



Executive Summary

Care to Help is a Seattle-based, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to meeting the basic health and educational needs of the poor. Since 2002, we have transformed 25,000 lives in villages across the Central Highlands of Vietnam through the provision of 20 safe water systems, 5 schools, 1 orphanage dormitory, and several sanitation projects.

With our 2008-2009 capital campaign, we are poised to transform another 3,500 lives. Our plans call for the construction of 5 wells and 5 to 7 schools with associated sanitation facilities.

In the following pages, we've provided a glimpse into the lives of the people we serve. We hope it will inspire you to contribute to this life-saving mission.



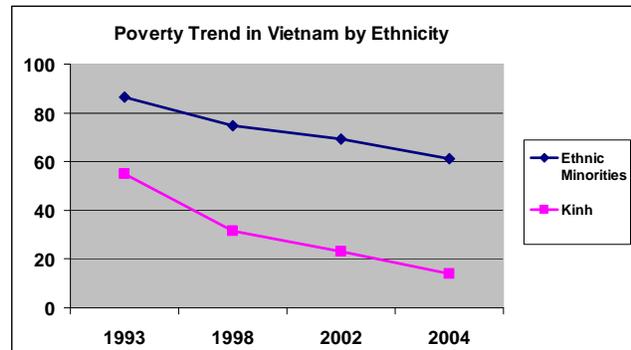
VIETNAM

Population: 85.3M
Per Capita GDP: \$2,600

The Face of Poverty in Vietnam

Not so long ago, Vietnam was caught in the vortex of an international conflict. The land and its people suffered the ravages of war and the subsequent growing pains of a centrally managed economy. After a decade of stagnation, the government initiated sweeping reforms in 1986 to stimulate growth and promote export-oriented industry. On the surface, the results have been extraordinary. Vietnam boasts one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The percent of people living below the poverty line has fallen from 75% in 1990 to 20% in 2004. Unfortunately, this reversal of fortune has not been shared equally.

Vietnam's 53 ethnic minorities represent 14% of the population but 39% of the poor. They have a steep climb to rise above acute need. Their poverty gap – i.e., the degree to which annual consumption falls below the poverty threshold – measures 19.2%. For the majority Kinh, that figure is 2.6%.¹ With reasonable economic growth, the Kinh could move out of poverty; the minority tribes cannot. Since minorities congregate in low growth areas,² poverty will become a matter of ethnicity within 5-10 years.



Source: Vietnam Living Standard Survey 1993 and 1998, Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey 2002 and 2004 conducted by the General Statistics Office (GSO.)

Most ethnic minorities are subsistence farmers in rural villages. While safe water reaches 50% of rural households, a Kinh household is four times as likely as a minority household to enjoy this life-giving resource. Proper sanitation is rare across the board. Tainted water and substandard hygiene contribute to high rates of infant and child mortality as well as chronic illness. Malnutrition and food insecurity stunt growth and impair normal child development.



Schools for ethnic minorities are few and far between. Coursework is tailored to the majority culture and language with curriculum in these schools shortened by as much as twenty-five percent.³ Many schools operate with ill-trained teachers and a persistent shortage of supplies. Not surprisingly, the children underperform in mathematics and reading.⁴ To achieve parity in adulthood, they would require *more* years of formal education. On average, they're in school 2-3 *fewer* years, if they go at all. Such conditions sustain a common perception that ethnic minorities are culturally backward and therefore predisposed to poverty.⁵

The Central Highlands

Care To Help works in the Central Highlands where ethnic minorities comprise one-third of the population. The mountainous terrain and poor regional infrastructure isolate residents from the country's vibrant economic life. Local markets for goods and services are thin, and access to

outside markets is limited. Beyond their meager crops, a whole family of 10-12 may live off a net income of \$100+ per year! While all-weather roads would open up new horizons, the people are disadvantaged in skills, knowledge, and experience. They are woefully ill-prepared for a global economy. Unfortunately, the government does next to nothing to help them, and they are too poor to help themselves.

Care To Help is determined to help these people one village at a time.

A Glimmer of Hope

When we begin our work with a rural community, the first priority is clean water. We are able to build a simple, deep, groundwater well system for about \$5-7 per person. The underlying aquifer is largely untapped and easily supports the needs of an entire village.



Water-borne illness drops sharply as soon as we install a system. With improved health, the people are ready to embrace other opportunities.



In August 2004, we got into the education business. The Quang Lap village had no school for their youngest children – roughly pre-school to third grade. We were able to strike a historic agreement with the local government. If we built the school and the village handled maintenance and utilities, the government would provide a teacher. As a result, the village kids get their education *for free* – an atypical endowment for this part of the world. We have since completed four more school projects plus a 24-bed dormitory building for a village

orphanage. We've also added restrooms to our site plans as they're a prerequisite for enrollment of young girls.

The response to our educational initiatives has been overwhelming. As an example, we'd planned to support 35 students in a small school that we built in Long Cat village. Over 100 students showed up on the first day of class – many more than the teachers expected! They have had to schedule three sessions a day to accommodate the ongoing demand. A like response followed the opening of our school at Kim Son Pagoda. Over a hundred children are enrolled in that school. It's clear that we won't be going out of business anytime soon!



A Successful Model

Water, sanitation, and a school under good management has become the model for our work with ethnic minority villages. The impact is immediate and life-changing. Once we've cleared the approval process and lined up a work crew, we can complete a well system in two weeks and a school in another month.

A key to our success is Mr. Nguyen Viet Hung, Care To Help's eyes, ears, hands, and feet in Vietnam. He is a gifted manager who understands the people, the depth of need, and (*most importantly*) the politically charged climate of the Central Highlands. He qualifies prospective projects, works with the community to arrange for construction and maintenance, obtains the building permits, and provides project oversight. His knowledge of the inner workings of government allows us to staff our schools with trained teachers at no charge to the village. This grass-roots approach insulates our work from the corruption that has plagued other ventures.

Many of our schools are situated on the grounds of Buddhist Pagodas where the nuns are dedicated to improving the living conditions for local villagers. They make sure that everything stays in good working order. They also form alliances with other community resources to provide goods and services for the children – e.g., school supplies and lunches. We stay in touch with the school principals to monitor progress. We also get health reports from the local doctors.



Pictured (l-r): Scott Mantz and Yen Ngo, Co-Founders; Thich Nu My Duc, Buddhist nun at Long Cat village; Nhon Nguyen and Hung Nguyen, business partners.

We refine our business model and our building plans as we work and learn. We design all of our groundwater wells, schools, and sanitation systems to ensure longevity, minimize life cycle costs, and simplify maintenance.

Dedicated to the People We Serve

To date, most of our projects owe their existence to the generosity of individuals and small businesses. In turn, every dollar that we receive goes directly to the people in need. All stateside labor, office space, and equipment are donated. Our lone paid employee is Mr. Hung whose efforts are indispensable to our mission. We use a small amount of funds to cultivate donors and spread the word about our work.

Contact Us

Our efforts to improve the lives of countless people depend upon your support. Please join our team by sending your tax-deductible contribution to:



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For more information, visit our web site at:
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