BASIC CIRCULAR ON THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM

The Presidency
General Direction of Plan
No. 106-TTP/NKH.

Reference:
about Community Development

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
Saigon, October 10, 1956

The Secretary of State for the Presidency
to
The Chiefs of Province

I herewith send you documents concerning the Community Development Program, studied and drawn by an inter-departmental committee. The documents comprise 4 parts:

a. Documents for Governmental agencies.
b. Documents to be popularized by the people
c. Investigation form for the village (form 1)
d. Family situation form (form 2)

The Community Development Program aims at infusing in the people a constructive spirit, a desire for progress and a good knowledge of the citizen's position in the general reconstruction work; that they may work together toward self-improvement under the guidance and assistance of the Government. This program is also a plan aiming at mobilizing the total and constructive participation of the people in all works set up by the Government. The Community Development Program can be considered as one of the basic plans for the renaissance of the country.

All details on methods for beginning the Community Development Movement have been carefully studied in these documents. I only request your attention on the responsibility and plenary powers vested to the local governmental agencies in the work aiming at realizing the Government policy.

I can say that a great part of the success or failure of the Community Development Program is due to the success or failure of the directing board of the local administrative agency; it is especially due
to whether or not they succeed in infusing an appropriate spirit in the people.

I also request your attention on the necessity of being very prudent in launching the movement.

The Community Development Program is a continual operation in which the matter of time is not an important element.

The important point is to provide the movement with a stable and wide foundation. We must avoid the symbolic way of acquiring only superficial results. The Community Development work can only succeed satisfactorily if it starts slowly and goes harmoniously along with increased understanding by the people and the authorities' capabilities in controlling and in giving assistance. In the first period of the operation, the Government is only aiming at setting up experimental sites in the localities which are to be used as experimental and cadre training centers.

The time of the experiment is not definite and will be flexible according to the results acquired on the practical side and on the authorities' means.

The number of experimental sites established in each province will also be fixed according to the practical situation of each locality.

However, it is advisable to organize only one experimental site in each district.

Moreover, in the first steps of the first experimental period, each province should have no more than three experimental sites:

one in a fishing village
one in an agriculture village
one in a handicraft village

or

one in a large and prosperous village
one in a small and needy village

In this way there are two advantages:

1. Helping the people to see clearly that the Community Development Movement can succeed in any situation, provided the people understand their interests and duties.

2. Creating different experimental centers.
In the experimental period, the recruiting of central cadres is not yet necessary. The localities should first mobilize all ready means of man-power: administrative or technical personnel, teachers and especially Civic Action cadres who have been trained to live closely with the people.

Would you please answer this letter, giving me a report on planned projects for the implementation of the above mentioned directives.

Signed: NGUYEN-HUU-CHAU