Counting Women’s Work: Evidence from Vietnam
Measuring the gendered economy

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Overview

• Results from Vietnam’s first time use survey
• Recognizing unpaid care work in terms of time
• Recognizing unpaid care work in monetary terms
• Conclusions
Vietnam Time Use Survey (VTUS)

- Pilot study in 6 cities
- In the field in 2014-2015
- 585 respondents age 10+
- 24-hour time diary
- Activities coded with UN’s International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics (ICATUS)
Time Use Results

• Results simplified into four activity groups
  – Unpaid care work: time spent in direct care activities like childcare or eldercare, and general housework like cooking, cleaning, household maintenance and management.
  – Market work: paid work and unpaid work for family farms and businesses
  – Education: time spent in school and outside of school studying
  – Leisure and self-care
Time Use Results

Note: time for leisure and self-care not shown because of different scales.
Time Use Results

Female minus Male Hours per Week

Age

Market work
Unpaid care work
Education
Leisure & Self-Care

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Less time in education for girls, less time in rest, leisure for women

• At age 15, boys spends 4 hours per week more on education than girls
• Combining work in the market and home, a 25-year-old woman works a total of 7 hours per week more than a man and has 6 hours per week less for leisure and self-care
• The largest difference in leisure and self-care time is at age 41, when women have 10 hours less per week than men
Women do more total work and specialize in unpaid care work

- On average, women spent 39 hours per week on unpaid care work while men used 29 hours per week only.
- Total work hours by sex and unpaid care work vs. market work, age 10+:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Work</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid Care Work</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Women are 51% of the population age 10+)
Comparing unpaid care work in monetary units

- Amounts relative to average market labour income ages 30-49
- Unpaid care work is valued at minimum wage

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Comparing unpaid care work in monetary units

• Valuing unpaid care work
  – If unpaid care work is valued at minimum wage (about 15,000 VND/hour), it is equal to 48% of 2015 GDP
  – At lower replacement wages, it is equal to 17%
  – Market labour was 87% of 2015 GDP

• Age patterns
  – Children consume much more in care time than in market goods and services
  – Elders produce a lot in unpaid care work
Women paid less than men for market labour

- Differences emerge in mid-20s age group
- May change in the future with lower gender education gaps
Conclusions (1)

• Heavy housework and care responsibilities may:
  – Detract from time girls have for education
  – Limit ability of adult women to earn and income and pursue a career
  – Discourage women from marrying and having children

• Not recognizing unpaid care work underestimates women’s contribution to the economy and household well-being
  – Valuing unpaid care work will result in better policies on gender, work, and human capital investment
  – Need for more and better time use surveys in countries around the world
Conclusions (2)

- Policies are needed to reduce the gender wage gap in market work
  - Provide infrastructure and social services to reduce time spent in strenuous household chores
  - Encourage more SME and MSEM for women to improve their incomes and empower women’s voices in their families
  - Develop labour market to shift from insecure and low paid jobs to more stable employment
  - Give women access to credit, occupational skills to help them seek better opportunities in the labour market
Thank you!

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