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MONITORING EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS FOR GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES PROJECT

FINAL REPORT



Mount Saint Vincent University

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Monitoring Educational Rights for Girls with Disabilities Project Final Report

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Executive summary

This report is built on the findings of the Monitoring Educational Rights for Girls with Disabilities in Vietnam (MRGD) project, supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) (2013-2015). This project aimed to address the lack of specific knowledge about girls with disabilities in Vietnam, and to set the stage for developing social activist strategies for their inclusion. To understand the experiences of girls with disabilities in and outside of Vietnamese schools, we piloted the study in North and South of Tu Liem districts in Vietnam. By supporting girls and women with disabilities to understand their educational rights, this study offered a participatory approach to monitoring rights to education through its engagement with the local knowledge on human rights and inclusive education for girls with disabilities in and out of schools.

The right to education for girls with disabilities is an integral part of the human rights paradigm that is interrelated and multi-faceted. This study demonstrated that systemic discrimination in relation to disability, gender, adolescent and ethnicity; forms of violence and social exclusion; and disrespect for difference in and out of school, were the key challenges for the inclusion of girls with disabilities in North and South Tu Liem districts. These systemic forms of discrimination perpetuated inequality in Vietnamese schools. The study highlights the need to take into account cultural factors in relation to socio-political issues, such as relationships between girls with disabilities and their family members, teachers, and non-disabled peers including boys and girls, in affecting their decision-making about their education. The lack of quality education for all girls with disabilities remains a concern from the current findings, indicating that a more inclusive, quality education system should be put in place for all children, including girls with disabilities.

Monitoring educational rights is an ongoing process ensuring that the rights of girls and women with disabilities are respected and fulfilled. This study has set a stage for raising the voices of girls and women with disabilities in Vietnam and fostering their collective activism. The study offered a number of recommendations by girls and women with disabilities in relation to inclusive education, policy dialogues and development, community engagement, communication, and networking.

Recommendations from girls with disabilities

1. Develop an inclusive ethos in schools through transforming educational policies and practices.
2. Consult people with disabilities through policy dialogues, development, advocacy, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

3. Engage community leaders and practitioners in discussions on Inclusive Education through communication strategies

Recommendations from women with disabilities

1. Develop strategies for women and girls with disabilities to construct their knowledge, engagement, and activism through training and research.
2. Strengthen opportunities of collective activism with women and girls with disabilities through building a local and transnational network of advocacy.

Recommendations Coming Out of the Project as a Whole

1. Strengthen and broaden the scope of the MRGD intervention into more disadvantaged areas.
2. Strengthen a gender equality lens in the MRGD's interventions so as to address the challenges to inclusive education for both boys and girls with disabilities.
3. Expand the use of participatory methodologies in designing, researching, and programming.
4. Develop knowledge mobilization strategies that place community engagement at the center of social change.

This study was conducted by a multinational research team at Mount Saint Vincent University, York University, and McGill University in Canada, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in South Africa, in partnership with UNICEF, and the grassroots Action to Community Development Centre in Vietnam.

Introduction

Official statistics suggest that 7 million people live with disabilities in Vietnam. According to UNICEF, an estimated 1.3 million of those people are children. A recent report published by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) indicates that:

...there were approximately 14.3 million children between the ages of 5-14 in Viet Nam, of whom an estimated 1.3 million children had a disability (UNICEF & MOET 2013). About 25% of the children of Viet Nam lived in urban areas and more than 80% were from Kinh family background (UNICEF & MOET, 2013). Of the total of 14.3 million children, 87.8% of children aged 5, 96.3% of children aged 6 – 10, and 88.8% of children aged 11 – 14 were enrolled in school, while amongst the estimated 1.3 million children with disabilities in Viet Nam, only a total of about 66.5% were enrolled in school. (UNICEF & MOET, 2015, p.32)

Vietnam has made progress in recognizing the rights of persons with disabilities. The National Action Plan to Support People with Disabilities 2006-2010 signified the realization of a policy document to address needs of people with disabilities. The National Action Plan 2012-2020 makes specific provisions to support people with disabilities to access education, health care, employment, transportation and social services (Decision 1019/QĐ-TTg, SRV, 2012). Further, on January 1st, 2011, the *Law on Persons with Disabilities* (LPWD) came into force in Vietnam, marking a new page for the history of disability and institutional change. Vietnam is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and ratified it in February 2015. A quarterly report from Action to the Community Development Centre and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2014) aptly stresses the importance of involving people with disabilities directly in decision making processes and the realization of their rights,

While it will be important to further develop the national legal framework that is compliant with international standards, an effective implementation of the CRPD and the LPWD [Law on Persons with Disabilities] will only be possible with the active engagement of Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) and the partnership between the State and DPOs. Only when people with disabilities (including children) are included in every step of the decision-making processes and in monitoring activities, will they be empowered to speak for themselves and only then will the legal framework materialize into the realization of rights. The development of civil society and of appropriate frameworks for civil society are, however, still in early stages and the involvement of civil society

organizations into policy, decision and monitoring making processes are not 'natural' and require advocacy. (UNDP & ACDC, 2014, p. 4)

Despite the provisions on human rights protection for all children, including those with disabilities in the United Nations Conventions, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, there is evidence that girls with disabilities are more disadvantaged than boys with disabilities within educational settings (Rydstrom, 2010; UNFPA 2009), and yet there have been very few interventions to address this reality. A study conducted by the National Union of Women with Disabilities in Uganda in partnership with the Canadian Centre of Disability Studies found that there are significant challenges for women and children with disabilities. The study identified barriers in areas of policies and programs implementation, education, financial stability, accessibility to disability services, and unequal power relationships within the family. The most common barrier, according to the study, is attitude towards disability, which negatively affects the social status of women and children with disabilities (Morris-Wales, Krassioukova-Enns, & Rempel, 2009).

The United Nations' thematic discussion on violence against women and girls with disabilities observes that:

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes that women and girls with disabilities are often at greater risk, both within and outside the home, of violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, and expresses concern about the difficult conditions faced by persons with disabilities who are subject to multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination. (United Nations, 2012, p. 4)

The United Nations recognizes the intersection between disability and gender discrimination as a contributing factor to forms of violence that women and girls with disabilities often experience:

The intersection of gender-based and disability-based discrimination also contributes to stereotypical views of women and girls with disabilities as lacking intelligence and being compliant and timid. It also leads to a lack of credibility when abuse is reported, and therefore minimal risk of perpetrators being discovered and punished. (United Nations, 2012, p. 7)

As a large and diverse group, girls and women with disabilities face many barriers to accessing education because of discrimination and prejudice based on

disability and gender. These barriers include poverty, sexual violence, unwanted pregnancy, inaccessible educational institutions, lack of mainstream educational opportunities and/or placement in separate schools, isolation from family and communities, and limited social protection (Ortoleva & Lewis, 2012; UNICEF, 2013; WHO & World Bank, 2011). While the global literacy rate for people with disabilities is 3 percent, it is lower for disabled girls and women at 1 percent (Rousso, 2003). The lack of knowledge on girls with disabilities globally and locally presents a challenge for inclusion of girls with disabilities internationally.

This study was developed within this context of global activism for the human rights of people with disabilities, mobilized by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, United Nations, 2006). In this report, we present the basic findings of the MRGD project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada in 2013-2015.

Monitoring Educational Rights: Concept and Process

UNESCO defines the right to education as “the right of every person to enjoy access to education of good quality, without discrimination or exclusion” (see UNESCO’s website)¹. Education is a fundamental right and essential to the exercise of other human rights. Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes the right to education for every child through specific measures in primary, secondary, vocational, and higher education (UNICEF, 1989). It requires that primary education be compulsory and freely available to all children (Article 28.1). It also *encourages* the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, and takes appropriate measures such as introducing free education and offering financial assistance in case of need (Article 28.2). Article 7 of the CRPD builds on Article 23 of the CRC in maintaining human rights protection for children with disabilities. It highlights the “fundamental freedoms” of children with disabilities to enjoy all human rights, such as the right to express their views on an equal basis with others. Article 24 of the CRPD guarantees access for all children with disabilities to and in education, and requires state-parties to combat exclusion in the educational system.

According to Rioux (2013), a disability rights approach to education goes beyond monitoring educational access. A critical approach to such rights adopts social justice principles that enable us to evaluate the ways in which education is structured, which includes policies, programs, legislations, pedagogies, and the values placed on equity in and out of schools. As she maintains:

¹ UNESCO’s website. The right to education. Available at <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/right2education>

Education is influenced by a variety of social, economic, and environmental factors, and not just by access to school. Equity in education is a commitment of the public education system to social justice. To implement a rights-based approach to education requires using human rights as a framework for pedagogical theory, for access to places of learning, for testing of capacity and for measuring success. It makes principles of human rights integral to the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes, and it means assessing the human rights implementation of educational policy, programmes, and legislation. (p. 132)

Our framework of monitoring educational rights involved multiple levels: 1) an understanding of access, process, and outcomes of education for groups and individuals historically marginalized by the educational structure and institutions; 2) a participatory approach that engages girls and women with disabilities in advocating for their rights; and 3) a holistic approach that includes, but is not restricted to the right to education. This framework also included other social, economic, and cultural rights in educational settings, such as the right to use a bus to get to school, to participate in school and public events, to choose the school where children want to study, to speak for themselves in an inclusive and respectful environment, and the right not to be abused by their caretakers and adults in their lives. As such, these rights are interrelated. They are premised on the right to be treated with dignity, autonomy, inclusion, non-discrimination, and equal respect (Rioux, Bassier-Marks & Jones, 2011).

Globally, the challenges for human rights for girls and women with disabilities are manifested in a number of key dimensions: the cultural prejudice against girls and women with disabilities (Morris, 1991; Frohmader & Meekosha, 2012; Ortoleva & Lewis, 2012); the lack of an institutional structure that protects and promotes their rights (United Nations, 2012); the inadequate structure of global governance in fostering state sovereignty in human rights protection (Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011); the intersection between disability and class, race, gender, and ethnicity (Erevelles & Mutua, 2005; Nguyen et al., 2015; Ortoleva & Lewis, 2012; Stienstra, 2015); and the challenges of the disability rights movement in excluding the socio-political root of impairment in the global South (Soldatic & Grech, 2014; Titchkosky, 2014). The challenges of disability and gender-based violence put girls and women with disabilities in greater danger compared to their male counterpart (Human Rights Watch, 2012).

In Vietnam, policies institutionalizing the CRPD have been developed since the Vietnamese government's signature and ratification of the Convention. However, the development of programs and initiatives on assisting people with disabilities to participate in socio-economic, legal, and educational activities (e.g. CRS, 2006; SRV, 2006a, 2006b) has continued to ignore the exclusion of women and girls with disabilities

in social and educational participation. Nguyen and Mitchell (2014) observe that in legal terms, this equality approach assumes that men and women, boys and girls, must have an equal opportunity to participate and to be protected by the law. Nonetheless, this approach does not attend to the intersection between disability and gender in human rights provisions.

Girls with disabilities are more disadvantaged than boys with disabilities due to their gender, disability, and social class. Girls with disabilities are often disempowered even when they are integrated in schools. Their social, political, economic, and educational participation, as well as their reproductive rights, are very limited (UNFPA, 2009; Action to Community Development Centre & UNDP, 2014; Nguyen, forthcoming). As such, there is a need to recognise forms of inequality that have been perpetuated in policies and laws, as well as within existing social, political, and cultural conditions.

To understand social justice for girls with disabilities in and outside of education, we drew on the work of monitoring educational rights through a holistic approach. It also required working against systemic barriers preventing children from enjoying their human rights. As Nguyen, Mitchell, De Lange and Fritsch (2015) posit:

The critical work of monitoring educational rights must accompany cultural and historical reflection to situate exclusions within dominant discourses of girlhood and disability. This work must be seen as an integral part of the socio-political process of social transformation, where the voice of girls with disabilities can represent a critical perspective on why and how to be included. Finally, monitoring rights must transform traditional conceptions of 'monitoring' where objectivism is taken as an ethos of rights monitoring. Thus, bringing the voice and perspectives of girls with disabilities into the framework of human rights monitoring in the global South is what we aim to address in the MRGD (p.777).

In short, the educational rights of girls with disabilities are an integral part of the larger collection of human rights. These rights are interrelated and multi-faceted. Monitoring educational rights is an ongoing process thus ensuring that the rights of girls and women with disabilities are respected and fulfilled. This process requires collecting evidence of human rights process and outcomes.

Context of the local fieldwork

Tu Liem is an urbanized area located in the west of Hanoi. Its area is 75.15 square km with a population of 550,000 people. The majority of the population is reported to be non-religious with about 10% Catholic. The main language spoken in Tu Liem is Kinh dialect (Report of Disabled Persons Organization in Tu Liem, 2013). We

chose to pilot the project in Tu Liem because of its geographical and socio-economic conditions in an urbanized area. The process of rapid urbanization has resulted in unsustainable development: while some households were able to overcome poverty through small business, including land selling and renting, their income was unstable. Additionally, with the migration of population from other Northern areas into this region in addition to the lack of vocational training, unemployment has become more alarming (Bac Tu Liem People's Committee, 2014). As a result, the gap between rich and poor populations has grown in recent years.

In December 2013, the former district of Tu Liem was divided into two administrative districts, North and South Tu Liem under decision 132/NQ-CP of the government. With a population of 3,546 disabled people, or 0.9% of the population in both districts, Tu Liem has seen the growth of disabled people's organizations and their movements. For example, the formulation of Disabled Persons' Organizations in the North and South of Tu Liem districts marked the evolvement of the disability movement in a local context. Our work in partnership with the Disabled Persons' Organization (DPO) of Bac Tu Liem (North of Tu Liem) and Can Tho Association for People with Disabilities (CAPD) demonstrate the potential of local DPOs to be involved in monitoring work. At the same time, the geo-political location² of Tu Liem in the process of urbanization marks the constructions of new forms of identities in the intersection of global and local change. The participants were recruited in both the North and South of Tu Liem districts. Further details on participant demographics are given in the section entitled *Sample*.

Terminology

The UNCRPD defines disability as “an evolving concept that results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (Preamble, United Nations, 2006). This definition focuses on the interaction between persons with impairments and the environment and how this interaction hinders the realization of individual participation on an equal basis with others³.

² According to Cambridge Dictionary, geopolitics is the study of the way a country's size, position, etc. influence its power and its relationships with other countries (see <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/geopolitics>). Geopolitics is studied widely in political science through the work of political scientist such as Richard Falk (2000), Van Henk Van Houtom (2005), Dalby (2008).

³ Some official reports (e.g., WHO & World Bank, 2011; UNICEF & MOET, 2015) see the equivalence between the concept of disability as defined by the CRPD and that of the ICF model. According the World Health Organization (WHO), the ICF model looks beyond the medical and biological conception of disability. It allows for “the impact of the environment and other contextual factors on the functioning of

Inclusive education refers to an education system that is based on the rights of all learners to participate in education on the basis of equal opportunity and without discrimination (Article 24, UN CRPD). Inclusive education enables all people, including people with disabilities, to participate effectively in an inclusive society. In addition to the need to understand the educational rights of girls with disabilities, we studied how participatory methodologies can help us understand specific barriers to inclusion for girls with disabilities in and beyond education. We asked the following questions:

- 1) What are the barriers to education that have been identified by girls with disabilities in and out of schools?
- 2) What are the gaps between the existing institutional structure in protecting educational rights and the real situation of girls with disabilities in practice?
- 3) How can participatory monitoring methodologies support the full inclusion of girls with disabilities in and out of schools?

Participants

In this study, we involved 21 girls⁴ and 13 women with disabilities as the key actors for social change (Nguyen et al., 2015). The types of impairment in relation to their levels of education and their socio-economic situation are demonstrated in Figure 1 and Figure 4, respectively. The women with disabilities participated in this study, building their capacities to conduct research and foster the role of women with disabilities in monitoring rights in the global South. They facilitated the visual discussions and conducted interviews with all girls with disabilities under the support of team members.

Methods

Research was used as an advocacy tool, combining two forms of participatory research methodologies to monitor and promote the educational rights of girls with

an individual or a population to be considered, analyzed, and recorded” (see WHO’s definition at http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/icf_more/en/). However, we suggest that there is a distinction between the two concepts. The ICF model is based on a functionalist approach that takes into account the environmental factors prohibiting an individual from functioning. By contrast, the CRPD measures the ways in which the participation of individual impairments is prevented on an equal basis with others (See also Rioux & Zubrow, 2001; Oliver & Barnes, 2012).

⁴ One additional girl participated in the project in phase 3. However, due to the lack of interview data about this participant in the entire research process, we decided not to include her data in the final report

disabilities in the Tu Liem district of Hanoi, Vietnam. We focused on interdisciplinary and participatory approaches as new ways to construct knowledge and foster social action. The use of participatory visual methods and in-depth interviews allowed us to explore experiences of human rights for girls with disabilities, particularly in the area of education. First, we used localized, interview-based, participatory monitoring methodologies developed by Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI) project (see [DRPI's website](#)). With this methodology we trained 13 women with disabilities in the local context to conduct in-depth interviews with 21 girls with disabilities about their access to education. Second, using the participatory visual methods of photovoice and drawing developed by the [Participatory Cultures Lab](#) at McGill University, we worked with 21 girls with disabilities as they constructed knowledge of, and reflected upon, their participation in education. Given that women and girls with disabilities have had very limited access to public education in Vietnam, we aimed to use these monitoring methodologies as a transformative tool to empower their knowledge production and increase their participation in education.

A focus group interview with the women with disabilities was conducted in the third phase of the project. It invited them to share their experiences about working with girls with disabilities. The one and half hour focus group was held at Dai Mo primary school (the site where we conducted the workshop) through the facilitation of two MRGD and ACDC team members. Of the 13 women eight women participated in this discussion. The interview questions focused on the following topics: 1) What kinds of discrimination did the women with disabilities face in their personal lives?; 2) How did they use their experiences to engage with girls with disabilities?; 3) What are their recommendations for the project in the new phase?; and 4) What are the possibilities for girls and women with disabilities to engage in collective activism from participating in this project?

We implemented the project in four phases:

Phase 1 (September 2013- January 2014): Developing a visual toolkit, *Participatory visual methodologies: Through a different lens* (Nguyen, Mitchell, & Fritsch, 2014) and adapting the DRPI methodologies through a gendered lens. The documents were translated into Vietnamese and forwarded to the Vietnamese Institute on Educational Sciences (VNIES) as a part of the knowledge-sharing process. Along with reviewing the literature, we also established the institutional structure for collaboration among the project's team members and partners.

Phase 2 (February 2014-January 2015): Training 10 women and 21 girls with disabilities in Hanoi on human rights monitoring and using participatory visual methods for rights monitoring and activism. We generated a total of 21 drawings with captions, 21 sets of photographs with captions and 7 policy posters in this fieldwork and 23 visual discussions. We also produced 21 in-depth narrative interviews. The data was transcribed and translated into English. We used Nvivo software to assist with data

analysis, including establishing coding, analysis, queries, and exporting data for reporting.

Phase 3 (February 2015- July 2015): Building on the experiences from the first field work, we continued to work with the girls and women to produce and analyze the visual images, using participatory visual analysis. We organized a reinforcement workshop with the women to help them reflect on their past experiences in using interview techniques and participatory visual methods, followed by a two-day participatory analysis workshop with the girls and women. In total we generated another set of visual data, including 14 drawings, 14 sets of photos, 7 posters on participatory analysis with the women and girls. A workshop validating participants' perspectives was organized for August 2015 in Hanoi.

Along with research activities, we organized three photo exhibition events featuring the participants' work at the community, school, and ministerial levels with the involvement of non-disabled students, teachers, school principals, community leaders, and policymakers in this work. A policy dialogue was held in partnership with UNICEF, the Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences, and Action to Community Development Centre (ACDC) in February 2015.

Phase 4 (August 2015 – January 2016): Focusing on community engagement and knowledge mobilization, we organized two workshops in Bac Tu Liem and Can Tho to fully engage the community and local stakeholders into the MRGD project in August 2015. To mobilize a transnational discussion on girls with disabilities in the global South, we organized two workshops and photo exhibitions held at the Coady International Institute (Saint Francis Xavier University, Canada) and York Centre for Asian Research (York University, Canada) in November 2015 and January 2016 as a part of our knowledge mobilization agenda. A few women with disabilities participated in these events through skype conferences.

Working with Girls and Women with Disabilities

Sample

A snowball technique was used to recruit participants in marginalized communities in Tu Liem district. This approach involved recruiting participants through local networks as they are not always visible in formal institutions. This approach is considered appropriate when working with marginalized populations (Del Balso & Lewis, 2012). In total we worked with 21 girls (ranging in age between 10 and 25) from Tu Liem district. Among the 21 girls, 19 were identified as Kinh people (the major ethnic group in Vietnam), while two girls came from ethnic minority groups. The types of impairments

varied: eight girls had intellectual impairments, nine had physical impairments, two girls had a visual impairment, one girl had a hearing impairment, and one girl experienced other disabling conditions (See Figure 1 below). Participants came from both urban and rural areas of Hanoi, as well as other Northern provinces.

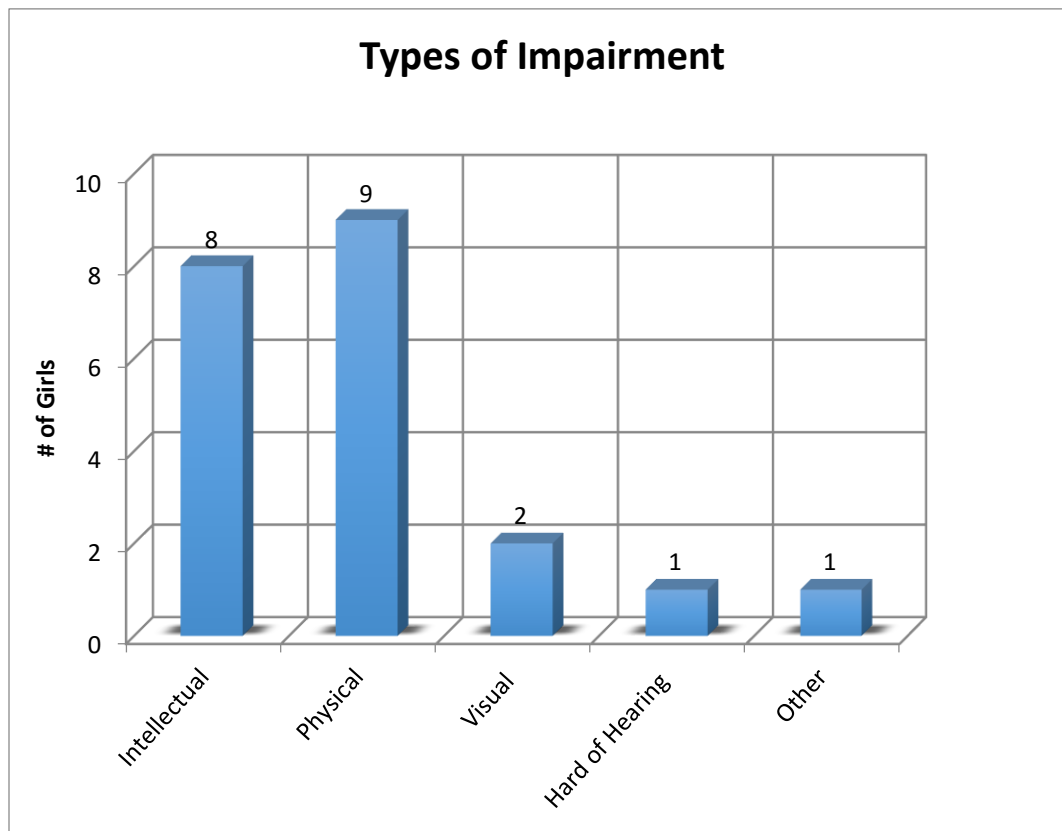


FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF GIRLS BY TYPE OF IMPAIRMENT

Women with disabilities were an essential part of the research process. They were trained in participatory interview techniques in the workshops 2014 and 2015. They then became the primary interviewers of the girls. The girls participated in two separate two-day workshops in 2014 and 2015 where they were trained to use photovoice and drawing as participatory monitoring methods. The women and girls then participated in a policy dialogue with UNICEF, MOET, VNIES and the community. This report is comprised of the findings from our fieldwork.

Participatory Visual Methodologies

Participatory Visual Methodologies (PVM) were used to understand how girls and women with disabilities construct their experiences about being included and excluded. Through this innovative approach in monitoring research (Nguyen, Mitchell, De Lange, & Fritsch, 2015), we used drawing, photovoice, and policy posters to work with girls with disabilities. Drawing and photovoice enabled participants, especially those who have typically been left out of research, to express what they cannot through more conventional forms of interviewing (*See Appendix D for protocol regarding participatory visual methodologies*).

In the first two-day workshop in February 2014, the girls were given the prompt of “Me and my community” to explore inclusion/exclusion in their community through *drawing*. Divided into groups with one or two adult facilitators (the women with disabilities participating in the study), the girls were asked to draw and write a caption for their drawing. They then displayed their drawings and each girl explained her drawing to the group. Next, the girls worked in small groups to take *photos* in response to the prompt “Feeling included and feeling not included in my school.” The prompt was used to elicit the girls’ perspectives on inclusion and exclusion, thus providing insight into their experiences with educational rights. Each group was given one digital camera and each girl asked to take one photograph on feeling included and one photograph on feeling not included.

The girls then created what we have termed ‘*policy posters*’ in which they considered the messages that they would like policy makers and other community leaders to see and hear, such as “Education for all” and “Listen to what disabled people say.” These also include the recommendations for building an inclusive school and inclusive community that cares for people with disabilities, and to have policymakers listen to the voices of the girls and women with disabilities (*See Recommendations*). The ‘findings’ were compiled into two visual tools: a book catalogue *Our Voices, Our Hope: Girls with Disabilities and Participatory Visual Methodologies* (See De Lange, Nguyen, Mitchell, & Nguyen, L. A., 2015) and a digital dialogue tool, *Picturing inclusion: Voices of girls with disabilities* (Mitchell, Nguyen, & Nghiem, 2015). These tools were shared with the women and girls with disabilities during the workshop to help the girls and women reflect on their earlier work in order to foster ideas and conversations. This allowed us to obtain a holistic perspective on the key themes generated by the participants through the visual process.

In the fieldwork which took place in Dai Mo Primary School in the South of Tu Liem district, the girls drew and took photos of public spaces in response to the prompt such as “what do you want your community to change?” and “Where can women and girls with disabilities participate?” We used this prompt to explore the ways in which girls and women with disabilities can re-imagine their own space for inclusion. Along with these new sets of data, a participatory visual analysis workshop with girls and women with disabilities was organized. The workshop involved having the girls select 10

photos they found most interesting in the book catalogue *Our Voices, Our Hopes*. Next, they worked with their team to create 3-4 key themes for these photos. Participants discussed the reasons for their photo selection how the photos represented their views. They watched the digital dialogue tool, Picturing Inclusion: Voices of Girls with Disabilities and reflecting on what they liked most about the film, what they did not like, and what they would change. These processes allowed the girls and women with disabilities to be knowledge co-producers.

The In-depth Interviews

Method

In phase 1, twenty-one girls were interviewed by 10 women with disabilities who had been trained in interview techniques. The research team developed a set of interview questions, based on the DRPI interview guide (DRPI, n.d.). We adapted this list of questions through a gender lens to help us explore the intersection between disability and gender in relation to human rights situations within and beyond education. The questions were developed in a way that related the girls' experiences with education and their life stories (*See Appendix A for the interview questions*). The structure of the interviews was open-ended to leave room for understanding other human rights situations, such as the right to social protection, health, and decision-making. The interviewers (women with disabilities) were trained to conduct the interviews. The rapport built through the experiences of girls and women with disabilities with discrimination enabled the interviewers and interviewees to share in-depth conversations.

The interviews were recorded, transcribed and translated before being analysed for themes, based on five human rights categories (*see Coding*). The transcribed interviews and visual discussions were translated from Vietnamese into English to facilitate the participation of all team members in data analysis. We used Nvivo qualitative analysis software to analyse interview data. We then mapped interviews, visual data, and policy analysis. This triangulation helped us to conduct more rigorous steps for understanding the girls' stories, experiences, and recommendations.

Coding

Using a *priory coding*, established by the DRPI's (See DRPI website), we identified categories of human rights violations emerging from the data. To do so, we tried out the coding system with the first 6 interviews, enabling us to track dominant and non-dominant categories. We then applied this coding scheme to the remaining interviews while leaving room for new categories to emerge. References to educational rights in five domains, including justice, information, privacy and family life, security and support services, education and social participation, were identified. References to violence, response to abuse, systemic roots of discrimination (social, economic, legislative, and institutional), intersectionality between disability, class, and gender, and recommendations for different groups of stakeholders were also coded. These categories also include recommendations for schools and teachers, community, government, and self-representation. Some categories collapsed in the coding process, such as Access to Justice and Access to Information, due to the lack of data specifically referencing these themes. Based on the coding of the interviews, queries were run to determine what participants said about particular topics. We looked at what was said and not said regarding each human rights principle, in which domain, and how often the situation happened.

The purpose of this analysis was not to establish statistically significant findings. Rather, our purpose was to understand which human rights situation emerged as more poignant than others, based on the frequency of incidences identified by Nvivo, along with an in-depth analysis of each situation to understand the specificity of each incidence. In short, we used the frequency and degree to which they happened to the girls, such as violence, to understand the situation (*See Appendix F for queries*).

The coding scheme used in Nvivo is pictured in figure 2.

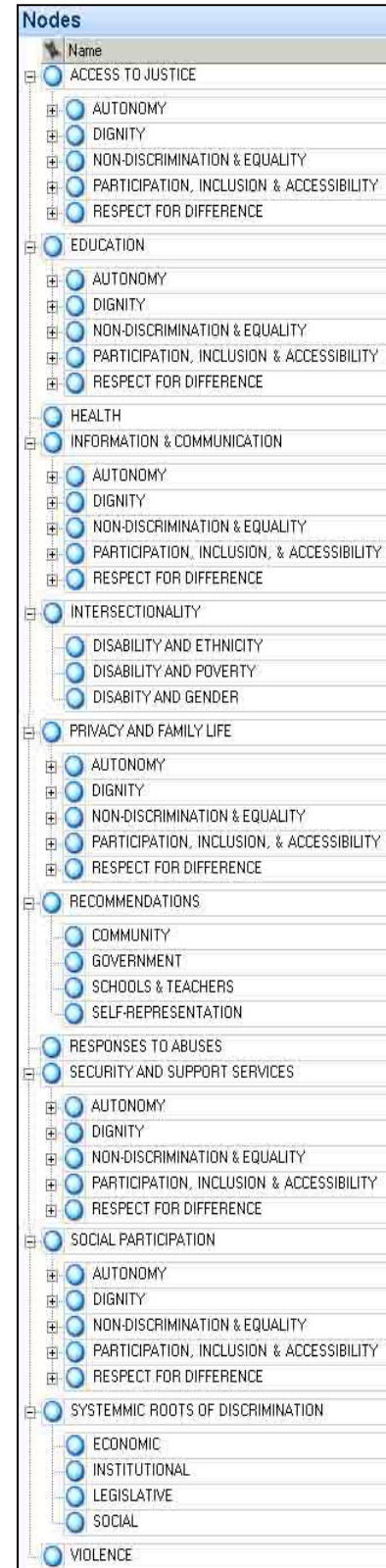


FIGURE 2: THE CODING SYSTEM

Findings

The following section will indicate the findings in each of the human rights categories before turning to specific experiences in education for the participants.

Human Rights Principles

The experiences of girls with disabilities were revealed in all domains, such as education, family, and social participation, to understand their human rights situation. The five principles include: autonomy; dignity; non-discrimination and equality; participation, inclusion and accessibility; and respect for difference (DRPI, n.d.). The participants' stories and visual productions were analysed based on these categories.

The study found that participants had both positive and negative experiences at home and in schools. Their social experiences in relation to discrimination, exclusion, inaccessibility, and disrespect for difference were common, and these were conditioned by their disability, ethnicity, class, and gender. For example, girls with disabilities experienced multiple forms of discrimination, compared to boys with disabilities (See *Discussion*).

At the same time, the study found that the experiences of girls and women with disabilities within the public space tended to be associated with stigma, exclusion, and discrimination, which negatively affected their dignity and social relationships in both school and the community. In their interviews, for example, participants discussed their negative experiences in school more often than their negative experiences with home and family life or the community. Their relationships with their peers, teachers, and their participation in educational activities were usually described as negative because of many factors including societal prejudices against their disabilities. By contrast, the participants' visual work revealed their capacity to question and transform such prejudices, and to construct positive relationships with their community. Importantly, the girls expressed their desire to be included in the public space. Therefore, instead of only focusing on the experiences with human rights violation, the study found complex patterns of inclusion and exclusion for girls with disabilities in and out of education.

To study the experiences of girls with disabilities in relation to social and educational participation, we ran a query⁵ using the Nvivo software to determine the girls' experiences with human rights specifically relating to education. The result shows that most participants had negative experiences relating to education. Specifically, the girls described experiences of lacking autonomy in making decisions regarding their

⁵ Query: a set of questions used to search and manage data.

educational experiences (57%)⁶. For example, they were not permitted to participate in some school outings, or they were not given a choice about going away for school. In some cases, they would have preferred to stay closer to their families. They experienced situations that made them feel negatively about their personal values or dignity (81%) and often felt that boys were treated better than girls in school. Many situations involved being bullied by their peers. The largest percentage of girls experienced discrimination and inequality, exclusion based on difference and disrespect (each 86%).

These findings reflect the intersection between the individual identities and the institutional structure. For example, the legal protections of girls with disabilities in policy and law, and the lack thereof, in and beyond education, were identified as the key institutional factors impacting the experiences of girls with disabilities (Nguyen & Mitchell, 2014). This barrier was expressed by girls with disabilities, including the lack of understanding from their teachers and peers for their learning differences, being discriminated against by their peers because of their language and family backgrounds, and being treated unfairly in classroom situation that required accommodation of their needs. In other instances, both positive and negative experiences were identified by the participants, demonstrating the complexity of interpreting their human rights experiences of girls with disabilities. The next sections will look at these and additional findings more closely.

Participation, Inclusion and Accessibility

Access to education. Girls with disabilities faced multiple barriers to and in education. In terms of access to education, specifically schooling, the girls were enrolled in different levels and types of education. Figure 3 shows the number and percentage of girls accessing various levels and types of schooling.

Education Level	# of Girls	Percentage
No Access to Education	3	14.29%
Primary Education		
Inclusive School	3	14.29%
Special School	1	4.76%
Drop Out from School	2	9.52%
Secondary Education		
Lower (Inclusive)	11	52.38%

⁶ The percentage was calculated based on the total number of instances the girls mentioned about their experiences with human rights principles in the interviews.

Upper (Inclusive)	1	4.76%
Total	21	100%

FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS BY ACCESS AND FORMS OF EDUCATION

This table indicates that the majority of girls with disabilities who participated in the study had some access to education. In total, 11 of 21 girls, or 52.38% of the participants, had access to lower secondary education. Among all participants who received some level of education, only one of them was in special (segregated) education. Their access to education reflects the current trend in educating students with disabilities in mainstream educational settings. Noticeably, although a high percentage of girls had access to education, their educational outcomes, including the transition from school to work, were unsettling. A small number of girls with disabilities dropped out of school (9.52%) at the primary level. The level of education that the girls reached as related to their socio-economic status is indicated in Figure 4:

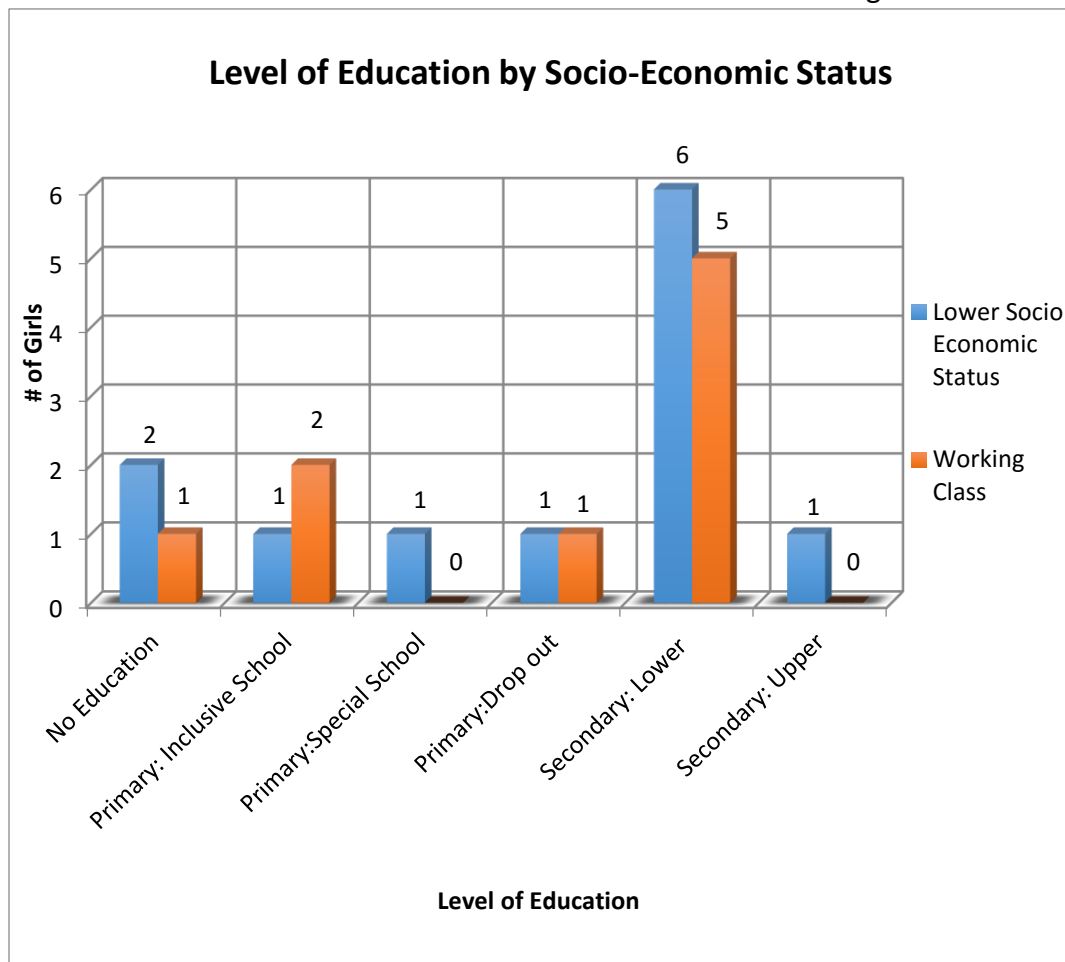


FIGURE 2: LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS FOR GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES IN NORTH AND SOUTH OF TU LIEM DISTRICTS

More girls in the lower socio-economic status did not have access to education. Interestingly, girls of the lower socio-economic status also had greater access to primary special schools and secondary education at both the lower and upper levels. Conversely, more girls of the working class had access to primary inclusive schools while the rate of drop out was the same for girls from each socio-economic status. Though it might be expected that a higher level of education would positively correlate with higher socio-economic status, this correlation could not be made in this study. This is most likely due to a small sample size.

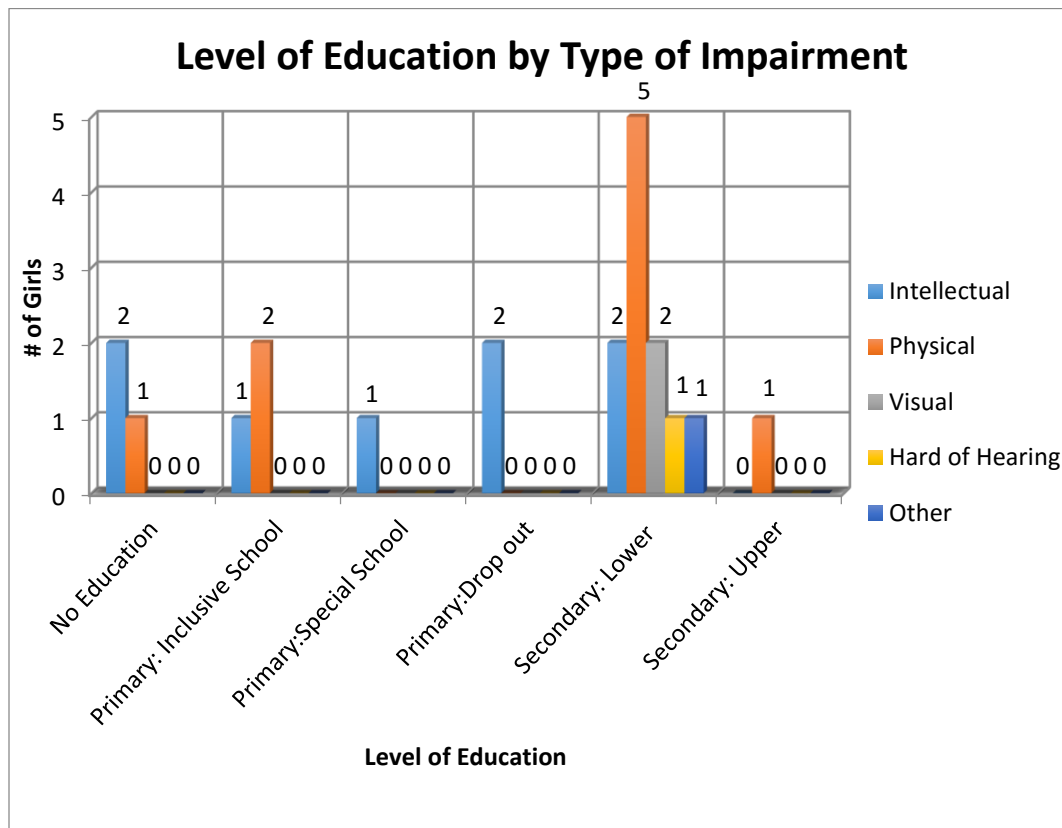


FIGURE 5: LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES BY TYPES OF IMPAIRMENT

The level of education of girls with disabilities, however, varied significantly by types of impairment. Figure 5 shows that girls with intellectual impairments had no access to education or dropped out of primary school more than any other category of impairment. Girls with physical impairments also reached secondary school at the lower and upper levels more than girls in any other category. However, as previously indicated, a highest number of girls have physical (9) and intellectual (8) disabilities while fewer girls were represented from the other categories in this study. While this finding may not be generalized to both districts due to the small sample, it reflects the

challenges of inclusive education for accommodating the learning needs of girls with physical and intellectual disabilities at different levels of education.

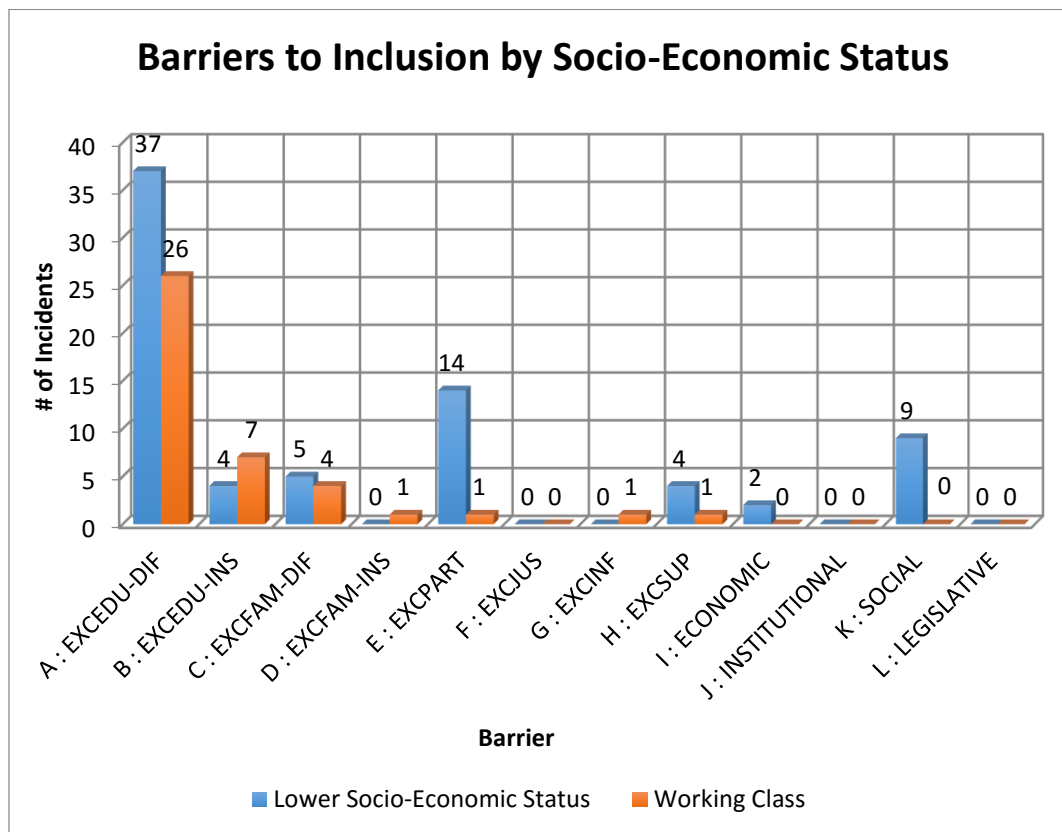


FIGURE 6: BARRIERS TO INCLUSION BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP FOR GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES IN NORTH AND SOUTH OF TU LIEM DISTRICTS

Figure 6 demonstrates the barriers to inclusion by socio-economic status of girls with disabilities. It shows that girls with lower socio-economic status experienced more barriers to inclusion in education, in their family, and in social participation. Girls with disabilities for both socio-economic groups felt excluded primarily because their difference was not respected in schools. Regarding types of barriers, the participants believed that social and economic exclusion was the key barriers for their inclusion. At the same time, attention needs to be taken in relation to other types of barrier (institutional and legislative). Despite the fact that the participants did not identify institutional and legislative barriers in their interviews, there are existing challenges for their inclusion through a systemic analysis of policy and law. Some systemic barriers are identified in the *Discussion* (see also Nguyen, 2015; Nguyen & Mitchell, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2015).

Figure 7 identifies the number of incidences of systemic discrimination experienced by girls with disabilities by comparing three forms of discrimination,

including disability and ethnicity, disability and poverty, and disability and gender. It shows that participants were more likely to recognize more systemic forms of discrimination when they got to higher levels of education. For example, participants at secondary level identified more systemic barriers associated with their ethnicity, poverty, and gender than those in primary schools. The intersection between and among these types of systemic barrier suggests that there were multiple levels of discrimination for girls with disabilities in and outside schools.

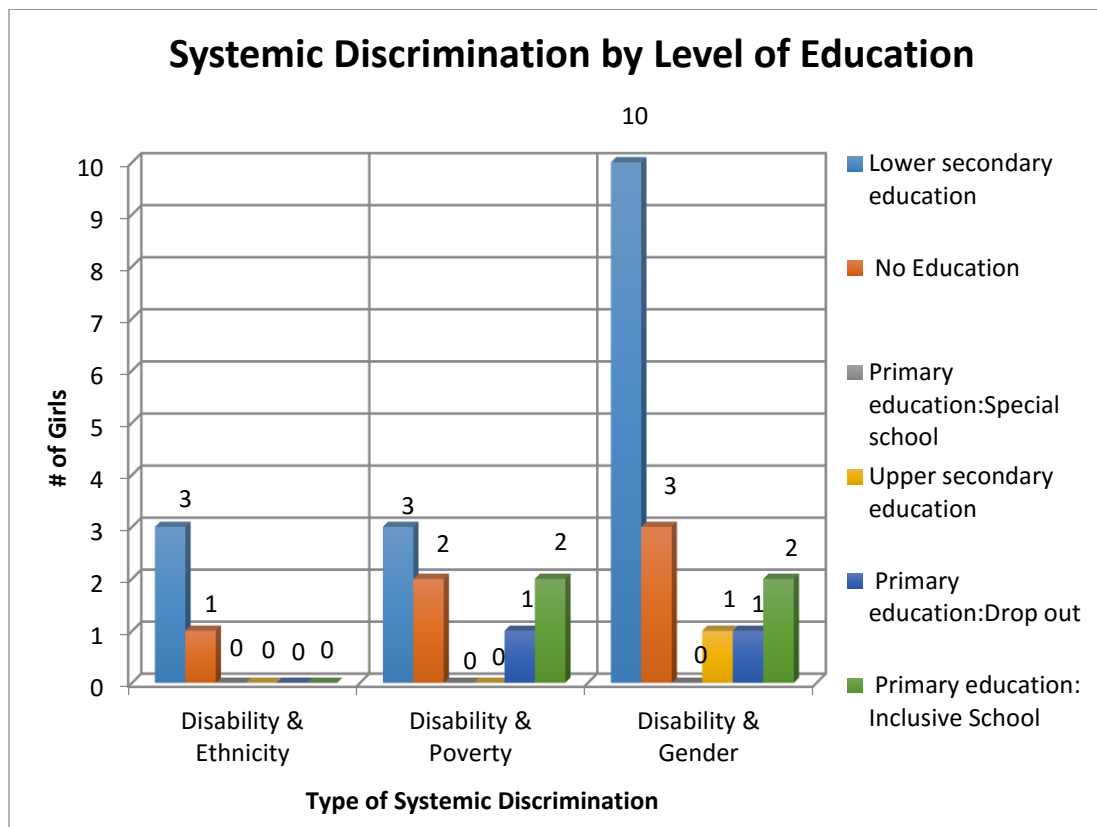


FIGURE 7: SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION FOR GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES IN NORTH AND SOUTH OF TU LIEM DISTRICTS

The following section indicates the findings from qualitative research analysis. A number of key barriers for girls with disabilities in their schools, families, and public life were identified.

Social attitude

Ignorance. There were complex experiences of participation and inclusion for participants. Usually, these experiences revealed both inclusion and exclusion. There were significant challenges for girls with disabilities in having positive educational

relationships with their peers. For example, depending on different types and levels of impairment, the participants had different experiences with participation and inclusion. The barriers to inclusion and participation for girls with disabilities were manifested in the lack of inclusive and quality education. Specifically, although they had some access to education, the participants were not fully included in educational and social activities. They found it difficult to join other students in play or educational activities, and when possible, they were only able to participate in a limited way. For instance, when asked if she participated in activities at school, one girl with a physical impairment responded: "Yes, I do. For example, I can still enjoy going on a sightseeing tour. But I can't go far." The same girl described being helped up and down the stairs by close friends. She indicated that her teacher sometimes helped her carry her bag. However, regarding class time she told interviewers, "I am almost ignored in my class." By this, she meant her teachers and peers ignored her presence in class. This experience reflects the invisibility of girls with disabilities in schools.

In many cases, the girls described being able to participate in some instances and being excluded in others. A girl with a physical impairment from a lower socio-economic class said, "What made me happiest was to go to school with my friend and to make friends with others outside my school." But when asked what made her unhappiest, she said, "That made me unhappiest was some of them talking something badly behind my back." In fact, being teased or treated as abnormal is a common situation many girls and boys with disabilities encountered in schools. The exclusion from play and educational activities negatively affected their dignity and educational relationships. A girl with hearing impairment described the complexity of exclusion through play and social interaction with the following observations:

My friends don't let me join their games because they can't get my speech. I can't hear clearly so misunderstand and do wrongly... I feel sad. My friends don't hate me, yet they don't understand me. Thanh and Nam had to be punished by my teacher, they had to clean the school yard because Thanh and Nam teased me. (Interview transcript with GwD 16)

Depending on their disability and impairment⁷, participants faced different barriers. The girl with a hearing impairment in this case faced significant barriers to her participation. Her access to mainstream education was conditioned by means of communication,

⁷ In this study, we use disability and impairment as two interrelated categories affecting the participation of girls with disabilities. Disability is a social construct reflecting the experiences and identities of girls with different types of impairment through their interaction with the social world. By contrast, impairment refers to the consequences of social, economic, and political forces on the individual body. Both categories reject the assumption that disability or impairment is a personal problem irrespective of their social contexts (See Connell, 2011; Erevelles, 2011; Soldatic & Grech, 2014).

which was misunderstood by her peers. As a consequence, she was marginalized from educational participation. Thus, her social and educational relationships were limited by the lack of an accessible approach that supports her communication in school.

Social exclusion

Exclusion. Girls with disabilities faced exclusion on a daily basis. The most obvious dimension of exclusion was exclusion from the classroom. Data from their drawings, photos, and stories demonstrated the participants' experiences with exclusion from schools and from their classrooms. For example, in picturing "feeling not included", a participant took image of being forced to leave the classroom because she had "naughty" behaviors. Another participant took an image of being locked out of the classroom as a vivid representation of being excluded from education. Clearly, although these photos were symbolic representations of what the participants wanted to convey in their messages, they also signified their experiences with exclusion in their everyday realities.

Violence

Bullying. Bullying is a form of violence taking place in and out of school. Girls with disabilities experienced bullying by being hit, pushed, robbed of money, forced to do domestic work, or attacked by their peers verbally or physically. In their visual productions, girls with disabilities were asked to take photos that reflect their feelings and experiences of being included and not included. The photo to the right (Image 1), taken by a group of girls who were given the prompt "Feeling included and feeling not included," showed two girls fighting each other. As shown in the caption: "this photo shows violence, don't pull each other's hair. Don't run in the place where we have stairs. Don't slip on the stairs. Don't play dangerous games."



IMAGE 1: PHOTOGRAPHS PRODUCED BY CHU THI ANH MAY, AGED 14, IN RESPONSE TO THE PROMPT, "FEELING INCLUDED AND NOT INCLUDED," HANOI, 2014

These incidences of bullying happened more frequently to girls with intellectual disabilities. Data showed that more than half of the participants mentioned their experiences with violence in schools or in their families in their interviews. We identified

12 girls in total who experienced bullying. The causes of bullying were attributed to their disability, gender, and ethnicity and in other cases to both gender and disability (Nguyen et al., 2015). This in-depth analysis showed that many girls were hit and bullied in school. The perpetrators identified were teachers, parents, and non-disabled peers. For example, a participant experienced hitting by a teacher, another by parents and still another in the work place. Sometimes the violence took other forms such as throwing things at the girls or pulling at them. For example, a participant had a boy put bones in her soup yet the teacher still forced her to eat it. Among the girls who experienced violence, girls with intellectual impairment experienced different forms of violence such as bullying and physical abuse. While we can not make claims about the extent of the violence against girls with intellectual impairments, compared to other groups, it is clear that this is an area for further research.⁸

Figure 8 below shows forms of violence by type of impairment.

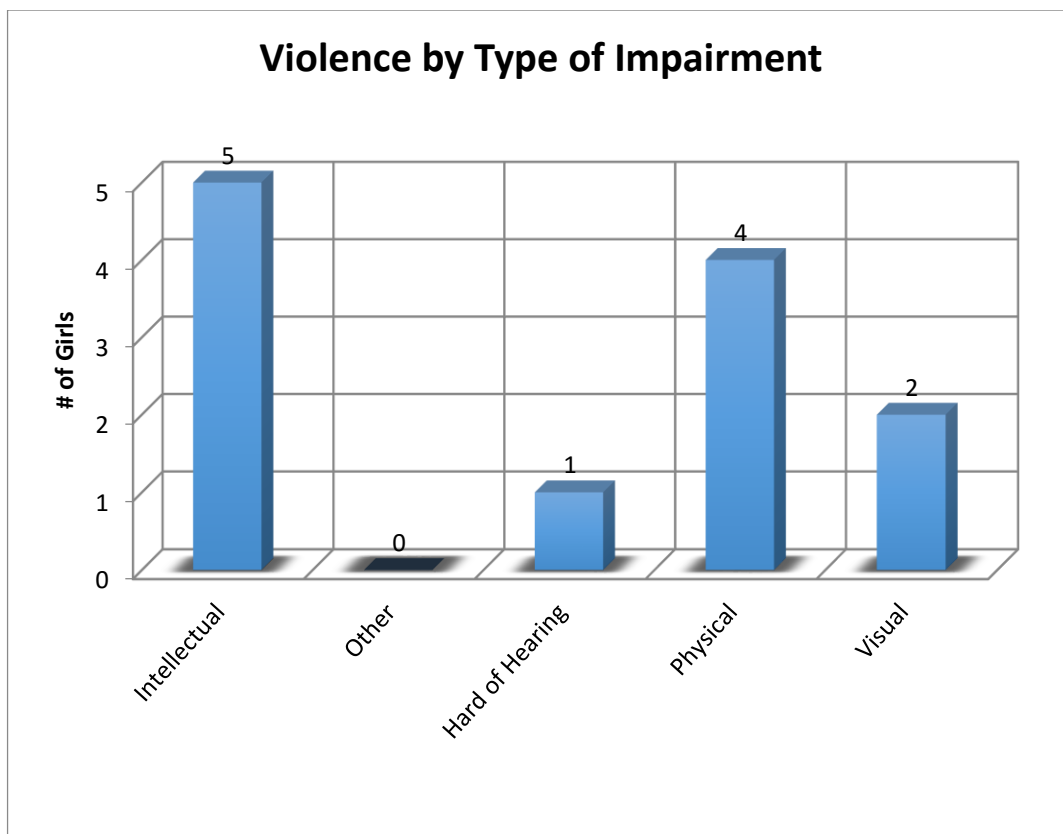


FIGURE 8: INCIDENCE OF VIOLENCE BY TYPE OF IMPAIRMENT

⁸ Due to the small sample used in this study, we cannot conclude that girls with intellectual impairments experienced higher incidences of violence. This incidence needs further research in order to examine the extent to which they experienced violence, compared to other groups.

This chart reflects a challenging picture facing girls with disabilities in their schools, families, and communities. The participants indicated their experiences with violence through their interviews and through 'staging' their photos – that is, the role play indicates their experiences with violence. They showed that school bullying happened to many girls with different types of impairment. Girls with intellectual impairment depicted many incidences of violence. In many cases, they did not have anyone to whom they could report the incidences.

Noticeably, this graph only indicates incidences where the participants revealed being physically or verbally abused. It is possible that the participants with other categories of impairment may have faced similar forms of violence but these incidences were not revealed due to the participants' concern with stigma.

*Gender-based violence*⁹. In general, girls with disabilities felt they were treated more poorly than boys with disabilities. Although they did not decipher the reason for being treated differently, they identified situations where discrimination took place on the basis of gender. Boys received favourable treatment over girls, such as having more care and being able to stay outside of the centre. Girls with intellectual disabilities were more likely to be hit by the boys. For instance, a girl told the interviewers that "They threw me out of the class and hit me" (*Interview transcript with GwD17*). Another girl said that "They slapped me. Then, I went out and cried. The girls told the boys that they were not allowed to beat me anymore because I had already cried" (*Interview transcript with GwD18*). In these instances, it is obvious that gender has factored in the violence against girls with disabilities through their relationships.

Domestic violence. While most participants felt that they were cared for and supported by their families, domestic violence happened to girls with intellectual disabilities more frequently than girls with other types of impairment. Domestic violence took many forms such as blaming, scolding, hitting or physical abuse. The same girl with intellectual disabilities said that she was verbally abused by her mother many times because she did not do well in school. She said that "My mom's scolding makes me feel self-pity" (*Interview transcript with GwD17*). Another girl also expressed her fear of being punished at home if she did not perform well in schools. Domestic violence negatively affected the identity, personality, and well-being of girls with disabilities in and out of schools.

⁹ In this study, we identified bullying as a category when the cause of violence is not directly attributed to gender. We identify incidence of gender-based violence when the incidence is directly or indirectly attributed to gender, which causes discrimination between boys and girls.

Other types of violence in institutions. Other incidences of violence took place in schools and in the institution due to the difference in terms of language and ethnicity. The intersection between disability and ethnicity has increased types of discrimination that disabled girls are facing. For example, a girl described feeling discriminated against because she is a member of an ethnic minority. As the daughter of a soldier during the war and coming from an ethnic minority, she told the interviewer that mopping the floor is an activity “different from my home” – the type of home for ethnic minorities in highland regions in Vietnam. Her unfamiliarity with cleaning the floor (a house-cleaning activity tends to be associated with urban lifestyle) in the center triggered the types of discrimination and violence against her ethnicity by her roommates. As she said: “I felt they hated me, like discrimination. Because I’m an ethnic minority’s girl, sometimes they call me ‘ethnic’ or something like that.” Clearly, discrimination against girls with disabilities and girls with ethnic minorities signifies the lack of inclusive culture in both schools and institutions where the participants stayed over the course of their training.

Inequity in schools and in the family

Clearly, these incidences demonstrated that girls with disabilities faced inequality and discrimination in and out of schools. Their experiences with discrimination and inequality in schools, in the family, and in the public spaces indicate inequity for girls with disabilities. Different from the caring relationships that most girls experienced at home, the attitude of, and relationships with, teachers and peers were more complex in school. The participants were generally marginalized by their classmates in school. They experienced negative attitude from peers, which appeared to be a common experience for girls and boys with disabilities at all ages. Below, we identify a number of typical forms of discrimination that were revealed by the participants.

Lack of resources and support. Participants identified the lack of resources (e.g., books and tuition) as one of the barriers for their participation in schools. The participants with lower socio-economic status expressed their need for resources more often. For example, a girl with intellectual impairment said: “I wanna get funding for my tuition fees and be able to go to school like my friends” (*Interview transcript with GwD17*). She also wished her teachers would buy her clothes and books. Another girl with intellectual impairment from a lower socio-economic status said that she wanted to have support in tuition so that it could be easier for her to study. As many participants came from a lower socio-economic background, the lack of funding and financial assistance in school were identified as the key challenge for their schooling.

At the same time, it is important to note that resources were just among many substantive needs identified by the participants. Participants also highlighted the needs for inclusive play and positive social relationships with their friends and teachers. These needs were mentioned with higher frequency than resources per se¹⁰. As such, inequity in schools should be interpreted at both levels of the lack of resources and inclusivity in public education.

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Unequal treatment. Participants experienced discrimination through their relationships with their teachers. Unequal treatment happened when the participants' needs were considered less important than others with the same situation. A girl with visual impairment who attended vocational training (and thus no longer attended public education) shared experiences that other students with disabilities had when being treated discriminatorily by the teachers in her school:

Participant 2: In school, the teachers usually discriminate against those from the center [of children with disabilities], so most of us from the center are now sitting in the last row.

Interviewer 3: So sitting in the last row is required by your teacher or can you choose your own group?

Participant 2: Sitting here is organized by our teachers. Teachers do not let friends sit together because they would talk. At class, there are usually four groups, and I usually sit in the third and fourth group (*Interview transcript with GwD2*).

According to some participants, teachers discriminated against girls with disabilities by treating them unfavorably, compared to other non-disabled students. Hoa shared her experience with a teacher's unequal treatment which caused her outrage:

I remember this situation when I was in the first grade. I did my test more slowly than my peers. They had already left the class when I was still writing. My teacher did not put my finished test into her rucksack but talked with other teachers and used my test to sit on. At that moment I felt really sad. Because I

¹⁰ In their interviews, some participants wanted to have resources such as having reference books and lower tuition fees. This was usually raised by participants with lower socio-economic status. This recommendation, however, was not reflected in their policy posters. Rather, the participants expressed their primary concerns about physical infrastructure such as elevators, ramps and flat roads.

couldn't see things as clearly as my classmates, she considered my paper as rubbish and sat on it (*Interview transcript with GWD2*).

Clearly, the teacher's negative attitude to her disability caused her negative feeling about schooling. In this case, the participant said that because of her visual impairment, the teacher assumed that the paper did not have any value. This attitude negatively affected her learning experience and social relationships in school.

In other instances, however, teachers have been found to enhance the participation of students. For example, in one school, a participant said that "some students who don't know how to do exercises are instructed until they can catch up with others. Any mistakes are clearly shown." (*Interview transcript with Gwd11*). Yet, very few students described only positive experiences of participation in schools.

Marginalization. Marginalization is a form of exclusion caused by systemic discrimination against groups and individuals by disability, gender, race, or ethnicity. The misrecognition of disadvantaged groups and individuals tends to go unnoticed. The intersection between the disadvantaged socio-economic status and disability intensified these challenges. For example, a girl with intellectual impairment said about her school distance,

The most difficult thing is that my house is very far away from the school. At the beginning, my mother was busy picking me from my house to the school and vice versa. It was very hard. Gradually, I asked my mother for permission to go to school by myself. My mother agreed but she still worried a lot (*Interview transcript with Gwd1*).

When comparing girls with disabilities and boys with disabilities, participants held that boys received better treatment than girls. Others felt that boys and girls with disabilities were treated the same regarding disability-related discrimination, but girls faced more gender-based violence compared to boys. As a result, they faced higher level of marginalization than other groups. A girl with physical disabilities said that she had to go through the road with a flood so she was late for school. Another girl told a story of being discriminated against on the bus. A bus driver forced her to get off the bus when her basket (used to sell her handicraft products) was taking more space on the bus. Marginalization was more common for teenage girls (and young women) when they participated into work and public services.

Multiple discrimination. In many instances, the participants' experiences with discrimination were caused by more than one factor. This form of discrimination was multi-faceted. As we mentioned in a previous example, the girl with disabilities who was

sent to the Vietnam Friendship Village from an ethnic minority said that her grandma decided to let her stay in the Children's village because her family was poor and could not afford paying her tuition. She told that she was discriminated by her friends who called her an "ethnic girl" in class. She further revealed how her teacher talked about her ethnic background: "when I talked to the teacher about exercises, they often said 'she's the ethnic minority so she doesn't understand'" (*Interview transcript with G11*). Clearly, while this instance indicated the participant's experience with discrimination in education, it also showed that her social situation was affected by the intersection among disability, poverty, and ethnicity.

Interestingly, other incidences of discrimination were also revealed through the interviews when the participants talked about their peers. For example, when an interviewer asked if anyone from ethnic minorities was also treated unequally like her, a participant (from a non-ethnic background) commented that "they [the students from ethnic minority] don't have anything" and "are also treated poorly" (*Interview transcript with GwD1*). However, when asked if poor (non-disabled) students were treated the same as those with disabilities, she responded that "they were cared by friends in the village and no one was treated like that" (*Interview transcript with GwD1*). Clearly, the levels of discrimination varied by types of impairment and by their intersection with other forms of identities. Thus, girls with disabilities experienced multiple layers of discrimination because they were perceived as different from the norm.

Prejudices against women and girls with disabilities. In the focus group with women with disabilities, all women said that they had been treated unfairly in their everyday lives. This was manifested through degrading language, negative attitudes, legal barriers and physical accessibility; yet, the lack of dignity, autonomy, and personal needs of women with disabilities went largely unrecognized. They identified the main cause of unequal treatment as based on societal prejudice. In addition, both women and girls with disabilities felt that they were considered as throwaways, abnormal or deformed individuals. They were seen as though they were incapable of doing anything. These social preconceptions led some women and girls with disabilities to internalize their difference as inferior to the norm.

Additionally, the participants recognized that inaccessible environment, the lack of positive attitude, and the lack of assistive services prevented them from participating in many social activities on an equal basis with others. They felt that experiences were usually ignored or left out by members in their communities. For example, a woman with disabilities felt that nobody had cared about her individual experiences. Many women with disabilities, she explained, thought that they did not deserve to be cared for. Similarly, another woman with disabilities revealed that she was asked many impolite questions about her ability to complete her tasks due to her disability in her lifetime.

Positive support in the family. Interestingly, despite these forms of discrimination and prejudice, the girls still felt included in their home and family life. They believed that their families supported them to join school. For example, when asked if her family loved and socialized with her, one participant said, “Yes, when I go home, people welcome me and tell me fun stories.” Many participants expressed love for their family and feeling included. Some described feelings of love for their siblings or their parents’ love of them. They produced drawings depicting their hopes for inclusion in family life in their future with hopes for a family of their own. This can be seen in the drawing below:



IMAGE 2: “MY TEACHER AND FRIENDS.” DRAWING PRODUCED BY DO THUY TRANG, AGED 17, IN RESPONSE TO THE PROMPT, “ME AND MY COMMUNITY”, HANOI 2014

In most cases, having a supportive and caring family was an important factor shaping the participants’ positive relationships at home. For example, when asked about who they would like to show their drawings or photos to, many participants identified their sisters or family members. In the workshops, we recognized that the girl with a hearing impairment was far more confident when her mother could join her. Similarly, another participant with intellectual impairment had her father support her in all educational and social activities. Although some parents tend to over-protect their children, parents played the central role in advocating for their children to be included in schools, and for society’s changing attitudes to children with disabilities (Nguyen, field note in February 2015). As such, a positive family relationship was seen as highly important for girls with disabilities to feel included.

Dignity: Feeling included in schools

The qualitative analysis using Nvivo software illustrated that participants had some positive experiences in schools. At the same time, their negative experiences with the expression of dignity were evident: In total we recorded 78 references regarding positive dignity, compared to 99 references regarding negative dignity in education. The most direct cause of their negative dignity can be attributed to the attitudes of their peers and teachers in schools.

Participants reported that they were often teased or bullied by other students. The teasing involved name calling. For example, they described being called a “dim-sighted chicken” or “a handicapped child” by their classmates. A 12-year old girl with physical impairment described her feelings about being teased in the following way: “I was sad when the junior friends called me one-handed sister. Babies called me the alien... I feel it is like discrimination, I am totally different from others around me. I feel I am smaller and lower than everyone.” The lack of self-worth in the girl’s negative experience indicates that she was feeling a lack of dignity in school due to her peers’ attitude.

These findings indicate that girls with disabilities did not feel they were being included in schools. Their experience of being regarded as difference from others negatively affected their dignity and their social relationships in schools. They experienced labelling on a daily basis, and this appeared to have happened to girls of all ages and types of impairment. Labelling was manifested in a typical way: (non-disabled) friends called their (disabled) friends by their impairments, rather than by their names. As such, labelling was experienced as a devaluation of the individual’s dignity. We found that this experience was internalized when, for instance, a girl with intellectual disabilities who said that she was isolated from playing with her friends said that her intellectual impairment was a primary cause for her friends to marginalize her. She assumed that the conversations between non-disabled people are “more fun” than one between disabled people.

In short, the participants’ negative perception of their self-worth was a form of internalization which was perpetuated by the dominant assumption that disability is useless and boring, which some participants perceived. The lack of acceptance from schools and from their non-disabled peers regarding their difference negatively affected their well-being.

Autonomy: the right to make decisions at home and in schools

Although participants felt a sense of autonomy in the home and in the community, we found that girls with disabilities were prohibited from their right to choose the schools they wanted to attend. Their parents and caretakers made decisions regarding their education. Autonomy refers to the dimensions to which individuals can

make choices about situations affecting them in different social contexts. The relationships with their families, schools, communities, and friends affected their ability to make informed decisions. These experiences were complex and multi-faceted. In their interviews, for instance, participants showed both positive and negative experiences with making decisions about their schooling. A participant told the interviewers that she could make “half” of the decision and her mother would support her decision. This text showed her participation into decision-making at home; yet through an unequal power relationship between parent-children:

Interviewer 9: Did you choose yourself or your parents choose for you?

Participant 1: I chose.

Interviewer 9: Uhm... You chose to go to school, right? Did your choice affect your life?

Participant 1: No

Interviewer 9: If it did not affect your life, so your parents could choose for you, right?

Participant 1: no, my mother chose a half, and I chose the remains.

Interviewer 9: How do you feel when you let your mother choose a half?

Participant 1: Because my mom approved all my activities at home, in term of studying issues, my brother asked for my opinion, if I agreed, my mother would also agree.

Yet, in a moment later in the interview, she expressed her regret for having to go to a school that she did not want to. She revealed the “order” by her mother, which, in her opinion, “cannot be resisted”:

Interviewer 9: Did you choose to enrol to this school?

Participant 1: If I had a right to choose, I would not choose to go to this school

Interviewer 9: Who did choose this school for you?

Participant 1: my mom

Interviewer 9: Do you feel that your mother’s choice affected you?

Participant 1: My mother’s choice affected me but...

Interviewer 9: Which effects?

Participant 1: At the beginning, it is fun but then I didn’t want to study at this school anymore. Mother’s order cannot be resisted.

This excerpt demonstrates the influence of parents on the experience of the girl with disabilities in decision-making. As a common case for childhood experience in Vietnamese culture, parents tend to care for their children, especially those with disabilities, by making decisions for them, instead of letting them decide their schooling.

Indeed, while parent's authority is assumed to dominate in most cases, including those in the Western context, this is usually the case in Vietnamese culture. In other words, an unequal power relationship between the mother and her daughter usually places restriction on their children's ability to make decision. In this case, for instance, the mother's legal and moral authority restricted her child's ability to exercise her right to choose schools. In other cases, however, the participants felt supported in some areas of educational decision making and not in others.

For many participants in this study, vocational training required moving from their families (usually from another province) into Hanoi. For example, some girls had to move from Ba Vi or Tuyen Quang provinces to Hanoi to take vocational training, where they worked and studied in a designated center. A participant from an ethnic minority said she would rather be at home, but at the same time recognized the value of being at the center instead. Her parents made the decision for her to move to Hanoi. Autonomy, in these instances, becomes more difficult to decipher. This disadvantaged socio-political location transformed the participants' experiences of exclusion.

In other cases, we also found that the girls who were in their early twenties could not make decisions for their future relationships with their partners because of prejudices against their disabilities. Their experience replicated the women's stories. Many women experienced profound prejudices due to the cultural assumption that disability is asexual. They experienced this prejudice in their community and family lives. This experience was more poignant for girls and women at an older age than younger one. For example, two participants told the interviewers that they could not sustain their relationships with their partners because of the prejudice from their families. Although these experiences with autonomy, and the lack thereof, were not directly related to education, they indicate that girls with disabilities lacked autonomy to make decision in relation to their personal lives.

Respect for difference: Experiences of disability identity in educational settings

Data from both interviews and visual discussions also revealed complex interactions between disability and the social contexts in which the participants shaped their identities. For example, the participant who previously described not being allowed to join games because students didn't understand her speech said that, "I have repeated many times, people haven't understood me yet, so they can stop listening to me." (*Interview transcript with GwD16*). Yet for her, "The happiest thing is that I am protected by my teachers and my friends. They make me feel safe." (*Interview transcript with GwD16*). This suggests that she experienced both positive and negative

relationships in school. Similarly, one girl with a physical impairment described being excluded but still feeling respected at times,

I did not have friends at that time so no respect, but there were some people who did not play with me but still respected me. They respected me in a way that although they did not play with me, they did not tease me, but someone hated me and they teased me and made me sad. (*Interview transcript with GwD1*)

Participants shared a lack of respect for difference in school more so than in families or in the community. One girl explained the volunteers' reaction to disability in the following way: "They hate, don't want to play with and feel scared...they are fear of the illness of disabled people." (*Interview transcript with GwD11*). Other experiences of disrespect in the classroom were noted: "I found they disrespect me; they didn't pay attention to the way I did my exercise but laughed at me while I was in the blackboard." (*Interview transcript with GwD13*). Thus, the lack of respect for difference was manifested in different ways. This experience perpetuated the girl's feeling of powerlessness in school.

These experiences, however, were not entirely negative. Some positive experiences were revealed, reflecting the participants' capacity to advocate for themselves. For instance, when asked about her feelings of learning in her vocational center, one participant said: "I feel comfortable because I can live with those who are in the same situation as me. They'll sympathize with me and I needn't feel shy" (*Interview transcript with GwD14*). In describing a teacher with whom she could share, the same participant said, "... she's very sociable. She treats us like friends, close friends. So I can share with her all sad and happy stories and almost all others do, too." (*Interview transcript with GwD14*). Their stories also reflected their positive relationships with their community. For example, when asked about community experiences, a participant shared her experience of being helped by a man who realized that she had been waiting to cross the road.

Clearly, the care and respect of the community for their disability played a significant role in shaping the participants' perception of the self. The participants' narratives indicated the role of societal awareness of their difference, which played a significant impact on the ways girls with disabilities felt about themselves and their experiences with inclusion and exclusion. In some instances, the bio-medical model of disability was revealed through the ways the participants talked about their disability; for instance, the degree to which difference was recognized and respected varied by types of impairment. In other instances, they associated disability with the socio-cultural contexts in which they participate. In short, the girls with disabilities in this project described complex experiences with the five human rights principles of autonomy,

dignity, non-discrimination and equality, participation, inclusion and accessibility, and respect for difference.

Discussion

Barriers to and from Education: A Holistic Approach

The findings showed that there were various forms of exclusion facing girls and women with disabilities in enjoying and exercising their educational rights. They also indicated that although the global imperative for fostering human rights of people with disabilities had generated some positive conditions for including girls with disabilities in Vietnam, there were limitations for the Vietnamese government to use this inclusion approach while at the same time maintaining its welfare model in disability and education policy. An understanding of the context of inclusion for girls with disabilities in Vietnam is important for making sense of educational rights of girls with disabilities. To unpack existing barriers to inclusion in and from education, we used a holistic approach, allowing us to understand these systemic barriers.

Competing Models of Disability Laws and Policies

The current Vietnamese legal and social framework on disability is modeled within a framework of welfare laws and policies, which prohibits acts of discrimination against people with disabilities. However, welfare laws and policies are based on the medical model of disability, which sees an individual impairment as a precondition for welfare entitlements (Degener, 2003). In this welfare approach, individuals are treated on the basis of individual needs rather than human rights provisions. There are limitations in using this approach as an overall framework for disability policy, as well as in modeling this approach in education.

The Law on Persons with Disabilities (SRV, 2010) aims to advance the rights of persons with disabilities in Vietnam. Its legal provisions, however, are not clearly aligned with a human rights framework. The law maintains the medical model of disability as a precondition for establishing eligibility criteria for welfare provisions. Article 3 of the Law on Persons with Disabilities establishes three categories of disability, including “persons with exceptionally serious disabilities,” “persons with serious disabilities,” and “persons with mild disabilities” (SRV, 2010, Article 3). The identification of disability, based on the “type” and “degree” of impairment, is thus a precondition for the authorities to decide who gets what, based on the pre-determined criteria for establishing eligible entitlements. In other words, despite an anti-discrimination law, disability continues to be constructed as a medical and personal problem. This approach

to disability does not take into account the environmental, political and social factors impeding the full participation of people with disabilities. Regulations for providing social assistance is based on the type and degree of disability.

While this legal provision for people with disabilities is necessary for giving people with disabilities access to social services, it is not universal. Prejudices against people with disabilities are not eliminated. Instead, the medical approach to disability serves to justify individual needs on a case by case basis. Article 27.1 of the *Law on Persons with Disabilities* states that “the state creates favourable conditions for people with disabilities to study in an appropriate manner with their needs and abilities” (Law on Persons with Disabilities, SRV, 2010). Its legal provisions include being accepted in school at a later age than regulated by the government, being exempted from some educational content or subject that the *individual* cannot fulfil [due to the disability], and being provided with educational equipment in support of their learning (SRV, 2010, Article 27.2). The conditional phrase “appropriate to the needs and abilities of people with disabilities” restricts access to education primarily for “people with severe disabilities.” These provisions do not warrant the right of all children with disabilities to access education and to be fully included in public education. This approach does not enhance social justice for all.

The study found that although a significant number of girls with disabilities in this study had access to primary and secondary education, their inclusion varied by socio-economic status and by types of disability. Figure 4 showed competing trends for girls with disabilities in Tu Liem districts: Girls with lower socio-economic status were more likely to lack access to education, but when they could get access to education, they were likely to proceed to lower and upper secondary level. Additionally, it appeared that the SE status was not the primary factor determining access to education for girls with disabilities in this study. By contrast, access to education was skewed by types of impairment. As shown in Figure 5, girls with physical disabilities had more access to education than girls with intellectual disabilities. The majority of participants who had access to secondary education had physical or visual/hearing disabilities. By contrast, girls with intellectual disabilities were more likely to have no education. Those who had enrolled in primary schools dropped out or repeated their grades (9.1%). Thus, having an access to education does not ensure positive process and outcomes of education.

At the same time, a small number of girls who dropped out from schools may suggest that there was some degree of support for the education of girls with disabilities in Tu Liem district in the family and in educational sectors. The experiences of girls with disabilities were both positive and negative, indicating that there is potential for building a more inclusive culture in education, where their voices could be more included (De Lange et al., 2015; Mitchell et al., 2015; Nguyen et al., 2015).

Systemic Discrimination: Disability, Gender, Ethnicity & Socio-economic Status

UNICEF (2013) notes that girls with disabilities faced high risks of child labour, such as caring for their siblings in disadvantaged situation. In different types of societies, a gender hierarchy still exists and it further disadvantages girls from equal access to health care, education, and social protection. The General Comment 9 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2006) observes:

Girls with disabilities are often even more vulnerable to discrimination due to gender discrimination. In this context, States parties are requested to pay particular attention to girls with disabilities by taking the necessary measures, and when needed extra measures, in order to ensure that they are well protected, have access to all services and are fully included in society. (p. 33)

This study found that while participants received some levels of access to education, they faced systemic barriers to inclusion and participation. As we have indicated, access to educational services only revealed one particular dimension of their educational rights (Rioux, 2013). That is, an understanding of whether girls with disabilities had access to education could not represent a holistic picture of education and social justice. We delved into more systemic dimensions of institutional inclusion and exclusion to understand access, inclusion, and participation more holistically.

The analysis of the in-depth interviews showed that both boys and girls with disabilities experienced different forms and levels of discrimination. There were incidences of multiple discrimination for girls with disabilities. Girls with disabilities faced prejudice against their disability in their everyday life. They were usually regarded as 'lacking,' 'disabled,' and 'dysfunctional' by non-disabled peers. As such, the disabling assumption that disabled people do not have value for their lives was institutionally and culturally constructed. These systemic forms of discrimination need to be addressed within educational policy and within a broader socio-cultural conditions.

The cultural and societal prejudice against disabled boys and girls, based on the assumption that they are abnormal, was common. In Vietnamese culture, being born as a girl is usually seen as a disappointment to her family. Consequently, women and girls are not given favourable conditions to fully participate in social activities, make decisions and access education. This systemic discrimination is reflected through this study. In our fieldwork, for instance, although the experiences of boys with disabilities were not directly observed (they were noted through the researchers' observation and understanding of the interviews), it appeared that the experiences of boys and girls with discrimination intersected with their sexuality and disability. The cultural perception of

disability as abnormal negatively affected the identities of both boys and girls with disabilities. A girl told the story of her classmate with Down syndrome, saying that,

... because he was too fat. Moreover, when studying biology, there was a lesson about the human body and the diseases, my friends figured out that he had Down syndrome so they teased him that he drank a lot of tea to get Down syndrome (*Interview transcript with GwD 13*).

Yet, adolescent girls with disabilities faced more challenges to inclusion when the education system was perceived to be reserved only for more capable individuals. Ableism, a way of thinking about individual's abilities and standards based on the dominant ideology about ability and normalcy, was manifested in the ways disabled bodies were perceived as imperfect. Ableism shaped the public perception of what it means to be abnormal (Titchkosky, 2011). The difference was assumed to be rehabilitated or corrected by some normative standards. The attitudes of their teachers and the marginalization of their social position in the classroom, reported by girls with different categories of impairment, showed an ablest assumption that school and the public space were used for more able-bodied people. This assumption led to marginalization of both boys and girls with disabilities.

At the same time, gender played a significant role in reinforcing the normative assumption that girls with disabilities are not valued in their families and societies. For example, girls with disabilities faced more challenges in terms of access to education. They experienced different forms of discrimination, violence, and societal prejudice in their families and in schools. The intersection between ableism and sexism was manifested in the assumption that women and girls with disabilities could not marry, and even when getting married, they might have children who are disabled like them. This gender-based prejudice was applied to girls with disabilities, suggesting that they were more disadvantaged than boys with disabilities (See also *Discrimination*). Girls with disabilities also witnessed other children, boys and girls, experiencing discrimination. The intersection between disability and gender appeared to be the main factor causing the negative experiences with education and social participation (see *Figure 7*). The degree of violence varied by types of disability. This finding rejects the general assumption that girls with disabilities face similar forms of violence in all contexts. Rather, it suggests that some girls, such as those with intellectual disabilities, faced more barriers to participation than others. It is therefore important that educational authorities develop measures to protect them from different forms of violence they faced in schools and in their families.

It is evident, then, that discrimination against girls with disabilities was systemic, and this happened not only in Vietnam but also in other countries (e.g., Ghai, 2012; Frohmader & Meekosha, 2012). The intersection between disabilities and sexuality

made women and girls with disabilities subject to multiple forms of discrimination. At the same time, this study suggests that sympathy and connectivity can help to engage women and girls with disabilities more closely.

Understanding the Voices and Experiences of Girls with Disabilities

The voices of girls with disabilities thus reflect unequal power relations between disabled and non-disabled people. At the same time, it reflects the inadequacy of the educational structure in addressing exclusion, discrimination, and prejudices for girls with disabilities.

Globally and locally, girls and women with disabilities are facing challenges for their inclusion (Ortoleva & Lewis, 2012l; Nguyen & Mitchell, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2012). Using participatory methodologies, we ask: How can research become a tool for addressing invisibility and systemic discrimination? Within the socio-cultural conditions of disability in Vietnamese society, the rights of people with disabilities have been formulated in the law. However, the study demonstrated that there were significant barriers for women and girls with disabilities. To understand their experiences, we studied both dimensions: the dimension to which law and policy construct the experiences of girls with disabilities, and the dimensions to which girls and women with disabilities participated in advocating for their educational rights using their personal experiences as one particular dimension of educational rights monitoring.

In the process of institutional structuring for human rights and disability rights, girls with disabilities have had few opportunities to be consulted or to participate in decision-making. There was a lack of voices and consultation for their opinions in former studies in relation to children with disabilities in Vietnam and internationally (Morris, 2014). With very few studies conducted in the context of human rights and disability rights, there is still a lack of understanding of the systemic dimensions facing girls with disabilities culturally, institutionally, and politically. Through monitoring their individual experiences, this study indicated that there were complex patterns of power relations which shaped their experiences and relationships in their schools and community. In most instances, the lack of respect for their difference, and the discrimination because of their difference, were the key challenges for girls with disabilities to participate.

As such, the prejudices against disability (Morris, 1991) negatively affected the social relationships of girls with disabilities in and outside schools, and this was implicit in the ways teachers treated girls with disabilities in schools. We identified the socio-cultural issues affecting the ability of girls with disabilities to decision-making in their family and school, including the relationships between the girls and boys with

disabilities, girls with disabilities and their parents, and girls with disabilities and teachers. Clearly, these power relationships were embedded within the broader social and cultural contexts of social inclusion that tended to be taken for granted (Nguyen, 2015).

While the socio-economic conditions of the participants were not the primary factor determining their access to education, they affected the outcomes of education for girls with disabilities. For example, participants who dropped out from school came from poor or relatively poor situation. Girls with intellectual disabilities were more likely to drop out from schools. They were teased and physically abused by boys in schools. This raises question regarding the normative assumptions regarding the power relationships between girls with disabilities and their social surroundings. For example, should parents make decision on behalf of their children in issues affecting their education and social lives? To what extent the choosing of schooling is decided by children in ways that reflect their ability to make decisions for their own lives? Interestingly, the girls with disabilities in this study did not indicate any instances of sexual violence. Perhaps part of the reasons is because our interviewers did not probe this during their interviews. We therefore take this finding with caution. That is, although the participants did not report any incidence of sexual violence, we should not assume that these incidences did not happen. Indeed, sexual violence might have happened at a more intimate level and this requires some degree of trust between the interviewers and interviewees in relation to this personal experience. Additionally, through our conversations, we found that sexual violence happened more often to women with disabilities. As such, we suggest that this incidence needs to be further investigated through sustainable monitoring.

The cultural assumption that disability is an illness has had negative effect on the participants' perception of self-worth. Some participants internalized their inferior status, assuming disability is an "illness" that needs medical treatment. Some participants thought that non-disabled boys and girls are "smarter," "funner," and that the conversation between a non-disabled and disabled person is "boring" (for instance, *Interviews GwD1 and GwD2*). It seems that some girls with disabilities have internalized the perception that their difference is an individual problem. This cultural belief has to some extent devalued their self-worth.

Clearly, these individual perceptions were circumscribed within a broader socio-political context. For example, within the global neo-liberal conditions, difference tended to be individualized and stigmatized. Neoliberal ideologies construct disability as individual problem due to one's lack of ability to participate into the market forces (Erevelles, 2011; McRuer, 2006; Nguyen, 2015). Instead of taking these experiences at face value, we suggest that these social experiences were culturally and historically influenced, reflecting the ways individual subjectivity was shaped by dominant discourses and practices.

In short, the voices of girls with disabilities reflected unequal power relations between disabled and non-disabled people – in this case being the situation of girls with disabilities and public institutions. At the same time, it demonstrated the inadequacy of the educational structure in addressing exclusion, discrimination, and prejudices for girls with disabilities.

The Gap between Policy and Practice

Clearly, there was a significant gap between current policy and practice. The findings showed that the gap was revealed in both policy and in the everyday lives of girls with disabilities. For example, under the legal provisions of the Law on Persons with Disabilities, inter-Ministerial circular 42/2013/TTLT-BGDDT-BLDTBXH-BTC was formulated, providing administrative and financial support for students with disabilities in and outside of the public education system. Circular 42 shows a commitment of the government to ensure equal access to education for students identified as “persons with disabilities.” Yet, the policy regulates the procedures for identification, based on medical assessment in combination with administrative procedures implemented by educational institutions. As such, this policy has maintained the medical model of disability.

This study showed that girls with disabilities lacked equal access to participate in education. The gap between policies and practice was illustrated through a number of dimensions: the lack of an institutional structure entitling *all* girls with different types of impairment to participate in education; the lack of awareness about *their* right to choose an appropriate educational environment; and finally, the lack of an inclusive, quality education system for boys and girls with disabilities to develop their personality and well-being on an equal basis with others. Negative attitudes, ignorance, and lack of support of teachers and the public perpetuated the exclusion of girls with disabilities from educational settings.

Multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion happened to both girls and women with disabilities. Inequality was manifested in the systemic barriers for access to education and employment for women and girls with disabilities. A government report showed that among disabled people who were capable of working, 47 per cent had sufficient employment, 32.2 per cent lacked employment, and 15.3 per cent were unemployed (MOLISA, 2008). By contrast, the majority of women with disabilities in this study showed that they were excluded in their family, workplace and society. Most women with disabilities were self-employed, had unpaid employment, or unable to participate into the workforce.

At the same time, discrimination was institutionally and culturally constructed by cultural and societal awareness. It was systemic and multi-dimensional. As such, the use

of a “gap model,” which aimed to investigate the gap between policy and practice, may not clearly identify systemic dimensions of institutional ableism and sexism based on which discrimination perpetuates (Fulcher, 1999). We therefore recommend a more holistic approach be used to monitor educational rights for girls and women with disabilities, drawing on their voices and experiences.

Using Participatory Monitoring Research for Social Change

As previously discussed, participatory methodologies are tools for empowering girls with disabilities to claim their rights. These methods helped participants to picture violence, exclusion, and multiple forms of discrimination they were facing in and out of schools. Participatory visual methodologies offered an inclusive approach for girls with disabilities to share their individual and collective experiences with inclusion and exclusion, discrimination, and lack of respect they faced in school.

Using participatory visual methodologies as a way to enhance the participation of girls with disabilities in inclusive research, we found that this approach was not only useful for the purpose of identifying forms of discrimination and exclusion; it was also instrumental for the purpose of creating a safe space for collective activism. To support girls with disabilities to formulate their agenda, for example, we identified a number of categories in the video production *Picturing Inclusion: Voices of Girls with Disabilities*, which include: marginalization, exclusion, discrimination, the lack of accessibility, the need to protect a safe environment, and the need for creating an inclusive schools and caring communities. This video, drawing on the visual creations that participants produced in an earlier workshop, enabled girls and women with disabilities to reflect on their visual production to create their messages for rebuilding inclusive schools and communities.

Visual productions and their discussions of the visual products revealed that girls with disabilities did not only identify negative experiences in education. They also wished to affirm their positive experiences and identities in the educational process (see Nguyen et al., 2015). These included their capacity to collectively formulate their voices and stories about inclusion and exclusion, to send their messages to policymakers and their communities about what could be changed, and to make their voices heard in the government’s policy agenda. Their capacity to formulate collective action, through their participation and engagement in different activities and workshops which the research team organized over the course of the study, demonstrated that with appropriate methodologies, policymakers can empower girls and women with disabilities to monitor their own rights.

As such, the production of knowledge about the relationships among disability, schooling, and the community, through participatory visual methodologies, can promote

new forms of activism. For example, the participation of UNICEF and VNIES stakeholders, alongside organizations of people with disabilities (DPOs) in the policy dialogues and community engagement activities, offered optimism for building a more inclusive agenda with the participation of girls and women with disabilities in Vietnam. Participatory monitoring methodologies, thus, enabled the research team to advance the methodological interventions for monitoring educational rights.

Recommendations

Recommendations from Girls with Disabilities

I pin a high hope that students with disabilities and poor conditions are treated equally, happily, socially and there's no discrimination
Voice from a girl with disabilities, fieldwork 2015

Consulting girls with disabilities was a particular purpose of our participatory approach to monitoring educational rights. Recommendations from girls with disabilities revealed that they wanted to create change in their educational and social settings. In both the in-depth interviews and visual workshops, girls with disabilities made recommendations for changing exclusion in society and education. Their recommendations involved creating changes at different levels, including school and teachers, the government, their community.

Several issues emerged: the need for solidarity and collectivity among girls and women with disabilities; access to education; participation in the community and public spaces; and awareness and support of people without disabilities for inclusion. For example, the poster below (Image 3), “Listen to what disabled people say,” is a powerful message from the girls with disabilities about their right to education.

Teachers and Peers: Constructing Inclusive Schools

Recommendations for schools were made in four key areas, their friends, teachers, resources and general hopes. Most participants suggested that their friends needed to be more inclusive and helpful. For example, one girl expressed her vision for inclusive schools as followed: “I want to go to school. I want my friends to play with me and protect me and not to tease me.” (*Interview transcript with GwD16*). Other participants made recommendations regarding their schools and teachers, including more support and understanding from their teachers in order to accommodate their learning. This was echoed in a participant’s recommendation for changing teacher’s

attitude: “What I want to change is sometimes I have no mistake but she [the teacher] doesn’t want to hear any explanation. I want teachers to listen to our explanation.” (*Interview transcript with GwD11*).

Participants also expressed hope that their schools would be more inclusive through their vision of what might be changed in their schools. As one participant said: “I hope to speak directly to everyone and the principle about my difficulties. I hope to share what I want with everyone so that I can feel more comfortable. I don’t have to let it in my mind.” (*Interview transcript with GwD10*). Another girl envisioned non-discrimination as a condition for the well-being of students with disabilities: “I pin a high hope that students with disabilities and poor conditions are treated equally, happily, socially and there’s no discrimination.” (*Interview transcript with GwD13*). Non-discrimination and equality were the key recommendations for restructuring inclusive schools.

Polymakers: Listen to What Disabled People Say!



IMAGE 3: “LISTEN TO WHAT DISABLED PEOPLE SAY” POLICY POSTER PRODUCED BY A GROUP OF GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE PHOTOVOICE WORKSHOP, HANOI, 2014

The key recommendation in this policy poster is that the voices of girls and women with disabilities, alongside others, need to be counted in institutional matters relating to them. The visual productions were exhibited during the policy dialogue with stakeholders to engage girls with disabilities in this policy dialogue. As such, this visual process represents a more democratic politics of representation where girls and women with disabilities can have a stake for claiming their rights.

Community Leaders: Constructing Inclusive Communities

The need to create a caring and respectful community was a message generated by girls with disabilities. An inclusive community was characterized by the images of girls and women with disabilities, alongside non-disabled people, participating in education and social activities on an equal and inclusive manner with their peers. It also highlighted the rights of everyone to be cared for and to belong to the classroom. The policy posters also indicated the lively, healthy, and engaging community in which girls with disabilities can participate. The poster below (Image 4) was from one of the groups. For example, a policy poster was created by each group as a collective voice of girls with disabilities for change.

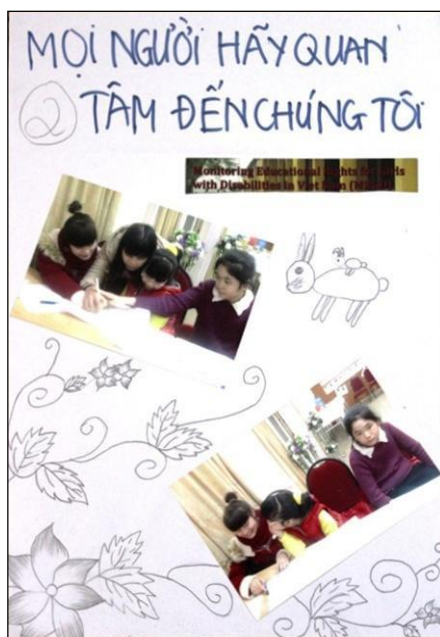


IMAGE 4: "PLEASE CARE ABOUT US"

Facilitator: People with disabilities have policies in their favour, but the policies are not implemented ... we should give opinions about the things that we need.

Participant: Broadcast it!

Facilitator: So that everyone can listen to the broadcast but it does not mean that everyone will respond. If you want to directly change your school, the people who can help you are the principals, the school boards and teachers.

Participant: This is the school for us.

Recommendations from Women with Disabilities

Social attitude is vital in laying the foundation of change. We need systematic initiatives conducted from the grassroots level, through ideological education

Voice from a woman with disabilities, fieldwork 2015.

Women and girls with disabilities were subject to multiple types of discrimination. In order to challenge this, we raised the perspectives of women with disabilities in this type of participatory research. As people who experienced their girlhood with disabilities, women with disabilities had empathy in sharing the experiences of younger girls with disabilities. In conducting a focus group with women with disabilities, we found that women with disabilities could play a powerful role in fostering disability activism. At the same time, their engagement with girls with disabilities in the MRGD project, including their recommendations for social changes, opened up new possibilities for their collective activism in educational settings.

Politics of Engagement

In this study, women with disabilities were trained to apply participatory visual methodologies and in-depth interviews in their work with the girls. The women were the co-researcher in this project. There were a few typical ways to make the women trustworthy, such as sharing their individual experiences with the girls, respecting the girls' opinions and decisions, and being patient to encourage the girls to participate in all activities. Many women affirmed that participatory visual methodology was truly interesting and helpful for the girls to tell their stories, express feelings, and construct views in a very dynamic way.

Clearly, the relationships between the women and girls with disabilities played the key role in probing the experiences of girls with disabilities. Because the girls and women with disabilities had experienced similar discrimination, the women had the insight to engage with the girls sympathetically. They shared their stories regarding exclusion as a way to develop their empathy with the girls. They appreciated the girls' perspectives and decisions and gave them affirmation about their abilities and strengths.

In this study, we found that the women instructed enthusiastically and gave thoughtful advice when the girls shared with the women about their difficulties. It was important that the girls feel safe and secure in the study. The sympathy and shared

experiences of the women fostered an environment of safety, confidence, and growth. One woman shared that she comforted her interviewee and tried to be the interviewee's close friend (L7). It was quite clear that the women were capable of engaging with the girls due to the fact that they experienced exclusion in their own lives and could engage girls with disabilities in sharing these personal experiences. As such, the engagement between women and girls with disabilities played an important role in the monitoring process, and this has constructed possibilities of their collective activism.

Possibilities of Collective Activism

The engagement between women and girls with disabilities is an indispensable part of the disability movement. They can increase their potential contributions to promote the full enjoyment by people with disabilities of their human rights. In this project, the women and girls have taken a significant step towards making the rights of people with disabilities real. Our study, which aimed to foster the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in the research process, offered opportunities for their collective activism.

With essential trainings, women with disabilities can become activists to build a transnational framework for inclusive education in the future. By using knowledge and skills provided from our project, they were able to participate in the research process more fully. Their participation changed social attitudes about girls and women with disabilities in different ways (see, for instance, VTV4 broadcast regarding the visual work of girls and women with disabilities).

This inspiring initiative, taken by women and girls with disabilities, is the forward-moving action that forms the foundation of our journey towards realizing social justice. Through the opportunities to be involved in our project, they engaged with each other in order to conduct strategic missions in demanding equality and non-discrimination for girls with disabilities, especially for those located in disadvantaged communities. They were aware of their roles as the key players in policy dialogues with stakeholders. The women recognized that this project created an opportunity for them to learn from each other, including learning through intercultural experiences about disability and gender. By giving recommendations for changes, the women demonstrated their aspiration to reach an accessible education as well as an inclusive society. One woman who was not able to go to school because of social barriers told her vision:

I'd rather that all children went to school. I couldn't go to school. My family used to live in poverty, so I had no access to education. I was so sad and wondered

why I didn't demand to go to school. I hope that children with disabilities and others who have to live in poverty can be facilitated to go to school. (L11)

Another woman gave very important recommendations about changing disability policy and curriculum. She emphasized,

Changing the community's awareness takes a long time. Educational and communicational methods are at the root of social perceptions. The images of people with disabilities in textbooks are miserable and pitiful. The media does not portray those with disabilities "normally". Policy makers also need to change their attitudes. People with disabilities should be invited to participate in the policy making process to avoid unreasonable policies such as some of the existing traffic policies, which do not take into consideration citizens who live with disabilities. Education policy remains exclusionary. (L3)

She gave the example of an outdated policy. Most students with disabilities did not agree with the policy that they now do not have to sit for an exam to go to university like others. Actually, they would like to participate in the exam with an accessible form. Although policy makers promulgated it as a priority for people with disabilities, the participant believed that they did not care about students with disabilities' feelings. She went on,

Social attitude is vital in laying the foundation of change. We need systematic initiatives conducted from the grassroots level, through ideological education. It is problematic that people with disabilities appear in stories or lessons abnormally in social interaction. These portrayals promote charity approaches rather than paving the way for equality. In the media, there should not be expressions like "extraordinary person" or "fairy tale" regarding people with disabilities. People in society should consider disabilities as a difference like issues of religion or race. I think it is a long journey. (L3)

Disabilities contribute to the identity of an individual. Thus, it is important to maintain that people with disabilities are citizens of their communities, like everybody, and thus deserve equal rights and quality of life. By envisioning where social transformation is needed, the women were vocal and actually got involved in being a part of that transformation. Clearly, with the different forms of activism engendered within the MRGD project, local authorities seemed to show more support towards the education and equality for women and girls with disabilities. The women simultaneously gave recommendations for our project in its new phase.

Recommendations coming out of the project as a whole

Taken together, this study had critical implications for the research team in addressing the educational rights of girls and women with disabilities. The recommendations of the girls and women with disabilities for the project were instrumental for future research. It envisioned possible directions for developing this study into a new phase.

Participants' feedback and evaluation

In general, the women provided very positive feedback about their training in relation to the research process. They gave advice about the research scope and fieldwork organization. First, they thought that this project should be broadened to other areas, especially in disadvantaged communities. A teacher with disabilities recommended that there is a need to expand the project in other disadvantaged areas outside of Hanoi. She believed that girls with disabilities are more likely to be excluded in these areas (*L5*).

Second, while the participants valued the work with girls with disabilities, they also suggested a need to strengthen a gender equality lens in the MRGD's interventions so as to address the challenges to inclusive education for both boys and girls with disabilities. This means that the research team needs to critically examine disability in the intersection with other marginalized identities such as gender, ethnicity and poverty in Vietnam, as well as in the global contexts.

Third, the women would like to have more opportunities to practice the methods. This demonstrates the need to sustain the training to build their capacity and resources for inclusive education. Finally, recommendations from DPO Bac Tu Liem suggested that local DPOs and communities be more directly involved in the entire research process to mobilize grassroots and community action (*L14*). These recommendations are highly necessary for the research team so as to prepare for the next phases of the project.

The recommendations of girls with disabilities suggest that the project could benefit other girls in their community. All girls expressed their hope for change through inclusion in school and community. At the policy dialogue with UNICEF, VNIES, and ACDC, for instance, a girl with visual impairment said that she hoped her younger generations could have access to school, and that the MRGD project could offer a significant opportunity for the participation of girls with disabilities in inclusive schools.

Methodologies

The use of participatory methodologies enabled us to engage girls and women with disabilities through the research process (see De Lange et al., 2015; Nguyen et al., 2015; Mitchell et al., 2016). The use of participatory methodologies, such as PVM, demanded a significant amount of time and resources in the organization and preparatory steps of the team's fieldwork. However, the outcomes of these methodologies were highly important because they challenged traditional perception that girls and women with disabilities are merely objects of human rights violations towards an inclusive approach fostering their social action.

PVM was one of the most innovative approaches being applied in this study. This approach requires the project's team members to tackle visual approaches with full consideration. For example, in what ways can PVM be more inclusive of girls with different abilities and disabilities? How can we minimize risk for girls in the project through visual productions and representations? How can we address the challenges of visual methods for those with different abilities? These ethical and methodological questions need to be tackled from time to time. With the great contributions of participatory visual methodologies for monitoring and advocating for change, there are potential for the research team to extend the use of PVM in future projects.

Knowledge mobilization: Community engagement as the centre of social change

The knowledge mobilization activities set forth by the MRGD project enabled the research team to transform knowledge on the educational rights of girls with disabilities into social action. This agenda marked some significant actions taken by the MRGD project. Over the course of the project, for example, we engaged in several community and university partnerships in an effort to create more collaborative relationships with global and local stakeholders to foster inclusion. The outcomes of our knowledge mobilization agenda, such as the policy and community dialogues with Vietnam Institute for Educational Sciences and Bac Tu Liem community stakeholders, revealed a number of issues in relation to the project's capacity to foster inclusion at different levels.

First, although the scope of the MRGD project was small, it has mobilized different social forces in recognizing the educational rights of girls with disabilities. This holistic approach was fostered in all phases of the research process.

Second, our workshops with the community stakeholders in Can Tho and Bac Tu Liem showed that community activists wanted to expand the MRGD approach into school and community levels. This finding demonstrates the potential for the MRGD

intervention to advocate for change at the level of policymaking and to enhance public awareness. In Phase Two, for instance, an educational policymaker at the Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences recommended that local communities could be more involved in the policy dialogue in order to mobilize public awareness on the role of inclusive education for girls with disabilities. The stakeholder's recommendation required the project's team members to take necessary steps to involve local communities and Disabled Persons' Organizations (DPOs) into the project with a view to mobilizing inclusion and social change at the grassroots level. As a participant into the policy dialogue and photo exhibition in Phase 2 put this systemically:

My hope is that the program can involve donors or relevant sectors in helping to bring the exhibitions like this into schools. First, we need to create communication at the community level. I think we cannot wait from the top-down approach [to make change]. We need a support of the community. With public awareness and sympathy at the community level then it would be easier to convince higher level of educational authority if we want to propose something (Policy dialogue and photo exhibition, February 2015).

Third, the outcomes of the community engagement activities demonstrate the great potential of the project to involve multiple social forces, such as NGOs and DPOs, parents' advocacy groups, media agencies, community leaders, and universities into the work of monitoring educational rights. With the different forms of partnerships being launched at different levels, such as partnerships with the UNICEF, government stakeholders, NGOs and DPOs, schools, and the community, we found that the project has achieved some success in mobilizing knowledge at the global and local levels.

Clearly, effective partnership required partners to fully engage in sharing their visions on the goals of monitoring educational rights, in relation to particular objectives and approaches taken by each organization. For example, the partnerships between the project's team members and the global and local stakeholders, such as UNICEF and Bac Tu Liem Association for People with Disabilities, were relatively successful because they brought about mutual understanding of each organization's priorities and agendas. With different levels of partnerships fostered by the project's team members, for example, we engaged local authorities and community stakeholders in two local workshops on the educational rights for girls with disabilities. The outcomes of these workshops showed that most stakeholders had engaged in this global and local initiative with enthusiasm and trust.

At the same time, some forms of partnership required more engaging discussions and trust among stakeholders about the visions and challenges of collaboration on a regular basis. While we acknowledge the challenges of partnerships

at the international level, we believe that clearer communication in terms of each party's objectives, visions, and agendas, is perhaps necessary for advancing the outcomes of the project in the next phase.

Finally, universities have shown significant interest in mobilizing this knowledge transnationally and nationally. With the partnerships with university institutions, such as Coady International Institute and York Centre for Asian Research in the final phase of the project, we were successful in fostering a more interdisciplinary and international focus of this study. Events such as *Girls with Disabilities in the global South: A transnational politics of activism*, organized by the project team members in collaboration with Coady International Institute in November 2015, showed the growth of this form of knowledge and activism transnationally. It suggested that the voices of girls and women with disabilities in the global South have become more internationally recognized by the global community, and that significant effort has been made in constructing a more inclusive global dialogue on inclusion and social justice in the global North and South.

In short, alongside the international collaboration and engagement among team members, UNICEF, and institutions in Vietnam, Canada, and South Africa, the MRGD project has fully engaged universities, NGOs, DPOs and the local communities in knowledge mobilization agenda. This is highly important for mobilizing public awareness and action on inclusion. A more sustainable approach for mobilizing educational rights involving all parties is necessary for future monitoring projects.

Conclusion

The MRGD project has set the inclusion of people with disabilities as a goal, and in order to continuously make progress towards achieving this goal, we used participatory methods to engage girls and women with disabilities. Using a holistic approach to studying human rights, this study demonstrated complex forms of inclusion and exclusion for girls with disabilities in and out of Vietnamese schools. We involved women with disabilities in this study to build their capacity to conduct research and foster the role of women with disabilities in monitoring educational rights in Vietnam. The involvement of 13 women and 21 girls with disabilities in the MRGD project over a period of 2 years enabled us to observe the capacity of girls and women with disabilities to get involved and to become active social actors for inclusion and social justice in Vietnam.

The study affirmed that women and girls with disabilities should be involved in the research process as a way to empower their rights. Given the lack of opportunities for girls with disabilities to recognize and to claim their rights, there is also a need for the project to provide participants with essential advocacy skills so that all voices could

be heard. Additionally, more equal opportunities for men and women, as well as people with and without disabilities, should be provided by all stakeholders, including global and local agencies. This is a journey that demands contributions from all. Making the rights of women and girls with disabilities real is a key task that will take great effort. The participation of women and girls in the MRGD project, then, should be strengthened so that they can effectively fulfil their roles in promoting their own rights.

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APPENDIX A
CHILDREN'S INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT
Monitoring Educational Rights for Girls with Disabilities

What we want to learn:

- What are your personal experience in living within your family and community?
- What are the barriers that prevent you from having access to education?
- What are the barriers that you have faced in your schools and community?
- What could be done to promote your access and inclusion in schools?
- How can society and the government support your right to education?

How will these questions be asked?

Through many fun and interactive drawing and photography activities, children (10-16 years old) will describe your personal experience at home, at school, and in the immediate community. You will do this as part of a 3-4 hour workshop. You will also be invited to participate in an one hour interview with one of the trained monitor in your district. These questions will also be asked through an interview with you and a trained monitor. You can also use the photos/drawings as data that you produced to allow you reflect on your personal experience in the interviews that you will participate.

What will you be asked to do?

You will be asked to express your feelings and experience at school, family and community through photovoice (using cameras). You will also participate in a one-hour interview with an assigned monitor in our team who will interview you about your individual experience.

How will you be thanked for participating?

Everyone who participates in the workshop will receive refreshments during the session.

How will confidentiality and anonymity be assured?

You will never be asked to give your real name. We will be audio recording the sessions so that we can study what you say. Once we had finished transcribing the audio take (writing down what you said), we will be destroying the audio tape. We will keep the forms locked up in a safe place in the office of Dr. Xuan Thuy Nguyen at York University in Toronto, Canada. No one else will have access to these forms.

Do I have to have my voice recorded?

If you do not wish to not have your voice recorded, we will have one of our team members interview you separately and your words will be noted down on paper.

How will I benefit from being in the study?

The benefit of being in this study is that it will promote access and inclusion of girls with disabilities in education.

How will the findings of the study be used?

The findings from the study will be used to design a larger study, and may be presented at conferences, in academic journals, in reports.

Are there any risks if I am in this study?

No, there are no risks to being in this study. We will try to keep everything you say in the workshops confidential, although we can't be sure that other children in the groups won't talk about things that were said in their everyday interaction with the peers and families. However, you do not have to reveal anything you aren't comfortable with saying. If you need to talk to an adult after the session in order to say more about your feelings, we will make sure that you can talk to someone who can give help.

Questions to answer:

I know that I do not have to participate in the activities and I can stop at any time.

Yes ____ No ____

I will allow my photographs and drawings to be used in the study.

Yes ____ No ____

I will allow my voice to be audio-taped during the activities.

Yes ____ No ____

If you have any questions, please contact the York University's Ethics Officer, Ms. Alison Collins-Mrakas at acollins@yorku.ca.

YOUR NAME: _____

YOUR SIGNATURE: _____

YOUR AGE: _____

YOUR SEX: _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____

Contact Information of Project Investigator

Dr. Xuan Thuy Nguyen

Principal Investigator for MRGD Project

School of Health Policy and Management, York University

Regular mail: York University, 4700 Keele Street, 441 HNES Building, Toronto, ON, M3J 1P3.

Telephone: +14167362100 ext 20717 Email: xtnguyen@yorku.ca

APPENDIX B
VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT FOR CHILDREN
Monitoring Educational Rights for Girls with Disabilities

This information is provided so that you can make a decision about whether or not you agree to participate in this study. We are giving you this information because we want you to be able to make informed decision about your participation.

Why are we doing this study?

We are collecting information about the educational experiences of girls with disabilities in your community. We want to examine if the educational rights of girls with disabilities have been respected and fulfilled in Vietnamese schools.

What will you be asked to do?

You will be asked to express your feelings and experience at school, in your family and within your community through photovoice (using cameras). You will also participate in a one-hour interview with an assigned monitor in our team who will interview you about your individual experience.

How will you be thanked for participating?

Everyone who participates in the workshop will receive refreshments during the session.

How will confidentiality and anonymity be assured?

You will never be asked to give your real name. We will be audio recording the sessions so that we can study what you say. Once we had finished transcribing the audio take (writing down what you said), we will be destroying the audio tape. We will keep the forms locked up in a safe place in the office of Dr. Xuan Thuy Nguyen at York University in Toronto, Canada. No one else will have access to these forms.

Do I have to have my voice recorded?

If you do not wish to not have your voice recorded, we will have one of our team members interview you separately and your words will be noted down on paper.

How will I benefit from being in the study?

The benefit of being in this study is that it will promote access and inclusion of girls with disabilities in education.

How will the findings of the study be used?

The findings from the study will be used to design a larger study, and may be presented at conferences, in academic journals, in reports.

Are there any risks if I am in this study?

No, there are no risks to being in this study. We will try to keep everything you say in the workshops confidential, although we can't be sure that other children in the groups won't talk about things that were said. However, you do not have to reveal anything you aren't comfortable with saying. If you need to talk to an adult after the session in order to say more about your feelings, we will make sure that you can talk to someone who can give help.

Questions to Answer:

I know that I do not have to participate in the activities and I can stop at any time.

Yes ____ No ____

I will allow my photographs and drawings to be used in the study.

Yes ____ No ____

I will allow my voice to be audio-taped during the activities.

Yes ____ No ____

If you have any questions, please contact the York University's Ethics Officer, Ms. Alison Collins-Mrakas at acollins@yorku.ca.

YOUR NAME: _____

YOUR SIGNATURE: _____

YOUR AGE: _____

YOUR SEX: _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____

Contact Information of Project Investigator

Dr. Xuan Thuy Nguyen

Principal Investigator for MRGD Project

School of Health Policy and Management, York University

Regular mail: York University, 4700 Keele Street, 441 HNES Building, Toronto, ON, M3J
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APPENDIX C
INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN
Monitoring Educational Rights for Girls with Disabilities (MRGD)

Dear parent/guardian,

We are conducting a study on the individual experiences of girls with disabilities in Vietnamese schools. The study is being sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). In this study, we aim to: a) develop a new approach to document the situation of girls with disabilities in education; b) test out methodologies for obtaining in-depth knowledge on the educational rights of girls with disabilities in one geographic area of Vietnam; and c) build capacity for women and girls with disabilities through providing training on monitoring methods. We are asking for your agreement to have your child participate in this study.

What will happen in this study and what will your child be asked to do?

If you agree for your child to participate, she will be involved in the two visual workshops and an interview conducted by our trained monitor. This is a part of our research for making sure that her rights to education are respected and fulfilled. Upon her participation, she will have an opportunity to participate in a photovoice and a drawing workshop. This learning experience will allow her to take photos that reflect her perspective on educational rights. The purpose of these activities is to help your child to become fully engaged in this research process through using cameras to raise her voice. She will then be invited to participate into an in-depth interview that will be conducted by one of our trained monitors. We hope that her participation will have a long-term impact for promoting the inclusion of girls and women with disabilities in schools and your community.

Are there possible negative things that might happen if your child participates in the study?

There are no negative things that will happen to your child by participating in this study. However, we understand that she may feel uncomfortable at some points in the research process. Therefore, we will take every effort to make your child feel comfortable when participating in this study. She will be free to choose to participate, or not to participate in the study. Her participation is completely voluntary. Her decision not to participate in the study will not influence her relationship with her peers, her

community, and the research team in any way. Further, she can decide not to answer any questions that she does not want to.

Can your child stop participating if she does not want to continue participating?

If, at any time during the study, your child wants to stop participating, for any reason, just let the monitors know and they will stop asking her questions. If she wants to answer some questions, but not others, she can do that, too. It is entirely her decision. If your child decides to stop participating in the study, she may do so, too. Any written or audio recordings made up to the point will be destroyed. No one will treat your child any differently if she decides that she do not want to participate in the study.

Will your information be kept confidential?

The information your child provides will be kept confidential. The name of your child will not appear in any report or publication of the research. The written and audio recordings of her interview will be safely stored in a place that is locked and will be destroyed at the end of the project.

We look forward to having your consent for your child to participate in this study. The participation of your child into our study will be of great importance for our study. If you have questions about the study, please don't hesitate to contact the principal investigator, Dr. Xuan Thuy Nguyen, at xtnguyen@yorku.ca.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Xuan Thuy Nguyen
Principal Investigator for MRGD Project
School of Health Policy and Management, York University
Regular mail: York University, 4700 Keele Street, 441 HNES Building, Toronto, ON, M3J 1P3, Canada
Telephone: +14167362100 ext 20717
Email: xtnguyen@yorku.ca

Questions to Answer:

I know that my child does not have to participate and can stop at any time.

Yes___ No ___

I will allow my child's photographs to be used in the study

Yes___ No ___

I will allow my child's voice to be audio-taped during the activities.

Yes___ No ___

By signing this form, you agree that you have fully understood the potential risks and benefits of this study for your child when participating in this study. You therefore agree to give consent for your child to participate in this study.

YOUR NAME: _____

YOUR SIGNATURE: _____

YOUR AGE: _____

YOUR SEX: _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____

APENDIX D

PROTOCOL FOR PARTICIPATORY WORK WITH CHILDREN

Session will be audio-taped.

Children (in single sex groupings) will participate in a workshop session organized around the use of photovoice as a visual methodology, as well as the possibility of using drawings, mapping.

Photovoice (working in small groups)

Take pictures of “Feeling good and not so good” in relation to home school, and immediate community

Small groups will look at their photos and choose several pictures of feeling good and not so good. They will add captions to the photos.

Small groups will create poster narratives, which they will present to the whole group.

APPENDIX E
INFORMED CONSENT FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES
Monitoring Educational Rights for Girls with Disabilities (MRGD)

Dear participants,

We are conducting a study on the individual experiences of girls with disabilities in Vietnamese schools. The study is being sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). In this study, we aim to: a) develop a new approach to document the situation of girls with disabilities in education; b) test out methodologies for obtaining in-depth knowledge on the educational rights of girls with disabilities in one geographic area of Vietnam; and c) build capacity for women and girls with disabilities through providing training on monitoring methods. As co-researchers who conducted the interviews and visual methods in this study, you are invited to participate in a focus group. This discussion enables you to share your experience in working with girls with disabilities.

What will happen in this study and what will you be asked to do?

You will be invited to attend a two-hour discussion with nine women with disabilities and the research team who participated in phase 1 of the study. This is a part of our research objective in making sure that you, as a disabled researcher, can raise your voice when participating in the MRGD project. Two members of the MRGD will facilitate this discussion. You will be asked to share your perspective on such issues as working with girls with disabilities, and on the methodologies that you have conducted as a co-researcher. We hope that your participation will have a long-term impact for promoting the inclusion of girls and women with disabilities in schools and your community.

Are there possible negative things that might happen if you participate in the study?

We do not anticipate that any negative things will happen to you by participating in this study. However, we understand that you may feel uncomfortable at some points in the research process. Therefore, we will take every effort to make you feel comfortable when participating in this study. You will be free to choose to participate, or not to participate in the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. You have a right to not respond to any question or contribute to any discussion you do not feel comfortable contributing to.

Can you stop participating if you do not want to continue participating?

If, at any time during the study, you want to stop participating, you can do so. If you want to answer some questions, but not others, you can do that, too. It is entirely your decision. Your withdrawal from the study will not affect you in any way. No one will treat you any differently if you decide that you do not want to participate in the study.

Will your information be kept confidential?

If you choose to withdraw from the study during the focus group, the information that you share in the focus group will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. The written and audio recordings of your discussion will be safely stored in a place that is locked and will be destroyed at the end of the project. We will do everything reasonable to ensure that no identifying information in relation to your participation in the study up to that point will be revealed. However, there will be a possibility that your information up to that point of the discussion may not be entirely removed or deleted.

In addition, given that you will be sharing their experiences and opinions, when reading the report other participants may recognize experiences of counterparts who also participated. Some experiences have certain specificity about them, which means that participants commenting about them may be identifiable by other participants or community members. Because of this, we cannot guarantee anonymity. To minimise the possibility of your responses being linked back to you, we ask you please share information in the focus group with this in mind. We also ask you to keep all information shared by other participants fully confidential.

We look forward to having your consent to participate in this study. Your participation into our study will be of great importance for our study. If you have questions about the study, please don't hesitate to contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Xuan Thuy Nguyen, at xuan.thuy.nguyen@msvu.ca.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Xuan Thuy Nguyen
Principal Investigator for MRGD Project
Center for the Education of Women and Girls

Mount Saint Vincent University¹¹
2 Melody Dr., Halifax, NS
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¹¹ The MRGD project was housed at Mount Saint Vincent University in the second phase of the research process.

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Monitoring Educational Rights for Girls with Disabilities in Vietnamese schools

A. Situations faced by the Interviewee:

- (a)** Please tell me a little about your family situation life during the past five years. Are you still living with your parents? What have they been doing in their lives?
- (b)** Please tell me a little about your life. What things do you do? Where do you go? Who do you meet?
- (c)** What are the things in your life that are most satisfying?
- (d)** What are the most difficult barriers or challenges that you face in your life?

[1st SITUATION]

1.1 Do you recall a particular time or event in the last five years when you were left out or treated badly or prevented from participating in the community because of your disability?

1.2 WHAT happened? WHERE and HOW did it happen?

1.3 Is this still happening or did it just happen once?

1.4 Are there other details that you want to share with us about what happened, when and how in this situation?

[Dignity]

1.5 HOW did this situation make you feel and WHY? (For example, did you feel respected/not respected, ignored/cared for, worthy/ unworthy?)

1.6 WHAT made you feel that way?

1.7 WHY do you think people treated you that way?

[Autonomy]

1.8 Did you feel that you had a choice about what happened to you?

1.9. Did you feel what happened to you affect your well-being?
WHY? or WHY NOT?

1.10. If you had a choice, would it have made a difference to what happened?

[Inclusion]

1.11 Did people in your community who knew or saw what happened to you care about your situation?

- (a) Were you kept apart or left out in this situation?
- (b) How did this make you feel?
- (c) Did you need a service or some assistance from the government, your family or friends so that you could participate?

If YES, what service(s) or assistance did you need?

Did you receive it?

If you did not receive it, HOW did that affect you?

What else do you think would be important to support you?

[Non-Discrimination & Equality]

1.12 How do you think your disability affected what happened to you?

1.13 How do you think your disability *and* gender affected the ways people treated you?

1.14 Do you think that girls without disabilities would be treated the same way you were? WHY or WHY NOT? HOW would they have been treated?

1.15 Do you think that boys with disabilities would be treated the same way you were? WHY or WHY NOT? HOW would they have been treated?

1.16 Were you treated the way you were because people thought you were different? If yes, WHY?

1.17 Do you think that a person without a disability would have been treated in a similar way in this situation? WHY? or WHY NOT?

1.18 Do you feel that people label you and then treat you differently because of the label?

If YES, what label do they use? HOW does this label affect you?

- (a) Would someone of a different ethnicity be treated that way? WHY? or WHY NOT?
- (b) Would a boy be treated that way? WHY? or WHY NOT?
- (c) Would a poor person be treated that way? WHY? or WHY NOT?
- (d) Did you tell the situation to anyone?

☐ yes ☐ no

● If you told the situation, what kind of person/organization did you report it to?

☐ teacher

☐ school principal

- ☐ community's leader
- ☐ government official
- ☐ police officer
- ☐ Youth's Union
- ☐ religious leader
- ☐ other: _____
(specify)

- how did that person react?
- what action was taken?
- If you did NOT REPORT the situation to anyone: - WHY did you not report it?

1.19 In your opinion, what action[s] should be taken to improve [or prevent] the situation in the future?

1.20 Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about that situation?

[THE 2nd SITUATION]

2.1 Do you recall *another* particular time or event in the last five years when you were left out or treated badly or prevented from participating in education because of your disability?

2.2 WHAT happened? WHERE and HOW did it happen?

2.3 Is this still happening or did it just happen once?

2.4 Are there other details that you want to share with us about what happened, when and how in this situation?

[Dignity]

2.5 HOW did this situation make you feel and WHY? (For example, did you feel respected/not respected, ignored/cared for, worthy/unworthy?)

2.6 WHAT made you feel that way?

2.7 WHY do you think people treated you that way?

[Autonomy]

2.8 Did you feel that you had a choice about what happened to you? WHY? or WHY NOT?

2.9. Did you feel what happened to you affect your well-being?

2.10 If you had a choice, would it have made a difference to

what happened?

- (a) Did you want to make a different decision or did you want to do something else?
WHAT was the different decision or did you want to do?
- (b) Did you have enough information to make that decision?
If not, WHY NOT?
What prevented you from having enough information?
- (c) Did you feel pressured to act the way you did? WHO/WHAT was pressuring you?
HOW did it make you feel?

[Inclusion]

2.11 Did people in your community who knew or saw what happened to you care about your situation?

WHAT did they do?

WHY do you think they did that way?

(a) Were you kept apart or left out in this situation?

(b) How did this make you feel?

(c) Did you need a service or some assistance from the government, your family or friends so that you could participate?

If YES, what service(s) or assistance did you need?

Did you receive it?

If you did not receive it, HOW did that affect you?

What else do you think would be important to support you?

[Non-Discrimination & Equality]

2.12 How do you think your disability affected what happened to you?

2.13. How do you think your disability *and* gender affected the ways people treated you?

2.14 Do you think that people without disabilities would be treated the

Same way you were?

WHY or WHY NOT?

HOW would they have been treated?

[Respect for Difference]

- 2.15 Were you treated the way you were because people thought you were different? If yes, WHY?
- 2.16 Do you think that a person without a disability would have been treated in a similar way in this situation? WHY? or WHY NOT?
- 2.17 Do you feel that people label you and then treat you differently because of the label? If YES, what label do they use? HOW does this label affect you?
- (a) Would someone of a different ethnicity be treated that way? WHY? or WHY NOT?
- (b) Would a woman be treated that way? WHY? or WHY NOT?
- (c) Would a poor person be treated that way? WHY? or WHY NOT?
- 2.18 Did you report the situation to anyone?
- ☐ yes ☐ no
- If you told the situation, what kind of person/organization did you report it to?
 - ☐ teacher
 - ☐ school principal
 - ☐ community's leader
 - ☐ government official
 - ☐ police officer
 - ☐ Youth's Union
 - ☐ religious leader
 - ☐ other: _____
(specify)
 - how did that person react?
 - what action was taken?
 - If you did NOT REPORT the situation to anyone: - WHY did you not report it?
- 2.18 In your opinion, what action[s] should be taken to improve [or prevent] the situation in the future?
- 2.19 Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about that situation?

[THE 3rd SITUATION]

3.1 Do you recall *another* particular time or event in the last five years when you were left out or treated badly or prevented from participating into your school's activities because of your disability?

3.2 WHAT happened? WHERE and HOW did it happen? Is this still happening or did it just happen once?

3.3 Are there other details that you want to share with us about what happened, when and how in this situation?

[Dignity]

3.4 HOW did this situation make you feel and WHY? (For example, did you feel respected/not respected, ignored/cared for, worthy/unworthy?)

3.5 WHAT made you feel that way?

3.6 WHY do you think people treated you that way?

[Autonomy]

3.7 Did you feel that you had a choice about what happened to you? WHY? or WHY NOT?

3.8 If you had a choice, would it have made a difference to what happened?

(a) Did you want to make a decision or did you want to do something else? WHAT was the different decision or did you want to do?

(b) Did you have enough information to make that decision? If not, WHY NOT?

What prevented you from having enough information?

(c) Did you feel pressured to act the way you did? WHO/WHAT was pressuring you? HOW did it make you feel?

[Inclusion]

3.9 Did your friends and teachers know or saw what happened to you care about your situation?

WHAT did they do?

WHY do you think they did that way?

(a) Were you kept apart or left out in this situation?

(b) How did this make you feel?

(c) Did you need a service or some assistance from the government, your family or friends so that you could participate?

If YES, what service(s) or assistance did you need?

Did you receive it?

If you did not receive it, HOW did that affect you?

What else do you think would be important to support you?

[Non-Discrimination & Equality]

3.10 How do you think your disability affected what happened to you?

3.11 How do you think your disability *and* gender affected the ways people treated you?

3.12 Do you think that girls without disabilities would be treated the same way you were? WHY or WHY NOT? HOW would they have been treated?

[Respect for Difference]

3.13 Were you treated the way you were because people thought you were different?

If yes, WHY?

3.14 Do you think that a person without a disability would have been treated in a similar way in this situation?

WHY? or WHY NOT?

3.15 Do you feel that people label you and then treat you differently because of the label?

If YES, what label do they use? HOW does this label affect you?

(a) Would someone of a different ethnicity be treated that way? WHY? or WHY NOT?

(b) Would a woman be treated that way? WHY? or WHY NOT?

(c) Would a poor person be treated that way? WHY? or WHY NOT?

3.16 Did you tell the situation to anyone?

☐ yes ☐ no

● If you told the situation, what kind of person/organization did you report it to?

☐ teacher

☐ school principal

☐ community's leader

☐ government official

☐ police officer

☐ Youth's Union

☐ religious leader

☐ other: _____

(specify)

- how did that person react?
- what action was taken?
- If you did NOT REPORT the situation to anyone: -
WHY did you not report it?

3.17 In your opinion, what action[s] should be taken to improve [or prevent] the situation in the future?

3.18 Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about that situation?

B. Background Information:

Now, if you don't mind, we would like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

4.1 What is your sex?

4.2 In what year were you born?

4.3 How would you describe your disability? [choose as many as apply]

- ☐ mobility
- ☐ sensory – if so, ☐ blind ☐ low vision ☐ deaf ☐ hard of hearing
- ☐ intellectual
- ☐ psychiatric
- ☐ other _____

(ask interviewee to specify)

4.4 How long have you had your disability?

- ☐ since birth
- ☐ since _____ (ask interviewee to specify the year)

4.5 Did you go to school?

- ☐ yes ☐ no

If YES, what kind of school? [choose as many as apply]

- ☐ primary ☐ secondary ☐ high school

4.6 Is there a specific place where you live?

- ☐ yes ☐ no

If YES, does your family:

- ☐ own that place?
- ☐ rent that place?
- ☐ other

4.7 How far do you live from the City Centre?

4.8 Who lives with you?

- ☐ no one

- ☐ parent(s) [if yes, how many parents?]
- ☐ other family member(s) [if yes, how many other family members?]
- ☐ friend(s) [if yes, how many friends?]
- ☐ other (specify) [if yes, how many?]

4.9 How far is the closest police station to where you live?

a. How far is your health centre from your house?

4.11 Would you say that the area where you live is accessible for people with disabilities?

- ☐ yes ☐ no

4.12 What makes the area where you live accessible or not accessible?

APPENDIX G: QUERIES ON BARRIERS TO INCLUSION BY PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWS

Name of Query	Question
Social Participation / Educational Participation / Participation in other public spaces	1a. What do girls with disabilities say about their social participation, educational participation, and participation into other public spaces? 1b. What do girls with disabilities say about their educational participation? 1c. What do girls with disabilities say about their other public spaces?
In/Exclusion in the Family	2. What do girls with disabilities say about their experiences in the family?
Barriers to Inclusion by Socio-economic Group	3. What do girls with disabilities in different socio-economic groups (poor vs. working-class) say about the kinds of significant barriers facing their inclusion?
Disability, Gender, and Class	4a. How do disabled girls in lower SES experience discrimination/inequality, compared to disabled boys? 4b. What experiences with violence are revealed through their stories?
Gender Discrimination (boys vs. girls)	5a. What do girls with disabilities say about their experiences with gender discrimination? 5b. How are girls with disabilities treated compared to boys with disabilities?
Dignity	6. What do girls with disabilities say about their feeling when being included and excluded?
Respect for difference	7. What do girls with disabilities say about experiences of being respected and not respected?

<p>Decision Making - Lacks Autonomy / Decision Making – Supported / Socio Economic Status & Decision Making</p>	<p>8a. What do girls with disabilities say about their decision-making? 8b. What do girls with higher SES say about their decision-making, compared to those with lower SES?</p>
<p>Recommendations – Community Recommendations – Government Recommendations – Schools & Teachers</p>	<p>9a. What do girls with disabilities in Tu Liem recommend about changes that need to be made at the government level? 9b. What do girls with disabilities in Tu Liem recommend about changes that need to be made at community level? 9c. What do girls with disabilities in Tu Liem recommend about changes that need to be made at school level?</p>

APPENDIX H

INFORMED CONSENT FOR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Monitoring Educational Rights for Girls with Disabilities (MRGD)

Dear participants,

We are conducting a study on the individual experiences of girls with disabilities in Vietnamese schools. The study is being sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). In this study, we aim to: a) develop a new approach to document the situation of girls with disabilities in education; b) test out methodologies for obtaining in-depth knowledge on the educational rights of girls with disabilities in one geographic area of Vietnam; and c) build capacity for women and girls with disabilities through providing training on monitoring methods.

What will happen in this study and what will you be asked to do?

You are invited to attend a 3-hour workshop and photo exhibition as a part of our knowledge mobilization agenda of the study. This is a part of our research to engage with the global community and foster the public engagement with the visual work of girls with disabilities. During the workshop, you will be invited to view 50 images being displayed in an exhibition space within 30 minutes. You will then be asked to reflect on your viewing, sharing your insights and perspectives, and considering how you can engage with the visual work of girls with disabilities. You will be asked to share your perspective with other workshop participants. We hope that your participation will have a long-term impact for promoting the inclusion of girls and women with disabilities in the global South through your engagement and activism.

Are there possible negative things that might happen if you participate in the study?

We do not anticipate that any negative things will happen to you by participating in this study. However, we understand that you may feel uncomfortable at some points in the research process. Therefore, we will take every effort to make you feel comfortable when participating in this study. You will be free to choose to participate, or not to participate in the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. You have a right to not respond to any question or contribute to any discussion you do not feel comfortable contributing to.

Can you stop participating if you do not want to continue participating?

If, at any time during the study, you want to stop participating, you can do so. If you want to answer some questions, but not others, you can do that, too. It is entirely your

decision. Your withdrawal from the study will not affect you in any way. No one will treat you any differently if you decide that you do not want to participate in the study.

Will your information be kept confidential?

If you choose to withdraw from the study during the focus group, the information that you share in the workshop will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. The written and audio recordings of your discussion will be safely stored in a place that is locked and will be destroyed at the end of the project. We will do everything reasonable to ensure that no identifying information in relation to your participation in the study up to that point will be revealed. However, there will be a possibility that your information up to that point of the discussion may not be entirely removed or deleted.

In addition, given that you will be sharing their experiences and opinions, when reading the report other participants may recognize experiences of counterparts who also participated. Some experiences have certain specificity about them, which means that participants commenting about them may be identifiable by other participants or community members. Because of this, we cannot guarantee anonymity. To minimise the possibility of your responses being linked back to you, we ask you please share information in the workshop with this in mind. We also ask you to keep all information shared by other participants fully confidential.

We look forward to having your consent to participate in this study. Your participation into our study will be of great importance for our study. If you have questions about the study, please don't hesitate to contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Xuan Thuy Nguyen, at xuan.thuy.nguyen@msvu.ca.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Xuan Thuy Nguyen
Principal Investigator for MRGD Project
Center for the Education of Women and Girls
Mount Saint Vincent University
2 Melody Dr., Halifax, NS
Telephone: 902-457-6483, Email: xuan.thuy.nguyen@msvu.ca
Trân trọng!

I will allow my photographs and drawings to be used in the study.

Yes ____ No ____