

The Care of Children and Adolescents: A Case Study of Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam (1960-1964)

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ABSTRACT

Children and adolescents have always been regarded as the nation's "young sprouts", requiring care and education to become productive citizens in adulthood. In the time of 1960- 1964, a period when South Vietnam was resisting the American War of Aggression and North Vietnam was executing the First Five-Year Plan, the Vietnamese Party and Government had a strong focus on children and adolescents' affairs. Directive No. 197-CT/TW (March 19, 1960) was a specialized document concerning the protection and care of children during the anti-American Resistance. The ThaiNguyen provincial government creatively applied this directive, establishing a system of child welfare that integrated education, healthcare, and culture. By using the archival analysis, historical, logical, and comparative analysis methods, this article clarifies the attention and direction from the local government. It thereby affirms the pivotal role of the provincial level in social governance and the development of future human resources, while also demonstrating early parallels with international standards on children's rights.

Keywords: Child Welfare (Children and Adolescents), Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam 1960-1964, Local Governance, UNICEF/UNCRC

INTRODUCTION

Children (ages 6-9) and adolescents (ages 10-15) are the future owners of the nation, holding a critical position and role in the career of national construction and defense. Child welfare and protection work has long been a fundamental duty of governments, especially times of war and socio-economic hardship. In almost countries, children are regarded not only as subjects needing protection but also as future citizens- the key agents of national development. In Vietnam, a country that endured over 80 years as a French colony (1858–1945), followed by a fierce 9-year resistance against the French (1945-1954), and then a 21-year resistance against the US (1954-1975), Vietnamese children struggled to enjoy the legitimate rights compared to the peaceful nations in the world. However, in the time of leadership, the Vietnamese Government consistently placed the care and protection of children and adolescents. This priority was performed from the central level (issuing guidelines) down to the local level (actualizing the policies).

Thai Nguyen is a province located within the Việt Bắc autonomous region, a mountainous midland with an area of 3425 km². It is bordered by Bac Kan to the north, Vinh Phuc and Bac Giang to the south, Tam Dao Mountain and Tuyen Quang to the west, and Bac Giang and Lang Son to the east. Until March 1, 1960, the province had a population of 290.255 people, of whom 120.305 were children under 15 (as 41.4% of the total

population). Thai Nguyen was divided into 7 districts, one town, 149 communes, 2 townships, and 4 city wards. The choice of Thai Nguyen Province as the research area in this article is based on several specific, defining factors.

Firstly, Thai Nguyen had an important strategic position militarily, economically, and politically during the anti-French Resistance, regarded as the Capital of the Resistance and the core revolutionary center. After 1954, Thai Nguyen has become one of North Vietnam's first industrial hubs, with the establishment of key projects such as the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Complex. This development has created an urgent demand for the education and training of the successor generation, making children a strategic focus.

Secondly, unlike the provinces (such as Hanoi and Hai Phong) or the high mountainous regions (such as Ha Giang and Cao Bang), Thai Nguyen is situated in the Midland region-a transition zone between the delta and the mountains. This position is the intersection of various geographical, demographic, and cultural areas, inhabited by ethnic minority groups such as the Tay, Nung, San Diu, and H'Mông. This provides an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of child care policies in a diverse environment. This study of Thai Nguyen allows us to clearly identify the commonality and distinctiveness of the child protection model within a broader scope.

Thirdly, there are numerous international studies on children across different phases and periods, but historical research in Vietnam on child protection during the period of 1954-1975 has primarily focused on the central level, or it is limited to the scope of education and health sectors, or only emphasized on the direct impacts of war on children (Nguyen, M.A., 2022). In contrast, in-depth local studies, especially in the midland and mountainous regions like Thai Nguyen, remain scarce. They have yet to fully reflect the role, organizational model, and social impact at the provincial level.

Fourthly, the issue of caring for children and adolescents in Thai Nguyen Province shows many similarities and differences compared with other countries and organizations worldwide. Furthermore, many of these efforts have been formalized and publicized at a later stage by the international community.

Thus, in this study, Thai Nguyen Province was chosen as the research site because it serves as an exemplary case study in child care work during the 1960-1964 period. It clearly reflects the creative application of central government policies under specific local conditions. An in-depth study on Thai Nguyen helps clarify the essential contributions of the midland provinces to human development under the new regime in North Vietnam. Accordingly, this research aims to contribute empirical data and perspectives to the modern history of Vietnamese social policy concerning the protection of the younger generation, the successors of the national construction and defense cause. Besides, this study also clarifies the methods by which local organizations were established and implemented activities for children, the specific forms of care provided, and compares these practices within an international comparative framework. Through this, the study not only supplements Vietnamese historiography but also engages in global discussions on child welfare and protection.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on Child Issues in Vietnam

The protection, care, and education of children is a deeply ingrained tradition in Vietnam. Upholding this ethical tradition and following the teachings of President Ho Chi Minh, the government has placed special emphasis on a human development strategy within its socio-economic development strategy, with priorities for children. The Vietnamese State has issued numerous guidelines, policies, and legal documents, and has organized many movements and activities, all aimed at coordinating efforts and mobilizing resources to effectively address the protection, care, and education of children. The Vietnam Committee for the Protection and Care of Children was established as the specialized agency for this issue. The major work, "Children in the Socio-Economic Development Strategy of Our Party and State" (1999), provided an overview and systematization of the most fundamental issues in child protection, care, and education in Vietnam, offering practical experiences and solutions for this work during the current period of national industrialization and modernization.

Nguyen, Q.B. (2007) asserted that the care, education, and protection of children are both long-term goals and immediate tasks. Based on this priority, Ho Chi Minh frequently wrote letters, visited children, and admonished them; many normative messages were reiterated over the years. The article emphasizes foundational guidelines, such as "The Five Things Uncle Ho Taught" - a system of criteria for ethics, discipline, a new way of life, and familial affection-as an early value framework for children. This serves as the anchor for schools and youth organizations to translate into regular educational activities. The education of children must be comprehensive (encompassing ethics, intellect, health, aesthetics, and labor), appropriate for their age, link study with practice, and involve the triumvirate linkage of Family-School-Society.

The issue of early childhood education (ECE) for children has also attracted considerable research interest. Dang, P. T., & Boyd, W. A. (2014) had analyzed the reform process of ECE methodology in Vietnam, focusing on the implementation and innovation of the curriculum over a ten-year period. The study, conducted in Lam Dong Province, aimed to evaluate changes in ECE teachers' work and to examine how these methodological changes were implemented and sustained. The research also explored how evolving social expectations impacted

educational philosophy, thereby influencing the beliefs and practices of ECE teachers. In another work, Dang, P. T., & Boyd, W. A. (2014) investigated the history and assessed ECE policies in Vietnam, spanning the period before 1945 up to the 2010s. The work showed the development of ECE within the country's historical and political context, including the impacts of war, educational reform, and social policies. The study also investigated the development of ECE in North Vietnam during the anti-American Resistance.

Nigel, S. & Nguyen, T. T.L. (2021) assessed the impact of economic and social changes on family sustainability and child welfare in Vietnam. The article provides a deeper analysis of the national child protection system, emphasizing the development of the legal and policy framework, the emergence of a professional workforce, and the growing volume of prevention and response services for children in need of protection in Vietnam. The article discusses the challenge of contextualizing child protection policies and services in the Vietnamese setting, advocating careful consideration of context when developing the child service system to ensure that the protection of children's best interests is appropriate and effective.

Nguyen Mai Anh (2022) has studied the role of children in the Vietnam War (1955–1975), focusing on the participation of children in military and political activities, as well as the mechanisms through which political ideology was communicated and enforced in the daily lives of Vietnamese youth during this period. Vietnamese children were involved not only directly but also indirectly through active studying and increasing production. The issue of child care was not mentioned in this study.

To date, research primarily focuses on social policy and child protection across various historical periods in Vietnam, but there is a lack of in-depth analysis on child protection policy at the provincial level during the early period of the anti-American Resistance. This represents a historical gap in Vietnamese research that needs to be addressed to clarify the role of localities in implementing central government policies regarding children.

International Research

Research on child protection and care has flourished in both the social and international context. In the Soviet Union, Ball (1994) documented the state's response to the crisis of abandoned children after the Revolution, showing how state-led institutions became central to the child welfare system. Kelly (2007) analyzed the childhood of Soviet children under the influence of educational, healthcare, and ideological policies, clarifying how children were integrated into the national construction project.

The issue of child care in Europe has also received significant attention from various nations. Éva Bicskei (2006) explored child care and ECE policies in Hungary from the end of World War II until the 1956 Revolution, primarily focusing on the organizational forms of ECE, financing methods, and the quality of educational facilities. Mathias Urban (2009) clarified European governments' policies to enhance access to ECE, particularly for children aged three and above. Countries such as Denmark, Sweden, and France have achieved or are close to achieving European Union (EU) targets for providing ECE services to 90% of children aged three and older and at least 33% of children under three. However, in some countries, access to ECE for children under three remains limited, especially in nations reliant on the private sector, where ECE services are often expensive and inaccessible to low-income families. Meanwhile, Andrea M. Noel (2024) focused on studying the impact of war and government policies on the development and maintenance of ECE during the rise of Hitler and Nazism, in the turbulent months surrounding the end of the war, and the establishment of a new ECE system in Wroclaw with Soviet support. The results and discussions are applied to contemporary circumstances such as the current crisis in Ukraine, as well as social and political upheavals arising from other emergencies.

Hein, C.; Cassirer (2010) emphasized the issue of child care in companies. Their work analyzes workplace child care programs in ten countries, including developed nations (such as France, the UK, the US) and developing nations (such as Brazil, India, South Africa). Each chapter introduces national policy, workplace initiatives, and partner involvement.

On a global scale, international organizations have established vital theoretical frameworks. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) codified international norms, affirming that children are rights-bearing subjects entitled to protection, education, and development. Building on this foundation, UNICEF has put forth practical frameworks such as the Global Social Protection Programme Framework (2019), which emphasizes social protection for children, and the Scaling Up Child Protection Framework (2021), which provides a roadmap for institutionalizing a comprehensive child protection system.

Overall, the study and theoretical frameworks above have provided a solid comparative foundation. However, there are still a few studies connecting early-period socialist social policy in Vietnam at the provincial level with these international discussions. Our research work contributes by placing the case of Thai Nguyen (1960-1964) within broader comparative frameworks, thereby filling a gap in both Vietnamese historiography and international scholarship on child welfare.

METHODOLOGY

This study applies a historical qualitative research design, focusing on archival document analysis and comparative historical interpretation. The primary objective is to reconstruct child protection practices in Thai Nguyen Province during the 1960–1964 period, while simultaneously situating this local experience within the international theoretical framework of child welfare.

Data Sources: The main data were collected from archival records at the central, provincial, and district levels in Thai Nguyen. Secondary data include international research on child welfare in the socialist context (Ball, 1994; Kelly, 2007; Wong, 1998; Hein & Cassirer, 2010; Éva Bicskei, 2006, etc.) and global policy frameworks such as UNICEF (2019, 2021) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Analytical Approach

First, Archival Document Analysis: This method aims to reconstruct the organizational structure and child protection activities in Thai Nguyen. The documents were coded according to themes such as institutional setup, education, healthcare, cultural activities, and mass organization efforts. The work of caring for and protecting children and adolescents in Thai Nguyen Province from 1960 to 1964 is clearly reflected in the archival records preserved at the Thai Nguyen Provincial Historical Archives Center. This is an important source of material for the research team to complete this study. Based on the archival sources at the Thai Nguyen Provincial Historical Archives Center, we synthesized, analyzed, and evaluated the data to clarify the research objectives.

Second, Historical Method: This method helps objectively, accurately, and systematically reconstruct the events and activities related to the care and protection of children and adolescents in Thai Nguyen Province during 1960–1964. The research process adheres to the principle of specificity in time and space, aiming to elucidate the formation, implementation, and impact of local guidelines and policies in relation to the overall political-social context of North Vietnam after 1954.

Third, System-Structure Approach: Child protection work does not exist in isolation but is embedded within the overall social policies of the State and involves coordination among numerous sectors and mass organizations. Therefore, the article approaches the research issue systematically, examining the relationships among participating actors (the Party, the government, mass organizations), the areas of impact (healthcare, education, propaganda, etc.), and the results achieved across multiple dimensions (organization, awareness, material conditions, etc.).

Fourth, Comparative Historical Analysis: This method involves comparing the findings with socialist models (the USSR, China, the German Democratic Republic) and international child protection frameworks (UNICEF, UNCRC). This approach allows for the identification of both local specificity and conformity with global principles. The comparative method is utilized to place the work of caring for and protecting children and adolescents in Thai Nguyen Province within a broader context, thereby highlighting the distinctiveness and reference value of the local model. First, the study compares the guidelines, policies, and implementation methods of child affairs in Thai Nguyen with those of some other localities in North Vietnam during the same period. Simultaneously, it compares them with the child policies of some socialist nations worldwide in the 1960s to clearly show the influence of international ideology and management models on Vietnam, as well as the local capacity for flexible adaptation and adjustment in practice.

The simultaneous use of these methods allowed the authors to approach the issue comprehensively, ensuring documentary accuracy while highlighting the multidimensional relationships in child care work in Thai Nguyen. However, the study relies primarily on archival records, which may reflect the State's perspective more than the community's voice. Moreover, the scope is focused on only one province, limiting the potential for generalization across all of North Vietnam. Nevertheless, this in-depth case study still provides significant insights into how local authorities implemented Central policies, while also showing convergence with international norms on child protection.

RESULTS

Factors Influencing Child and Adolescent Care and Protection Work in Thai Nguyen Province

First, child care is an international issue. On a global scale, children and adolescents have always been known as the inheritors and future developers of every nation. Characterized as the formative stage in the development of personality, childhood is considered the "foundational stage" that determines the quality of a country's future human resources. Therefore, the care, education, and protection of children is not merely a moral responsibility of the family, but also a sustainable development strategy for all nations.

When World War II ended (1945), tens of millions of children in Europe, Japan, and colonized countries were orphaned, malnourished, unschooled, and living in refugee camps. In light of this situation, the United Nations (UN) made protecting children's rights a central focus of postwar reconstruction. The UN established UNICEF

in 1946, initially with an emergency mission to aid children in Europe, and subsequently expanded its scope globally. UNICEF focused on areas such as providing milk and other nutritional food, launching vaccination programs to prevent infectious diseases, supporting the establishment of basic education systems in developing countries, and protecting children's rights in the context of humanitarian crises and migration. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN proclaimed that "Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance" (United Nations, 1948). The Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) affirmed that "Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give" (United Nations, 1959). From 1945 to 1975, the world witnessed a significant shift in thinking and policies regarding child protection. If children were considered "dependent subjects" before the war, they were increasingly acknowledged as social agents requiring comprehensive investment in physical, intellectual, and moral development after the war. Regardless of ideology, child welfare was considered a pillar in reconstruction, social development, and the preservation of lasting peace. Thus, at both the national and international levels, children have consistently held a central position in long-term development strategies, reflecting humanity's special concern for its own future. The period from 1945 to 1975 was a unique historical era in human development, as the world emerged from the catastrophic World War II and entered the East-West confrontation of the Cold War. In this context, children became the most vulnerable group, yet also the focus of policies for reconstruction, education, and the building of new societies. The fact that Vietnam, a poor nation recently emerged from war, could organize an extensive child care system like the one in Thai Nguyen Province is a particularly notable achievement, demonstrating compatibility with the shared progressive and humanistic trends of the world.

Second, the Policies of the Vietnamese Government

In Vietnam, child care is mentioned early. In the first Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1946), the new government's concern for children was reflected in specific legal articles. The Vietnamese Constitution of 1959 also affirmed that "the issue of children in general and children's rights in particular has continuously developed, becoming an important component of Vietnam's constitutional law" (Vietnam Committee for Child Protection and Care, 1999, p. 14). Children were always a class of "special citizens" for whom President Ho Chi Minh showed particular attention. On May 15, 1961, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Young Pioneers' Organization, Uncle Ho sent a congratulatory letter to the children, in which he admonished them to carry out the Five Teachings:

Love the Fatherland, love your compatriots;
Study well, labor well;
Be united, be disciplined;
Maintain good hygiene;
Be honest and brave (Nguyen, Q.B., 2007).

Deeply imbued with President Ho Chi Minh's thought, the Vietnamese Party and State issued many guidelines and resolutions to guide the younger generation, notably Directive No. 197-CT/TW dated March 19, 1960, issued by the Central Party Committee on child and adolescent affairs. In the Directive, the Party clearly articulated its view on the role and position of children in the cause of national construction and defense: "Caring for children and adolescents means caring for the training and nurturing of a new generation that will not only serve the cause of national construction but also the cause of the struggle to defend the Fatherland and reunify the country. At the same time, caring for children also allows all strata of the population to feel reassured and encouraged by the good progress of their children, motivating them to enthusiastically participate in the struggle for national reunification" (Vietnam Labor Party, 1960).

Based on a correct understanding of the position, role, and importance of child protection and care, the Party determined that the objective was to train children to become patriotic workers who love their nation, possess health and culture, and serve the cause of the working people wholeheartedly. Children needed to be developed comprehensively-ethically, intellectually, physically, and aesthetically-and be ready to strive for the cause of socialism and national reunification (Vietnam Labor Party, 1960). Based on this, child and adolescent care work in Vietnam during 1960-1964 achieved many positive results, demonstrating the humanistic nature of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's government. These Party guidelines served as a crucial foundation for local governments, including Thai Nguyen Province, to lead child affairs.

Policies and Implementation Directives of Thai Nguyen Province

Since its establishment in 1945, the government and people of Thai Nguyen Province have implemented activities emphasizing the education of children and adolescents. From April 23 to April 29, 1952, the Provincial Women's Union issued a directive to all chapters to launch and observe a "Children Protection Week." The child protection movement became a shared duty, a driving force for the peace movement among the world's people, with women both domestically and internationally taking primary responsibility. In its annual development directions and tasks (from 1960 to 1964), Thai Nguyen Province consistently prioritized the development of

culture, education, and healthcare, with children and adolescents as the primary beneficiaries (Executive Committee of the Thai Nguyen Provincial Party, 2021). In executing Directive 197 from the Central Party Secretariat on child and adolescent affairs, the Standing Committee of the Thai Nguyen Provincial Party Committee issued Notice No. 61/TT-TN on July 15, 1964, concerning the education and protection of children and adolescents. The Notice stipulated that Thai Nguyen not only regarded children as subjects requiring care but also as a crucial force for the future- the owners of the country. Linking child affairs to the revolutionary cause, educating political consciousness, revolutionary ethics, and working-class qualities demonstrated the province's long-term strategic vision in building the foundation for the new human being. The Notice subsequently launched the movement "All Citizens Care for Children."

The Thai Nguyen Provincial Party Committee advocated for the protection and care of children to achieve key objectives: (1) to ensure the entire Party and population possess a correct understanding of child and adolescent education; (2) to further elevate the sense of responsibility toward the education of the future generation; and (3) to ensure everyone understands the Party's guidelines on child education and consciously educates their children according to the new methods, implementing the content of Uncle Ho's Five Teachings (Thai Nguyen Provincial Youth and Children Committee, 1964). The goals set forth by the Provincial Party Committee were not only theoretically sound but also consistent with social reality, particularly in the context of the early years of socialist construction in North Vietnam. This deep-seated orientation combined ideological, political, and educational efforts, balancing immediate and long-term goals, and reconciling individual responsibility with the role of the entire system.

To effectively implement the movement, the Provincial Party Committee assigned responsibility to the Provincial Committee for Children and Adolescents, the Youth Union, the Provincial Women's Union, the Provincial Labor Union, the Department of Education, the Department of Culture and Sports, and the Department of Commerce to create specific plans for the education and protection of children. Furthermore, the Provincial Party Committee advocated for the establishment and consolidation of Parents' Associations at the commune and enterprise level, and the creation of guidelines for child education. A notable highlight in the Provincial Party Committee's policy was the mobilization of participation from the entire society: from Party committees, government, and mass organizations down to individual families and every sector. The policy of the Thai Nguyen Provincial Party Committee is a typical example of visionary, systematic, and deeply humanistic leadership in child affairs, concretizing the policies of the Party and State in educating the future generation.

IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS

Research results show that during 1960-1964, Thai Nguyen Province built a relatively comprehensive child care system, integrating education, healthcare, recreation, and ideological training. These activities not only reflected the specific local conditions but also closely aligned with the development orientation of the Vietnamese State.

First, the Organizational Institution

Archival records show that the provincial government paid special attention to building institutions specifically dedicated to children. The Provincial Committee for Children and Adolescents was established to coordinate policy; meanwhile, grassroots organizations like the Young Sprouts Cooperatives and the Ho Chi Minh Young Pioneers' Organization (YPO) became direct channels for engaging children in collective life. Parents' Associations and the Youth Union were mobilized to support both academic and extracurricular activities. This system ensured that child protection was not a marginal task but an organic component of provincial governance.

In 1961, the Provincial Committee for Children and Adolescents was founded, tasked with researching organizational issues, content, and methods for educating children and adolescents to propose to the Party. The Committee was responsible for implementing the guidelines approved by the Party, creating specific plans to direct the children's movement, and overseeing, reviewing, and exchanging experiences in child education. It also selected, trained, and motivated cadres responsible for child affairs, and organized training schools and classes for leaders of extracurricular activities.

Immediately following the establishment of the Provincial Committee, districts such as Phu Binh, Phu Luong, Vo Nhai, Đại Từ, and the town centers successively established District-level Committees for Children and Adolescents. By 1964, most communes across Thai Nguyen had successfully established Commune Child Affairs Boards. The Standing Board, in coordination with the Provincial Youth Union, organized two training courses for 310 commune child affairs heads and deputies. Subsequently, the districts also held short training courses for local YPO leaders. Thanks to political and professional training, grassroots child affairs cadres firmly grasped the

guidelines and educational methods, helping to boost the "All Citizens Care for Children" movement (Executive Committee of the Thai Nguyen Labor Youth Union, 1963).

In implementing the Party's policy on the care and protection of children and adolescents, the Vietnam Labor Youth Union and the Vietnam Women's Union at all levels played a central role in organizing specific activities and serving as the bridge between the government and the masses in the education and care of the younger generation.

The Vietnam Labor Youth Union in Thai Nguyen Province served as the core force for directly organizing, guiding, and training the team of cadres responsible for child affairs, and directing the activities of the local Ho Chi Minh Young Pioneers' Organization. The Youth Union collaborated with schools, cultural centers, and local authorities to launch the "A Thousand Good Deeds" movement, organizing competitions, summer camps, and traditional activities to enhance political awareness, ethics, and the spirit of solidarity and patriotism among children. The Youth Union directed the creation of "Four Goods" sub-branches, one of which was to excel in child and adolescent work. By 1964, the Provincial Youth Union had selected and assigned Union members to take charge of the children. The Youth Union's activities delved deeply into the content of revolutionary ideal education, fostering a spirit of overcoming hardship and a collective consciousness among the children (Executive Committee of the Thai Nguyen Labor Youth Union, 1963).

The Vietnam Women's Union in Thai Nguyen Province, in its role as the representative organization for women-who directly attend to the spiritual and physical lives of children-actively propagated and mobilized families to maintain good hygiene, raise children scientifically, ensure nutrition, and prevent diseases. The Union also organized talks and seminars on children's rights and duties, guiding parenting skills in the new context. Simultaneously, the Union coordinated with local healthcare and education authorities to open literacy classes, kindergartens, and mobilize land donations for school construction, creating conditions for children-especially girls and ethnic minority children-to attend school.

The coordination among these organizations formed a tightly linked network in child and adolescent care work in Thai Nguyen. Each organization had its own function but aimed toward the common goal of creating an environment for the comprehensive development of children-physically, intellectually, ethically, and spiritually. This was a crucial foundation for raising the quality of youth education and simultaneously promoting the role of the masses in executing the social policies of the Party and State.

To properly care for children and adolescents, it was essential to gather them into mass organizations. Children (ages 6 to 9) participated in the August Children's Brigade, then progressed to the Young Pioneers' Organization (ages 9 to 15), and further developed into the Labor Youth Union (after age 15) before becoming members of the Vietnam Labor Party (after age 18). Consequently, the work of developing the YPO was promoted in Thai Nguyen; YPO branches were established in almost all hamlets and villages, except for some extremely remote areas in Võ Nhai district. Many schools attracted up to 90% of adolescents into the YPO for education; for example, Binh Thanh School (Dinh Hoa) had 120 Pioneers out of 133 adolescents. Statistics from 18 communes in Đại Từ district in 1964 showed 2,925 Pioneers out of a total of 3,993 adolescents, reaching a rate of 73.3%. Since most children were of school age, the issue of integrating the grassroots YPO organization into schools held the foremost importance (Thai Nguyen Provincial Youth and Children Committee, 1964).

The issue of transitioning older Pioneers into the Youth Union received increased attention during the 1960-1964 period. Many sub-branches assigned individual Union members to be responsible for the propaganda and education of specific children. The Youth Union also counted the number of 15-year-olds and organized training classes for the Union. Dong Hy district opened two classes for 390 children, resulting in the recruitment of over 200 into the Union. Quang Trung Secondary School (Phú Bình) had 25 students admitted to the Union out of 31 in the training group in 1964. In 18 communes of Đại Từ district, 63 out of 114 children who aged out of the YPO were admitted to the Union. During the "Dien Bien, Ap Bac Youth Union Member" campaign (1963-1964), Định Hóa district admitted 50 excellent former Pioneers into the Union. This recruitment had a significant ideological educational effect on the Pioneers while increasing the combat effectiveness of the Youth Union (Executive Committee of the Thai Nguyen Provincial Party, 1964).

The organization, by age group, with a development pathway from Pioneers -> Youth Union -> Party, demonstrated a systemic, logical, and highly politically oriented ideology. This is evidence of a planned ideological education sequence with a clear trajectory, avoiding breaks between generations. In the process of building and developing the Young Pioneers' Organization and the August Children's Brigade, activities were implemented systematically, from theory to practice, from organization to ideological education, clearly showing a long-term orientation, continuity, and suitability to the specific characteristics of the locality.

Cooperatives established Parents' Councils at the commune level and Parents' Sub-Associations in the towns, setting up guidelines for educating children and launching the "All Party, All People Care for Children" movement. Communes enacted guidelines for adolescent education. All exemplary parents adhered to the policy and performed good deeds for their children to follow. Parents dedicated time to their children's studies and health,

ensuring children were not overworked, and avoiding excessive physical punishment or spoiling. Parents helped children build three clubhouses as places for meetings, recreation, and reading newspapers. Kim Phượng Commune, despite having five ethnic minority groups, ensured all children of school age attended school (Thai Nguyen Provincial Youth and Children Committee, 1964).

Second, Ideological and Political Morality of Children

As Vietnam was being invaded by U.S. Imperialism, Vietnamese children were not only disadvantaged compared to children in other nations but were also expected to contribute to the fight against the common enemy. Consequently, Thai Nguyen Province profoundly educated a spirit of patriotism and hatred for U.S. Imperialism and its lackeys. Thai Nguyen Province, along with other localities in North Vietnam, launched the movement "Study and Labor for the Beloved South, for Peace and National Reunification" to instill patriotism, hatred for the US–Diệ̣m regime, and the consciousness of struggling for national reunification. Building on this, the province promoted the "Study Well" emulation movement and the Central-launched "A Thousand Good Deeds to Build the Homeland" movement. All members of the Young Pioneers' Organization and the August Children's Brigade memorized and strived to correctly follow Uncle Ho's Five Teachings. Every YPO team, hamlet, and city ward acquired a Young Pioneers' newspaper and established Team Book Cabinets (Thai Nguyen Provincial Youth and Children Committee, 1964).

Through major annual commemorations like the anniversary of the heroic People's Army (12/22), the Dien Bien Phu victory (5/7), and the heroic sacrifice of martyr Nguyen Van Troi, Thai Nguyen Province educated children about the heroic revolutionary traditions of the nation and the army. Consequently, children desired to contribute their small part to the cause of socialist construction and the liberation of the South for national reunification. Children in Thai Nguyen often aspired to become soldiers (Bộ đội) carrying guns to fight the US Imperialists and defend the Fatherland. Many children's teams followed the example of hero Tran Quoc Toan in helping compatriots and supporting the resistance. Children organized learning sessions about the fighting achievements of heroes and martyrs in their communes, and organized to help the families of wounded soldiers and martyrs by looking after younger siblings, cooking meals, herding buffalo, milling rice, and pounding grain. Simultaneously, children coordinated to preserve the martyrs' cemeteries.

The children's sense of discipline and their spirit of honesty and bravery were enhanced. With the theme "I Love and Learn from the Soldiers," children practiced order and discipline in schools. Many teams organized children to practice lining up, walking, and standing correctly, practicing avoiding airplanes, and some military maneuvers like throwing grenades. As a result, the sense of order and discipline was elevated, meeting the country's wartime requirements.

Third, Child Education

The government of Thai Nguyen Province played a central role in planning and implementing policies for the younger generation. By expanding and investing in the school system, Thai Nguyen Province clearly demonstrated its commitment to ensuring the right to education - one of the most fundamental rights of children.

Table 1. Number of General Education Schools in Thai Nguyen (1939-1964) (*unit: schools*)

School year	Total number of schools	Elementary school	Secondary schools	High schools
1939-1940	51	51	0	0
1955 - 1956	91	75	15	1
1959 - 1960	142	124	17	1
1960-1961	162	144	17	1
1961-1962	183	150	28	5
1963-1964	198	158	35	5
1964-1965	204	158	40	6

(Source: Compiled by the author from the annual reports of the Administrative Committee of Thai Nguyen Province)

During the period 1939–1940, under the French colonial policy of “obscurantist education,” the total number of schools in Thai Nguyen was only 51, all of which were primary schools (Level I); there were no lower secondary (Level II) or upper secondary (Level III) schools. The number of children in Thai Nguyen in particular, and in Viet Nam as a whole, who were granted access to schooling was therefore very limited. Consequently, after the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, both the central government and the authorities of Thai Nguyen Province were compelled to intensify the “Binh dân học vụ” (Mass Literacy) movement to eradicate

illiteracy. To achieve this goal, Thai Nguyen Province strengthened efforts to build schools so that children could attend school.

From the 1955-1956 academic year onward, following the anti-French resistance war, the authorities in Thai Nguyen clearly identified education as a central pillar in the strategy for human development, with particular emphasis on children as the future generation of the nation. The number of schools nearly doubled compared with the period before 1945, and for the first time lower secondary and upper secondary schools were established, thereby expanding educational opportunities for students of different age groups. During the period 1960-1965, the school system developed rapidly in both scale and structure. The total number of schools increased from 162 to 204 within only five years, of which lower secondary schools rose from 17 to 40 and upper secondary schools from 1 to 6. The education sector mobilized the population to establish preschool, primary, and lower secondary semi-public schools and to renovate existing school facilities. Thai Nguyen also paid attention to education in mountainous areas by building laboratories in Đai Tu and Đình Hoa districts; expanding dormitories in Võ Nhai and Đình Hoa; and establishing an additional boarding school for children from ethnic minority communities in highland areas (Duy, T.H.H., 2021).

This expansion not only reflects increased investment in education but also demonstrates Thai Nguyen Province's proactive efforts to create conditions for children to progress to higher levels of schooling, thereby gradually realizing the goal of universal lower secondary education. In essence, the growth of the school network represents not merely educational development but also a concrete manifestation of policies for child care and protection implemented through practical measures: ensuring the right to education, reducing school dropout rates, and creating an environment conducive to the comprehensive development of children's intellectual capacities and personal character.

The construction of laboratories in mountainous districts such as Đai Tu and Đình Hoa illustrates efforts to narrow the educational gap between advantaged and disadvantaged regions. The expansion of dormitory facilities in Võ Nhai and Đình Hóa enabled ethnic minority students and those from remote and isolated areas to enjoy more stable living and learning conditions, thereby reducing dropout rates and increasing access to knowledge. The establishment of additional schools for children in highland areas serving ethnic minority communities further reflects the humanistic vision underlying Thai Nguyen Province's education policy: ensuring that no child is left behind. Provincial authorities paid close attention to the specific needs of each area, creating learning conditions appropriate to the cultural practices, languages, and living conditions of different population groups. This significance is further illustrated in Table 2, which presents the number of general education students at each level during the same period.

Table 2. General Education Students Divided by Grade Level in Thai Nguyen (1939-1964) (*unit: persons*)

School year	Total number of kindergartener	Total Number of General education Students	Elementary	Secodary school	High school
1939-1940	0	2.020	2.020		
1955-1956	8.989	14.517	12.390	1.976	151
1956-1957	10.319	15.774	13.676	1.815	283
1957-1958	12.507	15.062	12.676	1.820	360
1958-1959	17.285	17.637	15.192	2.056	389
1959-1960	23.232	25.887	22.351	3.072	464
1960-1961	18.802	34.829	29.425	4.829	575
1962-1963	15.000	54.370	40.400	12.180	1.790
1963-1964	17.884	58.950	44.180	12.910	1.860

(Source: Author synthesized from annual reports of the Thai Nguyen Provincial Administrative Committee.)

The data presented in the tables show a clear picture of the development of general education in Thai Nguyen across important historical periods, from before the August Revolution to the era of socialist construction in North Vietnam. In the 1939-1940 school year, the total number of general education students across the entire province was only 2,020 reflecting the scarcity and limitations of the education system under French rule, especially at the lower levels.

However, after liberation, the total number of general education students in Thai Nguyen increased from 14,517 in school year 1955-1956 to 58,950 in 1963-1964, meaning an approximately fourfold increase in less than a decade. Notably, the number of beginning students (First Grade) from the 1955-1956 school year onward shows that the policy of universal education was effectively implemented from the very first levels. The 1964-1965

academic year saw nearly 20.000 children attending pre-school/kindergarten classes, and over 50.000 children attending Elementary, Secondary, and High School levels, accounting for nearly 90% of all children. Over 10% of children were not attending school due to excessively cold weather in mountainous areas, the long distance to schools that required crossing streams, and a lack of understanding among some parents regarding the purpose of schooling (Executive Committee of the Thai Nguyen Provincial Party, 2021).

Thus, the leapfrog development in both scale and quality across all educational levels clearly demonstrates the correct and effective guidelines of the Vietnamese Party and State in developing education, raising literacy, and training human resources for the cause of socialist construction. The comprehensive growth in scale, structure, and educational levels demonstrates a methodical, goal-oriented, and effective educational strategy that contributes to the elimination of illiteracy and ensures that school-age children have access to education. Thai Nguyen became the second mountainous province in North Vietnam (after Hoa Binh Province) and the first province in the Việt Bắc Autonomous Region to complete the First Five-Year Supplementary Education Plan (Executive Committee of the Thai Nguyen Provincial Party, 2021).

The Thai Nguyen provincial government also directed departments and agencies to coordinate the implementation of comprehensive education programs, integrating cultural, moral, and life skills education for children. As a result, education was not only a tool for knowledge transfer but also a means of protecting children from risks such as school violence, social evils, or the risk of early dropout. From 1960 to 1964, children practiced the motto, "What has been learned must be mastered; what has been done must be done well". Many schools set up guidelines for regular attendance, punctuality, orderly listening to lectures, enthusiastic participation, memorizing lessons, and completing all homework. Thai Nguyen Province promoted the "Two Goods": Good Teaching - Good Learning) emulation movement, striving for excellent academic performance to become advanced students and receive the reward from Uncle Ho. The Provincial Department of Education also launched the campaign to achieve the title "Dien Bien, Ap Bac Class" to successfully complete the academic year's objectives. Consequently, the learning atmosphere was vibrant, and the quality of education improved. In 1964, Uncle Ho commended seven excellent students from Thai Nguyen Province, five of whom were children (Thai Nguyen Provincial Youth and Children Committee, 1964).

Therefore, the strong and comprehensive development of the education sector in Thai Nguyen profoundly demonstrated the role of education as a central tool in child care and protection efforts, contributing to the formation of a generation of children with all-round development in intellect, ethics, health, and aesthetics, gradually realizing the goal that "children today are the world of tomorrow." This is also clear evidence of the strategic and humanistic thinking of the Vietnamese Party and State in linking educational development with the care and protection of children, the future owners of the country.

Four, Child Healthcare and Recreation

Regarding material life, the economy of Thai Nguyen Province gradually developed from 1960 to 1964. In agriculture, Thai Nguyen consolidated 286 cooperatives with sound production directions, and increasing yields led to improved livelihoods. The State no longer had to provide relief or sell rice to alleviate hunger, as in the previous period. Many cooperatives achieved an average monthly food consumption exceeding \$20 per person. Consequently, the lives of children significantly improved. During the cold season, children had warm clothes to wear and enough food to eat.

In terms of child healthcare, Thai Nguyen Province showed deep concern for protecting children's health and improving their living conditions during the 1960-1964 period, especially in the challenging rural and mountainous areas. Thai Nguyen gradually achieved the goal of one commune healthcare station per commune, creating conditions for children to receive medical examination, treatment, and routine health care. The health sector organized vaccination campaigns against diseases such as tuberculosis, measles, flu, diphtheria, whooping cough, and tetanus. Additionally, communes actively established grassroots medical cabinets for initial first aid and disseminated knowledge on safe drug use. Statistical documents from the Provincial Child Protection Committee explicitly note the survey of existing medical cabinets (123/149) and activities related to the use and distribution of medicine to children in the community. The Department of Health organized many talks to guide parents on scientific child-rearing and family planning. "Tiny Health Teams" were established to urge peers to practice personal hygiene and maintain the environment. Thai Nguyen Province launched the guideline of "eat clean, drink clean, wear clean", which children actively embraced. In the communes, children brought boiled water when going to school or herding buffalo, reflecting a clear shift in health consciousness.

The Department of Physical Education and Sports coordinated with the education sector to conduct physical exercise for students. In 1962, Thai Nguyen Province organized a children's sports festival, giving them a chance to compete. Simultaneously, Thai Nguyen opened an amateur sports training school to train children in disciplines like track and field and table tennis, resulting in 83 students in 1964 (Thai Nguyen Provincial Youth and Children

Committee, 1964). The Department of Physical Education and Sports organized a table tennis competition to select the delegation to compete across North Vietnam.

Regarding children's recreation and entertainment, many communes built reading rooms, clubhouses, libraries, playgrounds, and training grounds for children, such as Kim Phuong (Đình Hóa), Tân Thái (Đại Tu), Thanh Công (Pho Yên), Xuân Phuong (Phu Bình), Trung Vương, and Đồi Càn (Thai Nguyen City). Internationally, there is International Children's Day (June 1st). In Vietnam, alongside supporting the international children's movement, there is also the Mid-Autumn Festival. Annually on this day, the entire society increases its focus and attention on child care and protection efforts, promoting development and equality for children, and raising the awareness and responsibility of the entire society regarding the role and importance of child protection and care for the country's development (Thai Nguyen Provincial Youth and Children Committee, 1964). Summer camps and volunteer activities were also widely directed and implemented by the Provincial Committee for Children and Adolescents. Annually, during the Mid-Autumn Festival on August 15th in the lunar calendar) On the anniversary of National Day, September 2nd, communes in Thai Nguyen Province organized summer camps at the Town Stadium, with an average of about 4.000-5.000 children participating. There, children organized games, performed cultural acts, lit bonfires, and rode horses. Classes for singing, dancing, and painting were organized for children, with 200 to 310 participants across the districts and towns. Notably, in 1964, Thai Nguyen Province opened a long-term music school for children aged 7 to 12, with 3-4 sessions per week to foster comprehensive aesthetic, physical, and moral development, demonstrating the province's systematic and methodical investment in the younger generation's development.

In the context of the 1960-1964 period, when the population's spiritual life was still challenging, and modern media was not widespread, mobile cinema became one of the important forms of education and entertainment for children and adolescents. The Thai Nguyen provincial government promoted the role of cinema in child care, protection, and education. Thai Nguyen prioritized scheduling screenings for mobile units to reach schools and village cultural houses, ensuring children in difficult areas also had access to cinema. The films shown often contained content educating on morality, patriotism, national tradition, and lessons on friendship, diligence, and respect, helping children form positive personalities and enhance social understanding. This activity was coordinated with the education sector and the Youth Union to organize screenings integrated with YPO activities, Children's Day (June 1st), the Mid-Autumn Festival, and the opening of the school year, creating a joyful atmosphere and enriching the spiritual life of the students. This was a creative, indirect educational method, helping to compensate for material deficiencies to support schools and families in forming a healthy worldview and philosophy of life for children.

Thus, from 1960 to 1964, the work of child and adolescent care and education in Thai Nguyen Province achieved specific success. Overall, these activities show that Thai Nguyen established a comprehensive approach to child welfare, even under wartime conditions. Children were supported not only in education and healthcare but also participated in cultural life and moral education. Significantly, these practices anticipated many principles later codified in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, such as the rights to education, healthcare, and recreation. This positive outcome was partly due to the Thai Nguyen provincial government's thorough comprehension of central guidance and its creative application to local reality. The government and people of Thai Nguyen recognized the role and importance of child and adolescent care and education. Children and adolescents in Thai Nguyen were well-behaved, had a good sense of discipline, and actively participated in the learning and training movements launched by the government. The solidarity and unity from top to bottom were a crucial factor in the success of child care and protection work in Thai Nguyen Province before US imperialism began its war of destruction against North Vietnam. The tradition of "loving the young, respecting the elderly" in Thai Nguyen, in particular, and the country in general was continuously promoted.

LIMITATIONS

Despite the progress, the child and adolescent movement in Thai Nguyen Province from 1960 to 1964 still had some limitations: the construction of material facilities for children, playgrounds, training grounds, reading rooms, and clubhouses remained constrained; some localities neglected disease prevention hygiene. The main reasons for these limitations were primarily due to the country having just emerged from war, resulting in a scarcity of material resources. Thai Nguyen Province, like many localities in North Vietnam, was focused on implementing the First Five-Year State Plan to build the technical material base of socialism while concurrently providing aid to the Southern front. Consequently, resources allocated to child care and protection were limited. Thai Nguyen Province gradually addressed these limitations in its leadership process once peace was restored (Thai Nguyen Provincial Youth and Children Committee, 1964).

Thus, this research has clarified the influencing factors, policies, and the work of child and adolescent care and protection in Thai Nguyen Province (Vietnam) during the 1960-1964 period. However, in this study, the authors only analyzed archival records during this specific period and within a specific locality to clarify leadership activities and the practical reality of child care and protection. The results of this study will suggest future research directions on the same topic for the authors. Accordingly, the authors plan to survey other timeframes (periods of war or after peace was restored) and broader scopes to observe the continuity and systemic nature of child and adolescent care in Vietnam.

DISCUSSION

The research findings in Thai Nguyen during the 1960-1964 period demonstrate that the locality established a child welfare system that was both specific to its context and compatible with international norms that were formalized later. This section discusses the results in relation to theoretical frameworks and comparative cases.

Foreshadowing UNICEF's "Child-Sensitive Social Protection" Framework

UNICEF's Global Social Protection Programme Framework (2019) defines social protection for children as policies that integrate education, healthcare, and social participation within a coordinated system. The initiatives in Thai Nguyen clearly reflect this. The establishment of schools, healthcare stations, and children's clubs shows systemic coordination, while moral education reflects a holistic concern for children's development. Despite limited resources, Thai Nguyen demonstrated an early local effort to build a child-centered welfare system. UNICEF's Scaling Up Child Protection Framework (2021) emphasizes a phased process of institutionalization, which Thai Nguyen exhibited through the establishment of the Provincial Committee for Children and Adolescents and grassroots organizations like the Young Sprouts Cooperatives.

Compatibility with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

The UNCRC affirms children's rights to education, healthcare, and recreation. The activities in Thai Nguyen from the 1960s somewhat anticipated these rights. The expansion of schooling aligns with the right to education; vaccination and nutrition campaigns relate to the right to health care; and club activities and festivals reflect the right to play and participate in cultural life. Although these were not yet defined as individual "rights" at the time, the Thai Nguyen practice early demonstrated these later international standards.

Comparative Cases

The case of the Soviet Union (USSR) offers the closest comparison to Vietnam. Ball (1994) analyzed the state's response to the crisis of abandoned children through a centralized care system, while Kelly (2007) showed that Soviet childhood was strongly shaped by education and ideology. To organize children into active participants, the Soviet Union established the Lenin Young Pioneers' Organization. Vietnam inherited this development experience by establishing the Ho Chi Minh Young Pioneers' Organization. In the 1960-1964 period, Thai Nguyen perfected its organizational structure, sharing this similarity through its focus on education, ideology, and collective mobilization. However, a difference exists: the USSR's welfare system was large-scale and heavily state-funded, whereas Thai Nguyen primarily relied on community participation. This indicates that Vietnam adopted Soviet principles but implemented them in accordance with local capacity.

In China, Wong (1998) pointed out that Chinese welfare policy sought to integrate vulnerable groups, with child care and education as the main instruments. China's Little Red Guards Children's Brigade was built with the task not only of focusing on study and training but also of cultivating a spirit of patriotism, class struggle, and communist ideals. Child care in socialist countries was implemented comprehensively across fields: widespread development of public kindergartens and pre-schools, free vaccination and medical treatment for children, development of children's culture (children's houses, comic book publishing, dedicated radio/TV programs), and involving children in collective production and training summer camps. The Thai Nguyen case reflects a similar trend by extending education and healthcare to rural and mountainous children. Both emphasized the collective spirit, evident through cooperatives and community organizations. However, unlike China, where welfare was closely linked to work units, Thai Nguyen relied more on the commune/village level, schools, and youth organizations. This represents a unique adaptation by Vietnam (Vietnam Committee for Child Protection and Care, 1999).

In developed capitalist countries like the UK, France, Sweden, the US, and Canada, child care after 1950 was placed within a state welfare framework. Programs supporting family planning, child health insurance, public nurseries, mandatory vaccinations, and universal education were implemented early. These countries viewed children as a national asset, and investment in the younger generation was seen as protecting national security and ensuring future sustainable growth. In the modern era, Mathias Urban (2009) affirmed that Early Childhood

Education (ECE) is recognized as essential for young children's development and an integral part of society. The research emphasizes the importance of providing quality ECE for all children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to ensure they reach their full potential. Despite progress in access, the quality of ECE in some countries remains uneven, and financial issues are a factor causing inequality in access to services. In Thai Nguyen, despite the context of war and poverty, ECE development was prioritized to address illiteracy left by colonial rule, while also caring for children's health and aesthetics. However, due to ongoing difficulties, material facilities for pre-schools in Vietnam remained limited.

Broader Implications

The comparative discussion shows that the Thai Nguyen experience is not just a local phenomenon but reflects the intersection between the socialist model and international norms. Despite limited resources, the provincial government built a child welfare system consistent with principles later acknowledged internationally. The Thai Nguyen case enriches international scholarship by demonstrating that developing countries experimented with child-centered protection models very early on, before they became global standards.

The case of Thai Nguyen Province during the 1960-1964 period not only provides insight into social governance in Vietnam but also holds significance for contemporary debates on child welfare and local governance in developing nations. The archival reconstruction shows that child care work was integrated into national construction projects and socialist modernization. This experience yields several implications that remain relevant for current social policy:

1. Emphasizes the role of local government in actualizing central directives. Without concretization into provincial programs, policy can easily become merely formal. In today's context of decentralization, this lesson is even more important.
2. Thai Nguyen's integration of education, healthcare, and culture proves the value of a holistic approach. Modern child-sensitive social protection frameworks also affirm this.
3. The case reveals the tension between "care" and "control." Welfare policy simultaneously protected and mobilized children toward ideological goals—an issue that persists in current debates.
4. Thai Nguyen's initiatives anticipated many principles later codified in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), showing that global discourse has local origins.
5. Finally, Thai Nguyen achieved success despite conditions of war and resource scarcity by focusing on the care and protection of the future generation. The lesson for current policy is that political will and community mobilization can compensate for resource limitations.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the protection and care of children and adolescents in Thai Nguyen Province during the (1960-1964) period, a crucial era in the process of socialist construction in North Vietnam. Archival records show that the local government established a relatively comprehensive child welfare system, integrating education, healthcare, cultural activities, and moral education. Notable initiatives included the establishment of the Provincial Committee for Children and Adolescents and the creation of grassroots organizations like the Young Sprouts Cooperatives, thereby integrating children into both school and collective life.

Despite challenging local conditions, Thai Nguyen Province consistently prioritized care and education to improve children's material and spiritual lives. The "All Citizens Care for Children" movement, widely implemented in Thai Nguyen during 1960–1964, not only affirmed the independent agency of children in society, reserving all priorities and the highest level of protection for them, but also served as the basis for families, relevant agencies, organizations, and the State to implement activities and policies consistent with children's needs and aspirations. From a midland province with many difficulties, Thai Nguyen became a shining example of organizing a comprehensive, creative, and humanistic child care system. These highlights not only possess historical value in implementing central policies but also offer profound suggestions for contemporary social policy models—as Vietnam aims to build a human-centered, sustainable society rooted in the community.

The article's contribution is showing how provincial-level governance in Vietnam actualized central directives into concrete activities while achieving compatibility with international norms very early on. The Thai Nguyen case thus not only enriches Vietnamese historiography but also contributes to global scholarship on child welfare. In terms of current policy, this experience underscores the importance of building a child protection system that is both appropriate to the local context and aligned with international standards. This study analyzed child care work in Thai Nguyen during the 1960-1964 period, situating it within the broader context of socialist social governance and international children's rights frameworks. Through archival records, the article points out that the local government concretized central directives into integrated programs spanning education, healthcare, culture, and

youth mobilization. The research results emphasize the decisive role of local governance, the importance of comprehensive integration, and the ability to maintain a welfare system even under conditions of scarcity. Comparison with the USSR, China, Western countries, and the later UNCRC shows both similarities in the socialist welfare model and unique adaptation by Vietnam.

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