

May 23, 2025

To Whom It Might Concern:

My name is Rad Kivette, CEO of The VinaCapital Foundation (VCF), a US, 501-c3, NGO, and I am a US citizen who has lived and worked in Vietnam for 25 years. Working for five different foreign NGO's over 25 years- the latest for 15 years, I have had the privilege of assisting the government of Vietnam with sustainable humanitarian assistance support in all 63 provinces of Vietnam. VCF is currently approved to work in 50 provinces but over time the organization has worked in all 63 provinces and currently has eight national programs in the health/medical and education fields. Each of these programs depend on close coordination with the Ministries of Health, Education and Training, Labor Invalids and Social Affairs and Foreign Affairs.

Over 19 years, VCF alone in the grassroots and capacity building arenas, has raised and implemented over \$31 million to save the lives of thousands of children and adults (nearly 12,000 in just one program: children's congenital heart defect surgery) raising thousands of people out of poverty, and championing women's rights improvements. Every VCF program supports the farsighted 5 and 10 Year Strategies of the government and the Party. In recent years, the government and hence VCF, have turned our attention toward the 15% of the population that is ethnic, generally rural and comprise 75% of all impoverished people in Vietnam. Many laws have been passed to support this focus on improving the health and welfare of these often-remote populations.

Vietnam has an incredible record of socio-economic growth over the last 25 years. GDP alone has grown from about \$35 billion in 2000 to over \$476 billion in 2024. The socialist-market economy continues to grow at a 'world-class' rate of 6- 7+percentage every year and indexes indicate that the level of personal satisfaction in all sectors- social, political and economic- remains high. Vietnamese leadership is laying the economic groundwork for the middle class advance from lower-middle income status to middle-middle and beyond.

VCF's involvement in Vietnam is deep and wide. We work with ministries in Hanoi to keep the overall strategic focus; we work at the provincial government level to be sure implementations are approved and appropriate; and we work at the grassroots levels saving lives and increasing livelihoods and building capacity in both health/medical and education sectors. VCF is in a unique position to observe and comment on the commitment of the Vietnamese government to human rights. Speaking for myself, I do not pretend to know all the activities in the country and as a guest, I focus on my work and those associated with my work. It is my opinion that the Vietnamese I associate with in Vietnam are able to express themselves freely and do so. I find all the news I am interested in readily available on TV, digitally or in print. I am not sure about 'assembly' but I have local friends who gather regularly in groups for religious activities and other purposes without interference. Gender equality continues to progress with laws that protect all parties and serious consideration for expansion other rights is in progress.

I am probably best qualified to talk about Child Rights and the Rights of Women and Girls since so much of our programming is focused on those areas. I spend a lot of time in urban and rural hospitals for children and women, as well as, schools from kindergarten to 12th grade all over the country. I have witnessed an overwhelming preponderance of dedication and zeal on the parts of these professionals to their work, far beyond expectations. Schoolteachers who buy supplies from their own pockets for children's extracurricular activities. Education departments who meet with us on weekends to celebrate

improvements and review other needs for the future. Doctors who work long, long hours and many all over the country who volunteer to work pro bono on weekends in our mobile rural medical outreach clinics. Rural doctors who make long distance house calls for remote patients who are too far away and too sick to travel. And those in the highest government ministry positions who make the time to review program plans, evaluate results, make resources available and advise on the pathway forward long before and long after the workdays begin and end. I witness teachers and Youth Union volunteers who stay long after the school day ends to teach informal classes that help ethnic girls navigate life changing decisions and obstacles. The list is long and VCF echoes the mantra in Hanoi that we 'leave no child behind.' In fact the incredible progress that has been made in the education and health/medical areas is because the government intends to 'leave no one behind' as the ever increasing economic growth funds more and more social improvements and the poverty levels fall below 5- 6%.

Vietnam was one of the first countries to approve the Convention on Child Rights and my sense at all levels is that the government is 100% committed to these principles just as they are committed to the SDG's and the Convention on Human Rights. Vietnam's progress, including the solid commitment to human rights in the areas I work in, is clear- it is consistent and it is measurable.

Rad Kivette