



Vietnam News, 31/3/2004

## Report highlights cases of severe child malnutrition

HA NOI — Many of Viet Nam's rural children were suffering from severe malnutrition, according to a preliminary report from an international research project known as Young Lives.

Young Lives, a joint project between the General Statistics Office, Save the Children UK and the Research and Training Centre for Community Development in Ha Noi, is studying the health and well-being of 3,000 Vietnamese children over a period of 15 years.

It hopes to provide information to help the Vietnamese Government fight child poverty.

According to the report on the project's findings since it began in 2000, Viet Nam had a high number of cases of acute, or severe, short-term malnutrition. The country saw more moderate levels of chronic or long-term malnutrition.

To control child malnutrition, researchers said aid should focus on rural areas, where malnutrition occurred twice as often as in urban areas.

According to the report, poor children suffer a high morbidity rate and poor rural women rarely receive adequate pre- or post-natal care.

It also found eight-year-olds had poor literacy and math skills and children needed more environmental and health education.

The General Statistics Office's deputy general director, Nguyen Van Tien, said the report only involved a small part of the country and did not reflect the situation in Viet Nam as a whole.

The project focused on Lao Cai, Hung Yen, Phu Yen and Ben Tre provinces and Da Nang City.

Young Lives is also being carried out in Ethiopia, India and Peru. It is funded by the UK Government Department for International Development. — VNS



Children in Yen Bai Province receive early medical care, an important factor in reducing rates of child malnutrition. — VNA/VNS Photo Huu Oai