



# **SOCIAL INCLUSION IN VIETNAM**

## **ISSUES OF POLICY AND PRACTICE**

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# OUTLINE

- UNESCO and VASS cooperation
- Defining & understanding social inclusion
- Recognized target groups
- Challenges for social inclusion
- Policy suggestions
- Issues for the future

# UNESCO & VASS COOPERATION

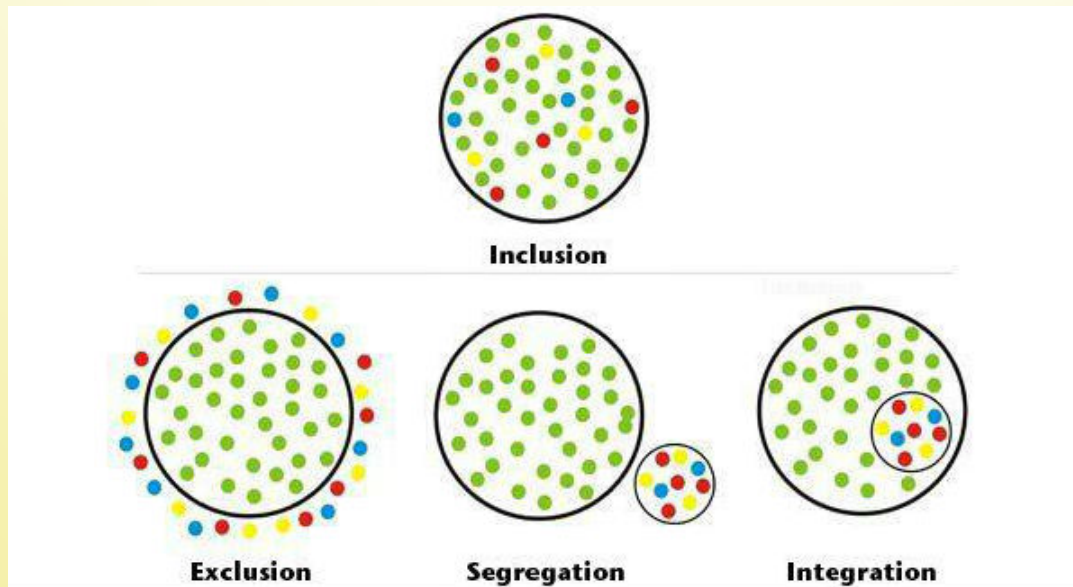
- Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS) is a major government agency for social research.
- UNESCO & VASS have significant cooperation in promoting the role of social sciences in inclusive and sustainable development.

Some key activities:

- The first high-level Forum on Management of Social Transformation of ASEAN countries: *“Societal vulnerability: the social inclusion challenges of environmental change”* was organized in Hanoi in December 2013.
- International Forum *“Gender dimensions of social exclusion: Towards more inclusive policies for women”* in September 2015 in Hanoi.
- A series of seminars, such as: *“Management of Social Change: Theoretical and Practical Issues in Vietnam”* held in Hanoi in December 2016.

# DEFINING SOCIAL INCLUSION

- An ethical idea
- Sits between policy and academia
- Inclusion widens people's choices and ensures shared prosperities.



Source: [www.friendshipcircle.org](http://www.friendshipcircle.org)

# UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL INCLUSION IN VIETNAM

- Understanding the concept is different from defining it.
- From beginning, social inclusion is often considered for academics, not policy makers.
- Policy priority on poverty reduction and vulnerabilities.
- Academia and then policies change focus from “integration” to “inclusion”
- Policy focus changes from pro-poor growth to inclusive growth and inclusive development.

# POLICY REQUIREMENTS BEING DISCUSSED IN VIETNAM

- To build capacity and consensus on social inclusion at all policy levels.
- To advocate and facilitate the mainstreaming of social inclusion into national plans & sectors.
- To ensure policy options and solutions implemented in practice.
- To promote partnership and regional networks.

# TARGET GROUPS IN VIETNAM

(the groups are overlapped)

- The poor and the poorest
- Ethnic minorities
- Informal sector
- The elderly
- Women, Children
- Disable people
- Migrants and displaced populations
- Victims of human trafficking

# APPROACHES FOR VIETNAM

For ensuring inclusiveness, the people has to be empowered:

- To access to quality education, health care, housing and other social services;
- To have equal opportunities;
- To facilitate land titling and private ownership;
- To be consulted and have a say in major development projects and decision-making;
- To live in a safe environment;
- To restore citizen's trust;
- To improve social protection;

# CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

- Inequality keeps widening and disparities continue to increase across social groups.
- Increasing risks due to economic shocks, climate changes, macroeconomic volatility.
- Low productivity and quality of life.
- Lack of efforts to improve justice and increased exclusion.
- Lack of transparency and accountability due to low social trust and access to information.
- Limited evidence, information and data

# Example of remaining/rising issue: THE INFORMAL SECTOR

- Large number of labors in the informal sector.
- Informal sector: 12 million of 52 million workers (2013)
- Nearly half of non-farm works in the informal sector
- Manufacturing, construction sector (43%), trade (31%) and services (26%)
- No pension, no insurance...
- Lack of quality data on the informal sector
- Still no effective policy/solution



# Examples of remaining/rising issue:

## ➤ **AGING POPULATION, GENDER EQUALITY and RETIREMENT AGE:**

- By law, retirement age is 60 for men and 55 for women.
- A proposal of rising retirement age (faster for women than for men) was instantly rejected by National Assembly.
- Lack of knowledge, evidence or methods to convince policy makers?

## ➤ **SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF MIGRANTS:**

- Residence registration system is a large barrier for the migrants and their children to access public services in urban areas.
- The issue has been raised for years, but only very little have been changed.

# Another example of remaining/rising issue THE ELDERLY POOR

Survival By Lottery | Vietnam's Elderly Poor | CNA Insider

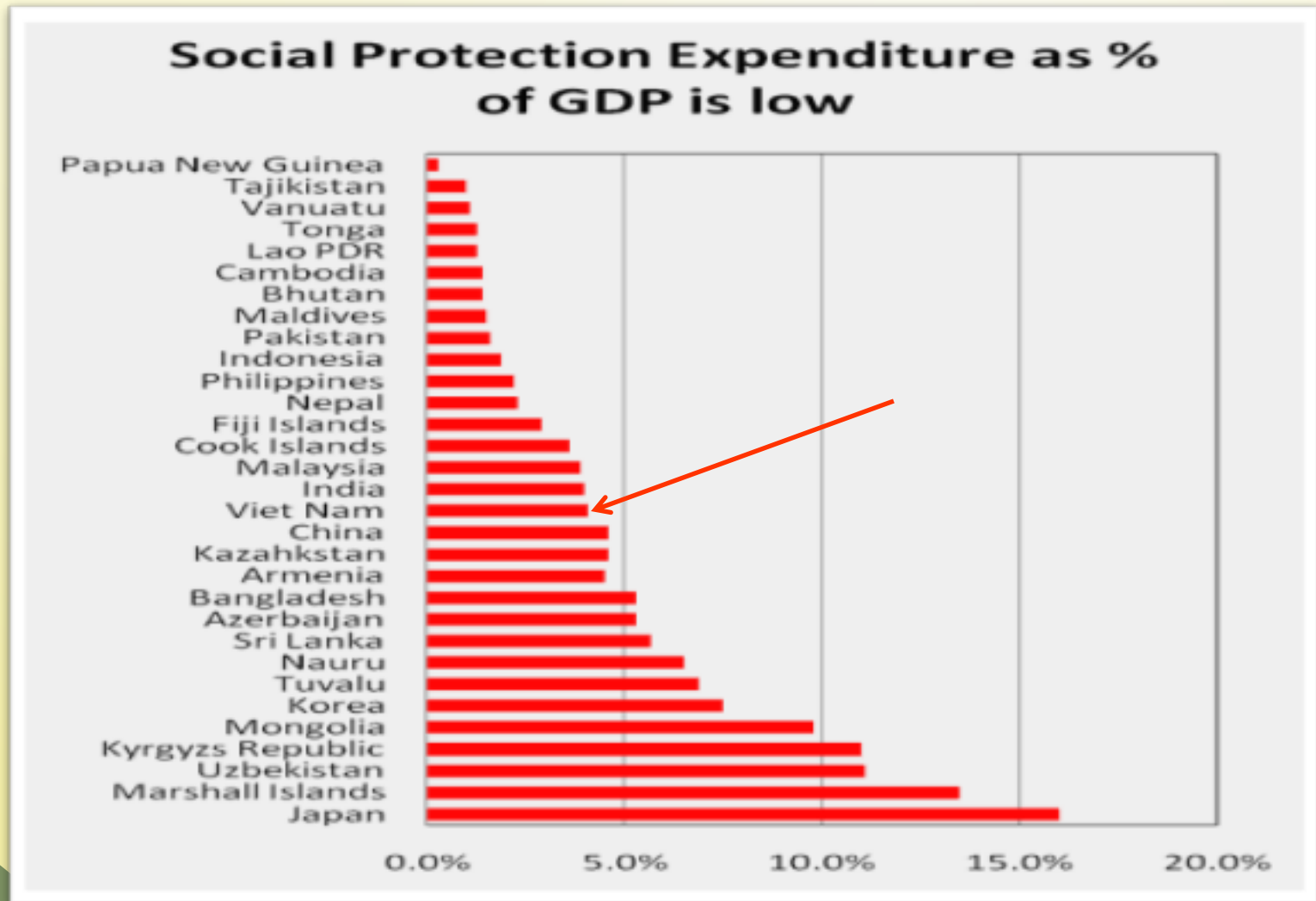
*Vietnam's elderly poor:*

**SURVIVAL  
BY LOTTERY**

*By Kim Wong & Ray Yeh*



# CAN SOCIAL PROTECTION BE AFFORDED?





Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS)

# Policy suggestions

- Respecting law as the basis of a stable and equitable society.
- Better responding to the needs of people by making government institutions and service delivery more efficiently.
- If growth is to be inclusive, resources and investment must be directed to the areas where the poor live, and the sectors in which they work.
- Improving the decision-making process through effective dialogue and participation; avoiding exclusion.

# Tripartite Institutions - Long term?

**Market  
Economy**

**Ruled-by-law  
state**

**Civil society**

# TWO KEY QUESTIONS



How can we integrate the specific issues of social inclusion into policy and planning?



How can we make social transformations inclusive and work for the people?

# The role of social sciences

- Social sciences do improve government's concern and policies on social inclusion in Vietnam.
- The supports from international agencies (e.g. UNESCO) and network with other countries in the region are important and significant.
- However, that is just the beginning. There are many issues need to be solved.
- Next step for VASS and UNESCO: besides other activities, it would be helpful to organize a MOST school in Vietnam.



# Thank You

Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS)