

Reducing Gender Inequality in Unpaid Care and Domestic Work in Vietnam: The Case of Ethnic Minorities

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Abbreviations

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| CAF | Centre for Analysis and Forecasting | MOLISA | Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product | MPI | Multidimensional Poverty Index |
| GSO | General Statistics Office | SD | Standard Deviation |
| ILO | International Labor Organization | SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| LFS | Labor force survey | SE | Standard Error |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals | UCDW | Unpaid Care and Domestic Work |
| MOET | Ministry of Education and Training | UNDP | United Nations Development Program |

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The authors include Nguyen Thang, Nguyen Thi Thu Phuong, and Pham Minh Thai (CAF/VASS). The paper presents authors' data analysis of the Labor Force Survey by the General Statistics Office (GSO), and a phone-based survey by CAF/VASS on unpaid care and domestic work in Vietnam, with a focus on ethnic minorities.

The phone-based survey on unpaid care and domestic work in Vietnam interviewed 1,000 ethnic minority households across the country's 63 provinces. The survey was coordinated by Nguyen Thi Quyen and Hoang Duc Hung (CAF/VASS). The survey sample is nationally representative. The sampling was conducted by Vu Hoang Dat (CAF/VASS). Survey data processing was conducted by Lu Kim Phuong (CAF/VASS). Other supports were provided by Hoang Thanh Tu (CAF/VASS) and Nguyen Huy Quang (internship at CAF/VASS).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Context

Vietnam is committed to the recognition and value of unpaid care and domestic work

Over the past 10 years, unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) has received significant increased attention from economic policy makers. UCDW can be defined as those household services performed by household members for the direct use of other household members that for technical reasons are still not adequately captured in measures of GDP and work. These services include household maintenance activities such as cooking, cleaning, washing and household sanitation activities, care activities performed for children and the elderly, household health care, and informal education and skills building that takes place within the home. UCDW has received increased attention from economic policy makers because it affects development and growth.

In this light, in 2017, Vietnam issued a National Action Plan in 2017 to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which included 17 general goals and 115 specific goals, as well as establishing a monitoring and evaluation system for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recently, the Government issued Decision No. 681/QĐ-TTg, dated June 4, 2019, "On the promulgation of the roadmap for the implementation of Vietnam's sustainable development goals until 2030," which includes 119 indicators and designates the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) as the coordinating agency. According to Indicator 49, time spent on UCDW by women should not exceed 1.5 times that of men by 2020, 1.4 times that of men in 2025, and 1.3 times that of men in 2030, and the focal point for this indicator is the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA)

This is the key monitoring indicator for SDG 5.4 "Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies, as well as the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and family, as appropriate." The implementation of SDG 5.4. is critical to achieving the dual goals of equity (gender equality) and efficiency (assisting workers, particularly female workers, in selecting the best job for their abilities), thereby increasing sustainable income and contributing to poverty reduction.

To that end, the General Statistical Office, which is part of the Ministry of Planning and Investment, has included questions about UCDW in the quarterly Labor Force Survey (LFS) since 2019. While no time use surveys were planned, LFS provides valuable information to track Vietnam's progress on SDG 5.4 and facilitates relevant analysis on a regular basis.

Box 1. Vietnam's UCDW policies and institutions in brief

Vietnam has laws and policies in place to redistribute responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work. According to the Law on Gender Equality (2006), both men and women are responsible for sharing unpaid care and domestic work. According to the Law on Marriage and Public Family (2014), unpaid care and domestic work should be fully appreciated. Three main policies aim to share UCDW responsibilities, including family-friendly working policies (public subsidies for maternity leave, family-friendly working conditions), combating discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes, and mainstreaming a care lens in all public policies (e.g., social protection program that supports caretakers). The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism's Family Department and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs' Department of Gender Equality are the two key government bodies working on such policies.

To address the issue of unpaid care and domestic work, Vietnam has two main policies: (1) investing in time-saving technology and infrastructure, such as access to safe water, and (2) expanding public and care services, such as childcare and elderly care. In terms of infrastructure investment, clean water systems programs, particularly in rural, mountainous, and disadvantaged areas, receive special attention. These programs help to improve living conditions, including reducing the burden of obtaining clean water, and thus benefit women disproportionately. In terms of public and care services, the Education Law of 2005 requires improving the childcare system in Vietnam. Access to kindergartens has been expanded for children aged three months to six years. During the school day, the educational program is extended. The Law on the Elderly of 2009 governs the content of elderly support, such as social protection policies for the elderly from low-income families or without family support, such as a monthly allowance, medical benefits, and access to aged care facilities. According to the Labor Code and the Social Insurance Law, the mother is entitled to 6 months of maternity leave and reduced working hours, while the father is entitled to 5 days of leave to care for the newborn child. There is a leave provision that allows women to take time off to care for their children. It should be noted, however, that people in rural areas and those in informal employment may benefit little, if at all, from these policies.



Unpaid care and domestic work is an issue in Vietnam, limiting women's labor force participation more than men

According to a review of the literature, the heavy and unequal burden of UCDW on women in Vietnam prevents many working-age women from obtaining paid work and access to decent work. As Vietnam's population ages¹, the burden of unpaid elder care increases, which disproportionately affects women. Meanwhile, population aging requires increased female labour market participation, including increased working hours and productivity, if Vietnam is to significantly increase GDP per capita and achieve its ambitions of becoming an upper-middle-income and high-income country by 2025 and 2045, respectively.

There is a scarcity of empirical evidence on UCDW at the national level, particularly among ethnic minorities

The review of the literature also reveals that the findings of existing studies are not nationally representative of the Vietnamese population as a whole, nor of ethnic minorities in particular. Meanwhile, when deciding between paid and unpaid care work, women in more developed UCDW markets, particularly large urban areas, face fewer constraints than their counterparts in ethnic minority areas. Gender and ethnic disparities are thus intertwined, reinforcing one another. This highlights the importance of conducting an in-depth investigation into the UCDW issue in an ethnicity-sensitive manner.

2. A brief overview of the CAF-CARE collaborative research on unpaid care and domestic work in Vietnam, with a focus on ethnic minorities

This study, funded by Global Affairs Canada, was conducted in 2021-2022 by the Centre for Analysis and Forecasting under the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences with support from CARE Vietnam, used a combined quantitative and qualitative approach to study UCDW in Vietnam, with a focus on ethnic differences. Quantitative analyses on UCDW based on LFS 2020, as well as a phone-based survey in 2021, which interviewed 1,000 ethnic minority households across the country's 63 provinces, yielded nationally representative findings on UCDW for Vietnam in general, and ethnic minorities in particular. The study's national representativeness presumably distinguishes it from others conducted to date.

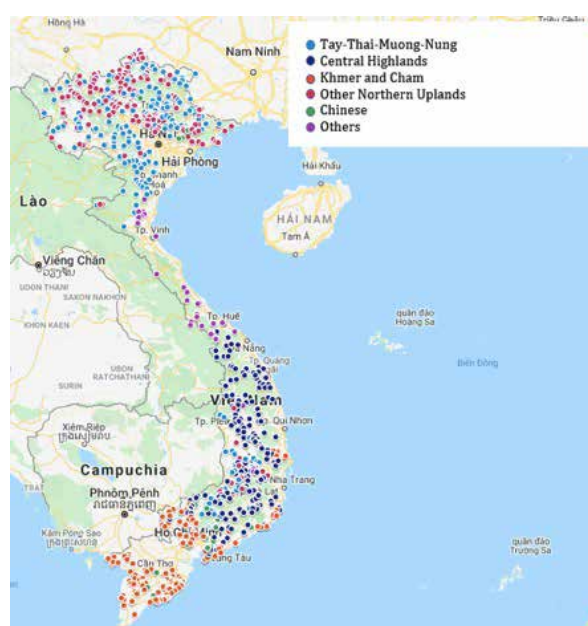


Figure 1. Surveyed area

¹ According to the General Statistics Office (GSO), data from the Population Census 2019 show that in 2026, Vietnam will enter a period of an aging population. (Source: <https://www.gso.gov.vn/du-lieu-va-so-lieu-thong-ke/2020/12/thong-cao-bao-chi-ket-qua-nghien-cuu-chuyen-sau-tong-dieu-tra-dan-so-va-nha-o-nam-2019/>)

3. Key findings

The following are the results of an analysis of the Labor Force Survey 2020 dataset:

- **Women are overwhelmingly the primary caregivers in the home.** In comparison to other categories of UCDW, women outnumber men in terms of the percentage of those doing domestic work. The gender gap in housework is 15.5 percentage points, with 93.2 percent of women doing housework compared to 77.8 percent of men. Meanwhile, the gender gap in childcare in the household is only 6.2 percentage points, or 59.4 percent of women versus 53.2 percent of men.
- **The gender gap in time spent on UCDW is significant.** Women devote 8.3 more hours per week to UCDW than men. When various individual characteristics (such as age, marital status, ethnicity, education, urban/rural, region, economic sector, formal/informal employment, as well as wage workers' income) are controlled for, this result holds true (with slightly different figures on the gap).
- **Once other personal characteristics are controlled for, time spent by working-aged people on UCDW tends to increase with their level of education attainment, beginning with lower secondary schooling.** This could imply that more educated people are more willing to shoulder the UCDW burden.
- **The largest gender gap is found in the time spent on house chores,** and then, on child care, while the smallest is reported on health care.
- **Working-age people with a higher level of education devote more of their workday to child care, a trend shared by the majority of ethnic groups.** This link could imply that more educated adults are more aware of the significance of early childhood development. This observation may point to the possibility of a vicious cycle of intergenerational transmission of inequality in human capital, which is a critical component of people's well-being.
- **Women spend significantly less time on paid work than men.** Women's paid work time accounts for only 76.3 percent of men's paid work time.

The following are the key findings from the phone survey, which was conducted solely among ethnic minorities:

- **UCDW and labour market participation**
 - » **UCDW limits labor-force participation, disproportionately affecting women and people from poor households.** Around one in every three jobless people identified UCDW as a barrier to finding paid work, and this percentage is considerably higher among female respondents and those heading poor households.
 - » **UCDW reduces labour mobility.** Three in ten employed people cited the UCDW burden as a reason for not changing jobs. This rate varies greatly by ethnic group, with the more prosperous Chinese and Khmer-Cham ethnic groups having the lowest rates.
 - » **The burden of UCDW has a disproportionately negative impact on the ability of the poor and undereducated to change jobs. In total,** 42.2 percent of poor-household respondents cited UCDW as a reason for their inability to find a new job, compared to 24.5 percent of non-poor-household respondents. The UCDW burden cited as a barrier to changing jobs varied according to education level. While 13.8 percent of respondents with upper secondary education cited the UCDW burden as a barrier to changing jobs, this percentage ranged between 35.7 percent and 37.8 percent for

respondents with lower levels of education attainment. In other words, the UCDW burden is a greater barrier to labour mobility for more disadvantaged people.

- **Gender-based intra-household decision-making regarding UCDW**

- » **UCDW decision-making in the household is slightly skewed towards men.** In the majority of households, slightly more than six out of ten, the wife and husband make joint decisions on UCDW division. In the remaining households, there is a slight gender disparity in favour of men. In 18.1 percent and 20.2 percent of households, the wife and husband make the majority of UCDW decisions, respectively. With a few exceptions, this is a fairly consistent situation across various types of households.
- » **Women, according to more than seven out of ten respondents, bear nearly all of the UCDW burden.** This proportion varies slightly by gender, 82.9 percent for female respondents and 71.2 percent for male respondents. Meanwhile, 51.1 percent of respondents reported that the majority of men do not engage in UCDW at all. This percentage varies considerably by gender, with females reporting 70.3 percent and males reporting 48.3 percent. Furthermore, according to 43 percent of respondents, women do UCDW because the men in the house want them to, while men do not do it because they are afraid of being laughed at if they do, according to slightly more than one-quarter of respondents.
- » **More than two-thirds of respondents believe women do more UCDW because it suits their abilities.** Housework is primarily a female responsibility, according to 70.8 percent of respondents. Women should be in charge of childcare and sick care, according to 66.6 percent and 68.6 percent of respondents, respectively. These opinions vary significantly by respondents' educational attainment, with significantly lower percentages of people with upper secondary education.

- **The availability, accessibility, and utilization of social services**

- » **Availability of childcare services in ethnic minority communities varies greatly depending on the type of service.** Preschool services were reported to be available to 62.9 percent of households with children under the age of two and 43.9 percent of households with children over the age of two. Meanwhile, only 19.7 percent of parents report that their children have access to school transportation, and the availability of this service varies greatly across ethnic groups, with the Central Highlands having the lowest rate, with only 7.3 percent reporting access. Access to all types of childcare services is also unequal by poverty status, favouring non-poor households.
- » **Nursing homes for the elderly, centers for people with disabilities, and job placement for women are all in short supply.** Nearly 87 percent of households reported the presence of a public health center, and 57 percent reported the presence of such drinking water supply projects. On the contrary, some services that could help women reduce their UCDW burden or find paid work are in short supply. Only 11.4 percent, 11.2 percent, and 18.9 percent of respondents reported a nursing home for the elderly, a disability center, and a job placement center for women, respectively.
- » **The use of available childcare services by households with children under the age of six is limited.** Less than three out of ten respondents from households with children under the age of six say they use childcare facilities for their children, despite the fact that a significantly higher percentage of these respondents say the services are available in their commune. This presumably is due to a number of factors (i) the distance between home and school is a major impediment; (ii) the difficult road and weather conditions; (iii) some parents are unable to pick up their children from school for a variety of reasons.

- » **Eight in ten homes with senior citizens aged 70 or older rely on public health services.** Meanwhile, only 14 percent of these families reported using the services of private providers, compared to 41.7 percent availability, presumably due to their limited affordability.
- » **Employment and training services are used infrequently, far less than their availability warrants.** This could be explained by the well-documented low quality of the services.

4. Policy recommendations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the following recommendations can be made to reduce gender inequality in UCDW, in accordance with the Vietnamese government's commitment:

- **Improving evidence-based and ethnicity-sensitive policymaking to reduce gender disparities in unpaid care and domestic work.**
 - » UCDW should be considered when developing policies for education, social protection, labour market access, infrastructure investment, and public service delivery.
 - » Identify and implement specific action plans to evaluate policy efforts to reduce gender inequality in UCDW for various ethnic minority groups.
 - » Although the government has established a roadmap for reducing gender inequality in UCDW, the aggregate target in UCDW should be disaggregated by ethnicity to allow tracking progress among ethnic minorities and ensure that they are not left behind on this dimension of people's well-being.
 - » Although LFS regularly asks pertinent questions about UCDW, it should be supplemented with appropriate time use surveys (TUS). TUS are not required to be performed as frequently as LFS because they are more expensive and time consuming. Instead, they can be performed once every 5 years to align with the 5-year planning cycle, or once every two and a half years to provide inputs for the 5-year plan's regular mid-term review.
 - » As the Vietnamese economy and society mature, policymakers and various stakeholders will need more credible evidence to make decisions or to engage in policy discussion. This requires the use of sound methodology to analyze collected data on UCDW for use by policymakers and other stakeholders. The analysis should be done on a regular basis and should go beyond simply generating aggregate numbers to allow for a better understanding of the structural relationships between gender inequality and other important factors, including ethnicity.
- **Reducing harmful social norms and biases against women**
 - » The importance of education in changing harmful social norms, held by both women and men, toward gender equality at home cannot be overstated. As a result, it is critical to continue to improve education at all levels while ensuring equal access to quality education for all population groups, including ethnic minorities.
 - » It is also critical to integrate educational content and practice learning projects for students about UCDW responsibility-sharing at home at all schooling levels, beginning with preschool. The content of such an education program should be tailored to ethnic minorities, including local stories and good examples.
 - » The Women's Union, including its grassroots unit, should be proactive in promoting gender equality at home, with a special focus on ethnic groups with strong social norms against women.

They can accomplish this effectively by collaborating with other stakeholders such as MOLISA, CEM, MPI, the media, non-governmental organizations, and the research community.

- **Redistributing UCDW between the state and the family by investing adequately in infrastructure and social services that have a significant impact on reducing women's burden**

- » Budget priority should be given to national infrastructure and care service provision programs aimed at reducing and redistributing UCDW.
- » A regional approach should be prioritized. For example, the Central Highland ethnic group is the most vulnerable, and there is a significant gender gap in UCDW time spent on both health care and childcare.
- » Continue to build on successes in promoting the availability and accessibility of infrastructure for education and health services, particularly in providing water supply at home for ethnic minority communities.

- **Reducing gender inequality in UCDW by improving social protection and labour policies**

- » Due to the interdependence of gender inequality at home and at work, reducing the former requires reducing the latter. As a result, policies must target both.
- » Social protection policy, including active labour market instruments, should prioritize the establishment of employment service centers and vocational skill training programs for women. The issue of unpaid care and domestic work should be mainstreamed in the system of social protection policies and active labour market instruments, particularly those for the development of ethnic minorities.
- » Using modern technology and scaling up successful models to reduce UCDW burdens.





**UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK
IN VIETNAM: AN OVERVIEW**

CHAPTER 1



Vietnam is committed to the recognition and value of unpaid care and domestic work

Over the past 10 years, unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) has received significant increased attention from economic policy makers. UCDW can be defined as those household services performed by household members for the direct use of other household members that for technical reasons are still not adequately captured in measures of GDP and work. These services include household maintenance activities such as cooking, cleaning, washing and household sanitation activities, care activities performed for children and the elderly, household health care, and informal education and skills building that takes place within the home. UCDW has received increased attention from economic policy makers because it affects development and growth.

In this light, in 2017, Vietnam issued a National Action Plan in 2017 to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which included 17 general goals and 115 specific goals, as well as establishing a monitoring and evaluation system for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recently, the Government issued Decision No. 681/QĐ-TTg, dated June 4, 2019, "On the promulgation of the roadmap for the implementation of Vietnam's sustainable development goals until 2030," which includes 119 indicators and designates the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) as the coordinating agency. According to Indicator 49, time spent on UCDW by women should not exceed 1.5 times that of men by 2020, 1.4 times that of men in 2025, and 1.3 times that of men in 2030, and the focal point for this indicator is the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA)

This is the key monitoring indicator for SDG 5.4 "Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies, as well as the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and family, as appropriate." The implementation of SDG 5.4. is critical to achieving the dual goals of equity (gender equality) and efficiency (assisting workers, particularly female workers, in selecting the best job for their abilities), thereby increasing sustainable income and contributing to poverty reduction.

To that end, the General Statistical Office, which is part of the Ministry of Planning and Investment, has included questions about UCDW in the quarterly Labor Force Survey (LFS) since 2019. While no time use surveys were planned, LFS provides valuable information to track Vietnam's progress on SDG 5.4 and facilitates relevant analysis on a regular basis.



UCDW is an issue in Vietnam, limiting women's labor force participation more than men

The gender disparity in UCDW in Vietnam was empirically documented in a 2015 survey by ILSSA and IDRC, which found that women spent 19.7 hours per week on paid work and 38.7 hours per week on unpaid care work, while men spent 25.1 hours and 26.2 hours per week on paid work and unpaid care work, respectively. Another survey performed by MOLISA and Action Aid in 2017 indicated an even greater inequality in unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) in Vietnam, with women spending 1.62 times as much time doing housework as men.

The heavy and unequal burden of UCDW on women in Vietnam prevents many working-age women from obtaining paid work and access to decent work. Women spend more time than men on unpaid care work, such as caring for others, cooking, cleaning, fetching water and firewood, and other non-market essential daily household tasks that go unpaid. These activities structure the terms and conditions by which women participate in the labour market in many situations.

The UCDW challenge becomes more pronounced as Vietnam's population ages

Vietnam is one of the fastest aging countries in Asia. The proportion of people over the age of 65 has risen dramatically, from 4.7 percent in 1989 to 7.7 percent in 2019 (Nguyen Quoc Anh, 2020). According to the most recent data from the GSO's Population Census 2019, Vietnam will enter a period of an aging population in 2026².

Importantly, the Ministry of Health (2018) anticipates an increase in the number of elderly people in need of care, but that access to elderly care services will be limited. This will increase the burden of unpaid elderly care, which disproportionately affects women. According to 2011 elderly survey results in Vietnam, nearly seven out of ten elderly people live with their children (National Committee on Elderly of Vietnam, 2012), and this rate is expected to rise to 73 percent by 2019 (Vietnam National Committee on the Elderly, 2019).

This will exacerbate the burden of unpaid elderly care, which disproportionately affects women. Meanwhile, population aging necessitates increased female labor force participation, as measured by working hours and productivity, if Vietnam is to significantly increase GDP per capita and achieve its ambitions of becoming an upper-middle-income and high-income country by 2025 and 2045, respectively.

UCDW receives attention in national policies, but benefits are not distributed evenly across various population groups

Vietnam has laws and policies in place to redistribute responsibility for UCDW. According to the Law on Gender Equality (2006), both men and women are responsible for sharing UCDW. According to the Law on Marriage and Public Family (2014), UCDW should be fully appreciated. Three main policies aim to share UCDW responsibilities, including family-friendly working policies (public subsidies for maternity leave, family-friendly working conditions), combating discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes, and mainstreaming a care lens in all public policies (e.g., social protection program that supports caretakers). The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism's Family Department and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs' Department of Gender Equality are the two key government bodies working on such policies.

To address the issue of UCDW, Vietnam has two main policies: (1) investing in time-saving technology and infrastructure, such as access to safe water, and (2) expanding public and care services, such as childcare and elderly care. In terms of infrastructure investment, clean water systems programs, particularly in

² Source: <https://www.gso.gov.vn/du-lieu-va-so-lieu-thong-ke/2020/12/thong-cao-bao-chi-ket-qua-nghien-cuu-chuyen-sau-tong-dieu-tra-dan-so-va-nha-0-nam-2019/>

rural, mountainous, and disadvantaged areas, receive special attention. These programs help to improve living conditions, including reducing the burden of obtaining clean water, and thus benefit women disproportionately. In terms of public and care services, the Education Law of 2005 requires improving the childcare system in Vietnam. Access to kindergartens has been expanded for children aged three months to six years. During the school day, the educational program is extended. The Law on the Elderly of 2009 governs the content of elderly support, such as social protection policies for the elderly from low-income families or without family support, such as a monthly allowance, medical benefits, and access to aged care facilities. According to the Labor Code and the Social Insurance Law, the mother is entitled to 6 months of maternity leave and reduced working hours, while the father is entitled to 5 days of leave to care for the newborn child. There is a leave provision that allows women to take time off to care for their children. It should be noted, however, that people in rural areas and those in informal employment may benefit little, if at all, from these policies.

Despite growing recognition of UCDW in Vietnam, empirical evidence on UCDW at the national level is limited, if at all, particularly among ethnic minorities.

The review of the literature also reveals that the findings of existing studies are not nationally representative of the Vietnamese population as a whole, nor of ethnic minorities in particular. Meanwhile, when deciding between paid and unpaid care work, women in more developed UCDW markets, particularly large urban areas, face fewer constraints than their counterparts in ethnic minority areas. Gender and ethnic disparities are thus intertwined, reinforcing one another.

This emphasizes the importance of conducting an in-depth investigation into the issue in an ethnically sensitive manner, using nationally representative datasets to answer a number of important questions. What is the gender gap in UCDW in Vietnam, both nationally and across ethnic groups? Does UCDW affect female labour-force participation? What are the social norms regarding UCDW? How do ethnic minorities gain access to and use various types of care and domestic services?



Introduction to the CAF-CARE study on UCDW in Vietnam by ethnicity

To fill these knowledge and data gaps, the Centre for Analysis and Forecasting under the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences conducted a study in 2021-2022, with technical support from CARE Vietnam and financial support from Global Affairs Canada through the AWEEV project. The research team investigated UCDW using quantitative approach, with a focus on ethnic minorities in Vietnam. The secondary dataset of the Labor Force Survey (LFS) and primary data collected by the research team from a phone survey were both analyzed.

In this study, UCDW, as defined by Moreira da Silva (2019) and the ILO (2018), includes the following activities: (1) House chores: cleaning the house, washing clothes, cooking, go shopping, grinding flour, drying fish meat for the household; (2) Health care (to be short for health care for family members): care for, help, or support members (age 18 or older) of the household who are disabled, sick, or old; and (3) Childcare: taking care of the household's children under the age of 18, assisting children with bathing, transportation to school, school homework, and so on.

In terms of secondary data, a nationally representative LFS has been carried out since 2007. Since 2018, GSO has conducted the LFS quarterly, covering questions on (1) basic demographic information of all household members; (2) general information of members aged 15 and over (including gender, migration status, and so on); and (3) employment and related information of members aged 15 and over (including formal vs. informal, number of working hours, wage earners' incomes, and so on). In 2019, UCDW questions were added to the LFS for the first time, but ethnicity data is not available. The questions ask about time spent in the seven days preceding the interview on (1) housework such as cooking and cleaning; (2) child care; and (3) caring for the sick and elderly. These are the main UCDW, which will be supplemented by other UCDW for final household consumption, such as livestock/cultivation to serve family meals, household appliance repair, and house construction/repair. The LFS sampling frame was created using data from the Population Census. LFS 2020 was sampled using data from the 2019 Population Census, which includes information on respondents' ethnicity. The quantitative analysis aims to produce findings on the size of UCDW at the national and ethnic minority group levels.

To supplement the nationally representative quantitative findings on the UCDW based on the LFS, the research team conducted a phone-



based survey on UCDW perceptions of ethnic minorities and their access to care and domestic services. The questions ask about UCDW for 7 days before the interview, which corresponds to the definition of UCDW used in the LFS 2020. Respondents were asked if they did not look for paid work due to UCDW in the previous year, from September 2020 to September 2021. Income data for September 2021 was requested in order to determine the household's poverty status. For the current survey period, social norms of UCDW responsibilities and access to care and domestic services were elicited. To ensure the survey's national representativeness, 1,000 ethnic minority households were chosen at random from the 2019 Population Census. Prior to conducting this survey, 20 people from ethnic minorities were interviewed to develop questions about UCDW's perception of ethnic minorities and their access to care and domestic services.

Vietnam is home to 53 ethnic groups. Following Baulch et al. (2008, and 2010) and Baulch and Vu (2012), the ethnic minority population in this study is divided into six groups based on similarity (similar natural geographic conditions, i.e. geomorphology, land, climate, similar language, population size, and general development)³. Table 1 and Figure 2 show the distribution of respondents by ethnic group and location, respectively. **Appendix 3** contains additional sample information.

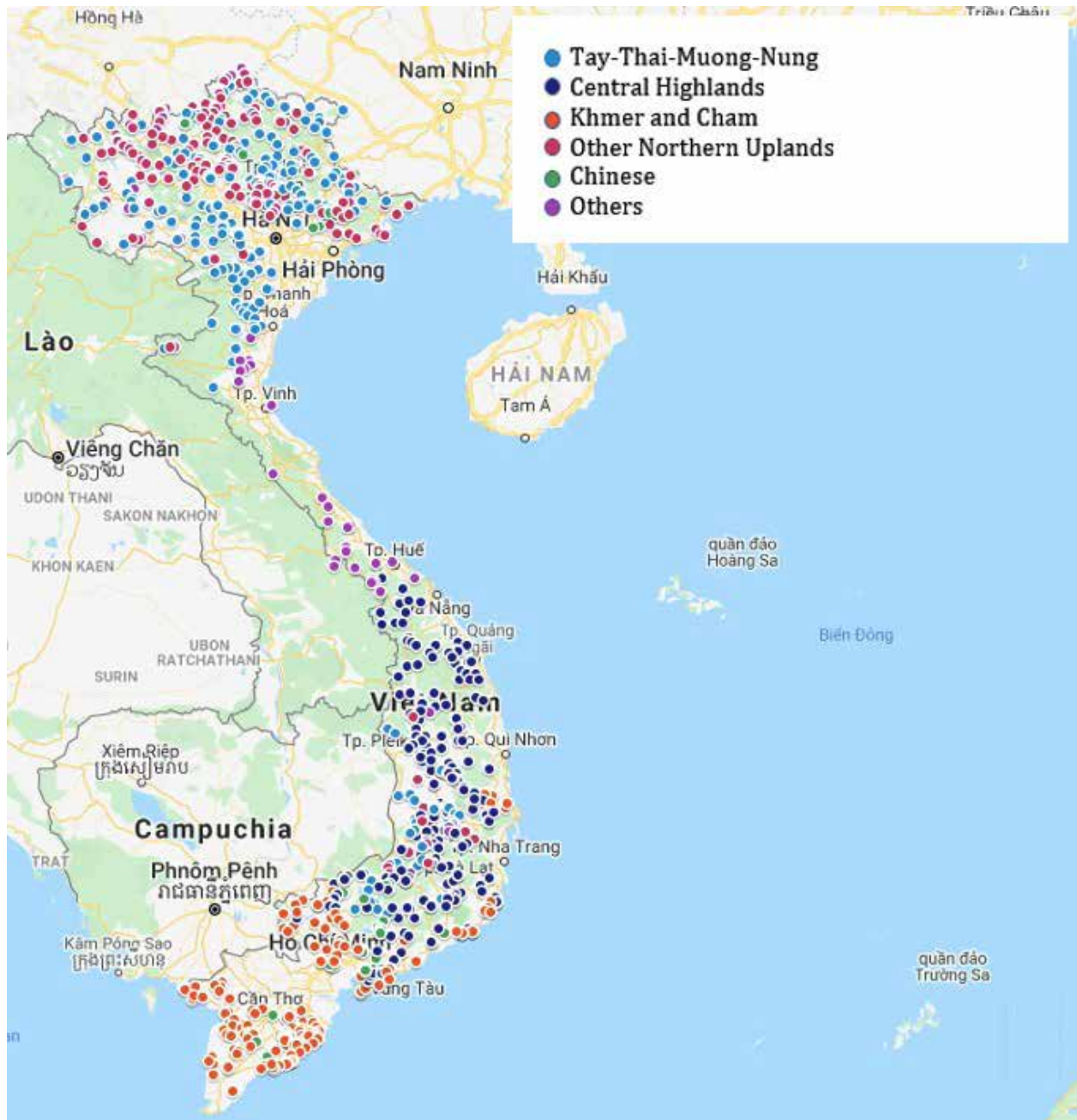
Table 1. Sample size of the phone-based survey, by ethnic groups (households)

| Ethnic group | Number of observations |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Chinese | 60 |
| Khmer and Cham | 201 |
| Tay-Thai-Muong-Nung | 251 |
| Other Northern Uplands | 194 |
| Central Highlands | 243 |
| Others | 51 |
| Total | 1,000 |

Source: CAF-CARE phone-based survey on UCDW in 2021

³ The 6 ethnic categories are (1) Kinh and Chinese; (2) Chăm and Khmer; (3) Tây, Thái, Mường, Nùng; (4) other minorities in the North; (5) minorities in the Central Highlands; (6) and "other," which is comprised of the remaining smaller ethnic groups, which are mostly located along the North and South Central Coasts.

Figure 2. Survey sites



Source: by the authors, a phone-based survey on UCDW in 2021

Based on the findings of the LFS 2020 and the phone-based survey mentioned above, this report is divided into four chapters. The first chapter examines the size of the UCDW by ethnic group, with a focus on the gender and educational attainment gap. The second chapter investigates UCDW as an impediment to labour-force participation. The third chapter examines social norms as a barrier to freedom of choice. Finally, in Chapter 4, some solutions to UCDW-related problems are proposed.



**GENDER DISPARITIES IN UNPAID CARE
AND DOMESTIC WORK: EVIDENCE FROM
THE LABOR FORCE SURVEY DATA**

CHAPTER 2

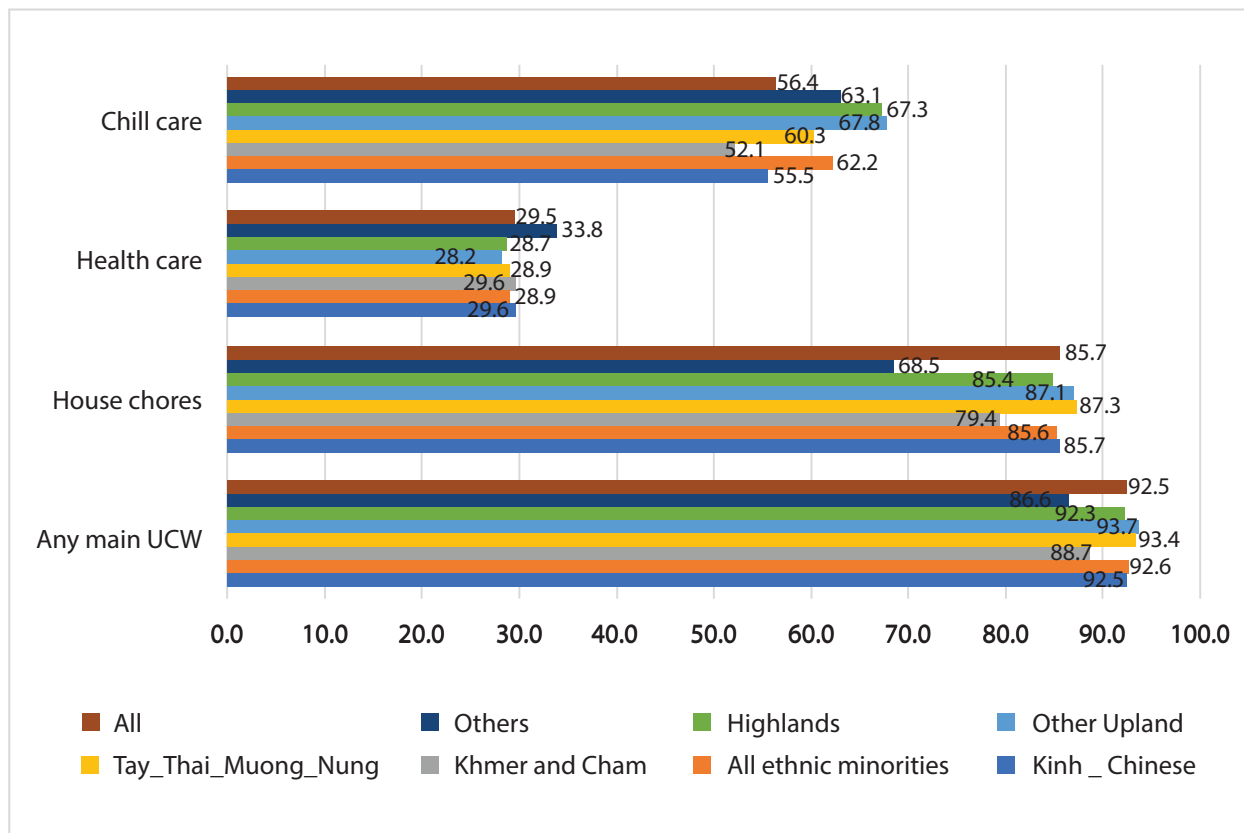


1. Participation in UCDW by gender and ethnicity

Household chores are the activities in which the majority of the working-age population is involved, followed by childcare.

Over 92 percent of respondents said they do at least one UCDW for their family (house chores, health care for the household members, or childcare). Housework is performed by 85.7 percent of the working-age population. A total of 56.4 percent of the working-age population is responsible for children in the family. Meanwhile, the figure for health care is only 29.5 percent⁴.

Figure 3. UCDW by ethnicity (% of working-age population)



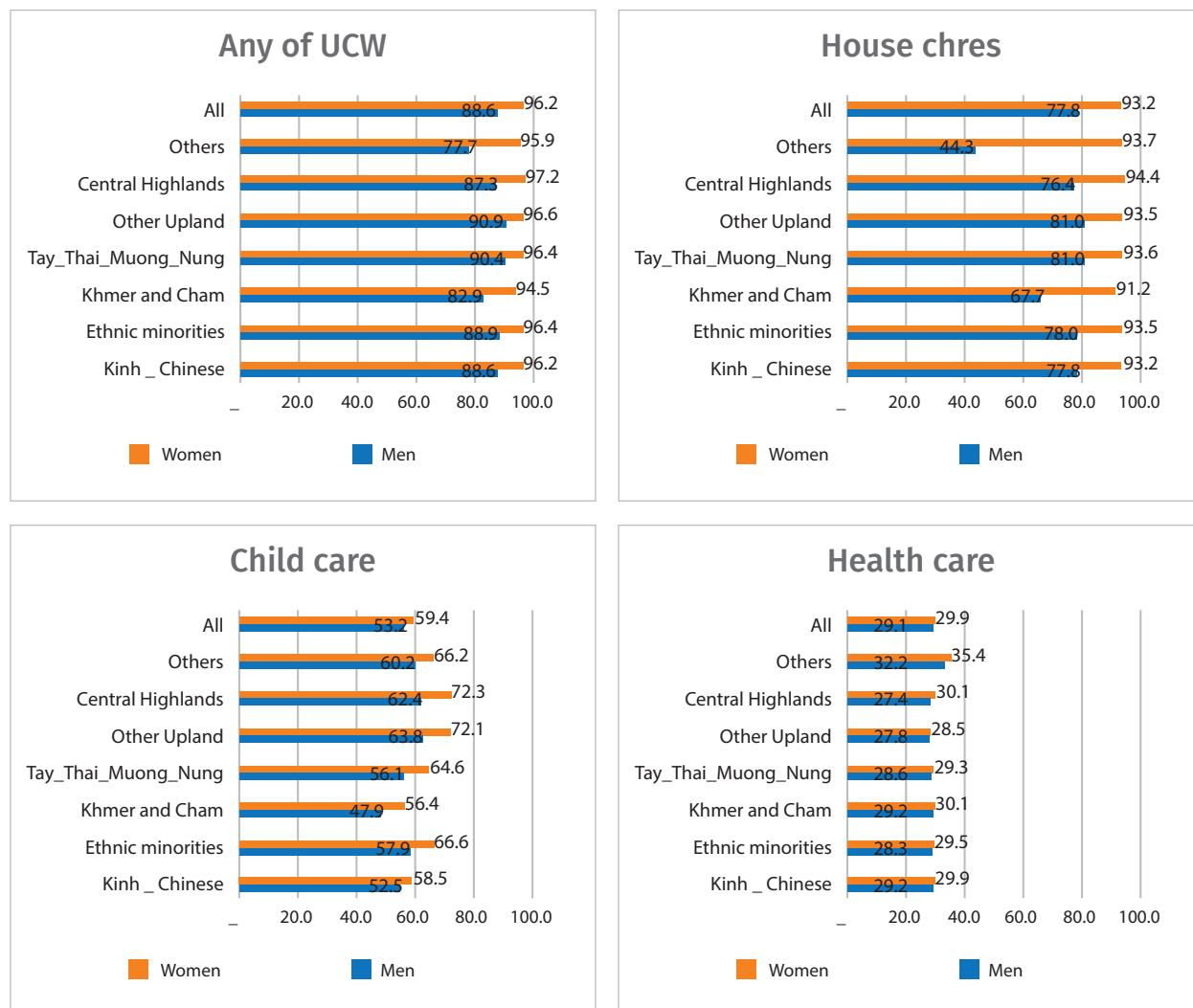
Source: Authors' calculation based on the LFS 2020 by GSO

Women are overwhelmingly the primary caregivers in the home

In comparison to other categories of UCDW, women outnumber men in terms of the percentage of those doing domestic work. The gender gap in housework is 15.5 percentage points, with 93.2 percent of women doing housework compared to 77.8 percent of men. Meanwhile, the gender gap in childcare in the household is only 6.2 percentage points, or 59.4 percent of women versus 53.2 percent of men.

⁴ It should be noted that it is based on the interviewees' perceptions of UCDW categories, for example, their perception of defining 2 hours working on house chores of cooking only, even though they can keep an eye on their small children during that time, which can also be counted as childcare.

Figure 4. UCDW by gender and ethnicity (% of working-age population)



Source: Authors' calculation based on the LFS 2020 by GSO

There is a significant gender disparity in housework across ethnic groups

In terms of the percentage of people doing housework, there is a significant disparity between men and women across ethnic groups. The largest one discovered is that 93.7 percent of women from other ethnic minorities are in charge of house chores, compared to 44.3 percent of men from that ethnic group. The same unpaid housework is performed by 91.2 percent of Khmer-Cham women and 67.7 percent of Khmer-Cham men.

Across ethnic groups, the gender gap in health-caregiving between men and women is very small. Household members' health is taken care of by 29.9% of women and 29.1% of men, respectively. The gender gap between ethnic groups is only about 2 or 3 percentage points.

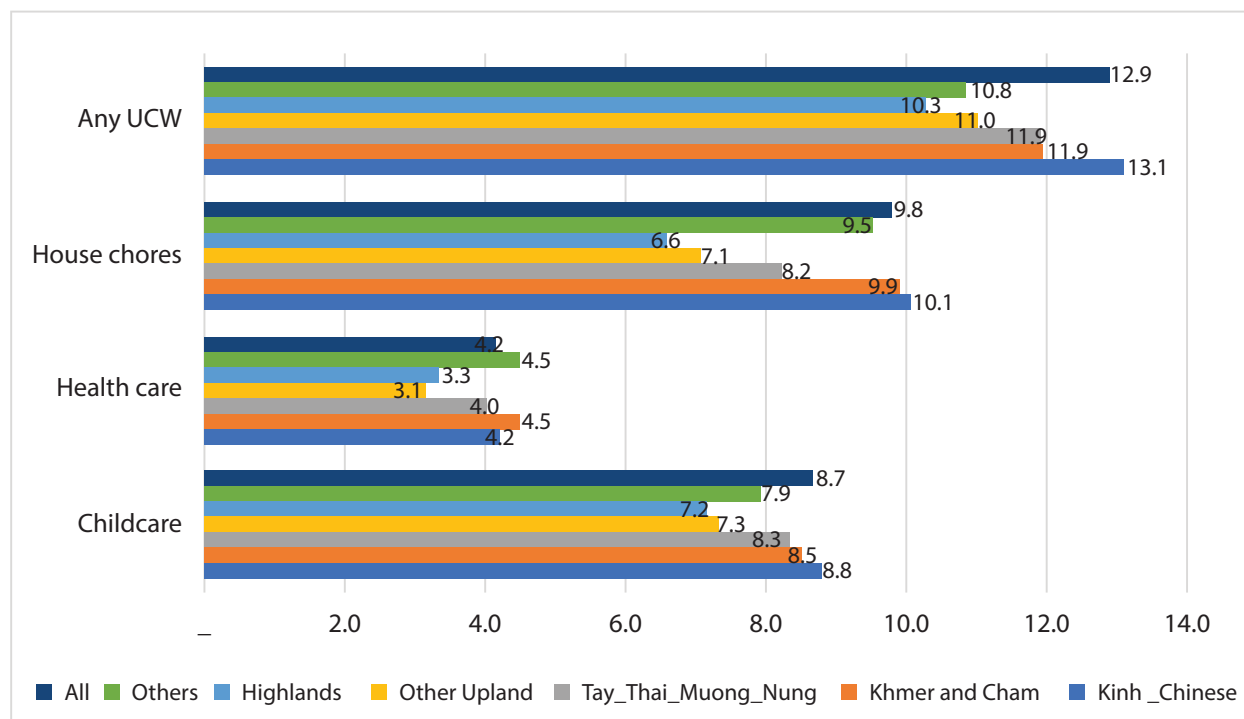


2. Time spent on UCDW by gender and ethnicity

The amount of time an adult spends on UCDW varies according to the type.

As previously stated, the majority of working-age people, 86 percent, are involved in housework, while approximately two-thirds, 56 percent, are involved in child care. Meanwhile, the average amount of time spent on housework by an adult is 9.8 hours per week, while the amount spent on childcare is 8.7 hours per week, which is not a significant difference. An adult spends a significantly smaller amount of time, 4.2 hours a week, on health care for family members.

Figure 5. Time spent on UCDW by ethnicity (hours/the last seven days)



Source: Authors' calculation based on the LFS 2020 by GSO

The largest ethnic gap in UCDW is found in the amount of time spent doing housework, while the smallest is found in health care.

The Kinh-Chinese and Khmer-Cham ethnic groups have the most housework (10 hours per week), followed by the Tay-Thai-Muong-Nung (8.2 hours per week). Ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands have the lowest number of hours of housework (6.6 hours per week), spending nearly half of their time doing it. Meanwhile, the difference in healthcare is only about an hour, with the Khmer-Cham spending the most (4.5 hours per week) and the other northern upland groups spending the least (3.1 hours per week).

The gender disparity in time spent on UCDW is significant and varies greatly across ethnic groups.

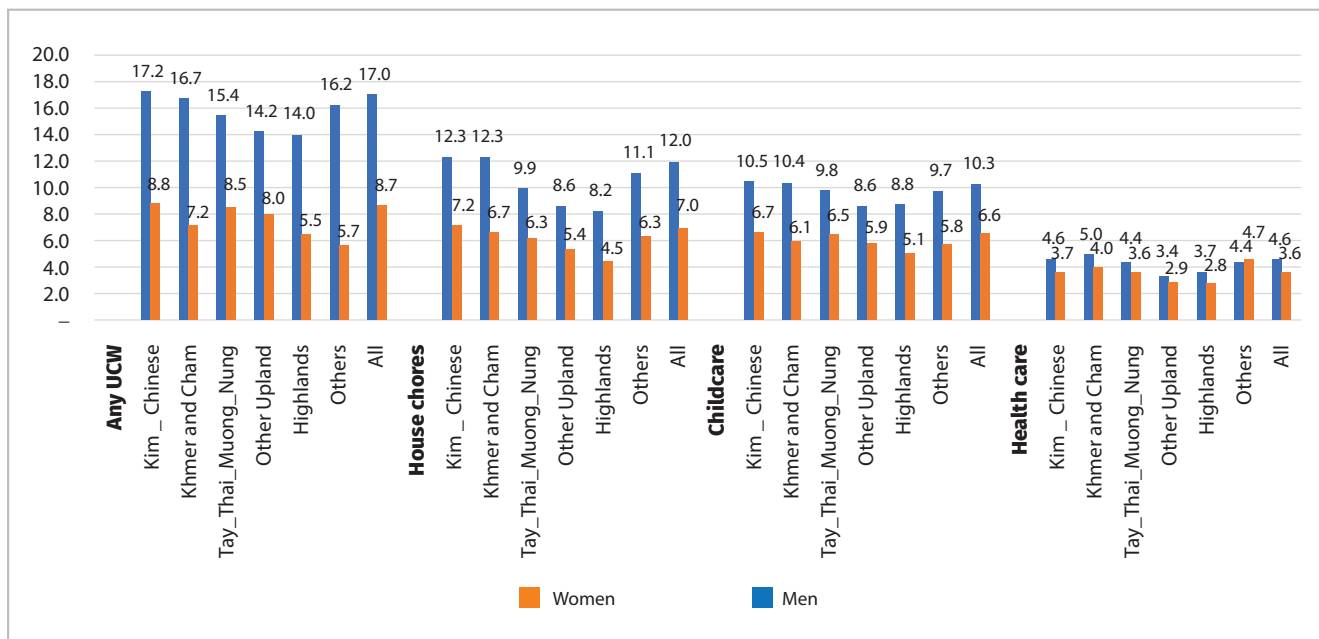
Women spend 8.3 hours per week on UCDW more than men do. The biggest gender gap is found in doing house chores, while time spent on health care is fairly balanced between women and men.

The gender imbalance in the number of working hours spent on different UCDW is shown in Figure 6, in any type of UCDW and any ethnic group. On average, women spend 8.3 hours per week on UCDW more than men do.

The biggest gap between women and men is found in the burden of house chores. The gap that women

do the house chores more than the men do is 3.7 hours per week as for the Tay-Thai-Muong Nung group (and 5.6 hours as for Khmer - Cham group). Time spent on health care is fairly balanced between the sexes with an average time of about 4.6 hours/week for women and 3.6 hours/week for men.

Figure 6. Time spent on specific UCDW by ethnicity and gender (hours/the last 7 days)



Source: Authors' calculation based on the LFS 2020 by GSO

Because the number of UCDW hours worked per week is correlated with multiple variables (e.g. marital status, age, education, urban vs. rural and regional locations, and type of production activities), a multivariate econometric analysis can be conducted to account for other personal characteristics, avoiding "apples to oranges" comparisons (e.g. comparing married women with single men or rural women with urban men etc.).

According to the regression results for ALL workers (Appendix 4, panel A), men spend 8.35 hours per week less on UCDW than women with the same other characteristics⁵. There are a few more regression results to mention. People in rural areas spend more time on UCDW than those in urban areas, presumably because public and private UCDW service provision in the latter is better. Other things being equal, people working in agriculture work more hours per week on UCDW than those working in other sectors of the economy.

Furthermore, once other personal characteristics are controlled for, time spent on UCDW tends to increase with level of education attainment, beginning with lower secondary schooling. This could imply that more educated people are more willing to shoulder the UCDW burden. People from the Northern Uplands⁶ spend the most time on UCDW, followed by those from the Red River Delta. People from ethnic minorities in the Northern Uplands spend the most time on UCDW of any ethnic group.

When regressions are performed for wage workers only, with the income variable included⁷, most of the above-mentioned findings hold true (in terms of sign, though the magnitude may differ). In Appendix 4, panel B, the results for both the OLS and the two-step Heckman models are presented; the latter allows for the correction of bias from non-randomly selected samples or otherwise incidentally truncated

⁵ It is very close to the unconditional difference of 8.3 hours per week discussed in a previous section.

⁶ The Northern Uplands consistently had the highest regional poverty rate in the last decade (World Bank 2020)

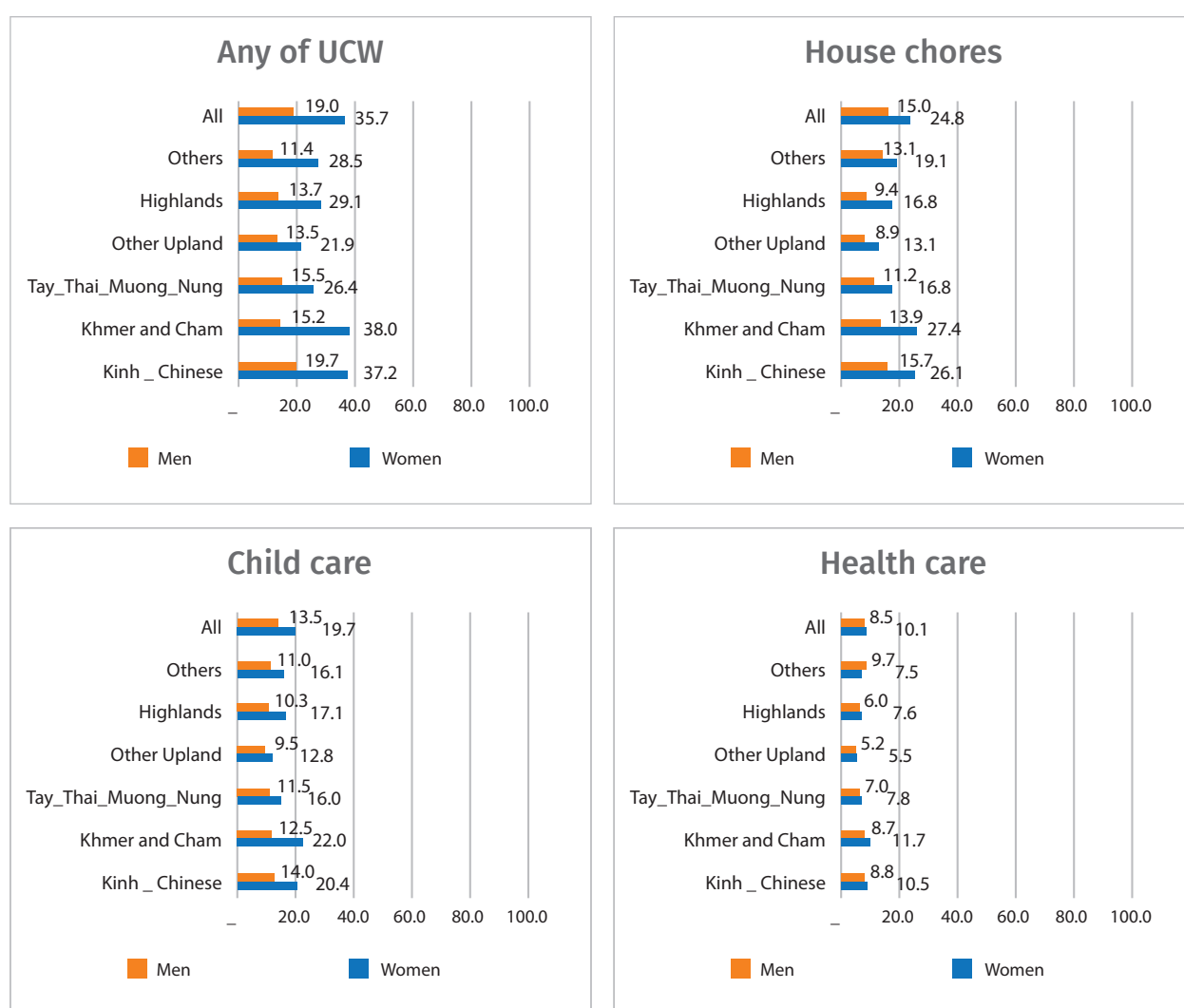
⁷ The LFS dataset lacks information on the income of non-wage earners, who made up 51.6% of all workers and 70.7% of workers from ethnic minorities in 2020, respectively.

dependent variables. It is worth noting that income is inversely related to the number of hours worked per week on UCDW, while all other personal characteristics remain constant. This could be due to people dividing their total time between paid and unpaid work. Assuming they earn the same per hour and have the same amount of leisure time, the more time they devote to the former, the less time they devote to the latter, and vice versa.

The Khmer-Cham group has the largest gender gap in terms of UCDW share of total working hours, while the other Northern Uplands group has the smallest gap.

38% of the total working hours of the Khmer-Cham women, compared with 15.2% of that of those men, was spent on UCDW, which is a 22.8% point difference. Meanwhile, 21.9% of the total working hours of the other Northern Uplands women, compared with 13.5% of that of those men, was reported on UCDW, which is only an 8.4% point difference.

Figure 7. UCDW share of total working hours by gender, ethnicity, and by types of UCDW (%)



Source: Authors' calculation based on the LFS 2020 by GSO

As measured by the share of total working hours, housework has the greatest gender disparity, while health care has the smallest.

24.8% of the total working hours of women, compared with 15% of that of men, was spent on house chores, which is a 9.8%-point difference. 19.7% of the total working hours of women, compared with 13.5% of that of men, was spent on childcare, which is a 6.2%-point difference. Meanwhile, 10.1% of the

total working hours of women, compared with 8.5% of that of men, was reported on health care, which is a 1.6%-point difference.

The Khmer-Cham ethnic group has the largest gender gap, as measured by UCDW share of total working hours, followed by the Central Highland ethnic group

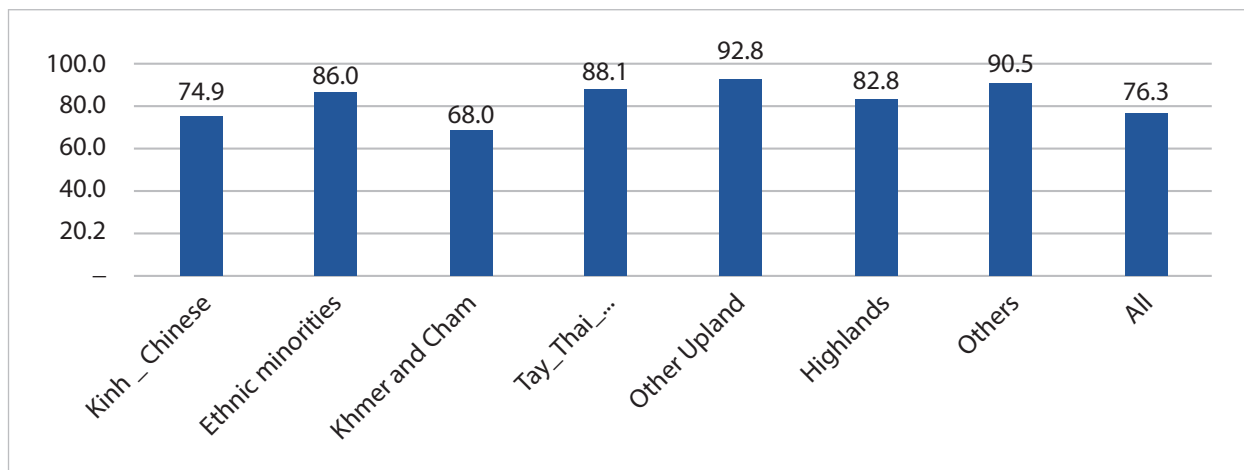
The Khmer-Cham ethnic group has the largest gender gap in terms of UCDW share of total working hours. Within this Khmer-Cham group, 22% of the total working hours of these women, compared with 12.5% of that of these men, was spent on taking care of kids in the household. 11.7% of the total working hours of the Khmer-Cham women, compared with 8.7% of that of these men, was reported on health care.

The Central Highland ethnic group is the second to have a large gender gap in terms of the proportion of total working hours spent on health care and childcare. Within this Central Highland group, 17.1% of the total working hours of women, compared with 10.3% of that of men, was spent on childcare. 7.6% of the total working hours of women, compared with 6.0% of that of men, was reported on health care.

Women spend significantly less time on paid work than men.

Women's paid work time accounts for only 76.3% of men's paid work time. At the most basic level, Khmer-Cham women spend only 68% of their working hours as men do for paid work, compared to 86 percent for all ethnic minorities.

Figure 8. Women's paid work time in comparison to men's (%)

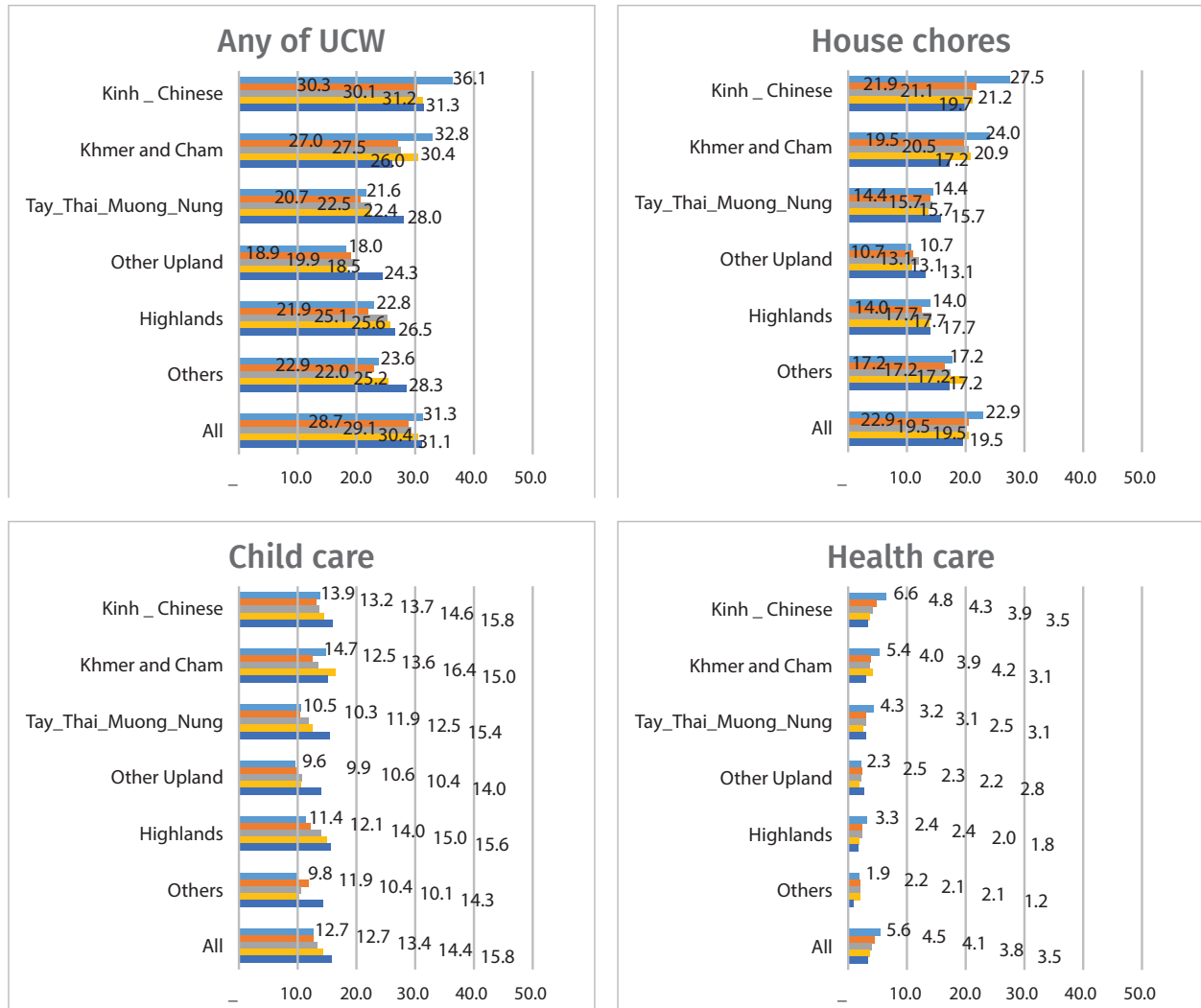


Source: Authors' calculation based on the LFS 2020 by GSO

The higher the educational attainment, the smaller share of total working hours a working-age person spends on housework and the larger share of total working hours on childcare.

LFS respondents spent roughly one-third of their workday on UCDW, and the relationship between educational attainment and hours worked on any type of UCDW is U-shaped (Figure 9). Individuals with no formal education spend largest share of their working time on UCDW, accounting for roughly 31% of total working hours on all forms of UCDW, followed by those with a college degree or higher. Between those levels of education were those with a primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary education. However, there was no discernible pattern of this association for specific types of UCDW.

Figure 9. UCDW share of total working hours by education attainment and ethnicity (%)



Source: Authors' calculation based on the LFS 2020 by GSO

The proportion of total time spent on housework varies significantly by ethnicity. In contrast, the proportion of working hours spent on childcare is comparable across ethnic groups. Furthermore, those with a higher level of education devote a larger proportion of their workday to childcare, a pattern shared by the majority of ethnic groups. This link could imply that more educated adults are more aware of the significance of early childhood development.

People from more affluent ethnic groups devote a greater proportion of their working hours to health care than the general population. Because public and private health care services are better provided in more developed areas, this observation may imply that members of more affluent families receive better health care support. Both of these observations about children and health care point to the possibility of a vicious circle of intergenerational transmission of inequality in human capital, which is an important component of people's well-being.



**MAJOR ISSUES IN UNPAID CARE AND
DOMESTIC WORK AMONG ETHNIC MINORITIES:
KEY FINDINGS FROM A PHONE SURVEY**

CHAPTER 3



This chapter presents key findings from a phone survey conducted by the research team in 2021 to collect primary data on UCDW among ethnic minorities. For more details on the survey refer to **Appendix 3**.

1. UCDW and employment

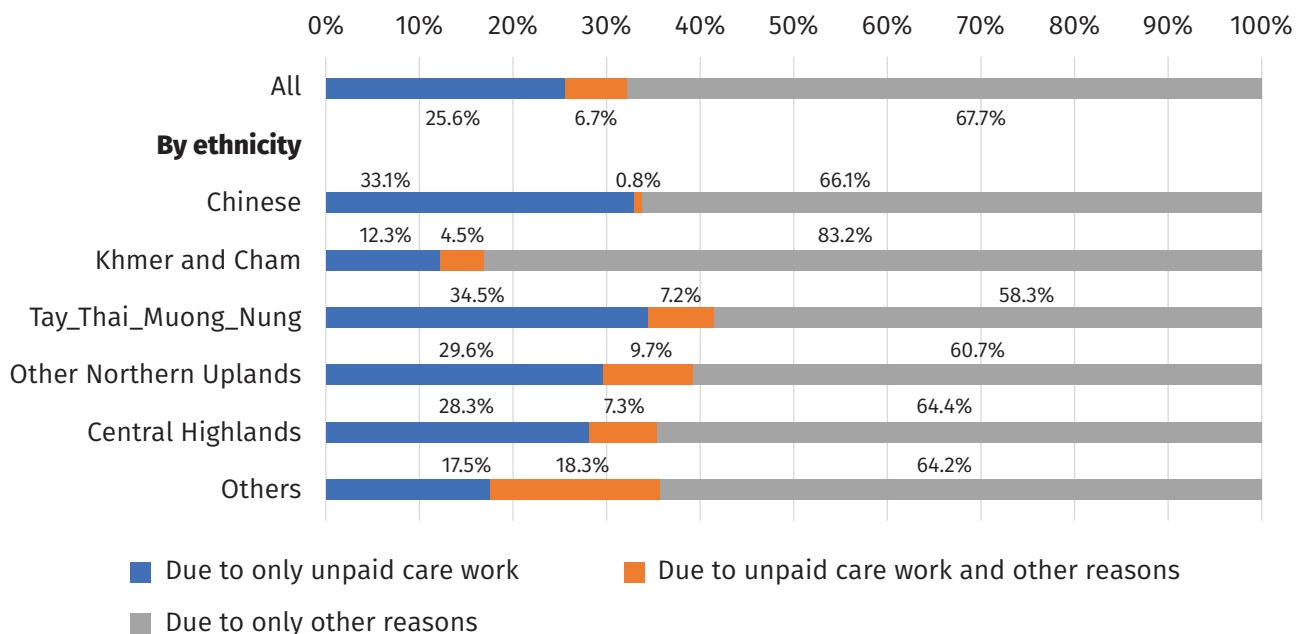
UCDW limit labour-force participation

According to the survey results, 59.9% of respondents said they had not looked for a new job in the previous 12 months⁸. More specifically, 23.9% of respondents are unemployed, while 36% are working but not looking for a new job. Among the factors they are not looking for a new job including the burden of UCDW, personal health limitations, the fear of not having appropriate skills, or lack of need.

One in every three unemployed people identified UCDW as a barrier to finding paid work, and this percentage is considerably higher among female respondents and those heading poor households.

A little less than one in every three unemployed adults cited UCDW as a reason for not looking for paid work (Figure 10). This figure is much higher for female (52.1%) than male (28.9) respondents. 42% of respondents heading poor households and 26.7% non-poor households.

Figure 10. Reasons for not looking for a job (% of unemployed)



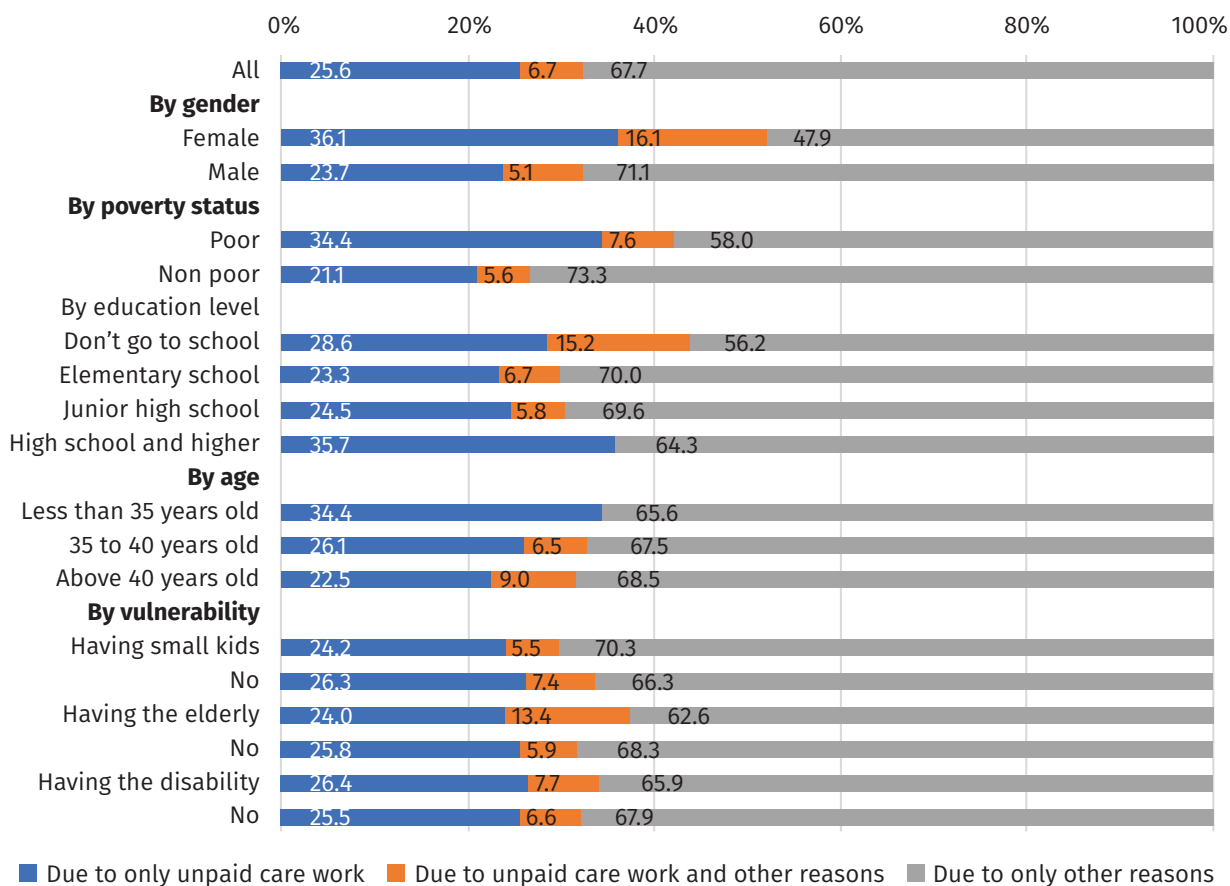
Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

In terms of access to paid work, the UCDW burden is distributed in a U-shape based on education attainment

The percentage of unemployed people citing the UCDW burden as a barrier to accessing paid work is highest for those with no schooling (43.8%), followed by those with an upper secondary school diploma or higher (35.7%). It is nearly the same for respondents with a primary education and a lower secondary education, which account for 30% and 30.4%, respectively. While it is difficult to provide a comprehensive explanation due to the numerous factors at play, it is possible to speculate that unemployed people with an upper secondary school diploma or higher are more likely than the rest to actively seek paid work.

⁸ Interview question: Did you look for a new job from September 2020 to September 2021, and for what reason did you not find a job in the past 1 year?

Figure 11. Reasons for not looking for a job by characteristics (% of unemployed people) ⁹



Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

Responses to reasons for not looking for a job differ by gender.

Half of the female group (52.1%) do not participate in the labour market due to the responsibility of UCDW. Meanwhile, the figure is only a third of the male group (28.9%) (Figure 11).

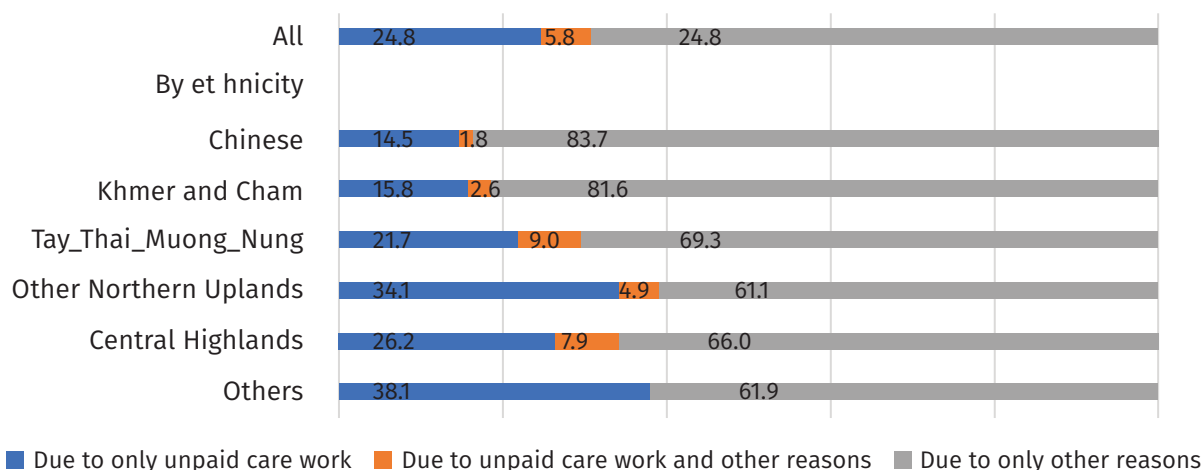
UCDW reduces labour mobility

Three in ten employed people cited the UCDW burden as a reason for not changing jobs

30.6% of the participants identified the burden of UCDW as one of the reasons for why employed people did not change jobs. This rate varies greatly by ethnic group, with the more prosperous Chinese and Khmer-Cham ethnic groups having the lowest rates.

⁹ Defined by MOLISA's poverty lines for the period of 2021-2025

Figure 12. Reasons for not changing jobs (percent of those working but are not looking for another new job)



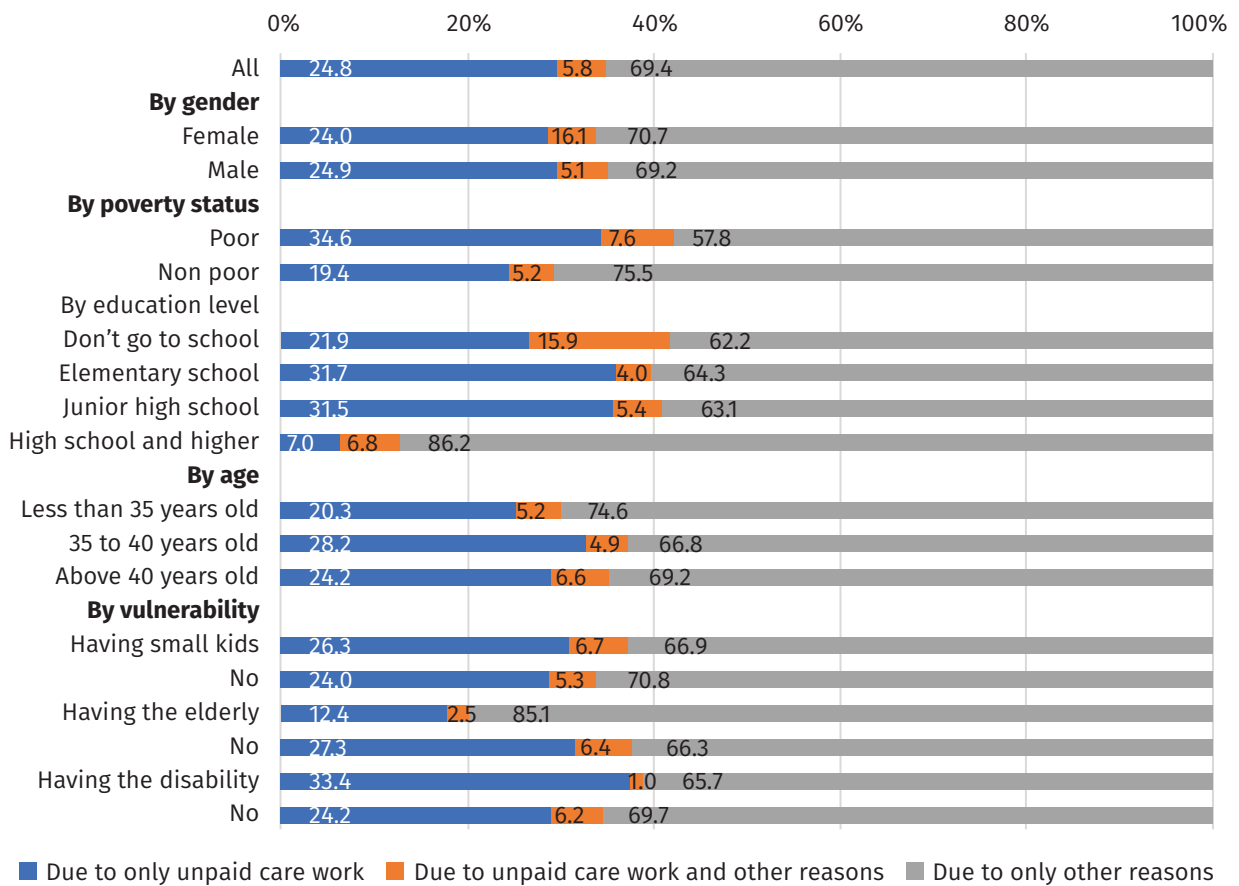
Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

The burden of UCDW has a disproportionately negative impact on the ability of the poor and undereducated to change jobs.

A total of 42.2% of poor-household respondents cited UCDW as a reason for their inability to find a new job, compared to 24.5% of non-poor-household respondents. The UCDW burden cited as a barrier to changing jobs varied according to education level. While 13.8% of respondents with upper secondary education cited the UCDW burden as a barrier to changing jobs, this percentage ranged between 35.7% and 37.8% for respondents with lower education attainment levels. In other words, the UCDW burden is a greater barrier to labour mobility for more disadvantaged people, implying the need for appropriate interventions to reduce the UCDW burden for poverty and inequality reduction.



Figure 13. Reasons for not moving on to another job by characteristics (% of those working but not looking for another new job)



Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

2. Gender-based intra-household decision-making regarding UCDW

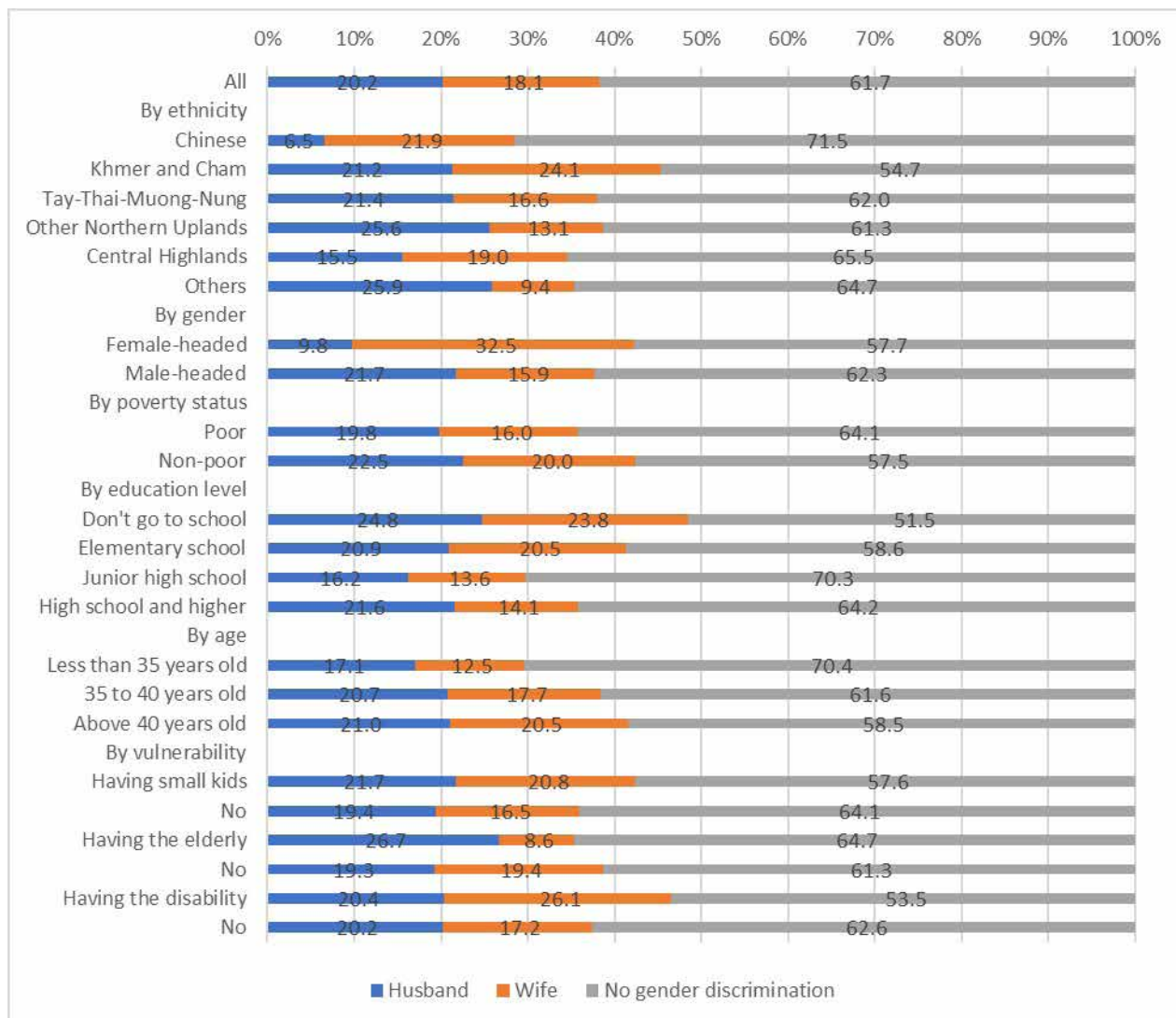
UCDW decision-making in the household is slightly skewed towards men.

In the majority of households, slightly more than six out of ten, the wife and husband make joint decisions on the UCDW division¹⁰. This proportion is slightly higher in households where the household head has completed lower secondary school or higher. Notably, joint decisions on the UCDW division are more common in poor households than in non-poor households, with 64.1% for the former and 57.1% for the latter.

There is a slight gender disparity in favor of men in the remaining households. In 18.1% and 20.2% of households, the wife and husband make most UCDW decisions, respectively. With a few exceptions, this is a fairly consistent situation across various types of households. The most notable exception is female-headed households, where the wife has the majority of decision-making power, with 32.5% of these households assigning housework versus 9.8% of men. This is most likely one of the reasons why a household is considered to be female led.

¹⁰ - It should be noted that joint decision making can still be asymmetrical.

Figure 14. Making decisions about UCDW in the family by the husband and wife (percent of households)



Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

According to more than seven out of ten respondents, women bear nearly all of the UCDW burden.

A total of 72.7% of respondents believe that women bear the lion's share of the UCDW burden in their community. This proportion varies slightly by gender, 82.9% for female respondents and 71.2% for male respondents¹¹. Meanwhile, 51.1% of respondents reported that most men do not engage in UCDW at all. This percentage varies considerably by gender, with females reporting 70.3% and males reporting 48.3%¹².

Furthermore, according to 43% of respondents, women do UCDW because the men in the house want them to, while men do not do it because they are afraid of being laughed at if they do, according to slightly more than one-quarter of respondents. Notably, this opinion does not differ significantly by gender of respondents, with the difference being statistically insignificant at any conventional level (see **Appendix 5**). Furthermore, analysis of data from the phone survey finds no significant differences by other characteristics such as ethnicity, poverty status, industry sector, and so on, and is thus not presented here.

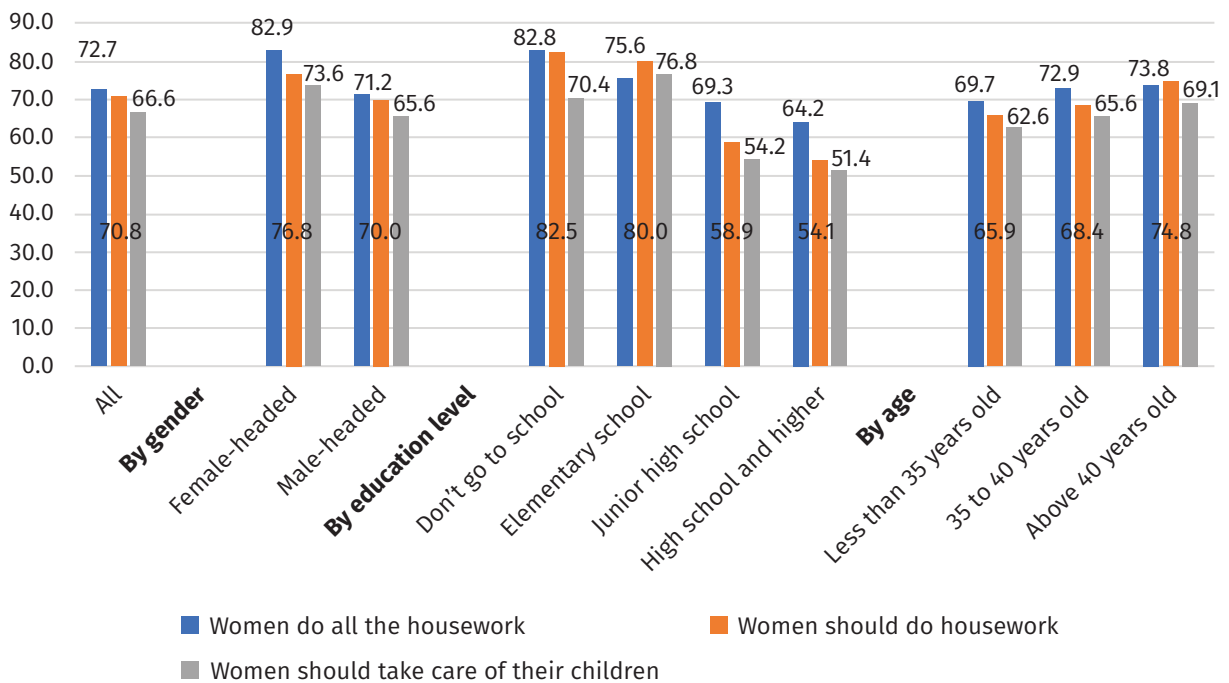
¹¹ Econometric analysis reveals that the difference is statistically significant only at the 10% level, after controlling for a variety of respondent characteristics (see details in Appendix 5).

¹² Econometric analysis reveals that the difference is statistically significant at the 1% level, after controlling for a variety of respondent characteristics (see details in Appendix 5).

More than two-thirds of respondents believe women do more UCDW because it suits their abilities.

According to the survey findings, women's labour-force participation and UCDW responsibility-sharing at home are hampered by their perception of the UCDW role (see Figure 15). According to 70.8% of respondents, housework is primarily a female responsibility. According to 66.6%, women should be in charge of childcare and 68.6% women should take care of sick people. Notably, the proportion of women who hold such views is higher (76.8%), compared to 70% of male respondents. However, once a set of personal characteristics are controlled for, the differences are not statistically significant at any conventional level (see Appendix 5).

Figure 15. Perceptions of responsibility for specific types of UCDW by gender, education, and age (% of respondents)



Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

Meanwhile, these opinions vary significantly by respondents' educational attainment, with significantly lower percentages of people with upper secondary and higher-level education believing so. Furthermore, when other personal characteristics are taken into account, the majority of these differences are statistically significant at the 5% or 1% level (see Appendix 5).

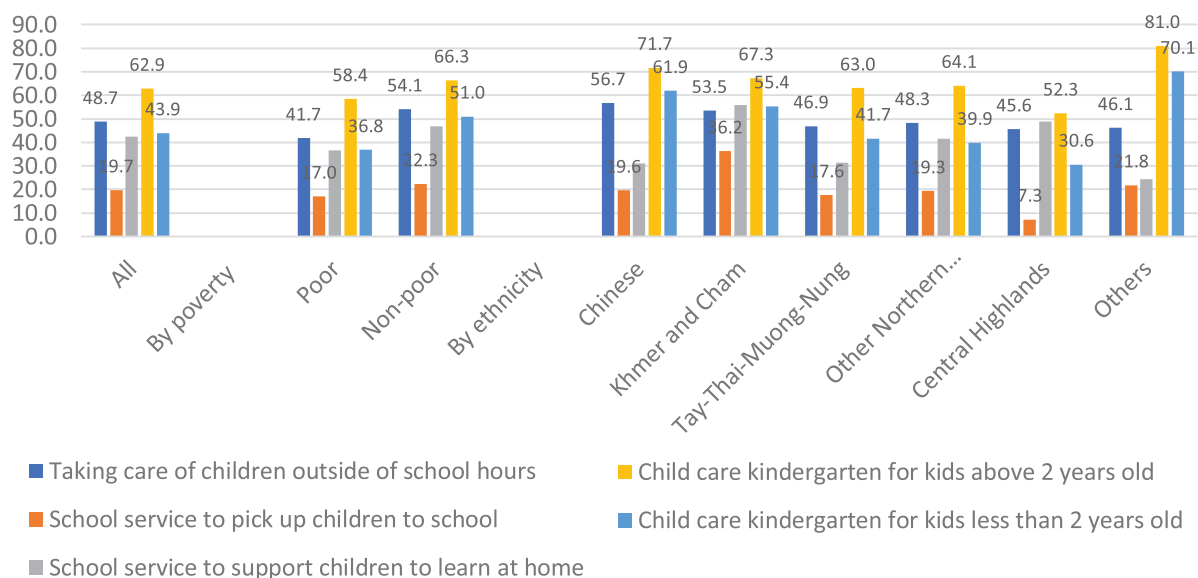
The opinions also differ according to the respondent's age, with older people more likely to agree than younger people. However, when other individual characteristics are taken into account, the differences in opinions are not statistically significant at any conventional level. Furthermore, analysis of data from the phone survey finds no significant differences in other characteristics such as ethnicity, poverty status, industry sector, and so on, and is thus not presented here.

3. The availability, accessibility, and utilization of social services

The availability of childcare services in ethnic minority communities varies greatly depending on the type of service.

Figure 16 shows that 48.7% of households reported that after-school care services for students were available, for example, teachers looking after students and assisting them with homework. Preschool services were reported to be available to 62.9% of households with children under the age of two and 43.9% of households with children over the age of two. Meanwhile, only 19.7% of parents report the availability of school transportation, and the availability of this service varies greatly across ethnic groups, with the Central Highlands having the lowest rate at 7.3%. Availability of all types of childcare services is also unequal to poverty status, favouring non-poor households.

Figure 16. Availability of childcare services in the ethnic minority area (% of households)

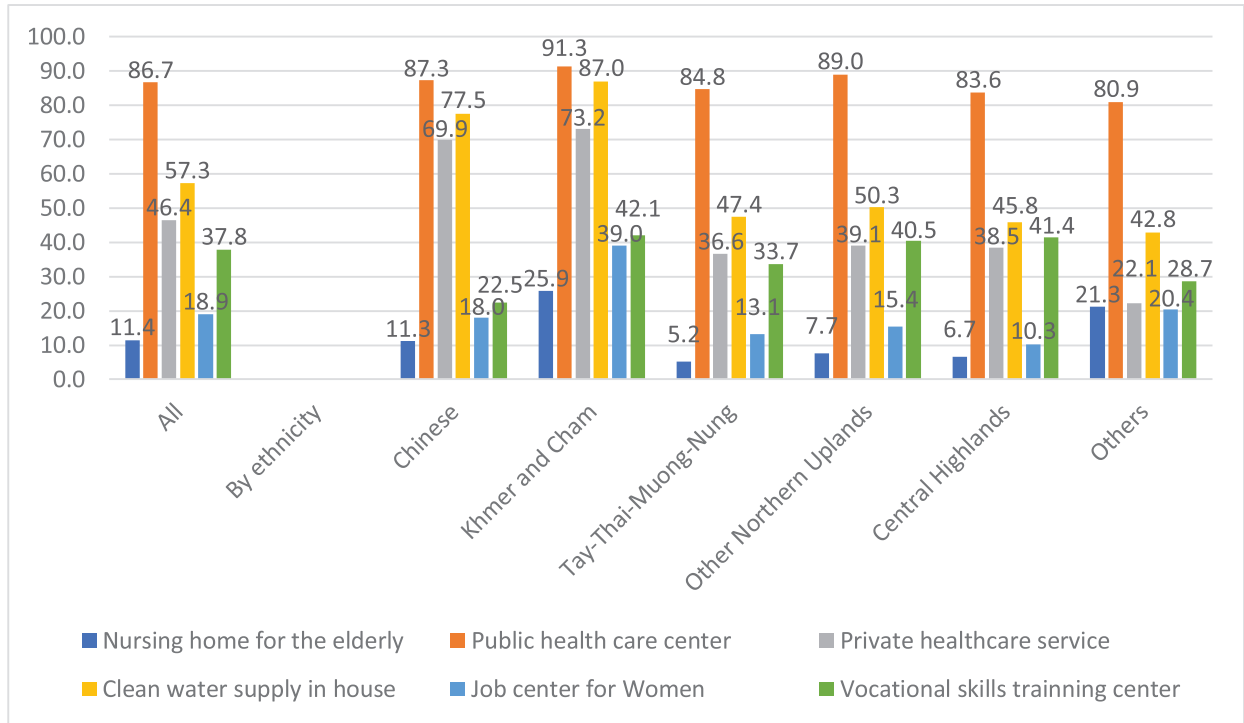


Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

Nursing homes for the elderly, centers for people with disabilities, and job placement for women are all in short supply.

Figure 17 depicts the widespread availability of public health services, followed by projects to provide drinking water. Nearly 87% of households reported the presence of a public health center, and 57% reported the presence of such drinking water supply projects. On the contrary, some services that could help women reduce their UCDW burden or find paid work are in short supply. A total of 11.4% of respondents reported a nursing home for the elderly, 11.2% disability center, and 18.9% job placement center for women. These services vary greatly across ethnic groups. Meanwhile, 38% reported the availability of a vocational skills training course and 46% local private health care services.

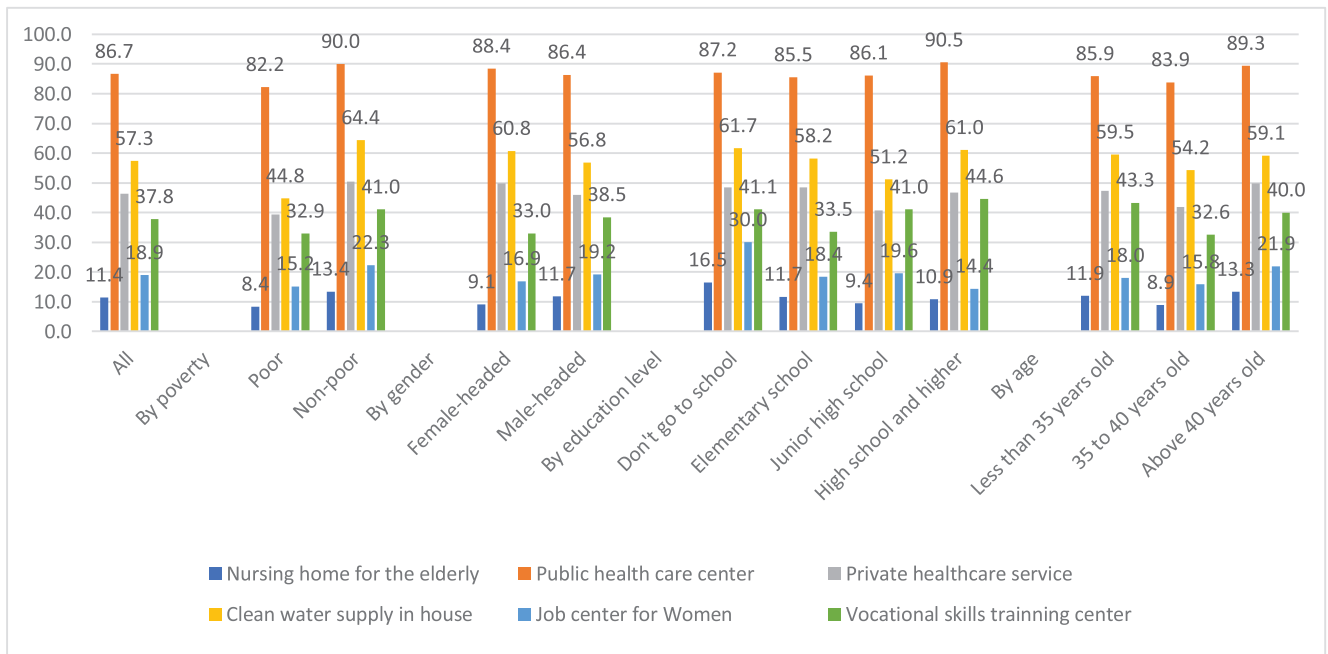
Figure 17. Availability of other care services by ethnic group (% of households)



Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

The availability of public health services varies little by ethnic group. However, there are significant ethnic disparities in the availability of other types of services in favour of more affluent ethnic groups such as the Chinese and Khmer-Cham, who frequently live-in developed areas. Disparities in the availability to others support services are also significant based on household characteristics (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Availability of other support services nearby by service type, gender, poverty status, age, and education level (% of households)



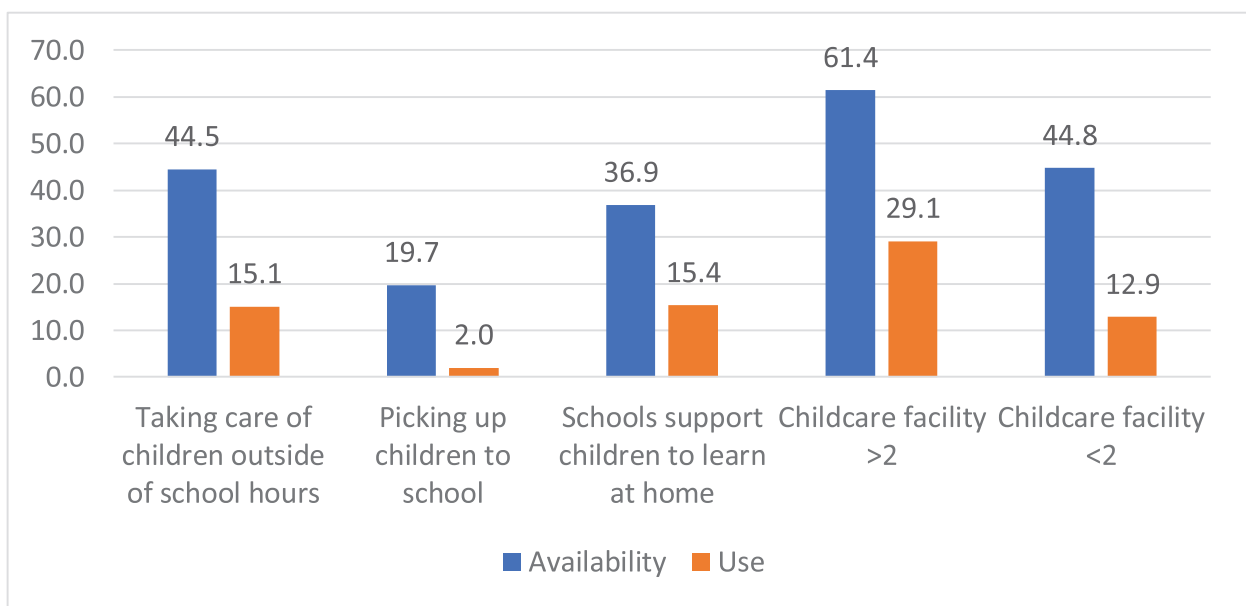
Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

The use of available childcare services by households with children under the age of six is limited.

Despite the fact that childcare is a significant part of UCDW for many families, many do not take advantage of the services that are available (Figure 19). Specifically, less than three out of ten respondents from households with children under the age of six say they use childcare facilities for their children, despite the fact that a significantly higher percentage of these respondents say the services are available in their commune.

This data backs up the National Assembly's claim that children's school attendance is low, especially among kindergarten-age children¹³. This is due to a number of factors¹⁴. To begin, the distance between home and school is a major impediment. Second, because of the difficult road and weather conditions, particularly in the winter when there is heavy fog, small children must get up very early in the morning in order to arrive at school on time. Third, some parents are unable to pick up their children from school for a variety of reasons.

Figure 19. Childcare support services availability and utilization by households with children under the age of six (% of households)



Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

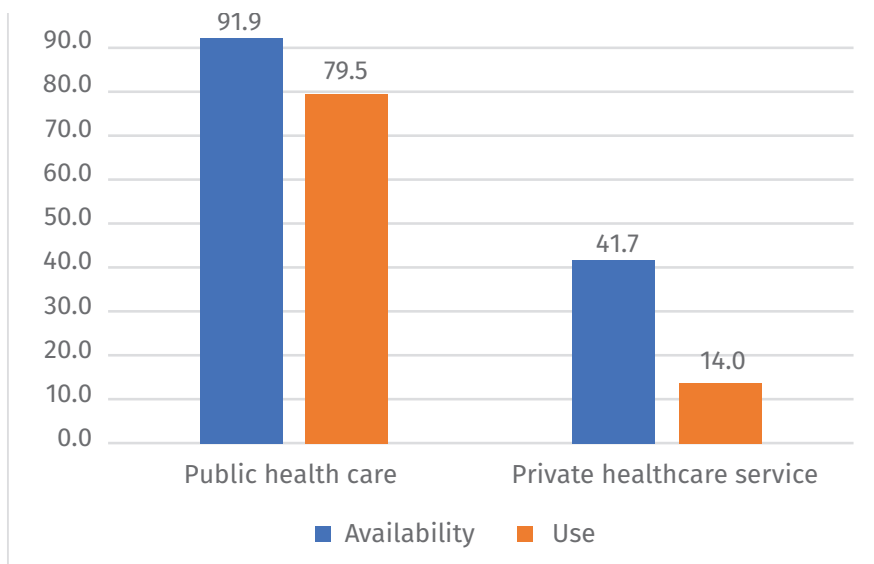
It is worth noting that non-poor households use childcare services more than poor ones. The same is true in households where the head of the household has a higher level of education or is younger. Given the critical importance of early childhood education, this poses a real risk of intergenerational poverty and inequality transmission.

13 Source: <https://tuyensinh.tvu.edu.vn/vi/news/tin-giao-duc/giao-duc-mam-non-vung-kho-nhieu-rao-can-va-thach-thuc-31273.html>

14 Source: <https://baodantoc.vn/giao-duc-mam-non-o-vung-cao-lao-cai-kho-khan-nhan-doi-4465.html>

Eight in ten homes with senior citizens aged 70 or older rely on public health services, whereas fewer families rely on private providers.

Figure 20. The use of available health services by households with elderly people aged 70 or older



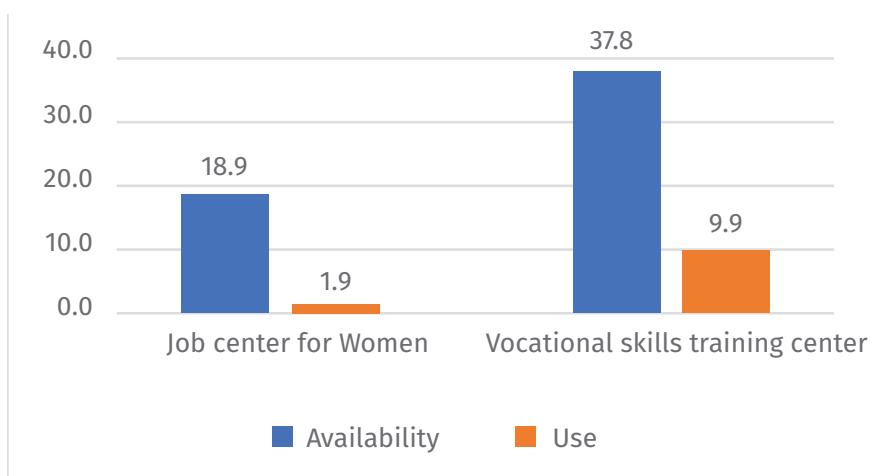
Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

Figure 20 shows that 79.5% of households with elderly people over 70 years old use public health care services, while 91.9% say these services are available in their community. Their use of private health services is significantly lower, at 14%, compared to 41.7% availability. It is worth noting that there is no statistically significant difference in the use of public and private health care services based on poverty status or other household characteristics.

Employment and training services are used infrequently.

As illustrated in Figure 21, labour market services are infrequently employed, far less than their availability warrants. This could be explained by the well-documented low quality of the services.

Figure 21. Utilization of labour-market services (% of households)



Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

A photograph of a grassy hillside with a dirt path leading up to a dense forest. The path is made of light brown soil and is partially covered with dry leaves and small plants. The grass is green and appears to be a mix of different species. The background is a thick wall of green trees and bushes.

**CONCLUSION AND POLICY
RECOMMENDATIONS**

CHAPTER 4





A literature review indicates that the heavy and unequal burden of UCDW on women in Vietnam prevents many working-age women from obtaining paid work and access to decent work. However, the findings of existing studies are not nationally representative of the Vietnamese population as a whole and particularly for ethnic minorities.

The objective of this CAF-CARE collaboration study was to fill knowledge and data gaps. The research team used a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach to investigate UCDW with a focus on ethnic minorities in Vietnam. Both the secondary dataset from the Labor Force Survey 2020 (LFS) and the primary data collected by the research team from a nationally representative phone survey on UCDW among ethnic minorities were analyzed.

According to an analysis of the LFS data, women are overwhelmingly the primary caregivers in the household, and there is a significant gender gap in time spent on UCDW. Women spend 8.3 hours more per week on UCDW than men. This result holds true when various individual characteristics (such as age, marital status, ethnicity, education, urban/rural, region, economic sector, formal/informal employment, and wage workers' income) are controlled for (with slightly different figures on the gap).

Furthermore, once other personal characteristics are controlled for, **the higher the educational attainment, the smaller share of total working hours a working-age person spends on housework and the larger share of total working hours on childcare.** According to the analysis of LFS data, working-aged people with a higher level of education devote more of their workday to child care, a trend shared by the majority of ethnic groups. This link could imply that more educated adults understand the importance of early childhood development. This finding may indicate the possibility of a vicious cycle of intergenerational transmission of inequality in human capital, which is a critical component of people's well-being. Analysis of the LFS dataset confirms that women spend significantly less time on paid work than men.

Analysis of the phone survey data finds that UCDW limit labour-force participation, disproportionately affecting females and people from poor households. Around one in every three jobless people identified UCDW as a barrier to finding paid work, and this percentage is considerably higher among female respondents and those heading poor households. UCDW also reduces labour mobility. Three in ten employed people cited the UCDW burden as a reason for not changing jobs. This rate varies greatly

by ethnic group, with the more prosperous Chinese and Khmer-Cham ethnic groups having the lowest rates. The burden of UCDW also has a disproportionately negative impact on the ability of the poor and undereducated to change jobs.

Social norms play an important role in intra-household decision-making, but they are still biased against women. According to 43% of respondents, women do UCDW because the men in the house want them to, while men do not do it because they are afraid of being laughed at if they do, according to slightly more than one-quarter of respondents. More than two-thirds of respondents believe women do more UCDW because it suits their abilities. Housework is primarily a female responsibility, according to 70.8% of respondents. Women should be in charge of child care and sick care, according to 66.6% and 68.6% of respondents, respectively. These opinions vary significantly by respondents' educational attainment, with significantly lower percentages of people with upper secondary education and higher believing so.

Social services are critical in shifting UCDW from the family to the state, but they are limited in ethnic minority areas and underutilized by ethnic minority households. Availability of childcare services in ethnic minority communities varies greatly depending on the type of service. Only 19.7% of parents report that their children have access to school transportation, and the availability of this service varies greatly across ethnic groups, with the Central Highlands having the lowest rate, with only 7.3% reporting access. Access to all types of childcare services is also unequal by poverty status, favoring non-poor households. Nursing homes for the elderly, centers for people with disabilities, and job placement for women are in all in short supply. Some services that could help women reduce their UCDW burden or find paid work are in short supply. Only 11.4%, 11.2%, and 18.9% of respondents reported a nursing home for the elderly, a disability center, and a job placement center for women, respectively.

Furthermore, the use of available childcare services by households with children under the age of six is limited. Less than three out of ten respondents from households with children under the age of six say they use childcare facilities for their children, despite the fact that a significantly higher percentage of these respondents say the services are available in their commune. Eight in ten homes with senior citizens aged 70 or older rely on public health services. Meanwhile, only 14% of these families reported using the services of private providers, compared to 41.7% availability, presumably due to their limited affordability. Employment and training services are used infrequently, far less than their availability warrants. This could be explained by the well-documented low quality of the services.

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the following recommendations can be made to reduce gender inequality in UCDW, in accordance with the Vietnamese government's commitment:

- **Improving evidence-based and ethnicity-sensitive policymaking to reduce gender disparities in UCDW**
 - » UCDW should be considered when developing policies for education, social protection, labour market access, infrastructure investment, and public service delivery.
 - » Identify and implement specific action plans to evaluate policy efforts to reduce gender inequality in UCDW for various ethnic minority groups.
 - » Although the government has established a roadmap for reducing gender inequality in UCDW, the aggregate target in UCDW should be disaggregated by ethnicity to allow tracking progress among ethnic minorities and ensure that they are not left behind on this dimension of people's well-being.
 - » Although the LFS regularly asks pertinent questions about UCDW, it should be supplemented with appropriate time use surveys (TUS). TUS are not required to be performed as frequently as the LFS

because they are more expensive and time consuming. Instead, they can be performed once every 5 years to align with the 5-year planning cycle, or once every two and a half years to provide inputs for the 5-year plan's regular mid-term review.

- » As the Vietnamese economy and society mature, policymakers and various stakeholders will need more credible evidence to make decisions or to engage in policy discussions. This requires the use of sound methodology to analyze collected data on UCDW for use by policymakers and other stakeholders. The analysis should be done on a regular basis and should go beyond simply generating aggregate numbers to allow for a better understanding of the structural relationships between gender inequality and other important factors, including ethnicity.

- **Reducing harmful social norms and biases against women**

- » The importance of education in changing social norms toward gender equality at home cannot be overstated. As a result, it is critical to continue to improve education at all levels while ensuring equal access to quality education for all population groups, including ethnic minorities.
- » It is also critical to integrate educational content and practice learning projects for students about UCDW responsibility-sharing at home at all schooling levels, beginning with preschool. The content of such an education program should be tailored to ethnic minorities, including local stories and good examples.
- » The Women's Union, including its grassroots unit, should be proactive in promoting gender equality at home, with a special focus on ethnic groups with strong social norms against women. They can accomplish this effectively by collaborating with other stakeholders such as MOLISA, CEM, MPI, the media, non-governmental organizations, and the research community.

- **Redistributing UCDW between the state and the family by investing adequately in infrastructure and social services that have a significant impact on reducing women's burden**

- » Budget priority should be given to national infrastructure and care service provision programs aimed at reducing and redistributing UCDW.
- » The regional approach can be prioritized. For example, the Central Highland ethnic group is the most vulnerable, and there is a significant gender gap in UCDW time spent on both health care and childcare.
- » Continue to build on successes in promoting the availability and accessibility of infrastructure for education and health services, particularly in providing water supply at home for ethnic minority communities.

- **Reducing gender inequality in UCDW by improving social protection and labour policies**

- » Due to the interdependence of gender inequality at home and at work, reducing the former requires reducing the latter. As a result, policies must target both.
- » Social protection policy, including active labour market instruments, should prioritize the establishment of employment service centers and vocational skill training programs for women. The issue of UCDW should be mainstreamed in the system of social protection policies and active labour market instruments, particularly those for the development of ethnic minorities.
- » Using modern technology and scaling up successful models to reduce UCDW burdens.



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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Definition of unpaid care and domestic work

Sida (2009) clearly distinguishes two concepts of UCDW and unpaid work. Whereby the former includes caring for children, the elderly, and sick people, and it also includes washing, cooking, shopping, cleaning, helping other families with their chores. The latter includes food, fuel, water collection, other energy provision, informal unpaid work, family labor in agriculture, etc.

Ferrant, Pesando, and Nowacka (2014) define *“UCDW refers to all unpaid services provided within a household for its members, including care of persons, housework and voluntary community work”*. UCDW activities are considered work as, theoretically, one person can hire other people to do such activities. Therefore, Ferrant, Pesando, and Nowacka (2014) decompose the UCDW definition into three components as follows. First, *“Unpaid”* means the one who performs this activity is not remunerated. Second, *“Care”* means the activity provides what is necessary for the well-being, health, and protection of someone or maintenance of something. Third, *“Work”* means the activity involves both physical and mental effort, and it is costly in terms of time resources.

ILO (2018) consider unpaid care and domestic workers are those of working age who, during a short reference period, performed any of the following activities: (i) household accounting and management, purchasing and/or transporting goods; (ii) preparing and/or serving meals, disposing of household waste and recycling; (iii) cleaning, decorating and maintaining one’s dwelling or premises, durables and other goods, and gardening; (iv) childcare and instruction, transporting and caring for older persons, dependents or other household members and domestic animals or pets, etc. (Box 2.1, p. 41).

Recently, Moreira da Silva (2019) defined *“Unpaid care and domestic work refer to all non-market, unpaid activities carried out in households – including both direct care of persons, such as children or elderly, and indirect care, such as cooking, cleaning or fetching water.”*

The concept of UCDW by Sida (2009) and Ferrant, Pesando, and Nowacka (2014) is a broad concept that includes both taking care of the family and family members and UCDW for other households. Furthermore, these concepts also include other unpaid work such as agricultural production for the household self-consumption, specifically cultivating or collecting plan or raising livestock cattle, poultry or livestock farming, catching seafood or hunt, collecting products natural products with a purpose mainly for household-self consumption, etc.



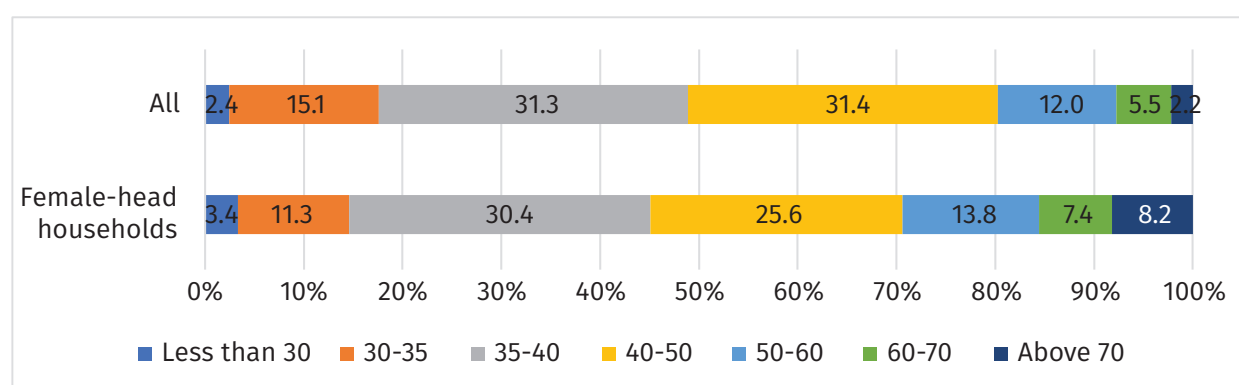
Appendix 2: Detailed questions related to UCDW activities

| Question number | Question contents |
|-----------------|---|
| c82 | In the past 7 days, how many hours did you [NAME] work cleaning the house, washing clothes, cooking, shopping, grinding flour, and drying fish and meat for your household? |
| c85 | In the past 7 days, did you [NAME] spend time taking care of, helping or supporting members (aged 18 years or older) of the household who are disabled, sick, or old? IF YES, how many hours? For example: Looking after, giving medicine, helping with shopping, taking friends to visit, etc. |
| c86 | During the past 7 days, did you [NAME] take care of your household's children under 18 years old? IF YES, how many hours? For example: Bathing the child, playing with the child, taking the child to school, playing sports or other activities with the child, guiding, tutoring or helping the child with homework, giving advice...etc. |

Source: LFS, by GSO

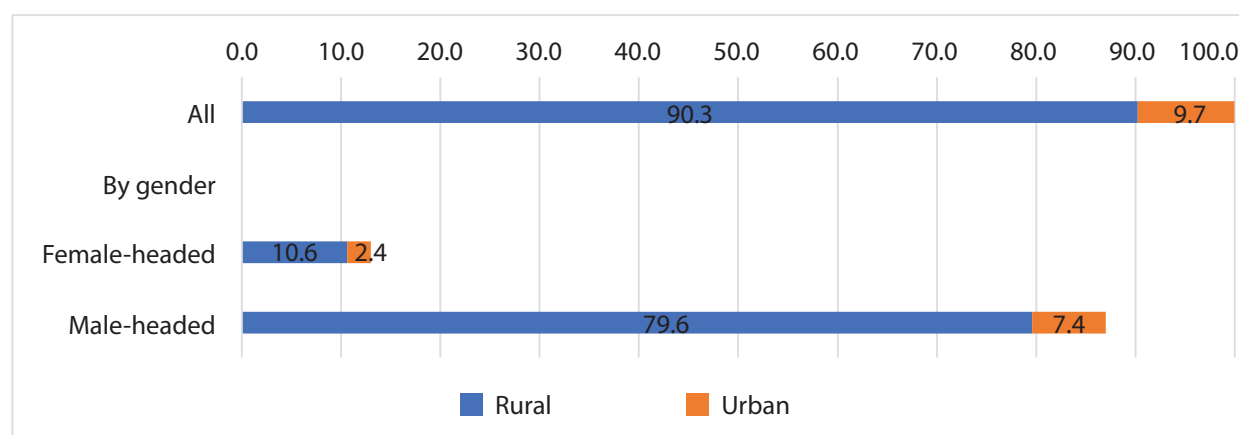
Appendix 3: Survey sample characteristics

Figure 22. Distribution of households by age (% of households)



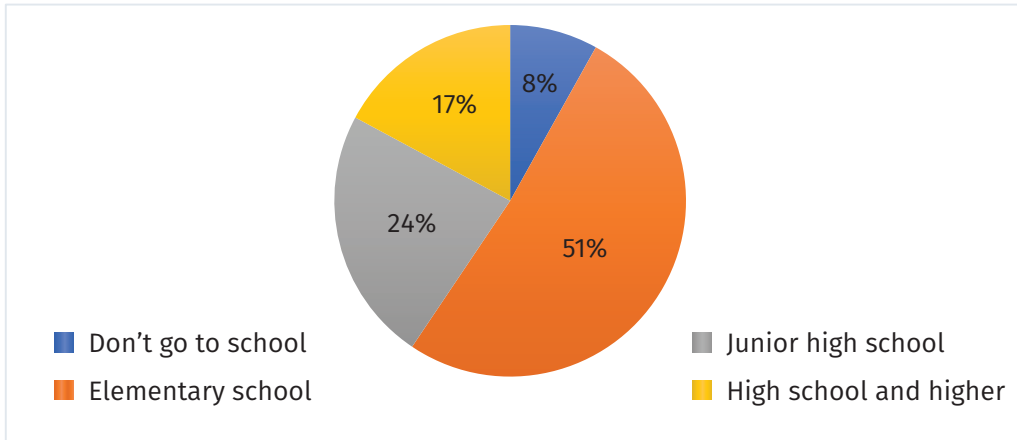
Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

Figure 23. Distribution of households by region and sex (% of households)



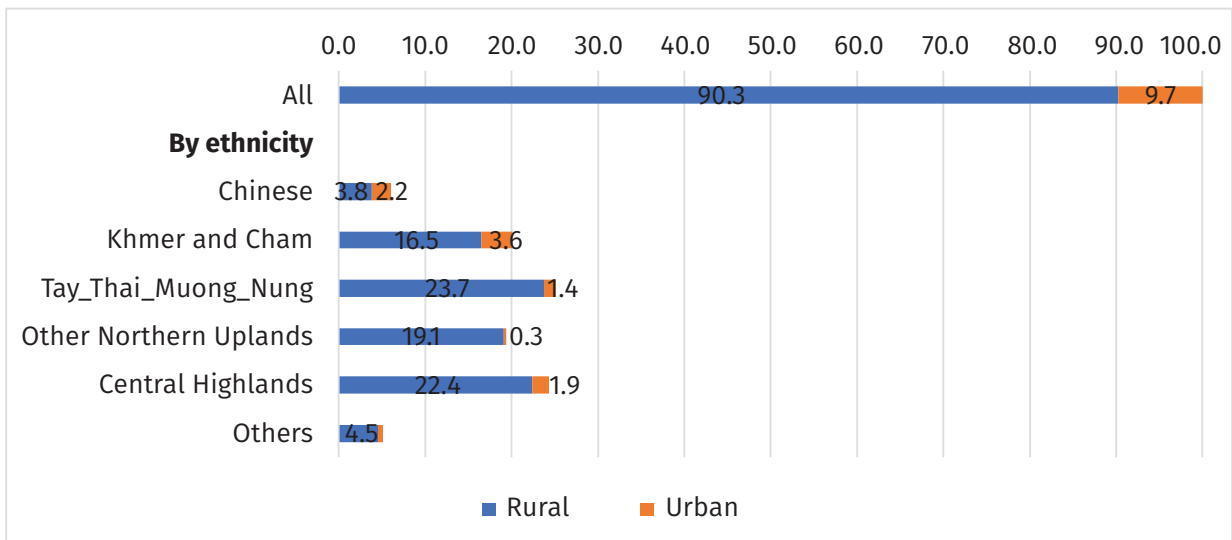
Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

Figure 24. Distribution of households by gender and education level (% of households)



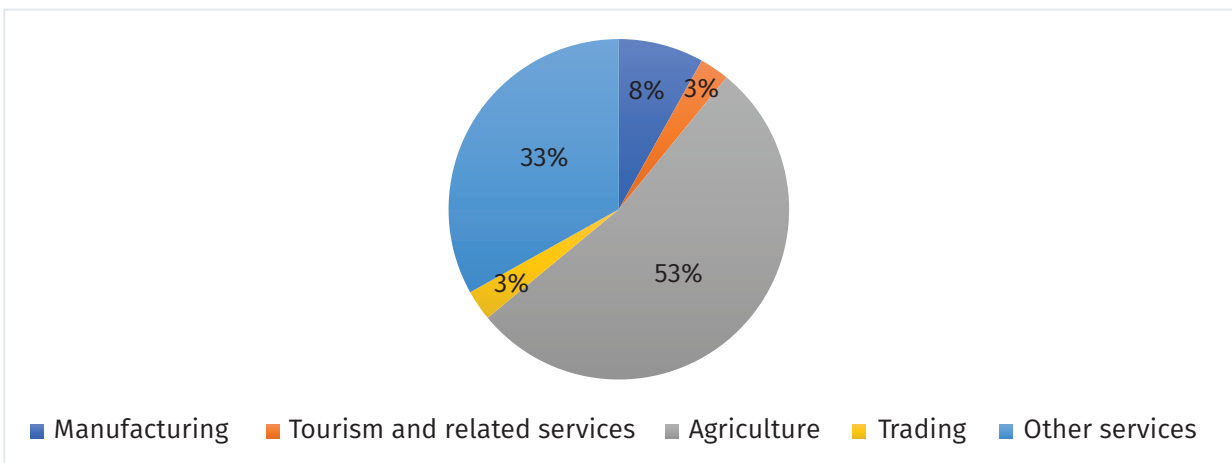
Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

Figure 25. Household distribution by region and ethnic group (% of households)



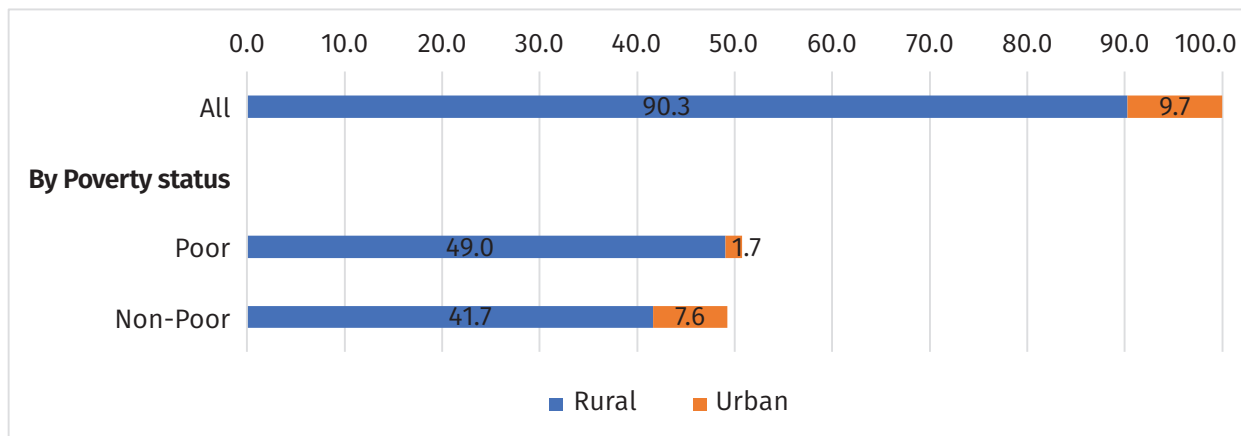
Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

Figure 26. Distribution of households by industry (%)



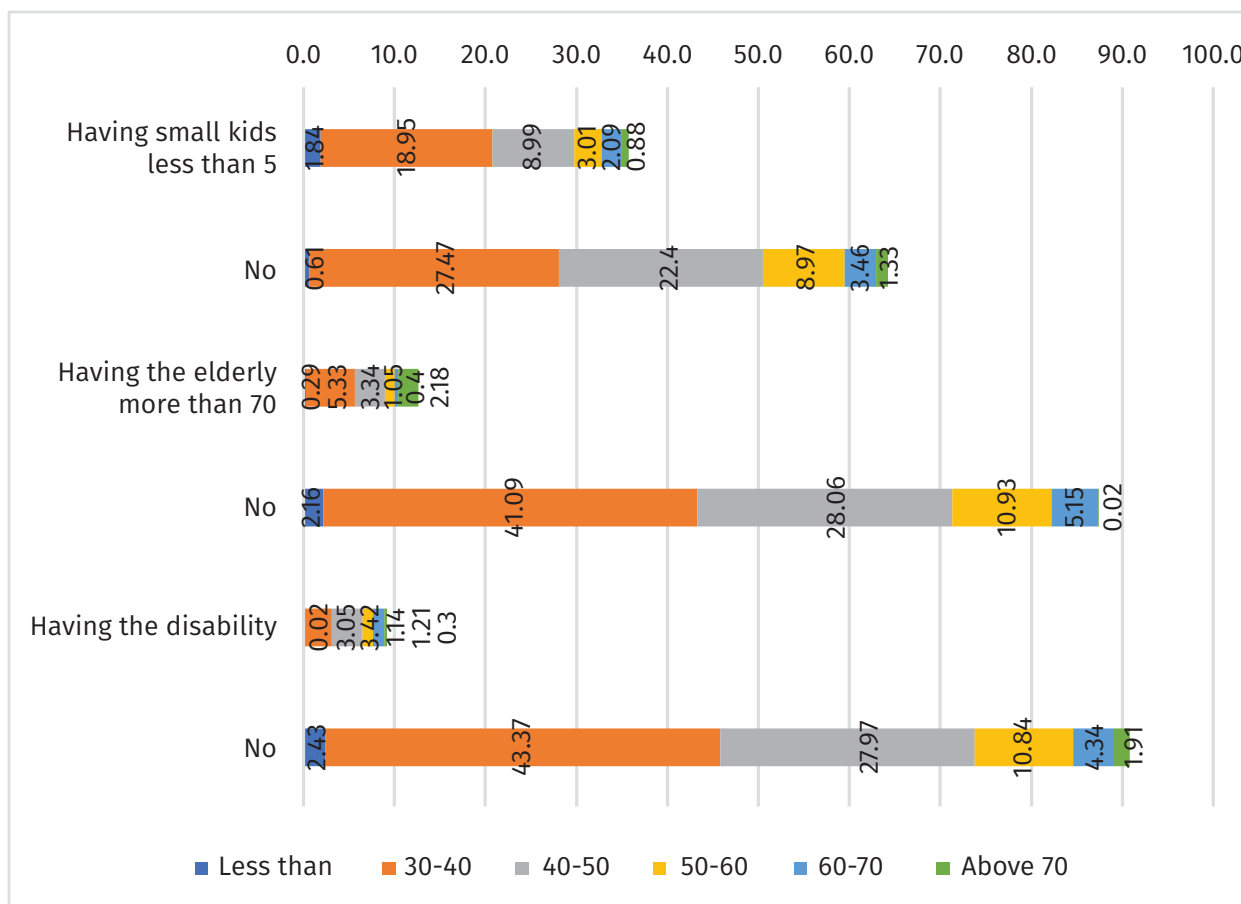
Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

Figure 27. Household distribution by region and poverty status (% of households)



Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

Figure 28. Household distribution by age and vulnerability characteristics (% of households)



Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

Appendix 4. Regression results for time spent on UCDW

Dependent variable: the number of hours per week a working-age person spends on UCDW

| PANEL A. ALL WORKERS | | PANEL B. WAGE WORKERS ONLY | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Variables | OLS | Variables | OLS | Heck man two steps |
| age | 0.110*** | age | 0.456*** | 0.174*** |
| age_square | -0.00225*** | age_square | -0.00649*** | -0.00291*** |
| Male | -8.349*** | Male | -7.631*** | -8.741*** |
| urban | -0.287*** | urban | 0.0403 | -0.282*** |
| Informal Employment | -0.0563 | Informal Employment | -0.0275 | -0.229** |
| Married | 4.521*** | Married | 5.257*** | 4.991*** |
| Kinh - Chinese | Reference group | Kinh - Chinese | Reference group | |
| Khmer and Cham | -1.030*** | Khmer and Cham | -0.827*** | -1.299*** |
| Tay_Thai_Nuong_Nung | 1.354*** | Tay_Thai_Nuong_Nung | -0.625*** | 1.349*** |
| Other EM in North Uplands | 4.918*** | Other EM in North Uplands | 1.301*** | 5.039*** |
| EM in Central Highlands | -2.118*** | EM in Central Highlands | -0.641*** | -2.492*** |
| Ethnic Others | -1.814*** | Ethnic Others | -0.588 | -1.570*** |
| No education | -0.263*** | No education | -0.727*** | -0.459*** |
| Primary | -0.607*** | Primary | -0.303*** | -0.723*** |
| Lower secondary | Reference group | Lower secondary | Reference group | |
| Upper secondary | 0.0344 | Upper secondary | -0.121 | 0.112* |
| college + | 1.042*** | college + | 0.543*** | 1.243*** |
| States | 1.254*** | States | 1.391*** | -0.950*** |
| FDI | -0.896*** | FDI | -0.705*** | -2.501*** |
| Domestic Enterprises | Reference group | Domestic Enterprises | Reference group | |
| HH Business | -0.109 | HH Business | 0.234*** | -1.850*** |
| Individual/ A gri. Hhs | 0.425*** | Individual/ A gri. Hhs | 0.827*** | -0.848*** |
| Agricu Iture | Reference group | Agricu Iture | Reference group | |
| Manuf & Cons | -2.814*** | Manuf & Cons | -0.250* | -3.804*** |
| Trade | -3.314*** | Trade | -0.420*** | -3.776*** |
| Services | -3.004*** | Services | -0.470*** | -3.713*** |
| Northern Mountain | 0.295*** | Northern Mountain | -1.192*** | 0.222*** |
| Red river delta | Reference group | Red river delta | Reference group | |

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Central Coast | -0.493*** |
| Central Highlands | -6.028*** |
| South East | -1.393*** |
| Mekong delta | -3.069*** |
| Elementary Occupations | Reference group |
| Managers | -1.445*** |
| Professionals | -0.211* |
| Associate Professionals | -0.495*** |
| Clerical support workers | 0.291** |
| Services and Sales workers | -0.820*** |
| Skilled Agricultural workers | -0.896*** |
| Craft and related trades workers | -0.277*** |
| Plant and Machinery Operation | -0.545*** |
| Armed forces Occupations | -0.755*** |
| Employer | -1.782*** |
| Own-account worker | Reference group |
| Unpaid family worker | 0.320*** |
| Member of cooperative | -2.836** |
| Wage worker | -2.118*** |
| Constant | 20.24*** |
| Observations | 425323 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.197 |
| F-Statistics | 2263 |
| Prob > F | 0 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Central Coast | -0.799*** | -0.759*** |
| Central Highlands | -4.323*** | -6.436*** |
| South East | -1.045*** | -1.380*** |
| Mekong delta | -2.944*** | -3.478*** |
| Elementary Occupations | Reference group | |
| Managers | -0.209 | 0.366* |
| Professionals | 0.697*** | 0.735*** |
| Associate Professionals | 0.463*** | 0.212 |
| Clerical support workers | 0.916*** | 0.863*** |
| Services and Sales workers | -0.321*** | 0.15 |
| Skilled Agricultural workers | -0.842*** | -0.410*** |
| Craft and related trades workers | -0.0593 | 0.146 |
| Plant and Machinery Operation | 0.0637 | 0.221** |
| Armed forces Occupations | -0.159 | 0.589 |
| Income | -0.000207*** | -0.000203*** |
| Constant | 9.253*** | 19.64*** |
| Observations | 192441 | 425293 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.196 | |
| F-Statistics | 1195 | |
| Prob > F | 0 | 0 |
| Lamda | | 9.138*** |

Note: *, ** and *** denote statistical significance at 10%, 5% and 1% levels, respectively

Source: The 2021 phone-based survey on UCDW of ethnic minority people

Appendix 5. Logit regressions on perceptions of gender roles in UCDW

Dependent variable is listed in the first row; independent variables are listed in the first column

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Most of women do all unpaid care work | Most of men do not do unpaid care work | Women do unpaid care work because men wants her to do so | Men donot do unpaid care work because he is afraid of being laughed at doing care work | House chores | Taking care of kids | Health care of illness, disability | House chores | Taking care of kids | Health care of illness, disability | |
| Age | 0.043 (0.067) | -0.003 (0.058) | -0.005 (0.061) | 0.166** (0.084) | 0.059 (0.064) | 0.050 (0.060) | 0.078 (0.062) | -0.070 (0.073) | -0.087 (0.069) | -0.070 (0.065) |
| Age squared | -0.000 (0.001) | 0.000 (0.001) | 0.000 (0.001) | -0.002** (0.001) | -0.000 (0.001) | -0.000 (0.001) | -0.001 (0.001) | 0.001 (0.001) | 0.001 (0.001) | 0.001 (0.001) |
| Male | -0.607* (0.327) | -0.944*** (0.268) | -0.082 (0.261) | -0.448 (0.274) | -0.149 (0.295) | -0.293 (0.283) | -0.217 (0.294) | 0.173 (0.299) | 0.122 (0.291) | 0.176 (0.283) |
| Urban | 0.191 (0.331) | -0.148 (0.282) | -0.112 (0.286) | -0.117 (0.328) | 0.074 (0.309) | -0.034 (0.293) | 0.056 (0.297) | 0.021 (0.321) | 0.238 (0.312) | 0.195 (0.312) |
| Married | 0.385 (0.352) | 0.277 (0.356) | 0.684* (0.390) | 0.507 (0.430) | -0.278 (0.428) | 0.000 (0.383) | -0.230 (0.438) | -0.058 (0.360) | 0.048 (0.362) | 0.203 (0.360) |
| Kinh and Chinese | Reference | | | | | | | | | |
| Khmer and Cham | -1.147* (0.632) | 0.060 (0.471) | 0.913* (0.480) | 1.159** (0.564) | 0.616 (0.511) | 0.486 (0.496) | 1.194** (0.504) | 1.105** (0.473) | 0.854* (0.464) | 1.284*** (0.484) |
| Tay-Thai-Muong-Nung | -0.609 (0.601) | -0.422 (0.434) | -0.403 (0.435) | 0.101 (0.571) | 0.565 (0.496) | 0.246 (0.497) | 0.301 (0.502) | 1.211*** (0.461) | 0.883* (0.452) | 1.092** (0.453) |
| Other Uplands | -0.500 (0.613) | -0.012 (0.450) | -0.214 (0.456) | 0.207 (0.596) | 0.659 (0.515) | 0.387 (0.518) | 0.465 (0.527) | 1.219** (0.483) | 1.075** (0.481) | 1.077** (0.477) |
| Central Highlands | -1.094* (0.598) | -0.512 (0.454) | -0.591 (0.445) | 0.867 (0.562) | 1.122*** (0.496) | 0.895* (0.482) | 1.258*** (0.483) | 1.055** (0.485) | 0.632 (0.463) | 0.773* (0.463) |
| Others | -0.744 (0.721) | -0.641 (0.551) | -0.337 (0.579) | 1.081 (0.667) | 0.608 (0.605) | 0.366 (0.595) | 0.614 (0.601) | 0.791 (0.601) | 0.507 (0.587) | 1.035* (0.591) |





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