

Approximate Facts and Figures about Indochinese Unaccompanied Minor Refugees

Resettled in Canada and Europe

Country	Approximate Total of UM From S.E.A.	Age upon Arrival	no. Refugees from S.E.A. in Resettlement Country	Initial Placement		
				Joined Family Members in Resettlement Country	Settled with Peer Groups (Group Care)	Foster Family Placement
CANADA*	500	11 - 17	80,000		5%	95%
FRANCE	6,500 (3,588 between '79-83)	15 - 18	approx. 100,000/ 6.5% UM	55% (3,575)		10% (650)
GERMANY (Fed. Rep. of)	approx. 1,482 1,350 Vietnamese 132 Cambodians	12 - 16	25,000 6% UM		75 - 80%	20 - 25%
DENMARK	153 Montagnard 141 Vietnamese approx. 294	6 - 22 10 - 18				a few younger children
NETHERLANDS	870 Vietnamese	14 - 18	15% of S.E.A. refugee population	52% (502)	27% (235)	6% Dutch 2% Viet. families
SWEDEN	150 S.E.A. approximately	14 - 18				
UNITED KINGDOM	222 S.E.A.	3 - 17	17,000 1.3% UM			
BELGIUM	154 S.E.A.		3,250/5% UM			100%
ITALY	12 Cambodians	10 - 16				100%
SWITZERLAND		13 - 17				

*NOTE: Figures do not include minors arriving with relatives or joining relatives.

The statistics are somewhat misleading since many jurisdictions, unlike Canada, count minors arriving with relatives or rejoining relatives as unaccompanied minors.

Europe versus Canada

Europe, in many cases, utilized different considerations in the resettlement process, such as keeping the minors in their own ethnic group and taking the minors' preference into account in the mode of placement.

The arguments favouring group living versus foster care were:

(i) enables the minors to act as a mutual support group;

(ii) allows them to communicate, retain cultural and ethnic links, deal with traumatic experience collectively over a period of time;

(iii) ethnic and cultural differences are the core of the children's identity and must be preserved on their terms and not on those of the resettlement country;

(iv) permits gradual adjustment to the new culture;

(v) facilitates preservation of culture and language, which in turn facilitates reintegration in case of family reunion;

(vi) no loyalty conflicts between natural family and foster family;

(vii) no pressure to integrate too fast;

(viii) most unaccompanied minors wished to live together in groups, especially if they had escaped together.