



Sex Work and Mobility from A Gender Perspective: Findings from Three Cities in Viet Nam

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Acronyms and abbreviations

DSEP	Department of Social Evils Prevention
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JPGE	United Nations–Government of Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality
MDG-F	MDG Achievement Fund
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MRSC	Mobility Research and Support Centre
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

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Executive summary

There are important gender differences concerning the mobility of sex workers. Women and men can have common but also different experiences as migrants and as sex workers, have different motivations and face different risks and vulnerabilities. The risks and vulnerabilities of sex workers caused by mobility have been mentioned in research and legal/policy frameworks. However, little is known about the different forms of mobility of sex workers, causes and mechanisms and associated vulnerabilities.

The present research aims to fill this current gap in knowledge. This research was commissioned by the Department of Social Evils Prevention (DSEP), the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) with technical assistance from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) within the framework of the Spanish MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) and the United Nations–Government of Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality (JPGE). Under the three-year JPGE, 12 United Nations agencies and programmes, in partnership with the Government of Viet Nam, provided strategic, coordinated and multi-sectoral capacity-building and technical assistance to build the capacity of the relevant national and provincial authorities so that they can better implement, monitor, evaluate and report on the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control.

The research aimed to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To generate a better understanding of the role played by gender in the decision of sex workers to migrate, and the ways migration and gender affect entry into sex work;
- To examine the reasons for, patterns of and vulnerabilities resulting from the mobility of sex workers (both mobile migrant sex workers and mobile non-migrant sex workers) with a gender perspective;
- To inform the design of policies and support programmes with specific recommendations.

The research was conducted in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Haiphong. These are the three most populous cities in Viet Nam and have a rather high number of sex workers in comparison with other provinces in Viet Nam. Research locations are in the inner cities, with 189 male and 199 female sex workers being chosen for structured questionnaire interviews: 80 female sex workers were chosen from “Labour–Education¹” Centres; 189 male and 119 female sex workers were chosen via respondent-driven sampling. The following research activities also took place: one focus group discussion with government staff responsible for sex work from the DSEP, four focus group discussions of sex worker peer educators, 15 in-depth interviews of sex workers, and four in-depth interviews of those with a high risk of entering sex work (karaoke bar staff and massage parlour staff).

This report contains five parts: Introduction; Main concepts, objectives and methods of the study; Socio-demographic characteristics of interviewed sex workers; Gender and mobility of sex workers; Conclusions and recommendations.

¹ The Labour Education Centre is also known as Centre 05

Socio-demographic characteristics of interviewed sex workers

- Over half of the interviewed sex workers are under 25 years old.
- Over three quarters of interviewed sex workers started sex work before turning 25.
- Over 56% of interviewed sex workers have education levels of up to secondary school level. Interviewed male sex workers have higher education levels than female sex workers.
- Over 65% of interviewed sex workers are single. More male sex workers are single than female sex workers.
- Interviewed sex workers mainly work independently.
- Average total income per month for sex work is VND 8.6 million, a high figure compared to the average urban income in Viet Nam of VND 2.13 million.
- The large majority of female sex workers have only clients of the opposite sex, while this is the case for only a small number of male sex workers.

From the analyses of sex workers' mobility, the report makes the following conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusions

1. The main motivation to migrate is to access a better income. There are gender differences in the reasons for migration: more women than men migrate to earn a better income. Only about half of the migrant sex workers were informed about job details prior to their movement.
2. Economic factors are important for both men and women when deciding to participate in sex work. Individual characteristics play an important role in men's participation in sex work. Family-related factors play an important role in women's decision.
3. It is **an increasingly common phenomenon for sex workers to work independently**. Men account for a higher proportion of sex workers who work independently. In contrast, the majority of female sex workers work under management.
4. Approximately **17% of sex workers have changed their workplaces in the past 10 years. The main reason is to look for new clients and gain better earnings**. More female than male sex workers are the target of raids by the authorities, while male sex workers change their workplace more often to look for new clients.
5. Regarding male sex workers, **work and income patterns are different from city to city**. Even more so than female sex workers, male sex workers try to hide the nature of their work **to avoid discrimination within their community; this creates serious challenges in the efforts to prevent and treat HIV, STIs and other diseases among sex workers**. Just over half of male-to-male sex workers use condoms at all times when having sex, compared with almost three quarters of female sex workers.

6. The decision to change workplace is strongly influenced by the amount of time spent working as a sex worker and by clients. **Independent sex workers are less likely to be the target of police raids than those who work under management. Male sex workers are much less likely to be the target of police raids than female sex workers.**

7. **Sex workers face health and social vulnerabilities due to their work.** These include violence, rape, repudiation of payment, prolonged period of service without extra payment, sex organ inflammation, sexually transmitted infections and discrimination. Generally, a higher proportion of women than men face these vulnerabilities.

8. There are differences between men and women and between migrants and non-migrants in terms of access to information and social services. Men account for a higher proportion of health insurance holders than women. However, a higher proportion of women in the sample have participated in training courses which provide health knowledge. When comparing migrants and non-migrants, non-migrants make up a higher proportion of those who have health insurance and have participated in training. There is only a slight difference between migrants and non-migrants in terms of knowing about legal aid centres, laws and regulation concerning sex work.

9. Approximately a quarter of the total 388 sex worker respondents have stopped sex work only to start again. Women account for a higher proportion, but in the sample the women were also older. **At the time of interview, 37.9% wanted to continue their work and 48.2% wanted to stop soon.** The reasons for wanting to stop sex work included: discrimination, fear of contracting HIV and sexually transmitted infections, and fear of the police. Both men and women emphasized economic factors as reasons to continue their work.

10. From the State management perspective, efforts at combining prohibition with harm reduction measures in prostitution control activities are modest. The DSEP has issued a guiding document, but actions for its practical implementation and coordination between non-governmental organizations, projects and community-based associations are still limited.

Recommendations

1. Promote communications between both target groups and people/community managing officers in improving awareness of harm reduction approaches to sex work. One important role of communication is to reduce discrimination.

2. Continue efforts to provide social services for sex workers such as providing information, improving awareness to reduce harm and offering health awareness and treatment through activities in associations.

3. State management should focus on harm-reduction approaches for sex work. Conditions for the involvement of non-governmental organizations and other social organizations in social support, harm reduction, discrimination reduction and support for the development of alternative livelihoods should be improved.

4. In order to help sex workers establish alternative livelihoods, the Government needs to improve sex workers' access to job training and loans. Interviewed sex workers voiced the need to create a link between market demand, vocational training and employment services. When establishing new careers, it is crucial to guarantee that the sex workers' previous occupation remains confidential.
5. Build up supporting models, create good conditions for sex workers to have easy access to services for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; help female sex workers to minimize the harm caused by being tricked, sexual violence and abuse and help them develop to alternative livelihoods. One avenue could be the expansion and support of existing associations.
6. Improve the capacity of officers working in the prevention of sex work, by learning from international experiences in managing this issue. Organize a study tour for relevant ministry members to a country which takes a different legal approach to sex work.
7. Conduct a comprehensive and systematic study on socio-economic aspects of sex work, especially how people end up in sex work and the opportunities for the development of alternate livelihoods. The study should also cover different sex workers (those under the management of procurers; those working independently; male and female sex workers; very mobile and less mobile sex workers). There should be a system keeping track at all levels to collect reliable data on the situation of sex work in Viet Nam.

1. Introduction

The mobility of sex workers shows important gender differences regarding female and male sex workers. Women and men can have different experiences as a sex worker and may face different barriers when accessing services.

While certainly not all sex workers have migrated to their place of work, important proportions of sex workers have been found to be migrants in the few studies available. The majority of female sex workers in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho and Haiphong originate from nearby provinces and cities (MOLISA, 2009; Hong and Long, 2011). While less data are available on male sex workers, they are also found to often originate from other provinces (Doussantousse et al., 2002). Migration is often motivated by a sense of responsibility towards families in cases of relative poverty, which is further increased by gendered norms of responsibility and behaviour. In the case of a number of men who have sex with men, migration and entry into sex work may also be a means to avoid community stigma and social sanctions on their sexuality. Migrants may suffer from discrimination, exploitation and limited access to social, education and health services (IOM, 2002). These vulnerabilities are increased for migrant sex workers as they engage in illegal work – they have less power to access and control resources and information and suffer from increased discrimination and stigma.

This vulnerability is further amplified by the high mobility of sex workers. Existing studies suggest that mobility can make sex workers vulnerable (MRSC, 2001). Three major factors have been identified as contributing to the mobility of female sex workers: avoiding the police (as sex work is illegal, sex workers can be arrested, have their identity cards taken or be put into administrative detention); satisfying client-driven demand for “new faces”; and avoiding stigma. Recent campaigns against sex work have driven such work increasingly underground (Lam, 2009). To date, not much is known about the mobility of male sex workers. While they are reportedly less affected by police raids, they may be subject to client-driven demand, stigma and possibly other factors.

Mobility may entail decreased access to services and information and disruption of social networks (Rushing, 2006). Moreover, research in other countries has shown how police crackdowns can lead to even greater mobility and more underground work. In turn, this leads to changes in the power relations between clients and sex workers (diminished income results in diminished negotiation power with clients) and impedes their access to services (Lam, 2008), which increases the risk of abuse, violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

The vulnerability of sex workers during the mobility process has been mentioned in research and legal/policy frameworks (Lam, 2009). However, so far little is known about different forms of mobility of sex workers, causes and mechanisms and associated vulnerabilities. Only one study was identified that specifically addressed the topic – while it laid important groundwork for the development of this study, it contained only a small sample of 16 female sex workers and the risks were outdated (MRSC, 2001). Moreover, it did not include male sex workers or specific research into how gender can influence sex work and the migration and mobility of sex workers.

Research and studies already conducted mainly focus on sex work and intervention programmes. There is little knowledge about whether and why some forms of mobility and sex work, at certain times and under certain conditions, are related. Additionally, we do not know much about how male and female sex workers may behave differently and are treated differently. There is a great need to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the situation of sex work in Viet Nam, particularly in relation to patterns of mobility, and the role of gender norms in influencing these patterns, in order to support the development of policies, programmes and services to protect the rights of these workers.

The present research aims to fill this current lack of knowledge. This research was commissioned by the Department of Social Evils Prevention (DSEP) with technical assistance from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) within the framework of the Spanish MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) and the United Nations–Government of Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality (JPGE). Under the three-year JPGE, 12 United Nations agencies and programmes, in partnership with the Government of Viet Nam, provided strategic, coordinated and multisectoral capacity-building and technical assistance to build the capacity of the relevant national and provincial authorities so that they can better implement, monitor, evaluate and report on the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control.

2. Main concepts, objectives and methods of the study

2.1. Main concepts

2.1.1. Gender

According to the Law on Gender Equality, the definition of gender refers to “characteristics, positions and roles of both men and women in all social relationships.”² Unlike the concept of sex being the biological differences between women and men, gender encompasses social relationships between men and women. Gender prejudice is defined as “bias and negative awareness, attitude and assessment of characteristics, positions, roles and ability of men or women.”

2.1.2. Sex work

The Ordinance on Prostitution Prevention issued by the Standing Committee of the Vietnamese National Assembly on 14 March 2003 defined some concepts related to sex work: selling sex is the action of a person having sexual relations with another for money or other material benefits; buying sex is the action of a person using money or other material benefits to pay for sexual relations; sex work refers to both selling and buying sex.

Sex work is illegal in Viet Nam. Article 4 of the Ordinance on Prostitution Prevention strictly bans selling and buying sex and related activities like running a brothel, arranging sex work, forcing

² Law on Gender Equality 2007:6.

someone to sell sex, sex broking, protecting sex work, taking advantage of service businesses to perform sex work and other relevant actions.³

The important characteristic of sex work is providing sexual satisfaction for money or material gain. This study researches four forms of sex work: sex work between women and men, sex work between women and women, sex work between men and men and sex work between men and women.

2.1.3. Migration and mobility

In this report, the term “migration” is used to refer to those moving to the three surveyed cities to seek jobs or for other purposes. These persons are referred to as migrants. Sex workers who have lived in the cities since they were born are considered non-migrants. The term “mobility” is used in cases where sex workers change working sites or living places within the cities. Mobility is applied to both migrants and non-migrants.

Migration or mobility can have both negative and positive consequences. As sex work is not accepted by the law and highly discriminated against by the community, the mobility of sex workers is often clandestine, ill-prepared and entails high risks. This report focuses on vulnerabilities that sex workers may experience during the mobility process.

2.2. Objectives

The proposed research aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

- (a) To generate a better understanding of the role played by gender in the decision of sex workers to migrate, and the ways migration and gender affect entry into sex work;
- (b) To examine the reasons for, patterns of and vulnerabilities resulting from the mobility of sex workers (both mobile migrant sex workers and mobile non-migrant sex workers) with a gender perspective;
- (c) To inform the design of policies and support programmes with specific recommendations.

2.3. Methods

2.3.1. Location of the study

The research was conducted in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Haiphong. These are the three most populous cities in Viet Nam and have a rather high number of sex workers in comparison with other provinces in Viet Nam. Research locations are in the inner cities.

2.3.2. Sample population

– Male and female sex workers who have exchanged money for sex in the previous month;

³ Vietnam National Assembly, Ordinance on Prostitution Prevention, 2003.

- A small number of young people who work in industries often framed as high-risk work settings for entry into sex work (such as cafés, karaoke bars, massage parlours);
- Representatives of the State management system on sex work from the DSEP in the three cities.

2.3.3. Quantitative sample

The research team conducted structured questionnaire interviews with 189 male and 199 female sex workers. Respondents were chosen using two methods:

- Via Labour–Education Centres: Sex workers are sent to Labour–Education Centres for violations of the Ordinance on Prostitution Prevention. Sex workers in detention may not be representative of all sex workers. Thus, only 40 female sex workers in the centres of two cities (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) – a total of 80 – were chosen randomly from the list provided.
- Via a method of respondent-driven sampling: First, five female and five male sex workers were selected who served as “seeds” (initial respondents). After being interviewed, these initial respondents were asked to introduce their friends to the study. This process continued until the sample size was met. In this way, respondents came forward voluntarily and more could be learned about their networks and the relationship between sex workers. In some cases, because of the limited time for fieldwork, the research team asked sex worker peer groups to help with recruiting more respondents for the interviews. In total, 189 male and 199 female sex workers were contacted.

Sample distribution in each city is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents by sex and province

		Province			Total
		Hanoi	Haiphong	Ho Chi Minh City	
Sex	Male	67	41	81	189
	Female	77	42	80	199
Total		144	83	161	388

2.3.4. Qualitative sample

To gather further in-depth information, several in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted:

- One focus group discussion with DSEP staff in each city to better understand the situation of sex work from the State management perspectives. The aim is to understand the perception of DSEP staff of the situation of sex workers, vulnerabilities experienced by sex workers through their mobility, the perceived impact of policies against sex work on sex workers and other difficulties faced by sex workers.
- Four focus group discussions of peer educators in the three cities (three to five members for each focus group discussion). In total 13 people were interviewed. The interviewed peer educators used to be sex workers themselves and now work with the DSEP or the AIDS and Drug Prevention Department. They function as a bridge between sex workers and these

government departments and assess the impact of socio-economic policies on sex workers.

- Five in-depth interviews with sex workers in each city (two males and three females), thus 15 in-depth interviews in total. These in-depth interviews focus on mobile sex workers to explore their mobility patterns and specific vulnerabilities caused by the mobility. Some of them were chosen from the quantitative sample.
- Four in-depth interviews with those with a high risk of entering sex work in the three cities (karaoke bar staff and massage parlour staff). Using these interviews the environment facilitating entry into sex work can be explored.

2.3.5. Ethical considerations

The experiences and priorities of sex workers are the major focus of this study. Keeping information and names confidential, sensitivity of gender and other research ethics are ensured by training data collectors and supervising the consultants. All respondents were interviewed in separate rooms, where confidentiality was assured.

2.3.6. Limitations of the study

The sample of this study includes only those engaged in sex work at present; thus, the results from studying migrating patterns and reasons for migration describe only this group. Regarding the analysis on development of alternative livelihoods after stopping sex work in particular, the survey could access only those who had stopped this work for a period of time but were engaged in sex work at the time of the survey. The research team did not interview those who had stopped and not gone back to sex work.

The study focuses on inner cities; thus, the study's scope does not cover forms of mobility of sex workers in the suburbs, as well as mobility from city centres to suburbs and forms of sex work on interprovincial motorways.

3. Socio-demographic characteristics of interviewed sex workers

* **Age:** Just over half of the interviewed sex workers are under 25 years old, but male sex workers tend to be younger than female sex workers. The proportion of female sex workers aged over 30 is higher than that of male ones. About 5% of sex workers are over 40 years of age, with a higher proportion of female sex workers and three female sex workers over 50 years of age. There are 17 female and 10 male sex workers aged 18 and younger.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of interviewed sex workers (in % and number-N)

Characteristics	Hanoi		Haiphong		Ho Chi Minh City		All three cities		Total (388)
	Male (66)	Female (77)	Male (41)	Female (42)	Male (81)	Female (80)	Male (189)	Female (199)	
Age at time of interview									
16–20	31.3	11.7	29.3	-	19.8	20.0	25.9	12.6	19.1

	21	9	12		16	16	49	25	74
21–25	26.9 18	24.7 19	31.7 13	23.8 10	45.7 37	41.3 33	36.0 68	31.2 62	33.5 130
26–30	17.9 12	18.2 14	22.0 9	28.6 12	22.2 18	21.3 17	20.6 39	21.6 43	21.1 82
>30	23.9 16	45.5 35	17.1 7	47.6 20	12.3 10	17.5 14	17.5 33	34.7 69	26.3 102
Age at time of starting sex work									
Under 18	22.4 15	19.5 15	34.1 14	19.5 8	17.7 14	21.5 17	23.0 43	20.2 40	21.6 83
19–24	55.2 37	35.1 27	51.2 21	36.6 15	63.3 50	48.8 39	57.8 108	40.9 81	49.1 189
25–30	16.4 11	26.0 20	12.2 5	24.4 10	16.5 13	18.8 15	15.5 29	22.7 45	19.2 74
>30	6.0 4	19.5 15	2.4 1	19.5 8	2.5 2	11.3 9	3.7 7	16.2 32	10.1 39
Educational attainment of sex workers									
Primary or less	1.5 1	23.4 18	4.9 2	23.8 10	17.3 14	26.3 21	9.0 17	24.6 49	17.1 66
Lower secondary	27.3 18	48.1 37	29.3 12	52.4 22	24.7 20	53.8 43	30.0 51	51.3 102	39.3 153
High school	45.5 30	27.3 21	46.3 19	21.4 9	44.4 36	17.5 14	45.2 85	22.1 44	33.3 129
College/University	25.8 17	1.3 1	2.4 1	2.4 1	13.6 11	2.5 2	19.1 36	2.0 4	10.3 40
Marital status									
Single	80.6 54	36.4 28	85.4 35	31.0 13	91.4 74	61.3 49	86.2 163	45.2 90	65.2 253
Living with spouse/partner	10.4 7	6.5 5	9.8 4	16.7 7	8.6 7	18.8 15	9.5 18	13.6 27	11.6 45
Separated, divorced, widowed	9.0 6	57.1 44	4.9 2	52.4 22	-	20.0 16	4.2 8	41.2 82	23.2 90
Having an additional income-generating job *									
Yes	52.2 35	32.5 25	73.2 30	50.0 21	43.2 35	57.5 46	52.9 100	46.2 92	49.5 192

* See the appendix (Table 25) for information on additional income-generating jobs.

* **Age at starting sex work:** The age of starting sex work in over three quarters of all cases is 25 and younger; 18% started aged 16–18 and about 4% were 15 or younger when they started.

There is a difference in the age when men and women started to work as sex workers: 23% of men started to work as sex workers at the age of 18 and younger, while that proportion of women is 20.2%; 57.8% of male sex workers started this work at the age 19–24, while this figure is 40.9% for women. The proportion of women starting to work as sex workers after the age of 30 is significant (16.2%), while that proportion of men is only 3.7%. However, these differences should be treated carefully, as fewer male sex workers over 30 were included in the sample.

* **Education:** Over 56% of sex workers have education levels of up to lower secondary school. However, the number of those with high school, and especially university, education levels is quite large. This shows that the often voiced presumption that sex workers tend to be uneducated is not accurate.⁴

However, a more varied picture emerges when sex-segregating the data. The proportion of male sex workers with education levels of high school or higher, especially university, is substantially higher than that of female sex workers. For example, 64.3% of male sex workers have high school or higher education levels, with 19.1% of them having university education level. However, those proportions of female sex workers are only 24.1% and 2%, respectively. Despite this difference, the female sex workers in this study still tend to be better educated than those found in older research (e.g. Elmer's overview of studies prior to 2000 – Elmer, 2001). The rising education level of female sex workers is in line with some recent research findings of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (2009).

* **Marital status:** Over 65% of respondents are single and about 23% are separated, divorced or widowed. In addition, nearly 12% live with spouses or with partners. More male sex workers are single than female sex workers (86.2% compared with 45.2%). However, about 1 in 10 surveyed male sex worker lives with his wife or female partner (9.5%). The proportion of female sex workers who were separated, divorced or widowed is much higher than that of male sex workers (41.2% compared with 4.2%). The marital status of interviewees in this study is little different from the ones found in the overview study by Elmer (2001).

The proportion of sex workers who are separated, divorced or widowed is significantly higher than the national comparison. According to results from the National Census and Housing Survey 2009, the proportion of men aged 15–49 with separated, divorced or widowed marital status was 1.2% and that of women aged 15–49 was 4.2%. Regarding urban areas in particular, the proportion of men who are separated, divorced or widowed is 2.8% and the figure for women is 11.8% (CPHCSC, 2010). This may explain why some women enter sex work when they are mainly responsible for supporting their families.

* **Sex work features:** Interviewed sex workers mainly work independently (66%: 70.4% of men and 61.8% of women) or in association with friends and networks of acquainted people (about 5% in total). The remaining 30% work under the management of their bosses in hotels, guest houses, recreational units or other service units. It was mentioned in some interviews that this may be linked to the development of modern technologies such as the Internet and mobile phones, which give sex workers more opportunities to deal with customers directly, so they do not depend on procurers.

Regional differences can also be observed. For example, the proportion of sex workers working independently in Hanoi and Haiphong are similarly high (Hanoi: 92.5% for males; 58.4% for females; 74.3% in general; Haiphong: 80.5% for males; 66.7% for females; 73.5% in general), but the

⁴ According to the Census and Housing Survey 2009, the proportion of those achieving an education level of high school or higher in Hanoi was 41.62% (men: 44.36%; women: 39.01%); in Haiphong was 24.74% (men: 27.63%; women 23.01%); in Ho Chi Minh City was 34.71% (men: 38.08%; women: 31.64%) (Education monograph).

proportion in Ho Chi Minh City is lower (46.9% for males; 62.5% for females; 54.7% in general). Thus, if turned around, the proportion of sex workers under management in Ho Chi Minh City is higher (37.9%), while it is 22.9% in both Hanoi and Haiphong (see Table 3).⁵

Table 3: Type of sex work (in % and number)

Forms of sex work	Hanoi		Haiphong		Ho Chi Minh City		All three Cities		All three Cities (388)
	Male (66)	Female (77)	Male (41)	Female (42)	Male (81)	Female (80)	Male (189)	Female (199)	
Work features									
Work independently	92.5 62	58.4 45	80.5 33	66.7 28	46.9 38	62.5 50	70.4 133	61.8 123	66.0 256
With managers in hotels/restaurants	1.5 1	22.1 17	7.3 3	23.8 10	4.9 4	13.8 11	4.2 8	19.1 38	11.9 46
With managers in entertainment bases	1.5 1	5.2 4	2.4 1	-	-	3.8 3	1.1 2	3.5 7	2.3 9
With managers in service facilities	3.0 2	10.4 8	7.3 3	4.8 2	38.3 31	15.0 12	19.0 36	11.1 22	14.9 58
In groups in a public place	-	3.9 3	-	2.4 1	1.2 1	2.5 2	0.5 1	3.0 6	1.8 7
Social networking/ Introduction by friends	1.5 1	-	2.4 1	-	2.5 2	2.5 2	2.1 4	1.0 2	1.5 6
Other	-	-	-	2.4 1	6.2 5	-	2.6 5	0.5 1	1.5 6
Continuous working time up to now									
Less than 1 year	22.4 15	18.2 14	36.6 15	11.9 5	46.9 38	30.0 24	36.0 68	21.6 43	28.6 111
From 1 year to under 3 years	40.3 27	50.6 39	24.4 10	47.6 20	30.9 25	56.3 45	32.8 62	52.3 104	42.8 166
From 3 years to under 5 years	11.9 8	16.9 13	19.5 8	21.4 9	8.6 7	5.0 4	12.2 23	13.1 26	9.5 49
From 5 years or more	25.4 17	14.3 11	19.5 8	19.0 8	13.6 11	8.8 7	19.0 36	13.1 26	16.0 62
Monthly income (in VND 1,000)	7,664	10,884	4,643	6,345	6,583	12,600	6,546	10,600	8,625
Times had sex with clients a week last month	5	14	7.8	15.4	7.9	18.5	6.4	13.8	10.1
Sex of clients									
Opposite sex	23.9 16	97.4 75	7.3 3	92.9 39	3.7 3	92.8 74	11.6 22	94.5 188	54.1 210
Same sex	31.3 21	1.3 1	41.5 17	7.1 3	72.8 59	5.0 4	51.3 97	4.0 8	27.1 105
Both	44.8 30	1.3 1	51.2 21	-	23.5 19	2.5 2	37.0 70	1.5 3	18.8 73
Working places									
Public places	6.0 4	1.3 1	4.9 2	95.1 39	4.9 4	-	5.3 10	4.0 8	4.6 18
Parks	9.0 6	2.6 2	17.1 7	14.3 6	3.7 3	-	8.5 16	4.0 8	6.2 24

⁵ This difference can also be attributed to the sample selection. In Ho Chi Minh City, the study team accessed brothels with male sex workers, which were not accessed in Hanoi and Haiphong. This increases the number of those working in managed places in Ho Chi Minh City in our sample, but may not reflect regional differences accurately.

Massage shops/karaoke bars	1.5 1	7.8 6	7.3 3	4.8 2	-	-	3.2 6	6.0 12	4.6 18
Restaurants/beer shops/coffee shops	-	3.9 3	4.9 2	4.8 2	-	-	1.1 2	2.5 5	1.8 7
Bars, discotheques	3.0 2	1.3 1	-	-	-	-	1.1 2	0.5 1	0.8 3
Brothels	-	2.6 2	-	2.4 1	37.0 30	2.5 2	15.9 30	2.5 5	9.0 35
Rest houses/hotels	95.5 64	90.9 70	85.4 35	85.7 36	79.0 64	95.0 76	86.2 163	91.5 182	88.9 345
Private houses	23.9 16	3.9 3	19.5 8	2.4 1	19.8 16	2.5 2	21.2 40	3.0 6	11.9 46

* **Continous working time:** Most of the interviewees have been engaged in sex work continuously for up to three years (71.4%), about 16% have been working as sex workers for five years or longer. There is a difference between male and female sex workers in terms of the continuous working time up to now. Although the proportions of both male and female sex workers who have been working for less than three years are similar, the proportion of male sex workers who have been working for less than one year is significantly higher than that of female sex workers (36% compared with 21.6%). Comparing the three cities shows that more sex workers have worked for less than three years in Ho Chi Minh City than in Hanoi and Haiphong.

On average, each sex worker works for 5.7 hours a day (among those with regular working time; this does not apply to those who work from home or upon receiving a call), with male sex workers working for 5.4 hours and female sex workers working for 6 hours on average. On average, sex workers work 19.2 days per month, with the difference between male and female sex workers not being significant (males: 18.9 days and females: 19.5 days).

* **Monthly income:** The average total income per month from sex work is VND 8.6 million,⁶ with female sex workers having an average income of VND 10.6 million, and males VND 6.55 million. This is a high figure compared with the national average income in Viet Nam – it is more than 2.5 times as much as the average income of the top 20% of earners.⁷ In addition to this, a high percentage of sex works have additional income from other jobs (about 45.6%). About 5% of respondents have income of VND 20 million or more through sex work. The income of sex workers in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City is substantially higher than in Haiphong.

⁶ Equivalent of USD 409.5 in December 2011.

⁷ According to data from the Survey on Population Living Standards 2010, monthly average income per capita of the population in urban areas is VND 2,129,700 and the national figure for income group 5 (20% with the highest income) is VND 3,411,000. Looking at urban areas only, income group 5 rises to VND 4,984,500. There are differences in urban incomes among the three cities, with income group 5 earning VND 4,069,000 in Haiphong, VND 4,831,000 in Hanoi and VND 6,436,000 in Ho Chi Minh City.

* **Time had sex with clients weekly:** In the last month before the survey, the interviewees had sex with customers on average over 10 times a week, with women having sex with customers nearly 14 times and men over 6 times. About 10% of them had sex with customers over 21 times a week.

* **Sex of clients:** Not surprisingly, there is a major difference between the sex of the clients of male and female sex workers. On average, 54.1% of sex workers have clients of a different sex, 27.1% of clients of the same sex and 18.8% of clients of both sexes. However, the large majority of the female sex workers have sex with customers of a different sex (94.5%), while this applies to only 11.6% of male sex workers. More than half of the interviewed male sex workers (51.3%) have exclusively clients of the same sex, and 37% have clients of both sexes.

Regarding male sex workers, there are differences among the three cities: Although male sex workers who have female clients are in the minority in all three cities, almost one quarter of surveyed male sex workers in Hanoi had only female clients (23.9%), while this applied to only a small proportion in Haiphong and Ho Chi Minh City (7.3% and 3.7%, respectively).

In Ho Chi Minh City, male sex workers who have sex with men account for the highest proportion (72.8%), while in Haiphong male sex workers who have clients of both sexes account for the highest proportion.

Male sex workers with female clients often work as freelancers who look for customers in bars and discotheques. According to interviewees, their customers are often well-off middle-aged women. The payment for this group is typically the highest (VND 800,000 to VND 2,500,000 for each encounter, plus gifts and tips if their clients become regular customers). This group accounts for a higher proportion in Hanoi. Male sex workers with male clients and clients of both sexes tend to receive lower payment (VND 100,000 to VND 150,000 for each encounter). Male sex workers with clients of both sexes often work independently, and sell their services to any customers they meet, while men who have sex with men often work in two ways: independently looking and waiting for customers in public areas (in all three cities) and working under direct or indirect management (the “brothel owner” will call them when there are customers, which is more popular in Haiphong); or they are provided with accommodation and meals and tend to their customers at the living site or according to their orders – there are many places of this kind in Ho Chi Minh City.

* **Working places:** Working sites are diverse, including hotels, guest houses, working places of sex workers (massage shops, karaoke bars, restaurants, beer shops, etc.) or private houses. The most popular sites are hotels or guest houses. The proportion of female sex workers using guest houses and hotels is not much different from that of male sex workers (about 5 percentage point difference). Other popular sites are private houses (11.9% in general, but with 21.2% of male and only 3% of female sex workers). There are also some quite significant differences between male and female sex workers in terms of where they have sex with customers. For example, the proportion of male sex workers using parks or brothels is higher than that of female sex workers, while the interviewed female sex workers use mostly karaoke bars, massage parlours or restaurants.

There are differences among the cities concerning where the services are sold. Sex workers in Ho Chi Minh City hardly ever use public areas, parks, massage shops, karaoke bars, cafés, bars or discotheques. However, a significant number of female sex workers in Haiphong use public areas. Meanwhile, a large proportion (nearly 40%) of male sex workers in Ho Chi Minh City use brothels as the venue for selling sex, but only a small proportion of female sex workers in Hanoi and Haiphong use them.

4. Gender and mobility of sex workers

4.1. Migration patterns of sex workers

Among the interviewees, 61.9% are immigrants from other provinces. More than three quarters are from rural areas (77.5%) and only 22.5% of immigrants are from urban areas.

4.1.1. Characteristics of migrants before going to the cities

Among the 232 people from other provinces approached by the researchers, women account for 53.9% (see Table 4). The average age of the women is 21.7, while this figure is 19.9 for the men. Most of them have secondary and high school levels of education. A total of 13.8% of migrant sex workers have a higher education (college, university). On average, the education level of interviewed women tends to be lower than that of men when they migrate. When asked to judge their families economic condition, most estimated it to be average (59%), but over a third judged their family's economic conditions to be poor (35.8%). The proportion of women who judged their family to be poor is higher than that of men: 42.4% of women compared with 28% of men.

Table 4: Characteristics of migrant sex workers (in %)

Demographic characteristics		Male (107)	Female (125)	Total (232)
Sex (N=232)	Female	-	-	53.9
	Male	-	-	46.1
Average age		19.9	21.7	20.8
Educational attainment (N=232)	Primary school and below	7.5	19.2	13.8
	Secondary school	20.6	57.6	40.5
	High school	45.8	20.0	31.9
	College/University	26.2	3.2	13.8
Wealth ranking of family (N=232)	Well-off	8.4	2.4	5.2
	Average	63.6	55.2	59.0
	Poor	28.0	42.4	35.8
Income before migration (N=160)	Completely dependent on family	12.9	6.1	8.8
	Not enough for individual life	43.5	43.9	43.8
	Sufficient for personal needs	25.8	24.5	25.0
	May partially support the family	14.5	24.4	19.4
	Abundant	3.2	3.1	3.1

4.1.2. Reasons for migrating

Economic factors are the main reasons behind decisions to migrate, with 48.7% of respondents migrating for higher incomes for themselves and to help their families, and a further 10.3% because of a lack of suitable jobs in the local area (see Table 5). Other important reasons to migrate are to study, including both vocational training and studies at professional schools (16.4%), because of enticement by friends (18.1%) or to live independently from families (14.2%).

Table 5: Reasons for urban migration (in %)

Reasons	Male (107)	Female (125)	Total (232)
Earn money to support family	37.4	58.4	48.7
Following enticement by friends	15.9	20.0	18.1
To study	28.0	6.4	16.4
Wanting to live independently	19.6	9.6	14.2
Could not find work locally	9.3	11.2	10.3
Escape from farming/rural society	10.3	8.8	9.5
Change to a more comfortable living environment	9.3	6.4	7.8
Escape from family conflicts	2.8	11.2	7.3
Sought a new working environment (sex work)	5.6	4.0	4.7
Move with the family	0.9	6.4	3.9
Improve knowledge	0.9	3.2	2.2
Others	9.1	6.6	8.2

However, there are important differences in the motivation of male and female respondents to move to the city. Income and helping families motivates 58.4% of women, but only 37.4% of men. This may be related to the fact that a higher proportion of women participating in the survey judge their families to be poor. Moreover, as shown by survey data not presented here, the percentage of females who are financially responsible for the family both before and after migration is higher than males.

Family factors seem to have a greater influence on women's decisions to migrate, with 11.2% of women migrating because of family conflicts, but only 2.8% of men deciding to leave home for this reason. Family conflicts mainly relate to broken spousal relationships. The analysis of marital status before working as sex workers shows that the proportion of women who are divorced or separated is much higher than that of men (24.6% compared with 2.6%, respectively). Men's decisions to migrate are more related to individuality. For example, 28% of men migrated to study, while this proportion of women is 6.4%. A high proportion of the approached male sex workers are currently students. Through interviews the researchers deduced that, during their studies, students realize that they can make money more quickly and easily by engaging in sex work. Similarly, 19.6% of men migrated to establish an independent life and prove their self-reliance, but only 9.6% of women cited that reason. Only 14 out of the 232 respondents engaged in sex work before migrating (6%), and for almost all of those (10 out of 14), looking for a new environment more favourable for sex work was an important reason to migrate.

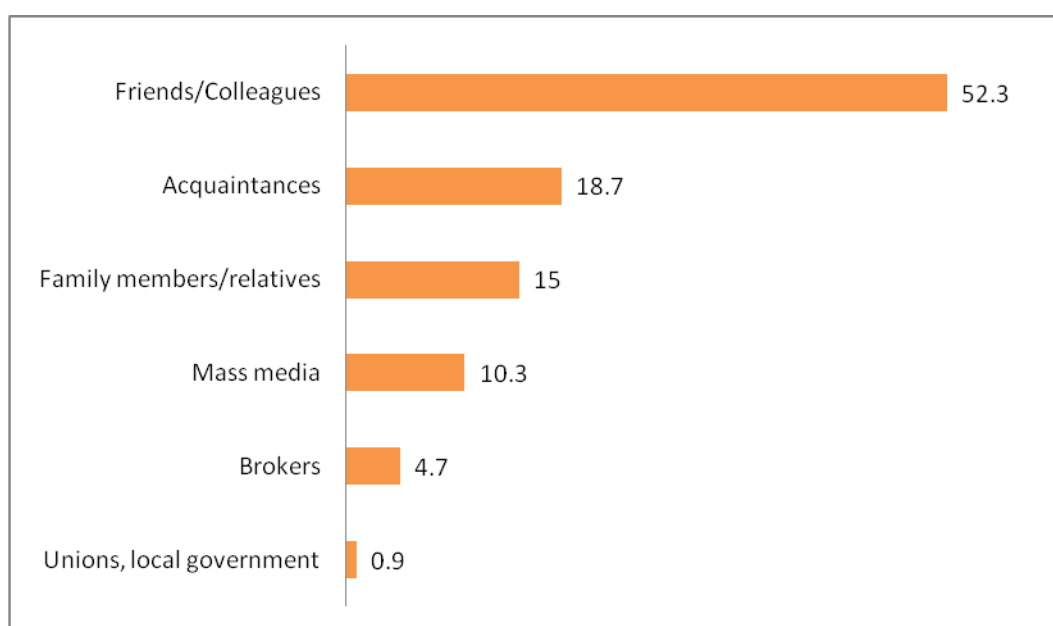
4.1.3. Jobs before and just after migrating to cities

Before migrating to the surveyed cities, 19 out of the 232 respondents (accounting for 8.2%) did not have a jobs outside their home, 53 were students (accounting for 22.8%) and 14 were sex workers (accounting for 6%). Before migrating, 63% of migrants held other jobs, with 51 people (22%) involved in farm work, 17 (7.3%) working in the service sector (e.g. restaurant, hairdresser, massage parlour), and the rest doing other work. In general, the jobs performed by migrants before moving to the cities are unstable or temporary low-income jobs. Remarkably, over one fifth of the surveyed migrant sex workers were students before migrating and either moved upon graduation to find a job or to continue studying.

When they were asked about their initial plans to find jobs in the city, about a third did not expect to change to a job that was better than their old one (31.4%); 41.7% had plans and succeeded in finding better jobs for themselves; and 28.3% had plans but failed to find jobs as they expected. The main reason for this is that migrants were not equipped with adequate professional skills or qualifications: 44% of those who did not succeed were not sufficiently qualified. In addition, other interviewees relied on the help of others, but this did not work out (12%); they had intentions to but finally did not want to change the type of job (6%); or they were let down or had family issues to resolve (4%).

Nearly 7 out of 10 migrants expected and had plans to change to jobs for the better (no significant difference between the sexes), of which 6 out of 10 succeeded and were satisfied with the outcome of their migration. At the same time, only about half had any information about job availability in destination areas. This finding that over half migrated with very limited information is reflected in the difficulties some migrants encounter when looking for jobs upon arrival in the cities. The main sources of information include friends and fellow workers (52.3%), acquaintances (18.7%) or relatives (15%) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Job information sources before migrating (in %)



Therefore, although 7 out of 10 migrants had plans to look for new jobs with better conditions than their previous ones, only 5 out of 10 sought or obtained information before migrating. Thus, there is an important information gap. As migrants were not provided with information about jobs, and often lack professional qualifications and working skills, they may struggle to find jobs and establish their new lives.

Occupations before migration are mainly in agriculture, labour work, hired-labour work or studying at school, but there is a change in occupational structure after migration. The group of business occupations, freelance and simple labour, workers, craftsmen and hired labour decreases from 56.9% to 28%. In general, these are low-income occupations. Meanwhile, service work in bars, restaurants, massage shops, recreational services and hairdressers increases from 7.3% to 33.2%. This shows that many migrants who enter the sex work industry initially work in the service and recreational sector.

While only 6% of interviewees were sex workers before migrating, 21.1% started sex work as a first job upon arriving in the city; thus, there is an initial four-fold increase (that of men increases from 2.8% to 15.9%, women from 8.8% to 25.6%). Many intended to look for other jobs but did not succeed, for various reasons. The 49 migrants working as sex workers as their first job upon arrival in the city were mainly motivated by a lack of money to search for other jobs, or other jobs were physically too demanding for them. The initial investment for sex work is small, while there is a high earning potential, so some enter this occupation as soon as they move to the city.

Despite certain differences, both male and female sex workers share a common pattern, namely a large proportion enter sex work or start to work in sectors closely related to sex work soon after moving to the city (45% of men and 62% of women) (see Table 6).

Table 6: Job before and just after arriving in the city at the last migration⁸ (in %)

Job before arriving in cities	Business, simple labour, etc. (1)	Entertainment services, massage, karaoke bar (2)	Sex work (3)	Not working (4)	Student (5)	Total
Job just after arriving						
Total	56.9 132	7.3 17	6.0 14	6.9 16	22.8 53	232
Business, simple labour, etc.	37.1 49	11.8 2	0.0 0	37.5 6	15.1 8	28.0 65
Entertainment services, massage, karaoke bar	39.4 52	76.5 13	0.0 0	25.0 4	15.1 8	33.2 77
Sex work	20.5 27	5.9 1	100.0 14	25.0 4	5.7 3	21.1 49
Not working	2.3	0.0	0.0	6.3	1.9	2.2

⁸ Some migrants may have moved to cities and gone back home several times. The information in Table 6 relates only to the last migration (i.e. migrants who came and stayed in the cities until the survey took place).

	3	0	0	1	1	5
Student	0.8	5.9	0.0	6.3	62.3	15.5
	1	1	0	1	33	36
Male	45.8	9.3	2.8	8.4	33.6	107
	49	10	3	9	36	
Business, simple labour, etc.	40.8	0.0	0.0	44.4	11.1	26.2
	20	0	0	4	4	28
Entertainment services, massage, karaoke bar	28.6	80.0	0.0	33.0	16.0	29.0
	14	8	0	3	6	31
Sex work	26.5	10.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	15.9
	13	1	3	0	0	17
Not working	4.1	0.0	0.0	11.1	2.8	3.7
	2	0	0	1	1	4
Students	0.0	10.0	0.0	11.1	69.4	25.2
	0	1	0	1	25	27
Female	66.4	5.6	8.8	5.6	13.6	125
	83	7	11	7	17	
Business, simple labour, etc.	34.9	28.6	0.0	28.6	23.5	29.6
	29	2	0	2	4	37
Entertainment services, massage, karaoke bar	45.8	71.4	0.0	14.3	11.8	36.8
	38	5	0	1	2	46
Sex work	16.9	0.0	100.0	57.1	17.6	25.6
	14	0	11	4	3	32
Not working	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8
	1	0	0	0	0	1
Student	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	47.1	7.2
	1	0	0	0	8	9

Notes: Group 1 (Business, simple labour, etc.) includes: Family business, shop or restaurant owner, street vendor; crafts and fine arts, repair mechanic, bricklayer; operating or production worker-machine operator, textile worker, assembly line worker; manual labour, self-employed; hired job, domestic work; unskilled labour in agriculture, forestry, mining.

Group 2 (Entertainment services, massage, karaoke bar) includes: Employment in service industries (hairdresser, barber, massage); working in the fields of culture, entertainment; server in restaurants and pubs; server in massage and karaoke services; server in bars/discotheques.

4.1.4. Financial responsibility before and just after migrating to the city

An analysis of the financial responsibility towards others before and just after arriving in the city provides further information on differences between men and women in sex work. When they were

asked about providing financial support to others in the last 12 months,⁹ 141 sex workers, accounting for 60.8% among all the migrant sex workers interviewed (see Figure 2) provided financial support to their families, including parents, children, spouses and siblings, but mostly to parents and children.

Figure 2: Financial support provided to families (last 12 months, in %) (N=232)

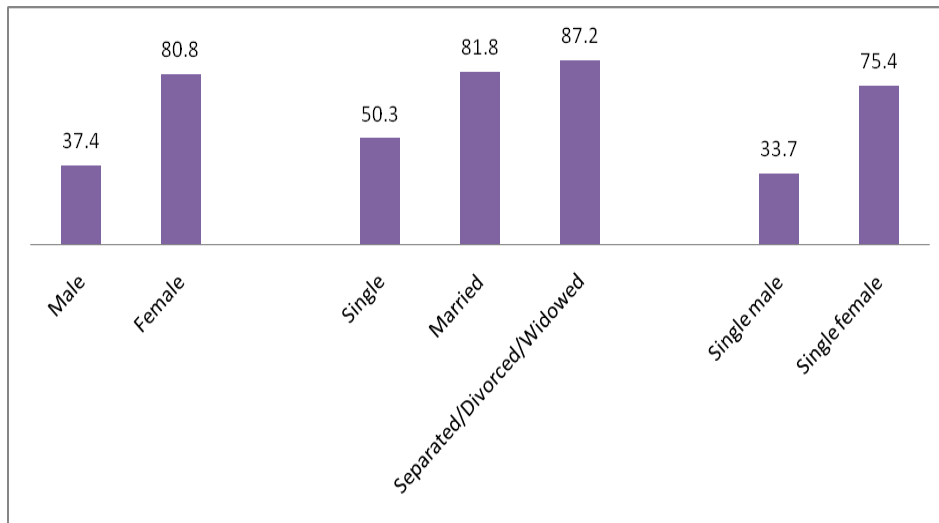


Figure 2 shows that migrant female and male sex workers have significant differences in regard to providing financial support to their family: 80.8% of female migrant sex workers provide financial support to their family, while the figure for males is only 37.4%. One of the related factors is that the proportion of widowed, divorced or separated women is higher than that of men. Furthermore, the interviewed men are younger than the women, with 28% of male interviewees still being students. Thus, owing to their age and life cycle differences, the female and male sex workers have different responsibilities towards their families, and families have different expectations of them in terms of support.

Compared with migrant sex workers, those who are non-migrants (have lived in the surveyed cities since they were born) make a smaller economic contribution to their families. In the last 12 months, 51.3% of non-migrants supported their families financially, with an important gender difference also persisting in this group: 74.3% of non-migrant women and 30.5% of non-migrant men.

There is no significant difference between migrants and non-migrants when considering the amount contributed: migrants send their families about VND 2.8 million a month; non-migrants send about VND 3 million. However, there is a difference in the amount of money sent to families by men and women. While the average amount of money that respondents (221 answered this question) send to their families is VND 2.9 million, the average amount that men (65 respondents) send to their families is VND 2 million and that of women (156 respondents) is VND 3.3 million.

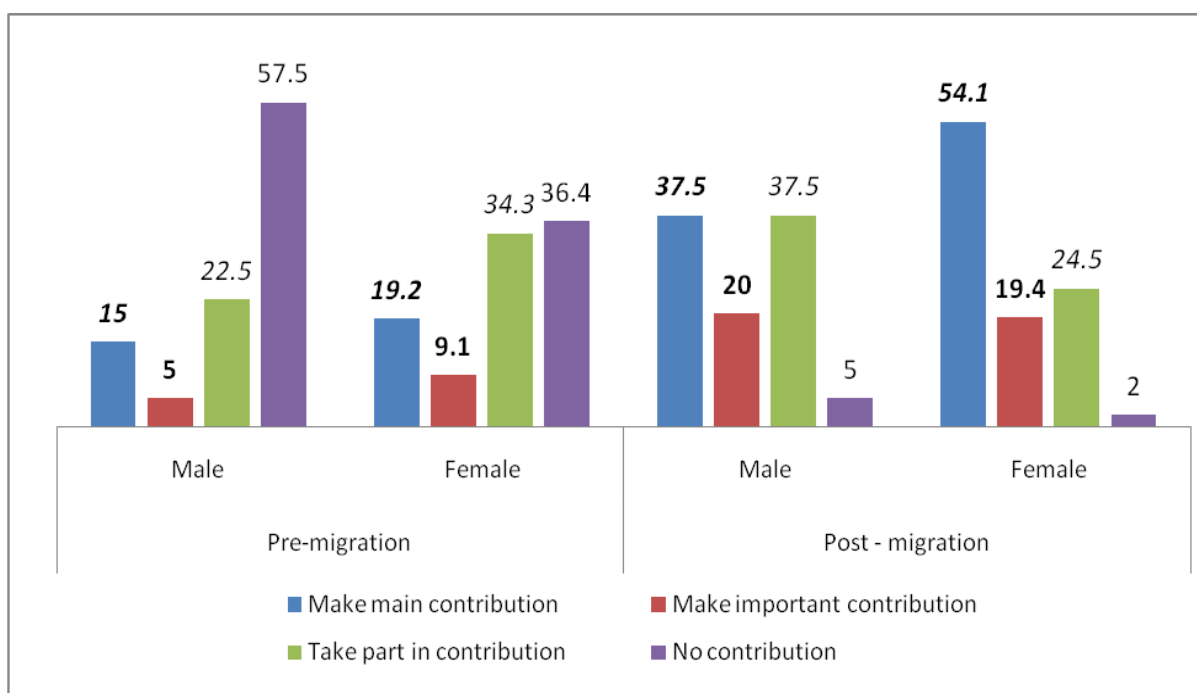
⁹ For the sex workers interviewed in the Labour–Education Centres, the question related to the last 12 months before entering the Centre.

Regarding marital status, differences between men and women remain pronounced. The average financial support provided by single men is VND 1.78 million; that of married men or those living with a female partner is VND 2.67 million; and that of widowed, divorced or separated ones is VND 1.9 million. Meanwhile, single women send financial support of VND 3.04 million; married women or those living with male partners send financial support of VND 5.14 million; and widowed, separated or divorced ones send VND 2.9 million, which is significantly different.

Regarding migrant sex workers, their marital status makes an important difference to the likelihood that they support their family financially. For example, those who are currently married (81.8%) or used to be married (87.2%), compared with the likelihood that single migrants (50.3%) support their families. Those receiving financial support are often parents (67.4%), children (36.9%) and siblings (12.8%). While 75.4% of single women give financial support to their families, only 33.7% of single men do so. Furthermore, while 26.7% of female respondents stated that sending financial support to families puts them under pressure, only 12.5% of men feel under this pressure. This may link back to the important differences in socio-demographic characteristics outlined above, with men being younger and many still studying, while many women are divorced or widowed and have to provide for their children. However, pressure may also be linked to differing gender patterns, as Hong and Long outline: “Traditional gender pattern that encourages women to sacrifice their individual interests for families makes many young women work very hard to pay their families’ debts or support their brothers’ study” (Hong and Long, 2011).

Migration has a positive influence on the incomes of the large majority of interviewed migrants and their families. Evidence shows that, before they migrated, only 18% of respondents were the breadwinners of their families; however, after they migrated, this proportion increased to 49.3%. The proportion of those making important contributions also increased from 7.9% to 19.6%. Conversely, the proportion of those not making any contribution decreased dramatically from 36.4% to only 2.9% (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Financial contribution to families pre- and post-migration (in %) (N=143)



The gender gap between men and women is not only reflected in the fact that they provide financial support to their families, but also in the relative importance of this contribution. Before migrating, 21.4% of men provided the main financial support or made important contributions to family economics. This proportion was 56.8% after they migrated (an increase of 35.4 percentage points). The proportion of women providing the main financial support or making an important contribution to family economics before migrating is higher than that of men, at 28.3%. This proportion increased sharply after they migrated to 73.7%.

Financial support increases in direct proportion to the age of respondents. However, there are differences between men and women among each age group. For example, regarding men aged over 26 years of age, 22.2% of them provide the main or important financial support before migration, and this proportion of women is 35.6%. After migration, 55.6% of men aged over 26 and 82.2% of women play an important role in giving financial support to their families. Regarding those aged 16–25 years of age, 57.7% of men and 66.6% of women play an important role in giving financial support to their families after migration.

Thus, surveyed female sex workers play overall a more important role in providing for their family financially than male sex workers, which is reflected in their likelihood to contribute and the amount contributed. Female sex workers in the sample are often from families with poorer economic conditions and financial pressure is perceived as a real burden for some of these women.

4.2. Entry into sex work

For migrant sex workers who were not working as sex workers prior to their migration, the average time spent living in the city before entering into sex work is 23.2 months (16.9 months for male respondents and 28.3 months for female respondents). If the first urban employment of migrants is in

recreational services, for example as a hairdresser or in karaoke bars, bars, discotheques, restaurants and massage parlours, the average time before they entered into sex work decreases to 15.9 months. This indicates the increased connection of these sectors to the sex work industry. Data from Table 6 also show that 33.2% of the interviewed migrant sex workers work in service and recreational sectors when they first arrive in the cities, while 27.5% of non-migrant sex workers worked in these sectors before starting sex work. Overall, the service and recreational sector is the single most important sector of employment before entering sex work.

With many of these establishments offering sex work as a side service, these working environments are highly conducive to entry into sex work: “As I work in the bar, when customers come to sing with me, they like me and invite me to go to hotels to have sex with them. My salary of VND 2 million a month is not enough to support my children. Another thing is my need, I do not have a husband, and I live far away from family, so I am lacking affection.” (female sex worker, 33 years old). Many could not resist the temptation of a big tip: “A lot of money is the biggest temptation. Each time I give them massage, if I have sex with them, they give me a tip of VND 500,000. I am not sure how long I can keep on refusing.” (masseuse, 22 years old).

Thus, as some service and recreational establishments offer sexual services as a side service, working in these places makes employees more likely to engage in sex work. When a 28-year-old man working in a massage shop for homosexual men in Ho Chi Minh City was asked “Do customers here have sexual demands?”, he answered that: “About 90% of them do. Very few of them request only a massage. There are hardly any customers coming for a massage without sexual demands.” However, as mentioned above, economic factors play an important role in deciding where to work. Given that they do not have jobs or the jobs they find are physically demanding with a low income, many people choose to work in these places. The respondent mentioned above affirmed that he had to work in the massage shop because he does not have money to study in order to qualify for other jobs, while this job pays quite well.

Data from Table 7 show that most of the sex workers entered into sex work when they were single (71.9%). However, there are again important gender differences: while 92% of male sex workers started when they were still single, only 53% of female sex workers were still single. Women also tend to start at a slightly older age at 23.8 years (21.5 years for men).

Table 7: Marital status when entering sex work (in %)

Characteristics		Male	Female	Total
Marital status (N=388)	Single	92.0	53.0	71.9
	Married	5.3	17.7	11.7
	Separated/Divorced/Widowed	2.7	29.3	16.4
Average age (N=385)		21.5	23.8	22.7

Concerning the reasons for entering into sex work, respondents gave various responses. Table 8 indicates the main reasons that led the sex workers to this work.

Table 8: Reasons for entering sex work (in %) (N=388, multiple answers possible)

Reasons	Male	Female	Total
To have a high income	65.1	41.7	53.3
To earn money to support the family	14.3	49.7	32.5
Was persuaded, enticed	31.7	27.6	29.6
As a result of troubled family relationships	5.3	17.1	11.3
To have sexual demands met	13.8	1.0	7.2
To earn money for drug use	3.2	5.5	4.4
Estimated as a suitable job	5.8	1.0	3.4
Was tricked/lured	0.5	4.0	2.3
Was lovesick	1.1	2.5	1.8
Was raped	0.5	1.0	0.8
Was forced	0.0	1.0	0.5

High income is the reason given by over half of the interviewees (53.3%) for starting sex work, with men at 65.1% and women at 41.7%. Cross-analysis of women’s marital status before engaging in sex work shows that there is no significant difference between those who are single, married, live with others as spouses, widowed, divorced or separated when giving this reason. Given that most men are single before starting to work as sex workers, differences were cross-analysed only for female respondents.

Many respondents could not resist the temptation of the high income from sex work: “I used to work as a masseur, which brought me to this job. As I worked as a masseur, and most of my customers were gay, and female customers liked tall and well-built men, and they chose me, then I did it. When there were just two people in the massage room then they would approach me. Money pushed me very strongly. Others who are not as good looking as me even did it, and I saw they were so rich, so I did it.” (male sex worker who has sex with men, 39 years old).

In the survey, 32.5% stated that they entered into sex work to earn money to support their families. Almost half of the interviewed women referred to their family, while this proportion of men is only 14.3%. As indicated above, the proportion of women having to provide financially for their families is higher than that of men (78% compared with 34%). Among men having to give financial support to their families in the last 12 months before the survey, only 41.5% said they engaged in sex work to generate income to support families, whereas 62.2% of women having to give financial support to their families in the last 12 months before the survey gave this reason. Direct comparison between single women and single men shows significant differences between them: about 35% of single women engage in sex work to earn money to support their families, while this figure is only 11% for single men.

Cross-analysis by age of men and women entering sex work shows that the proportions of women and men in nearly all age groups (aged 18 or younger, 19–24 and over 30) who give the reason of earning money to support families are quite different, with more women giving this reason. Only for

respondents aged 25–30 is the difference between men and women not marked; however, this proportion of women is still about 8 percentage points higher. This once again affirms a gender difference in migration, which puts financial burden on women, as discussed in the previous part of this report.

Besides gender differences, another factor related to the responsibility of men and women towards family is their marital status before starting sex work. Correlative analysis of women (because most men are single before entering sex work) shows a significant difference between single women and married women and divorced, separated or widowed ones in giving the reason of having to earn money to support their families. Nearly 70% of women who are married before entering sex work give this reason, while only about 35% of women who are single before entering sex work mention it.

In addition, some women mention that they were unlucky in love, tricked or experiencing disputes and crises in family relations. These are external factors, related to family and spiritual life. Regarding men, in addition to high incomes, they engage in sex work to fulfil their sexual desire or because they regard it as work suitable to their characteristics and ability. It is notable that 13% of male respondents state the need to fulfil sexual desires as a reason for entering sex work, while only 1% of female respondents mention this reason. In a society in which homosexuality is still sanctioned and stigmatized, entering sex work may be considered as one of the few available avenues to live their sexuality. According to the explanations above, the factors pushing men into sex work are often internal ones, more related to individual and practical needs. This may indicate the difference in behavioral patterns of men and women.

In fact, the reasons for entering sex work are most often a combination of individual reasons and reasons relating to family and friends. However, some indicated that they were tricked into sex work: “At that time, I was in difficulty, my second child was very small, one was at school, and one was sick. I was divorced and I just thought of how to make money to pay off the debts and support my children. My income was not enough to support myself while I had to support my children too. At first, I thought I was introduced a job of washing dishes in a restaurant, but when I arrived, it was not that job, I was taken to a brothel. The person taking me there got money from procuress already. I just came to the city and was trapped, then I had no choice but accepted this job.” (female sex worker, 33 years old). However, some respondents started to work as sex workers because they wanted to show off: “My family is not poor, but even rich, but my parents are too strict when it comes to money. When I went out with my friends, I wanted to save my face and I had to find a way to make money that I did not have. As soon as my friend made that suggestion, I accepted.” (female sex worker, 23 years old).

In the survey, 29.6% of respondents said that they started sex work after being enticed by friends or friends already engaged in sex work. This may reflect popular influence of friends and peers on individual behaviour, especially among young people.

Drug addiction is a reason for only 4.4% of respondents to start sex work. Drug use cannot only push some people into sex work, but also keeps them in this job for a long time when they are addicted. A number of sex workers approached by the research team were drug addicts and some were infected with HIV/AIDS.

Of the sex workers surveyed, 24.7% found the job themselves. In addition, other sex workers often entice others into this work, with 63.9% indicating that other sex workers introduced them to the job. Some sex workers wanted to help their friends to earn more money, others enticed their friends into the work to expand their team, or to follow their bosses' instructions to find new recruits.

The difference between men and women in terms of the people who introduced them to sex work is trivial. For example, the proportion of men who were recommended sex work by friends who were sex workers is only about 3.3 percentage points higher than that of women (65.6% compared with 62.3%).

Thus, different factors lead men and women into sex work. Men tend to start sex work at a young age and often when they are still single; they are more concerned by their individual needs when deciding to do this work. Conversely, women tend to start sex work at an older age and are less likely to be single. External factors related to family responsibilities and emotional or spiritual upheavals push women into sex work more than men. In addition, friends, especially friends involved in sex work, have a significant influence on individuals in their decision to enter sex work.

4.3. Mobility patterns of sex workers

4.3.1. Daily movement frequency

When sex workers were asked: "On average, how many times do you have to go to places where you serve customers?", 48 (accounting for 12.4% of respondents) said that they did not have to go anywhere (stayed at home to wait for customers or served customers at work). Among the rest, those who have to go to only one different place a day to meet customers account for 56.2% (that proportion of men is 69.5%, which is higher than that of women at only 43.4% – see Table 9).

Table 9: Daily mobility to meet clients (in % and number, among 340 sex workers who moved)

Number of moves	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
1 time	69.5	43.4	56.2
	116	75	191
2–3 times	26.9	42.8	35.0
	45	74	119
4–5 times	3.6	9.2	6.5
	6	16	22
Over 6 times	-	4.6	2.3
	-	8	8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
	167	173	340

The number of sex workers moving 2–3 times a day account for the second highest proportion with 35% (42.8% for women compared with 26.9% for men). Regarding those who move 4–5 times a day, the number of women account for a higher proportion, and no interviewed men move over 6 times a day. In general, female sex workers show a higher mobility than men: well over half of interviewed female sex workers move more than twice a day (56.6%), while only a third of men do so (30.5%).

Whether the sex workers work independently or under the management of procurers also influences daily mobility patterns. Data show that those working under management move less than those working independently.

This is linked to how customers are approached: among the 388 surveyed sex workers, only 28.4% approached customers through procurers (the proportion of female sex workers in this group under the management of procurers is nearly 10 percentage points higher than that of male ones). The number of sex workers approaching customers through (professional and amateur) middle people/protectors only accounts for under 17%. The rest approached customers using other methods such as the telephone (accounting for the highest proportion of both male and female sex workers), fellow workers, the Internet or by directly approaching clients (see Table 10).

I have my pictures [online], if they like me they call me. They talk to my manager, if they like me, they contact me. I just give my pictures to my manager. Sometimes, I contact them myself, I do not make phone calls, I just send a message with “do you want me?” or something like that. If he agrees, he chooses a venue and makes appointment to meet there. If he does not want me, I just let it go.

(male sex worker who has sex with men, 22 years old, Haiphong)

Table 10: Modes of approaching clients (in %)

Approach	Male	Female	Total
Mobile phone	75.8	63.9	69.9
Independently	48.7	66.9	57.8
Fellow sex workers	33.5	28.8	31.2
Managers	24.3	32.2	28.4
Internet	30.8	4.5	17.7
Amateur brokers (main job is motorbike driver, shop owners, etc.)	7.1	11.8	9.4
Professional brokers/protectors	7.7	7.3	7.5

In recent years, there has been a new approach that they no longer contact through procurers, they make contact through Internet instead. For example, they do not have to make contact through procurers, they just go online and make arrangement of venue and time, that's all and that's why it is easy. Previously, it used to be through middle people. Sex work now is operated in many ways suitable to each individual. Some ones work in public places as they do not know about modern technology, they just go to streets to look for customers. High-grade ones have information online.

(group discussion of DSEP cadres, Ho Chi Minh City)

4.3.2. Work location mobility of sex workers

Concerning work locations of sex workers, only 19.6% of respondents accessed working places outside the city centre in the last six months (or the six months before being sent to a Labour–Education Centre). Among them, the number of male sex workers is three times higher than that of female sex workers (30.2% compared with 9.5%). The percentage of respondents who worked only in inner cities during the time of observation is 80.4%.

Obviously, this result may be biased because the inner city was the study location. In addition, this result could be related to working independently or the under management of procurers. In general, more female sex workers work under management and therefore did not have to move around much.

However, when asked the same question in relation to their mobility since entering sex work, more sex workers have had significant mobility experience. Table 11 shows where the interviewed sex workers have worked since entry into the sector.

Table 11: Working areas since first entered sex work (in %)

Working area	Male	Female	Total
Abroad	1.1	0.5	0.8
Current city and other provinces	30.2	15.1	22.4
Urban and suburban districts	9.5	8.0	8.8
Within urban districts of the city	56.6	57.8	57.2
Within the district	5.8	18.6	12.4

Only 0.8% of sex workers in the sample have travelled abroad to engage in sex work; 22.4% have gone to other provinces for sex work. The number of men working in other provinces is twice as high as that of women: 30.2% compared with 15.1%.

Sixty-seven sex workers have moved to other areas within the last 10 years. Those who moved within the same city to another district account for the highest proportion (58.2%). More men moved to other districts than women (75% compared with 42.9%). The proportion of female sex workers with previous workplaces near their current place of residence is higher than that of male sex workers (25.7% in the same ward and 20% in the same district – see Table 12).

Table 12: Working areas before the last move (in % and number)

Working areas	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
In same current ward/commune	0	9	9
	-	25.7	13.4
In same current district	6	7	13
	18.8	20.0	19.4
In same current city	24	15	39
	75.0	42.9	58.2
In different city	2	4	6
	6.3	11.4	9.0
Total	32	35	67
	100.0	100.0	100.0

With regard to the 67 sex workers who have moved to different places to work in the last 10 years, they have moved for several reasons. The most popular reason is to look for new customers, with a significant difference between the male and female respondents who gave this reason (62.5% of men and 31.4% of women). Among the other reasons, the proportion of those moving for a higher income is most popular. Since looking for new customers is usually related to the desire to attain a higher income, it could be said that economic factors are the main determinant when the sex workers decided to change their workplace (see Table 13).

In addition, there are other reasons such as being pursued by functional forces, competition among fellow workers, meeting customer requests and others; however, the proportion of sex workers moving for these reasons is not high. A similar percentage of male and female sex workers mention these reasons.

Some sex workers move to other workplaces spontaneously, depending on their number of customers: “Many times, I move every few months, when I see this restaurant is quiet, I move to another one, when my friends recommend a busy restaurant, I move to work there, I stay to work where I can earn money... Yes, I also move from ward to ward, I just move to where there are many customers.” (female sex worker, 24 years old, Ho Chi Minh City).

Table 13: Reasons for changing workplace (the last time, in % and number)

Reasons	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Find new customers	62.5	31.4	46.3
	20	11	31

Find higher income	25.0 8	34.3 12	29.9 20
Raids by functional forces	6.3 2	17.1 6	11.9 8
Conflict with managers/brokers/protectors	6.3 2	14.3 5	10.4 7
At the request of clients	15.6 5	5.7 2	10.4 7
Conflict with co-workers	9.4 3	11.4 4	10.4 7
Transferred/exchanged by employers	6.3 2	2.9 1	4.5 3
Total	32	35	67

4.3.3. Gender differences in the forms of mobility

Moving because of being pursued

As far as the last two years are concerned (or the last two years before entering a Labour–Education Centre), 30.1% of sex workers have been pursued by functional forces, including the police. Among them, women account for the higher proportion (43.9% of women compared with 15.9% of men – see Table 14). The difference between men and women is significant and can be attributed to the fact that functional forces often focus on female sex workers without taking male sex workers in the site into account.

Table 14: Frequency of being pursued by functional forces in the last two years, by sex (in % and number)

Times pursued	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
1 time	8	36	44
	4.2	18.4	11.4
2 times	9	14	23
	4.8	7.1	6.0
3 times	4	11	15
	2.1	5.6	3.9
4 times	2	7	9
	1.1	3.6	2.3
Over 5 times	7	18	25
	3.7	9.2	6.5
None	159	110	269
	84.1	56.1	69.9
Total	189	196	385
	100.0	100.0	100.0

How did those pursued by police cope with the authorities? Among the 116 sex workers who have ever been impacted by functional forces, 10.3% often coped with them by moving to new places (other wards/communes); moving to a new place for a while, then coming back (also 10.3%); 54.3% chose to take a short time off (1–2 days depending on the situation) then went back to work; 25% cope by approaching customers in different ways to ensure their income (see Table 15). One female

sex worker in Hanoi told us: “I just ran away when I was pursued. I ran away that day and came back the next day. Sometimes, I took a few days off at home. I was afraid of being bullied so I did not move to other places. I just looked for customers around Hai Ba Trung Lake and Thong Nhat Park.” (female sex worker, 34 years old, Hanoi)

Table 15: Coping strategies of sex workers when pursued by the authorities (in % and number)

Reaction	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Move to a new workplace	7	5	12
	23.3	5.8	10.3
Temporarily move to a new workplace	4	8	12
	13.3	9.3	10.3
Stop working for a short period of time	19	44	63
	63.3	51.2	54.3
Others	0	29	29
	0.0	33.7	25.0
Total	30	86	116
	100.0	100.0	100.0

A comparison between men and women reveals differences in coping mechanisms. The number of male sex workers who changed workplaces or moved temporarily accounts for a higher proportion than that of female sex workers. Women often have more flexible coping strategies, with 33.7% of them choosing other ways so that “their work was not interrupted”: serving customers at home, moving to other streets/parks and even “taking a few hours off” until they were no longer being pursued.

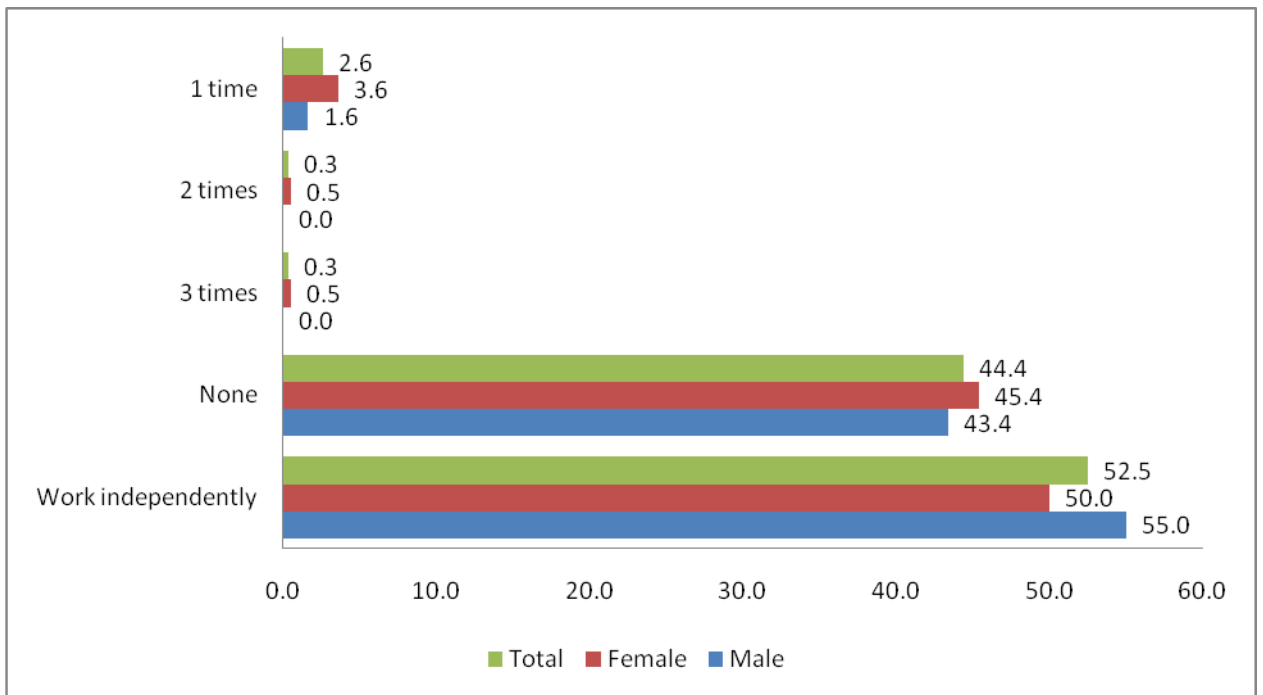
Others take advantage of administrative loopholes: “One end of Saigon Bridge is under the management of Ward 26, while the other end is under the management of Ward 15. If police stations of the two wards do not cooperate with each other during pursuance, they run to the other end when police of one ward pursue them and vice versa.” (peer group discussion, Ho Chi Minh City).

For those who had to move to other places or move temporarily for this reason, most did not have time to prepare and men were often less prepared than women (90.6% compared with 76.5%).

Not all sex workers received support to move. Their belongings may be few and the movement only temporary, so they need only some necessities and can manage without assistance. However, about 7% of them were supported by owners/procurers and 21.4% received support from their fellow workers.

Moving because of disputes with managers protectors

Figure 4: Frequency of moving to new places because of disputes with managers/protectors in the last two years



Only under 50% of interviewed sex workers cooperate with pimps or professional protectors and, among those, the number who had to change workplaces because of disputes is also small. Only 12 sex workers (9 women and 3 men) had to move for this reason. In general, interviewed sex workers rated their relationship with their owner/manager well. The percentage of those who evaluated the relationship between sex workers and owner/manager as “friendly, was helped when facing difficulties” is 44% for female and 34.6% for male respondents. Of the 12 who had to move because of a dispute, 9 had disputes about sharing agreements, one woman was fired over an unsettled dispute and two indicated other reasons.

Except those moving away themselves when disputes arose, the sex workers moving away because of an unsettled dispute often did not have time to prepare or managed to move themselves.

Moving because of disputes or competition with fellow workers

Of the 388 respondents, 27 had to move because of disputes or competition with fellow sex workers (accounting for 7%), 8% of women and 6% of men. The number of those who had moved once is the largest, while the proportion of those who had moved more than once is small.

Of the 27 sex workers who had to move because of their “fellow workers”, 40.7% did not have time to prepare and they moved away as soon as disputes arose, while 59.3% arranged suitable time to move themselves.

Concerning support for moving, 77.8% did not get support from anyone, 7.4% got support from the restaurant/bar owners whose management they were under (support in movement or arranging new workplaces); 7.4% got support from “fellow workers” at their workplaces and the rest got support from “fellow workers” at their new workplaces.

Moving in relation to customers

In the sample, 12% had to change their workplaces for reasons relating to customers. The reasons given were violence by customers or the need to look for new clients (see Table 16).

Table 16: Movement caused by clients in the last two years (in % and number)

Number of moves	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
1 time	5	5	10
	2.6	2.6	2.6
2 times	6	4	10
	3.2	2.0	2.6
3 times	2	1	3
	1.1	0.5	0.8
4 times	3	1	4
	1.6	0.5	1.0
Over 5 times	10	6	16
	5.3	3.1	4.2
None	163	179	342
	86.2	91.3	88.8
Total	189	196	385
	100.0	100.0	100.0

It is remarkable that among sex workers who had to move for reasons related to customers, those moving at least 5 times in the last two years account for the highest proportion (accounting for 37.2% of this group), and among those having to move because of customers, the proportion of men is higher than that of women (13.8% compared with 8.7%).

Regarding the way in which they moved, the proportion of those arranging suitable time for movement is the highest (72.1%) and more female sex workers chose this way than male ones (82.4% compared with 62.4%). In the survey, 26.5% chose to move away as soon as possible or when they were hurt, that means those who were insulted or assaulted by their customers often chose to move away immediately without time for preparation. More men chose this way than women (30.8% and 17.6%, respectively).

In terms of support of those who do move, there is a clear gender gap. Among 70% of those arranging movement themselves, the proportion of men is higher than that of women (80.8% compared with 52.9%), while moving with helps of fellow workers at old working place was happened for women and with helps of fellow workers at new places was 29.4% for women compared with 7.7% for men.

Moving for personal reasons

About 9% of the sex workers (32 persons) had to move for personal reasons (moving with other people; at the request of other sex workers, etc.) in the last two years. Most moved only the once. Among them, 9.4% moved immediately (this proportion of men is twice as high as that of women). The rest chose to move at a suitable time or with time for preparation and with the support of friends.

Half of those having to move for personal reasons made their own arrangements without asking for help from others (two thirds of men); 28.1% received support from fellow workers (this proportion of women is twice as high as that of men); 12.5% were supported by “fellow workers” in other places. Perhaps it is because they changed where they lived for personal reasons that two women received support from relatives (accounting for 6.3%).

Moving for community-related reasons

Reasons for moving related to the community include discriminating and stigmatizing behaviour towards the sex workers when their profession is known by the community. This may include insults or indirect and direct exclusion. Only 10 cases (5 men and 5 women) moved for this reason. Half of them had to move once, the rest had to move twice, three times or four times. Although they were discriminated against, most of them still took “suitable time” to move (7 out of 10). Five sex workers (4 female and 1 male) received support from fellow workers. The other half had to manage their movement themselves, with four men and one woman arranging the move without assistance.

In general, there are different reasons behind the mobility pattern of sex workers. About a third of sex workers move because of a police crackdown and about 10% move for other reasons such as seeking new customers, violence caused by customers or discrimination by the community. The data show certain gender differences during the mobility process as well as in coping strategies and mobility patterns.

4.4. Causes of sex workers’ mobility

The mobility of sex workers depends on many factors: the pressure of earning money, the demand by customers and managers, or time and workplace constraints. There are also differences between male and female sex workers concerning each of these factors.

How long sex workers have been engaged in sex work has a certain influence on their mobility. Sex workers who have been engaged in this activity longer are more likely to be known by the authorities and are more likely to be watched. Moreover, it is more likely that customers become bored with them, which pushes them to move to other places to look for new customers. Table 17 shows that, while only 16.1% of those engaged in sex work for less than five years changed their workplaces in the last two years, 21.8% of those engaged in sex work for more than five years changed their workplace. Similarly, the proportion of those engaged in this work for more than five years is also higher among sex workers who have been being pursued or those have moved for several reasons, such as disputes and competition, customers and other individual reasons. Moreover, the percentage of those moving their workplace because of competition with fellow workers and reasons related to customers is significantly higher for those working for five years or longer compared with those who have worked for a shorter time.

Whether sex workers work under management or independently creates differences in how they work, the size of their incomes and how they cope with “risks”, and can therefore affect their mobility process. For example, those working under management often have to share their earnings, but they are protected when risks arise. One of the members of a peer group in Haiphong told us: “In

terms of security, it is safer under the management of bar owners as they often hire protectors” (peer group discussion, Haiphong). However, a disadvantage of working under management is that it is easier to be detected, and therefore easier to be pursued.

As mentioned in part 3 (Socio-demographic characteristics of interviewed sex workers), 113 of the sex workers (accounting for 29.1%) work with pimps in restaurants/hotels/recreational or service units. Among them, the proportion of male sex workers under management is lower than that of female sex workers (24.3% compared with 33.7%). The rest mainly work independently (66%) or in groups in public areas.

Table 17 shows that 15.6% of sex workers working independently moved, while that proportion of those under management is only 21.2%. As far as police crackdowns are concerned, fewer sex workers working independently are affected than those working under management; however, the proportion of those working independently changing their workplace for personal reasons is higher. As they work independently, they can decide on this personal movement.

Table 17: Relationship between working features and being crackdown by the police, mobility and reasons for mobility (in % and number)

Forms of movement	Being crackdown by police (N=385)	Did move (N=388)	Due to competition/ conflicts (N=385)	Due to clients (N=385)	For private reasons (N=385)
Features					
Working period			**	***	
Under 5 years	28.3 (87)	16.1 (50)	5.5 (17)	7.8 (24)	7.5 (23)
Over 5 years	37.2 (29)	21.8 (17)	13.8 (10)	24.4 (19)	11.5 (9)
Management	*				*
Work independently	27.7 (76)	15.6 (43)	7.3 (20)	11.3 (31)	9.9 (27)
Work with managers	36.0 (40)	21.2 (24)	6.3 (7)	10.8 (12)	4.5 (5)
Pressure of giving financial support	*				
Have to give financial support	33.6 (74)	19.0 (42)	6.4 (14)	10.0 (22)	7.7 (17)
Do not have to give financial support	25.5 (42)	15.0 (25)	7.9 (13)	12.7 (21)	9.1 (15)
Sex of customers	***				
Opposite sex	40.6 (84)	17.1 (36)	7.2 (15)	8.7 (18)	8.2 (17)
Same sex	14.3 (15)	21.9 (23)	4.8 (5)	14.3 (15)	10.5 (11)
Both sexes	23.3 (17)	11.0 (8)	9.6 (7)	13.7 (10)	5.5 (4)

Notes: * p<0.1 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.001

The pressure of giving financial support to families can become a factor promoting mobility. As mentioned above, 57% of respondents give financial support to their families (the proportion of women is higher than that of men: 78.4% compared with 34.4%).

“Each month, I earn about VND 3 to 4 million... generally it depends on the middle person... Each month I have to send at least VND 1 million to my mother” (in-depth interview, woman, Haiphong). Another respondent said that: “All my brothers and sisters are married with children, and they have to take care of and support their own families, so they occasionally give some money, now I am the breadwinner of the family, every month I send money to my mother for her to pay for food, rent, electric and water bills, I have to cover all expenses... I send VND 2 to 3 million to my mother every month, I also have to spend a part to pay my debt. If I can earn and save more, I send VND 5 to 7 or 10 million to pay the debts.” (in-depth interview, woman, Ho Chi Minh City). Sex workers whose clients are of the same sex tend to move more often. However, the difference is not big: 21.9% of same-sex sex workers move compared with 17.1% of sex workers with clients of the opposite sex. Only 14.3% of same-sex workers moved because they were pursued, while this proportion of opposite-sex sex workers is 40.6%. In this research, same-sex sex workers are mainly men.

Multivariate analyses of the factors influencing the possibility of having to change workplaces in the last two years and the possibility of being pursued by functional forces were carried out with six independent variables: gender, migrants or local residents, length of time working as sex workers, working independently or under management, giving financial support to families in the last 12 months, and if customers are same sex or of the opposite sex.

Results (specific figures are not stated here) show that regarding the possibility of changing workplace, only the length of time working as sex workers and customers of sex workers have a significant influence. The possibility of changing workplace of those who have been working as sex workers for over five years is twice as higher as that of those who have been in sex work for one to five years. The possibility of having to move of those engaged in sex work with same-sex customers is twice as high as that of those engaged in sex work with both opposite-sex and same-sex customers.

Regarding police crackdowns, most of the factors included in the analysis are important. Female sex workers are much more likely to be pursued by functional forces than male sex workers (five times higher). Sex workers who have been engaged in sex work for five years or longer are much more likely to be pursued than those who have been in sex work for one to five years (nearly twice as likely). Sex workers working independently are much less likely to be pursued than those working under management (about over half). Sex workers with clients of the same sex are much less likely to be pursued than sex workers who have clients of both sexes (about half as likely).

4.5. Vulnerabilities caused by mobility

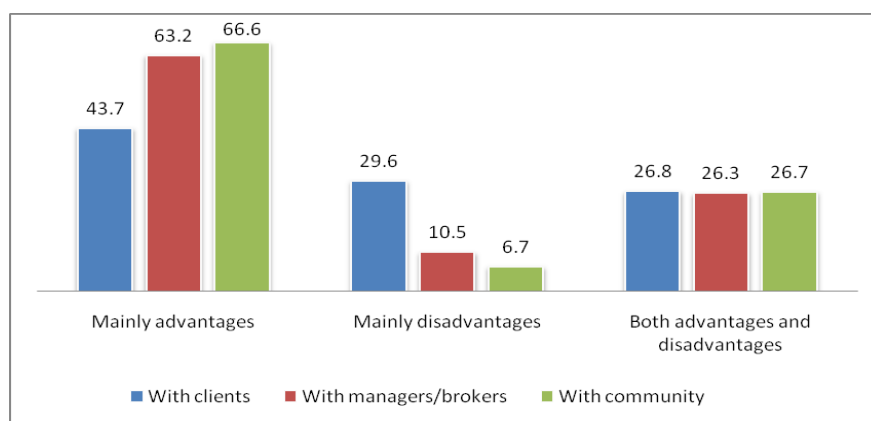
In general, sex workers move to new workplaces only when they have problems in their former workplaces. Therefore, they all expect to improve their situation in a new workplace. In fact, changing workplaces brings certain benefits to some sex workers, such as an increase in the number

of customers and enables them to avoid discrimination or police crackdowns, so their incomes generally increase.

Judging their relationship with clients, managers and brokers and with the community after having moved, the majority of sex workers state that mainly advantages ensued. Over two thirds of sex workers who have moved to a new place said that their relationships with the new community and managers and brokers were better (see Figure 5). Although the proportion of sex workers assessing their relationships with new customers as advantageous is not as high, it is still the most frequently stated answer with 43.7%. Building advantageous relationships with clients may take more time. One quarter of sex workers sees both advantages and disadvantages in all their relationships after they move.

However, sex workers also have to face other problems and risks in life, especially when they move to unfamiliar places and do not have a network of friends. Similar problems and risks will exist in new places, but there may also be new problems.

Figure 5: Assessing relationships in the new workplace



The sex workers said that commonly encountered problems after moving are having fewer customers, difficulties in finding accommodation, and having to deal with competition by fellow workers. Sex workers rarely encounter other problems such as ones related to resident registration or health care (see Table 18). A female sex worker in Ho Chi Minh City described her difficulties when moving to a new place and trying to integrate and find customers: “For example, if I live in Lan Ong and come to Binh Trieu to look for customers, I will be bullied or beaten by those in Binh Trieu. Each one has her own place to work and live. If I have protector, who tells them to let me work there for a few nights because police are pursuing in my place, then I can do it.” (group discussion, woman, Ho Chi Minh City).

Table 18: Difficulties encountered by sex workers after moving to new workplaces (in number)

Difficulties	Pursued by police	Moving because of conflicts with	Moving because of customers	Moving for personal reasons

			fellow sex workers					
	Male (N=11)	Female (N=17)	Male (N=11)	Female (N=16)	Male (N=26)	Female (N=17)	Male (N=16)	Female (N=16)
Accommodation	2	2	3	4	4	1	4	3
Competition	2	7	2	7	3	1	0	2
Pursued	2	1	0	0	2	1	0	0
Fewer customers	5	5	6	5	3	5	7	6
Stricter control	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
Cannot conduct household registration	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Cannot have health examination owing to lack of household book	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

4.6. Risks and access to services

4.6.1. Health and social risks for sex workers

Analysis in this part focuses on some major issues as follows: general assessment of sex workers on the risks associated with sex work; risks in relationships with customers; risks in the relationship with managers; and unease of sex workers.

General risks associated with sex work

Sex workers face several occupation-related risks. Injuries/inflammation to sexual organs is the most common problem for sex workers (35.1%). The proportion of female sex workers suffering from this problem is significantly higher than that of male sex workers (42.7% compared with 27%). The second risk is being sent to a Labour–Education Centre, with 42.7% of female sex workers having been sent to these centres (not applicable for male sex workers). Of the sex workers, 14.2% have been infected with sexually transmitted infections, with no significant difference between men and women. Other less frequently encountered risks are discrimination by the local community or HIV infection (with higher proportion of female sex workers being infected).

The possibility of being infected with sexually transmitted diseases depends on where sex workers work. Those working in public places or with managers, without their own houses, are often at more risk. One female peer said: “Comparison of getting HIV from working in service businesses and in streets, it is more likely for street sex workers getting HIV because it is not easy for street sex workers to find customers as there are so many sex workers. For example, if they are lucky they can find some customers, but sometimes when they are too tired and customers refuse to use condoms, they still accept so they are more likely to get HIV.” (female peer, Hanoi).

Table 19: Risks encountered during sex work, by sex (in %)

Risks	Male	Female	Total
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Genital injuries/inflammation ***	27.0 51	42.7 85	35.1 136
Being arrested/confined in the Labour–Education Centres	N/A	42.7 85	
Infection with sexually transmitted diseases	13.8 26	14.6 29	14.2 55
Fought by clients' wives	9.0 17	9.5 19	9.3 36
Discrimination by the wider community at the place of destination (the city) *	5.8 11	10.6 21	8.2 32
Rejection/discrimination by family/relatives	4.8 9	8.5 17	6.7 26
Unwanted pregnancies	N/A	7.5 15	
HIV/AIDS *	1.1 2	5.0 10	3.1 12
Discrimination by the community at the place of origin	1.6 3	2.5 5	2.1 8

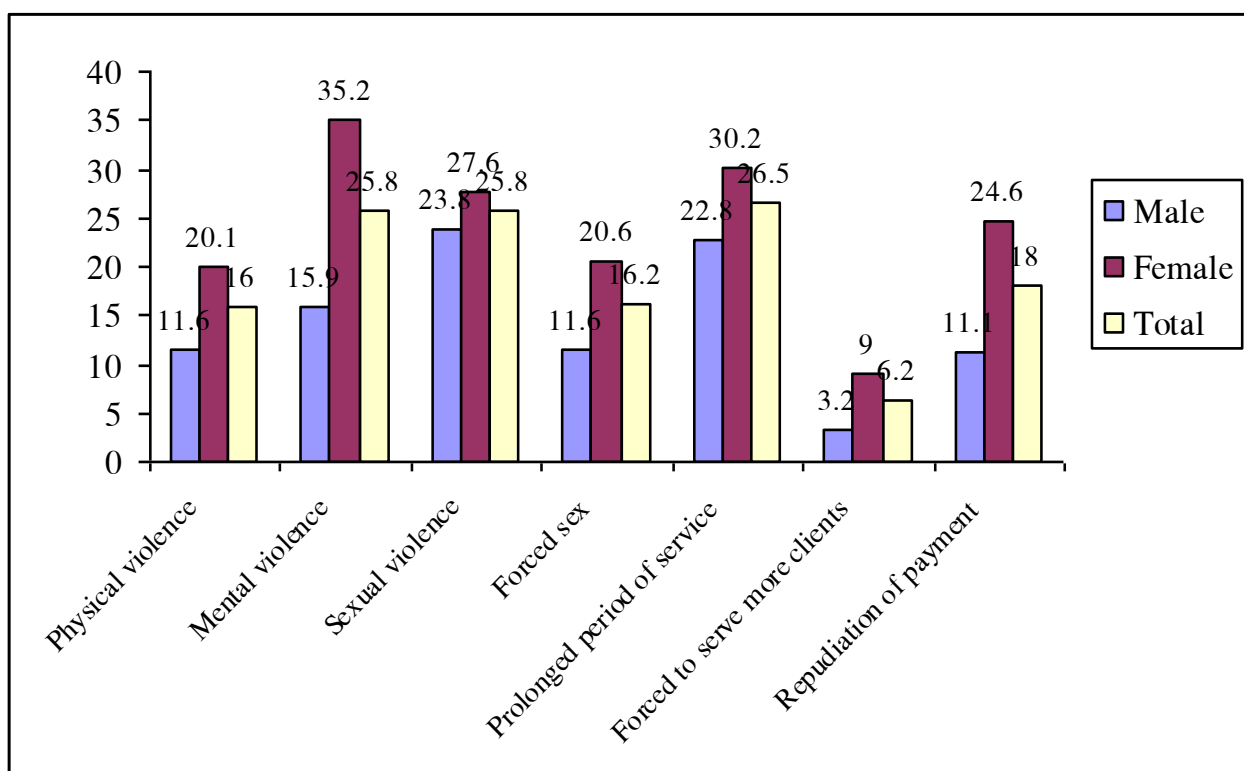
Notes: * p<0.1 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.001

About 23% of interviewed sex workers are using some kind of drug, and 23.6% (21 cases) have injected drugs before. Nine sex workers have shared or share syringes when using drugs.

Risks in relationships with customers

Regarding the risks in relationships with customers, sex workers mainly suffer from violence, repudiation of payment, and prolonged period of service without extra payment. For most of these risks, the proportion of female sex workers affected is higher than that of male sex workers (see Figure 6), but for both groups it is substantial. In general, 26.5% of sex workers have had to serve customers for longer without extra payment (22.8% of males and 30.2% of females). The second risk is mental violence such as being insulted and reprimanded, with 25.8% of sex workers suffering from this form of violence (15.9% of males and 35.2% of females). The third risk is sexual violence, suffered by 25.8% of sex workers (23.8% of males and 27.6% of females), and 16.2% of the sex workers (20.6% of females, 11.6% of males) were victims of “forced sex” or rape.. Of the sex workers, 18% do not get paid after serving customers (24.6% of females and 11.1% of males).

Figure 6: Risks related to clients (N=388)



The risks associated with customers were grouped into two sets of “having suffered from violence” (mental, physical and sexual violence) and “having been repudiated payment” (prolonged period of service without payment, serving more customers without payment, being repudiated payment after serving customers) and taking into account factors such as the sex of the sex workers, whether they are migrants or local residents, work independently or with managers, and have opposite-sex or same-sex customers.

The multivariate analysis shows that the sex of the workers has a significant influence on the possibility of suffering from violence at the hands of customers. Female sex workers are twice as likely to suffer from violence by customers than male sex workers.

Regarding repudiation of payment, the sex of the sex workers and their clients has a significant impact on the possibility of this occurring. Female sex workers are twice as likely to suffer from repudiation of payment than male sex workers. Those with clients of the opposite sex or of the same sex are less likely to be refused payment than those with clients of both sexes.

As far as both violence and repudiation of payment are concerned, there is no statistical difference in the risks encountered by migrants and those having lived in the cities for their whole life.

Another risk in the relationship with customers is not using condoms during sexual intercourse. Data show that 64.4% of sex workers use condoms every time they have sex with customers, 27.8% use one most of the time and only a very small proportion (1.5%; 6 respondents) never use one, and all of these are male sex workers. There is a significant difference between male and female sex workers in regard to this issue. Female sex workers are much more aware of condom use than male sex workers. Specifically, while 74.9% of female sex workers use condoms every time they have sex, only 53.4% of male sex workers do so. Factors related to always using condoms were analysed by

multivariate regression with four independent variables: gender, migrants or local residents, independent sex workers or sex workers with managers, and the length of time engaged in sex work. Results show that (specific figures are not presented here) the probability of male sex workers using condoms for every sexual encounter is a third of that for female sex workers; migrants are less likely to use condoms all the time than those who have lived in the cities since they were born; independent sex workers are less likely to use condoms all the time compared with those working with managers.

Regarding condom use when having sex with regular customers, the proportion of those using condoms all the time or most of the time is also very high with about 87%, and only 3% never using condoms with a regular customer.

Data indicate that sex workers can insist on using condoms. In 77.3% of cases, the sex worker decides on the safety measure, 16.2% of cases are agreed jointly between sex workers and customers and only 6.4% of cases are decided by customers.

Risks in relationships with managers

Sex workers may also encounter risks in the relationship with their managers or procurers: the most common risk is that procurers deduct or keep their wages, with an average of 19.4% of those with procurers suffering from this (20% of males and 19% of females). The second is being reprimanded, insulted and beaten, with 15.7% of sex workers having experienced this (the proportion of female sex workers is much higher than that of male sex workers). In addition, female sex workers are more at risk from being forced to serve customers when they are sick (see Table 20).

Examining the difference between migrant and non-migrant sex workers regarding the risks associated with procurers shows no significant difference.

The influence of four factors (gender, migrants or non-migrants, length of time engaged in sex work, and if customers are of the same or different sex) are possibly related to the risks in relationships with procurers (on payment; mental violence and being forced to serve customers when they are sick). The results of such a multivariate analysis show that (figures are not presented here), after all the factors are checked, the difference between men and women in the possibility of facing risks in their relationships with procurers is trivial. Meanwhile, the length of time engaged in sex work is an important factor. Interestingly, those who have been engaged in sex work for one to five years are eight times more likely to encounter problems such as deduction of payment, mental violence and having to serve customers when they are sick, than those who have been engaged in sex work for five years or longer.

Table 20: Risks encountered relating to the owner/broker, by sex (in %)

Risks	Male (N=45)	Female (N=63)	Total (N=108)
Withheld/deducted wages	20.0 9	19.0 12	19.4 21
Mental violence (verbal, being reprimanded, insults, threats, etc.) **	6.7 3	22.2 14	15.7 17

Forced meeting with clients when ill **	2.2 1	17.5 11	11.1 12
Forced sex with the employer/broker/protector	4.4 2	7.9 5	6.5 7
Forced meeting during menstruation	N/A	9.5 6	5.6 6
Physical violence (hitting, slapping, kicking, etc.) *	0.0 0	6.3 4	3,7 4
Forced meeting with clients during pregnancy	N/A	1.6 1	0.9 1

Notes: * p<0.1 ** p<0.05

Grievances of sex workers

When asked to “state three things you are not satisfied with in your present job”, the four factors that sex workers are least satisfied with are: the risk of being infected with HIV; being afraid of police crackdowns; being discriminated against; and afraid of being discovered by families. At least a third of sex workers mentioned these four points. Among these four factors, the difference between men and women is most clearly reflected in the fear of police crackdowns. This is because it is difficult to identify male sex workers and public opinion and police often focus more on female sex workers. As analysed above, the proportion of male sex workers who have been pursued by functional forces is much lower than that of female sex workers. To check the role of the gender factor, we analysed a multivariate model with the dependent variable “afraid of police crackdown” and four independent variables: sex, migrants or local residents, if they have been pursued by the police in the last two years, and working independently or with managers. The results (figures are not presented here) show that sex and if they have been pursued have a significant influence on their fear of police crackdowns. Female sex workers are twice as likely to worry about this issue than male sex workers, and the possibility that those who have been pursued have this worry is twice as high as those who have never been pursued.

About half of the sex workers are aware of the potential harm of sex work, especially the risk of being infected with diseases. There is no difference between men and women in this matter. A third of sex workers are also aware of discrimination by the community and society against them, especially male sex worker as they think that part of society can accept female sex work but do not accept male sex work. Male sex workers are more worried about their families learning about their sex work, a worry that is similar to that of discrimination by society against male sex work. This is also why a large proportion of male sex workers worry about damaging their family’s reputation, which is significantly higher than that of female sex workers (18.8% compared with 11.1%).

There is quite a remarkable gender difference in worries about violence and potential influence on children. Female sex workers are more worried about violence than male ones; they are also more worried about the influence on their children (probably because more female sex workers have children than male sex workers).

Table 21: Grievances related to sex work (in %)

	Sex	Total
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Feelings	Male	Female	
High risks of infectious diseases/HIV	47.6	48.7	48.2
Fear of police/functional forces ***	27.5	50.3	39.2
Discrimination/Disrespect	36.0	30.2	33.0
Afraid of being uncovered by family	35.4	29.1	32.2
Afraid of bad effects on family's reputation *	18.0	11.1	14.4
Always have to be worried/take preventive measures	10.1	11.1	10.6
Violence/risks of violence **	3.7	10.6	7.2
Afraid of bad effects on children ***	0.5	13.6	7.2
Feeling exploited	5.3	7.5	6.4
Unstable income	7.4	5.0	6.2
Unstable lifestyle	2.1	3.5	2.8
High risk of pregnancy	-	4.5	2.3
Unable to take care of children's studies	0.5	1.5	1.0
Have to live away from home	0.5	1.0	0.8
Unstable accommodation	0.5	0.5	0.5

Notes: * p<0.1 ** p<0.05 *** p< 0.001

4.6.2. Influence on sex workers' access to social services

Of all the respondents, 90.5% said that they could access health care easily in local medical units. This proportion of male sex workers is higher by about 4 percentage points. Only 6.7% experienced difficulty in accessing health care and 2.8% could not make an assessment as they had never gone for a medical examination.

A comparison between migrants and those living in the cities for their whole life shows no difference. Similarly, there is no significant difference in considering easy access to medical care at local medical stations between those who have had to change workplace in the last two years and those who have not changed.

Among those who went for medical examination, 31.8% went every two or three months; 27.6% went every six months and 4.2% went once a year. Nearly 20% go for a medical examination only when they are required to do so or are sick.

Regarding health care, only 24.7% of sex workers in the sample have health insurance (male: 32.3% and female: 17.6%), which is much lower than the national average of about 60%.¹⁰ Some did not buy health insurance because they were not concerned about health insurance; some felt healthy so they did not

¹⁰ By 2010, the proportion of people joining the health insurance scheme was nearly 60% of the national population (Ministry of Health and Health Partner Group, 2010). Recent data from the General Statistics Office also indicate that 64% of those going to the doctor have health insurance (Ministry of Health website, accessed in 2011).

buy health insurance; and a certain proportion insisted on not buying health insurance because they said having a medical examination and treatment through the health insurance scheme was not only slow but also ineffective, so they preferred to use a private service, which was faster.

Comparison between migrant sex workers and sex workers living in the cities for their whole life shows that the proportion of non-migrant sex workers with health-care insurance is much higher (19.4% compared with 32.7%). However, there is no significant difference between those having to change workplaces in the last two years and those not having to change in regard to health-care insurance.

In the community, 34.5% of sex workers joined training courses on skills and knowledge of health care (this is a course offered to anyone in the general community). The proportion of female sex workers participating in these courses is nearly twice as high as that of male sex workers (43.2% compared with 25.4%). The proportion of non-migrant sex workers participating is significantly higher than that of migrant sex workers (about 11 percentage points difference), while the proportion of those having to change workplaces in the last two years is higher, but the difference is trivial.

Of the sex workers, 14.4% joined different vocational training courses (male: 15.9% and female: 13.1%). There is no significant difference in the proportion of those joining vocational training courses between migrants and local residents or among those having to change workplaces in the last two years and those not having to change workplaces.

Increasingly, associations run by and for sex workers are being established in large cities in Viet Nam. These associations are aimed at improving their members' knowledge of social issues, health care and safe sex. In the sample, 45.5% joined an association (male: 48.7% and female: 42.2%). Of the respondents, 20.7% did not join associations as they thought it was not necessary, or did not wish to join one; 23.5% wanted to join but did not have time; and about 10% did not know of any associations to join.

There is a certain relationship between the participation of sex workers in associations and access to social and health-care services. Most members of associations deem their participation useful (96% of those who are currently members of an association). Former or current association members are three times more likely to attend health-care training than those who have never been members of an association.

As far as knowledge of the law is concerned, not many sex workers are concerned about accessing legal consultation. Only when they or their families have to deal with some issues related to their interests or rights are they concerned about the law. Similarly, only 15.5% know where to obtain legal consultation (this proportion of male sex workers is about 5% higher than that of female ones). About 6 out of 60 (10%) sex workers who know about these consulting services have used them to protect their interests or their families' interests.

The proportion of migrants having to change workplaces in the last two years who know where to obtain legal consultation is lower than that of non-migrants and those not having to change workplaces, but the difference is not large. The difference in the proportion of those knowing where to obtain legal

consultation between those participating in associations and those not currently participating is quite clear: while 24.8% of participants in associations know where to obtain legal consultation, only 11% of non-participants do.

In Viet Nam, the authorities seek to control internal migration through the household registration system. Access to social services and many other rights are bound to the place of birth and, if one moves internally, the registration has to be changed. However, even when registered, new migrants have different access rights than the local population (United Nations Viet Nam, 2010). Only 46% of the migrant sex workers in the sample registered their residence with the authorities (they either registered themselves or asked their landlords to do so); the rest “thought it was not necessary”, or lacked the necessary documents, or moved very often so they do not see the need to register their temporary residence.

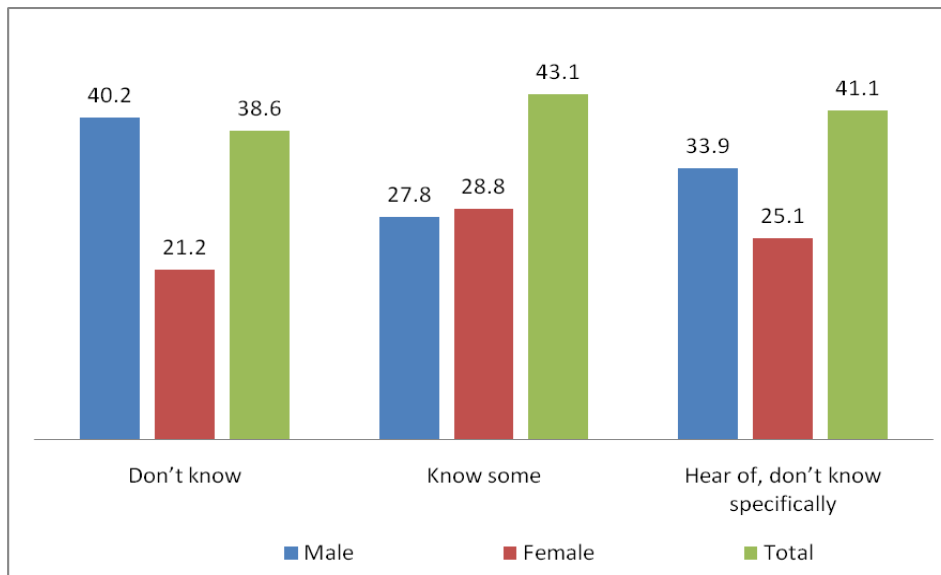
Among the 234 sex workers who need to register (which includes non-migrants when they move to live on their own), 12% (28 persons) said they encountered difficulties due to their lack of residence status (the proportion of female sex workers is higher with 16.8%). For example, they did not have an identity card to register or did not know how to register. Among those facing difficulties, the percentage of sex workers without an identification card is the highest (57.1% or 16 persons, of which 14 are female). A focus group discussion participant stated that: “I don’t have necessary papers when I want to rent a house for example. As those coming from other province, if landlords are strict and ask for temporary residence registration, or temporary absence registration, it is difficult.” (group discussion, female peer sex worker, Hanoi).

4.6.3. Access to information

In fact, all sex workers are aware that their work is illegal. However, not everyone is aware of legal stipulations related to controlling the behavior of sex workers, their organizers and middlemen. Of the interviewed sex workers, 33.9% said they did not know any legal stipulations related to dealing with sex work; 25.1% knew some stipulations and regulations punishing sex workers, clients and sex work middlemen; and about 41% had heard about them but were not sure (see Figure 7).

In general, the proportion of female sex workers aware of policies and laws on sex work is much higher than that of male sex workers. There is no marked difference in awareness of the laws on sex work between migrants or non-migrants or between those having to change workplaces in the last two years and those not having to change.

Figure 7: Awareness of the legal and policy framework regarding sex work (in %)



For those who are aware of some stipulations or have heard about them, the most popular sources of information are the television and newspapers (59.3%) and fellow workers (50.8%). Some sex workers obtained information as a result of being pursued (13.6%) and the proportion of female sex workers gaining information from this source is higher than that of male ones (17.4% compared with 8.8%), as female sex workers are more likely to be pursued by the authorities. Similarly, other sources of information include information from collective education programmes and centres, with 27.1% (this proportion of females is 45.1% while that of male sex workers is only 4.4%). In addition, procurers also account for a certain proportion in the role of providing legal information to their staff.

Regarding information related to health care and where to seek legal consultation, the main sources of information that the surveyed sex workers often access include: newspapers, television, Internet, fellow workers, customers, medical staff, staff of Labour–Education Centres, peers and friends. Among them, newspapers, television, peer sex workers or fellow workers account for the highest proportion (see Table 22).

Table 22: Information sources of sex workers (in %)

Information sources	Male	Female	Total
<i>Health-care knowledge</i>			
Peer sex workers	43.4	49.7	46.6
Book, newspaper, journal	46.0	35.7	40.7
Television	43.4	29.6	36.3
Co-sex workers	24.3	27.6	26.0
Internet	34.4	2.0	17.8
Health-care staff	14.8	20.6	17.8
Friends	18.5	15.6	17.0
Staff of Labour–Education Centres	2.6	20.6	11.9
Radio	4.2	3.0	3.6
Clients	3.2	2.0	2.6
<i>Knowledge about where to obtain legal counseling services</i>			
Peer sex workers group	42.9	48.0	45.0
Book, newspaper, journal	20.0	28.0	23.3
Internet	34.3	4.0	21.7
Friends	17.1	20.0	18,3
Television	17.1	12.0	15.0
Staff of Labour–Education Centres	8.6	16.0	11.7

4.7. Stopping sex work

Assisting sex workers to develop alternative livelihoods in the community is a major policy concern for the Government, and is a policy that is implemented by government and agencies or associations led by the Vietnamese Women’s Union. However, sex workers who want to stop sex work face difficulties.

Among the 388 sex workers approached by the research group, only 22.9% (i.e. 89 persons) have ever stopped sex work for more than six months. The proportion of female sex workers who previously stopped sex work is 29.6%, higher than that of male sex workers (15.9%). They stop sex work mainly to seek legal work (12.5%); because they had earned enough money to pay off debts or start their own businesses (9.1%); or because they had found other jobs (6.8%). This finding is also in line with conclusions of other studies (Trang and Lan, 2005). In addition, there are other factors such as being advised to stop by relatives, boyfriends or girlfriends (5.7%).

There is a significant difference between the reasons given by male and female sex workers for the reason they last stopped sex work. In particular, as many as 30.5% of female sex workers have to stop sex work when they are sent to Labour–Education Centres and 10.2% stop due to pregnancy. Obviously, both reasons do not apply to male sex workers. Meanwhile, the most important reason for male sex workers is “having earned enough money” (24.1%) and the second most important reason is “wanting to find legal work” (17.2%).

Among the 88 sex workers who had previously stopped sex work and restarted, the main reasons for restarting is that the income from the new job is too low (30.7%) and to earn money to help their family (28.4%). Some returned to sex work because they failed to stop using drugs (12.5%).

There is also a significant difference between male and female sex workers. Although most cite income as the reason for returning to sex work, 37.3% of female sex workers (the highest proportion) return to it because they need to “earn money to support families”, while only 10.3% of male sex workers give this as the reason. As for earning a “higher income than old job”, 37.9% of male sex workers (the highest proportion of males) and only 27.1% of female sex workers mention this reason.

When sex workers were asked about their intentions, 48.2% wanted to stop sex work eventually (187 persons), accounting for 55.3% of the female (110 persons) and 40.7% of the male sex workers (77 persons). Of the sex workers, 37.9% want to continue sex work in the foreseeable future (147 persons: 78 males – accounting for 41.3% of males – and 69 females – 34.7% of females), and 13.9% were indecisive. Table 23 shows the five most popular reasons related to stopping or continuing sex work, in each option in the order of priority for each sex.

Table 23: Reasons for wanting to stop or continue sex work at present, by sex (in %)

Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Reasons for stopping sex work (110 females and 77 males)			
Fear of infectious diseases/HIV	37.7	Discrimination/Lack of respect	33.6
Discriminated/Lack of respect	32.5	Fear of police	30.9
Fear of police	16.9	Afraid of negative effects on children	23.6
Afraid of being uncovered by family	16.9	Fear of infectious diseases/HIV	22.7
Always have to worry/take preventive measures	15.6	Afraid of being uncovered by family	20.0
Reason for continuing sex work (78 males and 69 females)			
Cushy work with high income	47.6	Cushy work with high income	50.3
Stable income	35.7	Stable income	45.1
Extend social network	27.0	Have not found other work	22.3
Live sexuality/meet partners	22.7	Extend social network	16.0
Have not found other work	18.9	Free and comfortable life	10.9

Regarding the intention to stop sex work, the common reason for male sex workers to want to stop is for themselves (high risk of contracting transmitted diseases – 37.7%), because of the community (being discriminated against) and fear of the authorities (afraid of police/functional forces), then family. Among the reasons for female sex workers to want to stop sex work, discrimination by the community and fear of the authorities are the two most important factors; family factors come third (worries about impact on children’s studies and reputation); and personal factors come last.

Regarding the intention to continue sex work or to stop, but without being able to do so, both female and male sex workers stated that high and stable incomes are two advantages of sex work. One clear difference is that men give prominence to sexual satisfaction (22.7%), while this proportion of female sex workers is only 2.6%. The desire to “extend the social network” is also an important reason for 27% of male sex workers (the third most important reason) and 16% of female sex workers (fourth most important reason). About a fifth of male and female sex workers want to continue sex work because

they “have not found other work”; so it can be expected that they will be engaged in sex work for a while, and may stop when they find another job.

Thus, the reasons for male sex workers wanting to stop are more related to personal and community factors, while those of women are related to the community and family. Meanwhile, the motivation for both sexes to continue this work is quite similar, with economic factors being the main determinant. However, men gave more prominence to their sexual needs when deciding to engage in sex work. It should also be mentioned that quite a large number of men in the sample were homosexual. As homosexuality is still socially sanctioned in Viet Nam, sex work may be seen for some as a rare avenue to live their sexuality.

When sex workers were asked about their long-term plan for the next three years, the proportion of them wanting to continue their jobs is 34.9%; there is no big gender difference in this opinion.

Table 24: Time spent as sex worker and intention to continue the job in the next three years (in %) (N=387)

Intention to continue sex work	Male			Female**			Total**		
	1-less than 5 years (152)	5 years or more (37)	Total (189)	1-less than 5 years (157)	5 years or more (41)	Total (198)	1-less than 5 years (309)	5 years or more (78)	Total (387)
Yes	34.2 52	51.4 19	37.6 71	27.4 43	51.2 21	32.3 64	30.7 95	51.3 40	34.9 135
No	58.6 89	45.9 17	56.1 106	67.5 106	43.9 18	62.6 124	63.1 195	44.9 35	59.4 230
Not yet decided	7.2 11	2.7 1	6.3 12	5.1 8	4.9 2	5.1 10	6.1 19	3.8 3	5.7 22

Notes: * p<0.1 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.001

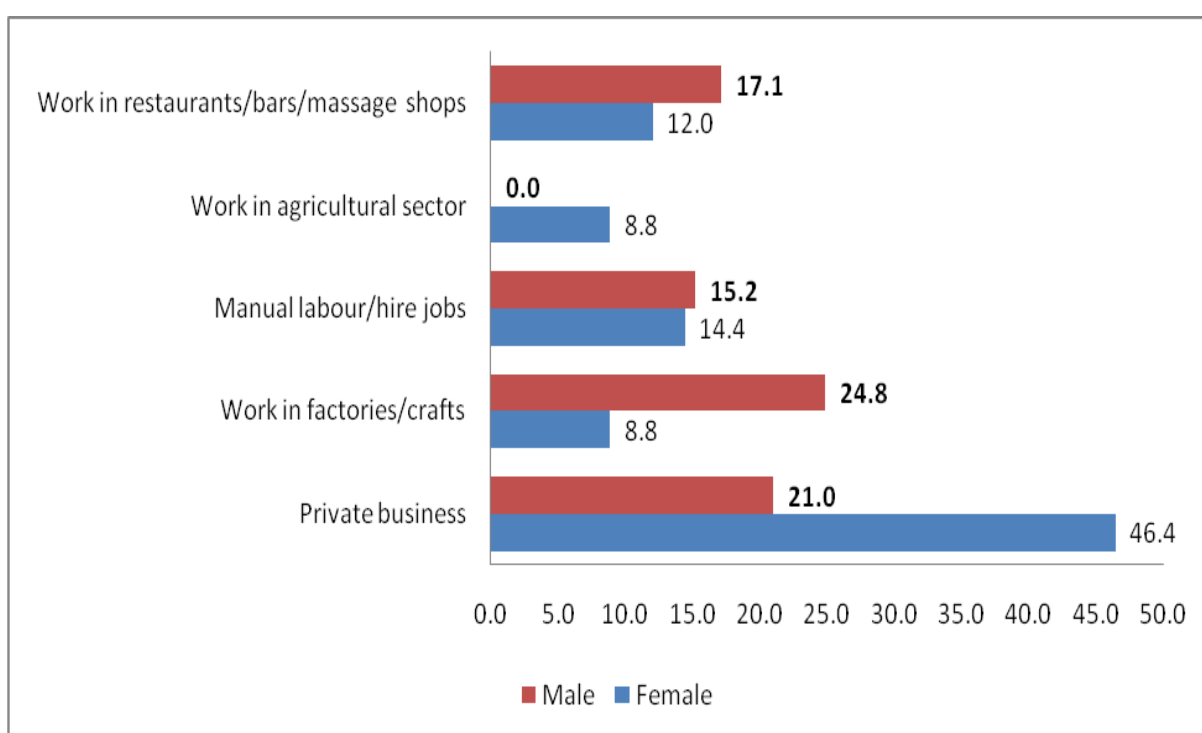
Table 24 shows that the time spent working as sex workers is closely related to their future plans. The longer the sex workers have been engaged in sex work, the less they want to stop and vice versa. While 30.7% of those recently starting sex work (from 1 to less than 5 years) intended to continue in the next three years, this proportion increased to 51.3% for those having worked for five years or more. This trend is similar for both male and female sex workers. Those who have worked as sex workers for a short time have not become attached to their work and are often young, so they have more opportunities to find suitable jobs. Many of them, especially students, engage in sex work only as a band-aid solution to pay off debts and earn more income to meet their spending needs. When sex workers were asked, many said they would stop the work once they had boyfriends/girlfriends or got married because they would want to have a stable life.

Those who have been engaged in sex work for a long time are often older, so it is difficult for them to find other jobs. During in-depth interviews, many said that, although they had stopped sex work many times, they did not have the skills for any other jobs, or they could find job only as workers with low salaries, whereas they had become accustomed to certain spending habits and could not resist returning to sex work. Some described sex work as the “job”, the “pleasure”, or the “game” in

which no one loses or is at a disadvantage and intend to pursue this work their whole life (male sex worker who has sex with men, 40 years old).

Figure 8 shows that among the 59.4% of those with plans to stop sex work, most want to open a small shop at home (34.8%). The proportion of female sex workers who want to go into business is significantly higher than that of male sex workers. The second most popular intention is to work as labourers or craftsmen (16.1%), with more male than female workers wishing to pursue this avenue (24.8% compared with 8.8%); and 14.3% of sex workers want to work in the service business, restaurants, karaoke bars or discotheques (male: 17.1% and female: 12%). Comparison between migrant and non-migrant sex workers shows no significant difference in future job intentions after stopping sex work (figures are not presented here).

Figure 8: Future job intentions (in %)



Interviewed sex workers suggested several possible ways to obtain support when stopping sex work: (a) availability of loans at favourable interest rates in the local area; (b) access to vocational training courses with low fees; and (c) being introduced to jobs after obtaining vocational training. Group discussions with DSEP officers reveal that, although the Government has a policy of providing loans to female sex workers if they seek to stop sex work, many sex workers do not apply for these loans for fear of discrimination. Therefore, the number of sex workers who access these loans supported by the Government is very small and the effect of this policy is insignificant.

Some projects of non-governmental organizations such as Life (in Ho Chi Minh City) organize short-term vocational training courses and support loans for sex workers once they finish the courses to invest in business plans. However, the effect has not been confirmed: “In fact, they just want to earn some

money before they stop, but it is so easy to make money doing this work so they return to it.” (group discussion, male peer, Ho Chi Minh City).

Thus, sex workers who are interested in stopping sex work continue or to return to sex work because of the income. Spending habits sustained by the comparatively high income received as sex workers are difficult to change, and providing financial support to the family becomes more difficult.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

Data from the three cities provide the following main findings on the mobility of sex workers from a gender perspective.

1. According to the respondents, **the main motivation to migrate is to access a better income. There is a gender difference in the reason to migrate.** More female than male respondents come from a family that they characterized as poor, while surveyed male sex workers tended to be younger, to have no dependants and many were at university. Thus, surveyed male and female sex workers felt they had differing responsibilities towards their family. While more women were motivated to migrate by a sense of responsibility towards their family, personal reasons played a stronger role for men’s decision to migrate. Overall, migrant female sex workers make larger financial contributions to their families than men. **Only about half of the migrant sex workers were informed about job details prior to their movement.**

2. Upon arriving in the city, both male and female sex workers have a high tendency to engage in sex work as their first job or to work in entertainment services, massage parlours and other service centres which tend to be closely related to sex work. **Economic factors are important for both men and women when deciding to engage in sex work.** Compared to other work, sex work generates a considerably high income while requiring little investment. **Individual characteristics play a more important role in men’s decision to enter sex work,** including income possibilities, job suitability, being enticed by friends and having sexual demands met. **Family-related factors play a more important part in women’s decision,** including gaining a better income for their family, and a crisis in family relationships can act as a trigger.

3. It is **an increasingly common phenomenon for sex workers to work independently.** These workers contact their clients using modern communication means such as the telephone, cell phones and the Internet. **Working patterns of male and female sex workers are different and thus they face different vulnerabilities.** Men account for a higher proportion of sex workers who work independently. In contrast, the majority of female sex workers work under management.

4. **Approximately 17% of sex workers have changed their workplaces in the past 10 years. The main reason is to look for new clients and gain better earnings.** Besides, a number of sex workers change their workplace because of raids by the authorities or conflicts with co-workers or managers. **Male and female sex workers have different mobility patterns.** For instance, more female than male sex workers are the target of raids by the authorities, while male sex workers change their workplace more often to look for new clients.

5. Regarding male sex workers, **work and income patterns are different from city to city.** Male sex workers in Ho Chi Minh City often work under management and gain higher earnings than those in Hanoi and Haiphong. Among the male sex workers, those with opposite-sex clients earn more than their counterparts who practice sex with same-sex clients or both sexes. Even more so than female sex workers, male sex workers try to hide the nature of their work **to avoid discrimination within their community; thus, the possibility of disease control is limited.** Just over half of male-to-male sex workers use condoms at all times when having sex, compared with almost three quarters of female sex workers.

6. **The decision to change workplace is strongly influenced by the amount of time spent working as sex workers and by clients.** Sex workers who have worked for a longer period are more likely to move from place to place. Sex workers with clients of a different sex, which are mostly female sex workers, are less likely to change workplace than sex workers with clients of the same sex, which are mostly male sex workers. As for being pursued by the authorities, this is about five times more likely to happen to female sex workers than male sex workers. Sex workers who have been working for a long period are more likely to be the target of police raids than those who have been working for short periods. **Independent sex workers are less likely to be the target of police raids than those who work under management. Sex workers with same-sex clients are much less likely to be the target of police raids than sex workers with clients of a different sex.**

7. **Sex workers are likely to face health and social vulnerabilities due to their work. The most common vulnerabilities include sex organ inflammation and sexually transmitted infections.** The second most common vulnerabilities are client-related risks, including violence, rape, refusal to use condoms and discrimination. The differences between men and women are stark. While women are more prone to suffer violence and discrimination, men are more likely to contract inflammation because of refusal to use condoms. The third risk relates to the relationship between sex workers and their managers, including wage reduction, non-payment of wages and being reprimanded. In general, women are more likely to encounter violence at the hands of their managers and to be forced to meet clients during illness, but there is not much difference between men and women. Those who have just started working as sex workers are more likely to encounter problems with their managers. The fourth risk relates to psychological vulnerabilities which make sex workers feel uncomfortable. These include disease and HIV risks, fear of police, stigma and fear of families discovering their status as sex workers. Men and women are very different in terms of their fear of the police: almost twice as many female sex workers fear the police than male sex workers, with men worrying more about their family finding out about their job.

8. **There are differences between men and women and between migrants and non-migrants in terms of information and social service access.** Men account for a higher proportion of health insurance holders than women. However, more women than men have participated in training courses which provide health knowledge and skills. Regarding knowledge of the law, only slightly more men than women know about legal aid centres. Nonetheless, many more women than men have a better understanding of relevant laws and regulations concerning sex work. Comparing migrants and non-migrants, non-migrants make up a higher proportion of those who have health

insurance and have participated in training. The difference is not very pronounced between migrants and non-migrants in terms of knowing about legal aid centres, laws and regulations concerning sex work.

9. Approximately a quarter of the total 388 sex worker respondents have attempted to stop sex work only to start again, with women accounting for a higher proportion. With regard to the future, 37.9% seek to continue their work and 48.2% would like to stop sex work. Women account for a higher proportion of those who want to stop sex work. **The reasons for wanting to stop sex work include: discrimination, fear of HIV and disease contraction, and fear of the police. Both men and women emphasize the economic factor when explaining why they want to continue their work;** however, men also attach importance to having their own sexual needs met by their sex work.

10. From the State management perspective, efforts at **combining prohibition with harm reduction measures in prostitution control activities are modest.** The DSEP has issued a guiding document, but actions for its practical implementation and coordination between non-governmental organizations, projects and community-based associations are still limited.

5.2. Recommendations

1. Promote communications between both target groups and people/community managing officers in reducing the harm of sex work. One important role of communication is to reduce discrimination. As findings from the study indicated, discrimination makes it more difficult for sex workers to stop their work. Promoting communication on this matter will create better conditions for to protect the health and legal rights of sex workers, and to help sex workers trying to leave the trade to establish alternative livelihoods.

2. Continue efforts to provide social services for sex workers such as providing information, improving awareness to reduce harm and improving health awareness and treatment through activities in associations. Existing associations have proven successful in attracting and supporting sex workers, but their numbers and activities need to be expanded. While the focus should remain on reducing harm, such as preventing HIV infection, the associations could offer access to vocational training and the development of alternative livelihoods.

3. State management should focus on harm reduction approaches. The illegality of sex work makes HIV and sexually transmitted infection prevention and other health and social interventions more difficult. Conditions for the involvement of non-governmental organizations and other social organizations in social support, harm reduction, discrimination reduction and support for the development of alternative livelihoods in the community should be improved.

4. In order to help sex workers access effectively to alternative livelihoods in the community, **the Government needs to improve sex workers' access to job training and loans.** Interviewed sex workers voiced the need to create a link between market demand, vocational training and employment services. **Conditions of access to loans which are already available need to be improved.** During job placement

and loan access, it is crucial to **guarantee that the sex workers' previous occupation will remain confidential.**

5. Build up supporting models, create good conditions for sex workers to have easy access to services for the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases; help female sex workers to minimize the harm caused by being tricked, sexual violence and abuse and help them develop to alternative livelihoods in the community. One avenue could be the expansion and support of existing associations.

6. Learn from international experiences in managing sex work. Organize a study tour for relevant ministry members to a country which takes a different legal approach to sex work.

7. Conduct a comprehensive and systematic study on socio-economic aspects of sex work, especially how people end up in sex work and the opportunities for the development of alternate livelihoods in the community. The study should also cover different sex workers (those under the management of procurers; those working independently; male and female sex workers; very mobile and less mobile sex workers). There should be a system keeping track at all levels to collect reliable data on the situation of sex work in Viet Nam

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Appendix

Table 25: Type of second job (in % and number)

Job	Male	Female	Total
Did not do other jobs	89	107	196
	<i>47.1</i>	<i>53.8</i>	<i>50.5</i>
Did other jobs	100	92	192
Family business, shop or restaurant owner, street vendors	4	17	21
	<i>4.0</i>	<i>18.5</i>	<i>10.9</i>
Craftsmen, repair mechanic, operating or production worker machine operator, textile worker, assembly line worker	11	1	12
	<i>11.0</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>6.3</i>
While collar staff	2	2	4
	<i>2.0</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>2.1</i>
Manual labour, self-employed, hired job, domestic work	31	29	60
	<i>31.0</i>	<i>31.5</i>	<i>31.2</i>
Waiter in restaurants and pubs, in massage parlours and karaoke services, in bars/discotheques	31	39	70
	<i>31.0</i>	<i>42.4</i>	<i>36.5</i>
Students, cleaners	21	4	25
	<i>21.0</i>	<i>4.3</i>	<i>13.0</i>

Sex Work and Mobility from A Gender Perspective: Findings from Three Cities in Viet Nam

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