

**WORK:**



**NO CHILD'S  
BUSINESS**



**VIETNAM**

2019 - 2024

# Work: No Child's Business in Vietnam

**Areas:** Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), Dong Thap Province  
**Sectors:** Informal sector, domestic work, agricultural sector, work in restaurants, factories, supermarkets and family enterprises.

**Partners:**

- Save the Children International in Vietnam (SCI)
- The Centre for Child Rights and Businesses
- UNICEF Vietnam

# 1,000,000

At the start of the programme, over 1 million children (more than 5% of all children in Vietnam) were in child labour.

# 3,000

child labourers and at-risk children were placed under child protection case management.

# 85%

Awareness of child labour and children's rights increased to 85%.

# 100%

New legislation has introduced school counsellors to all Vietnamese schools.

# 50,000

community members reached through awareness campaigns.

# 29% to 14%

The proportion of children working in Vietnam has decreased, from 29% in 2019 to 15% in 2024.



## Child labour in Vietnam

**More than 1 million children** between the ages of **5 and 17** (over 5% of the total number of children in Vietnam) were **involved in child labour** at the start of the programme period. The number of children engaged in child labour in Vietnam has **decreased in recent years**, from **29% at baseline to 15% in 2024**.

The WNCB programme was implemented in **Ho Chi Minh City** and **Dong Thap Province**, where **migration** is one of the main causes of child labour. **Poverty, lack of access to basic services** and a lack of awareness of children's rights also drive child labour in these areas.



## How we measure our results

- Key Performance Indicator studies (3x) during the baseline, mid-term and endline. In total, this included household surveys with over 1144 respondents, 179 focus groups discussions and 276 interviews in Vietnam.
- SenseMaker studies (3x) during the baseline, mid-term and endline to measure norms change in communities in which 81 adults and 175 children participated in Vietnam.
- Gender analysis to develop gender sensitive and transformative interventions
- Annual Outcome Harvesting to reflect on our interventions and contributions to change
- External mid-term review and final evaluation

## Impact summary

The programme achieved an overall reduction in the number of **children engaged in child labour**, dropping from **29% at baseline to 14.5% in 2024**. The **prevalence of child labour** was reduced from **30% to 15% for boys** and from **28% to 14% for girls between 2020 and 2024**.

In Ho Chi Minh City, child labour was reduced mainly among boys in construction and industry, and girls in domestic work. In Dong Thap Province, WNCB succeeded in reducing child labour by focusing on agriculture and fishing for boys, and domestic work for girls

# Stories of change

## Strengthening local and national child protection systems in Vietnam

Since the early 2000s, Vietnam's economy has rapidly developed, but not evenly. Large disparities exist between rural and urban areas and between regions. The poor, ethnic minorities and migrants struggle to make ends meet in growing cities. The effectiveness of social protection programmes for children is hampered by limited coverage and accessibility, including for children in remote or minority areas and children with disabilities.

To improve child protection systems in programme areas and at the national level, our partners used a systems-based approach. This has helped to develop better policies that look at the child, the family and the community as a whole, and includes better coordination of poverty, social, justice, labour and education policies. The systems approach also tackled social exclusion. Our goal: stronger, sustainable child protection systems in Vietnam, at all levels.

Through its systems-based approach, the WNCB Alliance in Vietnam has taken steps to eradicate child labour in communities. High-level engagement with the national government has led to improved national policies, programmes and legislation on child labour. In our work across sectors and at different levels, raising awareness of the link between education and the risk of child labour has been very important.

This is a story about the challenges and strategies for strengthening local and national child protection systems in Vietnam, and an overview of the changes our partners have achieved at different levels?

[wncb.org/story/strengthening-local-and-national-child-protection-systems-in-vietnam/](https://wncb.org/story/strengthening-local-and-national-child-protection-systems-in-vietnam/)

# Achievements

## Communities



“ Almost 3,000 child labourers and vulnerable children were placed under child protection case management and received support.

### Increased community awareness

WNCB partners reached over 50,000 community members through various initiatives such as awareness campaigns, child rights clubs, youth-led campaigns, parent-teacher associations, community forums and training for small businesses and communities on child labour prevention. As a result, awareness of child labour and children's rights has increased, with over 85% of community members understanding the impact of child labour by the end of the project.

Community engagement initiatives focused on education have increased parental awareness of education from 65% in 2020 to 85% in 2024. Community support for education initiatives has increased from 60% to 80% over the same period, demonstrating the success of the awareness campaigns. Reflecting the increased value placed on education by the community, school enrolment in the programme areas has increased from 79% in 2020 to 94% in 2024. During the programme period, the percentage of children aspiring to higher education or a career increased from 50% to 75%.

### Child protection systems and case management

Community-based child protection systems are now firmly established and operational in 10 communes in 4 districts of Dong Thap Province and in 8 communes in 4 districts of Ho Chi Minh City. In this context, 350 child protection officers and volunteers have been trained to understand child labour and case management. All Thao Dan social workers were trained in child protection procedures, improving their professional social work skills.

During the programme period, almost 3,000 child labourers and children at risk were placed under child protection case management and received support such as referrals, access to education, learning aids and social protection services.

### **Prevention of gender-based violence**

More than 120 teachers, child protection workers and members of women's associations in Ho Chi Minh City have been trained in gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence. Our work has shown that empowering women can reduce violence in the home and against children. Our work with mothers and women has also led to higher family incomes, fewer children dropping out of school, and higher status in their families and communities in the state.

## Schools



” 21,000 teachers/school counsellors have improved their social work and counselling skills.

### **Improved enrolment and attendance**

The WNCB project successfully increased enrolment and attendance of children aged 5-17 in the targeted areas, particularly those previously involved in child labour. In Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), a pilot programme targeting children from low-income families resulted in 95% of these children returning to school, with many receiving scholarships and educational support.

In Dong Thap, 580 students received vocational training and 2,700 vulnerable children received study kits to ensure they stayed in school. In HCMC, the WNCB programme provided school fees and training for 750 vulnerable children. These scholarships, emergency assistance and vocational tool kits have transformed children's access to education, increased school attendance and reduced child labour.

### **Child-friendly learning environments**

Working with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), our partners transformed 16 secondary and vocational schools in Ho Chi Minh City into child-friendly learning environments, leading to improved child protection systems. To achieve this, we trained key teachers on positive discipline, learning environment tools, and skills to protect against child labour and violence. MOET institutionalized 3 training packages and 1 child protection protocol in schools. As a result, by the end of the programme period, 21,000 teachers/school counsellors across the country had improved their social work and counselling skills. They are now better equipped to teach children life skills to prevent abuse, violence and child labour.



## Economic strengthening

“ Improved women’s status has led to higher family incomes, fewer children dropping out of school and less violence.

### Improved social and financial status of women

15 market linkage events in Ho Chi Minh City helped women start and link businesses. WNCB partners trained 80 women’s union members and 500 vulnerable women in financial management and business planning. We provided livelihood support and microfinance to support the development of 72 women’s businesses. This has increased women’s economic opportunities and resilience. These initiatives have also boosted household incomes and raised women’s social status and decision-making power. A powerful example comes from Dong Thap, where a group of women used their loans to set up a cooperative that now supports more than 50 families, providing a stable income and educational opportunities for their children. These women have become community leaders, advocating for the continuation and expansion of such programmes.

The improved status of these women in their communities over the course of the programme period has led to increased family incomes, fewer children dropping out of school, and reduced domestic violence, violence against children and child abuse.



## Private sector collaboration

“ Our partners successfully secured the inclusion of additional child rights criteria in the National Corporate Sustainability Index.

### Responsible business practices

During the programme period, we trained business associations to promote children’s rights and responsible business practices. These associations then trained 30 lower-tier suppliers, resulting in improved practices to prevent and remediate child labour in supply chains. By the end of the programme, local companies, trained and advised by our partners, had implemented measures to protect children in their supply chains. For example, five participating factories, ranging in size from 100 to more than 5,000 employees, developed action plans and improved human resources policies. Over 20 suppliers in the factories’ supply chains have been involved in the process and committed to preventing child labour and providing employment opportunities for young workers.

### New child rights criteria, clauses and guideline

Working with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), our partners successfully secured the inclusion of additional child rights criteria in the National Corporate Sustainability Index.

Thanks to the support of the WNCB programme, the National Action Plan for Responsible Business Practices in Vietnam now includes child-related clauses to protect children, promote their rights and promote responsible business practices in Vietnam throughout the supply chain. One guideline and case study were developed to guide the agriculture, fishery, coffee, cashew and service sectors and SMEs in tackling child labour. WNCB worked with the Vietnam Association for the Protection of Children’s Rights to organise capacity-building activities.

**Informal sector**

46 officials, including child protection officers, trade unionists and Cooperative Alliance staff, were trained to deliver child labour prevention messages to home-based enterprises. These officials then provided training to 520 enterprises in Dong Thap and HCMC, who committed to ending child labour.

**Improvements for young workers**

160 companies, government agencies and other stakeholders participated in two business forums in partnership with VCCI and formed a skills development network to improve employability and create more jobs for young people. Over 100 young workers were informed about their rights. Policy dialogues and consultations were held to protect their wellbeing and empower them.

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## Government



” All Vietnamese schools now have full-time counsellors, thanks to groundbreaking new legislation.

**Full-time school counsellors**

WNCB has been instrumental in introducing school counsellors in all Vietnamese schools. This legislation is ground-breaking as it obliges schools to hire full-time counsellors, with WNCB working with the Ministry of Education to improve services. School counsellors coordinate social work and child protection services.

They are now an essential element of the child protection system. They provide ongoing support to children and help identify and address child labour cases at an early stage.

The WNCB project has trained more than 21,000 teachers and child protection officers on the new government guidelines, ensuring their effective implementation at the grassroots level. The adoption of the guidelines has significantly strengthened Vietnam's child protection system, ensuring a more coordinated approach to the prevention of child labour. The guidelines have become a reference point for all child labour prevention activities. Local authorities, schools and businesses now better understand their roles and responsibilities in preventing child labour and protecting children's rights.

**National guidelines and policies**

With the support of the WNCB project, the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) has developed comprehensive national guidelines and policies to prevent child labour and improve child protection in Vietnam. These cover a wide range of child protection issues, including the identification and prevention of child labour, the reintegration of child labourers into the education system, and the provision of psychosocial support to children at risk. They also include measures to strengthen the capacity of local authorities and community-based child protection networks to respond effectively to child labour issues.

The guidelines were formally adopted by the Government of Vietnam, in collaboration with MOLISA, and incorporated into the national child protection policy. This marked a significant step forward in aligning Vietnam's child protection framework with international standards, particularly those of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

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Save the Children

**THE CENTRE**  
FOR CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS