

WXPPost JUL 7 1975 Group Hunts Jobs for Skilled Vietnam Refugees

By Gail Robinson

Washington Post Staff Writer

A volunteer effort is under way to utilize techniques of private employment agencies in an attempt to find suitable jobs for highly-skilled Vietnamese refugees. Capital Area Personnel Services Association an organization of private employment agencies in the Washington area, placed 6 of 31 Vietnamese applicants during its first week of existence and has arranged interviews for several others with engineering and architectural firms.

Conceding that many Vietnamese refugees do not meet certification requirements for some jobs, Project Assist hopes to find them work in areas related to their careers in Vietnam.

Dr. William Stuart, president of CAPSA, said a for-

mer engineer may be placed as a draftsman while a doctor may be able to work in a hospital.

Although Project Assist would be willing to place refugees in unskilled positions, Stuart said, "We try to be very alert that we don't want people presuming" the Vietnamese will take any job "simply because of their plight."

Project Assist opened June 23 and expects to close at the end of July. "We decided to do this on an all-out basis for one month," Stuart said.

During its first week, the organization placed an \$8,000-a-year secretary, a nurse's aide hoping to become certified as a nurse, a tailor and a salesperson. "There are more than minimum wage jobs," project director Myra Lenard, said.

The philosophy behind the project is that private per-

sonnel agencies have skills and resources which many volunteer groups and agencies, such as the United States Employment Service, do not have. "They fill jobs while we place people," Stuart said.

"We wanted to react positively to the President's appeal (for Americans to help the refugees), and we're acutely aware of the problems these people would face in the job market," Mrs. Lenard explained. "We thought we would recognize success in this (the placement) area."

According to Stuart, some CAPSA members thought it unfair to extend such services to the Vietnamese without helping unemployed Americans, so Project Assist decided to aid the so-called hard-core unemployed but not seek them out.

After the project was conceived, CAPSA found free

office space for July at 1010 Vermont Ave. NW with the provision that the group clean and paint the suite of offices.

Job placement is provided free of charge to both applicant and prospective employer.

Vietnamese have been referred to Project Assist from numerous government agencies including USES, the Labor Department and the State Department. Virtually all of the 31 Vietnamese applicants, according to Mrs. Lenard, are being sponsored by families in the Washington area. Vietnamese who do not have sponsors are still in refugee camps.

Mrs. Lenard said most persons who have contacted Project Assist are "highly educated and highly skilled... a good percentage have been educated in the United

States." The group includes men and women between ages 19 and 55.

"We take education and experience into account," she explained. "If there is no way we can place them in their field, we try to find a job for them with a general support staff or an entry level job." The latter can be taken by someone beginning a new career, she indicated.

"Certain types of jobs are difficult to utilize here, particularly military careers," she said.

Mrs. Lenard said she has encountered no hostility toward the Vietnamese, and Stuart agreed that any hostility toward Project Assist usually vanishes once its purpose is fully explained.

"There are many people who want to help," Mrs. Lenard said.