

## Migrant workers' labour rights

Hue University of Science conducts a research study on implementation of labour rights in industrial zones of Ho Chi Minh City

A report by Jekaterina Rudolph, October 2013

During the last years, research on migrant workers has moved into focus of Vietnamese Scientists. Since the start of the *Doi Moi* Policy in the mid-1980s, growing sums of foreign direct investments (FDIs) have pushed economic growth and structural changes of the Vietnamese economy. Thousands of men and women from rural areas, who seek for a deployment in growing industries, have moved to new labour magnets. Especially Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), the most important target region for FDIs, and numerous industrial zones in the greater HCMC-Area, have created a big demand for labour force.

Despite some positive effects of domestic migration (e.g. formal employment, regular income, domestic remittances to less developed rural areas) there are also many complex and multi-layered problems. In Vietnam, migrant workers are regarded to be one of the most vulnerable social caste, which suffers from several precarious living and working conditions.

In order to gain deeper knowledge about the migrants' labour situation, the Hue University of Sciences (HUS) conducted in September and October of this year a wide research activity. The focus of this current research lies on the implementation of migrant workers' labour rights. The scientists aim to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the actual job situation of male and female migrant workers?
2. How is the actual situation of implementation of migrant workers' labour rights and is there any discrimination between men and women?
3. What is the role of stakeholders in implementing migrant worker' labour rights?

The study elaborates in particular on migrants, coming from Central Vietnam and working in the footwear industry in industrial zones in the Binh Duong and Dong Nai Provinces north of HCMC (see map).

According to statistics of Dong Nai and Binh Duong's Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA), the number of migrant labourers from the Central region, who work in the footwear enterprises, accounts for 70 - 80% (Dong Nai, Binh Duong's DOLISA (Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, 2013). In 2012, there were 800,000 workers working in the industrial zones, - the amount of female workers was



Source:  
<http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-BLPIYsfhlo/TuCCXIVSVI/AAAAAAAAC9A/fhOPrmmmcFs/s1600/Provincias%20del%20sur%20de%20Vietnam.jpg>

about 70%. Labourers from other provinces accounted for almost 90%.

From the 23<sup>rd</sup> September until the 5<sup>th</sup> October, the research team of 6 – 8 people conducted a big field study in these two provinces. During these two weeks, the HUS-Team interviewed more than 600 migrant workers, by using structured questionnaires. Moreover, in order to gain deeper understanding, the HUS-Team organized four group-discussions, separately with men and women.

Furthermore the HUS-Team interviewed 44 people, including representatives of the enterprises (e.g. Sao Viet Enterprise, Shyang Hung Cheng Enterprise and Tae Kwang Vina) as well as representatives from the provincial and city level government. The main topic here was also the implementation and compliance of migrant workers' labour rights.

In order to understand the role of relevant stakeholders, there were interviews with people who represent the provincial Trade Union, DOLISA, the Shoes and Leather Association and representatives of the Youth Union.

Immediately, after finishing the field study, the HUS-Team started to evaluate the gained information. First results are expected to be presented during a workshop by the end of December 2013. Finally, HUS is going to publish a research paper, where all research questions are discussed critically and possible suggestions to improve the workers' situation are presented.



HUS-Researcher is interviewing a migrant worker in the late evening (Photo: Jekaterina Rudolph).