

IMPORTANT INFORMATION OF THAI BINH RED CROSS ASSOCIATION ABOUT NEEDS AND HOPES OF AGENT ORANGE/DIOXIN VICTIMS IN THAI BINH PROVINCE

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I. General Information

Thai Binh is an agricultural province in coastal area of Vietnamese Northern Delta. Although the people's life is improved in currently economic development, but Thai Binh is still a poor and difficult province. One of the big difficulties that the party, people and other social and mass organizations have paid much attention to cope with is serious consequence of the war in which solving/supporting living for Agent Orange is a big problem.

According to survey made by provincial labour, invalid and social affair show that:

Thai Binh has 27,934 Agent Orange infected people, including:

- + 18,828 people who was directly contacted (mothers and fathers)
- + 8,547 infected children (second generation)
- + 559 infected grandchildren (third generation)
- + 303 people of diplegia
- + Died people: 1,942
- + Alive people: 25,992

More than 100 families have been infected in three generations (parent, children and grandchildren)

There are families having 5 children and grandchildren disable and abnormal

There are couples gave 9 births but all died after of a period

Among alive infected victims, there are 7,420 ones getting monthly subsidy from the government, 6,000 victims are sending documents to Ministry of Labour, invalid and social affairs (MOLISA) to wait for approval of getting subsidy. The other 12,572 victims have not finished their documents to request to MOLISA.

II. Roles and capacity of Thai Binh Red Cross Association

Having sympathy with and understanding of difficulties, loss and suffer of Agent Orange victims, since early 90s Thai Binh Red Cross Association in collaboration with 10-80 Committee conducted surveys on Agent Orange victims. At the same time, Thai Binh Red Cross Association has developed and set forth directions and measures to advocate community help and support Agent Orange victims

Thai Binh Red Cross Association, promoting its humanitarian and charitable/merciful tradition, has launched programs in its networks, staff, members as well as in people from all walks of life to support and care materially and spiritually for Agent Orange victims' families that help to put themselves in tune with joint happiness with the community, such as loan programs for developing husbandry and production; spiritual encouragement and visit at difficult situations; providing relief and gifts for them, support and care for treatment and medicines when they are ill, etc.

At the provincial Red Cross, one center was established in order to provide health counseling, humanitarian examination and treatment for people, especially many Agent Orange victims has been helped by this center. The Red Cross often launches donation movement from people in terms of money, assets, and labor to help the victims and their families in grave circumstances, to visit and offer gifts on the occasions of New Year, ceremonies, and historical anniversaries.

From 2000 up to now, The Red Cross, at all level, in the province has motivated 600 million VND to support Agent Orange victims; bought more than 3,000 health and body insurance books, 79 sewing machines and 50 wheelchairs were presented to Agent Orange victims.

From 2001 up to now, undertaking directions of poverty elimination and hunger reduction, elimination of leaking and dilapidated roofs for the poor launched by the Party and Government, Thai Binh Red Cross Association has built more than 245 charity houses worth nearly 3 billions VND to offer Agent Orange victims. "Agent Orange Victim Fund" assigned to Red Cross by the Government to mobilize, manage and support, has effectively developed by Thai Binh Red Cross Association contributing to care and support victims that reduce difficulties, pain and suffer, misfortune of the victims. For the past years, The Red Cross has collaborated with some NGOs to provide vocational trainings, rehabilitation, primary health care, etc, for victims at difficult situations. This proves that Agent Orange victims still have ability, need of productive works and social activities and hope to have health care and integration into their community.

The Party and Government as well as party committee levels, mass organizations and people of Thai Binh tried to organize many supportive and assistant activities to the Agent Orange victims' families. However, Thai Binh is an agricultural province with difficult economy, material support to the victims is still very limited compared with their actual need, the victims therefore would like to voice their urgent needs and requests to kind-hearted individuals and organizations nationally and internationally for their understanding and helps.

III. Request and Need of Thai Binh Agent Orange victims

By communicating, helping and need assessment of the victims, we learn about their different requests and needs are identified as followings:

1. For victims who are hemiplegia and diplegia

Need of these people are:

- + To be taken care by family members
- + Families of seriously infected victims need to have support through loan for their agriculture and husbandry or side-occupation in order to generate constant income reducing difficulties.

2. For victims who are always ill and suffered from diseases but so poor that they cannot afford for health care and treatment.

Their needs are followings:

- + To have periodically medical examination and care in the locality by humanitarian and free medical examination and medicine supply of voluntary doctors.
- + To be helped to buy voluntary health insurance card for the poor
- + To have opportunity participating in rehabilitation

3. For victims who still have good health but poor, illiterate and jobless.

Their needs are followings:

- + To have appropriately vocational trainings that helps to get job
- + To have support by providing loan for small-scaled production of side-occupation or agriculture and husbandry.

4. For families having victims of generations that are always at difficult economic situations and leaking and dilapidated houses. Needs of these victims are:

- + To receive financial support for re-building their houses
- + To receive monthly subsidy
- + To receive capital support and guidance for economic development to escape from poverty and hunger

5. *For victims who are disable and abnormal children. Their needs are followings:*

- + To have care for and orthopedic surgery
- + To be sent to school and integrated into community's life

IV. Recommendations of Thai Binh Red Cross Association

Recommendations to kind-hearted individuals and organizations that help directly or indirectly through activities to meet minimum need of Agent Oranges, as followings

1. Thai Binh Red Cross Association hopes to receive financial support to provide trainings for 303 persons who are members of families of 303 people with hemiplegia and diplegia so as to help them having skills needed in taking care of the infected family members, how to give massage and point acupuncture helping the victims' rehabilitation, know-how to use regular medicines and Vietnamese traditional medicines.
2. Thai Binh Red Cross Association currently has a health care centre with voluntary doctors and wishes donors/sponsors to provide aids of a 16-seat vehicle and paraclinical materials/equipments (X-ray machine, scanning machine, dentist's chair, pacemaker, etc.) or provide medicines so that The Red Cross have schedule to take the doctors and medical equipments for mobile examination and treatment for the victims in poor and remote areas.
3. With its humanitarian roles, Thai Binh Red Cross Association hopes to be supported to set up a vocational training center, rehabilitation and job creation suitably for Agent Orange victims.
4. Thai Binh Red Cross Association calls national and international kind-hearted individuals and organizations for their support and assistance to poor Agent Orange victims' families having capital for household economic development in order to make their living.

The above are necessary and urgent needs of Agent Orange victims in Thai Binh and The Red Cross's ability and roles, we are looking forwards to receive attention and support from generous governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as individuals nationally and internationally.

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