

# SUMMARY OF SUPPLEMENTARY DATA ON ISSUES IN RELATION TO THE INITIAL REPORT OF VIETNAM ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CRPD AS REQUESTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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This report responds to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRCPD)'s inquiries for further information about the Vietnamese government's progress in the implementation of the CRPD. Data in the report was drawn from the Engendering Disability-Inclusive Development (EDID Vietnam) in addition to our previous research.<sup>1,2</sup> Specifically, the report provides supplementary information for the implementation in relation to Article 6: Women with disabilities; Article 7: Children with disabilities; Article 16: Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse; Article 20: Personal mobility; Article 23: Respect for home and the family; and Article 24: Education.

**Gender inequality and multiple discriminations:** Findings from EDID – Vietnam case studies show that women and girls with disabilities faced multiple discriminations due to a lack of intersectional approach in policies and laws on disability. Despite many national programs that promote gender equality in Vietnam<sup>3</sup>, women and girls with disabilities were not included in many relevant policies and laws<sup>4</sup>, such as the national program on supporting persons with disabilities (2012 – 2020).<sup>5</sup> Findings from our studies demonstrate that the intersections of gender, ethnicity, and disabilities have created multiple barriers for women and girls with disabilities (See also, TDKRA, 2022 and MRGD, 2016). These barriers negatively impact their access to education, limit their opportunities to find their life partners, employment opportunities, and increase their risks of sexual harassment and misogyny. Furthermore, this study found that patriarchy and ableism have negatively affected the opportunity of these women to leadership and well-being.

**Impact of COVID-19:** Women with disabilities and their family members were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under lockdown and social distancing policies, women and girls faced significant challenges in terms of income and opportunities to access social services. This is exacerbated by the inequality among women and girls from lower classes and those from rural areas compared to those from urban areas. Some women and girls with disabilities were not entitled to the government's support because they were not registered as members of an Association for Persons with Disabilities or were not recognized by the Law on Persons with Disabilities, which continues to embrace the medical model of disability.

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<sup>1</sup> Nguyen, X. T., Bernasky, T., Dang, T. L. (2022). Final Report: The Transforming Disability Knowledge, Research and Activism (TDKRA) project. Carleton University, Ottawa. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22215/ddsc.2022.301>

<sup>2</sup> Monitoring Educational Rights for Girls with Disabilities project (MRGD). (2016). Final report on the educational rights of girls with disabilities in Vietnamese schools. Halifax: Mount Saint Vincent University

<sup>3</sup> Decision No. 19/2002/QĐ-TTg: Ratifying the National Strategy for Advancement of Vietnamese Women to 2010; Decision No. 2351/QĐ-TTg: approving the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2011-2020; Decision No. 1696/QĐ-TTg: approving the National Action Programme on Gender Equality 2016-2020; Resolution No. 28/NQ-CP 28/NQ-CP: approving the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030.

<sup>4</sup> EDID Literature review and policies review on women and girls with disabilities in Vietnam.

<sup>5</sup> Decision No. 1019/QĐ-TTg: Approving the Scheme for Assisting People with Disabilities 2012 – 2020.

**Organizations of women with disabilities:** Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the political context, women with disabilities expressed a strong interest in establishing their networks of women with disabilities. They actively engaged in setting up their informal networks, mobilizing, and engaging in activism.

**Children with disabilities:** While there have been some national programs that promote services for children with disabilities<sup>6</sup>, children with disabilities were mostly excluded from the policy-making process. They were not consulted in disability policymaking. Girls with disabilities are invisible in policy prescriptions. There is a general assumption that they have been included in the category of children. However, our research shows that girls with disabilities, especially those who come from remote areas and ethnic minorities, have faced several barriers, not only to access national programs but also to engage in everyday social activities, including learning and playing.<sup>1,2</sup> Additionally, girls with disabilities suffered multiple forms of violence, including being teased, offended, ridiculed, beaten, pulled hair, robbed of school stuff, forced to steal money, and alienated by their classmates. Their experiences with school violence turned schooling into pressure that affected their well-being and deprived them of their right to education.

**Accessibility:** Women and girls with disabilities faced challenges in accessing public services such as buses, trains, and planes. These vehicles were not accessible and unsafe for them because they were at risk of being sexually harassed and teased on disability and gender basis. Barriers to mobility led to barriers to participation in other activities.

**Respect for home and the family:** Women with disabilities faced intersectional discrimination based on disability and gender. This violated their right to marry, find life partners and have children.

**Education:** Findings from EDID and previous research<sup>1,2</sup> indicate that despite some efforts by the government in promoting inclusive education<sup>7</sup>, the right to education of girls with diverse disabilities has not been fully realized (See “Children with disabilities”). Systemic ableism can be demonstrated through the educational management mechanisms that fail to ensure that the right to access Braille books of girls with visual impairments is fulfilled<sup>8</sup>. The lack of sign language instruction in schools restricted deaf students from having equal access to participate in inclusive and high-quality education, going to college, and even caused them to drop out.

These findings demonstrate that women and girls with disabilities in Vietnam have encountered multiple barriers to education, public transport, employment, and social services. Although it is generally assumed that women and girls with disabilities have been included in the national programs and policies, our research indicates that the intersections of disability, gender, ethnicity, age, and geographical locations have created significant barriers for their participation in these programs.

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<sup>6</sup> Decision No. 1438/ QD-TTg approving a project to assist children with disabilities in accessing caring, protection and education services in the community, period 2018-2025.

<sup>7</sup> Vietnam has promoted the access education for deaf students through project: Viet Nam Quality Improvement of Primary Education for Deaf Children Project (QIPEDC) managed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). The project’s information is available here: <https://qipcdc.moet.gov.vn/>

<sup>8</sup> Field notes in the Dialogue Forum ‘Eliminating Barriers towards Girls and Women with Disabilities’ held by EDID research team, DPH, UNICEF, and MOET, 2023.