

Aiden Lamborn

Nashua-Plainfield Community Schools

Nashua, Iowa, United States

Vietnam, Infrastructure

### **Vietnam: Perilous Paths to Peddle Products**

World hunger refers to the number of people across the globe who are facing chronic food insecurity. People who suffer from chronic hunger do not have the option to eat when they want to. They do not receive sufficient calories or nutrients. This is not a one-time deal, it is an ongoing problem in their day-to-day lives. They spend a majority of their energy and time trying to feed themselves or their families. According to the United Nations (UN) Hunger Report, hunger is the term used to define periods when populations are experiencing severe food insecurity. World hunger can affect more than individuals, sometimes it plagues entire nations. In Vietnam's case hunger is not due to a shortage of food, but the availability and access to it. The text states, "World hunger refers to hunger aggregated to the global level. Related terms include food insecurity and malnutrition. Food insecurity refers to limited or unreliable access to foods that are safe and nutritionally adequate (National Research Council, 2006)" (qtd. WorldHunger.org). Vietnam's hunger is not just for the people who are facing chronic hunger, but people who are malnourished or are experiencing food insecurity. Food insecurity is when an individual or group does not have sustainable access to food. Malnutrition is a condition from insufficient consumption of essential nutrients. Conditions like these can have a great impact on the lives of these people.

Vietnam is a middle-income Southeast Asian country. It is a nation of tropical hills, lowlands, and forested highlands. It has a growing population of 99.22 million people with 37.1 percent living in urban areas, and the remaining 62.9 percent living in rural areas. This population is spread across an area of 331,689 square kilometers, with 51,800 square kilometers of rugged mountain peaks, and only 20 percent of the land being level. Vietnam declared independence on September 2nd, 1945 under the Communist Party, headed by President Ho Chi Minh. This was followed by a 30-year-long struggle for national liberation and reunification. This led to the country being split into South Vietnam, a pro-French and pro-USA government, and North Vietnam, a socialist state supported by the Soviet Union and China. In the years between 1954 and 1975, Vietnam stood up for the country's liberation and unification. The United States sent over troops and military aid to support South Vietnam and began bombing the North in 1964. The Vietnamese people experienced a time of hardship and sacrifice. However, in 1973, the Paris Accord was signed, which caused the renewal of peace in Vietnam. This was followed by the withdrawal of the US troops, ultimately bringing the war to an end as North Vietnam liberated Southern Vietnam and reunified the country. Directing the newly unified Vietnam into a new era of peace, unification, and national construction. Since then Vietnam has been a growing nation that has been plagued by high poverty rates and failing infrastructure. Influencing factors of this include the size of a household, poor education and skills, strained agriculture, and remoteness in rural areas. This all circles back to the lack of supporting infrastructure.

According to the World Factbook, Vietnam's ethnicity is Kinh at 85.7 percent, Tay at 1.9 percent, Thai at 1.8 percent, Khmer at 1.5 percent, Muong at 1.5 percent, Mong at 1.2 percent, Nung at 1.1 percent, Hoa at 1 percent, other ethnicities 4.3 percent. The average household size is 3.6 people, and the average household income is \$148 a month. The average city home is made with brick, wood, and tile. Whereas an average north Vietnamese house is built with brick, mud, thatch, tile, earth, and concrete. Men are

affected by the topic, however, women and children are affected the most. This is because they are more likely to suffer from poverty and world hunger, due to women staying home more often than men to take care of children. This is also due to the gender wage gap between men and women. Only 48 percent of households have access to clean water in rural areas, whereas 82 percent have access in urban areas. This leads to 50 percent of the households lacking toilets, and this creates a sanitation problem. Not only this but only 25 percent of roads are paved creating an obstacle for travel and transportation.

Vietnam's infrastructure has been improving, however, there is still a large gap left for growth. The nation has reached its Millennium Development Goal of halving its poverty rate. This goal was achieved a decade before the deadline set by the UN. The main factors behind this are education enrolment, healthcare insurance and coverage, and access to an array of commodities. These commodities range from clean water and sanitary facilities to electricity and transportation. These all have an influential impact on poverty. Trosclair states, "Based on the swift drop in Vietnam's poverty rate from 20.7% to 13.5% between 2010 and 2014"(Trosclair). Although there is a visible improvement in the nation, the countries failing infrastructure still threatens its growth and remains the reason for poverty. High poverty rates are a very large problem in Vietnam and are the driving force behind the issue of hunger. Hunger and poverty are in tandem leading to the idea of solving one is also solving the other. According to Hei Yen, a journalist for the Hanoi Times, poverty is going to be back on the rise, " Under the multi-dimensional poverty standards in 2022-2025, Vietnam is expected to have 4.47 million households, or 17.44 million people, having income under the poverty threshold by January 2022"(Yen). According to the UN over 6.2 million citizens, or 6.8% of the entire population, live in extreme poverty. Hunger and poverty are in tandem in Vietnam. The major driver of poverty is infrastructure problems like electrical and transportation problems. Blackouts and traffic jams are increasing, and many citizens lack any form of transportation. Vietnam's current focus for improving infrastructure is energy, agriculture, water, transportation, sanitation, and telecommunication, which all are very outdated and limited.

Vietnam's rapid growth has outreached its slowly expanding infrastructure. Poor infrastructure is a direct cause of hunger, this is due to it making transportation very difficult. Problems then arise when products cannot be transported to areas of a country where there are shortages. Some roads in Vietnam are so mountainous it is not possible to reach all who are in need. Not only is the transportation of food a problem, but also the transportation of water. Crops require stable, and unpolluted water to grow. Irrigation infrastructure is unaffordable to most farmers, and Vietnam's dry season and droughts have become increasingly devastating. Technological improvements in machinery have increased the scale of food production, production speed, and the yield of farm equipment. This directly leads to the increased efficiency of cultivating more land, which is a major problem for this nation. Vietnam's agriculture industry has made large progress in the terms of productivity, exports, and output. However, this has also led to the problems of poor resource use, resource unsustainability, farmer losses, and poor product quality. Environmental factors like droughts, floods, and typhoons also greatly influenced food production. On top of this Vietnam's rapidly increasing population has put even more stress on the agriculture industry. The average farm size is roughly 1,560 square meters, compared to the United States average of 1,796,804 square meters. The lack of water and sanitation implementations are some of the leading causes of Vietnam's hunger and malnutrition.

One proven solution is the development and implementation of fast and consistent economic growth programs. This is especially important in currently poor areas like health, transportation, telecommunication, electricity, education, nutrition, agriculture, and sanitation. The next step would be to find a way to get citizens in poverty to participate in the implementation and contribute to the growth. Inturn creating income for them while they strengthen their own country. One possible solution is strengthening agriculture. This could be accomplished by the implementation of land reforms. These reforms would lead to the improvement of production, efficiency, yield, quality, and speed. They also create jobs, increased income, improved the economy, and larger exports. This would greatly help

Vietnam due to the poor environment, and poor soil due to both environmental factors, the misuse of it. However, this solution would be increasingly difficult to implement due to the lack of supporting infrastructure.

Improving infrastructure is the best plan of attack for this underdeveloped country. It will improve the daily life of people in the areas of transportation, electricity, and clean, available water. Both the government and the UN will provide the budget to fund this. Vietnamese citizens will provide the employee population. This will solve their infrastructure issues, as well as introduce money flow into their economy. Other contributing parts of this plan are federal domestic nutrition programs, programs for women and children, agricultural reform/support bills, infrastructure reforms, and school lunch programs/education reforms. This to be considered while implementing the plan would be different cultural factors. Such as how the Vietnamese don't like when people are boastful or show off their wealth. This leads to the consideration of this when implementing different infrastructures to ensure the result doesn't come off this way. This project will be sustainable by tackling the problem from within and creating the necessary foundation for the country to build and grow on. It will make Vietnam self-sufficient, and help them be able to completely take care of itself and any problems that arise. For this goal to be accomplished citizens, the federal government, and the United Nations must all do their part. This plan is to improve life for all citizens so their say in the program will have a large influence, they will also be the main driver of the plan. They will do most of the work and reforms. This will provide both jobs for them but also a way for them to influence their country's growth. The government will oversee the program and have complete control of it. This will help them see what works for them and their beliefs. This will help them follow the vision they have for their country. It will also help them learn how to deal with problems similar to this in the future if they come up. The United Nations will support and oversee the program to ensure that it is being helpful and provide advice for Vietnam to flourish. However, it can't be too controlling otherwise they may build a dependence on them making the solution redundant due to the country still requiring aid.

Vietnam is a middle-income Southeast Asian country with a growing population of 99.22 million people with 37.1 percent living in urban areas, and the remaining 62.9 percent living in rural areas. This population is spread across an area of 331,689 square kilometers, with 51,800 square kilometers of rugged mountain peaks. With the nation's fast-growing population increased strain has been put on the country's already underdeveloped infrastructure. Many lack access to clean water, and this also creates a sanitation issue. Vietnam's rugged terrain and many environmental factors have tested its current agriculture industry, which is in need of support. On top of this increasing traffic jams, and blackouts have shown the dire need for improvements on many sides of the country's infrastructure. Both the government and the UN will provide the budget to fund this growth. Vietnamese citizens will provide the employee population to overhaul the current infrastructure. This will solve their underdevelopment issues, as well as introduce money flow into their economy. Other contributing parts of this plan are federal domestic nutrition programs, programs for women and children, agricultural reform/support bills, infrastructure reforms, and school lunch programs/education reforms. As long as there is cooperation between the country and the UN as they work together, no problem will be too big to solve, and the nation will be led into an era of flourishing.

## Works Cited

- Ballard, Carol.* How Can We Save Our World?: *Sustainable Farming.* Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2010.
- Central Intelligence Agency.* (n.d.). Central Intelligence Agency. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/vietnam/>
- Collier, Paul.* "The Politics of Hunger." *Foreign Affairs*, Nov 2008. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2262665599?accountid=67858>.
- Keen, Jared.* *The Future of Farming.* Weigl Educational Publishers, 2003.
- Kamal, Baher.* *World Hunger on the Rise Again.* , 2017. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2265821121?accountid=67858>.
- Lappe, Frances M.* "The Myth--Scarcity: The Reality--there IS enough Food." *Food First News*, Spring, 1998. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2249955041?accountid=67858>.
- Lubetkin, Mario.* A World without Hunger is also about Protecting Food. , 2020. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2489424559?accountid=67858>.
- McConnell, Kathryn.* U.S. Announces Aggressive Approach to Reduce World Hunger. , 2010. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2250310798?accountid=67858>.
- Moss, Daniel, and Amrita Gupta.* *Preventing Hunger while Building Peace.* , 2021. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2562324825?accountid=67858>.
- Nichols, Rick.* "Feeding the World: The Race into the 21st Century (Part I)." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Nov 1996. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2266163022?accountid=67858>.
- Project, B.* (2020, July 2). *A long-term battle: Remaining causes of poverty in Vietnam.* The Borgen Project. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://borgenproject.org/remaining-causes-of-poverty-in-vietnam/>
- Schiller, Ben.* "After Years of Progress, Worldwide Hunger Is Once Again on the Rise." *Fast Company*, Fast Company, 29 Sept. 2017, <https://www.fastcompany.com/40469995/after-years-of-progress-worldwide-hunger-is-once-again-on-the-increase>.
- Shapouri, Shahla, and Stacey Rosen.* "Fifty Years of U.S. Food Aid and its Role in Reducing World Hunger." *Amber Waves*, Sept, 2004. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2265821275?accountid=67858>.
- Sheeran, Josette.* Seven Reasons Why we can End Hunger in our Lifetime. , 2006. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2250557198?accountid=67858>.

- Socialist Republic of viet nam*. Brief history of Vietnam. (n.d.). Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://www.vietnamconsulate-ny.org/about/2/brief-history-of-vietnam.html>
- Tatarski, M. (2021, July 30). *Vietnam grapples with drought along the Mekong Delta*. The Third Pole. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://www.thethirdpole.net/en/livelihoods/vietnam-solutions-dry-seasons-mekong-delta/>
- Thelwell, K. (2020, September 1). What to know about hunger in Vietnam. The Borgen Project. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://borgenproject.org/hunger-in-vietnam/#:~:text=Root%20Causes%20of%20Vietnam's%20Hunger%20Problem&text=High%20Poverty%20Rates%3A%20The%20issue,who%20live%20in%20extreme%20poverty.>
- "*The Time is Right to End World Hunger.*" National Catholic Reporter, 17 Apr 2009, pp. 28. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2262922652?accountid=67858>.
- Ultimate Guide to Customs and etiquette in Vietnam*. Vietnam Visa. (2018, June 6). Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://vietnamvisa.govt.vn/vietnam-travel-tips/the-ultimate-guide-to-customs-and-etiquette-in-vietnam/#:~:text=Vietnamese%20Values&text=The%20Vietnamese%20people%20value%20humility,and%20keep%20your%20body%20covered.>
- United Nations. (n.d.). *UNSDG | UN in action - viet nam*. United Nations. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://unsdg.un.org/un-in-action/viet-nam>
- World Hunger*. ProQuest, Ann Arbor, 2021. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2442363882?accountid=67858>.
- WorldHunger.org*. "World Hunger, Poverty Facts, Statistics 2018." World Hunger News, 29 Nov. 2018, <https://www.worldhunger.org/world-hunger-and-poverty-facts-and-statistics/>.
- World Vision*. "World Hunger: Facts & How to Help." World Vision Canada, <https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/food/world-hunger-facts-how-to-help>.
- Yen, H. (2021, July 23). *Gov't to earmark over \$3.2 billion for poverty reduction 2021-2025*. hanoitimes.vn. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <http://hanoitimes.vn/govt-to-earmark-over-32-billion-for-poverty-reduction-2021-2025-318145.html#:~:text=Under%20the%20multi%2Ddimensional%20poverty,poverty%20threshold%20by%20January%202022.>