

## Crossing Cultures: Meeting Americans

(Cont.)

Walking  
through  
a seated  
crowd or  
through  
two  
people  
talking.

Upright posture  
Say "Excuse me."

Stooped posture.  
Say "Excuse me" as  
you touch the person  
on the shoulder.

Body  
space

Generally an arm's  
length between  
people. (Respect  
for personal  
space.)

Standing or sitting  
close together.  
(May be viewed as an  
invasion of personal  
space by Americans.)

Dating

Freedom of choice,  
a wide range of  
choices for  
leisure time.

The family chooses.  
If there is no ap-  
proval then secret  
dating occurs.

1. Demonstrate and discuss the following:

Hitchhiking



May be dangerous.

#1, #10



A - OK



Good luck



Insulting gesture in Vietnam.

Insulting gestures--  
middle finger



No meaning in Vietnam.

Come here/Bye

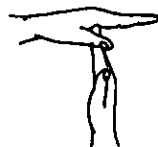


Overhand/Underhand  
gestures used in U.S.  
(opposite of gestures  
used in Vietnam).

Victory/Peace



Time-out



## Crossing Cultures: Meeting Americans

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### Notes:

#### Presentation

The content of this lesson can be presented using a series of role play situations, contrasting known behaviors in Vietnam with new American behaviors. Through experience, students can note some of their own reactions to different customs and develop a greater awareness of cultural differences. Use stick drawings on the whiteboard to highlight the topics covered.

# TRANSIT/DOCUMENTS

## Rationale

Most students have never flown except for the short airplane flight from Ho Chi Minh City to Bangkok. This class is intended to ease their anxiety with information about the transit process, the airplane flight and necessary documents.



**Objectives**      Students will be able to:

- identify the steps involved in the transit process.
- recognize aircraft equipment and flight procedures when on board the airplane.
- identify items not allowed by U.S. customs.
- identify two important reasons for repaying the ICM Promissary Loan.
- identify immigration documents necessary for their entrance into the U.S.

## Transit/Documents

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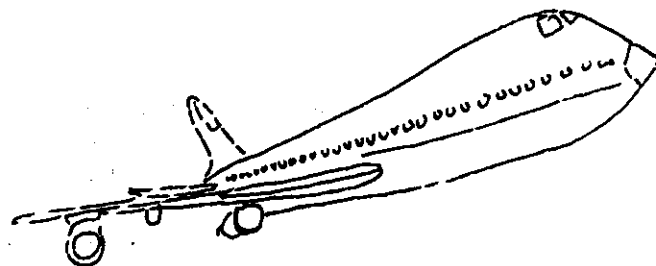
Estimated Class Time: 1 1/2 hours total

"Transit" video: 30 minutes  
Discussion: 30-60 minutes

### Materials:

- "Transit" video
- world globe
- demonstration kit: seat belt  
life vest  
oxygen mask  
air sickness bag  
food tray  
earphones  
ICM bag
- weather map

### Planning



## Suan Flu Preparations for Travel

Presentation: Discussion

Content:

1. ICM posts departure lists.
2. The ICM pre-embarkation medical examination is 24 hours before flight time.
3. Promissory Note--signed with ICM, usually by the time class meets.\*

The promissory note signifies an agreement between the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) and the refugee or immigrant that he or she will repay the cost of his or her family's flight to the U.S. The traveller is obligated to pay back the loan by sending monthly payments of specified amounts to his or her national volag office. Failure to pay will hurt a person's credit rating and eligibility for certain government jobs. It may also hurt other refugees' chances of going to the U.S. if many people do not repay their loans. If a person cannot afford to pay the amount due each month, that person should contact the volag by letter or telephone and agree to pay whatever he or she can afford.

You may delete costs as students have already signed with ICM.

### AGE

### COST OF FLIGHT

infant	\$ 48
2-12 years old	\$240
13-adult	\$480

(\$150 service fee for immigrants)

Repayment schedules are specified on the promissory note. Payments usually begin by the sixth month the migrant has been in the U.S.

\* Can omit for PRPC-bound students; they sign in Philippines.

## Transit/Documents

### 4. Baggage:

- a. Each adult is allowed 2 pieces of luggage, 20 kilos total weight, and 1 carry-on piece that must fit under the airplane seat or in the overhead bin. (The sum of length, width and height must not exceed 115 cm.) Travelers are subject to excess baggage fees in Bangkok at ICM's and the airline's discretion.
- b. Infants under 2 years old are allowed one piece of baggage and no carry-on.
- c. U.S. customs and/or the airlines do not allow:
  - fresh or prepared food
  - items intended for sale
  - guns, weapons (knives & scissors should be packed in checked luggage)
  - illegal drugs (dogs check at some customs points)
  - flammable items
  - over \$5,000 must be declared
  - plants, seeds
  - live animals

### Teacher Note:

If passengers are PRPC-bound, tickets are gathered for the escort's bag.

If passengers are U.S.-bound, the escort carries all tickets.

If there is no escort on a direct flight to the U.S., the head of each family holds the tickets.

### 5. ICM Bag:

An ICM bag is prepared for each U.S. bound family.\*

The bag contains:

- a. medical documents and X-rays
- b. immigration documents prepared by ODP and ICM

### 6. Documents:

#### a. I-94 for refugees

- This is a single-entry document that allows refugees to legally enter the U.S. once.
- In the U.S., refugees should always carry a copy of the I-94 with them; leave the original in a safe place.
- It authorizes employment.

\* Can omit for PRPC bound students. (ICM handles transfer of documents.)

Refugees have the same rights and obligations before the law as other Americans except for the following. They: 1) cannot vote; 2) are not eligible for a passport; 3) cannot carry a gun--in some states; 4) cannot enlist in U.S. military services. However, males 18 - 26 are required by law to register for selective service (the draft).

- Refugees are advised not to leave the country on an I-94 card. If travel outside the U.S. is necessary a travel document and re-entry permit must be obtained from INS.

- Refugees must notify INS of a change of address when moving. (Form AR-11.)

b. I-551 (Green card) for Immigrants

- Immigrants are issued an I-551 card after arrival in U.S. Prior to receipt, the Vietnamese exit permit stamped by INS is evidence of legal admission.

- This signifies Permanent Resident Alien (PRA) status.

- It is issued to adults and children alike.

- PRA's can travel freely on this "quasi-passport" travel document but must return within one year or forfeit their status.

- PRA's must notify INS of any change of address. (Form AR-11.)

- PRA's can enlist in the armed forces if they are 17-32 years old (citizenship can be accelerated if a member of the military).

- PRA's are like I-94 holders: they cannot vote and are required to register for the draft.

- Refugees may apply to become PRA's after a one year residence.

c. U.S. passport for American citizens.

- Some Amerasian children whose paternity is documented by a U.S. citizen father may be issued a U.S. passport in Bangkok. They are U.S. citizens.

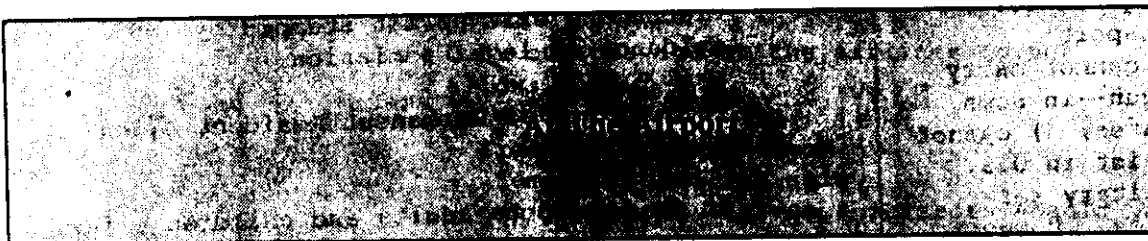
- Citizenship is not mandatory for anyone; it must be applied for.

- Immigrants are eligible to apply for citizenship 5 years after obtaining PRA status.



## Transit/Documents

- Citizenship requires a short test in history, government and English; the applicant must be of "good moral character."
- Citizens enjoy all rights: voting, passport, etc.
- Children under 14 years automatically become citizens if their parents are naturalized.



Presentation: (Open)

Content:

ICM provides bus transportation to the airport. At the airport, ICM personnel are responsible for seeing that ODP passengers are ticketed, have baggage checked, and are at the proper gate. In the event of delayed take-offs ICM provides food and/or lodging, if necessary. Luggage will be marked with an ICM sticker similar to the one which passengers wear. ICM provides each passenger with a picture vocabulary list for use on the airplane ("Language Assistance Card").

## On The Plane

Presentation: Show the "Transit" video. Discuss and demonstrate airplane equipment, as necessary.

### Content:

1. Air-conditioning may be quite cool. Wear or bring a sweater or long-sleeved shirt.
2. Changing cabin pressure, especially on take-offs and landings, can result in ears "popping." Swallow to equalize and alleviate feelings of pressure. Give small children candy or something to drink so that they will swallow. This is a good time to nurse an infant.
3. Flying time to the U.S.: 18-36 hours depending on transit stops and the route taken.
4. Flying time to the Philippines: 2 1/2 hours.
5. When necessary, ICM will provide a medical escort for U.S. bound flights.
6. Usually ICM flight passengers are seated together.
7. Food and drinks are free. Be sure to drink fluids to prevent dehydration. Air-conditioning can be drying to your skin, nose and mouth, occasionally causing nose bleeds. This is another reason to drink fluids.
8. Babies are required to wear diapers which can be obtained from the flight attendant.
9. Medicine for air-sickness, "Dramamine," can be obtained in advance from the Suan Plu nurse or from the flight attendant on board the airplane.
10. On U.S. carriers, a fee is charged for earphones and alcoholic beverages. Usually flight attendants won't offer these items to ICM passengers.
11. Show the routes taken, using the globe.

### Arrival at the Port of Entry\*

Presentation: (open)

Content:

1. All immigrants and refugees will enter through one of five ports of entry (New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, or Honolulu) where they will always be met by ICM staff.
2. Each arriving passenger will be cleared by the following officials using the documents in the ICM bag:
  - a) Public Health
  - b) Immigration
  - c) Customs
3. When clear:

They may go with the sponsor, if being met at airport, OR...

ICM will direct them to a connecting flight to their final destination, OR...

ICM will provide lodging if the connecting flight is delayed.
4. This is a good time to show the weather map and talk about climate at destinations.

\* Omit for PRPC-bound passengers.

## Jet Lag\*

Presentation: (open)

Content:

The time difference between Thailand and the United States (East Coast) is 12 hours. Although your mind knows you are in the U.S., your body will be confused for a couple of weeks and will think it is still in Thailand. You may feel tired and sleepy during the day and, when others are sleeping at night, you may feel wide awake. Be patient with yourself and try to get on a "Western" schedule. Usually this process takes about 2 weeks.

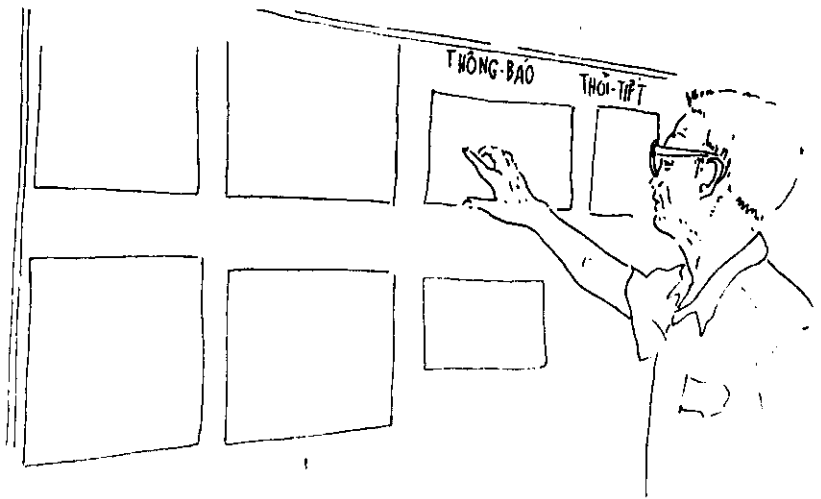
\* Omit for PRPC-bound passengers.

### 3

## RESETTLEMENT

### Rationale

Many ODP refugees and immigrants have misconceptions about what life in the U.S. is like and what responsibilities their relatives have assumed in sponsoring them. They have heard rumors in Vietnam regarding "entitlements" which are often untrue. The purpose of this lesson is to outline needs of refugees and immigrants, give them an idea of what it costs to live in the U.S., help them consider who is responsible for assisting them and correct misinformation.



### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify their needs as new arrivals.
- state some realistic costs of living in the U.S.
- discuss the responsibilities and describe realistic expectations of their sponsor/relative, themselves, and public agencies in the resettlement process.
- describe differences in public assistance available to immigrants and refugees.
- anticipate possible problems associated with family reunification/sponsorship and identify strategies for solving these problems.

## Resettlement

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Estimated Class Time: 60-90 minutes

Basic Content: 60 minutes

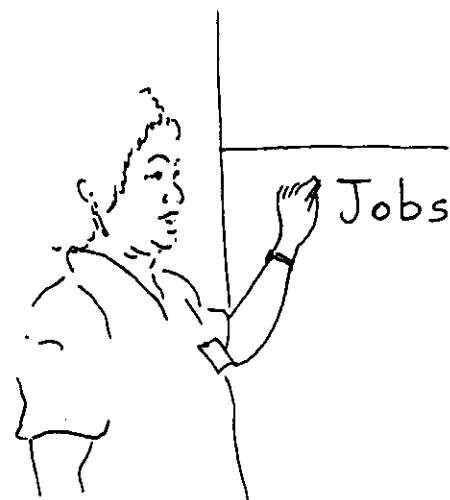
Consumer Research

Activity: 30 minutes

### Materials:

- poster: VOLAG Diagram
- catalogs, e.g., Sears, Penney's
- white paper
- markers
- masking tape

### Planning



### Needs of New Arrivals

Have the group develop a list of initial needs. The list will probably contain some or all of the following:

For presentation alternatives, see Notes.

house	clothes	car/transportation
food	travel	register for school
job	telephone	orientation to community
money	furniture	medical care
education		being met at the airport

### Managing

1. Brainstorm with the group how they will manage. Who will help? Where will the money come from?
2. Discuss/Elicit the following:  
job/self      government assistance      relatives

## Resettlement

### Community and Government Agencies

(See Notes for Definitions.)

(See Notes for Diagram to accompany content.)

Presentation: Explain and discuss the voluntary agency (VOLAG) system.

Content: Present the following information about refugees and immigrants.

#### Communication Regarding Migrants

Sponsors/relatives of all migrants are notified by ODP through a VOLAG of their relative's manifest plans as well as their destination (e.g. U.S. or Philippines).

Flight arrival time in the U.S. is also telexed in this way by ICM so relatives know when to meet the plane.

#### Immigrants

The petitioning sponsor files an "Affidavit of Support" documenting that he/she can financially support his/her relative on arrival. No federal funds are available. Particulars:

- the VOLAG is available for job-search information, advice and emergency situations.
- Mutual Assistance Associations (MAA) and church organizations may have programs to assist immigrants and refugees.



Refugees

VOLAGS have a contract with the federal government to assist refugees with initial resettlement and to ensure that FOOD, CLOTHING AND HOUSING are available for a minimum of 30 days. They do this by finding a sponsor to provide these necessities. The VOLAG helps in different ways--not always with money or commodities. The ODP refugee's anchor relative is usually the refugee's sponsor.

Refugees who are unable to work are eligible to apply for Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), a monthly cash payment, the size of which varies according to the state of residence and the size of the family. RCA is designed to assist with basic necessities for a temporary period of time. At present, this time period is 18 months. Refugees are eligible to apply for assistance with FOOD (food stamps), HOUSING (low-cost housing, if available), and MEDICAL CARE. If eligible to receive RCA, individuals are assigned a caseworker who monitors and encourages the refugee's progress toward employment as well as monitoring the recipient's adherence to eligibility requirements.

Things ODP Migrants Should Know

- Self-sufficiency and independence are important American values. People on welfare are considered to have a lower status in the community.
- Since Refugee Cash Assistance is, in the final analysis, paid for by job holders through taxes, these working people are upset by abuse or misuse of the welfare system. Since some refugees are receiving welfare payments when they appear able to work, some Americans have bad feelings toward refugees. (This is a mistaken generalization.) Many Americans do not distinguish between refugees and immigrants.
- Refugee Cash Assistance is based on need and eligibility. It is not an automatic entitlement.

Role play a scene with a person who works all day and encounters a healthy neighbor receiving welfare.

## Resettlement

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- Sponsors do the best they can; often it is a struggle for them to provide for their own family and newcomers. They may be under financial and work pressures; they may not have as much money as you think. Relatives may have changed. New arrivals can help by being as independent as possible and by being as sensitive to relatives' needs as they are to yours. Be an adventurer and navigate your own resettlement as much as possible in language, transportation and employment.

### Notes

Presentation Ideas: Needs of New Arrivals. Suggested presentation options depending on time available, the size and ages of the group and their interests.

- Limited time or elderly students: Brainstorm with the large group, develop a list of needs and write on the board. Discuss who meets these needs. Add approximate costs beside each item. The costs may be totaled for an estimate of monthly expenses for a new arrival.

- Adequate time/younger students: Develop a list of needs and then have students do some consumer research. Sample activity:

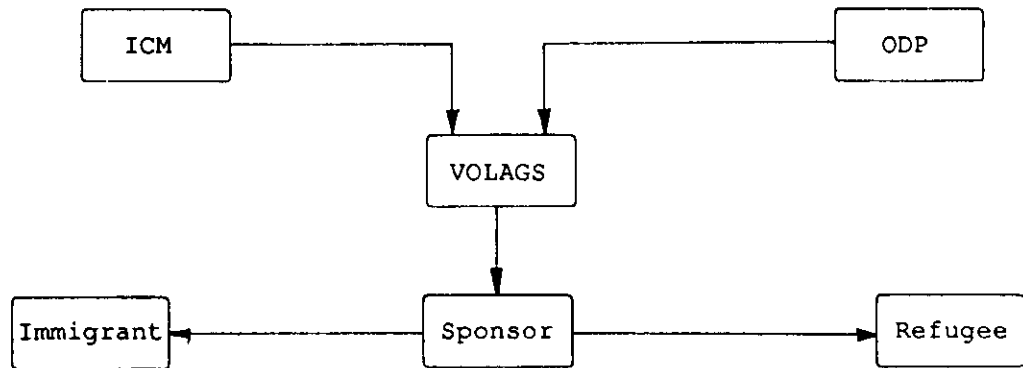
1. Divide class into groups of 6-10 people. Give each group a piece of white paper, a marker and a catalog (e.g. Penney's, Sears). Show how to use the catalog, making a list of items and prices. Then, give each group an assignment to compile a list of what they would buy:
  - \* winter clothing for a family of 4
  - \* summer clothing for a family of 4
  - \* furniture for the living room
  - \* items for the kitchen
  - \* items for the bedroom
  - \* items for the first box mailed to Vietnam
  - \* items you want but don't need
2. Have the groups total their lists and tape the whole paper to the wall. Have each group leader discuss the list briefly and ask for comments from the larger group.
3. Add items such as rent, utilities, transportation, etc. Discuss totals for initial monthly expenses.

Variation: Do this activity in small groups without the catalogs.

## Resettlement

### Notes

#### Migrant/Helping Organization Interactions



#### U.S. Voluntary Agencies (1986)

American Council for Nationalities Service - ACNS  
American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees - AFCR  
Buddhist Council for Refugee Rescue and Resettlement - BC  
Church World Service - CWS  
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society - HIAS  
Iowa Refugee Service Center  
International Rescue Committee - IRC  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugees Services - LIRS  
United States Catholic Conference - USCC  
Presiding Bishop's Fund World Relief - PBF  
Tolstoy Foundation - TF  
World Relief Refugee Service - WRRS  
Polish American Immigration and Relief - PAIR

## Notes

### Definitions:

#### Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGS)

Private, non-governmental, non-profit groups, many with religious affiliations, which have been involved in refugee resettlement for many years. They operate under a contract with the Department of State, Bureau for Refugee Programs. Each agency or VOLAG has developed its own approach to helping refugees. There is diversity in the way the agencies operate.

The "Statement of Understanding" which ODP refugees sign in Bangkok was developed by all VOLAGS so that refugees would understand VOLAG expectations. This does not apply to immigrants. (See Statement of Understanding included in the Appendix.)

#### Mutual Assistance Associations (MAA)

Ethnic groups created to help newcomers feel more at home in their community. May provide services such as translations, counseling, ESL classes. May also provide an organized community voice/support and lead organizing in ethnic holiday activities.

### Rumors:

Often Amerasian families have heard that there are special government funds to support Amerasian children. The rumors are varied but none are true. There are no special funds for Amerasian children accompanied by their families. There may be support groups and special programs sponsored by the VOLAGS for Amerasians and their families. These families are eligible for the same services as other refugees or immigrants.

Unaccompanied Amerasian minors 17 years old and younger are included in special foster care programs through USCC and LIRS.

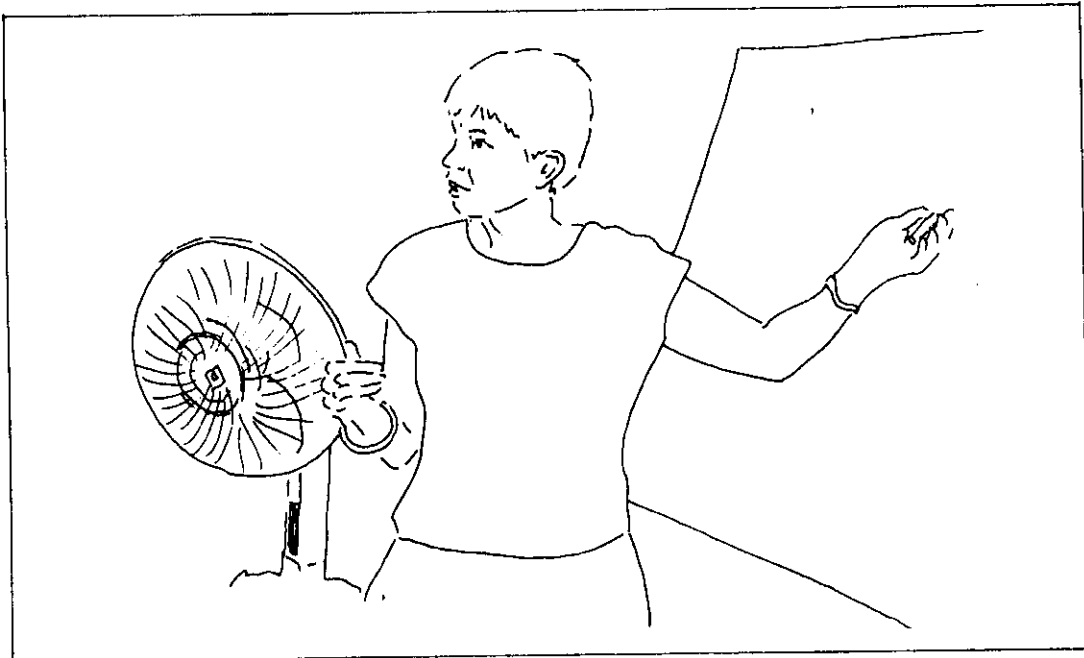
Another frequent expectation of those migrants who worked for the U.S. government or related agencies is that the U.S. government will provide a job for them. This is not true. They (the migrants) are free to contact former employing agencies if this is possible, but it will be an individual effort. Job references and experience with U.S. employers should be included on their job resumes.

# 4

## JOBS

### Rationale

Many ODP immigrants and refugees are highly motivated to work. Others are intent on continuing their education first, or have unrealistic expectations regarding their employability, the welfare system or their relatives' financial status. This class follows the "Resettlement" class and addresses a new arrival's need for money in terms of self-sufficiency and employment.



**Objectives**      Students will be able to:

- identify some of their marketable job skills.
- suggest problems they may face as they enter the job market.
- name some common entry-level jobs in the U.S.
- outline some positive and negative aspects of jobs they can name.

## Jobs

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Estimated Class Time: 90 minutes

Materials:

- slides
- projector

### Planning



### Introductory Discussion

1. Suggest/Elicit reasons for discussing jobs this early in the process of transit to the U.S.:

Suggested points:

- the cost of living which the group researched in the previous resettlement class;
- it will be difficult for the sponsor to financially support the refugee/immigrant family;
- the faster you get into the job market the easier your assimilation will be...independence from sponsor, meeting Americans and learning customs, speaking English and learning how to get around the city, earning the respect of neighbors and other Americans who highly value self-sufficiency.

2. Ask: "What kind of job are you looking for?"

- a. List and talk about jobs the group members had in Vietnam. (See "Jobs in the U.S." on the Notes page.)
- b. Ask: "What are the SKILLS involved in these jobs? What other skills do you have?"
- c. Define SKILLS: abilities and personal talents; abilities we have learned and developed with practice; skills are learned not only on the job, but also at school, home, through hobbies and life's experiences.
- d. Talk about transferring those skills to the job market in the U.S.



3. Ask: "What are other problems for newcomers trying to enter the job market?" Discuss the following:

- a. English ability. Students may need to look for a job that doesn't require much language.
- b. Age. Although the job market favors youth over age, many senior citizens work. Mention Senior Employment Resources in Virginia (SER) and suggest contacting a VOLAG or talking with relatives and friends about possibilities in specific communities.

You might list job possibilities for the elderly, such as book repair, bookkeeper, language teacher, accountant, custodian, house cleaner, babysitter, parking lot attendant, etc.

- c. Transportation. Students may need to plan carefully for long distances or they may want to live near their worksite.
- d. Prejudice. Under the law, each person is considered for a job on the basis of his/her qualifications and cannot be discriminated against because of race, religion or sex.

There may be incidences of harrassment in some areas of the country, most often in areas where jobs are few and competition for them is intense. In general, Vietnamese are considered hard-working, polite and good employees. As such, they may be considered a threat to other minority groups.

Migrants in the group may also have prejudices toward some ethnic groups or against some types of manual jobs, jobs that would be considered "beneath" them in Vietnam.

- e. Unemployment. Many Americans are unemployed and looking for work. In the search for jobs, refugees may be competing with Americans for available jobs.
- f. No work experience. American employers value prior U.S. work experience and references. This is termed a work history.

4. What's the answer?

a. Entry-level jobs. Entry-level jobs are those that require minimal English ability and relatively little skill. The pay is often minimum wage and there are few benefits. The work is sometimes repetitive and boring; the work hours may be in the evening or night.

b. Why look for an entry-level job? To:

- gain work experience in the U.S.
- earn money
- practice English and/or learn skills to move to a better job after proving and improving oneself.



Presentation: Show the slides, ask questions and discuss.

1. Ask questions during the slide show. Sample questions:

- Did you have this kind of job in Vietnam?
- Has anyone ever worked at this job?
- Do you have to be able to speak English to do this job?
- Do you think you could work in this type of job?

2. When the slide show is finished quickly list other types of jobs which some people can do out of their own homes.

- childcare
- piecework from a factory delivered to your home.
- hairdresser
- plumber, electrician, carpenter
- sewing or knitting for customers
- part-time work, day or night, weekends
- volunteer work gives experience, references, availability if a paying job becomes available.

(See the "Jobs" slide show script.)

### Finding a Job

1. Ask: "Where do you look for a job?" Elicit/  
Suggest the following:
  - through sponsors, friends, relatives
  - newspaper "want ads"
  - placing your skill in newspaper job wanted ads
  - state and private employment agencies
  - bulletin boards, notices and HELP WANTED signs
  - directly contacting the establishment to en-  
quire about openings.
3. Students will need to apply to get a job on  
their own. They probably will have to go to the  
interview alone. Before the interview they can  
ask if they can bring an interpreter. However,  
prospective employers will want to know just how  
much English a person can speak.

### Applying for a Job

1. Application Form
  - a. There are many different kinds. Take a few  
extra and have a friend or relative help you  
fill it out, or take a sample application  
with you as a guide in filling out forms with  
the required information.

2. The Interview

- b. What will be asked? How would you answer?  
(In Vietnam? In America?)

Questions:Answers:

In the U.S., it is illegal for an interviewer to ask:

- How old are you?
- Do you plan to have a family?
- What is your height/weight?
- Are you single/married/divorced?

(See Notes for questions the applicant might want to ask.)

1. "Why do you want this job?"

"I'm interested in your business."

"I enjoy working in this type of environment."

2. "What was your last job?" (See Notes page.)

"I was a \_\_\_\_\_."  
(salesperson, clerk, tailor, hairdresser)

3. "What are some of the skills that would be applicable to this job?"

"I enjoy dealing with customers."  
"I have good math skills." "I'm patient."

4. "Do you think you could do this job?"  
or  
"Why should I choose you for this position?"

"Oh yes. I will try very hard and my skills will help me a lot."

5. "Could I see your resume (I-94, green card, social security card)?"

"Of course, I have it right here."

3. An Interview Role Play.

- a. The interpreter and teacher may demonstrate or ask for a volunteer from the group to be the interviewed, with the teacher as the interviewer.
- b. Explain to the volunteer that you own a shop and that he/she called about an open position advertised in the newspaper. An interview was set up for 9 a.m. The student can speak Vietnamese, if necessary, and the interpreter will translate during the interview. On the whiteboard show that it is 8:45 a.m. when the student arrives for the interview.

## Jobs

### c. Do the role play.

- Ask questions discussed.
- Ask for a resume.
- Make small talk: "Oh, you are from Vietnam? Isn't that near Australia?"

### d. Review. When the role play has finished, Note points to remember:

- Be on time, or, better yet, 5-10 minutes early.
- Dress appropriately for the job interview.
- Bring your social security card and I-94 or I-551.
- Project a calm, confident attitude (direct eye contact, firm handshake).
- Ask the interviewer questions about the job; show an interest in the job.
- Present your skills, explain why you would be good for the job.
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time.
- Ask for clarification when you do not understand.

### 4. Summary.

"Don't get discouraged."

Finding a job takes a lot of time and effort. If you don't get the first job you apply for, keep trying.

## Notes

### Jobs in the U.S.

The question--"What was your last job?"--will be difficult for the group to answer because many were unemployed or sold goods on the black market and they are embarrassed/ashamed about this. The following may elicit a response:

- I know it was difficult for many of you to get 'good' jobs in Vietnam, especially after you applied to come to the U.S.
- I bet many of you worked by selling things, is this true?
- Did you sell things like bicycle parts, medicine, clothing?
- Employers in America will want to know about your past experience and by saying you haven't worked in years or that you sold things on the black market will NOT help you get a job.

### Selling Oneself

In Vietnam it is polite to be modest, self-effacing and to avoid eye-contact and any confrontation with the boss. Therefore to "sell oneself" may seem unnatural. Talk about:

- convincing the employer that you are willing to work, can learn the job, and have the skills for the job.
- employers respect direct, factual, confident information. You can sound confident without appearing boastful.
- employers are looking for people with the following attitudes:
  - \* cooperativeness
  - \* enthusiasm/taking the initiative
  - \* responsibility/dependability
  - \* conscientiousness/attention to detail

When departing after the interview show you are interested in the job by saying you hope to hear from them soon. Call a few days after the interview to see if a decision has been made.

### Questions an Applicant Might Want To Ask

- What are the specific job duties?
- Is there any training offered?
- What shift would I work?
- What is the starting salary?
- Will I be able to work overtime?
- Is there a cafeteria or do I bring my lunch?
- What employee benefits am I eligible for?

# EDUCATION IN AMERICA

## Rationale

Most refugees arriving in the U.S. will continue their education in some form or another: children will attend primary or secondary school, adults might study ESL or take vocational training, and in a few cases, might attend college. The American school system can be confusing to the new arrival in terms of its structure, student requirements, educational approaches and social environment. In addition, refugees may have very unrealistic expectations regarding higher education--its cost, entrance requirements, availability of scholarships, immediacy and value in getting a good job.

Refugees will be better prepared to set goals for their education if they are well-informed.



## Objectives      Students will be able to:

- identify common educational systems in the U.S.: public schools for children, adult education, vocational training, community college and universities.
- describe realistic expectations and goals about continuing their education in the U.S.
- recognize differences between American and Vietnamese schools.

## Education In America

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Estimated Class Time: 30-60 minutes

Materials:

- Slides
- Projector

### Planning





## Elementary And High School

Presentation: may be covered in a slide show with a follow up discussion.

Content:

Public Schools: All children are guaranteed 12 years (grades 1-12) of free public education. Taxpayers (people who own property and pay local taxes) pay the cost of this education. Education is compulsory for children ages 6-16. Parents also have the option of enrolling their children in private schools, but these schools charge tuition and are often quite expensive.

1. School Structure. School systems may vary in their structure depending on the city or state. Schools are usually organized in the following way:
  - a. Pre-school. Many cities have a one year program for children ages 5-6 (called Kindergarten) as part of their public school, and therefore these children are expected to attend. Some cities do not have this public service and parents may have to pay a fee if they want to enroll their children in a pre-school program. Pre-school programs usually do not take children under 2 years old. They offer services ranging from daycare to educational programs to prepare children for elementary school.
  - b. Elementary School. This school is for children 6-13 years old. It may be organized in a variety of ways:
    - \* grade school (grades 1-8)  
or
    - \* grade school (grades 1-6) and junior high (grade 7-9)  
or
    - \* grade school (grades 1-5) and middle school (grades 6-8).

## Education In America

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c. Secondary School. This school is for children 14-18 years old. Usually it is a 3 or 4 year program depending on the length of the elementary school program.

### 2. Aspects of Public Schools:

a. The school year is September-June. Classes are held 8 or 9 a.m. until 2:30-4:00 p.m.

b. Dress--Uniforms are not worn, but most schools have a dress code.

c. Lunch--Children bring their lunch from home or purchase food in the school cafeteria. Some "free lunch" programs are available for low-income families.

d. Subjects--Elementary schools mainly have required subjects, whereas high schools have less required subjects and offer more "electives". High schools usually offer some vocational classes such as typing, auto mechanics, carpentry, and home economics.

e. Free Services--These include books (which must be returned at the end of the school year) and bus transportation for children who live more than a mile from their school.

### 3. Enrolling A Child: Parents are responsible for enrolling their children in school. The school will need the following information:

a. personal data about the child (name, address, birthdate, etc.).

b. the immigration card (I-94) for refugees and a green card (I-551) for immigrants.

c. an immunization record (most schools require certain immunizations).

### 4. Newcomer Concerns: Most schools require that all children be placed in a regular classroom or be "mainstreamed."

4. Newcomer Concerns (cont.):

- a. Schools in cities with large refugee populations usually have ESL classes available and, in some cases, a bilingual teaching assistant. Immigrant and refugee children will usually attend "regular classes" for at least part of the day.
- b. Children are usually placed in a grade level according to their age, not their English ability. Some schools may give an English test for placement purposes, not as an entrance test.
- c. School may be the first place adults or their children experience a social situation in which everyone else seems to know each other, and they truly feel "new", different and left-out. Discuss ways to make friends and to be a friend. Pose problems with the group. Ask what they would do, or advise their children to do, if someone was overly friendly or they were teased and called names such as "slant eyes."

5. Differences Between Asian and American Schools:

- a. U.S. learning approaches are generally participatory and encourage students to "learn by doing." The traditional lecture method is less common in American classrooms. Some schools also organize field trips with educational objectives.
- b. Evaluation--Grading systems vary from school to school, but students are generally evaluated on attendance, completion of assignments, tests, and classroom participation. Most schools do not have standardized exams to determine if a student moves from one grade to another or from elementary to secondary school.
- c. Subjects--Most high schools require one hour of physical education. Some offer sex education classes.

## Education In America

- d. Punishment--Physical punishment is not used in the classroom. If a student is having problems with attendance, tardiness, or behavior, discipline might be additional homework, staying after school, or a parent-teacher conference. Expulsion from school is a last resort.
- e. Parent Involvement--One American educational principle is that education is best provided when parents get involved. Many schools have a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and encourage regular conferences between parents and teachers to discuss student's progress.

### Adult Education

Presentation: (open)

Content:

1. Considerations. Adult education (beyond high school) is not provided free by the government, therefore it is not always possible to attend college or other programs due to:
  - a. expense
  - b. lack of available scholarships
  - c. entrance requirements, such as English ability
2. The adult educational program most necessary for many newcomers when they first arrive in the U.S. is ESL. Many of these programs are free or low-cost and are offered at different times (mornings, evenings) so that you can work and study at the same time. These courses may be offered through community colleges, MAA's, volags, churches, and special refugee programs.
3. Setting Goals. Although continuing education (especially vocational training and college) may not be possible when you first arrive, it may be possible in the future. Adult education in America is characterized by the ability of a student:

- a. to go part-time and also work.
- b. to work first and go to school later.
- c. to start attending one program and then transfer.

#### 4. Types of Adult Education:

- a. Vocational Schools: Also called Technical Schools, they offer specialized training in different areas such as computer programing, business skills, mechanics, etc. The programs may vary in length of study and cost.
- b. Community Colleges: Sometimes called Junior Colleges, they offer a 2 year program. They focus much more on vocational skills rather than on academic subjects. They also offer preparatory classes for students to enter a 4 year college.
- c. College/University: These usually offer a 4 year program. Costs vary depending on whether the college or university is private or state funded. Many colleges require some form of entrance examination, especially for non-native English speakers.

## Education In America

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### Notes

#### Situations:

Situation 1: Xuan is in the third grade. She is a very good student--she studies hard, does all of her assignments, sits quietly in class, pays attention to the teacher, and doesn't interrupt the teacher with questions. At the end of the semester, her evaluation said that she needed to improve in classroom participation. She was very confused.

Situation 2: Bich is in the 10th grade and is having problems in school because he doesn't turn in his assignments. His teacher sent a note to his parents explaining the problem and asking them to discuss it with Bich. One month later the school had an "open house" for parents to meet the teachers. Bich's parents did not attend. Bich's teacher thought his parents didn't care about his education.

- \* Why did the teacher think Bich's parents didn't care?
- \* What is the role of parents in Vietnam? U.S.?
- \* If a student didn't turn in assignments in Vietnam, would he be punished? How?

Situation 3: Tuan is so happy at the relaxed atmosphere in his classroom that in classes he talks loudly to his fellow students, throws spitballs when the teacher isn't looking, and often gets up and walks around the room. Discuss what may happen to him.

(Grades fall, teacher calls parents in for a conference, required to stay after school, be assigned extra homework, be sent to a counselor.)

#### Higher/Adult Education

- A. Outline possibilities and options for adults.
- B. Have students identify realistic expectations about continuing their education in America.
  1. Put up the poster of the picture story "Y.U. College"\* and ask the students the following questions:
    - a. How did the man try to get money for his education?
    - b. Was he successful?
    - c. How do you think he will get the money to go to school?
    - d. What would you do?

\* See Everything In Sight by Fred Ligon, picture story #80.

Notes

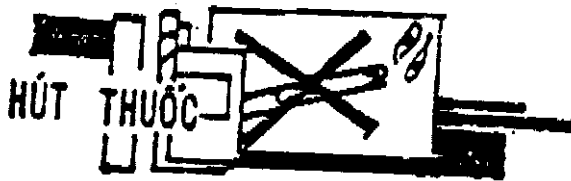
2. Discuss the considerations to keep in mind about "higher education."
  3. Although it may be unrealistic to think that newly arrived refugees will go to college, what kind of schooling might they attend? Discuss ESL programs available in the U.S.
  4. If the student's goal is to get more education, how might they do this? Discuss some of the characteristics of adult education that make future planning possible.
- C. Ask the students to choose a program that best suits their needs and give the reason why. Or, give a few case studies and have them identify the appropriate kind of education. (Examples should include older people who might be better off with on-the-job training rather than an educational program.) Point out that continuing one's education does not necessarily mean you can get a "good job."

FROM CONSORTIUM 2532921

3.30.1990 14:33

P. 5

## Sống Trong Một Gia Đình Hoa Kỳ



2/5

Sự tổ chức trong gia đình Hoa kỳ





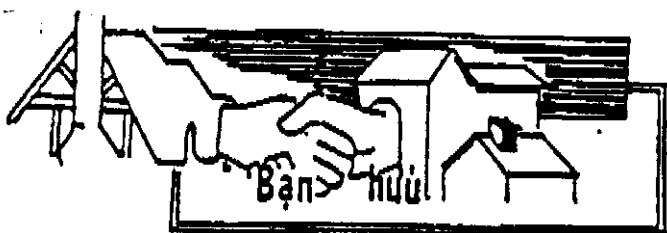
hẹn hò và tình yêu



Sự thành tín

Trả lời : KHÔNG:

75



Giận dữ và sự "mất mặt"



# HỘI GIA ĐÌNH TÙ NHÂN CHÍNH TRỊ VIỆT NAM

## FAMILIES OF VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 5435, ARLINGTON, VA 22205-0635  
TELEPHONE: 703-560-0058

### Hội Đồng Quản Trị Board of Directors

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Deputy Secretary  
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Treasurer

### Cố Vấn Đoàn Advisory Committee

HIẾP LOWMAN  
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

**April 3, 1990**

### QUESTIONS

1. In past meetings, we requested that the processing for former detainees be expedited as quickly as possible, and for as many as possible.

We believe that the process is now going smoothly. We thank all the people involved in the process, particularly Mr. Funseth.

We wish that the process could move faster given the events happening in the world now. Inevitably, Viet Nam will be affected, so will be the former detainees. They may be at risk.

2. We have requested that our Reception Committees in California, Texas, Virginia, Maryland, Washington, D.C., etc. be given notice when former detainees arrive in their respective areas. The National Voluntary Agencies already are assisting us in sending letters requesting their affiliates to notify our committees to that effect. In spite of some concern in the past that confidentiality would get in the way, the people whom we meet feel happy and relieved that someone cares. They can ask for help when they need it. So, a special thank you to National Volags.

We plan to organize more committees in areas that will receive former detainees and their families, and in order to meet them, we need to have the information prior to their arrival, and upon their arrival. We would request that the Bureau for Refugee Programs give us as much details as possible, and in a timely manner, so that we can inform our committees so that they will be prepared.

3. We attended ORR workgroup meetings on program design and service delivery to these people. We heard that ORR will assist MAAs in setting up offices for counseling, and places for the newly arrived former detainees to meet. We firmly believe that not all these people are suffering from some mental disorder. Their minds have been non-active for years; they simply need to restart thinking positively now. Sitting and talking time away does not help them at all. Besides, time is very important to them. They should get started right away thinking of their future in their new homeland. That means getting brushed up on their English and preparing for employment.

We wish that ORR would concentrate on programs which will be geared towards self-sufficiency and self-esteem building.



**Migration and Refugee Services**

**National Office**

3211 4th Street N.E. Washington, DC 20017-1194 (202) 541-3220 FAX (202) 541-3399 TELEX 7400424

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Diocese Resettlement Directors

**From:** Dawn Calabla/Mark Franken

**Date:** February 16, 1990

**Re:** Coordinating reception & placement efforts with the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association (FVPPA)

On February 5th, Mrs. Khuc Minh Tho, director of FVPPA, consulted representatives of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) and USCC, on her organization's re-ed reception activity.

FVPPA is a non-profit organization with more than 20 chapters across the U.S. Established in 1978, it has been in the forefront of the lobbying effort to win the release of Vietnamese re-ed prisoners. The majority of FVPPA members still have loved ones in prison camps or waiting for exit permits to come to the U.S.

FVPPA is interested in organizing receptions for the former political prisoners and their families. If the immediate relatives have no objections, the receptions would be held at airports or private homes.

We encourage you to cooperate with local FVPPA chapters where they exist in arranging such activities as airport receptions and in using FVPPA volunteers to provide assistance to new arrivals, particularly "free cases."

FVPPA pledges to protect the confidentiality of the re-ed prisoners and their families. Without the family's consent, FVPPA will not proceed with the reception.

Attached is the FVPPA package telling the history of the organization and its objectives, along with a list of their local coordinating committees. We have full confidence that FVPPA is a legitimate organization enjoying the support of the Vietnamese community. We hope your resettlement office will utilize the local FVPPA chapter's reception programs and its offers of continued assistance to re-ed prisoners and their families.



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P.O. BOX 5435, ARLINGTON, VA 22205-0635  
TELEPHONE: 703-560-0058

February 5, 1990

### Hội Đồng Quản Trị Board of Directors

KHÚC MINH THO  
NGUYỄN THỊ HẠNH  
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NGUYỄN VĂN GIỚI  
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN  
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Deputy Secretary  
NGUYỄN THỊ HẠNH  
Treasurer

### Cố Vấn Đoàn Advisory Committee

HIỆP LOWMAN  
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

## AGENDA

The following issues will be discussed:

### **1. Role of Coordinating Committee for the Reception of Vietnamese Political Prisoners.**

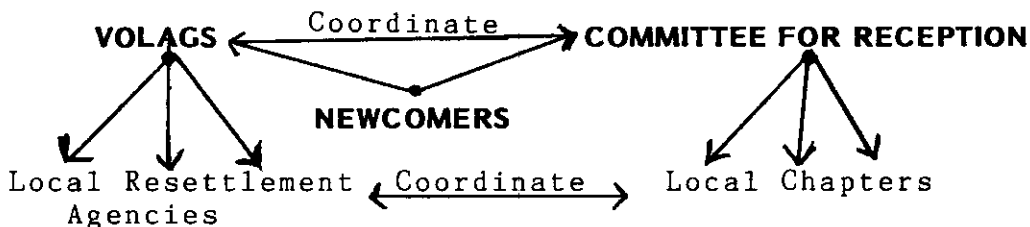
The Committee was originally established to welcome and assist the former re-education camp detainees and their families upon their arrival in the United States. The Committee will help these newcomers by providing moral support. We would like to clarify that our Committee does not intend to interfere with the resettlement process itself, whose duty belongs to the Volag Agencies. The Committee operates strictly on the basis of volunteerism.

### **2. Assistance from Volag Agencies**

In order to carry out the goals discussed above more effectively, the Committee will need information regarding newcomers. We will organize our groups to welcome them. In order to do that, assistance from Volags upon their arrival would be greatly appreciated.

### **3. Details on Requested Information**

- Name of former camp detainees
- Occupation/Rank
- Number of accompanying family members
- Name/Address/Telephone number of sponsor
- Name/Address of local resettlement agency
- Date of arrival
- Airport destination and flight number





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TRẦN THỊ PHƯƠNG  
Deputy Secretary  
NGUYỄN THỊ HANH  
Treasurer

### Cố Vấn Đoàn Advisory Committee

HIẾP LOWMAN  
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

### LIST OF THE COMMITTEE FOR RECEPTION OF FORMER VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS

#### NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE (Head Committee)

P.O. Box 5435  
Arlington, VA 22205-0635  
P.O.C.: Mrs. Khuc Minh Tho  
Tel: (703) 560-0058  
Fax #: (703) 204-0394

#### LOCAL RECEPTION COMMITTEE

1. **Washington Metropolitan Area (DC, VA, MD)**  
P.O.C.: Nguyen Ngoc Bich  
Tel: (703) 358-3268 (W)  
(703) 971-9178 (H)
2. **Northern California (San Jose)**  
P.O.C.: Vu van Loc  
399 West San Carlos  
San Jose, CA 95110  
Tel: (408) 971-7857
3. **Southern California (Westminster/Orange County)**  
P.O.C.: Nguyen Tu Mo  
P.O. Box 635  
Westminster, CA 92684-635  
Tel: (714) 367-0306  
Fax #: (714) 638-9713
4. **Texas (Houston)**  
P.O.C.: Le Van Nhan  
719 Anita  
Houston, TX 77066  
Tel: (713) 896-7703  
(713) 847-9221
5. **Texas (Dallas)**  
P.O.C.: Vuong Sy Ich  
1019 Anna  
Delton, TX 76201  
Tel: (817) 566-1462

**LIST OF COMMITTEE FOR RECEPTION**

Page 2

6. **Oklahoma**  
P.O.C.: Truong Khanh Tao  
Refugee Center  
Vietnamese American Association  
3121 N. Classen  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118  
Tel: (405) 521-1441 (H)  
(405) 524-2947 (W)
7. **Kansas**  
P.O.C.: Nguyen Van Sang  
P.O. Box 1865  
Garden City, KS 67846  
Tel: (316) 275-4354 (H)  
(316) 275-0271 (W)
8. **Massachusetts (Boston)**  
P.O.C.: Nguyen Thanh Hai  
Tel: (617) 825-0800 (W)  
(617) 287-1649 (H)  
Fax #: (617) 288-6367
9. **Washington State (Seattle)**  
P.O.C.: Dang Minh Chau  
Tel: (206) 473-1508  
(206) 982-9125
10. **Florida (Miami)**  
P.O.C.: Chu Ba Yen  
P.O. Box 163556  
Miami, FL 33116  
Tel: (305) 251-9908
11. **Pensylvania (Philadelphia)**  
P.O.C.: Nguyen Ngoc Khoan  
Tel: (215) 734-1726 (H)
12. **Illinois (Chicago)**  
P.O.C.: Ngo van Lan  
4833 North Broadway  
2nd Floor  
Chicago, IL 60640  
Tel: (312) 728-3700

Additional local chapters are in the process of being formed.  
We will notify Volag of any further established affiliates.





# HỘI GIA ĐÌNH TÙ NHÂN CHÍNH TRỊ VIỆT NAM

## FAMILIES OF VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 5435, ARLINGTON, VA 22205-0635  
TELEPHONE: 703-560-0058

### FORMER REEDUCATION DETAINEES' PROFILE

#### Hội Đồng Quản Trị Board of Directors

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NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

The 9,000 former re-education detainees and their families are coming to join their direct kins and relatives in the United States. These former re-education detainees have been re-education for a long time - some of them for a decade or more. The reason for their re-education was based on the extent of their important positions and the association with the United States and the South Vietnamese government.

Since the fall of Saigon in 1975, thousands of men and a few women who were incarcerated in labor camps - the so-called "Re-education", throughout Viet Nam because of their association with the Saigon government and the United States. These people languished in camps for years without benefit of a trial. Their release was granted at certain times throughout the entire decade, depending on their ranks, and the progress of their indoctrination. Some of them served 14 years and others are still in camps.

In 1984, the President of the United States announced that these prisoners and the Amerasians are the people of humanitarian concern to the United States. "If the Government of Viet Nam let them go, the United States will take them."

In recent diplomatic breakthroughs, the Government of Viet Nam agreed to allow former re-education political prisoners and their families to emigrate or join their relatives in the United States. Approximately 10,000 of these people will resettle in the United States this year. Thus, the first group of 3,500 people were interviewed in the last quarter of 1989; and some of the people have been steadily arriving in various states.

This group, as based on the records of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, has the following makeup:

- Army 80 percent
- Civil Service 15 percent
- Religious Leaders 05 percent

#### Military Rank:

As it stands now, we can divide this population into two (2) groups: those who were in re-education camps ranging from 3 to 5 years and are younger in age and lower in ranks (45-55) ; and those who were in re-education camps longer - 6 to 14 years - older in age and higher in rank (from 50 to 60 years of age).

Sergeants, warrant officers and captains (captain being the highest rank among the three groups coming in the first quarter of calendar year 1990).

Majors, Lieutenant Colonels, Colonels and some Generals (only a handful are being interviewed from the first and second lists).

Civil Service: Governmental Departments: Secretaries, Chief of Cabinets, Congressional, provincial/City Council Chairmen, Directors.

Religious Leaders: Catholic, Buddhist, Hoa Hao, Protestant clergy.

**Present Status:** These ex-political prisoners are not allowed to work. The 1987 group are given ration cards right after their release; while the previous ones had to serve one year confinement, and were given no ration cards after 2, 3 years, depending on the People's committees at their residence. These people now either stay with their families or relatives, roaming around the cities. Among this group 45-50 percent have family ties in the United States or in third world countries.

**Family Makeup:** The average family size is 5. Their children are mostly grown up and have their own families.

**Health:** Those who were with 6-13 years in re-education camps, are now older and suffer from diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, rheumatism, and malnutrition. When they were in re-education they had to produce their own food. Besides, they had to cut and carry lumber. The work was hard, the food inadequate and not nutritious. Most of them lost many of their teeth during the confinement. Those who were released after a shorter time period in re-education, are not in any situation, because of years of living in poverty and restriction in movement.

**Mental Health:** Naturally, those who were kept in camps for years, with limitations on what they could do or receive, will have problems. For years those men were neither allowed to write or receive letters. Not until 1979 - 1980 were their families allowed to visit them at the lobby of the camps once or twice a year. Their only resting time was in the indoctrination session at night. They saw their friends go one by one because of suicide, diseases, and starvation (they were too weak to work.)

**Family Structure:** Now, coming back to freedom, for those who still have families at home, they see that their children cannot complete their education, but must work at odd jobs; some of the families have already broken up. And, for those whose families left the country, resettling abroad, the situation does not seem any better. Their wives and children have become well-adjusted, find themselves different, and must start with their husbands all over again. It is not easy for a Vietnamese man to accept his wife's authority, and his children's better knowledge than he himself. Some of the wives have taken another man in their loneliness - although he may not share the same quarter. Worse still, he sees that most of his friends, comrades in arm are now settled with good jobs, and good living standards. It is a tremendous load for the minds of these people.

**Background:** Prior to 1975, those military men, who had been in the Navy, Air Force, Intelligence, have been in training abroad, usually the United States or Okinawa, Japan, for the lower rank and Military Academies' graduates, at one time or other. The Infantry high ranking officers mostly went through executive management in the United States. To those in the Air Force, they had spread their wings to the end of the horizon, similarly, did those in the Navy; they never thought of ever being a nobody in life. It is not easy for them to swallow the past and look to the future. The older professionals and religious leaders are in even worse condition because of their age, the roles they played in the past, and the years spent in re-education camps where they were made to accept the lowest life standards possible. Now it is difficult to get a permanent-pensioned job. It is not easy for these people to accept reality - a menial job.