NOVEMBER 2021

WHAT MAKES PEOPLE VULNERABLE TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Profile of victims of human trafficking in Vietnam

blue dragon
CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

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KEY LEARNINGS

- Since 2005, Blue Dragon Children's Foundation has been involved in the rescue and recovery of 1,780 victims of exploitation. For 147 of these, we do not have detailed information. For the other 1,633:

  » 1,160 (71%) were rescued from China; 366 (22%) were rescued within Vietnam; 89 (5%) were rescued on the border with or en route to China; and 18 were rescued from Myanmar (1%).

  » 1,364 (84%) were female and 269 (16%) were male.

  » 758 (46.4%) were Kinh people (Vietnam's ethnic majority); 838 (51.3%) were ethnic minority people; and 37 (2.3%) were Cambodian nationals.

- 585 (36%) of the rescued victims were children; however, this number does not reflect the number of victims who were trafficked as children and aged into adulthood before their rescue.

- Of the 33 rescued victims aged 39 and over who disclosed the details of their trafficking experiences, 36% had been in exploitation for over 20 years.

- A total of 681 victims (41.7%) were rescued from forced labour exploitation; 911 victims (55.7%) were rescued from sexual exploitation (including commercial sexual exploitation, forced marriage, baby trafficking and forced surrogacy); 37 rescued victims (2.3%) were Cambodian nationals for whom the form of exploitation cannot be confirmed; and four rescued victims (0.3%) were children under 10 years old who had been sold into adoption schemes involving Chinese families.

- Ethnic minority people are over three times more likely than Kinh people to be a victim of trafficking.

- H'mong people are most at-risk of being trafficked if population size is taken into account. A total of 334 rescued victims (20%) in the dataset were H'mong, indicating that H'mong people are 14 times more likely than Kinh people to be victims of trafficking.

- The majority of victims are from either mountainous regions along Vietnam's northern border with China or southern Vietnam's Mekong River Delta region.

- Victims of sexual exploitation (commercial sexual exploitation, forced marriages and surrogacy) originated from all over Vietnam. In the Mekong River Delta, the majority of victims were trafficked into sexual exploitation, particularly forced marriages in China. Trafficking victims from northern mountainous provinces and central coastal areas were exposed to a broader set of exploitative practices.

PART 1: BACKGROUND

AND INTRODUCTION

Blue Dragon's mission is to provide exceptional care for children in crisis, while creating long-term change for a better world.

Blue Dragon has two long-term goals: ensuring all street children in Hanoi have access to services and opportunities to get off the streets and build new futures; and ending the sex trafficking of women and girls from Vietnam.

Blue Dragon rescues street children and victims of trafficking from slavery and provides comprehensive programming and services that meet the individual needs of each person. These services include psychological counselling, nutrition, and other direct assistance; access to school or vocational training; career preparation; and legal counsel.

We build on our grassroots experience working with individual victims of trafficking and street children in order to advise national level ministries on strengthening Vietnam's legal framework, provide training for officials, and improve the ability of government agencies to implement laws and policies.

Increasingly, Blue Dragon has been expanding its contribution to the overall body of knowledge about human trafficking and how to combat it. This report is our latest contribution.

For the purposes of this report, 'trafficking' always refers to 'human trafficking'.

VIETNAM'S TRAFFICKING PROFILE

Vietnam is a source and, to a lesser extent, a destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour.[1]

Statistics published by the Vietnamese government indicate that the majority of Vietnamese victims of human trafficking are women and children subjected to sexual exploration abroad. Many are misled by fraudulent employment opportunities and sold into forced marriages in China, or to brothel operators in China, Myanmar, other Asian countries, or along Vietnam's borders. Some Vietnamese women who travel abroad for internationally brokered marriages or jobs are subjected to domestic servitude or forced prostitution.

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[1] US Department of State, 2021, Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020. Vietnam, p8.

Traffickers increasingly use social media and gaming sites to lure potential victims into vulnerable situations. Often, men will entice young women and girls with online relationships and persuade them to move abroad before subjecting them to forced labour or sex trafficking.[2]

Blue Dragon has rescued children as young as seven from forced labour in small, privately owned garment factories and informal workspaces. Traffickers are sometimes extended family members, or small-scale networks which exploit Vietnamese men, women, and children—including street children and children with disabilities—through forced labour.[3] Although comprehensive data on these cases is unavailable, one study suggests that 5.6% of children in Vietnam have experienced situations consistent with, or indicative of, trafficking.[4]

Sex traffickers traditionally target children from impoverished rural areas, though the trafficking of middle class women and women from urban areas is becoming increasingly common.[5]

BACKGROUND TO BLUE DRAGON'S ANTI-TRAFFICKING WORK

In 2005, Blue Dragon's founder and a law student volunteering for Blue Dragon rescued a trafficked 13-year-old boy from the streets of Ho Chi Minh City, the first of many children the organisation would go on to rescue.

In 2007, we rescued seven girls who were tricked into leaving Vietnam and sold to brothels in China. This was Blue Dragon's first experience rescuing victims of the sex trade.

Today, Blue Dragon regularly receives calls for help from family and community members whose sons and daughters have gone missing, as well as requests from police departments, the National Child Protection Hotline, the Border Guard Authority, and local officials throughout the country. Although poor and ethnic minorities are at higher risk of being trafficked, victims can come from any demographic. Blue Dragon rescues these victims regardless of their age, gender, or background.

When Blue Dragon receives calls for help, we conduct an investigation to locate the missing person. Whether they are trapped in a brothel, home, or factory, we help them escape.

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[2] *Ibid*, p8-9. See also, Blue Dragon Children's Foundation, July 2021, 'Trafficking and Traffickers in Vietnam', Hanoi, Vietnam.

[3] US Department of State, *Ibid*, p9.

[4] Apland, K. & Yarrow, E., n.d, Casting Light in the shadows: Child and youth migration, exploitation and trafficking in Vietnam, CORAM International, UK, p25.

[5] Blue Dragon Children's Foundation, *Ibid*.

The Rescue Team has considerable experience advocating for the rights of children in crisis. The team members are experienced lawyers and policy advocates. The Rescue Team works in conjunction with the police and local authorities to ensure the safety of victims and team members alike, as well as to protect the rights of all victims during their repatriation and reintegration into society. We support victims throughout the process of reporting their cases to police so that traffickers can be arrested and prosecuted when possible. We continue this support and provide legal representation throughout the investigation and court process in order to ensure that each victim's rights are protected.

Our rescue work is underpinned by the following principles:

- Act in the best interests of victims
- Urgency
- Safety first
- Planning and cooperation
- Only rescue those who want to be rescued

SOURCE DATA

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THIS REPORT IS BASED ON DATA OF 1,633 VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING (VoT) ASSISTED BY BLUE DRAGON BETWEEN 2005 AND 13 JUNE 2021.

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The data includes two key groups. The first group consists of 946 victims who were rescued directly by Blue Dragon (58%). These individuals were reported missing to Blue Dragon by family, police, and Vietnam's National Child Protection Hotline (111). Blue Dragon, in collaboration with authorities, rescued each of these victims, repatriated them to Vietnam, and reintegrated them with their communities.

The other set of cases are people whom authorities in Vietnam or China rescued before inviting Blue Dragon to help with repatriation and aftercare. There are 687 victims (42%) that fit this category. These cases are referred to in the report as 'assist' cases.

For both sets of victims, Blue Dragon provides legal advocacy, transport from the border to our emergency accommodation in Hanoi, initial emergency assistance and long-term care when required and requested by the rescued victim.

Table 1: Data on Which the Report is Based

Year	No. of VoT* – Direct rescue	No. of VoT – Assist	No. of VoT – Total
2005	1	0	1
2006	27	0	27
2007	2	0	2
2008	18	0	18
2009	15	0	15
2010	23	2	25
2011	48	0	48
2012	85	7	92
2013	76	10	86
2014	49	20	69
2015	90	152	242
2016	80	74	154
2017	142	21	163
2018	77	72	149
2019	111	37	148
2020	78	216	294
2021	24	76	100
Total	**946**	**687**	**1633**
%	**58%**	**42%**	**100%**

Note that 147 victims have been excluded from the report due to insufficient available information regarding their cases. The total number of victims rescued and assisted by Blue Dragon between 2005 and 13 June 2021 is 1,780.

* VoT = Victim of Trafficking

Chart 1: Victims by Year of Rescue
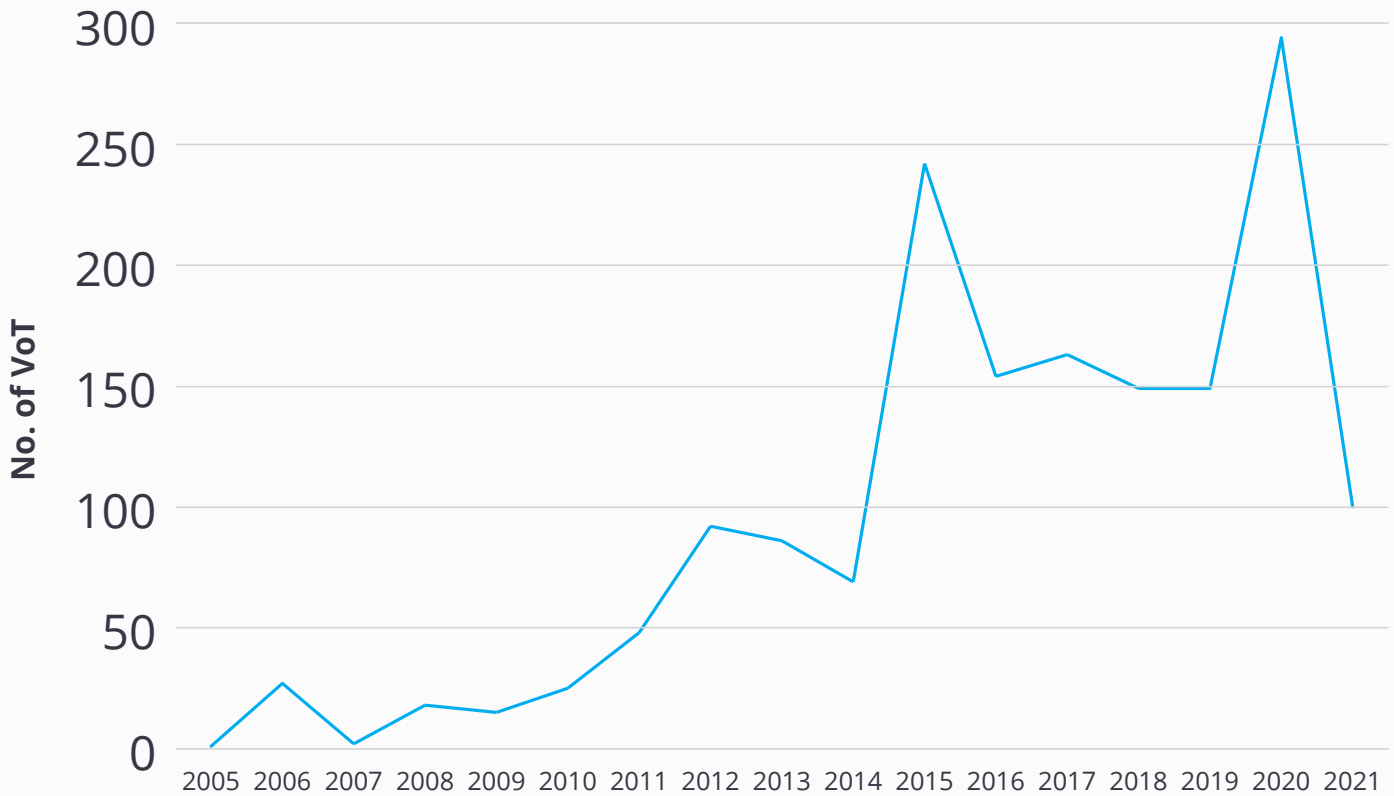
It is important to note that the victims included in this data may not have been officially identified as a victim of trafficking according to the identification and verification process of the Vietnamese government. This means that it is not possible to compare this data with official government data as such data only includes individuals who meet the Vietnamese government's legal definition of 'victim'.

As an NGO, Blue Dragon is not required to adhere to the Vietnamese government's identification process for victims of human trafficking. We identify victims based on our detailed knowledge of the case and our discussions with the victims. We provide support, particularly repatriation and emergency assistance, based on the reasonable assumption that that person is a victim of trafficking and/or exploitation and requires assistance.

LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

This report is based on a significant body of data collected from over 1,600 victims. It is important to note, however, that all the data is from a single source: Blue Dragon Children's Foundation. Some background about how the organisation works and thus how victim information is entered into the database is instructive to better understand the data.

Blue Dragon collaborates with government authorities to rescue victims directly, as well as assists with the repatriation of and aftercare for victims rescued by other authorities. Calls for assistance come from across the country and relate to all forms of trafficking.

In addition to rescuing victims, Blue Dragon has comprehensive trafficking prevention programs in three provinces: Dien Bien, Thua Thien-Hue, and Ha Giang. These programs are well known in these provinces and have helped us form strong collaborative partnerships with local authorities, thus increasing the prevalence of case referrals from these areas. In particular, our work in Thua Thien-Hue started in 2005, several years before child labour was recognised as a major issue. Since then, we have worked closely with communities across the country to identify and locate missing children and have rescued a large number of children from sweatshops in southern Vietnam.

Blue Dragon's work in Thua Thien-Hue started in 2005 and, while the program continues, we have not needed to rescue a child in the province since 2018.

In 2011 we carried out our first rescue of child victims from Dien Bien province who had been trafficked to sweatshops.

Our formal program in Ha Giang commenced in 2019, though it should be noted that Blue Dragon had previously conducted a high number of rescues in the province due to the prevalence of cross-border trafficking in the region.

It could be argued that the data is biased towards women and girls who were trafficked to China for sexual exploitation and ignores or downplays other forms of trafficking. Indeed, the majority of the victims in this dataset are women and girls (84%) and the main type of exploitation is sex trafficking in all its forms (56%). However, Blue Dragon has never specifically limited itself to addressing a particular type of trafficking; instead we have always responded to the needs of the communities with whom we work and to the calls for help that have reached us. As mentioned above, we conduct a rescue only after receiving a specific call for help to find and bring home a person who has been trafficked. The fact that most victims are women and victims of sexual exploitation in China suggests that this type of trafficking is indeed the most common and that it is among the worst types of trafficking, leading to a high need for help in cases involving this form of trafficking.

It is also likely that victims of some types of trafficking, such as labour exploitation, do not identify themselves as having been trafficked or exploited and therefore do not call for help. This means that labour trafficking is often not identified and is therefore underrepresented in the dataset.

We know that labour trafficking is less visible and less reported than sex trafficking in many countries.[6] However, this does not detract from the seriousness of the problem of the trafficking for sexual exploitation of Vietnamese women and girls.

Not all victims disclose their trafficking experiences. Therefore, this report is not able to address victims' background, economic status, and specific trafficking experiences. This is an area which requires further study in order to build a more comprehensive understanding of human trafficking.

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[6] See for example, McGough, M, Feb. 26 2013, 'Ending Modern-Day Slavery: Using Research to Inform U.S. Anti-Human Trafficking Efforts', **nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/ending-modern-day-slavery-using-research-inform-us-anti-human-trafficking-efforts**, Joudo Larsen J & Renshaw L 2012. People trafficking in Australia. Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice no. 441. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. **www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi441** and IOM, Global Data Hub on Human Trafficking, **www.ctdatacollaborative.org**.

PART 2: FINDINGS

GENERAL FINDINGS

The number of victims assisted by Blue Dragon has been steadily increasing year on year. In part this is due to Blue Dragon becoming involved in more cases as our reputation grows. It also speaks to increased activity from police and border forces in rescuing victims and in calling for follow-up care from Blue Dragon.

Destination Countries

The data is dominated by victims rescued from China, however there is also a substantial number of victims who were trafficked domestically. The other destination country represented is Myanmar. The number of rescues from Myanmar has increased significantly since early 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As far as we know, Chinese and Vietnamese traffickers are taking girls from Vietnam, through China and into Myanmar to work in karaoke bars, massage parlours, and brothels. Anecdotal data suggests that most of the 'customers' at these establishments are Chinese, though it is likely that some are Burmese. Due to the pandemic, the number of customers has been reduced and it seems that owners have increased their mistreatment of the victims, leading to more calls for help to Blue Dragon and Vietnamese authorities.

Table 2: Number of Victims by Destination Country

Destination	No. of VoT
China	1160
Myanmar	18
Vietnam	366
Stopped at the border/en route to China	89

Chart 2: Destination Country of Victims

Vietnam (28%)

Myanmar (1%)

Stopped at border/en route to China (6%)

China (71%)
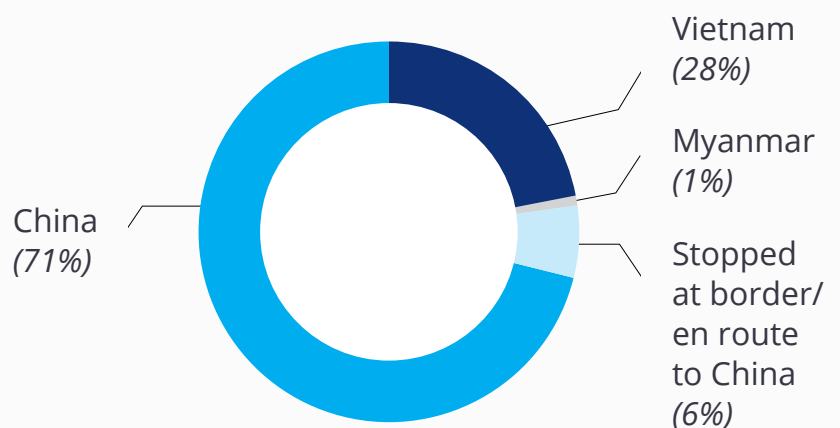
Chart 3: Form of Exploitation of Victims Trafficked to China

Other *(3%)*

Sexual exploitation and forced marriage *(1%)*

Forced labour *(30%)*

Slavery or practices similar to slavery *(50%)*

Sexual exploitation *(15%)*

Baby trafficking *(1%)*
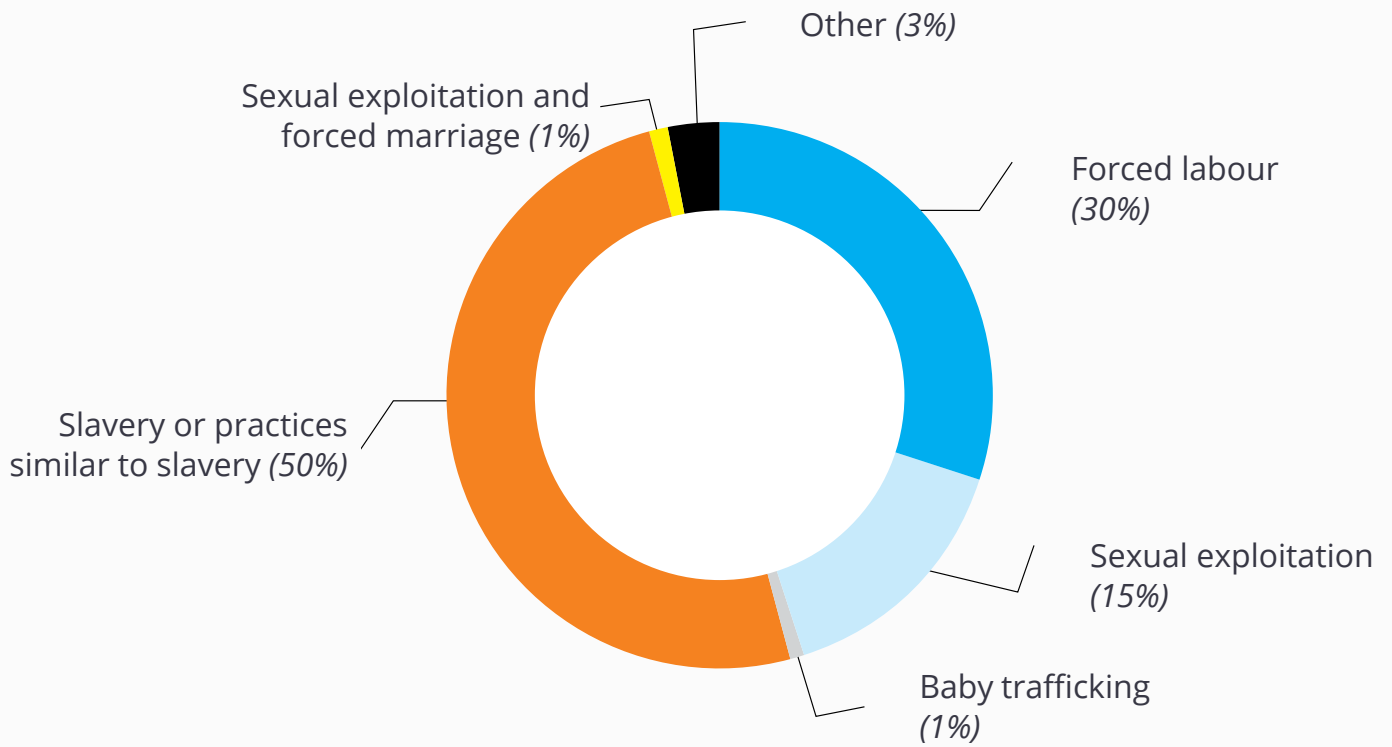
Chart 4: Form of Exploitation of Victims Trafficked to Myanmar

Sexual exploitation *(100%)*

Chart 5: Form of Exploitation of Victims Trafficked Within Vietnam

Sexual exploitation *(16%)*

Forced labour *(84%)*
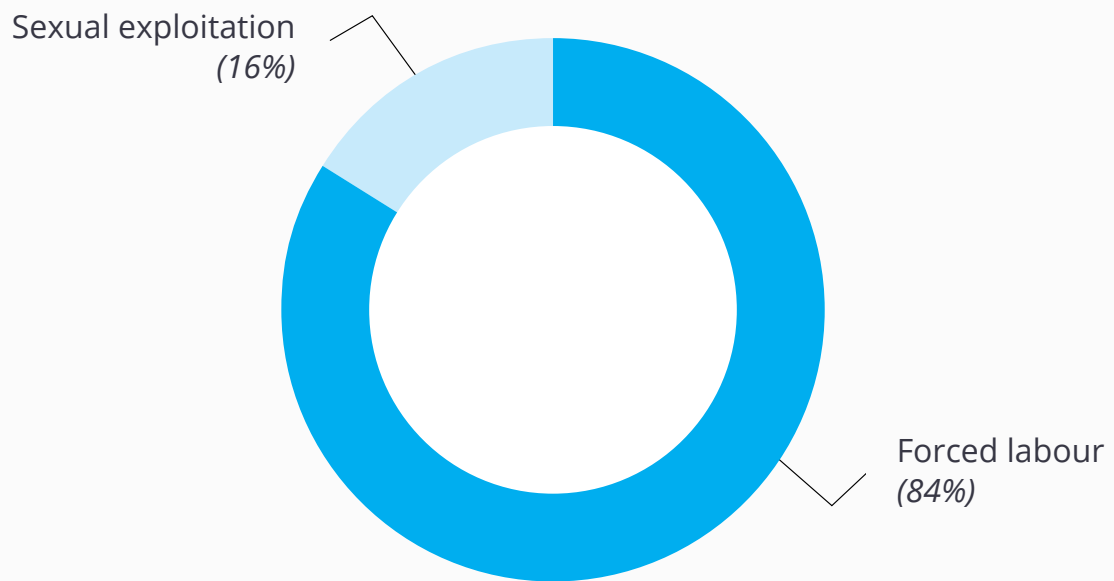
Chart 6: Form of Exploitation of Victims Rescued at the Border or En Route to China

Other *(11%)*

Forced surrogacy *(6%)*

Forced labour *(30%)*

Sexual exploitation and forced marriage *(8%)*

Slavery or practices similar to slavery *(12%)*

Sexual exploitation *(32%)*

Baby trafficking *(1%)*
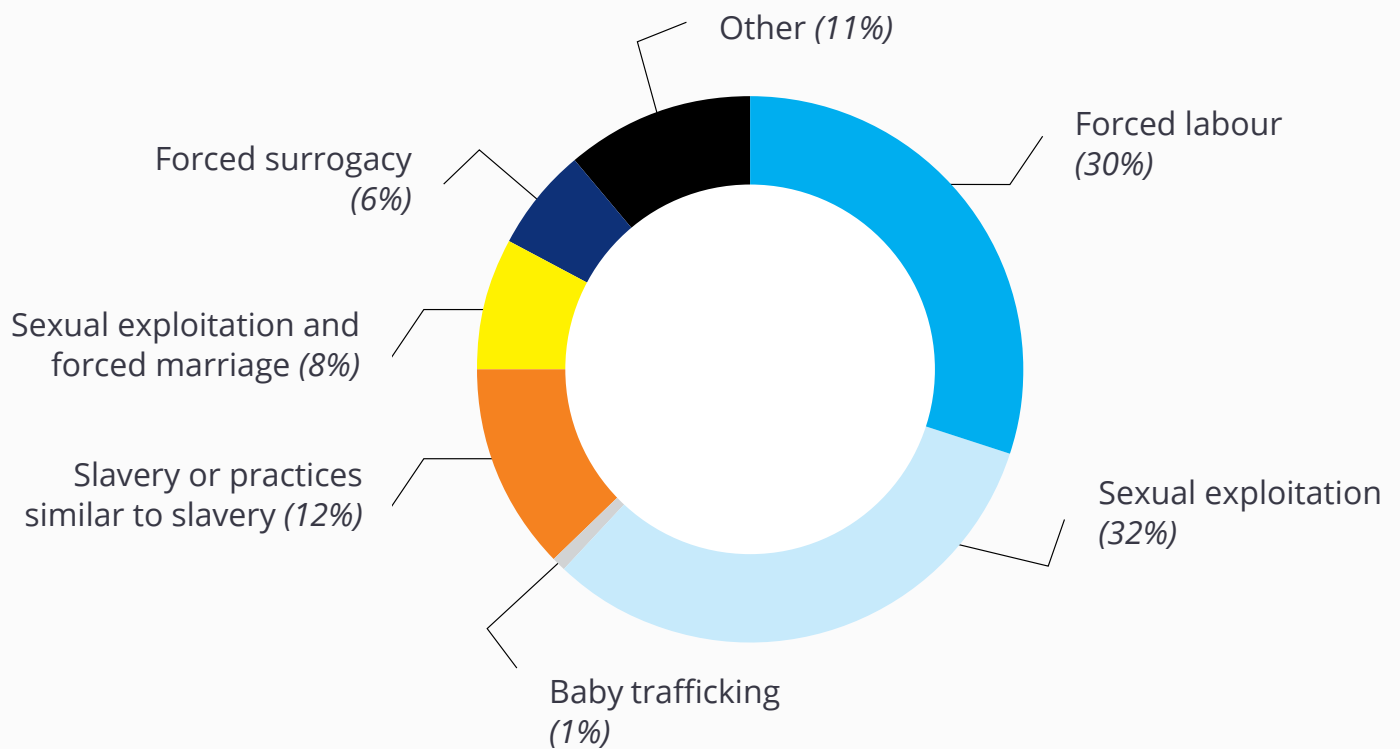
Year of Rescue

There has been a significant increase in rescues over the past ten years, coinciding with an increase in Blue Dragon's operational capacity and reputation.

Table 3: Year of Rescue by Gender

Year	No. of VoT	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
2005	1	1	100%	0	0%
2006	27	10	37%	17	63%
2007	2	0	0%	2	100%
2008	18	10	56%	8	44%
2009	15	13	87%	2	13%
2010	25	7	28%	18	72%
2011	48	23	48%	25	52%
2012	92	36	39%	56	61%
2013	86	29	34%	57	66%
2014	69	21	30%	48	70%
2015	242	33	14%	209	86%
2016	154	16	10%	138	90%
2017	163	10	6%	153	94%
2018	149	19	13%	130	87%
2019	148	1	1%	147	99%
2020	294	39	13%	255	87%
2021	100	1	1%	99	99%
Total	**1633**	**269**		**1364**	

Chart 7: Year of Rescue by Gender
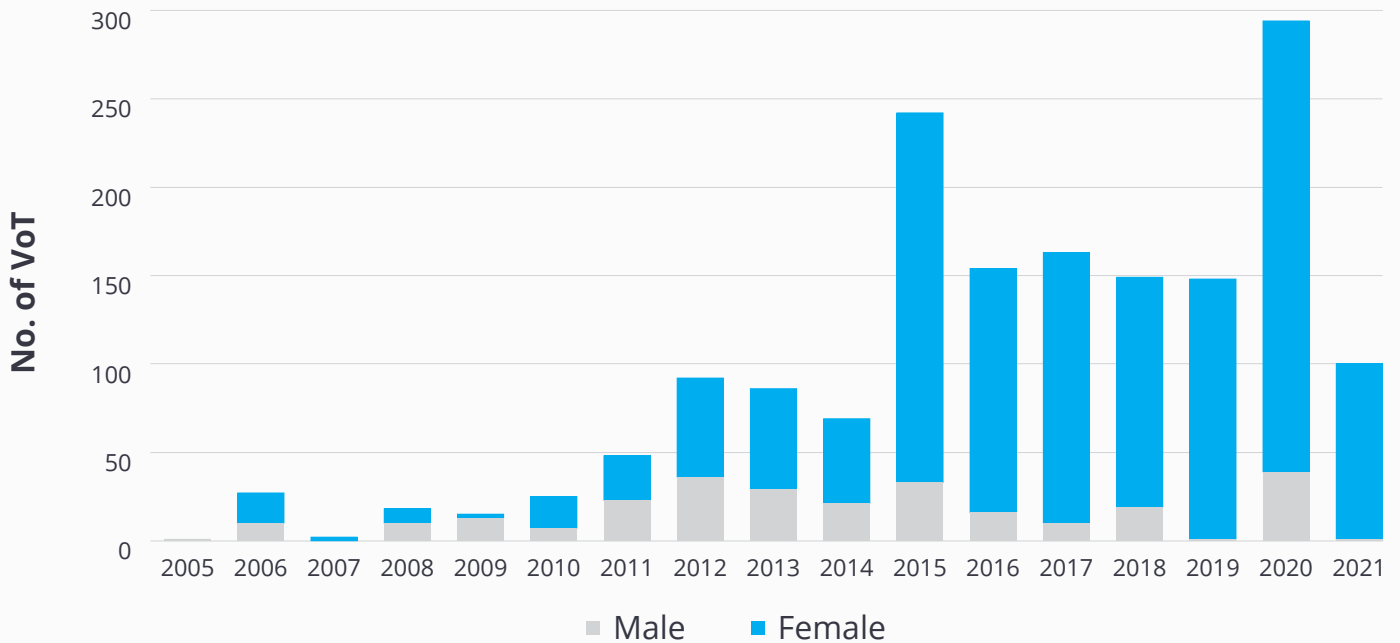
Chart 7 illustrates a clear spike in rescued victims in 2020, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the total number of victims Blue Dragon assisted doubled that of the previous year. Data for 2021 includes only victims rescued up until 13 June, though the numbers indicate that Blue Dragon is on pace to participate in far more rescues in 2021 than it did in years prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This spike is likely the result of increased poverty and economic need brought about by government imposed restrictions put in place to control the pandemic. Since the pandemic first struck Vietnam in early 2020, Blue Dragon has recorded higher numbers of children on the streets, higher numbers of children dropping out of school, and more families in extreme economic need.[7]

The spike in 2015 was due to Blue Dragon piloting anti-trafficking activities in Ha Giang province in north-eastern Vietnam. In 2015, Chinese authorities recorded a considerable increase in traffickers attempting to smuggle victims through the Thanh Thuy Border Gate. Many of these cases were referred to Blue Dragon for support in victim repatriation and recovery. Though the number of cases in Ha Giang decreased in subsequent years, cases in the province remain high and Blue Dragon has continued to work with the local border guards to support anti-trafficking activities in the region.

Type of Exploitation

Blue Dragon's vision for the future includes the eradication of human trafficking in Vietnam. We help all victims of trafficking, regardless of nationality, place of domicile, sex, age, or type of exploitation.

In this report we use internationally recognised terms[8] for each type of exploitation:

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[7] See **www.bluedragon.org/news-and-publications/publications** and **www.bluedragon.org/latest-news**.

[8] International Organisation of Migration, Human Trafficking Case Data Standards (HTCDS) 1.0, 2021.

- **'Sexual exploitation'** is commercial sexual exploitation. Victims are coerced to provide sexual 'services' for clients. In Vietnam victims of this type of exploitation are enslaved in brothels, karaoke bars, or serve guests at hotels.

- **'Slavery or practices similar to slavery'** in this data refers exclusively to forced marriage. Due to gender imbalances in China, traffickers target Vietnamese girls and women with promises of jobs and money in China. These girls and women are then sold into 'marriage' with Chinese men. These marriages are rarely registered with authorities and are considered illegal since the girls and women are forced into them against their will. The victims' primary responsibility in these forced marriages is to meet the sexual demands of men in the family and give birth to children who can continue the family name. They are usually confined to the home and not allowed to contact their families. In most cases, the victims are subjected to domestic labour exploitation or other types of forced labour, such as working on the family farm or in local factories.

- **'Sexual exploitation and forced marriage'** includes victims who were sold into forced marriages and then either sold again into forced sex work or forced by their 'husbands' to work as prostitutes.

- **'Forced labour'** victims are those who work long hours under poor and hazardous conditions against their will for little or no pay. These victims are detained by their 'employers' and often work in isolated areas. In most cases their identification papers are confiscated. In Vietnam, victims are mainly exploited in informal, domestic sweatshops[9], farms, and illegal mines. Some are transported to China where their labor is exploited on farms or in factories and their unlawful migration status limits their ability to escape.

- **'Baby trafficking'** in this data refers to situations where pregnant women are trafficked in order for their babies to be sold.

- **'Organ removal'** is a form of trafficking where victims are deceived into selling organs, usually their kidneys. There are no cases of trafficking for organ removal in this data, however we are aware that police have rescued some Vietnamese victims of organ trafficking in recent years.

- **'Forced surrogacy'** involves a woman being forced to carry a baby that traffickers plan to sell immediately following birth.

- **'Other'** in this data includes 37 Cambodian victims rescued by Blue Dragon between 2005 and 13 June 2021 who were unable to explain the type of exploitation they had been exposed to due to language barriers. In addition, nine cases (24%) in this category were rescued while in transit through Vietnam so it was unclear what type of exploitation they would have been trafficked into. This category includes young children (under 13 years old) who were sold into adoption schemes involving Chinese families.

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[9] The majority of these operations were small and informal workspaces in private homes, rather than factories. As far as we know, they typically produced cheap clothing for the domestic market.

Table 4: Type of Exploitation by Year

Year	Forced Labour	Sexual Exploitation	Baby Trafficking	Slavery or Practices Similar to Slavery	Sexual Exploitation and Forced Marriage	Organ Removal	Forced Surrogacy	Other
2005	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
2008	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	20	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
2011	43	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012	64	23	0	2	2	0	0	1
2013	50	27	0	7	2	0	0	0
2014	44	11	0	10	4	0	0	0
2015	145	50	0	46	0	0	0	1
2016	73	28	0	46	1	0	0	6
2017	16	22	0	119	3	0	0	3
2018	30	16	1	101	0	0	1	0
2019	2	30	5	107	2	0	0	2
2020	107	33	4	121	2	0	8	19
2021	26	23	3	36	0	0	3	9
Total	**681**	**275**	**13**	**595**	**16**	**0**	**12**	**41**
%	**41.7%**	**16.8%**	**0.8%**	**36.4%**	**1.0%**	**0%**	**0.7%**	**2.5%**

The effects of COVID-19 have led to an increase in sex trafficking – both in China and within Vietnam. The number of cases of forced surrogacy has also increased since the COVID-19 pandemic began. We are aware of several cases of forced surrogacy which were handled solely by police and are, therefore, not included in our data. The increase in victims of labour trafficking is mostly represented by people who had been exploited in China before COVID-19 controls led to their identification and repatriation to Vietnam.

Table 5: Number of Victims by Destination Country and Form of Exploitation

Country	Forced Labour	Sexual Exploitation	Baby Trafficking	Slavery or Practices Similar to Slavery	Sexual Exploitation and Forced Marriage	Forced Surrogacy	Other
China	346	171	12	584	9	7	31
Myanmar	0	18	0	0	0	0	0
Vietnam	308	58	0	0	0	0	0
At border/ en route to China	27	28	1	11	7	5	10
Total	**681**	**275**	**13**	**595**	**16**	**12**	**41**

Chart 8: Number of Victims by Destination Country and Form of Exploitation

The data illustrates that victims rescued from China encountered various forms of sexual and labour exploitation. Meanwhile, all victims rescued from Myanmar were trafficked into the commercial sex industry. This does not mean that Vietnamese victims of human trafficking in Myanmar are not exploited for forced labour, but simply that Blue Dragon has not been involved with the rescue of victims exposed to exploitative labour.

Victims who were rescued prior to crossing the border, either en route to a border crossing, at the airport, or at a border gate, were being trafficked into a wide range of exploitative practices. This category includes nine Cambodian victims who were identified and rescued while being transported through Vietnam.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

Gender

The majority of victims in this dataset are female (84%), which aligns with government data that indicates that approximately 85% of victims are female.[10] It should be noted, however, that this statistic likely does not accurately reflect the fact that labour trafficking, which primarily targets men and boys, is underrepresented in all available statistics for Vietnam.

Understandably, each form of exploitation is highly gendered. Women are more likely to be exploited for commercial sex and forced marriage while men are more likely to be exploited for labour. It is worth noting that, in this data, more women than men were rescued from labour exploitation. These victims are primarily girls who were rescued from labour exploitation in sweatshops.

This dataset does not include any male victims of commercial sexual exploitation; however, that does not mean Vietnamese males are safe from this form of exploitation. Over the past 16 years, Blue Dragon has assisted many boys who had been sexually exploited in return for a room for the night or for payment. For internal operational reasons these victims are not included in this dataset.

[10] Department 2, Vietnam Supreme People's Procuracy, 2020, 'Discussion results of prosecutions and trials of human trafficking crimes' in Workshop materials, 'Implementation of the National Plan of Action against trafficking in persons during 2016 – 2020 and the enhancement of assistance for trafficked victims', Hanoi, Vietnam.

Table 6: Victims by Gender and Type of Exploitation

Type of Exploitation	No. of VoT	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
Forced Labour	681	269	40%	412	60%
Slavery or Practices Similar to Slavery	595	0	0%	595	100%
Sexual Exploitation	275	0	0%	275	100%
Sexual Exploitation and Forced Marriage	16	0	0%	16	100%
Baby Trafficking	13	0	0%	13	100%
Forced Surrogacy	12	0	0%	12	100%
Other	41	0	0%	41	100%
Total	**1633**	**269**	**16%**	**1364**	**84%**

Chart 9: Victims by Gender and Type of Exploitation
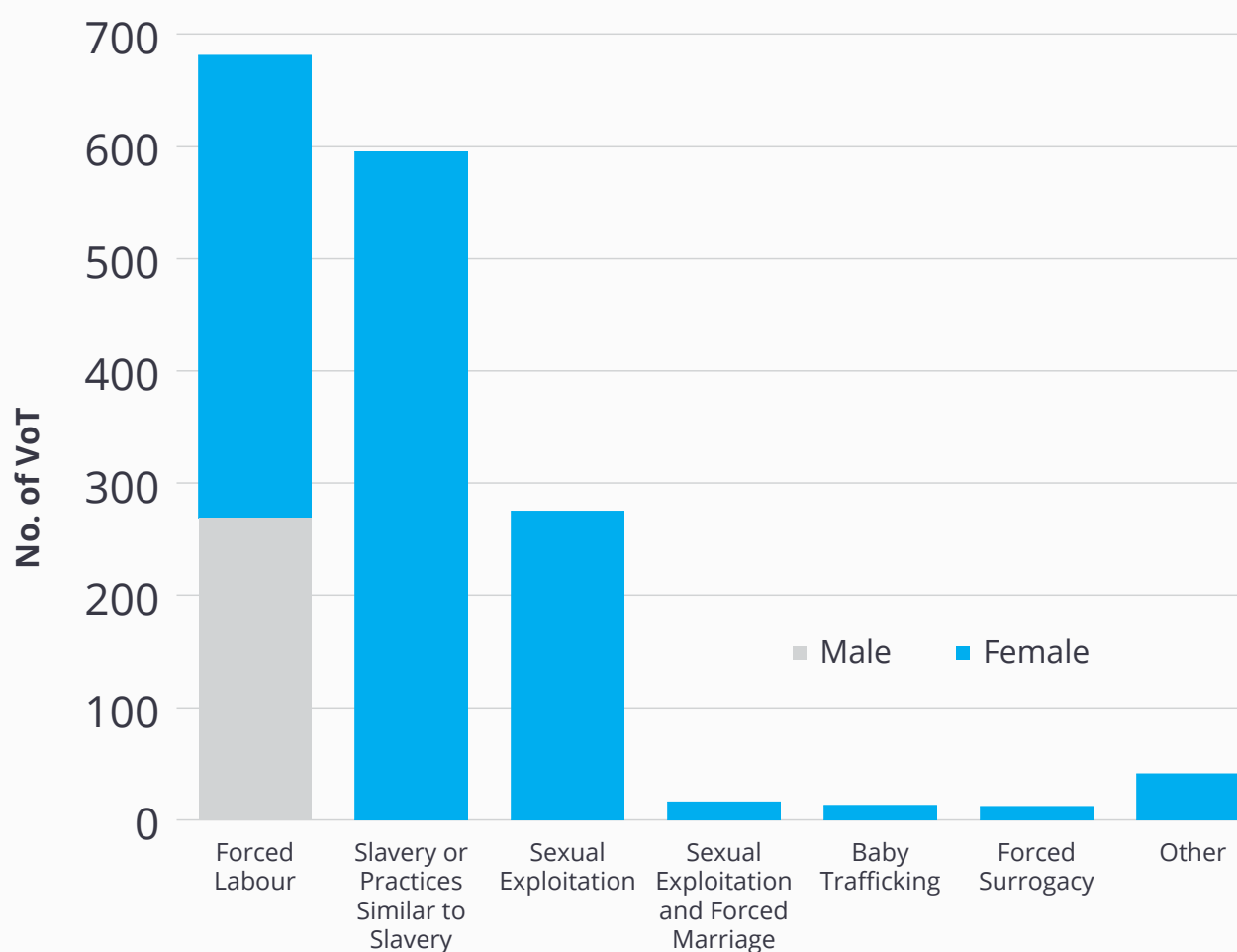
Age

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THE DATA SHOWS THAT A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF VICTIMS ARE UNDER 18 YEARS OLD AT THE TIME OF THEIR RESCUE (585 VICTIMS, 36%).

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Age at time of rescue does not accurately reflect age at time of trafficking as many victims spend several years being exploited prior to their rescue. Therefore, the percentage of victims who were children when they were trafficked is likely much higher than what is reflected in the data.

Table 7: Age at Rescue

Age Group	No. of VoT	% of total	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
0-8	5	0%	1	20%	4	80%
9-15	304	19%	125	41%	179	59%
16-17	276	17%	57	21%	219	79%
18-20	271	17%	36	13%	235	87%
21-23	205	13%	13	6%	192	94%
24-26	153	9%	10	7%	143	93%
27-29	146	9%	10	7%	136	93%
30-38	195	12%	14	7%	181	93%
39-47	57	3%	1	2%	56	98%
48+	21	1%	2	10%	19	90%
Total	**1633**	**100%**	**269**		**1364**	

Chart 10: Age at Rescue

- 48+ (1%)
- 39-47 (4%)
- 30-38 (12%)
- 18-29 (47%)
- 16-17 (17%)
- 0-15 (19%)
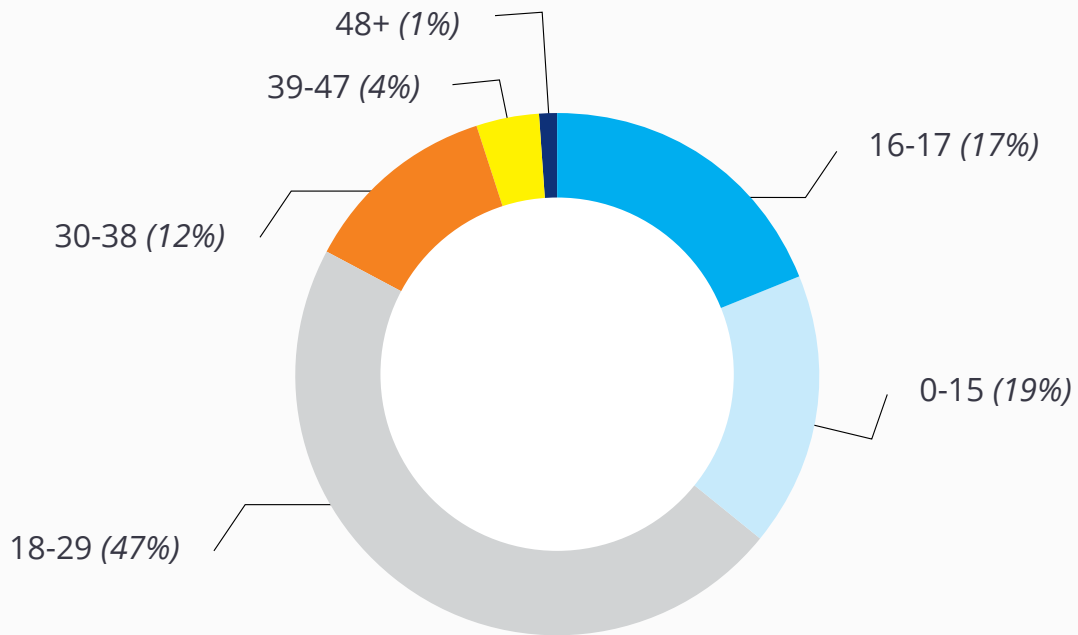
THE LARGEST DEMOGRAPHIC OF VICTIMS WERE FEMALES AGED 18-29 AT TIME OF RESCUE (47%).

This is the most vulnerable age for forced marriages, commercial sexual exploitation, and all types of trafficking related to pregnancy.

This can be seen in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Victims by Age and Type of Exploitation

Age Group	Forced Labour	Sexual Exploitation	Baby Trafficking	Slavery or Practices Similar to Slavery	Sexual Exploitation and Forced Marriage	Forced Surrogacy	Other
0-15	226	39	0	39	0	1	4
16-17	123	65	1	75	3	0	9
18-29	246	125	5	270	8	6	16
30-38	59	43	7	163	5	5	12
39-47	17	2	0	38	0	0	0
48+	10	1	0	10	0	0	0
Total	**681**	**275**	**13**	**595**	**16**	**12**	**41**

16- and 17-year-olds are placed in a distinct category due to Vietnam's legal classifications of 'adults' and 'children'. Vietnamese law defines a 'child' as a person under 16 years old. Therefore, 16- and 17-year-olds are treated as adults under the country's current human trafficking laws. This is significant because there is a lower burden of evidence needed to prosecute and convict traffickers of children than traffickers of adults (there is no need to demonstrate 'means', such as force or deception). There are also more severe penalties for traffickers of children.

The children in our dataset who were rescued from labour exploitation were mostly trafficked into sweatshops within Vietnam, including two who were 7 years old at the time they were rescued. There is also a very high number of girls aged 9-15 years who were sold into forced marriages and to brothels. The youngest victim of commercial sex trafficking was 13 years old at the time of her rescue while the youngest victim of forced marriage was 11 years old at the time of her rescue.

Chart 11: Victims by Age and Type of Exploitation
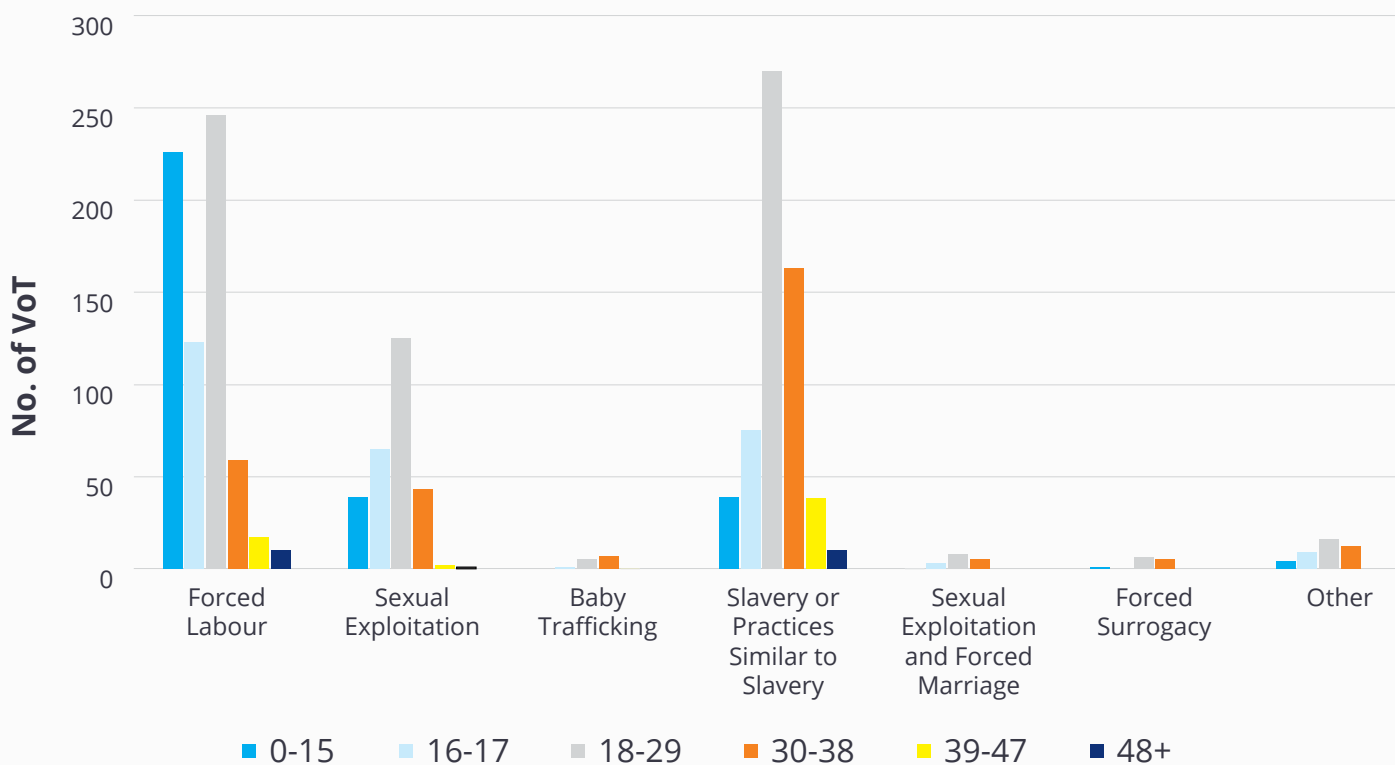
Chart 11 illustrates that children under 15 years old are most vulnerable to labour exploitation, followed by victims aged 18 to 26. Among the 226 victims of forced labour under age 15 included in the dataset, 192 (85%) were exploited in Vietnam: in sweatshops (187 cases); on farms (4 cases); and in illegal mines (1 case). In contrast, the 139 victims (70%) of forced labour aged 16-17 were exploited for labour in China.

Individuals aged 18 to 26 are most vulnerable to commercial sex trafficking and forced marriage.

The table and chart below illustrate the trend more clearly.

Table 9: Victims by Age and Type of Exploitation (Summary)

Age Group	Forced Labour	Sexual Exploitation	Other	% of total
0-15	226	79	4	19%
16-17	123	144	9	17%
18-29	246	414	16	39%
30-38	59	223	12	21%
39-47	17	40	0	3%
48+	10	11	0	1%
Total	**681**	**911**	**41**	**100%**

Chart 12: Victims by Age and Type of Exploitation (Summary)
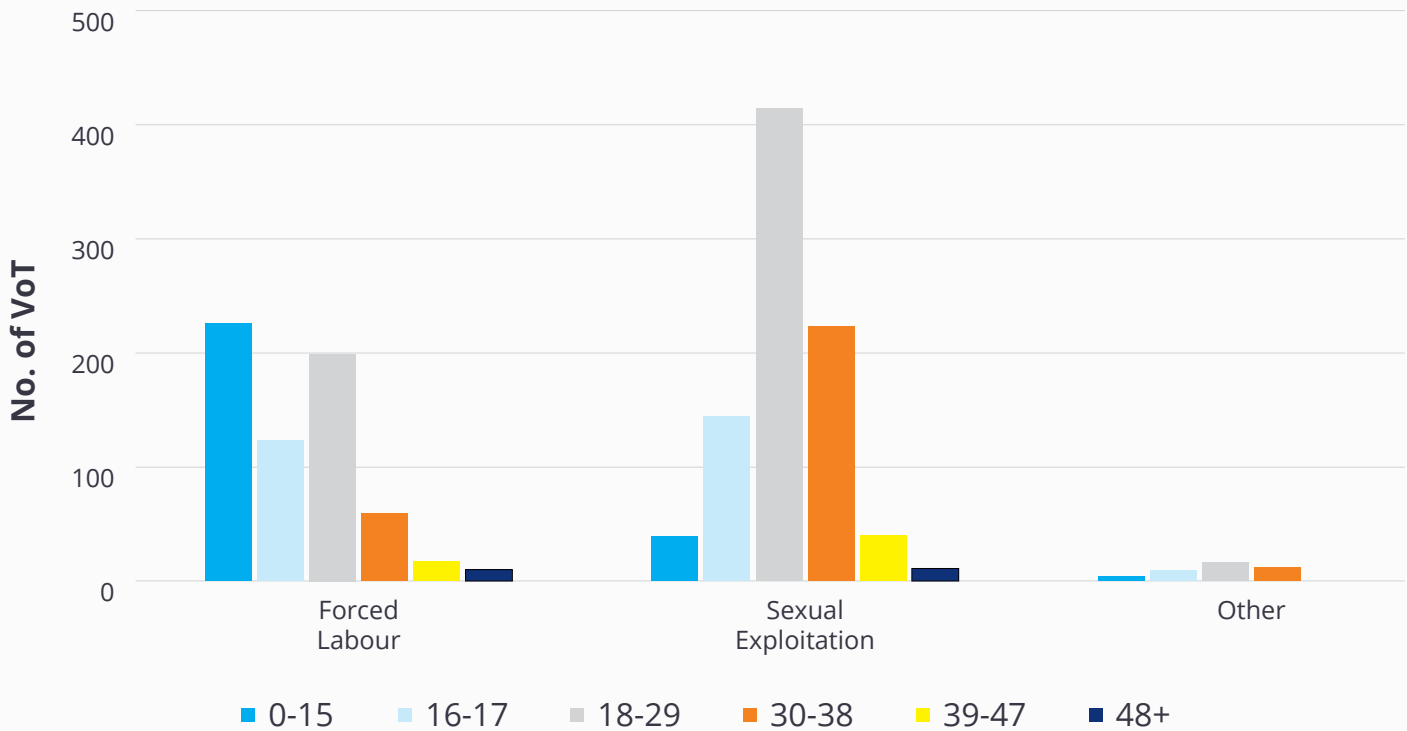
It should be noted that many victims of sexual exploitation aged 39 and above have been in slavery for many years before their rescue. Among 51 victims of sexual exploitation in this age range, only 33 of them agreed to disclose their trafficking experiences. The average time in exploitation among these 33 people was 11 years and 4 months. Detailed information regarding their time in exploitation is noted in Table 10.

Table 10: Time in Slavery Among Victims of Sexual Exploitation Aged 39+

Time in Slavery (Year)	No. of VoT	% of total
0 – < 1 year	5	15.2%
1 – < 5 years	8	24.2%
5 – < 10 years	6	18.2%
10 – < 20 years	2	6.0%
20 – 30 years	12	36.4%
Total	**33**	**100%**

Ethnicity

Vietnam is home to 54 ethnic groups, with the Kinh ethnicity representing 85% of the total population.

Only 46.4% of victims included in this dataset are Kinh. The remaining 53.6% includes individuals representing 22 different ethnic minority groups (838 cases, 51.3%) and 37 Cambodians (2.3%).

THIS ILLUSTRATES THAT ETHNIC MINORITY PEOPLE ARE OVER THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN KINH PEOPLE TO BE TRAFFICKED.[11]

The ethnic group that is most vulnerable to human trafficking is the H'mong ethnic group, which accounts for 334, or 20%, of the victims in this dataset. The total H'mong population, according to the 2019 census, is 1,393,547, or 1.4% of Vietnam's total population of 96,462,106.

[11] If ethnic minority people were trafficked at a rate proportional to their share of the total population, they should account for 15% of the victims, or 245 cases. In reality, at 838 victims (excluding Cambodians), they account for 53% of the victims, 3.4 times what would be expected.

THESE FIGURES INDICATE THAT H'MONG PEOPLE ARE OVER 14 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE TRAFFICKED THAN KINH PEOPLE.[12]

Table 11: Victims by Gender and Ethnicity

Ethnicity	No. of VoT	Male	% Male	Female	% Female	% of Total VoT
Kinh*	758	144	15%	644	85%	46.4%
H'mong	334	68	20%	266	80%	20.5%
Thai	239	35	15%	204	85%	14.6%
Kho Mu	93	31	33%	62	67%	5.7%
Dao	44	6	14%	38	86%	2.7%
Cambodian	37	0	0%	37	100%	2.3%
Khmer	34	0	0%	34	100%	2.1%
Tay	26	1	4%	25	96%	1.6%
Nung	14	0	0%	14	100%	0.9%
Xdang	12	11	92%	1	8%	0.7%
Hoa	9	3	33%	6	67%	0.6%
Muong	8	0	0%	8	100%	0.5%
Gia Rai	5	0	0%	5	100%	0.3%
Ede	4	0	0%	4	100%	0.2%
Khang	3	0	0%	3	100%	0.2%
Xa Pho	3	0	0%	3	100%	0.2%
Dan Lai	2	0	0%	2	100%	0.1%
H're	2	0	0%	2	100%	0.1%
Bana	1	0	0%	1	100%	0.1%
Giay	1	0	0%	1	100%	0.1%
Kor	1	0	0%	1	100%	0.1%
Ko Tu	1	0	0%	1	100%	0.1%
Mnong	1	0	0%	1	100%	0.1%
Xa Phang	1	0	0%	1	100%	0.1%
Total	**1633**	**269**		**1364**		**100%**

'Kinh' is the majority ethnic group.

[12] If H'mong people were trafficked at a rate proportional to their share of the total population, they would make up 1.4% of the victims, or 23 cases in the dataset. In fact, there are 334 H'mong victims included in the dataset, or 14.6 times the expected number.

There are interesting differences in the types of exploitation victims from different ethnic groups are exposed to. For Kinh, H'mong, Khmer, and Dao people, the most common type of exploitation is forced marriage. For Thai and Tay people, labour exploitation is the most common type of exploitation. Kho Mu victims are most commonly exploited for labour in sweatshops. Many of the Kho Mu victims rescued with involvement from Blue Dragon are teens from Dien Bien province who were saved from sweatshops in Ho Chi Minh City. In recent years, we have not seen as many cases of Kho Mu children from Dien Bien being exploited domestically for labour exploitation of children, however the number of these children being sexually exploited in China is on the rise.

In this dataset, Kho Mu people were the only group exploited for baby trafficking. Meanwhile, forced surrogacy exploiters mainly targeted Kinh people.

Table 12: Victims by Ethnicity and Type of Exploitation

Ethnicity	Forced Labour	Sexual Exploitation	Baby Trafficking	Slavery or Practices Similar to slavery	Sexual Exploitation and forced marriage	Forced Surrogacy	Other
Kinh*	294	147	0	302	4	11	0
H'mong	151	35	0	143	3	0	2
Thai	143	31	0	59	3	1	2
Kho Mu	49	13	13	14	4	0	0
Dao	14	9	0	20	1	0	0
Cambodian	0	0	0	0	0	0	37
Khmer	2	3	0	28	1	0	0
Tay	10	12	0	4	0	0	0
Nung	1	5	0	8	0	0	0
Xdang	11	0	0	1	0	0	0
Hoa	3	1	0	5	0	0	0
Muong	1	6	0	1	0	0	0
Gia Rai	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Ede	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Khang	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Xa Pho	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Dan Lai	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
H're	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Bana	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Giay	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Kor	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Ko Tu	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Mnong	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Xa Phang	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**681**	**275**	**13**	**595**	**16**	**12**	**41**
%	**42%**	**17%**	**1%**	**36%**	**1%**	**1%**	**3%**

Table 13: Victims by Ethnicity and Type of Exploitation (Summary)

Ethnicity	Labour Exploitation	% of Total	Sexual Exploitation (All Types)	% of Total	Other	% of Total	Total
Kinh*	294	39%	464	61%	0	0%	758
H'mong	151	45%	181	54%	2	1%	334
Thai	143	60%	94	39%	2	1%	239
Kho Mu	49	53%	44	47%	0	0%	93
Dao	14	32%	30	68%	0	0%	44
Cambodian	0	0%	0	0%	37	100%	37
Khmer	2	6%	32	94%	0	0%	34
Tay	10	38%	16	62%	0	0%	26
Nung	1	7%	13	93%	0	0%	14
Xdang	11	92%	1	8%	0	0%	12
Hoa	3	33%	6	67%	0	0%	9
Muong	1	13%	7	88%	0	0%	8
Gia Rai	0	0%	5	100%	0	0%	5
Ede	0	0%	4	100%	0	0%	4
Khang	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	3
Xa Pho	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	3
Dan Lai	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2
H're	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2
Bana	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1
Giay	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1
Kor	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1
Ko Tu	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1
Mnong	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1
Xa Phang	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1
Total	**681**		**911**		**41**		**1633**

Chart 13: Victims by Ethnicity and Type of Exploitation (Ten Groups with the Highest Number of Victims)

Legend: ■ Labour Exploitation ■ Sexual Exploitation (All Forms) ■ Other
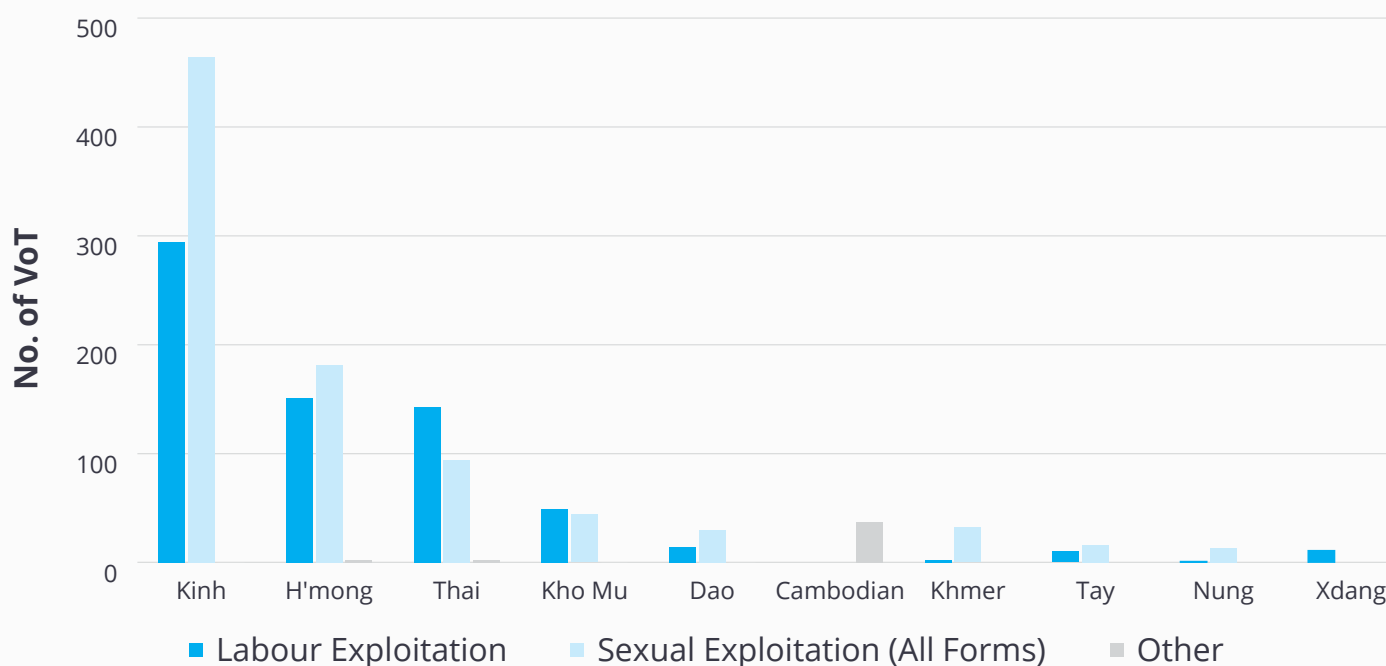
Province of Origin

Blue Dragon has rescued victims who were trafficked from 61 of Vietnam's 63 provinces.[13] In this dataset, most victims are from provinces in northern Vietnam. This region is particularly affected by trafficking to China. Blue Dragon has also participated in many rescues in central regions, including Thua Thien-Hue province where child labour was prevalent and Nghe An province where victims are most vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

In recent years, however, we have rescued higher numbers of victims who originated in southern Vietnam, particularly the Mekong River Delta region. These victims were rescued from China.

Table 14: Victims from Southern Vietnam by Year

Region	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Southeast	0	1	2	0	1	8	8	10	18	13	16	6
Mekong River Delta	3	0	4	2	0	6	12	34	32	29	43	16
Total	3	1	6	2	1	14	20	44	50	42	59	22
% of Total Victims	**12%**	**2%**	**7%**	**2%**	**1%**	**6%**	**13%**	**27%**	**34%**	**28%**	**20%**	**22%**

* No victims from southern Vietnam were represented in the database prior to 2010.

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[13] See appendix for full listing of victims by province. No victims from Quang Tri and Danang are represented in this data.

CONSIDERING THE TOP 20 PROVINCES REPRESENTED IN THE DATASET, WHICH ACCOUNT FOR 74% OF THE TOTAL VICTIMS (EXCLUDING CAMBODIANS), THE MAJORITY OF RESCUED VICTIMS ORIGINATED FROM NORTHERN MOUNTAINOUS AREAS BORDERING CHINA AND THE MEKONG RIVER DELTA IN SOUTHERN VIETNAM.

Table 15: Twenty Provinces with the Highest Number of Victims

Province	No of Victims	% of Total	Male	Female	Region
Dien Bien	227	13.9%	65	162	Northern mountainous
Thua Thien-Hue	182	11.1%	91	91	Northern central / central coast
Ha Giang	180	11.0%	75	105	Northern mountainous
Nghe An	151	9.2%	7	144	Northern central / central coast
Lao Cai	107	6.6%	2	105	Northern mountainous
Yen Bai	50	3.1%	0	50	Northern mountainous
Lai Chau	45	2.8%	0	45	Northern mountainous
Bac Giang	37	2.3%	10	27	Northern mountainous
Son La	37	2.3%	0	37	Northern mountainous
Thanh Hoa	31	1.9%	0	31	Northern central / central coast
Ca Mau	29	1.8%	0	29	Mekong River Delta
Bac Lieu	29	1.8%	0	29	Mekong River Delta
Kien Giang	26	1.6%	0	26	Mekong River Delta
Soc Trang	25	1.5%	0	25	Mekong River Delta
Ho Chi Minh City	24	1.5%	1	23	Southeast
An Giang	22	1.3%	0	22	Mekong River Delta
Total	**1202**		**251**	**951**	
% of Total Victims		**73.7%**			

If we look at the main types of exploitation, the top source provinces vary for different types of exploitation.

VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION TEND TO ORIGINATE FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. IN THE MEKONG RIVER DELTA REGION, MOST VICTIMS ARE TRAFFICKED FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ESPECIALLY FOR FORCED MARRIAGE. VICTIMS OF LABOUR TRAFFICKING WERE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE ORIGINATED IN CENTRAL PROVINCES AND NORTHERN MOUNTAINOUS PROVINCES BORDERING CHINA.

Table 16: Twenty Provinces with the Highest Number of Sex Trafficking Victims

Province	Labour Exploitation	Sexual Exploitation (All types)	Other	Region
Nghe An	25	124	2	North central / central coast
Dien Bien	146	80	1	Northern mountainous
Lao Cai	46	61	0	Northern mountainous
Ha Giang	128	52	0	Northern mountainous
Son La	6	31	0	Northern mountainous
Bac Lieu	2	27	0	Mekong River Delta
Ca Mau	2	27	0	Mekong River Delta
Yen Bai	22	27	1	Northern mountainous
Soc Trang	0	25	0	Mekong River Delta
Thanh Hoa	6	25	0	North central / central coast
An Giang	0	22	0	Mekong River Delta
Kien Giang	4	22	0	Mekong River Delta
Dong Nai	0	21	0	Southeast
Ho Chi Minh City	3	21	0	Southeast
Hanoi	0	20	0	Red River Delta
Dong Thap	2	19	0	Mekong River Delta
Lai Chau	27	18	0	Northern mountainous
Bac Giang	19	18	0	Northern mountainous
Binh Thuan	0	17	0	North central / central coast
Tay Ninh	0	16	0	Southeast

Table 17: Twenty Provinces with the Highest Number of Labour Trafficking Victims

Province	Labour Exploitation	Sexual Exploitation (All Types)	Other	Region
Thua Thien-Hue	181	1	0	North central / central coast
Dien Bien	146	80	1	Northern mountainous
Ha Giang	128	52	0	Northern mountainous
Lao Cai	46	61	0	Northern mountainous
Lai Chau	27	18	0	Northern mountainous
Nghe An	25	124	2	North central / central coast
Yen Bai	22	27	1	Northern mountainous
Bac Giang	19	18	0	Northern mountainous
Phu Tho	11	6	0	Northern mountainous
Quang Nam	11	5	0	North central / central coast
Tuyen Quang	7	9	0	Northern mountainous
Son La	6	31	0	Northern mountainous
Thanh Hoa	6	25	0	North central / central coast
Cao Bang	4	14	0	Northern mountainous
Kien Giang	4	22	0	Mekong River Delta
Vinh Phuc	4	8	0	Red River Delta
Ba Ria - Vung Tau	3	11	0	Southeast
Ha Tinh	3	4	0	North central / central coast
Ho Chi Minh City	3	21	0	Southeast
Bac Lieu	2	27	0	Mekong River Delta

All 13 victims of baby trafficking included in the dataset originated in Nghe An province and all occurred after 2018 (see table 4). These cases of forced surrogacy originated in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and rural areas in southern Vietnam. Eleven of the 13 cases occurred in 2020 and 2021 (see table 4). While these victims only represent a small portion of the dataset, this form of exploitation is clearly on the rise, likely due to the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Table 18: Provinces Affected by Forced Surrogacy

Province	Forced Surrogacy	Region
Ho Chi Minh City	3	Southeast
Hanoi	2	Red River Delta
Binh Duong	1	Southeast
Binh Thuan	1	Northern central / central coast
Dak Nong	1	Central highlands
Kien Giang	1	Mekong River Delta
Son La	1	Northern mountainous
Tay Ninh	1	Southeast
Tra Vinh	1	Mekong River Delta

Of the ten provinces with the highest prevalence of child trafficking, which represent 975 victims (60%), eight are in the northern mountainous region, one (Ca Mau province) is in the Mekong River Delta region, and one (Quang Nam) is on the central coast.

Table 19: Ten Provinces with the Highest Number of Child Victims

Province	Under 16	16-17	18-29	30-38	38-47	48+	Total	% Child Victims
Thua Thien-Hue	157	23	2	0	0	0	182	99%
Dien Bien	45	63	109	9	1	0	227	48%
Ha Giang	35	40	76	19	2	8	180	42%
Nghe An	19	23	65	29	13	2	151	28%
Lao Cai	6	19	59	17	5	1	107	23%
Quang Nam	5	4	6	1	0	0	16	56%
Ninh Binh	4	1	0	2	0	0	7	71%
Ca Mau	3	1	21	2	1	1	29	14%
Lai Chau	3	9	24	8	1	0	45	27%
Thanh Hoa	3	2	20	3	2	1	31	16%
Total	**280**	**185**	**382**	**90**	**25**	**13**	**975**	
% of Total Victims							**60%**	

This data includes the many children from Thua Thien-Hue and Dien Bien who were rescued by Blue Dragon from sweatshops in Ho Chi Minh City. Blue Dragon has programs in both of these provinces which were established due to the historical prevalence of child labour trafficking in these areas.[14] It should be noted that there are likely other forms of child trafficking in other provinces that are undetected and thus not included in the data.

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[14] Note that we have not rescued a child from a sweatshop since 2017. This particular form of exploitation seems to have been largely eradicated from Vietnam.

Domestic Trafficking in Vietnam

Prior to 2020, the Vietnamese government had not released detailed, disaggregated statistics delineating the form of exploitation, gender, origin, and destination of identified cases. However, the government's 2020 TIP Report included some disaggregated information.[15] Importantly, the report noted that 80% of victims were exploited in countries other than Vietnam. Despite this statistic, Blue Dragon's data indicates that there is also a significant amount of human trafficking taking place within Vietnam. As there are few sources of data regarding domestic human trafficking, we include here an analysis of domestic human trafficking based on Blue Dragon data.

Table 20: Victims of Domestic Trafficking by Gender

Year	No. of VoT	Male	Female
2005	1	1	0
2006	27	10	17
2007	0	0	0
2008	18	10	8
2009	15	13	2
2010	20	7	13
2011	44	23	21
2012	72	36	36
2013	51	29	22
2014	41	18	13
2015	8	8	0
2016	14	4	10
2017	9	2	7
2018	5	1	4
2019	3	0	3
2020	22	2	20
2021	16	0	16
Total	**366**	**164**	**202**

Since 2005, Blue Dragon has rescued 366 victims who had been trafficked domestically, representing 22% of the 1,633 victims Blue Dragon was involved in rescuing. 55% of these domestically trafficked victims are female despite the data being dominated by labour exploitation (see table 23), which typically targets males. A high number of these victims are children, both male and female, who had been exploited in sweatshops in southern Vietnam.

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[15] See US State Department, 'Trafficking in Persons report 2021. Vietnam'.

Table 21: Victims of Domestic Trafficking by Age

Year	0-8	9-15	16-17	18-20	21-23	24-26	27-29	30-38	39-47	48+
2005	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006	1	25	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2008	1	16	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	0	13	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2011	0	22	16	5	0	1	0	0	0	0
2012	0	32	17	16	5	2	0	0	0	0
2013	0	29	12	8	2	0	0	0	0	0
2014	0	17	13	6	0	2	0	2	1	0
2015	0	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	0	7	3	3	0	0	1	0	0	0
2017	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	0	6	13	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
2021	0	4	5	3	1	3	0	0	0	0
Total	**2**	**206**	**93**	**43**	**10**	**8**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**0**

Table 22: Victims of Domestic Trafficking by Age (Summary)

Age Group	No. of VoT	%
0-15	208	57
16-17	93	25
18-29	62	17
30-38	2	1
39-47	1	0
48+	0	0
Total	**366**	**100%**

Chart 14: Victims of Domestic Trafficking by Age (Summary)

30-38 (1%)
0-15 (57%)
18-29 (17%)
16-17 (25%)
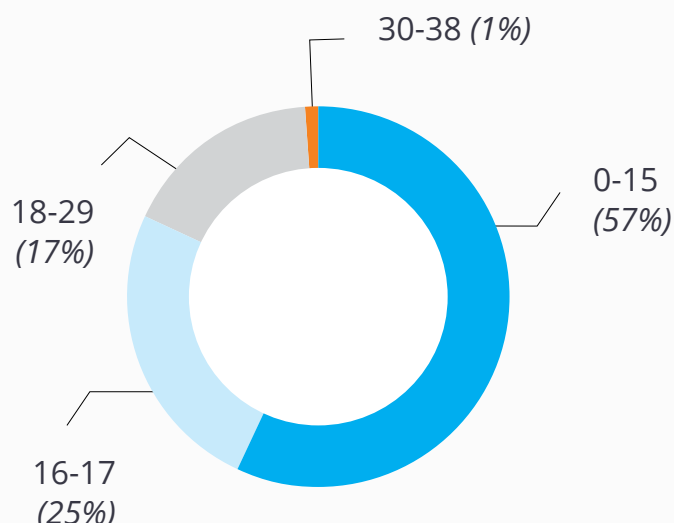
Concerningly, the vast majority of domestic trafficking victims were children at their time of rescue. This is partly a result of Blue Dragon's focus on rescuing children from sweatshops in Ho Chi Minh City between 2006 and 2018. Blue Dragon no longer receives reports of this type of child trafficking and the problem seems to have dissipated.

It should be noted, however, that there has been an increase in the domestic trafficking of girls into commercial sexual exploitation. This is likely due to increased economic vulnerability spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic which traffickers have used to their advantage in targeting victims for domestic exploitation.

Table 23: Victims of Domestic Trafficking by Type of Exploitation

Year	Forced Labour	Sexual Exploitation
2005	1	0
2006	27	0
2007	0	0
2008	18	0
2009	15	0
2010	20	0
2011	43	1
2012	64	8
2013	50	1
2014	41	0
2015	8	0
2016	7	7
2017	9	0
2018	3	2
2019	0	3
2020	2	20
2021	0	16
Total	**308**	**58**

As the data is so heavily influenced by the sweatshop rescues, it's instructive to consider a further breakdown as in Table 24.

Table 24: Victims of Domestic Trafficking by Type of Exploitation, Disaggregated

Year	Sweatshops in Ho Chi Minh City	Farm	Fishing	Illegal Mine	Brothels/ Karaoke Bars in Vietnam
2005	1	0	0	0	0
2006	27	0	0	0	0
2007	0	0	0	0	0
2008	18	0	0	0	0
2009	15	0	0	0	0
2010	20	0	0	0	0
2011	43	0	0	0	1
2012	64	0	0	0	8
2013	50	0	0	0	1
2014	30	0	0	11	0
2015	1	7	0	0	0
2016	5	0	0	2	7
2017	9	0	0	0	0
2018	3	0	0	0	2
2019	0	0	0	0	3
2020	0	0	2	0	20
2021	0	0	0	0	16
Total	**286**	**7**	**2**	**13**	**58**

Chart 15: Victims of Domestic Trafficking by Type of Exploitation

Brothels/Karaoke Bars in Vietnam *(16%)*

Illegal Mine *(4%)*

Fishing *(0%)*

Farm *(2%)*

Sweatshop in Ho Chi Minh City *(78%)*
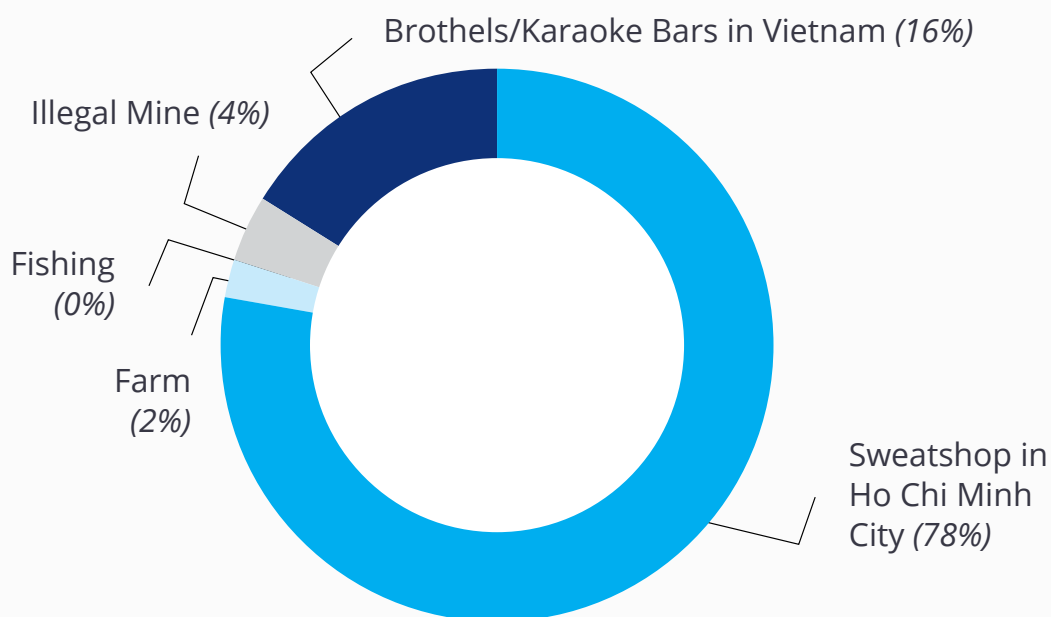
This data provides some insight into the problem of domestic trafficking; however, it only includes data collected from cases in which Blue Dragon had involvement. There is more domestic trafficking occurring than what is shown in our dataset. We also know that many victims 'self-rescue' and are never identified or assisted by authorities or Blue Dragon.

Table 25: Victims of Domestic Trafficking by Ethnicity

Year	Kinh	Thai	Kho Mu	H'mong	Khang	Dao	Tay	Dan Lai	Xdang	Muong	Gia Rai
2005	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2008	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2011	21	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012	31	22	18	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2013	26	24	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
2014	15	21	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
2015	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
2016	12	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2017	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
2019	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
2020	7	2	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2021	3	1	2	1	1	4	4	0	0	0	0
Total	**209**	**72**	**45**	**11**	**2**	**7**	**5**	**2**	**7**	**2**	**4**

The majority of the victims trafficked into sweatshops were Kinh children from Thua Thien-Hue province, however ethnic Thai, Kho Mu, and H'mong children from Dien Bien province also account for a significant number of the cases.

The most recent cases, which primarily involved domestic commercial sexual exploitation, are mainly ethnic minority children and young people. This illustrates that, while ethnic minority people are vulnerable to being trafficked to China, they are also vulnerable to domestic exploitation.

Chart 16: Victims of Domestic Trafficking by Ethnicity
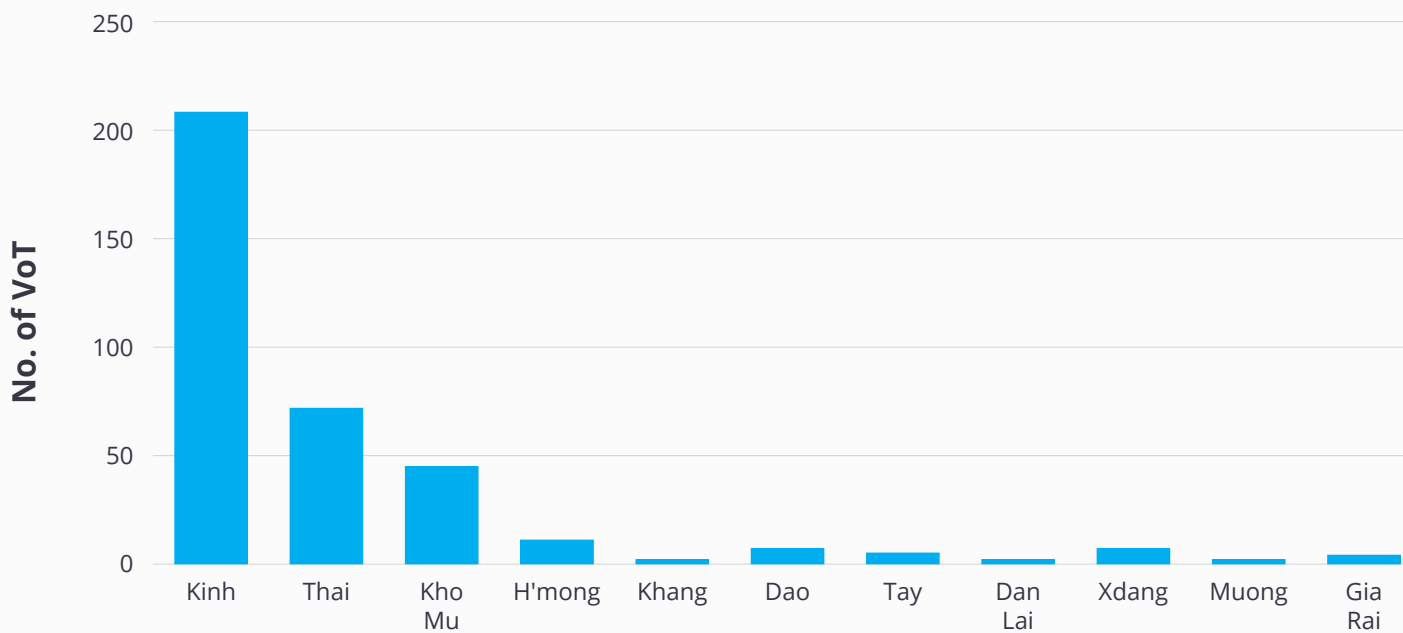
PART 3: EXPLAINING VULNERABILITY: SOME HYPOTHESES TESTED

Using this dataset, it is possible to test some hypotheses in order to better understand the prevalence of trafficking in Vietnam and the vulnerability of Vietnamese people to human trafficking.

One hypothesis is that poverty is a key indicator of vulnerability to being trafficked. This is supported by the data, although it is not the only vulnerability factor.

POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY

CONSIDERING POVERTY BY PROVINCE IS INSTRUCTIVE AS MOST OF THE **PROVINCES WITH HIGH NUMBERS OF VICTIMS HAVE HIGH LEVELS OF INCOME POVERTY AND RANK HIGHLY ON THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX (MPI).**

The MPI is a composite indicator that aims to provide broader insight into poverty. It is measured through five dimensions: healthcare; education; housing; water and sanitation; and access to information.[16] It is reported as a percentage with higher numbers indicating higher levels of deprivation.

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[16] For more information about the MPI see UNDP, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, n.d. 'Multidimensional Poverty Index in Vietnam. Reducing poverty in all its dimensions to ensure a good quality life for all', **www.undp.org/content/dam/vietnam/docs/Publications/MDP-full-E.pdf**, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Table 26: Comparing Poverty and Trafficking Prevalence by Region[17]

Region	No of VoT	% of Total VoT	Pop'n ('000s)	% of Total Pop'n	Poverty Rate (%)	MPI (%)
Red River Delta[18]	101	6%	21,566.40	23%	2.4%	1.9%
Northern mountainous[19]	760	48%	12,292.70	13%	13.8%	18.4%
North central & central coast[20]	417	26%	20,056.90	21%	8%	8.7%
Central highlands[21]	33	2%	5,871.00	6%	9.1%	13.9%
Southeast[22]	82	5%	17,074.30	18%	0.6%	0.6%
Mekong River Delta[23]	203	13%	17,804.70	19%	5.2%	5.8%
	1596		**94,666.00**	**100%**		

[17] All data from the General Statistics Office, **www.gso.gov.vn/en/statistical-data**. Population data from the 2018 census, the Poverty rate is based on the Poverty Census 2015 and MPI data from 2018.

[18] Red River Delta: Ha Noi, Vinh Phuc, Bac Ninh, Quang Ninh, Hai Duong, Hai Phong, Hung Yen, Thai Binh, Ha Nam, Nam Dinh, Ninh Binh provinces.

[19] Northern midlands and mountain areas: Ha Giang, Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Tuyen Quang, Lao Cai, Yen Bai, Thai Nguyen, Lang Son, Bac Giang, Phu Tho, Dien Bien, Lai Chau, Son La, Hoa Binh provinces.

[20] Northern central area and Central coastal area: Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Thua Thien-Hue, Da Nang, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan provinces.

[21] Central Highlands: Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Lam Dong provinces.

[22] Southeast: Binh Phuoc, Tay Ninh, Binh Duong, Dong Nai, Ba Ria - Vung Tau provinces and Ho Chi Minh city.

[23] Mekong River Delta: Long An, Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Tra Vinh, Vinh Long, Dong Thap, An Giang, Kien Giang, Can Tho, Hau Giang, Soc Trang, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau provinces.

Table 27: Comparing Poverty and Trafficking Prevalence by Province (Twenty Provinces with the Highest Number of Victims)

Province	No. of VoT	Average Pop'n (Thous. pers.)	Population Density (Person/km2)	Poverty Rate (%)	MPI (%)	Region
Dien Bien	227	576.7	60.0	26.1%	44.5%	Northern mountainous
Thua Thien-Hue	182	1,163.6	237.0	3.7%	4.7%	North central / central coast
Ha Giang	180	846.5	107.0	20.8%	32.6%	Northern mountainous
Nghe An	151	3,157.1	192.0	10.4%	13.5%	North central / central coast
Lao Cai	107	705.6	111.0	18.1%	20.5%	Northern mountainous
Yen Bai	50	815.6	118.0	17.5%	20.3%	Northern mountainous
Lai Chau	45	456.3	50.0	27.9%	37.1%	Northern mountainous
Bac Giang	37	1,691.8	434.0	6.3%	3.8%	Northern mountainous
Son La	37	1,242.7	88.0	20%	36.3%	Northern mountainous
Thanh Hoa	31	3,558.2	320.0	9.6%	8.8%	North central / central coast
Ca Mau	29	1,229.6	236.0	4%	8.3%	Mekong River Delta
Bac Lieu	29	897.0	336.0	6.9%	9.4%	Mekong River Delta
Kien Giang	26	1,810.5	285.0	2.7%	5.8%	Mekong River Delta
Soc Trang	25	1,315.9	397.0	8.7%	6.7%	Mekong River Delta
Ho Chi Minh City	24	8,598.7	4,171.0	..	0.1%	Southeast
An Giang	22	2,164.2	612.0	2.7%	5.7%	Mekong River Delta
Dong Thap	21	1,693.3	500.0	5.8%	5.6%	Mekong River Delta
Dong Nai	21	3,086.1	526.0	0.5%	0.5%	Southeast
Ha Noi	20	7,520.7	2,239.0	1.3%	0.9%	Red River Delta
Cao Bang	18	540.4	81.0	21.9%	31.5%	Northern mountainous

* The prevalence of human trafficking in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi appears high due to their high populations.

This analysis shows that most of the provinces where human trafficking is prevalent also have a high poverty rate and a high score on the MPI.

However, there are some provinces such as Thua Thien-Hue, Ca Mau, and Dong Thap that have relatively low levels of poverty and MPI scores but high levels of human trafficking. Why is that?

In the case of Thua Thien-Hue, 98% of child labour victims (179 cases) originated in rural districts with long histories of residents migrating to Ho Chi Minh City to work in sweatshops. In many cases, the sweatshop owners are distant relatives or acquaintances of the victims' families. As stated above, poverty is a key indicator of vulnerability to trafficking, though it is not the only indicator.

THERE IS A NEED FOR FURTHER STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND THE HISTORY, CUSTOMS, CULTURE, MIGRATION BEHAVIOURS AND OTHER SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH LOCALITY IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE ROOT CAUSES OF VULNERABILITY TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND THEIR INFLUENCES ON THE PREVALENCE OF PARTICULAR FORMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

Another possible reason for the high rates of human trafficking in these provinces are their high population densities. Most provinces with high human trafficking rates but moderate poverty rates have population densities of over 500 people per square kilometer. Access to land and other sources of income generation (such as fish farming in the Mekong River Delta) in these very high density provinces is scarce, thus driving many people to migrate in order to find work.

According to the inaugural Annual Economic Report of the Mekong River Delta 2020, from 2009 to 2019, about 1.1 million people migrated away from the Delta region.[24] The report hypotheses that the living conditions, jobs, and livelihoods of people in the region are deteriorating due to population pressure and climate change, and that the continued flow of people leaving the Mekong River Delta in search of better lives elsewhere is an inevitable result.[25]

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[24] VCCI, Fulbright University, 2020, 'Annual Economic Report of the Mekong River Delta 2020', pXXIX.
[25] Ibid, p33.

Additionally, the Ministry of Public Security reports that 18,000 Vietnamese women leave the country each year to marry foreign men, primarily in Taiwan, South Korea, and China. 78% of these women are from low income households in Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong River Delta. They tend to be unemployed and have a low level of education. From 2008 to 2018, 70,000 women from the Mekong River Delta alone married foreigners.[26]

Vietnam's very low-density provinces tend to be in mountainous areas where much of the land is not suitable for income generation. Due to low population densities, remoteness, and poor infrastructure, these provinces tend to have little access to social services, such as healthcare and education, and markets for agricultural produce. It is common for residents of these provinces to migrate in order to find work to supplement their poor agricultural incomes. This conclusion is further reinforced in a report from the Steering Committee 138 on Crime Prevention and Control which notes that, of the 8,366 victims of human trafficking identified from 2008 to 2013, 79.3% came from poor households and 63.1% were farmers.[27]

THUS, IN POOR, NORTHERN MOUNTAINOUS AREAS, THE MAIN DRIVERS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING (AND VULNERABILITY TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING) ARE HIGH POVERTY RATES AND A LACK OF ACCESS TO SERVICES. IN THE MEKONG RIVER DELTA AND CENTRAL COAST, HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS DRIVEN BY A HIGH POPULATION DENSITY WHICH PUTS PRESSURE ON INCOME GENERATION RESOURCES, THEREBY PRESERVING THE REGIONAL TRADITION OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND INCREASING VULNERABILITY TO TRAFFICKING.

[26] Phúc Nguyên, 2019, 70.000 phụ nữ ĐBSCL lấy chồng nước ngoài, Cổng thông tin điện tử chính phủ thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, truy cập tại: **tphcm.chinhphu.vn/70-000-phu-nu-dbscl-lay-chong-nuoc-ngoai**.

[27] IOM, Vietnam Migration Data and Reports. **vietnam.iom.int/sites/vietnam/files/IOM_Files/Migration_Data_Reports/Bu%C3%B4n%20b%C3%A1n%20ng%C6%B0%E1%BB%9Di.pdf**.

ETHNICITY AND VULNERABILITY

As already outlined, ethnic minority status is a major indicator of vulnerability to trafficking. Ethnic minority people, particularly the H'mong people, have higher poverty rates and less access to social services than Kinh people. H'mong people are the poorest and most disadvantaged ethnic group in Vietnam and they have the highest poverty rate across all indicators in the MPI.[28]

The H'mong MPI score was seven times higher than that of the Kinh (91.7% compared to 12.9%) in 2015.[29] Though income poverty and hunger among H'mong people have decreased in recent years, indicators such as female illiteracy, child marriage, and the inability to access healthcare are not reducing at the same rate as they are for other ethnic groups. This is the main reason for the H'mong people's continued high rate of multidimensional poverty.

For H'mong people, poor access to social services means that 'the average number of years of schooling was small (for both genders), the percentage of trained workers was only one-sixth of Kinh, the grid electricity use was only half of Kinh, the rate of septic and semi-septic toilet use was only a 13th of Kinh and especially the distances to school, market or health clinic for H'mong people were much further than for the Hoa ethnic group [the ethnic group with the lowest poverty rates]'.[30]

In addition, H'mong people tend to value their traditional culture and lifestyles and, due to traditional gender roles, this mean that H'mong females are even more vulnerable than their male peers. Girls are more likely to drop out of school to assist with family agriculture or care for young siblings. The traditional practice of early marriage is also still common in many H'mong communities, where child marriage rates average 60% (compared to 2.7% for Hoa people).[31]

Ethnic minorities in Vietnam tend to live in Vietnam's harshest and most mountainous environments, particularly the northern mountains, central highlands, and western parts of central provinces, such as Nghe An and Quang Nam. Ethnic minority people, especially H'mong people, are heavily reliant on agriculture despite their lands being less fertile than the country's river deltas, meaning the income produced is very low. Many families can not even farm enough for their own consumption. Agriculture accounts for 13.6% of incomes nationwide and 11.2% for Kinh people. In 2016, it was nearly 42% for H'mong people.[32]

Thus, ethnic minority groups, particularly H'mong communities, are highly vulnerable to human trafficking.

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[28] UNDP/MoLISA/VASS, 2018, Multidimensional Poverty in Vietnam. Reducing poverty in all its dimensions to ensure a quality life for all, Hanoi, Vietnam, **www.vn.undp.org/content/vietnam/en/home/library/poverty/MDPR.html**, pp57-63.

[29] *Ibid*, p57.

[30] *Ibid*, p60.

[31] *Ibid*, p60-61.

[32] *Ibid*, p61.

GENDER AND VULNERABILITY

The data indicates that women and girls are more vulnerable to human trafficking than men and boys. This is perhaps not surprising; women and girls are vulnerable to all types of trafficking, including labour exploitation, whereas men and boys are usually exploited in labour trafficking, and only sometimes in commercial sexual exploitation. However, it is essential to consider the intersection of gender with other vulnerabilities that make women more likely to be trafficked. Merely understanding that women are more vulnerable than men is not useful without understanding the nuance of intersection with other vulnerabilities, and the multiple causes of these intersections.

The most significant intersection for understanding vulnerability to trafficking in Vietnam is the intersection between gender and ethnic minority status. Ethnic minority women experience higher poverty rates and have poorer access to public services, such as healthcare and education, than their male peers. Female H'mong have much higher illiteracy rates than their female Kinh peers (67% in 2015 compared to 11% for Kinh females). H'mong girls attend primary school at similar rates to Kinh girls, but the percentage of H'mong girls who attend lower and higher secondary school is lower than Kinh girls, despite improvements since 2009.[33] H'mong families tend to have many children, and women and girls typically take responsibility for childcare. Blue Dragon's experience working in H'mong communities has allowed us to identify that marrying young and caring for younger siblings are the primary reasons that H'mong girls are more likely to drop out of school than their male peers.[34]

**THEREFORE,
IT IS HARDLY
SURPRISING THAT
THE DEMOGRAPHIC
MOST VULNERABLE
TO HUMAN
TRAFFICKING ARE
H'MONG GIRLS AND
YOUNG WOMEN.**

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[33] *Ibid*, p60.

[34] Blue Dragon Children's Foundation, September 2021, 'Back to School: Collaborative and holistic campaigns to prevent child trafficking', **www.bluedragon.org/back-to-school-report**.

PART 4: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report, combined with the information in our related report about traffickers and the crime of human trafficking,[35] provides important evidence which can inform the fight against human trafficking. Understanding victims, particularly their vulnerabilities, can contribute to anti-trafficking work in Vietnam, not just for Blue Dragon, but for all stakeholders.

Based on our analysis of this dataset, Blue Dragon's conclusions and recommendations fall into four categories:

a) the need to recognise all types of trafficking;
b) the need to improve the collection, sharing and analysis of data;
c) the need for effective approaches to prevent trafficking; and
d) the need to specifically address the vulnerabilities that lead to human trafficking.

A RECOGNISING ALL TYPES OF TRAFFICKING

The data in this report provides concrete evidence that certain areas of Vietnamese law and policy related to human trafficking need to be strengthened, particularly policies which fail to recognise all forms of human trafficking and fall short of identifying and verifying all types of victims.

Official reports state that more than 90% of Vietnamese victims are trafficked to other countries, however it is clear from this dataset that domestic trafficking is also significant.[36] The current legal framework and implementation of relevant laws is weak in terms of recognising and identifying victims of domestic trafficking.

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[35] Blue Dragon Children's Foundation, July 2021, 'Human Trafficking and Traffickers in Vietnam', Hanoi, Vietnam, **www.bluedragon.org/profile-of-trafficking-in-vietnam**.

[36] Department of Criminal Investigation, Ministry of Public Security, 2021, Actual situation of receiving, verifying, identifying and rescuing trafficking victims, Workshop materials: Improving the Identification and Verification of Victims of Trafficking, Da Nang, 2021.

There are also some weaknesses in identifying victims of cross border trafficking. The US Department of State TIP Report 2020 puts the number of identified victims at 670, 490, 300, and 121 in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 respectively.[37] However, based on our data it is likely that these numbers are an inaccurate representation of the scale of the problem and, in fact, the number of trafficked Vietnamese increased over those years. Many victims of international human trafficking are not verified by government authorities under the current legal framework and are thus not included in official data. In turn, these victims do not receive the support they need and are entitled to.

Further gaps in recognising victims result from the lack of a comprehensive definition of 'human trafficking' in Vietnam's legal framework. Our data shows the emergence of new forms of trafficking, such as baby trafficking. However, due to gaps in the legal definition of human trafficking, the current legal framework is insufficient in addressing this type of trafficking even though it was specifically discussed during the 8th session of the National Assembly XIV in 2019.[38]

In the TIP Report 2020, for the first time the government provided disaggregated data of victims' gender: of 121 identified victims in 2020, 112 were female (92.5%) and nine were male (7.5%).[39] This contrasts with Blue Dragon's data, in which during 2020 there were 39 male victims (13%).

Also for the first time, the government reported on the various forms of exploitation victims were exposed to. Of the 84 cases of trafficking processed by Vietnamese courts in 2020, 71 involved sexual exploitation; 10 involved forced labour; and the form of exploitation in the remaining three cases was unclear.[40] In Blue Dragon's dataset, we see that domestic child labour trafficking, domestic sex trafficking, and labour trafficking (both domestically and in China) are significant problems, though official figures don't illustrate the same severity. Overlooking these forms of trafficking skews government data and prevents victims from accessing the assistance to which they are entitled.

B IMPROVING DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

There is an urgent need for better data in order to more effectively combat human trafficking; to ensure that all victims receive the support they need to be rescued, repatriated and assisted to reintegrate back into their communities; and to ensure justice is served for victims.

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[37] US Department of State, June 2020, Trafficking in Persons Report, p606.

[38] Thiên Thảo, 2019, Vẫn nóng tình trạng mua bán bào thai qua biên giới, Trang Thông tin điện tử Công an tỉnh Nghệ An, truy cập tại: **congan.nghean.gov.vn/an-ninh-trat-tu/201911/van-nong-tinh-trang-mua-ban-bao-thai-qua-bien-gioi-883443**.

[39] US Department of State, June 2020, Trafficking in Persons Report, p606.

[40] *Ibid*, p606.

IMPROVED SYSTEMS FOR THE COLLECTION, COMPILATION, AND SHARING OF TRAFFICKING DATA MUST BE DEVELOPED.

Recognising this challenge, the government has included plans for a better database and improved data sharing in the *National Plan of Action on Human Trafficking Prevention for the period 2021-2025, with a Vision to 2030*.[41]

Blue Dragon's experience is that both poor data and inadequate legal definitions create inaccurate perceptions and understandings of human trafficking among the public, law enforcement, and the justice system. In Vietnam, the public often equates human trafficking solely with sex trafficking to China. This affects which cases are identified, which victims come forward, and which types of trafficking are investigated and prosecuted.

More robust data, including that which is included in this report, can inform the public, law enforcement, and the justice system on what constitutes human trafficking and how it affects the country. This will likely lead to improved recognition, investigations, and prosecutions across the full range of trafficking cases, as well as provide protection to all victims of trafficking.

C PREVENTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

IN ORDER TO EFFECTIVELY EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTAND THE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING THAT OCCUR IN EACH PARTICULAR LOCALITY, THE DRIVING FORCES BEHIND PARTICULAR FORMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, AND THE SPECIFIC VULNERABILITIES OF VARIOUS POPULATIONS.

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[41] 'Program on Human Trafficking Prevention and Combat for period 2021-2025 with a Vision to 2030', Decision No. 193/QD-TTg, dated 09/02/2021 by the Prime Minister, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Human trafficking education must be tailored to each region, province, and ethnic minority group. Additionally, such education must be accessible to specific vulnerable communities in poor, mountainous, and marginal lands. This requires tailoring educative materials, not only in content, but also in language and methods of distribution (e.g. loudspeakers, training, banners, and newspaper articles).

Developing a mass campaign with one consistent message for the whole country would be ineffective. In order to truly understand human trafficking in Vietnam, nuance is far more important than consistency.

A KEY LESSON GLEANED FROM THIS DATASET IS THAT RAISING AWARENESS IS A NECESSARY BUT INSUFFICIENT INTERVENTION FOR THE PREVENTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

Our data regarding traffickers and victims indicates that a lack of knowledge about trafficking and particular risks (e.g. the risk of accepting online job offers) is an important but small contributor to the overall vulnerability of victims. Far more important factors include addressing poverty and the lack of access to social services.

Blue Dragon is invested in educating communities about human trafficking. We focus on ensuring vulnerable children and ethnic minority people understand the realities of trafficking and the methods used by traffickers to lure victims. We also promote the government hotline number (111) as a resource for people who suspect human trafficking, feel they are in danger of being trafficked, or have been trafficked.

In a survey in Ha Giang province in November 2020, after 18 months implementing an anti-trafficking project in local communities, Blue Dragon found that 71% of respondents reported having seen or participated in a communications event in their community, and 'respondents became more vigilant with regard to who is vulnerable to TIP, what tactics are used by traffickers, what situations can be described as TIP, and the risks associated with migration.'[42]

The Vietnamese government has also invested significant effort in human trafficking education campaigns. These efforts appear to have positively impacted anti-human trafficking initiatives.

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[42] IST Research & Blue Dragon, Jan. 2021, 'SAS Ha Giang. Endline Household Survey Analysis', p5.

However, we have yet to see this increased understanding translate to behavioural change. In 2020 and 2021, in Dien Bien and Ha Giang provinces, Blue Dragon and the Department of Education and Training witnessed record numbers of children dropping out of school, many of whom cited the need to find work to contribute to their household income.[43] Families in areas with few job opportunities and inadequate agricultural land rely on irregular migration. Such migration is not a one-off event, but a regular livelihood strategy for a large number of families. These families rely on migration both within Vietnam to provinces with more job opportunities, especially provinces with large industrial zones, or to the bordering countries of China, Laos, and Cambodia. Families who are economically vulnerable may well understand the risks of irregular migration, but the risk of starvation is far more influential on their decision making than the possibility of being trafficked. Awareness of the risks involved with irregular migration and the skills to stay safe (such as knowing how to assess a job offer and knowing the national anti-trafficking hotline number) are useful, but must be combined with efforts to reduce economic hardships and deprivation among the most vulnerable communities.

D REDUCING VULNERABILITY

Interventions to reduce vulnerability and deprivation should be targeted carefully, based on the evidence and data related to human trafficking. From this report, we know that ethnic minority people, particularly H'mong communities, are the most vulnerable demographic to human trafficking.[44]

The *Multidimensional Poverty in Vietnam* report cited earlier found that the most significant factors which contribute to closing the poverty gap between ethnic minority people and Kinh people are investment in infrastructure (i.e. public services), educational attainment, and reductions in family size.[45]

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[43] Blue Dragon, September 2021, 'Back to School: Collaborative and holistic campaigns to prevent child trafficking', **www.bluedragon.org/back-to-school-report**.

[44] Blue Dragon, July 2021, 'Human trafficking and traffickers in Vietnam', **www.bluedragon.org/profile-of-trafficking-in-vietnam**.

[45] MoLISA/VASS/UNDP, 2018, Multidimensional Poverty in Vietnam. Reducing poverty in all its dimensions to ensure a quality life for all. Summary Report, Hanoi, Vietnam, p9.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION EFFORTS SHOULD THEREFORE BE MORE CLOSELY TIED TO OTHER POVERTY REDUCTION EFFORTS – PARTICULARLY INVESTMENTS IN KEEPING CHILDREN IN SCHOOL, AND IMPROVING ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES, ESPECIALLY HEALTHCARE.

In Vietnam, there are already many very effective poverty reduction initiatives. Vietnam has been widely praised for their efforts in ensuring 'growth with equity'. Further investments in economic development in vulnerable mountainous areas and marginal areas of the Mekong River Delta and Central Highlands will reduce vulnerability to human trafficking.

Anti-trafficking efforts need to work in closer alignment with these programs. For example, the government has a very successful microloan scheme, as well as a very effective 'cow bank' program which provides livestock for poor families. Significantly, both of these programs are offered through the Vietnam Women's Union – a major stakeholder in the fight to protect Vietnam's most vulnerable population – ethnic minority women – from trafficking.

The Vietnamese government and NGOs which operate within Vietnam must ensure that poverty reduction and livelihood development efforts do not impede freedom of movement for vulnerable communities. Individuals, as well as the country's economy, require migration in order to supply labour for industrial zones and earn money abroad for remittances. The challenge ahead is acknowledging the reality and necessity of labour migration while simultaneously reducing the risks associated with irregular migration and ensuring opportunities for regular, legal forms of migration.

Given the high number of children being trafficked, there needs to be more investment in keeping children in school. In Thua Thien-Hue province, Blue Dragon implemented a significant program which provides school scholarships to vulnerable children. In total, Blue Dragon's support has helped 800 children complete their schooling. This initiative, coupled with community education on child trafficking and child labour, helped to successfully end the trafficking of children from the province to southern sweatshops.[46]

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[46] For more information about Blue Dragon's efforts to keep children in school, see Blue Dragon Children's Foundation, September 2021, 'Back to School: Collaborative and holistic campaigns to prevent child trafficking', **www.bluedragon.org/back-to-school-report**.

Blue Dragon's work in Thua Thien-Hue is a powerful example of how keeping children in school is a powerful, yet relatively inexpensive, human trafficking prevention measure. Considering that Vietnamese society places high cultural value on education and that the government is motivated to ensure children remain in school, it should be relatively easy and inexpensive to target school retention and programming for ethnic minority and other poor children as anti-trafficking measures. NGOs should invest more in keeping children in school, not only to fight the immediate threat of trafficking, but also to help break the cycle of poverty which perpetuates human trafficking.

Chart 17: Victims Rescued from Thua Thien-Hue Province by Year
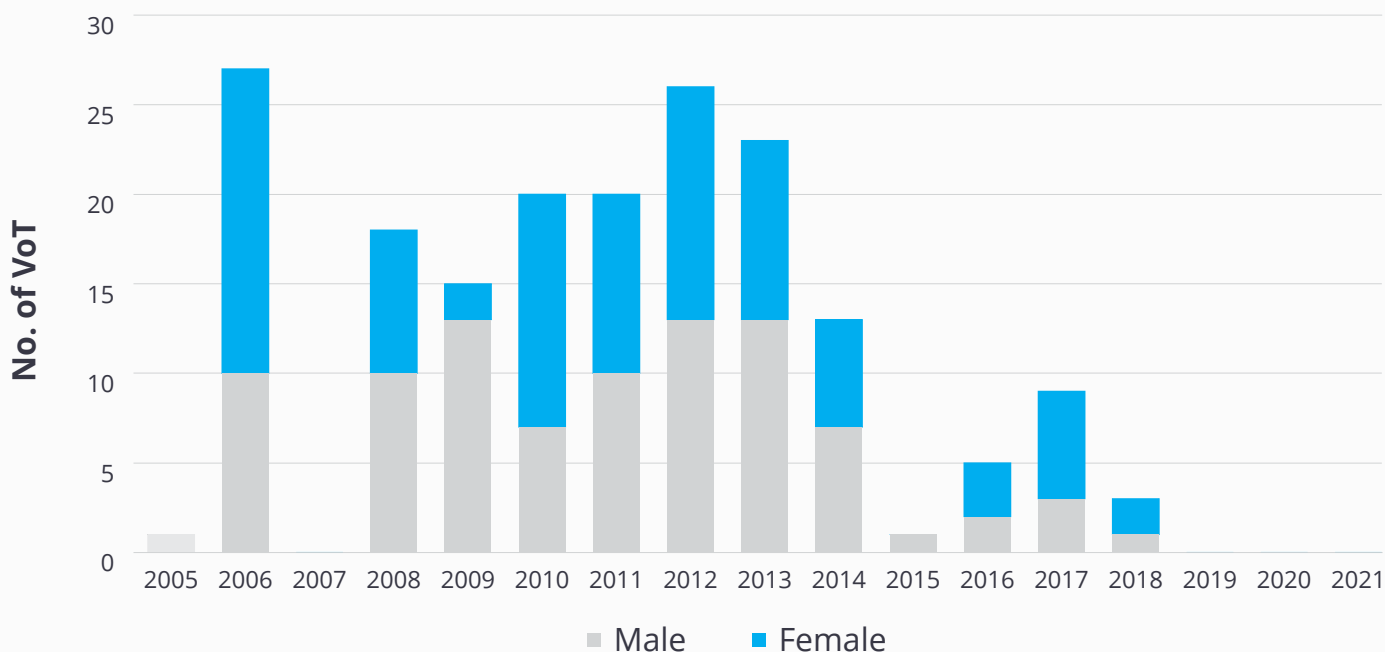
Economic interventions and keeping children in school will be even more important in the post-COVID-19 environment. Blue Dragon's data indicates that very high numbers of ethnic minority children are dropping out of school due to familial economic vulnerability. This had led to increases in forms of trafficking that were less common in the past, such as the domestic sex trafficking of young girls. Since the pandemic began in 2020, we have rescued 36 young women and girls from domestic sex trafficking, compared to 22 total between 2011 and 2019.

If anti-trafficking efforts can be better coordinated with poverty reduction efforts and efforts to keep children, especially girls, in school, it should be possible to significantly reduce the prevalence of human trafficking in Vietnam.

Taken as a whole, the information in this report gives Blue Dragon hope that, in partnership with the Vietnamese government and other stakeholders, we can achieve our long-term goal of ending human trafficking in Vietnam.

In order to reduce vulnerability to trafficking, Vietnam does not need new or complex initiatives. Rather, there is a need for targeted legal reforms; better targeting of existing successful programs for poverty reduction; reducing gender inequality; and closing socioeconomic gaps between the majority Kinh people and ethnic minority peoples.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO END THE TRAFFICKING OF HUMANS FROM VIETNAM:

Reform trafficking laws and policies to ensure that victims of all types of trafficking can be identified and verified and that all types of trafficking can legally be investigated and prosecuted.

Educate the public, law enforcement, and the justice system about the complexities of human trafficking which have been identified by this data in order to ensure that there is an awareness of the full range of trafficking affecting Vietnam, and thereby encourage wider recognition, investigation, and prosecution of human trafficking.

Improve data collection, sharing, and analysis to provide better data for combatting human trafficking. Ensure disaggregation of data by gender, age, ethnicity and type of trafficking.
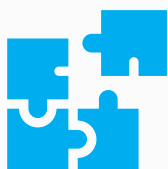
Tailor trafficking prevention efforts to the specific type of trafficking relevant to each region, and address the specific cultural, historical, and socioeconomic forces which influence vulnerability and drive human trafficking.

Ensure that anti-trafficking education is accessible and tailored to the specific vulnerable groups in each local area.

Better integrate anti-trafficking programs and initiatives with general economic development programs that target the identified vulnerable groups. This may vary from province to province or district to district.

Invest in keeping children in school as both a poverty reduction strategy as well as a trafficking prevention initiative.

APPENDIX:

DETAILED TABLES

Table 28: Victims by Province of Origin and Type of Exploitation

Province	Forced Labour	Sexual Exploitation	Baby Trafficking	Slavery or Practices Similar to Slavery	Sexual Exploitation and Forced Marriage	Forced Surrogacy	Other
An Giang	0	4	0	18	0	0	0
Ba Ria - Vung Tau	3	2	0	7	2	0	0
Bac Giang	19	8	0	10	0	0	0
Bac Kan	0	1	0	3	1	0	0
Bac Lieu	2	1	0	26	0	0	0
Bac Ninh	0	4	0	2	0	0	0
Ben Tre	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Binh Dinh	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Binh Duong	0	1	0	2	0	1	0
Binh Phuoc	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Binh Thuan	0	2	0	14	0	1	0
Ca Mau	2	2	0	25	0	0	0
Cambodia	0	0	0	0	0	0	37
Can Tho	1	4	0	9	0	0	0
Cao Bang	4	3	0	11	0	0	0
Dak Lak	2	5	0	6	0	0	0
Dak Nong	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Dien Bien	146	28	0	50	2	0	1
Dong Nai	0	3	0	18	0	0	0
Dong Thap	2	7	0	11	1	0	0
Gia Lai	1	7	0	0	0	0	0
Ha Giang	128	18	0	33	1	0	0
Ha Nam	2	1	0	2	0	0	0
Ha Tinh	3	2	0	2	0	0	0
Hai Duong	0	4	0	9	0	0	0
Hai Phong	1	6	0	4	0	0	0
Hanoi	0	7	0	10	1	2	0
Hau Giang	0	3	0	3	0	0	0

Province	Forced Labour	Sexual Exploitation	Baby Trafficking	Slavery or Practices Similar to Slavery	Sexual Exploitation and Forced Marriage	Forced Surrogacy	Other
Ho Chi Minh City	3	4	0	14	0	3	0
Hoa Binh	1	1	0	2	0	0	0
Hung Yen	0	3	0	1	0	0	0
Khanh Hoa	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kien Giang	4	7	0	14	0	1	0
Kon Tum	0	1	0	3	0	0	0
Lai Chau	27	5	0	12	1	0	0
Lam Dong	0	0	0	5	0	0	0
Lang Son	1	5	0	8	0	0	0
Lao Cai	46	22	0	39	0	0	0
Long An	0	1	0	3	0	0	0
Nam Dinh	1	5	0	4	0	0	0
Nghe An	25	39	13	66	6	0	2
Ninh Binh	1	5	0	1	0	0	0
Ninh Thuan	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Phu Tho	11	4	0	2	0	0	0
Phu Yen	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Quang Binh	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Quang Nam	11	1	0	4	0	0	0
Quang Ngai	0	3	0	1	0	0	0
Quang Ninh	2	0	0	4	0	0	0
Soc Trang	0	4	0	20	1	0	0
Son La	6	9	0	21	0	1	0
Tay Ninh	0	0	0	15	0	1	0
Thai Binh	0	0	0	6	0	0	0
Thai Nguyen	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Thanh Hoa	6	9	0	16	0	0	0
Thua Thien-Hue	181	0	0	1	0	0	0
Tien Giang	0	1	0	6	0	0	0
Tra Vinh	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Tuyen Quang	7	5	0	4	0	0	0
Vinh Long	0	4	0	9	0	0	0
Vinh Phuc	4	2	0	6	0	0	0
Yen Bai	22	7	0	20	0	0	1
Total	**681**	**275**	**13**	**595**	**16**	**12**	**41**

Table 29: Victims by Province of Origin and Age

Province	0-8	9-15	16-17	18-20	21-23	24-26	27-29	30-38	39-47	48+
An Giang	0	1	3	4	4	4	2	3	1	0
Ba Ria - Vung Tau	0	1	0	1	2	1	2	4	2	1
Bac Giang	0	0	10	14	4	3	2	4	0	0
Bac Kan	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0
Bac Lieu	0	2	5	5	1	6	2	6	2	0
Bac Ninh	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	1
Ben Tre	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0
Binh Dinh	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Binh Duong	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Binh Phuoc	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Binh Thuan	0	0	1	1	3	2	6	3	1	0
Ca Mau	0	3	1	10	2	5	4	2	1	1
Cambodia	0	1	9	6	6	3	3	9	0	0
Can Tho	0	1	1	3	4	0	3	1	1	0
Cao Bang	0	0	2	5	4	1	1	5	0	0
Dak Lak	0	1	1	4	2	2	1	2	0	0
Dak Nong	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Dien Bien	1	44	63	58	34	8	9	9	1	0
Dong Nai	0	2	3	1	5	1	3	3	3	0
Dong Thap	0	2	3	7	3	3	3	0	0	0
Gia Lai	0	2	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Ha Giang	0	35	40	30	12	17	17	19	2	8
Ha Nam	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1
Hanoi	0	1	2	4	1	1	3	5	1	2
Ha Tinh	0	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hai Duong	0	0	3	2	2	1	2	0	3	0
Hai Phong	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	6	1	0
Hau Giang	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	1	0
Ho Chi Minh City	0	1	0	4	6	5	1	5	2	0
Hoa Binh	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Hung Yen	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
Khanh Hoa	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kien Giang	0	2	1	7	7	2	5	2	0	0
Kon Tum	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0
Lai Chau	0	3	9	6	5	5	8	8	1	0
Lam Dong	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	1
Lang Son	0	0	2	4	3	3	0	2	0	0
Lao Cai	0	6	19	16	14	12	17	17	5	1

Province	0-8	9-15	16-17	18-20	21-23	24-26	27-29	30-38	39-47	48+
Long An	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Nam Dinh	0	0	0	3	1	1	4	1	0	0
Nghe An	1	18	23	21	19	18	7	29	13	2
Ninh Binh	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Ninh Thuan	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Phu Tho	0	0	2	3	3	3	1	4	1	0
Phu Yen	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Quang Binh	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
Quang Nam	0	5	4	4	2	0	0	1	0	0
Quang Ngai	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Quang Ninh	0	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
Soc Trang	0	2	3	1	6	3	6	4	0	0
Son La	0	1	8	12	4	3	7	2	0	0
Tay Ninh	0	0	2	3	7	2	0	2	0	0
Thai Binh	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	4	0
Thai Nguyen	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Thanh Hoa	0	3	2	4	4	7	4	3	2	1
Thua Thien-Hue	2	155	23	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Tien Giang	0	0	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	0
Tra Vinh	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Tuyen Quang	0	1	2	1	0	3	2	3	4	0
Vinh Long	0	0	3	2	1	3	1	3	0	0
Vinh Phuc	0	0	1	0	2	1	2	4	2	0
Yen Bai	1	1	6	6	12	12	3	8	0	1
Total	**5**	**304**	**276**	**271**	**205**	**153**	**146**	**195**	**57**	**21**