

***VIET NAM EXPERIENCE:***

***USING MOTHER TONGUES TO IMPROVE  
LEARNING OUTCOMES OF ETHNIC  
MINORITY CHILDREN***

***Primary Education Department, Ministry of Education and Training***



# Content:

 ***1. Using languages in education in Việt Nam.***

 ***2. Experiences of mother tongue based bilingual education approach in Việt Nam***



# 1. Using languages in education in Viet Nam

- Việt Nam has more than 90 million population (1 November 2013) with 54 ethnic groups including one majority group Kinh (86%) and 53 ethnic minority groups (14%).
- Each ethnic group has its own language which is used in the community together with the national language (Vietnamese).
- The use of languages is legalized. Constitution 2013: “National language is Vietnamese. *“Ethnic minorities have the right to use their own languages and scripts, maintain and develop their good traditions, practices, custom and culture” (Article 42).*”

## ***1. Using languages in education in Viet Nam (2)***

- Education Law 2005: *“The Government creates conditions for ethnic minorities to learn their oral and writing systems of their languages to promote the cultures and support EM children easy in learning in schools and other education center. The teaching/learning ethnic minority oral and written languages should be in lines with the Governments’ regulations” (Article 7).*
- Decree 82/2010/ND-CP indicates policies for teachers who teach ethnic minority languages and ethnic minority learners who learn ethnic minority languages with writing systems in general education establishments and continuing education centres in the national education system.

## ***2. Difficulties in access to education of ethnic minority children***

According to education statistics, ethnic minority children at preschool education level is 16.4%; at primary level 17.5%; at lower secondary level 15.7% and higher education level 10.9%.

- (i) **Natural conditions:** distance to school, inaccessible transportation, risk of natural disasters and climate change;
- (ii) **Socio-economic conditions:** ethnic minority groups consist of 50% poor households (total 10% poor households in 2013).. Poverty results in inadequate conditions for learning such as food, learning aids, etc.

## ***2. Difficulties in access to education of ethnic minority children (2)***

(iii) **Language barrier:** at home and in the community, ethnic minority children speak their mother tongues (ethnic minority languages) but in school, language of instruction is Vietnamese. Teachers can't speak children's home languages is the most challenging constraint for young learners (preprimary and first grades in primary education).

***Those difficulties have influenced on learning outcomes of ethnic minority children, resulted in not going to school, absence, repetition and drop out over years***

### ***3. Mother tongue-based bilingual education approach in Viet Nam***

The Ministry of Education and Training has implemented various solutions to improve quality education in ethnic minority areas to ensure the equity in education for ethnic minority children. There have been various bilingual education approaches implemented in Viet Nam: alternating between Jrai and Vietnamese and **mother tongue based bilingual education (MTBBE)**.

**MTBBE approach is based on mother language (L1) to learn Vietnamese (L2) and use both L1 and L2 as languages of instruction.**



### 3. MÔ HÌNH GIÁO DỤC GDSN TMD Ở VIỆT NAM (2)

Pre-school education	Primary education				
Pre-school (5 years)	Grade 1 (6 years)	Grade 2 (7 years)	Grade 3 (8 years)	Grade 4 (9 years)	Grade 5 (10 years)
<b>L1</b> (listening, speaking)	<b>L1</b> (listening, speaking, reading, writing)	<b>L1</b> (listening, speaking, reading, writing)	<b>L1</b> (listening, speaking, reading, writing)	<b>L1</b> (listening, speaking, reading, writing)	<b>L1</b> (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
<b>← Language of instruction →</b>					
<b>L1</b>	<b>L1 &amp; L2</b>	<b>L1 &amp; L2</b>	<b>L1 &amp; L2</b>	<b>L1 &amp; L2</b>	<b>L1 &amp; L2</b>
<b>L2</b> (listening, speaking)	<b>L2</b> (listening, speaking)	<b>L2</b> (listening, speaking)	<b>L2</b> (listening, speaking, reading, writing)	<b>L2</b> (listening, speaking, reading, writing)	<b>L2</b> (listening, speaking, reading, writing)

## 4. Results of MTBBE programme

MTBBE implemented with two cohorts: 1st cohort 2008-2014, 2nd cohort 2009-2015 of 487 students of the following ethnic minority groups having scripts :

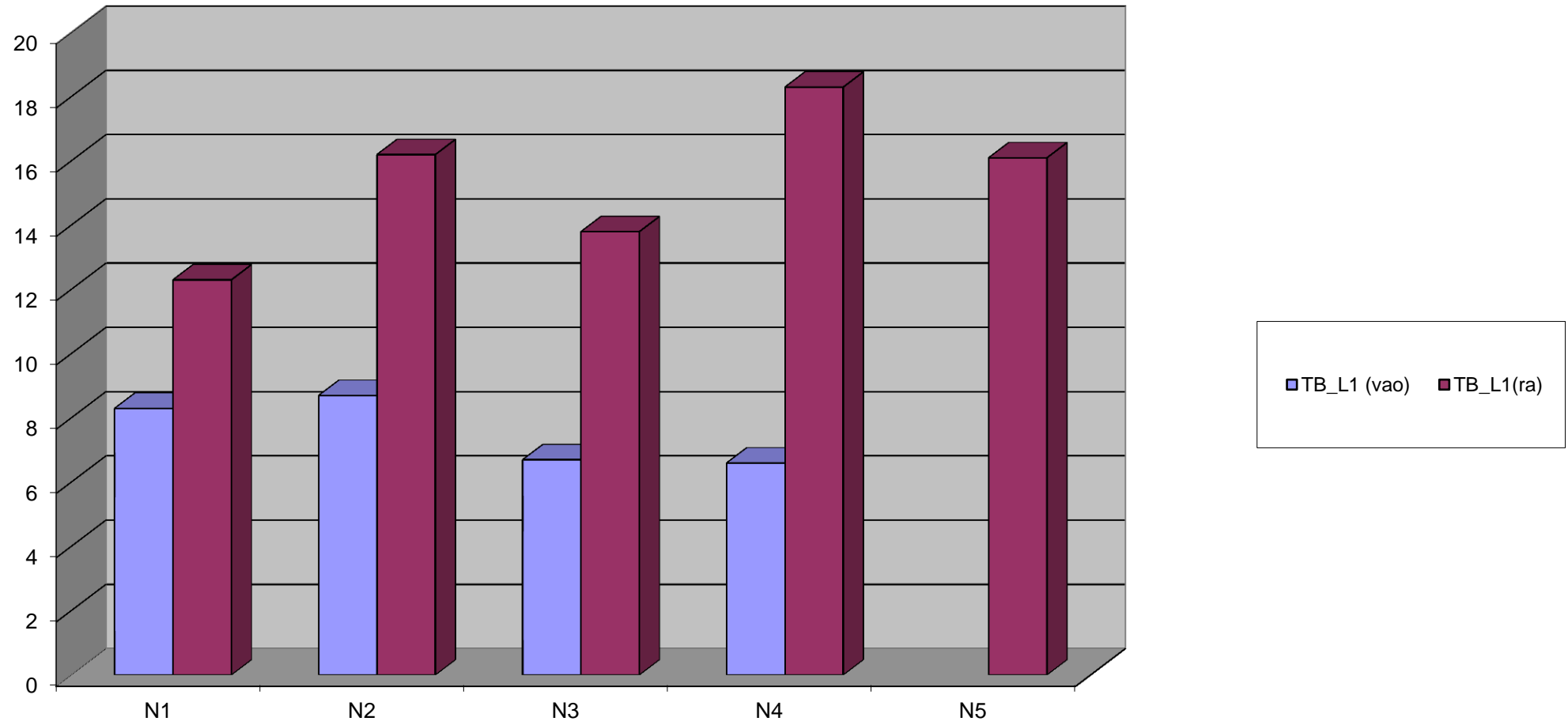
- **Mông** (Lào Cai province, belongs to language group of Mong - Dao or Mong-Mien);
- **Jrai** (Gia Lai province, belongs to language group of Malayo - Polynesian);
- **Khmer** (Trà Vinh province, belongs to language group Mon - Khmer).

After 6 years, first cohort has completed their MTBBE learning programme by end of May 2014

**Quality of education improved: results of MTBBE students outperformed their peers in mainstreaming schools, no student at Weak category**

## 4. Results of MTBBE programme (2)

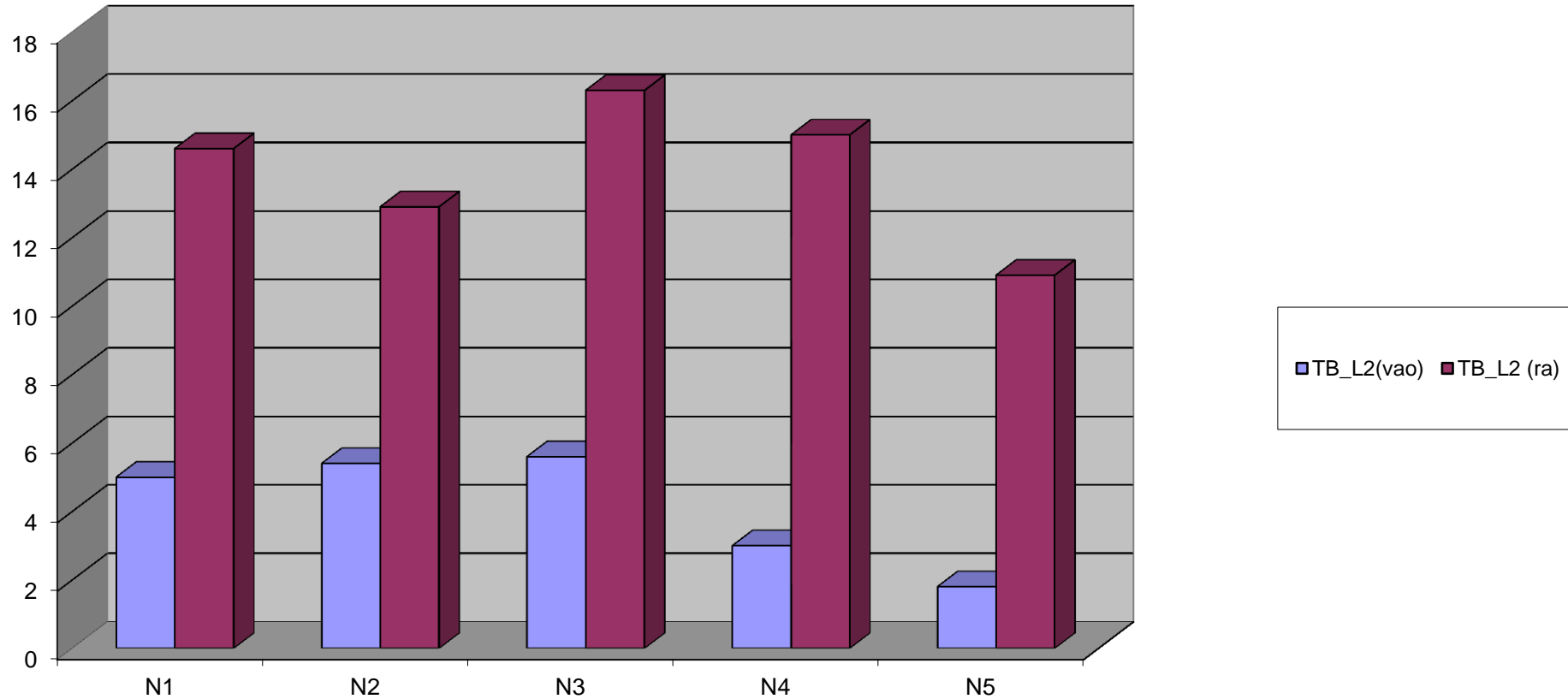
5 year old preprimary children of 1<sup>st</sup> cohort



**Legend: Entrants vs Graduates**

## 4. Results of MTBBE programme (3)

### 5 year preprimary children of 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort



Legend: Entrants vs Graduates



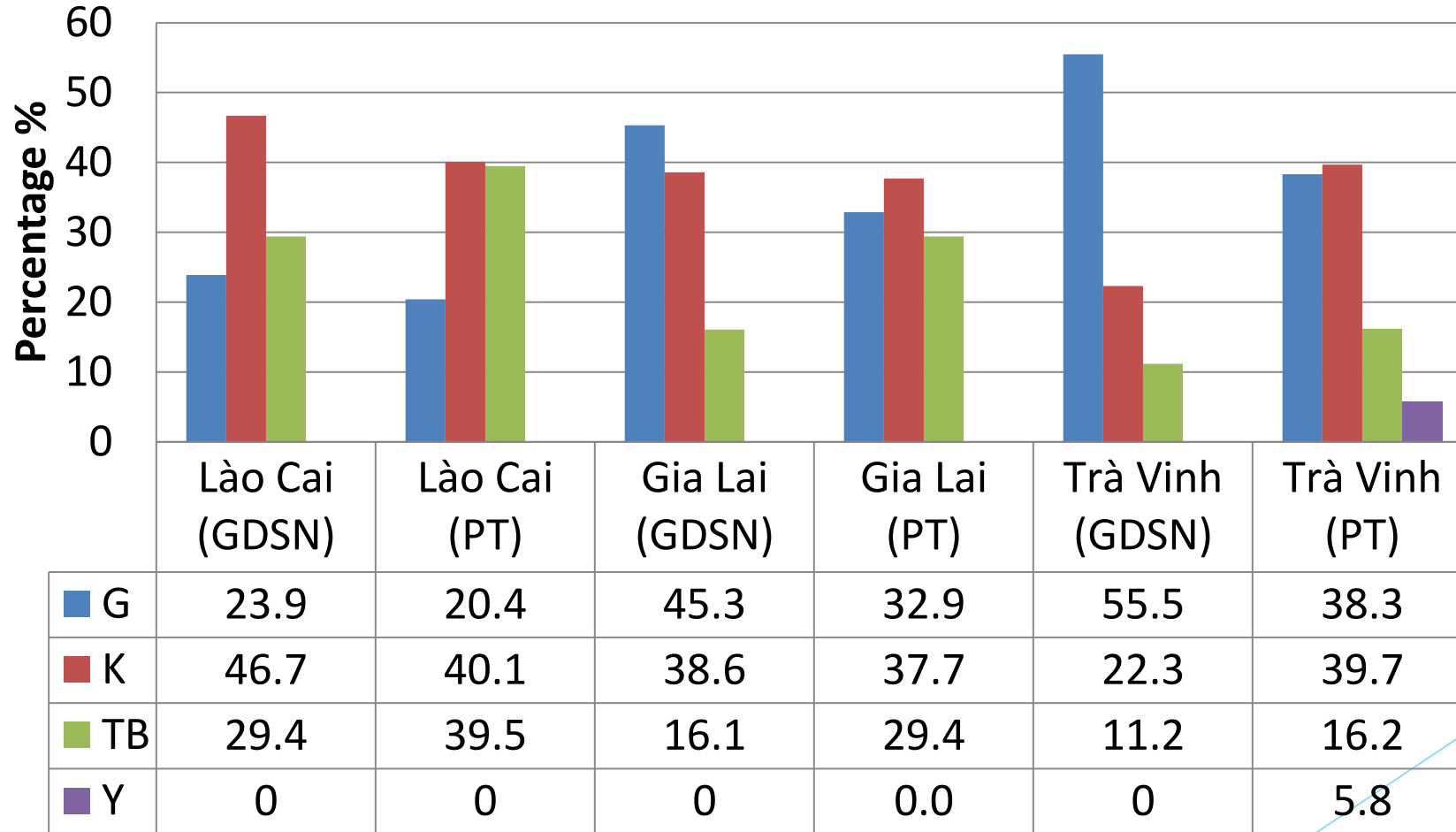


## 4. Results of MTBBE programme (4)

School Year	Excellent (%)	Good (%)	Average (%)	Week (%)
2009-2010 (Grade 1)	23.7	40.1	36.2	0.0
2010-2011 (Grade 2)	27.2	37.9	34.9	0.0
2011-2012 (Grade 3)	21.7	47.6	29.6	1.1
2012-2013 (Grade 4)	33.9	39.1	27.0	0.0
2013-2014 (Grade 5)	30.7	48.2	21.1	0.0

# 4. Results of MTBBE programme (5)

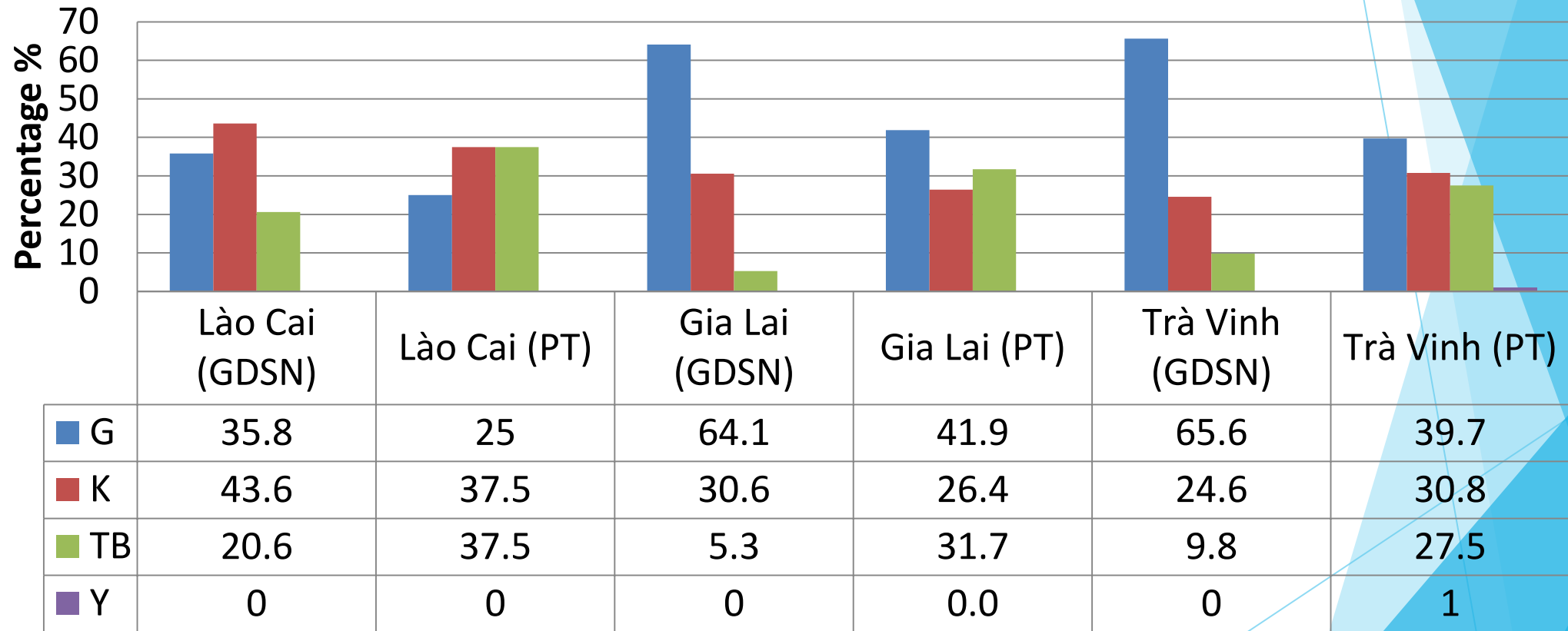
Vietnamese - Grade 4



Excellent Good Average Weak

# 4. Results of MTBBE programme (6)

## Mathematics - Grade 4



Excellent Good Average Weak

## ***5. Lessons learned***

1. Learning and use mother tongue helped ethnic minority students acquire well knowledge and skills in school. They actively participated in the class activities such as contributing to lessons; become more confident in learning and communication. Being active and confident helped them learn better and integrate well in the community.
2. Ethnic minority children easily expressed their opinions in mother tongue helped remove the language barrier between teacher and students. Natural and mutual support between two languages helped improve mother tongue and Vietnamese competencies.
3. Using and interacting in both mother tongue and Vietnamese languages is the best condition to acquire academic knowledge and develop communication skills.

## 5. *Lessons learned (2)*

On 14 August 2012, at the National Forum on Solutions to Improve Quality of Education, Mr Ksor Phước, Minister Chairperson of the Ethnic Council of the National Assembly firmly said: “***MTBBE approach for those ethnic minority groups with scripts has to be considered as a primary solution to improve quality of education***”.





## 5. *Lessons learned (3)*

4. MTBBE contributes to maintain and develop ethnic minority languages and cultural identity. Language and culture relates closely to one another. Cultural aspects are reflected in the language, and in its turn, language is the most effective to sustain cultural values.
5. It is critical to have an enabling political environment, such as having a **legal framework for the use of ethnic minority languages** (Constitution, Education Law).
6. It is important to communicate with communities and the whole society on the role and benefits of MTBBE towards the development of ethnic minority education e.g. **quality of education has been improved**.
7. MTBBE is an appropriate solution to ensure the **equity in education** for ethnic minority children.



## **5. *Lessons learned (4)***

8. Mass media from central to grassroots levels have radio and television programmes in ethnic minority languages also help strengthen knowledge transfer to ethnic minority communities and children.
9. Effective cooperation between education sector with the Party and authorities at all levels, between schools and community people and parents have significantly supported MTBBE implementation
10. MTBBE has developed capable and determined education managers and teachers to successfully implemented the programme.
11. Việt Nam is a diversified nation with various ethnic minority groups, who are living together in the same area require mother tongue based multilingual education. At present, MTBBE approach has been implemented only in monolingual classroom settings.





*Thank you for your attention*