

Started in 1962, Rural Affairs was a pioneer program within the AID mission in Vietnam to stimulate better local government and security in Vietnam's rural countryside. It put young Americans, many volunteers, into the provinces to live on the local economy and work with Vietnamese officials and citizens on vital local needs, which included schools, wells, refugees, and improved rice and pig culture, as well as more basic issues of physical security and representative local government. The philosophy was to create a tie between villagers and government and, more basically, a greater sense of national identity and of value in belonging to the national, as opposed to Communist, side of the prolonged civil war. The Vietnamese staff of Rural Affairs were close colleagues. Rural Affairs was succeeded by larger organizations such as the Office of Civil Operations (OCO) and Civil Operation and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS).