A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION
ON THE REPORT ON THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
VIETNAM ADVISORY GROUP
Saigon, Vietnam

20 May, 1957

Field Administration Division
In order to better implement the Education Report prepared by MSUG last June, six sub-committees were set up at a general meeting at the Department of Education on October 31, 1956.

This meeting was attended by representatives of the Department of Education, USOM and MSUG under the chairmanship of the Secretary of Education. The six sub-committees included school construction, popular education, semi-public schools, textbooks and publications, organization and administration and Basic Philosophy of Education. These sub-committees were created in connection with the recommendations contained in the final Education Report presented by MSUG.

The purpose of these sub-committees was to take a close look at each specific subject and to develop solutions to problems faced by the Department of Education.

It is felt that these were not only the Education Department's problems but USOM's and MSUG's as well because of their close cooperation with the former in its attempts to improve the educational system of Vietnam. For this reason, each above-mentioned group is represented in each sub-committee which is composed of three or four members.

In addition, a Central-Committee was set up to coordinate the implementation, the members of which were the Secretary of Education, Nguyễn Dưỡng Dön, USOM's Education Division Chief Hildreth and MSUG's Field Administration Chief Mode.
The members of the sub-committees were designated by the general Committee. Vo-Hong-Phuc of MSUG was the general coordinator for all sub-committees.

A brief summary of the achievement of each sub-committee was drafted last December in which were listed the names of the sub-committees and participants, number of meeting held, items discussed and recommendations as of that date. These recommendations were submitted to the Secretary of Education for approval. After several additional meetings the members came to the following decisions:

a) On Publications and Textbooks.

It was decided that a Service of Publication and Textbooks be set up within the Department of Education to serve the entire system of education. This project was made possible due to the financial and technical assistance provided by USOM under the close collaboration of Dr. Cress. MSUG participants in this sub-committee did not follow closely its activities at the end because it was not included in the top priority list of recommendations of the Education Report.

b) On Administration and Organization.

One of the basic items discussed was the creation of a position of Under-Secretary of State for Education. Though the Secretary of Education seemed to be very receptive to this recommendation many difficulties arose because of the choice of the candidate, his functions and the procedures by which he is appointed. The question which remains unsolved as of this date is whether the Under-Secretary of State should be a political appointee.
Other questions having connection with the organization of the Department of Education such as the creation of a Directorate for Popular Education were also discussed.

**c) On Philosophy of Education.**

Apparently the sub-committee has agreed to the principles propounded by Dr. Hildreth as follows:

1.- Education shall be regarded as the inalienable right of all the citizen of this country regardless of race, creed and station in life.

2.- The system of public education shall be extended to all children of the elementary and secondary school ages and shall be entirely free of tuition.

3.- The schools of the nation shall respect the dignity and sanctity of the individual and shall use all possible means to permit him to realize his greatest potentiality in life, regardless of his station in life.

**d) On school construction.**

One of the big steps taken by the Department of Education at the suggestions of the committee was the appointment of a director in charge of school construction. This appointment was made possible due to the important program of construction planned by the Department of Education for 1957 with some financial support by USOM. Some 400 village primary schools were to be built at the beginning of this year at a cost of 60 million piasters jointly shared by USOM and the Department of Education.
As of this date, this project is not yet carried out due to the delay in releasing funds by I.C.A. Some provinces are reported to have built some of their schools with their own funds while waiting for the Department of Education.

e) On popular education.

The basic concern of the sub-committee for the time being is to eliminate illiteracy as soon as possible. For this reason, all efforts are centered around this matter which needs to be solved before the end of this year.

The anti-illiteracy campaign launched last June by the Department of Education in collaboration with the municipal and provincial authorities was designated to combat illiteracy. Many efforts were made by local people despite the lack of facilities and funds. For this reason, many problems remained unsolved despite of the fact that USOM has agreed to pay half of the cost of the school supplies and for all syllabi.

Though eliminating illiteracy is the pressing need at present, members feel it necessary to expand the program of popular education beyond this level in order to satisfy the needs of adults who wish to further their studies. A long-range program is planned for the future provided money is available.

f) On Semi-Public schools.

The most difficult problem faced with by the members lies in the distribution of government subsidies. Since there is no ready-made rules as to how much subsidy each semi-public school is allowed, the members suggested that subsidies be more flexible and be based on the cost of schools, their size and the wealth of each
province due to the difference in school composition.

Apparently this suggestion was followed by the Department of Education in its recent meeting on subsidies. One million piasters have already been made available by the Presidency to subsidize semi-public schools (70 o/o) and cultural and social activities (30 o/o). Ten of the 12 existing semi-public schools will receive their subsidies for 1957.

The semi-public school project is the only one which is not included in USOM's assistance program for this year.

**General Observations.**

Through the sub-committees have held some thirty meetings in the last four months, (November to beginning of March) it's still premature to make any final evaluation of the work of the sub-committees and their outcome.

By and large, the work of the sub-committees has gone very smoothly and a spirit of cooperation prevailed among representatives of the three groups concerned.

Of course, each group may view the implementation differently because each one has a different functional approach as to the same problem, however the success or failure of the implementation depends a great deal on the principal party, namely the Department of Education. Several of MSUG's recommendation have been implemented but more is still needed to be done. It is only a matter of time and money. The school construction project for instance could have been begun four months ago but due to the delay in receiving funds; it has not yet been started.