INTRODUCTION

The visit to Hanoi was carried out from 11-20 October 2004. Planning for the mission was a bit delayed due to a high-level international government meeting held in Hanoi that shut down government offices several days just prior.

On this trip as on others, the major challenge in conducting research in Vietnam, was to acquire a reasonably accurate depiction of the current status of developments as information remains highly compartmentalized, leaving many individuals with only a piece of the puzzle to share with you. An added difficulty is the need for formal approval for any kind of school visit or visit to government offices. This created a bit of a bottleneck and prevented us from having access to as many offices and schools as we would have liked. In the end, only one visit to an inclusive school an hour away from Hanoi was possible. No other schools of any level were visited. Ministry of Education visits were also limited to just a few contacts. However, as always, several key informant interviews of NGO staff, often particularly well informed with a strong global understanding of certain issues, were key to some updates. A desk review of several recent reports also added more depth to the interviews undertaken.

The key point to highlight from the current status of inclusive education in Vietnam is a readiness and preparedness to approach the subject at the heart of the Ministry of Education and Training (hereafter, MOET). Through a significant budget from the World Bank, the Primary Education for Disadvantaged Children (PEDC) project, which is housed at MOET, will attempt to include more children with disabilities, as well as other excluded groups, in primary schools over the coming years. I was unable to meet with the main contact person at the PEDC as he and most of his staff were in Ho Chi Minh City when I was in Hanoi. However, I did attain one paper that he was presenting the day before my departure and some of their main goals and policies are therefore included here. Development of national guidelines on the part of the Government may be finalized as soon as late 2004 or early 2005. Plans were also mentioned about a seminar and meeting on the proposed guidelines from 22-25 March 2005.
At the same time, the EFA process in Vietnam is strongly supported by UNESCO Bangkok and provincial level plans have been developed in many provinces. Though there has not been any specific mention of action activities for children with disabilities in the plan, some of the broader guidelines mentioned here, such as Early Intervention programs, could still help to reach out to children with disabilities. It would certainly be very worthwhile to undertake an assessment of the compatibility and responsibilities of the IE guidelines that are to be introduced by the Steering Committee on Inclusive Education for the EFA monitoring process.
SECTION 1: FOCAL POINT FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES WITHIN THE MINISTRY OR DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION

1. Identify the catalyst or determining factors which led to the decision to include CWD in the national education system
   a) What was the reason for including CWD in the school system?
   b) Who made the decision?
   c) When was the decision made?

   Note: Elicit answers by means of open-ended questions first. Use examples if reasons are not forthcoming.

   Possible examples of reasons could be:
   - All children, including CWD have a right to education
   - Convention on the Rights of the Child
   - UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
   - Response to Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action
   - Signatory to the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons and the Agenda for Action (1993-2002), with its targets on education
   - Response to the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All.
   - Initiatives by international NGOs eg SCUK in Laos
   - Local NGO advocacy and programmes
   - Advocacy by parents of CWD
   - Advocacy by organizations of persons with disabilities (DPOs).

The first time the concept of “integrated education” was formally discussed in Vietnam was in 1985 at a UNESCO workshop. Since 1987, Vietnam has had pilot projects on inclusive education, partly because so few children with disabilities could be served with the system of special schools. According to a Save the Children Sweden evaluation in 1995, only about 1% of children with disabilities were in special schools in 1991 and 3% in 1995.

According to interviews with Mr. Le Van Tac of the Ministry of Education and Training, National Institute of Educational Strategies and Curriculum (NIESAC), it took another six years to understand the “implications and implementation needs” of IE after the beginning of pilot projects in 1990. Two policies were decided in 1996, to adjust the curriculum and to increase collaborative learning and sharing. Changing attitudes and behavior took many years, but the pay-off has been implementation of IE at the national policy level, if not yet in all regions in practice. Greater support in policy and legislation was given to Inclusive Education after the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action was implemented in 1994. Mr. Tac’s research institute under NIESAC is now called the Center for Education of Children with Exceptionalities.

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(CECE). Before 1986, the name was the Center on Special Education and Special Schools.
2. Policy on education and children with disabilities

a) What are the key features of national policy on education?
b) Is there a national EFA policy?
c) Does the Government have a policy of compulsory education for all children?
d) Does the policy make specific reference to the inclusion of children with disabilities?
e) Is there any other specific policy on the education of children with disabilities?
f) Does the Government consult organizations of persons with disabilities in formulating policy to include children and youth with disabilities in the education system?

The national education system is run by the Ministry of Education and Training. Vietnam published a National Education for All Action Plan for 2003-2015 in June 2003. This document was approved by the Prime Minister in Government Document No. 872/CP-KG Date: 02/07/2003 (July 2, 2003). There are also implementation plans at the provincial level that have recently been completed. The Government has developed Strategies for Educational Development 2001-2010 to provide access to 50-70% of disabled children by 2005-2010 respectively\(^3\). As mentioned below, provincial plans of action have also been put into place. Policy is being developed for inclusion of children with disabilities, but as of yet since there is no precise law on inclusion, policies are being slowly and delicately considered. The Vietnamese government is still very much a top-down, central-level to provinces, organization.

School is compulsory, according to law, for the five years of primary education from age 6-10 or 11. However, it is unclear to what extent this policy is enforced. Drop-out rates remain very high, already at the primary level, and wealthier children are far more likely than poorer children to complete primary school. In 1996-1997, the Early Childhood Department of MOET introduced a guideline that the intellectually disabled children should be enrolled in integrated classrooms\(^4\).

The government has one formal mechanism for consultation, the National Coordinating Committee on Disability (NCCD). Apparently the NCCD, chaired by Mr. Tue of MOLISA, has been involved in planning with MOET on inclusive education. (More details on NCCD are below in question 17 on multi-sectoral cooperation).

Another committee has been proposed to the Prime Minister’s Office, the Steering Committee on Inclusive Education, under the leadership of Madame Mai. This is an on-going and open-ended request. It is not known when a decision could be reached on the formal establishment of such a committee. It is unclear if this committee would include members from other ministries or from disabled persons’ organizations.

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\(^4\) Ibid, p.19.
3. Legislation
   a) Has legislation been passed mandating compulsory education for all children?
   b) Does this legislation explicitly include children with disabilities?
   c) Has any specific legislation been passed mandating education for children with disabilities?
   d) When was the legislation passed?
   e) Is the legislation actively enforced?

Article 35 of the 1992 Constitution of the Socialist republic of Vietnam states that education is the first priority in national policy. Vietnam was also among the first countries in Asia to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. The Law on Universal Primary Education, passed in 1998, makes school compulsory for all children between the ages of 6 and 10 years and from first to fifth grade. This general legislation contains no specific reference to children with disabilities. The Education Law of 1998 supports education of disabled children. Children with disabilities whose families are in financial difficulty are exempted from fees either totally or partially with this law through Decision 70/TTg about School Tuition Reduction. Provisions are also made to increase the pay of teachers of children with disabilities. Other relevant laws include the Ordinance on Disabled Persons and the Law on Protection and Care of Children.

In the Ordinance on Disabled Persons No.28 (10-10-1998) (Official Title of this legislation is: Order No. 06-L/Ctn of August 8, 1998, Promulgating The Ordinance On Disabled Persons) under Article 16, point 1 of chapter III, entitled “Cultural Education for Disabled Persons” the following direction on education for children with disabilities is given: “Education for disabled children shall be organized and carried out in the forms of integration schooling at general schools or specialized schools for the disabled, nursing homes for the disabled and at the family.”

The Law on Protection, Care and Education of Children (1991) places the impetus for the care of children on all of society including families, schools, community, state agencies and social organizations and affirms the principle of non-discrimination to the child regardless of his or her physical endowment, gender or racial origin.

Other legislation includes Decree 26 on Special Education (14/4/1995), which declared that Ministry of Education and Training should take the forefront in providing education for children with disabilities, replacing MOLISA in this role. MOET issued directive No.12/GD-DT on 17/7/1995 urging enrollment of 100 percent of children in primary school and urging the establishment of special schools and classes for children with disabilities. Finally Circular No.5276/TH was issued on 5/8/1995 to speed up the process of transferring schools from under

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6 Cao, Manh Thang op. cit. p. 12.
MOLISA to MOET, also urging greater teacher training for inclusive education, “especially in areas where special schools are unavailable.”

7 Ibid., p.13.
4. Providers of education to children and youth with disabilities

a) Who are the main providers of education to children with disabilities and youth with disabilities? Ministry of Education, other government ministries, international agencies, NGOs?

b) List each main provider and briefly describe its role and the extent of provision, with particular reference to rural areas.

c) Are the programmes of the various providers coordinated in some way e.g. under a common policy framework? In a common national database?

d) Is there a formal and a non-formal system of education for persons with disabilities?

e) Are children and youth with disabilities included in both systems, or only in the non-formal system?

f) Does the non-formal system provide basic education to primary school age children?

g) Is the Government responsible for the non-formal system or is it run mainly by NGOs?

h) Does the Government provide resources to the non-formal system?

i) What form of support is provided?

Children with disabilities can be included in mainstream schools, but Vietnam is still developing means to assure that children with disabilities can and will be accepted into classrooms and have access to trained teachers and to the materials that they will need. International NGOs have led the way in developing pilot projects in Vietnam, always in partnership with the government of Vietnam, primarily with MOET. The support has often been in the form of developing teacher training programs as well as in overcoming community lack of awareness on this issue. Rädda Barnen, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Komitee Twee have been active in this arena since the early 1990s. Save the Children UK works with early intervention programs and with the Centre for Research and Evaluation of Disabled Children in Ho Chi Minh City. AIFO and MCNV have also been active in developing community-based rehabilitation programs.

The Ministry of Education has had the legislative mandate for education of children with disabilities since 1995, however the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) has not conceded all of the special schools to the Ministry of Education. No one is sure when or if this will occur. MOLISA considers the comprehensive treatment of people with disabilities to fall under their purview. While this could make the challenge of coordination greater, there does seem to be an increased willingness to share information as evidenced in the recent NCCD meeting sponsored by MOLISA, which did include representatives from a variety of Ministries, including MOET.

According to Hang from Rädda Barnen, some provincial-level authorities and People’s Committees at the local level also establish and run schools. The Ministry of Education had “technical” or formal input. The physical building is also the responsibility of the District level community.

Vietnam does have formal and non-formal schools. However, the non-formal schools are not specifically run by NGOs. Civil society organizations are still in their infancy in Vietnam, with a recent decree, Decree No. 88/2003/Nd-Cp of July 30, 2003 Providing for the Organization, Operation and Management of Associations, one of the first instruments allowing their official establishment. There is of course a “home-care system” too which provides “alternative basic education” for children outside of the mainstream system.
The Vietnamese government does not provide financial support to any NGOs in the Western definition. Rather, international NGOs and international donors are, in most cases, providing financial underwriting to the Vietnamese government in many pilot projects and special schools for children with disabilities. Some government employees also receive financial allowances for their work for NGOs to augment their salaries which can be as low as 40USD a month (approximately one tenth of some NGO salaries and even less than other international organizations). The Vietnamese government also supports the SSHVO, the Society for the Support of Vietnamese Handicapped and Orphans, however this is a “welfare” organization in the old sense, which gives gifts at Tết (Vietnamese New Year) and other donations, rather than a systemic aid organization developing programs or policies.

There is not a common policy framework or any known coordination mechanism at this time for implementation of inclusive education nationwide. There is no common data base of student information. It is highly doubtful that other electronic forms of networking currently exist. The quote of a MOET expert in a recent UNICEF-survey illustrates this: “At this moment, nobody manages and coordinates the range of activities that are carried out to provide education for CWDs.”

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8 Huff et al., op. cit., p.20.
5. Budgetary policy and measures
   a) Is there a defined budget allocation for the education of children with disabilities?
   b) Is the money allocated as part of the regular budget?
   c) Is there a separate allocation specific to the education of children with disabilities?
   d) Is there a specific allocation to make schools physically accessible to children with disabilities?
   e) What other forms of specific support to children with disabilities are covered by the budget?

Examples:
- Support teachers
- Special teaching devices, materials etc

According to the Ministry of Education, there is not a separate budget for education of children with disabilities. As written in 1997, but still true today: “IE has not enjoyed an official status within the educational structure (an IE office within MOET for example). Therefore regular budget allocation is hard to obtain, while IE requires essential funds for regular activities, for example in training and retraining of teachers, provision of low-cost teaching aids.” In a report on educational budgeting for Rādda Barnen at the district level, the author also wrote: “Among expenditure items of budget, there is not any separate item for CWD or directly related to CWD.”

The People’s Committee and the District Department of Education and Training (DOET) include an education budget in their general budgets, 80 per cent of which goes to salaries for teachers. While teachers of special schools are paid 70% more than other teachers, teachers in inclusive education classes do not yet have any legislated financial incentives. Most of the education budget, approximately 70% is administered by the provinces that then delegate responsibilities to lower levels of administration in districts and communes. The government has just recently issued bonds in order to mobilize resources for education and continues to work on budget modernization with MOET, the World Bank and the Ministry of Finance. Government expenditure has increased for education, but private expenditure is now implicated at a high level as well. School fees were introduced in the early 1990s and have been a heavy burden on poorer households. Currently, for every 1000VND of government subsidy, a family will spend 800VND. These charges can be for books and even for school construction, so that, even if tuition is not paid, the costs are prohibitive for some. The exceptions to paying school fees can indeed include poor families and families with disabled children. These fee reductions are

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13 Ngo Huy Duc, op. ci.,p.38.
considered the biggest added expense of educating children with disabilities as well as providing additional support for other supplied. Usually, 100 percent fee reduction is applied to severely disabled children or children from families in difficult circumstances, while 50 percent reduction is applied to other children with disabilities. There is also some community support for assisting children with disabilities in getting to school, but this is not by any means standardized across the country. Financial implications of schooling are particularly important when considering how to encourage more children with disabilities to go to school, as many children with disabilities are from poor families. In Vinc Tuong district near Hanoi, for example, it is estimated that 38% of children with disabilities are from poor families, a significant number seeing that only 2.7% of all children are from poor families.

According to sources from the XXXXX, there is one line item in the Vietnamese central government budget to allow 800,000 dongs/pupil expenditure for children with disabilities. However, this amount is only available for 4000 children with disabilities in the year 2000, therefore budgeting for education of children with disabilities will still fall to the local authorities. Other funds that could assist children with disabilities come from some charities such as the Committee for Protection and Care of Children, now the (Committee for Family, Population and Children), fund for children protection at the commune level, fund for study encouragement of the commune People’s Committee and the Fund for supporting children allegedly affected by Agent Orange.

In rural and mountainous areas school lasts only a half a day. At times, in big cities as well, as the numbers are far greater than present school buildings can contain. Furthermore, in poor, rural and mountainous areas, the children are likely to go home for lunch and the poorer children may not come back afterwards, as they could have other needs in helping the family.

According to Anat Prag of CRS, budgeting and planning or otherwise responding to needs at the provincial level are parts of the planning and implementation process with Ministry of Planning and Investment and Ministry of Finance. There are not yet clear national policies on increasing teacher pay for those teachers involved in these processes. In one school in the north of Vietnam, teachers are paid just an additional 10,000 VND per month. This budget study interviewed principals who recommended that teachers be paid closer to 50,000VND a month. However, as another interviewee mentioned there is some danger in setting up a system wherein teachers are paid extra according to the severity of disability.

Budgets for preschools, as mentioned elsewhere, are community financed. Even in very poor communities, teachers are paid from contributions from the local parents and families. At times

\[14\text{ Ibid.},\text{ p.86.}\]  
\[15\text{ Ibid.},\text{ p.49.}\]  
\[16\text{ Ibid.},\text{ p.43.}\]  
\[17\text{ Ibid.},\text{ p.49.}\]  
\[18\text{ Ibid.},\text{ p.83.}\]  
\[19\text{ Ibid.},\text{ p.85.}\]
these schools just provide childcare and are not staffed by trained teachers. On an educational trip, the Steering Committee on Inclusive Education saw one example in Italy where teachers were compensated financially for their efforts. In the US, there were other examples of alternative rewards such as professional development opportunities. CRS has also undertaken “Best Teacher Contests” that annually present awards for teachers at school level. These awards are on teaching quality and developing teacher resources. Awardees receive small financial incentives. There is some positive awareness generated in the media and the outcomes of the materials competition will be compiled and shared in the form of a publication funded by USAID. This could be completed by the end of 2004.

Though there is not currently specific funding to make schools accessible, as of July 2004 there is a law on construction that includes barrier-free access codes. The law “stipulates the need for accessible design for the use of people with disabilities in any of the newly built facilities.”

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6. Administrative and implementation steps

a) What is the process by which policy and legislation on inclusive education is implemented at the school level?
b) Is there a focal point within the Ministry that is responsible for the education of children with disabilities, in special education and/or regular schools?
c) Does the focal point have a separate budget?
d) Is there a policy or are there guidelines which determine which children with disabilities will be accepted into regular schools or are all CWD accepted?
e) What are the guidelines? At what level is the decision made – departmental or school level?
f) Who is responsible for finding out-of-school children with disabilities? What specific steps are taken to achieve their enrolment?
g) What specific policy directives are given to school management to implement inclusive education?
h) How are these directives implemented?
i) Is there a directive to take action at community level to find children with disabilities who are not enrolled in school?
j) Is awareness training of educational administrators conducted on the issue of including children with disabilities in the school system?

The focal point for special education development has been NIESAC, and the research center headed by Mr. Tac, as mentioned earlier, the Center for Education of Children with Exceptionalities (CECE) the main focal point for special education development at MOET\(^{21}\). Mr. Tac, the head of this department, highlighted the fact that the focal point is not responsible for implementation of policies, but only for their development. A Steering Committee on Education for Children with Disabilities has been established formally by MOET (in Decision 4431/QD-BGD&DT-TCCB) which will be responsible for “awareness building, surveying and planning human resource development, and making proposals for policies on education for children with disabilities”\(^{22}\). However, it seems that the Steering Committee is still not finalized in operational terms\(^{23}\). Steering Committees are also under development at the provincial level in the Departments of Education and Training that are the implementing arms of the Ministry of Education and Training. The main central-level Steering Committee will be presided over by the department of Primary Education and the leaders and experts in this department and in Mr. Tac’s department are responsible for executing the tasks associated with special education amongst their other tasks. Schools in Vietnam are relegated to different levels of government depending on the level of schooling, such that pre-schools are run by communes and districts, primary schools and lower secondary are run by the district, upper secondary is run by the province and vocational training and colleges are run by provinces and central government. Tertiary and post-graduate schools are run solely by the central government\(^{24}\).

\(^{21}\) There are a total of 10 different research centers at MOET including centers on non-formal education, learning materials and teaching aids, statistics and projection, per-school education and professional, secondary, higher and postgraduate education.
\(^{22}\) Huff et al., *op. cit.*, p.20.
\(^{23}\) According to H. Olsen, the funder of this process in email 27 November 2004.
\(^{24}\) Ngo Huy Duc, *op cit* p. 35.
An important element of Vietnam’s policy structure was highlighted several times by different interviewees. At the commune level, there is one chairman and two vice chairmen. One of these vice-chairmen is in charge of education and culture. This person is one of the possible key implementers for change in the educational administration system. Furthermore, this model also holds at the district and provincial level, and this person is chosen as the representative on the Steering Committee on Inclusive Education from the provincial level.

There are not yet any specific guidelines to define which children can and cannot go to school. Some doctors have been known to discourage parents from sending a child to school. Some NGO projects have therefore recognized the importance of community education, convincing the parents of the value of sending their children to school, in spite of the high costs and difficulties they could encounter.

In terms of community involvement on the issue of education for children with disabilities, Mr. Tac mentioned the role of the Women’s Union, Youth Union and People’s Committee in community education and including children with disabilities, alongside MOLISA and MOET. Community Support Teams which include parents, health and education staff and members of mass organizations, support efforts of getting children to school. In general, there are also loudspeaker announcements when these teams arrive in villages. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to school for assessment. In one training effort by Rädda Barnen, these teams worked together to create support plans that would provide an analysis of the family’s situation and immediate needs and existing barriers for the child’s participation. This process does not seem formalized and will therefore depend largely on what kinds of training these teachers and team leaders have had. The commune-level health workers can conduct surveys to attempt to identify the children with disabilities in the community, however, these results are not systematically tallied. According to NIESAC, the village head will lead the workers in the task of identifying these children. Skills in working with evaluation teams are also taught in teacher-training courses and most teachers will then know who to contact in case of need.

Since 1998, CRS has undertaken a pilot project in Quang Ninh, Ninh Binh and Hoa Binh, three northern provinces, in community awareness training. This training has reached out to teachers, educators, and local and national government leaders. The aim has been to strengthen capacity of these different stakeholders and to promote changes in attitudes and behaviors towards children with disabilities. A total of 435 education managers from all 61 provinces of Vietnam have attended training on basic principles in inclusive education. Six MOET staff have also attended training on international leadership in inclusive education at St. Marcos University in California.

Perhaps this is the best place to mention also the six priority areas of the Education Plan for Children with Disabilities from 2003-2015. These are:

1. To promote information-education-communication activities related to education for children with disabilities
2. To have statistics and formulate folio of children with disabilities
3. To train teachers regarding inclusive education
4. To renovate infrastructure and build resources for education of children with disabilities
5. To form legislation and policies including:
   a. Regulation on education for children with disabilities
   b. Legal documents regulating objectives, content, methods and evaluation of education for children with disabilities
   c. Training programs and plans for teachers
   d. Inter-ministry circulars providing guidance of schemes, policies, infrastructure, equipment for education for children with disabilities
6. To increase the percentage of children with disabilities enrollment in primary schools to 70%.

The aim of implementing the seven +1 priority areas of the Biwako Millennium Framework also bears mention as this seems to be considered one of the main areas for action of the NCCD:

1. Self-help organizations of persons with disabilities and related family and parent associations
2. Women with disabilities
3. Early detection, early intervention and education
4. Training and employment, including self-employment
5. Access to built environments and public transportation
6. Access to information and communications including information, communication and assistive technologies
7. Poverty alleviation through capacity-building, social security and sustainable livelihood programs

+1 This last area of priority was added in Vietnam, to include greater awareness and educational campaigns in the community to increase support and decrease discrimination.

However, as can be easily deduced when considering the current structure, it is seen that “structural implementation is lacking and in practice only provinces/districts that receive

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technical and financial support from INGOs and/or other donor organizations are actually implementing Inclusive Education.\textsuperscript{29} Furthermore, without guidelines on implementation and some budget support, it will be difficult for those under-served areas to make up for their current shortfalls in providing services for children with disabilities.

\textsuperscript{29} Huff et al., \textit{op.cit.}, p.21.
7. Special schools
   a) Do you have a system of special schools for CWD? Please describe your system.
   b) Are these run by GO or NGO or both?
   c) What percentage of CWD attend special schools?
   d) Do you have special schools in rural areas?

Historically, Vietnam, like most countries, had developed a system of special education schools, one per province in most cases with more in urban areas. Mr. Tac of NIESAC estimated that there are roughly 97 special schools of all sizes, locations and sponsors and that 7000 children are enrolled in these schools. In a MOET document on special education, it was mentioned that these institutions are primarily in urban areas. As it is said that there is one special school in each province in Viet Nam, these could be in more or less urban or rural areas depending on the province itself. However, most schools are indeed in urban areas, which means that children with disabilities in rural areas would have to travel to be able to access services of special schools.30

8. Regular inclusive schools – Primary level
   a) Do you have a system of regular inclusive schools which enroll CWD?
   b) When did you start having inclusive regular schools?
   c) How many, or what percentage of your regular schools are inclusive?
   d) What percentage of CWD attend regular inclusive schools?
   e) What is the educational situation for CWD in rural areas?

According to a recent article from NIESAC, over 75,000 children with disabilities have been able to pursue courses in inclusive schools from kindergarten to lower secondary level, with some going on to university.31 Inclusive education was started in the 1990s in Vietnam. As can be seen from other sections of this paper, the system is still being developed and no studies are yet complete to assess the level of reach of the inclusive school system geographically or in terms of percentage of children with disabilities educated. However, it is clear that the model is well considered by the Vietnamese government and stakeholders, especially for its high effectiveness, low cost, feasibility and applicability even in difficult areas.32 Children with disabilities may or may not be able to go to school either in rural or urban areas depending on the level of training of local teachers, the awareness of the community and local officials about inclusive education and the readiness of parents to send their children to these schools.

Numbers of children with disabilities in school at all is still miniscule compared to the need. IE

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30 Cao, Manh Thang op. cit., p. 1.
32 Ibid.
has mainly included children with movement disabilities or slight learning difficulties to date, while those children with more severe difficulties are not well served. No one seems to have specific numbers on the regional coverage of IE schools nor on numbers of children integrated, though IE is said to be implemented in 50 of 61 provinces\textsuperscript{33}.

9. Pre-school
   a) Is there a system of pre-school education?
   b) What percentage of children attend pre-school?
   c) Is it GO or NGO run?
   d) Do CWD attend regular pre-schools?
   e) What training is given to pre-school teachers?
   f) Do any pre-school teachers have any special training to enable them to teach CWD?

There is a system of pre-school in Vietnam, but it is not yet a fully developed, formal system. The structure consists of 3 years of nursery school from 3 months to 3 years old, then 3 additional years of kindergarten from ages 3 to 6 years. However, as much as 87% of children under three years old are still cared for at home34. Children aged 3-4 years do start attending child-care programs, such that just 45% of children of these ages are cared for at home. Greater numbers of children in urban areas attend pre-school than in rural areas but classes tend to be much larger than the recommended norm. Just 30-35% of total ECCE programs are fully state-run, subsidized center and community-run centers account for the majority of other care centers35.

As of 2000, teachers of day-care centers numbered over 48,000. The teachers have diverse levels of training: 31% have received some form of basic training, another 31% have participated in short courses and 21% have been enrolled in six-month professional training programs. Just 15% had participated in the 2-3 year teacher training program in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and only 225 day-care teachers had university or college degrees. Amongst kindergarten staff, 3 percent have attended a 3-4 year ECCE program, 51% have attended two-year pre-service education courses, 25% attended 9-month training programs and 8 percent had 3-6 months of training. Another 12% had no training at all. Training for pre-school teachers in inclusive education has only recently been introduced at two Central Junior Colleges of Preschool Teacher Training No.1 in Ha Noi and No.3 in Ho Chi Minh City36. It is also estimated that half of teachers are also still farming at home37.

Preschools can also be run by the village and taught by young village women (or adolescents). At any rate, pre-schools are primarily the responsibility of communes and districts. The official rate of preschool enrollment is 60% but, for example, in the regions where SCUK works, the enrollment rate is closer to 43%.

Training for preschool teachers for teaching children with disabilities has just been started in the

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34 de Los Angeles-Bantista, Feny. Early Childhood Care and Education in South-East Asia: Working for Access, Quality and Inclusion in Thailand, the Philippines and Viet Nam. UNESCO Bangkok, 2004, p.v.
35 Ibid.
36 NIESAC, op. cit., p.2.
37 Ibid, p.v-vi.
past year in Vietnam. Children with disabilities are still not present in large numbers in preschools and kindergartens, but these numbers are starting to increase. (See also the next section for statistical estimates from Ho Chi Minh City).
10. Early detection and early intervention for infants and young children with disabilities

a) Is an early detection and early intervention service provided to families of infants and young children with disabilities? Who are the service providers? Examples: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, NGO sector or any combination of these?

b) Does this service reach all families with children with disabilities?

c) What plans do you have to extend early intervention services?

Early effort in developing early intervention programs for hearing-impaired and intellectually-impaired children were undertaken by Konnmittee Twee. SCUK has developed holistic Early Intervention programs that address early symptoms but also try to address the root causes such as malnutrition and common diseases. Families and communities are included for early intervention education. The People’s Committee at the commune level is the implementing partner. The Vice Chairman of the People’s Committee for social issues has the power to implement these programs. Focus needs to be as early as possible and should include nutritional development. Emotional support also needs to be addressed. SCUK has developed “parenting education materials” used by children in grades 3 and 4 (many parents themselves in the rural and mountainous areas served by SCUK cannot read). These materials also address injury prevention and the curriculum on education in preschool includes a section on inclusive education.

The Early Intervention program of SCUK relies on the Early Childhood Development officer (ECD) who is chosen from among village health workers and the Committee for Protection and Care of Children (recently renamed Committee for Family, Population and Children). The ECD will promote the development and follow the progress of children aged 5 to see how many are enrolled in school. However, this role can occasionally be made more difficult in some areas when people do not remember the age or date of birth of their child. Still, awareness remains the most important factor, as there are many attitudinal obstacles to be overcome.

At present these services are slowly being put into place by the village health workers, indirectly under the Ministry of Health, more directly under the local authorities. This service will reach most families in a given commune, and training has taken place in 53 of 61 provinces. However, it remains the case, that “there is often a lack of coherence and coordination between all these projects [which are] often not embedded in the national, departmental or local educational policies”. Estimates of extent of coverage show that only a small fraction of children with disabilities are being included in any early intervention programs. For instance, in Ho Chi Minh City of approximately 22,000 children with visual intellectual disabilities, 54 are in the Early Intervention Program at the Research and Education for Children with Disabilities Center, 113 are integrated into kindergartens and primary schools and 900 are attending 15 special schools. That would indicate that 21,000 are not included in any system of special care.

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39 Ibid, p.16.
Plans are definitely in place to reach out to more parts of Vietnam with early childhood care. A meeting will soon be held jointly chaired by Save the Children France and Save the Children UK and the ECD department called Pathway on ECD that will help explain how inclusive education can be implemented at the early levels. Save the Children Alliance (SCJapan, SCUK and SCUS) continue to support these efforts.

The community-based rehabilitation program has also been well developed in Vietnam and deserves mention. This network was started in 1987 and includes a provincial steering committee, district steering committees and communal CBR units. The CBR unit mobilizes cooperation from disabled persons and their families and provides counseling and supervision of rehabilitation exercises. CBR is mainly aimed at those with physical disabilities and mild learning disabilities. There should be some role of the CBR representatives in recommending educational opportunities for children with disabilities. Coordination between IE representatives and CBR programs still needs to be increased. A report from 1995 mentioned several reasons why this still was not widely successful: (1) absence of information on what the other partners in health or education are doing for rehabilitation, (2) the steering committees on CBR at district and commune level have not developed clear plans for integrated medical, social and educational rehabilitation or structures for follow-up with individual children, (3) absence of record-sharing between schools and health centres, (4) available records only address disabilities and not the support needed and (5) CBR and IE programs are not all present in the same communities\(^{40}\).

11. Access to secondary school for children and youth with disabilities
   a) Do students with disabilities have access to secondary level education opportunities?
   b) Is any assistance or special accommodation provided to these students in secondary schools?

Anecdotal evidence from the interviews of children with disabilities showed that children with disabilities who successfully maneuver through primary school are not given any additional services for secondary school.

12. Access to tertiary education opportunities for persons with disabilities
   a) Do students with disabilities have access to tertiary level education opportunities?
   b) Is any assistance or special accommodation provided to these students in tertiary level educational institutions?

SECTION 2: NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS OR MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SECTION ON EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS AND MONITORING

Disability statistics, data base, collection methods, definitions

13. Definition

a) What is the definition of the term “disability” in your country?
b) Is there an “official” definition, or is the term used to mean different things to different groups e.g. do parents, children, teachers, Ministry of Education, Bureau of Statistics define disability differently? Please specify the documents which contain these definitions?
c) Is the new (2001) WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) used in your country for census, household survey or other data collection activities?
d) Are you aware of the WHO ICF definition?
e) What categories of disability do you include in your definitions of disability and in your schools?

The official state definition of the Government of Viet Nam is found in the Ordinance on Disabled Persons, Article One:

Disabled persons by definition of this Ordinance, irrespective of the causes of the disability, are defective of one or many parts of the body or functions which are shown in different forms of disability, and which reduce the capability of activity and cause many difficulties to work, life and studies.

Mr. Dang Tu An, Deputy Head, Management Section on Educating Children with Disabilities referred to the WHO definition from 2001 in a recent speech:

According to WHO’s definition (April 2001) Children with disabilities are those who have a disorder in body structure or functions which may manifest itself in imperfect ability to take care of themselves or have difficulties in learning primary education curriculums if they are not provided with special assistance in terms of educational methods and necessary assistative equipment\(^4\).

Mr. An explained that 90% of children with disabilities in Vietnam fall under 5 categories:

1. Hearing-impaired children (including deaf children and those with hearing problems at different levels)

2. Visually-impaired children (including blind children and those with seeing problems)

3. Mentally-retarded children (including children with specific learning difficulties or with limited abilities in intellectual activities…)

4. Children having difficulties in language and communication (including idoglossia, stutters or having problems in pronunciation at different levels or totally unable to read or write)

5. Motor disabled children (including hand, leg, totally or half body paralyzed, dysfunctions or malfunctions of mobile body parts)

Furthermore, there are also:

1. Children with multiple disabilities
2. Children with strange behavior
3. Children with autism or auto-suggestion

There is some familiarity among experts with the WHO classification, but this is not used throughout the schools for data collection. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Ministry of Education, MOLISA and Ministry of Health also have differing views on what the official definition of disability should be.
The new 2001 WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health is not yet
used for census, household survey or other data collection activities. However, the previous 1980
definitions have been used at least at the central level. Furthermore, there is a perception that the
WHO definition is “medically inclined, complicated for those working outside the medical field,
like educators and social workers.”

In the 1997 UNICEF study, “definition and criteria for classification of children with disabilities
are not consistent at the grassroots level, leading to discrepancies in figures in some school
surveys on disabled children. This leads to such cases as children with myopia being listed as
disabled, and would then lead to a higher percentage of children with disabilities to be said to be
attending school than is in actuality the case.

Types of disability listed in the 2003 UNICEF-Vietnam study include variations on the above and
in greater detail:

1. Mobility impairments which include amputees, polio, spinal lesion, cerebral palsy,.
2. Visual impairments including those who are blind or cannot see things less than 3 meters,
   or cannot count fingers in a distance of less than 3 meters and those who cannot see
   fingers in a distance of less than 1 meter.
3. Hearing impairments include those who are deaf or have a hearing difficulty in one or
   both ears.
4. Language disorder including those who cannot speak or only pronounce inarticulate
   sounds, and have to use hands or writing to express ideas.
5. Intellectual disability, including those with cognitive or intellectual limitations.
6. Mental disorder/strange behavior resulting from psychotic/mental illness, e.g.
   schizophrenia and depression.
7. Epilepsy including those with epileptic seizures ranging from a brief lapse of attention to
   a prolonged loss of consciousness with abnormal motor activity (chronic or recurrent)
8. Loss of sensation (leprosy) including those with a chronic infection that attacks
   superficial tissue, especially the skin and nerves, predominating on appendages like
   fingers, toes, ears and nose.

43 Ibid., p.40.
44 Ibid.
45 Huff et al., op. cit.,p.15.
9. Other disabilities: Disabilities that do not fit into the categories listed above.
14. Disability statistics - general

a) Does your country collect statistics on persons with disabilities of all ages?
b) Is data disaggregated by disability category, age, gender, urban/rural?
c) Please provide figures according to any disaggregation which is available.
d) Do you have data on children with disabilities from birth?
e) Do you have a disability birth registration process in hospitals under the Ministry of Health?
f) Please provide samples of any available data collection instruments.
g) Please identify institutions (GO or NGO) which may be undertaking, or have the capacity to undertake data collection on children with disabilities in the community and schools.
h) Please identify (and provide) all publications with any data on quantitative aspects of disabilities.

There have been some attempts to collect data on people with disabilities, however at present there is no institutionalized census taking of people with disabilities neither for the population at large, neither for children with disabilities in school. The statistics that do exist vary widely, based on differences in methodology and sample size.

No information exists on disabilities at birth. There is no birth registration process that includes information on disability. The right to registration at birth exists in Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. No disability data is collected through this process. Birth registration does exist in Vietnam however until very recently (2003), the need to pay a fee for birth registration prevented many of the poorest families from fulfilling this right. Furthermore, a requirement to register births of children not in the place of current residence or even in the place of birth, but in the place of “permanent residency” also hampers further birth registrations. Birth registration is decreed under Decree 83/1998/ND-CP of 10 October 1998 on Civil Status Registration. The policy guideline for implementing this decree is Circular 12/1999/TP-BTP from the Ministry of Justice. This decree includes the provision to allow parents to register the child in the place of birth and extends the length of time for registration from 30 days to 60 days. However, according to a January 2000 report by Craig Thomas for Save the Children (France and Sweden), 14% of children from a sample in Ho Chi Minh City were not registered and 21% of those registered were registered late. In Khanh Hoa province, where many ethnic minorities live, approximately half of the children were unregistered.

According to the most recent UNICEF-Vietnam study on children with disabilities, the prevalence of children with disabilities between the ages of 0-18 years is 2.4% or 662,000 children. However, these numbers are low if compared to data from surrounding countries or earlier studies. The UNICEF-Vietnam study included three different methods, the National Statistical Data Collection (NSDC), household surveys and Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) surveys. The NSDC was undertaken by MOLISA between May and September 2003, based on a pilot study in 1995 and adjusted for population growth to provide data from all 61 provinces of Vietnam. These results are estimates and should be used only for reference purpose.

only. According to the UNICEF-Vietnam report, the major sources of statistics in Vietnam on children are the USAID survey conducted by Thomas Kane in October 1999 and the MOLISA/UNICEF Child Disability Survey (CDS) of 1998. Also important is the Review of Child Labour, Street Children Child Prostitution and Trafficking, Disability and the Family of 1998 by Tim Bond and David Hayter. The authors state that “no other major statistical and situation reports on the overall numbers and status of CWD in Vietnam” have been published since the issuance of these reports47.

The 1998 CDS stated that almost half of the school-aged children with disabilities were illiterate, or 45.5%, one third of children with disabilities had never attended school and one sixth had attended but dropped out48. In the part of the survey conducted in institutions results were somewhat different. Just 5% had never attended school but 85% had not finished primary school. Reasons that children did not attend school included family poverty, lack of education for children with disabilities, inaccessible schools and embarrassment or lack of confidence because of the disability.

According to the UNICEF-Vietnam survey of 2003, again only an estimation of overall rates, the amount of children in school is roughly 35-38% in total and for rural and urban areas. Those children not in school account for between 51-52% for the same categories. This result seems to contradict the overall conclusion of most experts that those children in rural areas will have a harder time accessing school. Rates of school attendance according to this same survey vary widely according to type of disability, with the highest percentage of children out of school being those with strange behavior (84%), followed by those children with intellectual impairments (76%), then hearing impairments (68%) followed by those with epilepsy (64%) and then by those children with mobility impairments (60%). Children with visual impairments had the highest rate of schooling, with 38% out of school49. The household survey also revealed that in general, boys had had more education than girls50.

The 2003 UNICEF-Vietnam survey did include some information on age, gender and the urban/rural divide for children with disabilities. Disability prevalence rises continuously with age from 1.39% from 0-6 years to 11.82 % for older than 60 years. Rates are always higher at each age level for men than for women51. Prevalence was 2.37% in the total population, but 2.42% for males and 2.31% for females. In urban areas the prevalence was lower both overall (1.42%) and for males (1.75%) and females (1.12%). Rural areas therefore have a higher prevalence, 2.57% overall and 2.56% for males and 2.58% for females52. In addition, a recent Save the Children Sweden report states that “less than 10% of children with disabilities in Vietnam are going to

47 Ibid., p.10.
48 Ibid., p.11.
49 Huff et al., op. cit., p. 29 (Percentage calculations by the author).
50 Ibid., p.30.
51 Ibid., p.24.
52 Ibid., p.25.
school, most of them in inclusive classes. The number of boys is higher than that of girls.53

15. **Disability statistics and data-base – Ministry of Education**

   a) Does the Ministry of Education collect separate statistics on children with disabilities? If yes, what categories of disability are used for data collection of children with disabilities in schools?
   
   b) Do you have data on the total number of children with disabilities of school age? This refers to all disabled children – those in school and those not in school.
   
   c) If yes, what percentage of children with disabilities attend school?
   
   d) What percentage of children with disabilities does not attend school?
   
   e) What percentage of children with disabilities attends:

   - i) special schools
   - ii) regular school
   - iii) non-formal education

   f) Do you have school registration forms? Do they identify children with disabilities?
   
   g) What categories are used on this form?
   
   h) Please provide examples of any forms used for registration.
   
   i) Is any other data collected for statistical purposes concerning children with disabilities?
   
   j) Are there any plans to improve data collection?

Mr. Anh Tuan of the Ministry of Education, Statistics Office explained that very limited data on children with disabilities is collected each year. The process used to collect this data is to send a request form to schools which are then handed down to teachers who will fill out the form with the number of students with disabilities in their classroom. No definitions are provided and no training is given to the teachers as to how to identify children with disabilities. This leads to some wide dispersions in the identification of “disabilities” and often can include disadvantaged children such as children from extremely poor families. There is no information on what kind of disability, only the numbers. The process is also only undertaken in regular schools and not in special schools and results are not tallied to come to a total number of children with disabilities in school. Other survey requests are also sent during the year. The second request contains further questions including how the students are learning, questions on teaching quality, age of the students and school level. The statistics exist for schools, districts, provinces and grade level. It is important to note that the individuals are not identified and therefore it would be difficult to deduce any information on drop-out rates, or other in-depth analyses based on individual characteristics. Also, there are no other follow-on studies of this data from this office. Their sole position is to collect and disseminate the data within MOET. Also, the DOET level is the level that collects the data from schools, MOET is only directly responsible for universities and indirectly responsible for schooling at all other levels.

School registration forms do exist but do not identify children with disabilities. The information included on this form is name, age, birth registration card, parents names, address and IS card. These forms are also filled out at the school level. Apparently, private nursery schools are also included in statistics, it seems that any schools which fall under another Ministry will not be tallied, but private schools could be counted. MOET does not know statistics on children with disabilities who are not in school.

Any changes to information collection would have to be undertaken at the MOET central level. For example, recent curriculum changes have led to some new information requests. The European Commission has funded the development of information systems at MOET (Management Information Systems, MIS).

There is supposed to be a working group on statistics for children with disabilities which would
include Mr. Tac. Mr. Tac estimates that 33 percent of children have learning difficulties, 20% have hearing impairments and 15% visual impairments. The remainder have a movement impairment.
16. Monitoring procedures – national monitoring and monitoring for the EFA process

a) Are children with disabilities identified as a separate category in national and EFA monitoring?

b) If children with disabilities are not identified as a separate category how do you measure any increase or decrease in enrolments?

c) On what basis do you formulate policies to improve access and performance of children and youth with disabilities in the education system?

Children with disabilities are not identified as a separate category for EFA monitoring. In a meeting with Nguyen Quoc Chi, the former National EFA Coordinator54, we discussed the current status of EFA monitoring in Vietnam. It is not clear when the EFA process in Vietnam will explicitly include children with disabilities, likely not this year or the next, but at some point in the future. This has been discussed already with the Director of Special Education of MOET. NIESAC may coordinate many different kinds of solutions for children with disabilities. The current EFA action plan is focused on 85-89% of “normal” students. According to Chi, inclusive education is still in its infancy in Vietnam with various pilot projects and no clear aim or systematization. People still often think that special schools are more appropriate for children with disabilities.

Dr. Chi coordinates efforts in MOET in general and also with DOET in the provinces and occasionally with BOET (at the commune level). He re-iterated the plan to create a National Steering Committee on Inclusive Education under the Prime Minister’s Office (which would help to resolve some of the inter-ministerial issues). There are already National Committees on school “concretization” (physical buildings) undertaking such projects as replacing schools with three shifts per day (these schools are those that have too many students for them to stay all day) and another steering committee on the universalization of lower secondary school. The EFA Steering Committee includes the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning and Investment, MOLISA, Ministry of Personnel as well as many of the mass organizations such as the Women’s Union, the Youth Union and the Fatherland Front.

In a recent document from the EFA coordination office entitled “TBS for EFA Plan Implementation” dated October 18 2004, it is stated that there is a “special subsidiary focus on disabled/excluded children based on government policy of equity of educational opportunity for all children.” The TBS should be used in order to identify and reach out to excluded and under-served groups throughout the country in the educational process. The two main goals currently are provincial level planning and implementing the TBS (targeted budget support) initiative from international donors. This TBS process is related to the Primary Education for Disadvantaged Children (PEDC) project. The EFA process is attempting to link to the PEDC project in terms of overlapping goals. The PEDC project is operating in 215 districts of 40 provinces. The PEDC project should soon develop specific policy for excluded children. The PEDC office, as discussed

54 On 06/12/2004, the MOET announced Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuong, Deputy Director of Continuing Education Department as National. EFA Coordinator and Head of Coordination Board of EFA Action Plan.
elsewhere, will include disadvantaged children, minorities, disabled children and street children and is now only in the first step of implementation. Another report mentioned the importance of data, then budgeting in planning for future action in educational policy. For example, the district Division of Finance is responsible for collecting educational data (number of schools, classes, teachers etc.) to advise the province on the draft budget for the year\textsuperscript{55}.

CRS is working with MOET to develop guidelines on inclusive education using a bottom-up approach. The chief contact is Mr. An, of the Steering Committee on Inclusive Education and Mr. Tac of NIESAC. CRS is looking at management tools for IE environments, including considering who the stakeholders are, such as teachers, parents, and formal and informal health sector representatives. If guidelines are too much based on the wishes of the central government, they are likely to remain unenforced. Richard Villa, the well-known inclusive education specialist, has made several trips to Vietnam to assist in developing guidelines. An example of guidelines that are not enforced includes the declaration that 50\% of children with disabilities will be included. Schools are unaware of such a guideline and have no specific directions or responsibilities for carrying out this new legislation. They have no data to know if they are covering sufficient numbers, lack trained teachers and don’t yet have familiarity with inclusive education practices. The project undertook to translate guidelines from several other countries for comparison of goals and objectives in other systems. They also took trips to Italy, Australia and the United States to see good practices but also “challenging school environments”. They saw that teachers are often the key and managers and finances were not.

A recent paper from the Ministry of Finance underlined the importance of statistics for the planning and implementation of improved opportunities for people with disabilities in Vietnam:

> The State should carry out a project on disability survey to come up with specific analysis on the actually situation of disabled persons in Vietnam, including indicators on ages, gender, qualification, types of disability, jobs, capability, aspiration, income (if available), etc. Only by having these data, can NCCD make recommendations with measures appropriate to socio-economic development programs of the country and plan on finance requirement proposed to local authorities at all levels for budget allocation.

Under the commitment for universal education, every year teachers are sent through the commune to seek out children who aren’t in school.

\textsuperscript{55} Ngo Huy Duc, p.52.
17. Multi-sectoral collaboration

a) Does your country have a national coordination mechanism or national coordination council on disability? (NCCD)
b) Does the national council have inter-sectoral representation – please specify
c) Does representation include organizations of persons with disabilities?
d) Is there any multi-sectoral collaboration in the provision of education to children with disabilities?
e) If so, please describe the ministries involved and the nature of the collaboration?

The National Coordinating Committee on Disability is one of the main bodies for coordinating efforts on disability issues for people with disabilities. While NCCD is primarily under the auspices of MOLISA, a recent conference had evidence of input from other ministries as well, including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, and the Ministries of Transportation and Construction. The National Assembly is also a member as are several representatives from Disabled Persons’ Organizations. In a recent assessment document, most interviewees saw the goal of the NCCD as the assistance to the Government of Vietnam in achieving the UNSCAP 7+1 goals56. Coordination was seen as a means of monitoring progress on disability issues, increased effectiveness and efficiency of the different activities done by various Ministries, and coordination as an advocacy and awareness raising tool. The NCCD should play a “monitoring role” for inclusion of disability at the policy level, and not at the implementation level. NCCD is likely to serve more as an information-sharing mechanism in the form of newsletters and strategic plans as well as through workshops and seminars, rather than as in-depth technical advisors. This role is still very necessary and yet well developed. Sharing information across ministries on statistics, experts, progress indicators allows for information sharing, feedback and advice. The NCCD should reach out to Ministries and Departments, NGOs, associations, mass-organizations and other non-government actors and of course to people with disabilities and their families.

The Steering Committee on Inclusive Education is at present only made up of members of MOET. However, inter-ministerial cooperation is one of the six objectives of the Primary Education for Disadvantaged Children Project. (As mentioned above in section one question 6). Mr. An described what he saw as the role of the NCCD in education for children with disabilities:

- Education must reflect closely the society and the community, so inclusive education needs to stay in touch with the society and the community.
- Education for children with disabilities should take into consideration those experiences and scientific conclusions of developed countries which are appropriate with the practical situation of Vietnam.
- Education for children with disabilities requires more resources than that for normal children. It is necessary to acquire domestic preferential resources and international assistance.
- The coordination of line ministries, branches, domestic and international organizations is a prime condition to achieve objectives in education for children with disabilities.

56 MDF Indochina, Training and Consultancy. The NCCD’s strategic orientation process; Main findings of the Interviews. 2004, P. 2.
Mr. An stated his expectations for NCCD roles as the following:

- To coordinate among domestic and international organizations
- To coordinate activities in communities, society, and families of children with disabilities.
- To incorporate education for children with disabilities in the general disability development strategy.
- To provide information on education for children with disability at local and international level.
- To be the focal point to record achievements in education for children with disability in Vietnam

It is important to note this last expectation, as several other offices could conceivably be covering the same role, including the PEDC and the EFA office57.

Finally, the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) has recently been formed to support government priorities on education. The consultative working groups include donors, NGOs and government in an attempt to “improve aid effectiveness and to reduce transaction costs.” The Education Working Group follows in the steps of several other such groups on other topics over the last decade of international aid involvement in Vietnam. Regular meetings are planned quarterly to review Education for All achievements, Education management and information systems and primary pupil achievement58.

57 An, Dang Tu, op. cit.
SECTION 3: IMPLICATIONS AT LEVELS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL: TEACHERS, CHILDREN (DISABLED AND NON-DISABLED) FAMILY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

These questions should be addressed at school level at an inclusive regular Primary School

18. Interview a head teacher or principal of an inclusive regular school
   a) What steps are taken to prepare Head Teachers or Principles for the inclusion of CWD in regular schools?
   b) What specific actions are taken at school management level to implement directives from Educational administration? What directives are given to Head Teachers and then what action do they take?
   c) What steps are taken to prepare teachers to cater for students with a diverse range of abilities and disabilities?
   d) What steps are taken to prepare students for the inclusion of CWD in the regular school and classes?

At the inclusive school that we visited at Vinh Phuc Province, Yên Lac town and Trung Nguyên commune, the Head Teacher (teacher chosen from the school by other teachers for the period of one year), told us that no particular training is given specifically for the Head of the school. Teachers are given training at this school in both in-service and longer formal training programs.

The Head Teacher informed us that a criteria for being selected as an ‘excellent school’ by the People’s Committee is that 85% of children with disabilities in their area should be in school. However, it was unclear how these statistics were measured, only that the teachers were content to be able to be considered an “excellent school” through their efforts in this regard.

The Head teacher expressed a desire to have more specific legislation which could then be implemented by the school. However, regular visits by the Department of Education and Training and from Ministry of Education and Training officials are common for this pilot school. Staff from Save the Children Sweden also visit regularly.

Some training is provided for the other students and for parents about the inclusion of children with disabilities in the school.
19. Interview a classroom teacher in a class with CWD in an inclusive regular school.

   a) What preparation have you had for including CWD in your classes?
   b) Have you had any special training?
   c) What teacher training have you had? Please describe your teacher training programme?
   d) What qualifications did you have to become a teacher? How many years at school?
   e) What is your opinion of including CWD in regular classes?
   f) What are the advantages of including CWD in regular classes?
   g) What problems or challenges do you experience?
   h) Are there more boys than girls with disabilities in your classes?

One teacher acknowledged that the evaluation demands on children with disabilities was different than for other children. Children with disabilities could still pass into a higher grade even if they had not achieved the same level as other students in their classes.

All of the teachers we interviewed had attended courses on inclusive education at the College of Vinh Phuc Province. Their courses were one-year long and the teachers lived on campus in a hostel. All teachers in Vinh Phuc Province are said to follow this class. Students need to take an entrance exam in order to attend this class. Teachers can also take in-service courses. Teacher-training courses are also given at the school for all teachers. According to the teachers, all schools have a policy of inclusive education in the province.

Teachers recognized that there may be several more disabled boys than girls in classes but there were not official numbers showing these statistics. They added that some other classes could have more girls than boys. Most of the children with disabilities according to the teachers are children with learning disabilities. Ha, the student we interviewed, was considered an exception to this rule. However, Ha clearly had both learning disabilities and physically disabilities. She cannot write as her hands are not coordinated enough.

The teachers said that they had realized on their own that the movement toward inclusive education would be easier on the teaching staff, as all children with disabilities in the same classroom is too difficult for one teacher to handle. Furthermore, the teachers pointed out that it is useful for the disabled children to have a student helper and have formalized this process. Each class has not more than three disabled children. The teacher directs the class and has other children help. They said that school fees for these student helpers were waived as an incentive for other children to become involved. There is a special class for deaf children, where there are six students.

One of the greatest advantages of inclusive education was the possibility of having students assist teachers with the children with disabilities. Another advantage is that the school is closer to home and therefore the costs associated with education are lower. Furthermore, the environment is friendlier with no discrimination towards children with disabilities, so that these children can develop in a normal way and live with their parents at home. If children with disabilities were not welcome in their school, the teachers commented, most would stay at home, not go to special schools. Finances remain the main problem. Some of the children with disabilities may live with relatives nearby, so that even an inclusive school acts as a magnet for bringing more children with
disabilities. The teachers also acknowledged that special schools have advantages not granted to inclusive schools. In special schools the teachers should have more in-depth training and have greater expertise and skills in teaching the children with disabilities. Special schools also have more equipment to help children with special needs. One other possible advantage of special schools is that the children are in a certain system that could allow them to gain access to secondary schools or to vocational training which could then help them to get jobs upon graduation. Another comment by the teachers was that the students are not likely to continue after primary school since the focus thus far in teacher training has been solely on disabled children in primary school. They said that after finishing the 1st through the 5th grades, these children would likely stay at home as secondary schools are not yet developed and ready to accept children with disabilities.

Tuyêt, a teacher in an urban primary school, was very proud of the fact that she had trained a blind child for many years who moved on to secondary school. She now has a deaf child in her class. She still meets occasionally with the blind student to check on her progress since she lives nearby. However, she is faced with some difficulties as she does not have enough supplies for her studies.

The teachers also said that encouragement for them would be vastly appreciated, in the form of regular awards for teaching children with disabilities. They also support each other in these efforts informally, but made it clear that more institutional support would be welcome. They pointed out that even in teaching other children preparation is demanding, but for children with disabilities they need extra time and materials and do not receive any special support for these extra efforts. While having higher salaries would be one way of compensating the teachers, they commented that special thanks or awards would also be welcome forms of compensation. They recommend that MOET consult with teachers on how to reward and support good teaching. Awards at provincial and country level would be welcome.
20. Interview a CWD in a class in an inclusive regular school
   a) Did you want to go to the regular school?
   b) What is it like for you attending the regular school?
   c) What do you like best about attending the regular school?
   d) What problems or difficulties do you have attending the regular school?
   e) Did you go to school before you went to the regular school?
   f) What age did you start school and what school did you attend?
   g) Who made the decision for you to go to school?
   h) Did your parents want you to go to school?

Ha is a 14-year old student at Vinh Phuc school about an hour from Hanoi. She had never attended school before being able to be included in this inclusive primary school at the age of XX. She is several years older than her classmates but performs very well. She enjoys very much coming to school with the other students and her family also added that she has become physically much more healthy and more open and happy at home. She eats better and interacts more regularly with her family. She enjoys learning all subjects and giving ideas to the class. She reported no particular difficulties in attending school. She only attends the morning session however, which could be due to difficulties in transportation. Most students arrive on bicycles and she is in a wheelchair and must be taken the 2 kilometers to her home, where she lives with her grandparents and siblings. Ha said that she had a very good memory and is third in her class in spite of the fact that she has not yet learned to write. The teacher will ask her questions and test her orally on many of their subjects. She is best at mathematics.

21. Interview a non-disabled peer in the same class as a CWD
   a) What do you think about having CWD in your class and school?
   b) Tell me the things you like?
   c) Tell me the things you don’t like?

The student helper of Ha (also named Ha), said that she enjoyed going to school with children with disabilities because she enjoyed helping them. She added that she can learn from them as well and helps Ha to play and to write her lessons. The two girls come from the same village and at times Ha will help her come to school, though her brother or other community members can also help to bring Ha to school. Ha said that there wasn’t anything she didn’t like about helping Ha, but that it was sometimes difficult to understand her voice. She can also not yet write for herself so she must be helped to write things at times.

22. Interview a family member of a CWD attending a regular inclusive school
   a) Did you want your child to go to the regular school? What were your reasons?
   b) Did you have a choice between a regular and an inclusive school?
   c) Is your child happy at the regular school?
   d) Are you happy with the way your child is treated at the regular school?
   e) What do you like best about having your child attend the regular school?
   f) Have there been any difficulties or problems?
   g) Was your child at school before she/he went to the regular school? Where?
   h) Why did you decide to send your child to the regular school?
   i) Would you send your girl with disabilities to school, as well as your boy with disabilities? What are your
reasons?

Ha did not have the opportunity to attend any other school before she attended this inclusive school. This school is only about 2 kilometers away from her grandparents’ home, thus allowing them to send her there without great additional costs. Ha has three other brothers and sisters, her parents live and work in Ho Chi Minh City. The family seemed relatively affluent for the village and province in which they live. Ha went to school in the beginning because the teachers came to tell the grandparents that she would be welcome. The family was reticent at first, and feared community reactions against Ha including other children making fun of her.

Visits to the doctor early on were also not encouraging, the doctor recommended rehabilitation but not study for Ha. Before Ha attended school she visited a famous hospital in Hanoi where rehabilitation is performed. Nguyen Dait Tu is a famous therapist, however the family found the therapy very expensive with few results and Ha’s condition did not greatly improve.

Since Ha has gone to school, she no longer has seizures and her physical condition overall has improved greatly. After she started school she has become much happier overall. Before, she stayed in her room alone, but now she communicates more freely and plays more regularly with her siblings. Overall the family was very content with her treatment by other students at school. However, they were less impressed with assistance provided by medical experts and have since ceased regular treatments. The best outcome of inclusive education is providing Ha with greater experience in the community with other non-disabled students. If all students in her school were disabled, she would not have been able to advance so clearly in her skills in interacting with others.

Her family is rightly very proud of Ha. They had several stories to illustrate her impressive memory, including that fact that she remembers the names of the foreign experts who have visited the school (including our own) after hearing them only once. She can also read now thanks to attending school.

The family was also curious about possibilities of meeting people with disabilities who have had some success in their lives to show it was possible to succeed. They recommended newsletters to the district and commune levels to learn more about what possibilities exist in the country for children with disabilities. Parents don’t know much about how to proceed, especially for secondary and tertiary school. Parents are also not aware of laws and policies and don’t know about the system that exists at the central level. They do have meetings with teachers who give some guidelines on how to proceed. There is also a community support group that works for disability under the People’s Committee. Information could be sent to the People’s Committee at the Commune level.

23. Interview a community member or local official
   a) What do you think about having CWD attend the regular schools?
   b) Do members of the community support the inclusive schools?
   c) Do you see any problems in having CWD in regular schools?
d) Are any meetings held in the community to raise awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities, and the need for children with disabilities to attend school?

No interviews were undertaken with community members who were knowledgeable about CWD in schools. However, in many of the IE programs there has been attention paid to the community component of inclusive education. The teachers at the inclusive school in Vinh Phuc mentioned that Rädda Barnen had undertaken to educate parents along with other community members and that this education had played a role in encouraging parents of non-disabled children to understand and accept having children with disabilities in the same classroom as their children.

SECTION 4: IMPLICATIONS AT LEVELS OF SPECIAL SCHOOL, PRE-SCHOOL, EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRE OR SERVICE, AND INCLUSIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL, AND TEACHER, CHILD (DISABLED AND NON-DISABLED) FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

No interviews were undertaken at special schools, pre-schools or early intervention centres on this visit. Information about these systems is available in the earlier overview section 1 under questions 7, 8 and 9.

If the opportunity arises address these questions to teachers, students and parents of children with disabilities at:
   • Special school
   • Pre-school
   • Early intervention centre or service
   • Inclusive Secondary schools

Where it is not possible to obtain information from all sectors please observe the order of PRIORITIES as listed above.

24. Interview a Head Teacher or a classroom teacher in a Special School.
   a) What is your view of inclusive schools – placing children with disabilities in regular schools and classes?
   b) What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of special schools?
   c) Would you like to teach in a regular school?
   d) What training have you had for your position at a Special School?

25. Interview a parent of a disabled child attending a Special School
   a) Are you happy with the education your child is getting at the Special School?
   b) Did you have a choice between the Special School and a regular inclusive school?
   c) Would you like your child to attend a regular inclusive school? Please give your reasons.

26. Interview a child at a Special School
   a) Tell me what you like about your school
   b) Would you like to go to a regular school instead of a special school? Why?
27. Interview a teacher at a Pre-school
   a) Do you have any children with disabilities at your Pre-school?
   b) Do you think children with disabilities should be able to attend pre-school

28. Interview a parent of a young disabled child attending an Early Intervention Centre or service
   a) What age was your child when you found out he/she had a disability?
   b) Who referred you to the Early Intervention Centre or service?
   c) How does the Early Intervention Centre help you with your child?
   d) What sort of school would you like your child to attend when she-he is older?
      Special School or regular inclusive school?

29. Interview a teacher at an inclusive secondary school
   a) What preparation have you had for including CWD in your classes?
   b) What teacher training have you had? Please describe your teacher training programme?
   c) What is your opinion of including CWD in regular classes?
   d) What are the advantages of including CWD in regular classes?
   e) What problems or challenges do you experience?
   f) Are there more boys than girls with disabilities in your classes?

30. Interview a parent of a youth with disabilities attending an inclusive secondary school
   a) Did you experience any difficulties getting your child enrolled in secondary school?
   b) Are you happy with the education your child is getting at the Secondary School?
   c) What do you expect your child to do when he/she finishes secondary school?

31. Interview a student attending an inclusive secondary school
   a) Did you want to go to the regular secondary school?
   b) What is it like for you attending the regular secondary school?
   c) What do you like best about attending the regular secondary school?
   d) What problems or difficulties do you have attending the regular secondary school?
   e) Who made the decision for you to go to the regular secondary school?
   f) Did your parents want you to go to the regular secondary school?
   g) What do you want to do when you finish secondary school?
SECTION 5: TEACHER TRAINING INCLUDING TRAINING FOR TEACHERS TO TEACH STUDENTS WITH DIVERSE ABILITIES IN REGULAR SCHOOLS

32. Interview Ministry of Education officials and visit Colleges or University departments responsible for teacher training for special education teachers and regular teachers who will teach in inclusive schools

a) Please describe your teacher education programme?
b) How long is the training to become a primary school teacher?
c) Does teacher training take place in a College or at University?
d) How do you select students for teacher training?
e) What educational qualifications must they have?
f) Do you have special training courses for teacher trainees who will teach CWD?
g) Do these teacher trainees teach in regular schools or special schools?
h) Do you provide comprehensive in-service training, with methodology and techniques for teaching children with diverse abilities, for all teacher trainees, including those who will teach in regular schools?
i) Do you provide in-service training for regular school teachers to enable them to teach children with diverse abilities?
j) Do you employ any untrained teachers?

Teacher training has been one of the most active areas of the IE implementation process in Vietnam in the past few years. There are now short-courses as well as one-year, two-year and three-year courses. NIESAC estimates that 30,000 preschool, primary school and lecturers for 81 teacher training colleges nationwide have had short courses on inclusive education. Entrance exams for teacher training in this field do not have any additional requirements for special education teachers.

Central to efforts of teacher training for inclusive education have been upgrading courses which are two years long for teachers with some teaching experience, who have had 12 years of formal schooling plus two years of teacher training (12+2). The upgrading courses can either confer the University-level degree to teachers with a teaching certificate of three years of pre-service training or award the 12+2 teachers with the third year in order to be awarded a teaching certificate. All new teachers for primary schools, as of recent government policies, will be required to have the 12+3 years of schooling which awards the teaching certificate. In other faculties of teacher training, there will be some courses on special education, which will allow all teachers—even those not specialized in this subject—to have some contact with special education. Several teachers of inclusive education have also been supported by CRS in attending Masters programs in special education in the United Kingdom in 2003 and 2004.

Presently, primary school teachers are not university-qualified. The teacher-training colleges in

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59 Ibid.
the provinces award certificates for three years of training. This is “formal” pre-service training that takes place before the trainee begins to teach. Primary school teachers who go through formal training for three years can add one extra year on special education. The three major specialties are for hearing-impaired children, visually-impaired children and intellectually-impaired children. A fourth will be added for children with various disabilities. Some teachers are employed after only one-year of training.

According to NIESAC, there are two main thrusts of the teacher-training platform. The first is to educate the teachers about the principles of inclusive education, including about individual education plans, how to modify their lesson plans and to effectively instruct the students in a child-centered manner. The second is the specific training on certain kinds of impairments. In the regular curriculum, for hearing impairment this training lasts 6 weeks and includes some sign language. For children with learning difficulties, this includes how to learn concepts, task analysis and for visual-imperfections this is 3 weeks long with Braille and task analysis components. The process is to train key resources persons in the district who can then train others. Every year there is upgrade training in the year or during the summer. There is also in-service training in the classroom. There is the one-year in-service training and upgrading training. The 3-year courses are at the teacher training colleges. To be fully certified three years are required.

In-service training has been available since 1997. This is 2 years long, as mentioned above, and includes three kinds of specialties on children with, 1) hearing impairments, 2) intellectual-impairments and 3) visual-impairments. Two thirds of trainees will take just one specialization, while the other third will take all three skills. The classes are for two years and are full-time, every day. The courses are still more or less on an ad hoc basis and are held in conjunction with funding from NGOs etc. The main sponsors have been Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Komitee Twee and JICA. These three organizations aid in the offering of refreshment courses. There are also formal courses for which recruitment is held every year. Students who finish high school can take entrance exams for these courses. They can follow these studies in parallel with other courses for 4 years. Afterwards, they can teach primary or preschool in inclusive or special schools. Primary teachers teach every subject, while secondary teachers can be more specialized.

Komittee Twee, working in Vietnam since 1977, has been focused on teacher training programs since 1992. Several distinct projects included Education for Hearing-Impaired Children supported by the Institute of Deaf in Holland from 1992–1996 which instituted long and short-term training curricula for teachers of hearing-impaired children. From 1993–2003, Komitee Twee supported the development of the Hanoi Pedagogic University, from a department of Special Education to the establishment of the first separate special education faculty in 2001. Ho Chi Minh and Da Nang Pedagogic University added a special education faculty in 2003. Faculties of special education were also added to Early Childhood Education Colleges No. 1 in Hanoi and No. 3 in Ho Chi Minh City in 2003. Two-year in-service training courses include training for teaching for hearing-impaired, intellectually-impaired and visually-impaired children. At the provincial level there is some of each of these courses as well. Courses for teachers have been introduced...
in the 5 teacher-training universities nationwide: Hanoi, Da Nang, Quy Nhon, Ho Chi Minh City and Dong Thap\(^{61}\).

At Teacher Training College No.3 in Ho Chi Minh City, there is, at present, a program for training teachers for early intervention for children of kindergarten age that includes teaching for hearing-impaired, intellectually-impaired and visually-impaired children. This training so far has been primarily for teacher trainers. From 1999-2003, there was also a training course for early intervention for hearing-impaired children. There are 33 early-intervention centers for hearing impaired children throughout the country. There are interventions at school about which people are informed through media, brochures and television. Children are provided with hearing aids if they need them. Early intervention for intellectually disabled children was taught to teachers of 30 regular kindergartens. This training included information on Individual Education Plans (IEP). Longer-term plans for teacher-training include expanding training on early intervention. Pre-service training is 3 years long and includes all subjects. In-service training includes 3 subjects as mentioned above, and lasts 24 months. There are also occasional short training programs over weekends and during breaks.

According to Ta Thuy Hanh of Rädda Barnen, support has been given to MOET in training teachers and parents about children’s rights in 1997. Support of a child-friendly environment is essential to understanding how to assist children with disabilities. However, some teachers still don’t respect children and submit some to punishment. Therefore one positive early contribution of Rädda Barnen activities is the broader understanding of all facets of children’s lives and appreciation for a new way of teaching, breaking out of old-fashioned molds and changing teaching methodology towards a more modern child-centered approach. Since 2000, RB has been trying to include inclusive education approaches in pre-service training at teacher training colleges. Children rights are becoming a part of general teacher training programs, including at the Department of Primary Teacher Education and in the World Bank teacher-training project. After the first evaluation in 1995 the focus was narrowed in 1996-2001 to include the following subjects: 1) community support, 2) MOET and NIES support on curriculum development 3) pre-service training, testing and revision should eventually be adopted on a nationwide scale. RB served as a catalyst with the government to spur on innovative ideas. The Evaluation of 2000 showed positive feedback for the child-rights component of education. Previously child rights months were only in October and November, but now this component is included all year long. Teachers use games, and other kinds of play-learning to try to instill respect for children’s rights. MOET includes children rights now in the curriculum along with moral education, country family, politeness and respect for the founding father, Ho Chi Minh. In a new textbook that covers up to grade 3 and the teacher’s guidebook these lessons are included.

There is not yet a plan in place to teach secondary-level teachers. One possibility is to have primary teachers to instruct secondary teachers in certain required skills. University authorities

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will bring training courses to secondary level in the coming years but no specific plans are yet in place.

A March 18, 2004 Decision by the Ministry of Education (No. 75/2004/QD-TCCB) outlines the following functionalities, responsibilities and structure for Center for Education of Children with Exceptionalities (CECE) who has the chief responsibility for teacher training:

Functions:
1. Doing research on special education field (People with Disabilities, Disadvantaged children, minority children and gifted children)
2. Building human resources for special education field
3. Counseling to MOET on scientific bases to develop strategy and curriculum of special education field

Responsibilities
1. Doing research on scientific bases to develop strategy and curriculum of special education
2. Develop models and curriculum of special education
3. Training and cooperative training on special education field
4. Doing scientific research on schools needs, teaching materials, pilot production of textbooks, teaching materials etc.
5. Counseling and supervising on special education
6. Gathering, processing and communicating information on special education
7. Cooperating with organizations, individuals all over the country and the world on special education

The following sections make up the body of NIESAC
- Section of Strategic Planning, Policy on Special Education Development
- Section on Intellectual Education Development
- Section on Education for People with Hearing Difficulty
- Section on Education for People with Seeing Difficulty
- Section on Education for Disadvantaged Children
- Section on Minority Education
SECTION 6: ACCESS TO TERTIARY EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

33. Interview University officials where people with disabilities are enrolled as students
   a) Is there a policy determining the right to tertiary education for people with disabilities?
   b) How many students with disabilities enroll each year?
   c) Is there a support system and special accommodations made for students with disabilities?

34. Interview a student with a disability attending University or tertiary training
   a) Did you have any difficulties being accepted for tertiary education?
   b) What is it like for you attending University or College?
   c) What problems or difficulties do you have attending University or College?
   d) Does the University or College provide any additional assistance to you?

No interviews were undertaken at tertiary level during this visit.
SECTION 7: ORGANIZATIONS OF AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Interview: Representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities and/or individuals with disabilities

35. Consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities

a) Has the Government or the Ministry of Education consulted with your organization in the formulation of policy to include children with disabilities in the educational system?
b) Has the Government established an advisory council of persons with disabilities to inform it on all policy decisions concerning persons with disabilities, including children?
c) Are members of organizations of persons with disabilities represented on any national Coordination Council on Disabilities?
d) Are members of parents associations of persons with disabilities represented on any national Coordination Council on Disabilities?
e) What were your personal experiences of education?
f) What do you think was the most important factor that encouraged you to attend school? (Such as family support, local government, disability organization support, etc.)

At present, the National Coordinating Committee on Disability (NCCD) is the sole consultative body for policy-making at the national level. However, as stated earlier, this body is limited in scope, as it is resident within the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs and has limited capacity for implementation of policy within the Ministry of Education. However, other efforts are underway for the Ministry of Education.

Through a meeting at the Disability Forum of international and local NGOs, we were able to have the input of a variety of organizations including from members of the National Blind Association, Bright Futures, and the Hanoi Disabled Students Club.

A significant frustration was evident in interviews with the member of the National Blind Association on the lack of technological supports for education of people with disabilities. Particularly, more software and other technical supports should be available for people with visual impairments. The government should create more opportunities that are not based on the individual’s ability to pay, as seems to be the case at present for many programs. Support had come from overseas organizations for Braille materials but not for enough more sophisticated tools. Furthermore, very few blind individuals are able to attend regular schools, only “excellent” students are able to attend and there seems to be a great disparity between the North and the South in opportunity, with greater possibilities in the South. Students who are able to attend schools at secondary level often studied in special schools before then were transferred to regular inclusive schools at higher grade levels. In computer science, there was a significant difference in support available for mainstream students than for special students. He wondered why technological advances were not arriving in Vietnam. Chances for tertiary schooling were slim for all students, not just for students with disabilities who can have added difficulties with entrance exams. Some universities have been “directed” by the government to accept blind students, however.
In addition, Van explained that some administrators, it seems, do not want to create inclusive schools, but to emphasize the charity aspect of all-disabled special schools to increase funds from abroad. This student, Van, still felt immense discrimination in his personal life and great barriers between himself and the outside world. He feels “weak” and “empty”. Fortunately, he was able to meet many volunteers in his years in school and has been able to be involved in a movement towards greater possibilities for people with disabilities. He also was refused entry to many high schools whose officials stated that no law exists requiring them to accept blind people. He has since opted for a distance learning program, however claimed that it was not entirely appropriate for him, that it was in fact not difficult enough. He feels that the most important issue is to amend laws so that people with disabilities can more easily access secondary and university education. Van suggested that all “excellent” student should gather together to present their demands to the government and have a common voice to authorities in overcoming obstacles. He recommended a meeting between the Ministry of Education and people with disabilities to discuss plans of action.

Several members of Bright futures also shared their experiences. Kim Oanh is enrolled in courses through the Distance Education Channel of the Hanoi University of Foreign Students (sic). Her mother was a teacher and so she was able to attend a regular school and was, in fact, the only disabled child in her school. Other teachers were more difficult to persuade to help her. Oanh dreams of becoming a teacher herself. She talks of the obstacles that exist however, including that people without disabilities are not sufficiently aware about people with disabilities and their needs. She was able to work as a consultant for World Vision in 2003 as an assistant to children and adults of Quang Tri province. She is also involved in other projects including the possibility of establishing a women’s club and making a newsletter for sharing information. She said that teachers are the most important link to encourage more children to go to school and that social and cultural development in urban and rural areas in order to improve the possibilities for children with disabilities in the future.

A student from the Hanoi Disabled Students Club stated that she was in her fourth year of school at the Hanoi University of Business Management. She is studying to be an accountant. She started school at the age of seven in Nam Dinh, 100 kilometers away from Hanoi. She was encouraged to go to school by family and friends but also because school is considered compulsory. She was helped by her parents to go to school at the primary level, but at the secondary level just friends assisted her. She received no particular support from the community, only from family and friends. She was the only child with a disability in her school when she was younger. She now knows about 10 other friends, all of whom have gone to school solely with the support of their families. She suggested that family provides the most support but that the government did not provide as much as it perhaps could have. She had to pay fees to school when she was young in Nam Dinh (in spite of the laws that exist against charging fees to children with disabilities). Encouragement for parents and friends to help as well as schools and the government to overcome resistance on the part of teachers and the community, including other students is important. She mentioned the case of a friend who stopped going to school after she met with resistance from her teacher who asked her why she was going to school. The girl was quite disappointed and dropped out afterwards. Her family had encouraged her to attend, but she stays at home now and has no communication with anyone. Lastly, she mentioned that inclusive education was very beneficial for her, as she has a great deal of self-confidence. People are more friendly because she knows how to integrate into the environment. She mentioned that there
could be more support in urban areas than rural areas to help children with disabilities integrate into school. The most important action to aid children with disabilities to go to school is for parents to understand the benefits of education. This is key, to have other people with disabilities help parents understand that their child can be educated and have a normal life. In rural areas, parents also need financial support. School should be free in practice, not just in law. Encouragement can also come from relatives and from the community. The community can implement laws for a barrier-free environment. Children should also have an individualized syllabus.

According to Van, of Bright Futures, there has been some consultation of their organization by MOET’s Center for Special Education, including in helping teachers and with programs for visually-impaired and hearing-impaired persons. Van went to a mainstream public school at the age of 5 in Hanoi. She left Hanoi during the war years however, from 1965 to 1973. She completed school and university in Hanoi, graduating in 1975. Van believes that current policies are sufficient but that there continues to be a significant gap between policy and practice. She mentioned the need for greater support at secondary and tertiary levels of education. Blind people for instance rely on others to help them by reading books out loud if they are not available in Braille, and by otherwise overcoming the lack of a specialized curriculum. Self-help organizations can assist people to go to class in their community. Sometimes children with disabilities are older than other children in class which is an added difficulty to integration. Some children can lose some years by spending too much time in medical care due to their physical challenges. Children can go to nonformal classes too, which can be more welcoming. Teachers are usually welcoming and helpful according to Van. Family is the key for aiding children with disabilities in rural areas and siblings can aid the child in their work at home. However, the great difficulty is often having enough money to feed everyone in the family, and some children with disabilities also need to do some work at home to help the family get by. Bright Futures teaches English and computer skills to disabled persons in the community as well as showing them small income-producing techniques. Members also pay fees, though there are no fees for disabled persons to take classes, other non-disabled students can pay to attend classes and this provides some income.

On the question of parental involvement in the disability education process, VVAF and CRS have both undertaken advocacy programs for parents in the past year or so. Parents associations are also part of the PEDC project on community awareness for disadvantaged group under Carlton Aslett. According to Anat Prag of CRS, some groups are already formed that do volunteer work with schools such as cleaning.
SECTION 8: CURRENT STATUS, PROCESS TOWARDS CHANGE AND PLANNING FOR FUTURE ACTION

The following questions are to be addressed to all informants or interviewees, with the exception of children, where inappropriate because of age or other factors

36. Respondents views on current situation, changes perceived as necessary and means of achieving change
   
   a) What is your opinion of the current provisions for the education of children with disabilities in your country?
   b) What further changes would you like to see in the education legislation, policy and implementation at school system level?
   c) What action will be necessary to achieve these changes?

Teachers thought that additional policies should be put into place to support teachers of children with disabilities, as there is not enough funding for teaching aids or for other rewards for good performance. The teachers were not well informed of government policy on free tuition for children with disabilities. They were proud of the fact that children with disabilities in their school were not charged fees, but explicitly stated that this was a local policy and that they were not aware of national legislation in this regard.

Ms. Thao of SCUK pointed out that one very important key to improving educational achievement for children with disabilities was to implement measurable guidelines. She said that before, malnutrition was not measured in Vietnam, but now that these measures are taken, support has been put into place to improve these rates. The allusion is of course to the need for statistical measurement of the achievement or lack thereof in schools for children with disabilities. Once indicators are put into place, more attention will be paid to this issue and resources found to improve the rates of schooling. Therefore, one recommendation is to ask MOET to report these statistics to the government.

However, as Anat Prag mentioned, measurable guidelines without concrete information and support on how to successfully reach these goals will leave the real end result, quality education for children with disabilities, out of reach.

Recommendations from the UNICEF-Vietnam report from 2003 include a major survey on disability prevalence, causes and types, services and needs (also suggested in the Kane survey 1999, p.63). Other recommendations for the government are to develop a comprehensive 5-year plan which should be a joint-plan for MOET, MOH and MOLISA and include the input of Ministry of Finance, CPFC and Ministry of Planning and Investment. The government should also develop a monitoring mechanism to follow progress of implementation and develop policy frameworks for target areas of early identification and intervention, inclusive education, community-based rehabilitation and vocational training. Finally the government should be communicating the contents of efforts through awareness campaigns. Other recommendations for the international community include coordinating inclusive education efforts in areas where CBR is in place, have regular coordinating meetings on CBR and IE, and involve disabled persons’
organizations in planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. All parties should continue to share information.

NIESAC recommends the prioritization of the following issues in order to attain the goals of the National Action Plan on Education for All:

1. Raising awareness of disabled children’s ability, need and right to learn, as well as community’s responsibility to ensure the equality in opportunity to access education of children with difficult circumstances, so as to realize equity in education for this target group.

2. Enhancing resources for inclusive education at both national and local level, especially for the teaching staff and educational administrators.

3. Developing inclusive education and early intervention settings in various regions, particularly in remote and mountainous regions.

4. Capacity-building for special schools and converting these institutions’ function into “resource centers” to support inclusive education.

5. Developing specific policies and guidelines in terms of inclusive education.

6. Conducting research on technical and instrumental solutions for disabled children’s education, such as sign language for the deaf, touch-handwriting for the blind, teaching aids and techniques etc.

Another recommendation that is essential to the development of guidelines is mentioned in reference to ECCE in a recent publication cited in this report. According to the author, it would be helpful to develop tools that can be used to "define specific indicators of family poverty, and at the same time define risk factors for child development." This advice could not be more true for identifying one of the key factors that prevents some children with disabilities from going to school. Besides all of the other challenges that face the child with disabilities, structural difficulties in the form of transportation, the payment of fees and the purchase of supplies could be those that can rely the most on external assistance to be overcome.

Recommendations on IE teacher training include: scaling up inclusive-education teacher training within the four provinces where most work has been done to date, developing IE in other provinces after “consolidation” of the process in these four provinces, develop resource units or small-scale resource centers to support IE work in the teacher training colleges, developing IE for pre-school and upper primary schools, be sure to include IE in other donor initiatives to improve

primary education and continue to advocate for IE^63.

37. Recommendations for input to the Guidelines for action to include children and youth with disabilities in school systems
   a) What particular points would you like to see included in the Guidelines For Action to include children and youth with disabilities in the school system?

SECTION 9: CONSULTANT INPUT

These should be presented under headings of Protocol document (until actual headings for Guidelines document have been determined.)

- Brief summary of any major recommendations for country actions to improve access to quality education for children and youth with disabilities
- Recommendations for regional Guidelines based on information obtained from country case study, including recommendations made by respondents.

Recommendations for country actions to improve access to quality education

1. Be aware of differences between policy and practice, particularly due to the absence of solid statistics to more accurately assess the reality of the situation on the ground. Take into account the reasons that children and families state for not sending their children or not attending school, seriousness of disability and weak health are the highest, while negative attitudes, financial considerations and embarrassment are also important.  
2. Attempt to consolidate and systematize efforts on inclusive education to gain greater advantage from training and experience already gained by some teachers and administrators. This could include more funding for on-going training efforts outside of the formal teacher-training system.
3. Develop a guidebook to services in provinces, districts and communes that can be used to understand the extent of coverage and the regional actors for all levels of services that aid children with disabilities in accessing schools. This could build on the 2003 study by UNICEF-Vietnam.
4. Use hospitals as another outreach point to find and aid parents of children with disabilities as parents will often contact medical authorities to address their childrens’ problems. The Ministry of Health is still primarily absent from these discussions while they could play an important role.
5. Develop guidelines to aid parents with costs associated with sending children with disabilities to school. Funds should be available to families in difficulty to help with fees, uniforms, books, transportation and any other associated costs.
6. Make more low-cost, high distribution documents to share how and why children with disabilities should go to school.
7. An essential point to consider is the slow extension of IE guidelines to groups of more severely disabled children and higher and higher levels of education and vocational training.

Recommendations for regional Guidelines

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64 Huff et al., op. cit., p. 30.
1. Consider the causes and effects of having a disabled child in the family, including poverty, limited ability for the caregiver to travel to work and leave the child at home, other socio-economic variables depending on the country and level of development. Develop a system to analyze the reasons that children do not go to school to help to overcome these specific obstacles. A kind of individualized education planning of the child and his or her relation to schooling, even before he or she arrives in the classroom.

2. Identify guidelines for all schools to include more children with disabilities but taking into account the level of development of the school and the country. In other words, recommendations for Brunei will differ from those for Vietnam. Have guidelines that act as a decision tree…(My country has x number of years of experience with education for children with disabilities, x number of trained teachers etc.) This could then lead to differing recommendations based on the starting point of the country.

3. Define inclusive education and make clear distinctions on desired outcomes…not simply to include children with disabilities but to have quality outcomes. Inclusive education may be better for the emotional and social development of the child, but if it comes at the price of individual assistance, that is unacceptable. Inclusive education is preferable to leaving children out of the system, but the best result will depend on the child him or herself.

4. Partner with NGOs, people with disabilities themselves and parents in order to keep a realistic tone to guidelines. What do parents and children need the most?

5. Develop guidelines based on the children’s needs. This could mean distinct guidelines for each of the major groups of children with disabilities, including those with motor difficulties and those children who are visually-impaired, hearing-impaired or intellectually-impaired. There could be another set of guidelines for all students. Guidelines should also take into account stakeholders, assigning “responsibility for different levels.

6. Share examples of research and policy papers in local languages with local policy and decision-makers.

39. Please specify and provide all the documents relating to your education system concerning the education of children and youth with disabilities, including documents on data, monitoring and review. Alternatively please advise where these can be obtained.

This would include documents on policy and legislation, regulations and directives and school level registration and assessment procedures, as well as statistical data, census questions, household or disability survey questions.

See Annex 2
ANNEX 1
List all institutions visited
List all respondents interviewed
This may include Information obtained from:

- Ministry or Directorate of Education
- National Bureau of Statistics
- Ministry of Education Statistics and Monitoring section
- Head teachers or School Principals
- Teachers in regular schools with children with disabilities included in regular classes
- Children with disabilities in inclusive schools
- Non-disabled peers in same class as children with disabilities
- Family members of children with disabilities enrolled in inclusive schools
- Community members or local government officials in communities where there are inclusive schools
- University and/or teacher training college personnel engaged in training special education teachers and regular teachers who will teach in regular inclusive schools
- Representatives of organizations of people with disabilities

In addition, information may be obtained from:

- Head teachers at Special Schools
- Classroom teachers at Special Schools
- Students at Special schools
- Parents of children attending Special Schools
- Teachers and coordinators of inclusive pre-schools
- Children and family members of children attending inclusive pre-schools
- Parents of children attending early Intervention Centres
- People with disabilities in the local communities
- Students with disabilities attending inclusive secondary schools, and their parents
- Teachers at inclusive secondary schools
- University staff at Universities and Colleges where students with disabilities are enrolled in tertiary studies
- Students with disabilities enrolled at Universities and Colleges
UNESCO BKK/ UNESCO Hanoi
Project on Education for All (EFA) Guidelines for Inclusive Education
Hanoi, Vietnam
11-20 October 2004

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National Blind Association

School visit
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School address

National Coordinating Committee on Disability

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Annex 2

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Annex 1:
List of Acronyms

EFA (Education for All)
NGO (Non Governmental Organization)
MOET (Ministry of Education and Training)
PEDC (Primary Education for Disadvantaged Children)
UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)
CWD (Children With Disabilities)
SCUK (Save the Children UK)
NIESAC (National Institute of Educational Strategies and Curriculum)
CECE (Center for Education of Children with Exceptionalities)
NCCD (National Coordinating Committee on Disability)
MOLISA (The Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs)
UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund)
MCNV (Medical Committee Netherlands-Vietnam)
SSHVO (Society for the Support of Vietnamese Handicapped and Orphans)
DOET (Department of Education and Training)
USAID (US Agency for International Development)
CRS (Catholic Relief Services)
INGO (International non-government organization)
ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education)
ECD (Early Childhood Development)
SCUS (Save the Children US)
CBR (Community Based Rehabilitation)
WHO (World Health Organization)
NSDC (National Statistical Data Collection)
CDS (Child Disability Survey)
MIS (Management Information System)
PEDC (Primary Education for Disadvantaged Children)
IE (Inclusive Education)
UNSCAP (United Nations System Conferences Action Plan)
ESWG (Education Sector Working Group)
JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency)
NIES (National Institute for Education Sciences)
VVAF (Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation)
CPFC (Commission for Population, Family and Children
MOH (Ministry Of Health)
KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and Practice)