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CHILD WELFARE IN VIETNAM

Fact Sheet

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A. Child Welfare Statistics

1. Estimated Child Population. As of the latest census conducted by the Government of Vietnam (GVN), of the estimated total population of over 18 million, 8 million, or approximately 46%, were under 15 years of age. This reflected a slight change since 1967, when approximately 45% of the total population of 17 million was under 14 years of age. The change was primarily in the age group 0-4 years of age, which declined from approximately 15% in 1967, to approximately 14% in 1970.

2. Estimated Number of Orphans. No data have been systematically collected on the number of full or part orphans in Vietnam. The following figures represent the best available estimates as of April 1, 1972:

Civilian:	Children in Orphanages	24,095
	Dependent children living with mothers	150,000
	Parentless children living with relatives	150,000
Military:	Orphans receiving benefits from Ministry of War Veterans	<u>555,620</u>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>879,715</b>

3. Children in Orphanages. There are 19,095 children in 133 orphanages registered by the Ministry of Social Welfare. It is estimated that there are in addition upwards of 35 orphanages not registered with MSW which are caring for approximately 5,000 children. A total of 164 orphanages are receiving Food for Peace (PL-480, Title II) commodities which indicate that a majority of all orphanages are receiving this assistance. Although the children being cared for in orphanages are generally identified as "orphans," according to the MSW more than 50% are neither orphans nor abandoned. They have one or both parents living or close relatives; and in many cases have been placed in orphanages because of economic difficulties, or because their families have moved into overcrowded urban areas, or are in movement as refugees or as military dependents.

4. Vietnamese-American Children. GVN estimates approximate a total of 10 to 15,000 children with foreign fathers. Of the 19,095 children currently in GVN recognized orphanages, the GVN estimates about 1,000 (5%) are of mixed parentage. According to the GVN, most of the children of American fathers, or of fathers of other nationalities, are living with their mothers or within her extended family system.

5. Refugee Children. There are no complete data on the number and status of children within the refugee population. Sample surveys in 1968-1969 indicated that approximately 50% of the refugees were under 14 years of age.

B. Existing Child Welfare Programs in Vietnam. The Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW) has primary responsibility for GVN programs for assistance to disadvantaged children exclusive of benefits provided under the War Veteran's Act. Such assistance is provided through child welfare programs operated directly by the MSW and the network of provincial and municipal Social Welfare Services and through subsidies to such programs operated by voluntary agencies recognized by the MSW as meeting certain minimum standards. The major existing services as of 1972 include the following:

1. Orphanages. There are 133 orphanages recognized by the MSW, serving approximately 19,095 children. Two of these are operated directly by the MSW, and 131 by privately sponsored religious or charitable agencies. It is estimated that there are about 35 additional orphanages not registered with the MSW, serving about 5,000 children. MSW subsidizes the 131 orphanages at the rate of VN\$900 per month per child from the National Budget, including VN\$300 per month per child from the American Aid Chapter of the budget. In addition, these orphanages receive Food for Peace commodities (PL-480, Title II) estimated to be worth about US\$3.00 per month per child.

2. Day Care Centers. Of the estimated more than 250 day care centers, 201 are registered with MSW (serving 23,000 children), 16 under public auspices, and the remainder sponsored by private religious and charitable agencies. MSW subsidizes the private day care centers at the rate of VN\$300 per month per child from the National Budget, including VN\$100 from the American Aid Chapter. These centers also receive Food for Peace commodities (PL-480, Title II). In the past year, a foster home day care program has been initiated on a pilot basis to provide care for small children under three years of age whose mothers are working particularly children of widows who might otherwise have to place their very young children in orphanages. A training program was organized for women interested in providing such care in their own homes and a number who have completed the course have begun providing services. MSW is supplementing the fees paid by the parents which are scaled to their incomes for care of young children in homes approved for this program.

3. School Feeding. MSW and cooperating American voluntary agencies operate a school feeding program. The required commodities are supplied under the Food for Peace program (PL-480, Title II.) In CY 1972, this program served about 635,000 school children, and in FY 1973, the

estimated total will be one million children. CARE is one of the cooperating agencies and through a contract with Foremost Dairies and assistance from the MSW, will serve an additional 44,000 children unable to meet minimal lunch fees.

4. Infant Nutrition Centers. MSW, under arrangements with an American voluntary agency (World Vision), is operating an infant nutrition center in Saigon. A second center is operated by a Vietnamese private organization. These centers provide temporary care for malnourished infants to reduce the high mortality rate in orphanages and for infants whose mothers require short-time hospitalization.

5. Training for Child Care Workers. MSW is operating a training program for child care workers in public and private orphanages and day care centers in Saigon and short-term courses at convenient locations in all four regions of the country. The 1973 American Aid Chapter includes funds to expand this important training program.

6. Public Assistance and Social Security. In keeping with its tradition of a society built upon the extended family, South Vietnam does not have any kind of a public assistance or social security system.

C. Vietnamese Children Adopted by Americans and World-wide. According to information from the U.S. Mission, an average of 150 visas a year were issued to Vietnamese children in 1970 and 1971. It is presumed that most, if not all, came to the U.S. for adoption or had been adopted in Vietnam by Americans there.

There has been a recent easing of adoption procedures which has increased the number of children being assisted. In 1972, over 500 Vietnamese children were adopted at a current rate of 50-60 a month.

D. U.S. Input for Child Welfare.

1. Food for Peace (PL-480, Title II). The major U.S. input for child welfare has been through the Food for Peace program. Children have benefited from PL-480, Title II commodities distributed through the channels of the Ministry of Social Welfare and American voluntary agencies cooperating in sponsorship of this program. In addition to special child feeding programs, an unspecified number of children are included in other categories entitled to these commodities. The estimated number of recipients of PL-480, Title II commodities for these categories during CY 1972 are as follows

CY 1972- During CY 1972, out of the total of 2,025,900 Vietnamese needy people who benefited from the approximately 48,000 tons of commodities (non-fat dry milk, flour, vegetable oil, corn soya milk and bulgur) programmed, slightly in excess of 50% of the beneficiaries were the high-priority category--children. A breakdown of monthly child feeding support is as follows:

a. School Feeding	595,000 recipients
b. Maternal Child Health	450 recipients
c. Other Child Feeding (War Victims, Montagnards, Day Care Centers, etc.)	<u>480,566 recipients</u>

TOTAL 1,076,016 recipients

FY 1973- USAID/Daigon continues to place strong emphasis on supplementing the diets of pre-school and school age children, as well as pregnant and lactating mothers. Nearly 90% of the projected 48,000 tons of the total program is to benefit children. Recipient breakdown is as follows:

a. School lunch	1,200,000 recipients
b. Orphans	19,000 recipients
c. Day care centers	14,000 recipients
d. Social Welfare Institutions	17,000 recipients
e. Maternal Child Health	10,000 recipients
f. Refugees	200,000 recipients
g. Montagnards	78,000 recipients
h. Community Development	<u>25,000 recipients</u>

TOTAL 1,563,000 recipients

Commodity mix approximates that of FY 1972, except that flour will be blend A (fortified flour is better for bread-making) and bulgur will be fortified with lysine (protein additive). The dollar value of commodities distributed is not broken down according to number of recipients. The overall dollar value for the total Food for Peace program for CY 1972 was \$9.5 million, of which \$7.6 million was for child feeding; the approved program for FY 1973 is valued at a total of \$9.5 million, of which \$8.6 million is programmed for child feeding.

2. Extended Child Welfare Program. A.I.D. agreed in principle to provide an additional VN\$600 million for FY 1972, to finance an expansion of existing child welfare services and initiate new programs for disadvantaged Vietnamese children. On April 1, 1972, the plans submitted by the GVN for the first portion of this program totaling VN\$136 million were approved. Funding levels for the planning activities to be carried out under the Ministry of Social Welfare were estimates subject to modification as indicated by experience in implementation, and the program was increased to VN\$336 million, which includes the following:

- a. Assist MSW to develop the capability to mobilize voluntary agencies and other private sector agencies, particularly for family and child welfare. VN\$18.0 million

b. Improve and expand existing facilities and procure equipment for social welfare institutions. VN\$18.0 million

c. Support GVN social legislation measures, such as modernization of adoption regulations and establishment of legal standards for the operation of orphanages and day care centers. VN\$4.0 million

d. Improve the supervision of social welfare institutions, such as training for day care workers, provincial child welfare supervisors, social welfare service chiefs, and orphanage director; establish additional mobile supervisory teams; and provide supplemental allowances to child welfare personnel; provide supplemental allowances to improve nutrition of children in institutions. VN\$110.9 million

e. Provide vocational training for orphans in selected social welfare institutions and improve facilities and equipment. VN\$3.6 million

f. Improve existing facilities for re-educating juvenile offenders in correction centers. VN\$10.0 million

g. Improve and expand the home day care program, for example, by providing subsidies to vocational course trainees, subsidies to train women offering day care in their homes, and subsidies to poor families providing foster care for related or unrelated orphans. VN\$19.9 million

h. Develop a program in maternity hospitals to prevent abandonment of children. VN\$20.0 million

i. Support the establishment of a Presidential Commission on Child Welfare. VN\$15.0 million

j. Emergency assistance to children affected by the NVA invasion. VN\$50.2 million

A minimum of VN\$449 million is being provided for child welfare programs in 1973.

3. U.S. Government Technical Support. American advisory staff includes five Social Welfare Advisors assigned to the Saigon office. All five of these officers devote part of their time to advising the MSW, the provincial Social Welfare Services, and voluntary agencies on child welfare programs and activities.

E. American Voluntary Agencies--Child Welfare Activities. The following American voluntary agencies currently operating in Vietnam are providing various types of assistance for child welfare:

American Friends Service Committee  
CARE  
Catholic Relief Service  
Christian and Missionary Alliance  
Christian Children's Fund  
Foster Parents Plan  
International Rescue Committee  
Travelers Aid--International Social Service of America  
Seventh Day Adventist Welfare Service  
United World Mission-United Welfare and Relief Services  
Vietnam Christian Services (a joint program sponsored by Church World Service, Lutheran World Relief and the Mennonite Central Committee)  
World Vision Relief Organization  
Pearl S. Buck Foundation  
Children's Medical Relief International  
Community Development Foundation/Save the Children Federation  
Baptist Relief Service  
World Relief Commission  
Assemblies of God Relief Agency

In addition, there are more than ten private organizations contributing to the support of child welfare services under private Vietnamese sponsorship. Likewise, a number of other voluntary agencies are supporting programs which indirectly benefit children in their own families and particular those within the refugee population. It is estimated that in FY 1971, American and international voluntary agencies provided several million dollars' worth of services for children in Vietnam.

F. United Nations.

1. Under the U.N. Technical Cooperation Program:

1 Child Welfare Advisor was provided 1965-1968  
2 Child Welfare Advisors 1969-1971  
1 Child Welfare Advisor 1971 to date

2. Under funds in trust contributed by the Netherland Government for a five year period, the U.N. has provided a team of four social welfare training advisors--1967-1971, and one training advisor is continuing until July 1973.

The U.N. has also provided a number of fellowships for overseas training for MSW staff.

With the assistance of U.N. advisors, the National School of Social Work has been established under the MSW. For construction of the buildings to house the school and for its equipment, the U.S. Government has contributed \$750,000 in funds-in-trust to UNICEF and the Netherlands Government has contributed \$50,000 to UNICEF. (This is over and above the Netherlands funds-in-trust contributed to the U.N. for technical assistance.)

3. The UNICEF Child Feeding Program, which initially was planned for 50,000 children, now reaches 100,000. PL-480, Title II commodities are furnished by U.S. and all local costs funded by UNICEF.

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