

PROJECT FACT SHEET

November 2023

Children of Vietnam

Collaborating with Women for a Sustainable Future



Mission of Children of Vietnam

Children of Vietnam (COV) lifts children out of poverty by eliminating barriers to fulfilling their potential through wraparound services that focus on one child, one family, one community at a time. COV works in Da Nang City and surrounding areas, in Quang Ngai Province, and in Quang Nam Province.

Life Challenges of the Women Served

In Vietnam, children who are born into poverty have little hope for the chance of a better life. More than 66 percent of the population lives in rural areas, where whole families earn as little as \$1 – \$2 per day as rice farmers. Children growing up in extreme poverty often have no choice but to quit school and move far from home, exposing them to dangers such as trafficking, homelessness, sexual exploitation, drug abuse, and illness.

Because single mothers face unique challenges, their children become especially vulnerable. Social and economic factors related to income disparity – including unemployment, family breakdown, and

low education levels – hinder the rights of women and children. When women lack the means to improve their family's situation, their children experience negative impacts and are sometimes removed from the home.

COV collaborates with mothers to help prevent unnecessary family separation. Research shows some of the risk factors that result in children being placed in residential care include health issues, disability, poverty, and poor or unequal provision of social services. Through job and life skills training and educational support for their children, these single moms build resiliency and provide for their families.

Women lag far behind men in access to land, credit, decent jobs, and social services. Women's health and education indicators remain lower than those of men. Women earn less than men, and the formal labor market underrepresents them, according to Asia Development Bank. The reasons are complex, involving patriarchal social customs and beliefs, the societal value of boys over girls, gaps between government policy and practice, and limited access to banking resources. This prevents the economic advancement of many urban and rural women.

The Project: Empowering Foundations for Women and Their Children

To help break the cycle of poverty, COV works with single mothers who live at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. As COV collaborates with these mothers, their children have a better chance to grow up in a safe, stable, and healthy home and ultimately, overcome poverty. The Empowering Foundations for Women and Their Children (EFWC) program provides comprehensive services tailored to meet single mothers' immediate needs while helping them develop lifelong skills that lead to self-sufficiency and reliance. EFWC achieves these goals through:

- microloans and financial assistance to promote self-sufficiency
- training and workshops on micro-business management, self-protection, and nutrition
- medical exams and proper healthcare
- primary and secondary school scholarships and study aids for their children.

This is a powerful program with an individual approach, since these women face myriad barriers that trap them in poverty. It requires a multi-faceted effort to confront the causes of poverty – a single solution often fails. EFWC works collaboratively with each woman to develop an empowerment plan by assessing needs, identifying strengths, and defining personal goals. The ultimate goal is for each mother to be in charge of her future and to earn a stable income that sustains her family.

The practical implementation of EFWC can be seen in the case of Ms. Xi, who was profiled in COV's final report at the conclusion of its Together Women Rise (then, Dining for Women) grant in 2012 – 2013:



“Ms. Xi was born in 1968. She lives with her two children in Hoa Phong Commune, Hoa Vang District, Da Nang City. When first enrolled in the EFWC program, her first daughter was a freshman at Danang 9 Educational University; her youngest son was in 11th grade in the high school. Ms. Xi’s husband died when her son was in grade 7. Without a man in the family, life is more and more difficult. The woman becomes a main labor (sole income provider) and plays two roles – father and mother. These difficulties fight other difficulties. Ms. Xi lost her mainstay of spirit and economy. She alone works for money to feed the children by performing in different kinds of job. She is a farmer and poultry raiser. Additionally, in free time, she works as a cleaner to get more money. But it’s still not enough for all of the household expenses.



The hopelessness covers Ms. Xi’s mind. Three, mother and children, live in an old house. In rainy season, the roof leaks everywhere. If there is a big wind, tiles seem to fall down. They had to get a plastic sheet for cover to avoid all of the leaking. A new tile roof was a big dream of all the members. And they did not know when the dream comes true. When enrolled EFWC program Ms. Xi was supported with wraparound services.

1. Micro Loan: Supporting to feed poultry with the capital of 8,000,000 VND (equal to \$385 USD)
2. Medical care General health checking
3. Education and Vocation Monthly scholarship support for daughter in university for 7 months (3,500,000 VND, equal to \$168)
4. Housing – a new tile roof (4,000,000 VND, equal to \$192 USD)
5. Nutrition Tet gift for Lunar New Year and nutrition supplementation
6. Training – Participate in two trainings about knowledge for poultry breeding and social skills.

After two years enrolled in the program, the income per month of Ms. Xi is now about \$150 USD compared with the income at initial enrollment of \$100 USD. Ms. Xi was able buy a motorbike for her



daughter to ride to university, and her son is now a freshman of Danang Teaching University. Having both children university students at the same time is a big burden to Ms. Xi now, but she is very happy with this achievement and challenge. COV continues to help Ms. Xi by providing a university scholarship for one of her children to reduce her cost burden so that Ms. Xi can overcome the current difficulty and build a poverty free future for herself and her children sustainably.”

Evidence of Success

Success is evident in the individual stories of hope and empowerment from COV's 25 year history. Its connection with Together Women Rise is deep, with the first grant in April 2009 (\$26,947.25), followed by two years of grants – May 2012 and 2013 – of \$30,049 each. This \$50,000 legacy grant continues the collaborative with COV and the mothers of Vietnam. In 2014, Together Women Rise members, chapter leaders, and other travelers were able to visit with COV beneficiaries in Vietnam. Read the story of [one such encounter here](#).

A sampling of COV's successes, July 2021 – June 2022:

- 1,893 families received emergency COVID and disaster relief
- 1,143 kindergarteners provided with soy milk daily
- Interventions for 102 children with disabilities
- 15,131 children fed every day throughout the school year
- 149 single mothers provided with business training and livelihood
- 617 people in remote villages supplied with clean drinking water
- 103 children with disabilities accessed wrap-around services
- 237 children enjoyed four new classrooms
- 259 scholarships were provided to low income students.

Voices

“Since joining the Empowering Foundations for Women and Their Children (EFWC) program, I have received funds to repair my barns and start a chicken-raising project. I've also benefited from receiving general health check-ups, Tet gifts, and two scholarships for my child at the beginning of the year. Additionally, I have participated in business training sessions and celebrated Women's Day on March 8, 2023.

I am truly grateful for EFWC's help as it has brought happiness into my life. I am now able to improve my livelihood and support my children while they continue their education. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the Children of Vietnam for their care and for creating these favorable



conditions for me. Participating in this program has brought me great joy.”
Ngo Thi Ngoc Linh, Hoa Vang District, Danang City

“My children have been given scholarships to purchase books and educational materials and have eased some of my concerns since I started participating in the EFWC program in 2021. In addition, I received a microloan for my livelihood, enabling me to invest in water heaters and hairdressing tools for my job. Thanks to these investments, my customer base has steadily grown, and my income has improved. On behalf of single women like myself, I would like to express my gratitude to the program and Children of Vietnam for your care and support.”
Nguyen Thi Chau, Hoa Vang District, Danang City

“While participating in the EFWC program, I had the opportunity to attend specialized training sessions where I acquired valuable knowledge and skills to conduct my business and trade effectively. One of my most memorable experiences was a trip to Hoa Phu Thanh, where I shared knowledge about nutrition and hygienic cooking for my children. What I enjoyed the most was playing games with other single mothers. It was such a fun experience that I didn't want to leave. I am sincerely grateful to the program for caring and for creating opportunities for women to engage in business and improve their lives.”
Le Thi Bich Tram, Hoa Vang District, Danang City

About the Featured Grantee

Children of Vietnam (COV) began in 1998 with two friends, one from Vietnam and the other from America, who simply saw the needs of many children and decided to act. Ben Wilson and Luong Thi Huong rode a scooter through the streets of Da Nang and into the countryside, bringing aid to children and their families – food, shelter, medicine, and clothing – anything and everything a child might need.

From the beginning, Ben and Huong believed in creating partnerships with the communities, finding the greatest needs, delivering aid quickly, and working to provide the support that sustained growth.

COV’s Operating Pillars:

