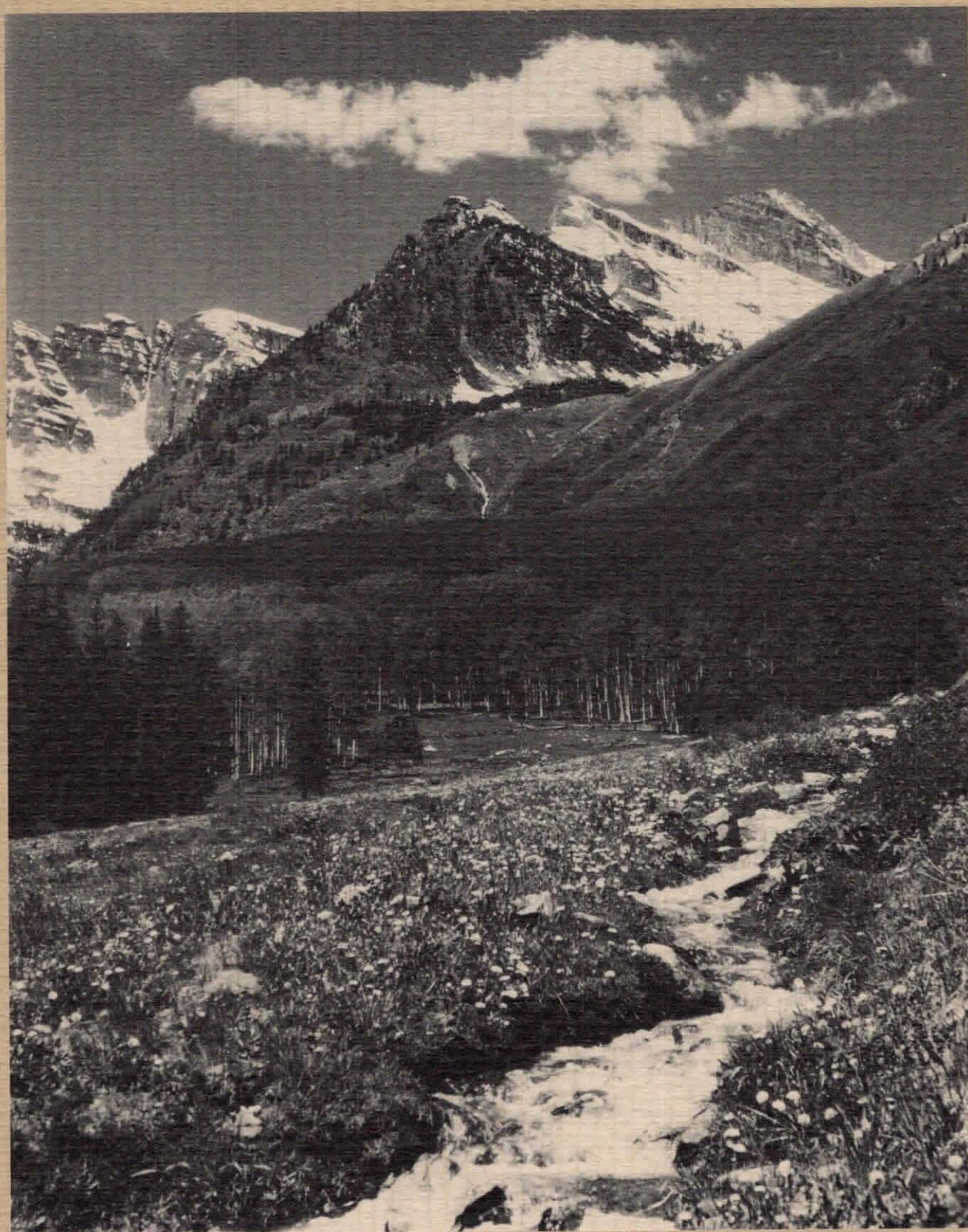


Volunteer Agencies in the International Arena



A Report on the First Annual Session of the Community International Fellows Program

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Introduction

Some fifty members of community-based volunteer organizations involved in international exchange programs participated in a week-long International Fellows Program held in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in June, 1980. Sponsored by the United States International Communication Agency (USICA) and the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, the program had a two-fold purpose. It was designed, in part, to increase the participants' understanding of U.S. involvement in world affairs in the 1980s by examining substantive international issues. At the same time, the program dealt with the needs and challenges of international exchange organizations themselves. A number of speakers addressed themselves to the central problems of locating, recruiting, and stimulating volunteers, but equally important, perhaps, was the exchange that took place among the participants themselves.

Assembled in this report are brief summaries of the presentations which highlighted the institute program. The first section covers the speakers who described the world in which we find ourselves in the 1980s—in a sense, the global stage on which the participating organizations play out their parts. The second section features presentations which examine the state of volunteer exchange agencies and prospects for their continued growth and usefulness. The talks ranged from descriptions of the domestic political and social forces which affect the work of the agencies, to

workshops offering specific guidelines for recruiting and maintaining volunteers. The texts of two complete talks are included as appendices and must stand as representatives of the many other fine presentations too lengthy to include here in their entirety.

Speakers represented a mix of public and volunteer agencies, all engaged in the international arena. While coming from a variety of backgrounds, however, speakers and participants alike shared the view that the people-to-people approach to international issues is just as valid and important as government efforts in strengthening relations among nations—a conviction confirmed time and again during the course of the week.

The opportunity to meet people from organizations that take different approaches to similar problems was an important, albeit easily overlooked, aspect of the International Fellows Program. This conference was one of the first opportunities for members of private voluntary organizations to get together, share ideas, exchange information, and debate the merits of continuing to work independently of one another.

In a larger sense, the object of this first meeting of the Community International Fellows Program was understanding—understanding volunteers and volunteering, understanding peoples of other nations, and understanding members of organizations with which we share mutual interests. Whether our organizations fail because we wish to protect our “turf,” or tensions in the world increase and lead to a global disaster, will depend upon our ability and willingness to understand. We hope that the International Fellows Program helped to increase participants' understanding, and we commit ourselves to furthering this goal at future Fellows Programs.

Jerry Inman
United States International
Communication Agency
and
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Charles F. Kettering Foundation
Co-organizers of the International
Fellows Program

The International Scene: Setting the Stage

As the world shrinks and the interdependence among nations grows, relationships between the United States and other nations will inevitably change, agreed many speakers who shared their international expertise with participants of the week-long institute program. The United States, speakers pointed out, no longer holds the unparalleled world position to which it laid claim immediately after the Second World War, and developing nations which did not even exist twenty years ago are demanding a greater voice in policies that affect their destinies. The Soviet Union has gained superpower status, and U.S. relations with nations in the Pacific Basin are more stable now than they were even five years ago.

An International "Mason-Dixon" Line

Relationships between the predominantly industrialized nations in the Northern Hemisphere and the developing countries, largely located in the Southern Hemisphere, will play an important role in the 1980s, according to John Sewell of the Overseas Development Council. Issues emanating from what Sewell referred to as North/South relations will affect more and more Americans in the eighties, he said, and will involve economic matters now considered by many Americans to be largely domestic issues.

On the whole, the economic growth of developing countries has been spectacular over the last twenty-five to thirty years, said Sewell. They have grown much faster than the industrial nations grew in the past, he said, noting that in the 1970s average growth rates of the less developed countries were nearly 6 percent a year, while those of the industrialized nations were a little over 3 percent. However, he pointed out, this development has been very uneven. Some countries have made progress, and many people in 1980 are worse off than they were in 1970.

Developing countries are going to play much more important economic and political roles in the 1980s, Sewell continued. The industrialized countries used to ask what they could do for developing nations, but now, because of the interaction of their economies, what happens in developing nations affects the economies of the industrialized countries. For example, he explained, "The decision of the developing nations not to cut back on economic growth during the first Arab oil boycott in 1973-74 dampened the effects of this event appreciably on the industrialized nations because the developing countries continued to purchase goods from the industrial world."

The developing countries want to participate more in decisions on trade changes, monetary policies, regulation of multinational corporations, and systems of transferring foreign aid, continued Sewell. "The demands of the developing countries are not to change the system radically," he said, "but rather to have a more equitable share and participation in that system." He maintained that a new set of international actors is emerging. There is no longer a developing world, but rather a series of different groups of nations in the Third World—quite striking in their differences. The advanced developing countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong are well on their way to industrialization. The middle-income countries like Malaysia and Zambia, which depend on the export of raw materials and some manufacturing, are doing quite well. Finally, there are the forty poorest countries which are located mostly in Africa and Southeast Asia. Their per capita income remains below that of the United States at the time of the American Revolution. Prospects for these countries in the 1980s are not good, Sewell predicted.

The speaker cited economic issues to illustrate the interdependence inherent in North/South relations. He pointed out that unemployment will be a key problem in industrialized countries in the 1980s. In developing nations, however, unemployment rates are often lower than in our own country because, there, anyone who is engaged even in selling "shoe laces, plastic doodads, or shoeshines on the street" is considered employed. But the real issue in those countries, he cautioned, is underemployment—a number of people are working very hard for very long hours for very little pay.



However, continued Sewell, when properly conducted, trade between the North and the South can benefit everyone. The developing countries' abilities to produce consumer goods cheaply and the industrialized nations' capacities to produce high-technology goods and heavy industrial equipment should prove beneficial for all if the trade-offs can be made equitable.

Sewell believes that in the United States the weight of decision making in the 1980s will shift from the executive to the legislative branch. No organization like Congress with its 535 "chiefs" can create a coherent policy, he said; decision makers in the private sector will gain more power, and the need for citizen education about international affairs will become very great. As a result, volunteer organizations

involved in international affairs will probably be asked for more help and advice throughout the decade.

Stressing the urgency for cooperation between developing and industrialized nations, Sewell said, "When one talks about the shape of the world in the year 2000, one is not talking about an abstract concept. I don't plan to retire until after the year 2000. The decisions people make in the 1980s will have a vast impact on what the world will be like in the year 2000."

The U.S.S.R. : A View from the Left

If the emerging nations still have one foot in the wings, there is no doubt that the Soviet Union occupies a large portion of center stage and that the crucial importance of U.S./Soviet relations cannot be overstated.

Philip Stewart, professor of political science at Ohio State University, Sovietologist, and rapporteur since 1972 for the Dartmouth Conference (a dialogue between private citizens of the United States and the Soviet Union) provided participants with a rare opportunity to gain insights into Soviet thinking by describing the Soviet view of the American political scene. Stewart explained that "the Soviet Union tends to see—and I think this is a fundamental Soviet belief—that the political process in the U.S. is comprised of two groups. One is a group of 'realistic' people who recognize the dangers of nuclear war; who recognize that the U.S.S.R. is now a powerful, equal partner; who recognize that military superiority has lost its political utility; who recognize that the U.S. can no longer maintain a dominant position in the world by military force alone and that therefore it is essential to come to an accommodation with the Soviet Union. The Soviets believe that while not giving the Soviet Union anything, this group of Americans simply recognizes the U.S.S.R. as another great power in the world, recognizes its right to compete for influence in the world, and recognizes it as a power that must be dealt with as an equal—openly and honestly."

But while they believe that this first group recognizes political reality in the world, Stewart said, the Soviets define a second group as a broad coalition of military-minded people—the anti-detente forces. As a result of the Vietnam War, Soviets believe that the anti-detente forces suffered a severe setback and the "realistic" forces came to the fore. As the 1970s unwound, the "realistic" forces, in the Soviets' view, were outmaneuvered; they failed to form a solid relationship with the Soviet Union and have now succumbed to the temptation to seek narrow, short-term advantages.

Stewart explained that, from 1974 onward, the pro-detente forces gradually became weaker, in the Soviets' view. They placed hopes on the SALT process, but after President Carter came to office, they said, even the SALT process was sacrificed for the president's own personal interest in the human rights campaign. Not, the Soviets claimed, that they objected to human rights concerns, but that the president should personally involve himself was regarded as a sign of bad faith. Indeed, with respect to arms control as a process, the Soviets now argue that, as early as 1977, when a German and American study group talked about a greater strengthening of the NATO structure, the West gave up a serious interest in this area. Stewart added that the Soviets maintain the SALT treaty was dead long before their decision to go into Afghanistan.

From the Soviet perspective, according to Stewart, the period of detente was one in which the United States falsely argued that the U.S.S.R. wished to use detente for its own purposes. The Soviets alleged that the United States sought a change in Soviet domestic politics, increased Jewish emigration, and better treatment of Soviet dissidents—causes which the Soviets regarded as attempts to interfere with their internal affairs. Whether there is any basis for the Soviet views, said Stewart, is one question. But the U.S. must be able to hear what the Soviets are saying if it expects to deal with them realistically and arrive at some kind of workable relationship.

A Pacific Scenario

While prospects for detente with the Soviet Union have dimmed in the past five years, U.S. relationships with other nations—notably in the Far East—have strengthened considerably during that time.

"If one had predicted five years after the end of our long and traumatic involvement in Vietnam that our position in the Pacific would be as strong as it is today, no one—optimist or pessimist—would have found the prediction credible," Anthony Albrecht, deputy assistant secretary, Bureau

of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, United States Department of State, told the participants. "In the past three years we have redefined the proper role for the U.S. in the area. In so doing, we have strengthened our national security in a critical region at a critical time."

Reminding participants that one cannot, of course, lose sight of the difficult challenges in the region such as Vietnamese aggression and the North Korean commitment to reunite the peninsula on its own terms, the speaker nevertheless felt that, on balance, the situation is a promising one. He reviewed the major American achievements in the Pacific Basin over the past three years:

- There has been a significant and steady growth in the relationship between the U.S. and Japan—our most important Asian ally.
- Relations between the People's Republic of China and the U.S. were normalized in December, 1978. This improvement is currently manifested by such developments as a U.S.-China trade agreement, including most-favored-nation status; the extension of investment guarantees; and the revision of our policy permitting the sale of high technology to China.
- The U.S. has negotiated a revision of the Philippine Base Agreement, which assures our access to vital bases until 1991, with a revision of the agreement scheduled for 1984.
- The five nations of Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, which comprise the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), are the core around which the U.S. rebuilt its policy in Southeast Asia since 1977. During that time, trade with these countries has increased by some 30 percent.
- The U.S. has renewed its support for the security of Thailand.
- President Carter has decided to resettle 168,000 refugees a year from Southeast Asia.
- We have witnessed the peaceful transition from colonialism to independence of a dozen Pacific nations.

Proposals for increased cooperation among the nations surrounding the Pacific have arisen intermittently since the early 1960s. Behind nearly all of these, the speaker explained, is the hope that Pacific nations might develop an affinity for each other similar to that found in the Atlantic community.

In 1978, the late Prime Minister Ohira of Japan gave new impetus to this idea by announcing support of a Pacific Community" comprising Japan, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the rapidly developing nations of East Asia.

While there still is no formal U.S. position on a Pacific Community, it is clear, Albrecht emphasized, that we must not attempt to move any faster than the countries of the area desire, keeping in mind the interests of the ASEAN nations, avoiding any impression that either the U.S. or Japan is trying to use the Pacific Community concept as a means of dominating the area, and keeping an open position on the sticky question of which countries would be members of such an organization.

The United States as Breadbasket

No national boundaries contain the worldwide problems of hunger and malnutrition, said speaker Ronald E. Stenning, director of U.S. Programs for Church World Service, who outlined the magnitude of world food needs and described the role the United States plays in an increasingly interdependent food system.

The United States is undoubtedly the major figure in global food matters, he said. It is the major supplier for many countries that depend on commercial imports for their food needs, and it also provides, on concessional or grant terms, equivalent amounts of food supplies to developing countries that experience chronic or occasional food shortages, whether due to natural or human factors.

Stenning reported that in 1980 this country will provide 50 percent of the world's wheat exports and 25 percent of all rice exports. In 1978 and 1979 we exported 64 percent of all our wheat production, 42 percent of the soybean production, and 46 percent of the rice, and from 1970 to 1980, he said, the total volume of U.S. exports of food has gone up 66 percent.

The United States has as much control over global food needs as the Arab oil-producing nations have over global energy needs, said Stenning. In fact, he said, other nations view the U.S. use of food in the same way that Americans see the oil-producing nations' use of oil. The speaker noted that "the U.S. benefited economically from the control it had over basic food crops before the Arab oil-producing nations began to benefit economically from the control they have over oil supplies."

Decisions related to who receives assistance—and how much—have been influenced by U.S. economic, political, and national security interests, which frequently override considerations of human needs, claimed Stenning. And, he added, while many Americans believe that humanitarian concerns motivate the U.S. foreign assistance program, that perception does not match the view others have of how the United States uses its assistance—or, in some instances, with the realities of the allocation process. However, he said, the scale of past levels of U.S. assistance should not be minimized.

U.S. food policy needs considerable organizational reform, Stenning maintained. There should exist a single cabinet-level agency with clear responsibility for representing development needs in the formulation of all international policy concerns. Only in this way can we hope to have consistent U.S. food policy, he said.

Further, Stenning continued, the purpose of development and food assistance needs attention. Objectives should be clarified and new policies that hold out some hope and promise for reducing human misery and promoting greater justice should be established. Religious groups now active in the public policy arena are currently making specific recommendations for changes which will make U.S. aid policies and programs more responsive to human needs. He pointed out that the need for such reorganization is given urgency by the widely accepted projections of increased food shortages and widening malnutrition in the coming years unless decisive action is taken to improve the current situation.

Ultimately, the speaker concluded, it is important to realize that we are never going to overcome hunger and malnutrition merely by increasing the level of food produc-

tion or food reserves. The only durable solution to hunger is the reduction of poverty itself, a formidable challenge to the world economic system.

Consciousness Raising

While it may be disconcerting to find that U.S. efforts at humanitarianism are coldly regarded in some quarters as sheer opportunism, it is nevertheless essential to recognize that that view exists, speakers pointed out. The need to operate in today's world with informed insight and understanding ran like a theme song through the presentations, sounded in the background by some speakers and brought to the forefront by others such as Alice Ilchman of the United States International Communications Agency (USICA), Peter Bird Martin, executive director of the American Universities Field Staff, and C. Payne Lucas, director of AFRICARE.

One key to building an appropriate foreign policy constituency in the United States is education—primarily the informal, yet invaluable, education derived from foreign travel and meeting foreign visitors, Ilchman told participants. Unfortunately, Americans have, for many years, taken a rather patronizing view of the scholars of other nations—particularly those from developing nations. The general assumption in the U.S., she said, was that we have more to teach foreign visitors in the disciplines or professions than we have to learn from them in a mutual exchange. We were, and to a great degree still are, more interested in our effect on other countries than in the effect of other countries on our own culture and economy, Ilchman claimed.

With the development of area studies in the 1950s, Americans wanted direct access to field sites, archives, or population samples, explained Ilchman. They would work in India or Nigeria, "researching" the peoples, cultures, and civilizations but not always knowing the scholars or understanding their ideas.

In recent years, however, increasing numbers of American scholars have placed a higher value on the possibilities of real exchange, the speaker said. Many American social scientists now want access not to field sites but to scholars in other countries. Also, and perhaps more important, the study of a number of social science problems has shifted from a preoccupation with methodology and numbers, where the United States was the leader, to the more humanistic contextual approach presently developing among European scholars.

Information about other peoples and their cultures is also provided by the media, whose limitations were discussed by Peter Martin, a journalist and editor for some



thirty years. Press, television, and radio are quick to report coups, assassination attempts, and natural disasters that occur in other countries, he said, but they usually fail to portray the day-to-day activities of the peoples of foreign nations.

Martin pointed out that while the organizations represented at the Community International Fellows Program are interested in processes, the media are not interested in *covering* processes. A revolution in Nicaragua, OPEC's increasing oil prices, or a war between Egypt and Israel is news; that's what interests the media. Newspapers, television, and radio cannot report daily on the fact that four hundred million children go to bed hungry every night, the speaker said. A newspaper may publish that figure one day, but what will it do the next day? Such processes are not news to television, radio, magazine and newspaper editors, Martin explained, and there is no miraculous method to make such things news.

By and large, information about world events that concerns international exchange organizations must come from the organizations themselves, maintained C. Payne Lucas, who argued that it is up to organizations like his to

inform and educate the public. If international volunteer organizations can convince the average American that one out of six or one out of seven jobs in the United States is related to foreign assistance and foreign trade, he said, then Americans will start to understand the reasons for supporting these organizations' programs.

Illustrating the economic benefits of international cooperation, Lucas said that "when you consider that AFRICARE is participating in a \$6 million program in Upper Volta over the next six years, of which \$3 million will end up in the hands of Americans because we're buying American bulldozers, equipment, and supplies, and paying American technicians, then the whole business of interdependence is seen in a new light." A few such examples as this—which abound in exchange organizations, he added, do much to persuade the public that foreign aid is not a giveaway program, but rather an integral part of our economy. Once U.S. citizens become convinced of interdependence, said Lucas, a foreign policy constituency will grow, and more persons will support the people-to-people diplomacy advocated by international exchange organizations.

People-to-People Diplomacy: The Role of the Volunteer Agencies

While the program was devised, in part, to broaden the backgrounds of participants regarding some of the large-scale international issues relevant to their missions, it was aimed also at the more immediate concerns which engage them in their work. Thus, talks on world trends were complemented throughout the week-long sessions by presentations designed to enhance participants' understanding and capabilities as leaders of international volunteer agencies working at the community level.

Volunteers: The 1980 Models

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the eight organizations which attended the Community International Fellows Program, and the conference appropriately began with a presentation by Ruth Robbins, of the League of Women Voters, who traced past and present attitudes toward volunteering and outlined major changes in patterns of volunteering today.*

Despite the millions of Americans—one out of every four citizens over the age of thirteen—involved in volunteer work today, “there are many who believe that voluntarism is in a state of profound transition if not a state of siege,” Robbins told participants. Among the forces she cited as eroding the volunteer movement are inflation and the women's movement, which have driven or enticed women to seek full-time paid employment; general disillusion with the utility of social or political activism following the Vietnam War and Watergate; and discouragement in the face of many of this country's “intractable problems.”

Voluntarism is far from dead, Robbins believes, although “the patient could be healthier.” There is, in fact, growing evidence that in a post-industrial society voluntarism will actually increase and that the caliber of those involved will improve, she said. Trends also indicate, however, that many volunteers won't make a long-term commitment to a cause or organization, and that they will be more demanding with regard to what they are willing to contribute, she added.

*Full text appears in Appendix A.

Organizations recruiting and employing volunteers, then, must reassess their operations and learn to adapt to the new trends in voluntarism, Robbins advised. “With changing life-styles, mobility, shorter organizational attention spans, and an increasingly competitive buyer's market for volunteers, it goes without saying that we cannot rely on past techniques if we are to meet the future,” she said.

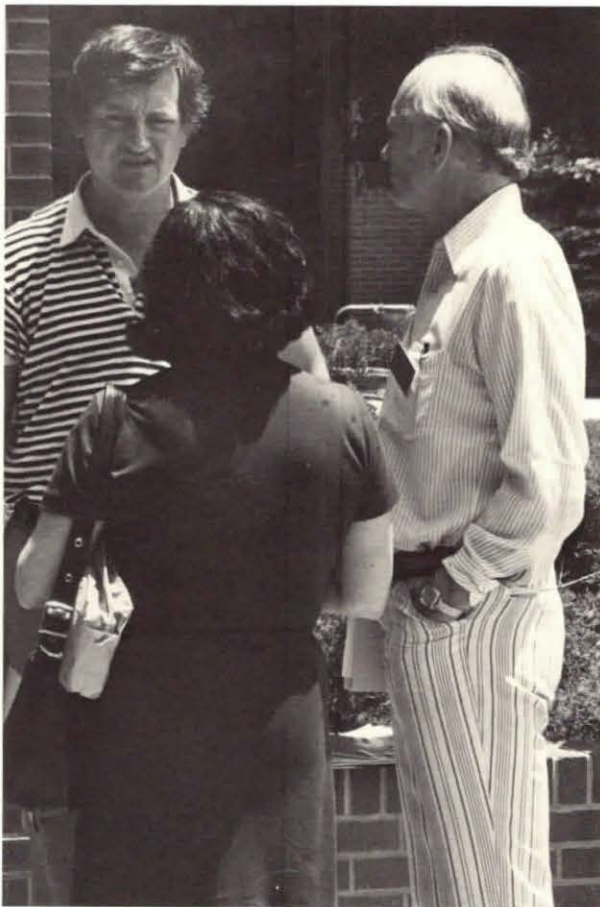
Robbins suggested a number of approaches tailored to the changing patterns of voluntarism. These included emphasis on volunteer work as a springboard for other career opportunities; willingness to accept less than full-time involvement; holding meetings at times and places that will better accommodate members' conflicting schedules; recognizing that many volunteers want challenging, responsible work, commensurate with their skills; and providing skills training for volunteers who are quickly thrust into leadership roles.

“If voluntarism is uniquely suited to a democratic form of government, then the groups in this room are uniquely suited to both voluntarism and democracy. Whether we keep in step with the world or drag our feet and lose our vitality is up to us. But change we must,” Robbins concluded.

America's Best-Kept Secret

Certainly, volunteering is in a state of transition, said Robert Presson of VOLUNTEER, the National Center for Citizen Involvement, but the picture is by no means a dismal one. While both a reevaluation of the volunteer's needs and a reassessment of how to meet these needs are in order, organizations need not rush into revamping their recruitment programs, abandoning voluntary agencies as lost causes, or launching expensive, professionally prepared nationwide campaigns to induce volunteers to join their ranks. Far from experiencing its final death throes, voluntarism is actually on the increase, Presson said, citing the following facts:

- In 1965, about 18 percent of all Americans identified themselves as volunteers in a Department of Labor survey. In 1977, the Gallup Organization did a study which indicated that the figure had risen to 27 percent.
- The average American spends nine hours a week doing volunteer work, according to *Americans Volunteer—1974*, published by the ACTION agency. This nine hours a week translates into 3.5 million full-time employees.



- Fifty percent of all volunteer activity in the United States is church-related, 15 percent education-related, 15 percent health-oriented, 7 percent related to social services, and 3 percent associated with social and criminal justice activities. The ratio of men to women volunteers is about one to one. On the average, men contribute ten hours a week; women, eight hours a week.
- The total value of volunteer services is \$50 billion a year, according to Dr. Harold Wolozin of the University of Massachusetts.
- Seven million persons who are not now volunteers have indicated interest in doing volunteer work.

As Presson put it, volunteering may be the best-kept secret in the United States today.

Discovering why people volunteer, what they volunteer for, and why they stop being volunteers can be helpful in motivating additional volunteers. Presson noted that in attempting to get people involved in volunteer work, organizations have modeled themselves after corporations, and

he argued that organizations should instead examine what attracts the public to leisure-time activities. Why, for instance, will a skier get up early, drive for hours, spend money on equipment and lift passes, wait in long lift lines, and then drive for hours to return home more tired and exhausted than after two days' work? Volunteer organizations need to identify similar rewards, the speaker suggested. Luring people away from the swimming pools, tennis courts, and soap operas—at least for a little while—and getting them to volunteer, is the challenge we face, according to Presson. And, he added, organizations will not succeed by modeling themselves after IBM or AT&T.

Pushing the Right Buttons

Motivation was a subject also addressed by Richard Celeste, director of the Peace Corps, who offered one rather surprising solution to the problem:

The single most important rule is never to feel that you've asked a volunteer to do enough. And always remember to say thanks. The problem isn't that no one is willing to do volunteer work or that this is the "me generation"; the problem is that we've lost the art of identifying real jobs—meaningful tasks—for volunteers to do.

Celeste advised volunteer groups to seek returned Peace Corps volunteers as resources and speakers, and for development education. We won't know the full extent of the human resources represented by the eighty-thousand past and present Peace Corps volunteers, said Celeste, until "we call on them and put them to work, and put them to work some more, and put them to work some more."

Designing an Effective Recruitment Strategy

The twin problems of attracting and recruiting volunteers often concern volunteer agencies as much as how to motivate them after they've joined. Robert Woyach and William Shaw, from the Ohio State University Mershon Center and the Kettering Foundation respectively, conducted a workshop which dealt in part with creating an effective recruitment strategy.

No one who has worked in a volunteer organization for any length of time needs to be told that recruitment cannot be left to chance, the speakers pointed out. Recruiting must be planned and organized, a time-consuming and difficult task. However, organizations that make an extra effort and make a substantial investment in their recruitment programs attract volunteers, they said.

A recruitment strategy should include a number of techniques that complement and reinforce each other. Woyach gave these examples:

- Soliciting by telephone. Of the 217 organizations Woyach surveyed across the United States, 94 percent said that they used the telephone and thought it very effective in their recruitment campaigns.
- Personalized mail. Eighty-two percent of the groups surveyed by Woyach claimed they used personalized mail, but it was not felt to be as effective as telephone contact.
- Publicity. Publicity is most effective as a recruiting device when coordinated with other recruitment activities. Naturally, a telephone or mail campaign to recruit volunteers will be more effective immediately *after* the head of a local chapter is interviewed on a public service television show, rather than two weeks before the program is broadcast.
- Presentations to other groups. This can be a very useful technique, but these presentations will not get many volunteers unless that is their main objective. There also must be mechanisms by which people can respond immediately.
- Media advertising. Advertising is expensive but often reaches people who would probably never be reached otherwise.
- Mass mailing. Although 57 percent of the groups surveyed conducted mass mailings, this technique was thought to be ineffective. To have greater impact, such mailings must be supplemented by more personal techniques.

Participants examined the message to prospective volunteers as well as the means by which it is conveyed. Although it must describe the benefits to the person being recruited, the message that emphasizes the benefits provided by the organization to the local, national, or international community achieves better results than one that focuses only on what the individual will derive from his or her association with the organization, they have found.

With a well-planned message in hand and the media to present it selected, the final element in the recruitment strategy is the follow-through. This phase of the plan must be just as well-thought-out and executed as the other aspects, the speakers explained, since it defeats the purpose to prepare an effective campaign and fail to follow up with prospective volunteers.

Building a Community-Based Volunteer Organization

Turning from what stimulates volunteers of organizations to creation of the organizations themselves, Thelma Press described how the people of San Bernardino, California, formed the Council for International Friendship and Goodwill, which she represents. In 1974, she related, some citizens of San Bernardino met with the mayor to suggest that a council be formed to encourage all residents to make the city a warm and friendly place for foreign and domestic visitors attending San Bernardino's bicentennial celebration. Such a council would also enable the townspeople to hold programs in honor of foreign dignitaries, to conduct fund-raising campaigns, and to use the time and talents of the residents of the city in support of international and intercultural understanding.

The mayor and city council approved the idea and appropriated six hundred dollars to initiate the program, which was coordinated by the Bicentennial Commission. In December, 1976, when the Bicentennial Commission closed its doors, its responsibilities were carried on by the International Council. To instill a commitment to long-term involvement, the council was made a permanent division of the mayor's office in 1979. At that time, Press explained, the council was reorganized to meet the needs of expanding international interaction and to stimulate the growth and coordination of internationally-oriented activities in ways which would focus interest on world affairs in the local community.

Working with over forty other community organizations, the council works to enhance understanding among people of many cultures, to insure a warm welcome and offer hospitality to visiting travelers, to aid professional business and civic contacts, and to encourage student exchange.

In a Nutshell

Insofar as it is possible to identify one paper which encompasses the many topics covered in the International Fellows Program, the talk by Stephen Rhinesmith, president of American Field Service International, represents



such a state-of-the-art presentation.* This overview spanned the history and purposes of people-to-people exchange programs, reviewed cooperative efforts undertaken by various private organizations and government agencies, described events and trends which serve to support international exchange programs, and broadly outlined political, economic, and organizational issues which will challenge the continued growth of such organizations in the decade to come.

Rhinesmith relayed both "the good news" and "the bad news" in assessing the conflicting forces which affect international exchange organizations today. On the bright side of the picture, he described various ventures in cooperative

endeavors, both among the organizations themselves and between governmental and private agencies. Most promising of the latter developments, he said, was creation of the United States International Communication Agency (USICA) in 1978, an agency "aimed directly at the field of international exchange [which] for the first time, gives us a home base rather than a share of a bureau within the State Department."

Various federally-generated mandates in support of citizen education—"helping the American people understand an increasingly complex world in a way that will allow them to make intelligent decisions about what kind of U.S. foreign policy to support"—have given considerable momentum to the work of private agencies, the speaker said, explaining that government support of volunteer agencies is justified in part by the perception that these organizations are involved in contributing to a more internationally knowledgeable U.S. citizenry.

On the dimmer side of the picture, Rhinesmith cited a number of uncontrollable forces working against the private agencies. Labor-intensive and heavily dependent on air travel, these organizations are hard-hit by inflation and peculiarly vulnerable to the fluctuations of the dollar in world markets. Recently, for example, AFC lost \$115,000 overnight in a 35 percent devaluation of the cruzeiro in Brazil, Rhinesmith noted.

A number of international political events have also had an adverse effect on U.S. support for exchange organizations, Rhinesmith continued, citing animus against Iranian students on the part of many Americans; reshuffling of government priorities in the face of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; and hesitance on the part of students and their parents about participating in a number of exchange programs centered in politically unstable parts of the world.

The outlook for substantial support from private philanthropic sources such as large corporations and major foundations is not an encouraging one either, the speaker said. "Since the private philanthropic sector is not going to help us much and the public sector is not going to bail us out, we are left with two ways to approach the 1980s—better management and better interorganizational cooperation," he concluded.

Summing up the conference, Rhinesmith said, "If we can... help one another with our individual problems and find ways to work more cooperatively together toward common ends, then this week will have not only been successful in itself, but may provide the basis for a long-lasting contribution to the field of international exchange in the 1980s."

*Full text appears in Appendix B.

Appendix A:
**“Forces Affecting Volunteers
in America Today”**
by Ruth Robbins

I was invited today because I am a confirmed volunteer, a strong advocate of voluntarism, and a dedicated proponent of its future growth. I am not a social scientist or a behaviorist, so I will leave all the psychological factors involved in motivating volunteers to the experts. This morning I would like to talk about volunteers and voluntarism from a lay person's point of view. I would like to share with you some of the problems we face in the League of Women Voters (LWV), primarily that of declining membership, and some of the steps we are taking to attract new members.

How the changes in our society are influencing the volunteer and what volunteer organizations can do to transform the influences into opportunities for renewal are what I want to talk about. But before I discuss the present and future of voluntarism, I'd like to turn briefly to an examination of its past in order to remind you of the richness and importance of the volunteer tradition in our history.

Voluntarism, as defined in the book, *Voluntarism at the Crossroads*, by Gordon Manser and Rosemary Higgins Cass, consists of “the activities of individuals and agencies arising out of a spontaneous private (as contrasted with governmental) effort to promote or advance some aspect of the common good as this good is perceived by the persons participating in it.” Its essence, therefore, is individual initiative, a sense of caring, and a belief in being of service to others without any expectation of personal profit.

The roots of voluntarism lie deep in the history of the world's great religions. The Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Koran all bear witness to the heritage of faith, love, and mercy that provided the spiritual foundation for voluntarism. The Reformation concept of personal freedom, together with the social philosophies of the West, provided the matrix for its development in Anglo-Saxon societies. (It never has, of course, taken root in large parts of the world.) But it was on the frontier of North America, where energetic and optimistic immigrants, who placed a premium on individual initiative and inventiveness, and founded communities prior to the advent of





formal government, that voluntarism found its perfect home. As Alexis de Tocqueville observed nearly a century and a half ago:

Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions constantly form associations. . . . The Americans make associations to give entertainment, to found seminaries, to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; in this manner they found hospitals, prisons, and schools. If it is proposed to inculcate some truth or to foster some feeling by the encouragement of a great example, they form a society. Wherever at the head of some new undertaking you see the government in France, or a man of rank in England, in the United States you will be sure to find an association.

Throughout most of the history of the U.S., virtually every significant step forward in social progress originally sprang from voluntarism—the abolitionist movement, women's rights, care of the poor and mentally ill, family planning, environmentalism, and so on. Voluntarism has served as the cutting edge in many fields of social need, giving rise to new professions and, in addition, to the assumption by government of the major share of the financial burden for extending social services, or, where needed, the sanction of law. Its flexibility and dynamism have kept society's juices flowing in those situations where government and business become bogged down—the one by the rigidities of bureaucracy, the other by the imperatives of the marketplace. In so doing, voluntarism has been, and is, an essential counterweight to business and government—the other principal sectors of our society.

Voluntarism—A Big Business Taken for Granted

It seems a paradox that while voluntarism is omnipresent throughout our society today, it is so taken for granted that it is inadequately recognized as an important social force at the national level. Yet, there are today over thirty-seven million Americans—one out of every four citizens over the age of thirteen—involved in volunteer work. Voluntarism is such a big business that over \$25 billion in private funds is spent in an average year on philanthropic activities. In addition, it's estimated that at least another \$25 billion is contributed annually to society through the voluntary services of millions of Americans.

Yet, there are many who believe that voluntarism is in a state of profound transition, if not a state of siege, in spite of the millions of us still involved in it; in spite of the

channel it provides through which we, as individuals and in groups, can express our values and build a moral consensus for what should be sanctioned and undertaken by government; and in spite of the need for the voluntary sector to keep government honest and responsible, to provide alternative ways to solve problems, and to provide opportunities for the initiative and sense of caring of individuals.

What's happening to voluntarism in today's changing world? Is it in a state of siege? Maybe. Of transition? Yes. But why? With all that voluntarism has done for this country and continues to offer people, what more could anyone want?

Well, there's money. Notwithstanding all the virtues of voluntarism, it doesn't pay. This can be a big problem for volunteers, since ours is a society in which money plays the major role in determining one's status and also serves as a measure of self-worth. Many volunteers feel that they constantly face the problem of trying to gain the recognition for their work that their salaried peers receive in the marketplace.

For women volunteers, this quandary has been posed largely as a result of the feminist movement. The decline in volunteers which began in the early 1970s has been largely a decline in the number of white, educated, middle-class women who did most of the volunteer work in the past. As work and educational opportunities have expanded for women, as their options have multiplied, women face tougher choices. Many women feel that they must choose between voluntarism and employment, because if they try to give time to both while sharing the responsibilities of the home, they may be overwhelmed. Then, too, the women's movement has, in some instances, taken a critical view of women working without pay. For a while, volunteering was almost a dirty word. Female volunteers have been told by critics that by not receiving money for their work, they were not only being exploited, but were perpetuating the role of women as second-class citizens.

And while we're on the subject of money, it's a fact that spiraling inflation, along with higher expectations, have hit the volunteer hard. Increasing numbers of volunteers must

seek full-time work to help support a house, pay for higher education, and so on. Sixty to sixty-five percent of all the women who work do so primarily for economic reasons.

Taken together, the pressures of meeting new economic demands, the desire to measure up to the predominantly male values of the marketplace, and the tinge of guilt that comes in admitting that one is "just a volunteer," have all taken their toll on the volunteer, particularly the woman volunteer.

In addition, politically oriented voluntary organizations like the LWV have taken it on the chin in the past fifteen years as the complexities of government, the proliferation of interest groups, the disillusionment engendered by Vietnam and Watergate, and the intractability of problems such as energy and inflation have left many citizens numb. Apathy and self-interest have replaced action on college campuses and in many communities across the nation. The currently fashionable "me first" attitude is partly responsible for the declining number of volunteers, and for a lessening of the selflessness that long marked the unpaid efforts of Americans. And often, when people do get involved, they want instant results or they lose interest and drop out before the real battle begins, thus diminishing both their cause and the cause of voluntarism.

There may be other reasons for the present decline in voluntarism, but I've stated the main ones—the money crunch, the feminist movement, the changing nature of governmental problems, the resurgence of materialistic values, and a decline of the public spirit. What do these trends portend for the future? That voluntarism will shrivel and die in the years ahead? Not at all. The patient could be healthier, but the prognosis is positive: voluntarism will thrive and grow. However, it will undergo many changes, and organizations like yours and the LWV will have to accept those changes—and respond to them—if we are to thrive and grow along with the renascent voluntarism.

Some Predictions and Trends

In their book entitled *Challenge to Leadership*, Drs. David H. Smith and John Dixon make some interesting predictions about voluntarism. The role and impact of the voluntary sector are likely to increase in importance in the coming decades, they say. There is growing evidence that as life in a post-industrial society moves steadily away from the production and consumption of material goods to production and consumption that promote well-being, we will also move toward a more issue-minded and leisure-oriented society. With more time to spend, they point out,

more people will spend it as volunteers. Moreover, they believe that as we continue to pursue such social and political goals as equality and social justice, more people will be drawn into issue-focused groups to help ensure the achievement of these goals.

Drs. Smith and Dixon also predict that the caliber of those involved in voluntarism will improve. The influx of new volunteers will come from among the young, from retirees, and from those at mid-career levels who have climbed the ladder of success and are turning away from big government and big business in search of more personal and meaningful outlets.

Trends also indicate that the new volunteers won't stay with us as long as volunteers in the past; however, they will be quite demanding as to what they are willing to do. To quote Smith and Dixon:

One manifestation of new forms of voluntary action in future decades probably will be more rapid turnover in voluntary group memberships and more rapid changes in the membership composition of established voluntary groups as a result of the increased mobility of the population and more frequent changes in the goals of voluntary groups, shifting coalitions and mergers among groups, and a general sense of temporariness in social identities and affiliations. The voluntary activity of individuals will thus become much more spasmodic, cyclical and variable than at present.

Some of those predictions, I think you'll agree, already seem to have manifested themselves. In the days when I was an ingenue in the LWV, it would have been unheard of for a member of less than two years standing to become the president of a local league. Today, it's commonplace. The revolving door does spin at a faster pace. We have embarked on the future predicted by Drs. Smith and Dixon, but are we ready for it? And what do we do about it?

For one thing, we must be willing to examine our own customs and to assess and reassess both our short and long term goals. We have to establish ongoing mechanisms for self-evaluation that ask the right questions, the hard questions. At every level, we must take an honest look at what we're doing and, more importantly, how we're doing it. And the answer, "because that's the way we've done it before," is the answer we must question.

In evaluating past efforts and establishing short and long range goals, it's important to create the right atmosphere for review. We can learn much from the retreats of church and synagogue groups and from corporations, which use

sessions away from work to help clear the air and renew commitment. Many of you are already familiar with the process—an invaluable opportunity to question "Who are we? What do we want to be? How will we get there from here?"

When we're doing something right, we should do our best to keep it up—or do it again—whether it's a successful project, a method for raising money, or a campaign to educate citizens. And we ought to do more to translate one success to another, to apply the lessons learned in one area to other efforts we undertake.

In addition to building on success, we should also avoid getting mired down in failure. Ascribing blame doesn't produce much in the way of results. In evaluating a project that's been less than a success, we need to examine carefully what went wrong and why, but we mustn't let it haunt us or inhibit us from reaching out and embracing new projects.

Recruiting Volunteers

We cannot, of course, overlook the vital need for membership recruitment—both now and in the future. With changing lifestyles, mobility, shorter organizational attention spans, and an increasingly competitive buyer's market for volunteers, it goes without saying that we cannot rely on past techniques if we are to meet the future. The potential members are among today's thirty-seven million men and women who feel that voluntarism is worth the effort and among the increased numbers who may turn to voluntarism in the future. To attract creative people and recruit and hold new members, we must emphasize what is unique about our particular organizations.

In an age when almost everyone pursues self-improvement and almost everyone is seeking to reaffirm self-worth, opportunities to grow, to create, to experiment, and to achieve new goals should be available constantly. The LWV, as a multi-issue organization, attracts some members and loses others on the basis of current programs. Issues come and issues go, but what remains is the league's ability to transfer attitudes, skills and techniques that equip an individual to function effectively in society—no matter how much it changes.

At the same time, we should recognize that there is nothing sinful in emphasizing that volunteer work can be a springboard for other career opportunities. Let's face it—books on getting ahead in life wouldn't be at the top of the best-seller list if people didn't have such a strong desire for success. What's wrong with promoting the technical skills one can acquire in working for your organization? We in the LWV remind potential members that over 21 percent of women holding elected or appointed office have a league background—a fact that men and women interested in political careers would find quite attractive if they were casting about for an activity designed to further their goals. This is a technically oriented society, and the pressure to develop a trade will be with us for years to come. Some of our local leagues have begun to work with colleges and universities on programs that provide academic credit for volunteer work. In moving with the times, we have provided volunteers with job descriptions, as well as supervision and training. We have given them letters of recommendation when they're ready to move on. We have to let potential members know that an investment in our organizations can be an investment in their own futures.

And speaking of one's personal investment, I'm happy to say that in the LWV we've come a long way in acknowledging the varying attitudes and expectations of our members. I think we've finally begun to accept the fact that members need not give their whole life to the league and that if she or he is interested in only one area of league work—or none at all—that member still has something to offer us. In recruiting members and dealing with our colleagues, we must realize that interests vary and each vol-

unteer should be respected—and shown appreciation—for what she or he can and wants to contribute—be it full-time involvement, work on a single issue, or annual dues.

A voluntary organization's strength is that it can be different things to different people. To some it's basically an opportunity to do good, others are interested in personal growth, and still others like it best for the companionship it offers. These attractions are not mutually exclusive or contradictory, but one can't expect every member to be attracted to everything one does.

You must adapt yourselves to the new volunteers and accommodate to the varying needs of a variety of members. Many leagues have been doing so for years by holding evening meetings or downtown luncheon meetings for working women and men, setting up child-care facilities, and holding conventions on weekends so that more members may participate. Providing these services is one way to acknowledge that it takes more to attract persons to meetings than the sound of a gavel. It is a way of coming to grips with change.

No mention of changing society would be complete without reference to energy and inflation. We have made a conscious effort to schedule meetings and activities in central locations convenient to public transportation and to encourage car pools. And, wherever possible, we reimburse volunteers for expenses.

We must recognize that volunteers want challenging, responsible work that is commensurate with their abilities. Unless we do, new members are unlikely to feel that they have a stake in the organization. We must provide members with the opportunity, not the obligation, to do meaningful work—even on a one-shot basis. We must develop methods for "quick involvement" and skills training which address the problems faced by volunteers quickly thrust into leadership roles.

Training—A Must

As far as I'm concerned, the old "I'm just a volunteer" routine is about as "out" as guilt. Being a volunteer doesn't mean having to say you're sorry. The self-effacement implicit in the phrase "just a volunteer" is a cop-out, a way of saying to the world, "Don't hold me accountable for my work. I'm unsure of my abilities." What gets rid of that self-doubt is training.

Training is to the volunteer what aroma is to cheese. Training makes the volunteer! As volunteer leaders, we should do everything we can to rid the word volunteer of opprobrium and endow it with its rightful attributes of



service, achievement, initiative, and skill. Looking around this room, I'd say that we, as volunteer leaders, are endowed with those attributes, and we know it. But we have to help others realize it and gain confidence through training and experience. And we may have to do it, as I've said, in new ways tailored to the short-term member.

An Additional Challenge

I would now like to make a sincere plea for your more active involvement in foreign policy issues. Each of us is working for an organization that encourages better understanding among nations. There are many ways of accomplishing this including tourism, cultural exchanges, development efforts, and educating people on U.S. foreign policy issues. Most of you are concerned with people-to-people exchanges. I would like to suggest that when you are involved in people-to-people exchanges it is your responsibility to be knowledgeable and to educate your people on the actions our government takes that affect our relations with other nations.

If we really believe in global interdependence, if we really believe that the state of the world influences the state of our country, if we really believe that war is not a viable vehicle for solving international problems, then we must be aware of U.S. policies and actions that affect others. Our foreign aid and trade policies affect most nations and therefore our relationships with them. All the work you do and have done can be wiped out by the U.S. looking inward and reverting to isolationist thinking.

For years, the LWV has been trying to build a foreign policy constituency—people who are concerned with foreign policy issues. We need help! Polls invariably show interest in these issues running well behind domestic issues.

I recognize that the International Revenue Service looks askance at private, nonprofit volunteer organizations trying to influence legislation, but you can keep your constituency informed on governmental policies, legislation, and action that affect your work. The League of Women Voters Education Fund does this all the time. The Education Fund provides citizens with information on governmental issues. We are certain that the information is presented in a factual, nonbiased manner, and we do not advocate support for or opposition to legislation. Your organization certainly can do the same. In addition, the LWV and those leagues in your city and state are anxious to work with you and to provide you with information you may need.

And Change We Must

We must learn how to work together better than we have in the past—contributing to our common goal as well as each doing his or her job.

If voluntarism is uniquely suited to a democratic form of government, then the groups in this room are uniquely suited to both voluntarism and democracy. Whether we keep in step with the world or drag our feet and lose our vitality is up to us. But change we must. We have no choice if we are to continue to attract volunteers and learn how to retain them by making their experiences challenging, meaningful, and rewarding.

Appendix B:

“The Past, Present, and Future of People-to-People Exchanges in the United States”

by Stephen H. Rhinesmith

History

Of the major national organizations meeting here, Experiment in International Living was the first to initiate international exchange programs. Founded in 1932, it was the first formalized international people-to-people organization on a community level. While the Rhodes Scholarship Program began in 1917 as the first formal international exchange, the Experiment's entry into the field in 1932 was the forerunner of the community-based exchanges in which our organizations are engaged today.

After the Second World War, the American Field Service (AFS) started its high school exchange program. Although AFS was founded in 1914 as an ambulance corps and carried out approximately 200 exchanges on the university level between France and the United States between 1919 and 1939, the first formal community-based exchange of AFS started in 1947, with a high school exchange program for fifty students.

Next in line came Youth for Understanding (YFU), started in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1951 under the auspices of the Michigan Council of Churches. YFU began as a small community-based program very heavily dependent on the churches in Michigan for exchanges, primarily with Europe. It continued on a small scale during the fifties and sixties and has seen most of its growth since the late sixties.

In 1956, President Eisenhower became actively interested in the people-to-people movement and gave a great boost to AFS, the Experiment, and YFU when he personally became involved in the creation of People-to-People in Kansas City, the forerunner of the Sister Cities program. Through the late fifties this gave encouragement to all of us who were in the field. As many of you know, any time the president of the United States shows interest in this kind of activity, it focuses attention on the rest of us.

In the early sixties, the Council on Service to International Visitors (COSERV) was formed as an association of local community organizations in support of the U.S. government's International Visitor Program. COSERV has recently been renamed the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV) in an effort to promote its program as it expands to more and more communities throughout the United States.

Shortly after COSERV was founded, the Partners of the Americas grew out of the Alliance for Progress that President Kennedy had started. The Partners created “partnerships” between states in the United States and countries or states in Latin America. Oriented toward people-to-people understanding, as well as toward technical assistance, the Partners shared the interests of Sister Cities and People-to-People in adult exchanges on a regional level.

Between 1964 and 1977 no new organizations entered the field. The international exchange movement during this time weathered a difficult period with U.S. civil rights unrest and the problems of social upheaval associated with the Vietnam War years. Nevertheless, existing programs grew steadily, and when President and Mrs. Carter came to the White House in 1977, Wayne Smith persuaded them to be patrons of a mass citizen exchange open to people of all ages and backgrounds. The Friendship Force, launched in 1977, will this year sponsor the exchange of almost 18,000 people between the United States and other countries around the world.

Purposes

As one looks at the way our organizations have come into existence over the years, one can see a growing group of institutions dedicated to providing a bridge between the people of the United States and other countries. This has evolved in a way that facilitates not only international understanding, but also technical exchange and technical assistance. In examining the purposes of these organizations, we can see a number of different areas in which we operate.

First, and perhaps fundamental, is a homestay experience, a program element common to all of us. People-to-people programs basically mean going abroad for the purpose of living with people in a community and, within that context, establishing relationships one hopes will continue.

Second, there is certainly an intercultural aspect to our work which enables people to understand the cultures of other parts of the world. This is true not only of Americans going abroad, but also of the thousands of persons we



sponsor who spend time in the homes of Americans throughout the United States. Increased cultural understanding enables an individual to see the world through another person's eyes and thereby better comprehend the values, attitudes, and beliefs shaping another's world view.

Third, some of our organizations are involved in technical assistance and vocational training, objectives that characterize the work of the Experiment, the Partners, and some of Sister Cities' exchanges. Here we facilitate the exchange of specialists in particular areas for the purpose of aiding and assisting in the development process. In this respect, the Experiment in International Living differs somewhat from other organizations in that its School for International Training offers bachelor's and master's degrees and it provides formal contract work for the U.S. and other governments in specific technical-assistance projects.

There is a fourth, albeit oblique, component to our operations, and this involves the development of a more global perspective on the problems the world faces. A recent movement in the United States has emphasized the development of global perspectives in education focusing on the reform of the kindergarten through twelfth grade educational process by infusing into the curriculum of public education in this country more international perspective on all current subject matter.

In today's tight economy our objectives would be described as "soft"—the kind of work that becomes dispensable when set against other national priorities. The fallback position for some of us is to emphasize technical and vocational training which presents a better case for the transfer of the "hard" skills and technology often supported even by strained budgets. I have had the experience of being turned down by a number of African ambassadors for an AFS initiative because they felt that it was primarily a program for international understanding when they needed technical and vocational skills. As many of you know, there is a movement in the Third World today, particularly in Asia and Africa, toward asking for more skill acquisition from international exchange and less of the sort of people-to-people exchange aimed at international understanding. I believe, however, that the degree to which countries are willing to go into the "soft" side or "hard" side of exchange depends upon who is funding it. If you represent a program like the Friendship Force which is completely privately funded, governments will be happy to give permission to operate in their countries. This was evident most recently when a group of us went to China. I talked with the Ministry of Education about the possibility of initiating AFS or a similar kind of people-to-people program, and it was clear after a short discussion that the Chinese

were not ready for exchanges for the purpose of international understanding. They want any exchanges with the West for which they have to spend their own hard currency to be oriented toward the acquisition of highly technical skills related to the Four Modernizations in industry, agriculture, defense, and science and technology.

Cooperative Efforts

In the last decade or so there have been a number of tentative efforts aimed at interorganizational cooperation. Some of the first were with regard to monitoring and regulating the field. When John Richardson was Assistant Secretary of State in the early and mid-seventies, there were several meetings in which some of us tried to develop guidelines for the field of international teenage exchange. The present International Communication Agency Guidelines for Teenage Exchange Visitors Programs really constitute one of the first such cooperative endeavors. These guidelines were created by national leaders of teenage exchange programs to monitor and protect the field against people who get into it and, either deliberately or unwittingly, threaten to change the standards of service provided to young people participating in international exchange.

Additional cooperative endeavors have involved meetings for the purpose of sharing information. In 1973, representatives of AFS, the Experiment, YFU, the African-American Institute, the Institute of International Education, and the Council on International Educational Exchange met to talk about common concerns and interests. The meetings focused on the comparison of administrative structures, personnel, salary and compensation patterns, travel arrangements, and all the nitty gritty functions of operation. It did not go very far because there was such a wide range of differences in the structure and operations of the organizations and their programs. There was, however, a basis on which AFS and the Experiment in International Living began a dialogue which continued over five years and concluded last fall after a formal study of the feasibility of merging the two organizations.

A second effort was attempted about three or four years ago when Jim Doty and Alan Reich of the Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs at the State Department brought together a number of organizations to share information and determine whether there were any ways in which we could cooperate with regard to the Bicentennial. According to Jim Doty, there was a perception at that time that someone was trying to put an "umbrella" over organizations which had not asked for it, and things fell apart quickly.

Recent Supporting Developments

There are several other developments that I want to mention to those of you who may not be aware of other things that are happening within the United States which provide momentum to international people-to-people relationships at this time.

Between the fall of 1978 and the end of 1979, a President's Commission on Language and International Studies was in operation to examine the state of foreign language training and international studies in the United States. The results of the commission's work were in some ways discouraging. The commission discovered that the study of foreign languages in this country has gone downhill rapidly in the last ten years. The number of students studying a foreign language on the college level is half of what it was in 1970. Only 2 percent of secondary school teachers in the United States have ever had a course in political science or any other international affairs subject, and, of the public school teachers currently in training in the United States, only 5 percent have had any courses in international affairs.

Citing these statistics, the commission said that, in terms of its educational program, the United States is becoming less capable of dealing with the world. It attributed the decline basically to the spillover effect, starting with the lack of requirements of international businesses and those engaged in international endeavors on a professional level. Since international businesses do not require foreign languages and an international studies background, graduate schools don't require them, colleges don't require them, and high schools don't require them. The effect is felt down the line.

The United States International Communication Agency (USICA) was created in April, 1978, as an agency forged out of the United States Information Agency (USIA) and the Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs of the State Department. The new agency is aimed directly at the

field of international exchange and, for the first time, gives us a home base rather than a share of a bureau within the State Department. To that extent, USICA provides a new focus within the government around which all of us can organize.

Citizen Education Efforts: Some Good News

A final development which has given momentum to our field in recent years has been the focus on so-called development education or citizen education. Concern for citizen education has come about in four different agencies in very different ways. The Peace Corps, USICA, the Agency for International Development (AID), and the new Department of Education have each created specific units or mandates directed toward citizen education in the last year.

While USICA's primary mandate is to help the rest of the world understand the American people and the U.S. government's policies, President Carter incorporated a second mandate which is directed toward helping the American people to understand the rest of the world. That basically is what development or citizen education is all about—helping the American people understand an increasingly complex world in a way that will allow them to make intelligent decisions about what kind of U.S. foreign policy to support.

In fact, one of the justifications for government support of many of our organizations is the fact that we are perceived as being involved in that very endeavor. It may be important for us, therefore, to consider the ways in which we are facilitating USICA's second mandate.

AID has been involved in development education through the whole international technical assistance community which rounds out this family of organizations in which we are involved. These include groups from CARE to Church World Service, from the International Catholic Relief to the Red Cross, and all of the other international, technical assistance agencies which are currently responsible for \$1.8 billion of U.S. aid going from the private sector to developing countries around the world. In terms of constituency building, they also are concerned about who is interested in international affairs and who will support foreign aid both on government and private levels. They are interested in development education not only as a means of getting support for their agencies, but also as a way of building a case for the work that they do for the Third World in refugee relief, alleviation of famine, population control, and many other areas.

The Peace Corps has recently established a development education unit using former Peace Corps volunteers for systematically educating Americans about the Third World. For almost twenty years, the Peace Corps had made no formal use of returned volunteers for the education of Americans. This is the greatest pool of language, cultural, and technical specialists on the Third World which the United States has. The Peace Corps now is engaged in trying to organize these people for purposes of citizen education within the United States.

Finally, many of us have been involved in lobbying for the funding of National Defense Education Act Title VI, Section 603, which is the authorizing legislation for citizen education in the United States. The purpose of this act is to allow the Department of Education to make grants to private organizations in the U.S. that are developing innovative schemes to educate the American people toward a better understanding of the world. Funded for the first time at a \$2 million level, thirty-six projects were accepted last year out of 450 proposals made by various universities and private organizations.

In the last two years we, as a nation, have focused our attention on the degree to which people in the United States are aware of and informed about the world. Earlier this year, President Carter met with some of us in the cabinet room of the White House to talk about the Caribbean as a central focus of concern for people-to-people relations. He encouraged private organizations like us to become involved in improving U.S.-Caribbean relations. When a president recognizes our organizations as supporting national priorities in such a way, it cannot fail to create a certain amount of momentum for us.

Now for the Bad News

With so many things going for us, one may well ask how we can fail. Well, the bad news is that I have exhausted the optimistic aspects of my topic and turn now to an overview of forces working against us.

A number of occurrences in the world today are creating enormous challenges for our organizations. These events include economic, geopolitical, organizational, programmatic, and financial trends, and they will have far ranging implications for us during the next decade.

Economic Issues

As many of you know, during the last few years I have been obsessed with the increasing financial vulnerability of the institutions in this field as a result of changing economic conditions. If you compare our organizations, we range from institutions which are highly vulnerable to the economic and political changes that occur in the world to organizations that are largely insulated from those changes. I speak here of a spectrum that goes from AFS, the most vulnerable, to the Friendship Force, the most insulated. But even the Friendship Force has been hit with a doubling of its participant fees in the last two years just as a result of rising oil prices.

I am not sure that it all starts with OPEC, but that organization is certainly a major factor in the problem. Two major shock years in terms of oil price increases, 1973 and 1979, raise serious strategic questions for many of our organizations. Last year, for example, the airline industry spent as much on fuel as it did on its total operation in 1970! The impact of dramatically rising airfares on organizations such as ours need hardly be detailed.

Even centrally funded USICA programs are not above being affected by OPEC since the amount of money available for exchanges has remained stable, so the volume of exchanges has had to diminish. This is particularly evident in the Fulbright Program.

While airfares are a particular area of economic difficulty for us, inflation in general has a severe impact on labor intensive organizations. Those of us with ten or twelve staff members like the Friendship Force, People-to-People, or NCIV are in better shape than those with large central staffs of 150 to 180 people like YFU, the Experiment, and AFS. U.S. inflation affects the wage and salary spiral and obviously affects operating costs. If one also maintains offices abroad as AFS does, then inflation at 111

percent in Israel and more than 100 percent in Latin America creates an even more difficult problem. We are also faced with wage/price indexing in Brazil, labor laws in Peru which don't allow one to fire anybody, and social welfare costs in Scandinavia which are enormous. In short, the cost of labor to run these programs is skyrocketing.

At the same time, the enormous dollar fluctuations in recent years have also affected some of us. To give you an idea, two months ago AFS lost \$115,000 overnight on a 36 percent devaluation of the cruzeiro in Brazil. We had \$350,000 sitting in a bank which we couldn't get out without paying a 25 percent transfer tax. We applied to the government for an exemption and got the exemption on Monday—the devaluation was on the previous Saturday! Imagine the kind of vulnerability one has when, like AFS, \$6 million of income this year will come from abroad. YFU has a similar financial picture. With this kind of dependence, you have to decide what kind of currency to quote your prices in and what to do with blocked currencies.

All this becomes particularly difficult if you have any kind of commitment to Third World involvement. If you are working in Western Europe things are relatively stable, but if you have a commitment to Africa, Asia, or Latin America, the OPEC effect hits hard. What is happening is that OPEC is "blowing out" the economies of the Third World to the point where they can't handle their balance of payments. They are devaluing their currencies, blocking currencies, and imposing taxes (like Brazil's \$1,200 exit tax for every person leaving the country) in an attempt to depress the flow of dollars out of the country. As governments move to protect their economic positions in the world, it affects the flow of people who want to be involved in our programs.

This raises another important issue, namely the vulnerability of the fallback position of our organizations. Our budgets have grown enormously in the last decade. AFS had a \$5.9 million budget in 1972 and this year has \$16 million. Now, in business one might be happy to see that kind of growth, and, in fact, it represents some growth of the program, but the vulnerability factor has increased geometrically. If you are off by 2 percent on your budget when it is \$6 million you have a \$120,000 problem. If you are off by 2 percent on your budget of \$16 million, you have a \$320,000 problem. This, in turn, affects your fallback position. If you want to use business terms, our organizations are all enormously undercapitalized. We don't have endowments that are big enough to handle a 5

percent mistake. In fact, we cannot even talk about making mistakes because in many cases a loss would be out of our control. This leads many of our institutions to examine the necessity of capital campaigns or other efforts to build up endowments that are more than \$500,000. This, for a budget of \$16 million, is completely inadequate. So while our organizations may become stronger each year in terms of program operations and size, our cash or capital positions become increasingly exposed.

Speaking of cash raises another problem. Interest rates today are having a significant impact on a number of the institutions represented here that are engaged in substantial borrowing. Among us are some institutions that have outstanding, on a cash basis, an average of \$1 million a month. Over the course of a year, at 12½ percent or more, debt servicing becomes a major budget item.

In summary, the economic situation for nonprofit, people-to-people organizations has become much more complicated in the last few years. It raises new challenges for all of us. Our planning and management has to be much more sophisticated than ever before, and still our vulnerability increases.

Geopolitical Issues

Moving to another area of increasing complexity, I want to make a few obvious comments about the geopolitical situation. Afghanistan and Iran are important not only for their obvious consequences but for their spillover effects—two in particular.

The first problem is that the Iranian situation focused attention on Iranian students in the United States—some 53,000 of them by official count (and 75,000 by unofficial count). Anti-U.S. protests by some Iranian students such as those who jumped on cars earlier this year in Berkeley do little to enhance the image of foreign students. This even affected John Reinhardt's testimony on Capitol Hill last spring for USICA. He walked into an appropriation hearing for USICA and spent half his time being questioned about why USIA didn't tell a better story in Iran to prevent Khomeini from taking power and why the international exchange portion of USICA doesn't do something about those students jumping on cars.

The problem created by the situation in Afghanistan is completely different. Let us forget for the moment the larger question of war, because if that happens, we can all change our game plans. An issue which arises from Afghanistan is the matter of government spending priorities. You can be sure that \$19.5 billion increase in defense spending which President Carter has proposed is not going to come out of whatever else Congress considers critical,



but out of something they don't regard as that important—namely us! Generally, it looks very doubtful that USICA is going to have any major increases in funding in the next three to five years as the government plows money into military hardware on the one hand and tries to balance the budget on the other hand. They are going to go around and pick off nickels and dimes—and those nickels and dimes are us!

As we look to the future, I contend that the private organizations involved in this field will need to rely heavily on themselves financially. The government is not going to bail us out. It is obvious that the government has problems almost equal to ours in terms of how it is going to sustain its current level of commitment to international people-to-people programs.

A less crucial political problem for some of us is that of operating in Moslem countries. We are experiencing some resistance on the part of parents to sending teenagers to

Moslem countries as a result of recent embassy attacks. AFS has plans to send students to Turkey this summer—plans which, given the political and economic situations there, are open to serious questioning.

So, the uncertain geopolitical situation and Third World instability obviously affect our organizations and national priorities in terms of funding available for us to deal with the kinds of uncertain conditions we face. This is a new situation which greatly affects our strategic planning and our financial and program planning. It means that we must have more sophisticated management systems and more sophisticated capacities to ensure that we can offer program stability during unstable conditions.

Programmatic Issues

On the one hand, we have a need for expansion. That need is both philosophical and financial. The larger we are in terms of the number of people we involve, the more we achieve our goal of trying to alleviate tensions among nations and of trying to facilitate an understanding of other countries. Such expansion, however, has not only philosophical components, but also basic financial perspectives. The old formula in which volume times price equals cost works with nonprofit organizations just as it does with profit-making organizations. It works very well with nonprofit organizations when you are running a \$2 million inflationary increase to continue the same operations you undertook last year. If you don't have an increase in volume, that means your price is going to have to go up by an amount that may put you out of the market. So expansion becomes critical.

For some of us there is also the question of diversification. Do we continue doing what we have done in the past, or do we need to change or diversify the kinds of activities

in which we are involved? There is also the possibility of cutting our losses. In sum, retrenchment, expansion, and diversification form the three strategic options for our organizations. Retrenchment needs to be examined, particularly in light of the socioeconomic and Third World diversity factors which will be hit under any retrenchment program. If we erode our commitment to more idealistic values, we may ultimately affect the willingness of volunteers to work for our various organizations. This brings me to several organizational issues which I would like to mention.

Organizational Issues

From an organizational perspective, questions of how we organize ourselves revolve around our use of volunteers versus staff. Charlie MacCormack and I have had long discussions in the last year about the fact that volunteers are excellent for servicing programs. In fact, in our kind of programs volunteers are the core of our capacity to provide good service to our participants. Volunteers, however, are a restraining factor in the business of marketing, because volunteers generally prefer to serve socioeconomic classes they see as needing the service they provide. They do not like to "market" to upper classes. Their "commission" on the business is the feeling that they are doing something for someone who would otherwise not receive the service. If you ask them to go out and sell programs to rich people, they ask "Why am I doing this?"

The other problem with using volunteers as your marketing network is that they are interested in marketing only a limited number of products. They get into teenage exchange because that is "their thing." You may have ideas for 500 wonderful new programs, yet they say, "That's very nice, but I am not interested," or "I don't have any time," or "I am doing all I can right now," and there goes your diversification, out the window! The degree to which volunteer-based marketing methods are the way to get participants in programs may be one of the things we want to talk about.

Another major organizational issue is the question of our international structure. Many of you represent confederations nationally or internationally. There are only a few of us who are lucky enough to be otherwise.

Centralization and decentralization of structure are key issues in terms of our vulnerability and our capacity to get things done. Since we are all volunteer-based organizations and since volunteers want to participate not only in

our programs but also in decision-making, this raises a series of questions concerning democratization of our structures and management procedures which we will have to deal with during the years ahead. To the extent that the world in which we live is becoming increasingly complex and requires rapid and decisive responses, there is a collision path between a slower democratic decision-making process and a rapid, informed decision-making procedure.

Governmental Issues

I have already mentioned several encouraging aspects of governmental issues like USICA's second mandate and some discouraging factors like the influence of Afghanistan. The importance of the current government position for some of the organizations here is very much related to our degree of dependence upon federal funding. NCIV, for example, is wholly dependent upon federal funding with its \$200,000 budget divided equally between USICA and AID. Partners of the Americas gets a large part of its budget from AID, as does Sister Cities. The governmental posture on funding is therefore going to be a key issue for many of us in the future, and it does not look as though such funds will increase.

John Gibson, President, of NCIV, just completed an excellent report about local community organizations in the United States which support the international visitors program. In his survey he discovered that many of these local organizations with very small budgets of under \$1,000 in some cases cannot even raise that much money locally to keep themselves going. In general, the international community visitor programs are in a state of financial crisis throughout the country, and government assistance is being requested for these decentralized activities, as well as for the more central national efforts which we represent.

Private Philanthropy

All this brings me to the private philanthropic sector because this is the final resource supporting our capacity to meet the needs of the coming decade.

As many of you know, the National Council on Philanthropy over the last two or three years has been engaged in an effort to direct more private giving into the international field. Exxon has also been a leader in discussions related to that effort. However, the response thus far has not been terribly encouraging. The international corporate world still gives less than 1 percent of its philanthropic dollars to international endeavors.

Our dependence on private philanthropy varies enormously. On the one hand, the Friendship Force uses no private funds or public monies in its operation. On the other hand, Youth for Understanding annually raises \$1.5 million; AFS, \$.7 million; and the Experiment, \$.5 million from the private sector.

The outlook in general is not particularly encouraging. The average corporate gift is around \$1,500 and the major private foundations have no interest in the international exchange field. Ford, Mellon, and Carnegie were interested in international exchange in the fifties, but are no longer involved in this kind of activity. We are dependent upon small regional foundations and individual foundations for most of our financial support.

Conclusion

Since the private philanthropic sector is not going to help us much and the public sector is not going to bail us out, we are left with two ways to approach the 1980s—better management and better interorganizational cooperation.

First, as individual organizations, what decisions must we make in our planning for the 1980s which will allow us to refocus our priorities, economize our resources, and improve our effectiveness? Second, what can we do cooperatively which will allow us to gain a national momentum in support of all of our efforts which will ensure that collectively we do not get lost in the swirl of international economic, geopolitical, and military priorities?

If we can assure these two purposes—helping one another with our individual problems and finding ways to work more cooperatively together toward common ends—then this week will have not only been successful in itself, but may provide the basis for a long lasting contribution to the field of international exchange in the 1980s.

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"Thinking About the Pacific Basin"

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"Multi-faceted View of Volunteers"

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"Thinking About the United States and Its Relations to the World"

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"American Communities and Private Development Assistance"

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"Media and World Affairs"

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"A Partnership Cooperation at the Community Level"

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"Thoughts About Volunteers"

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"Exchange Programs in the 1980s"

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"Forces Affecting Volunteers in America Today"

Ruth Robbins
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"Thinking About North/South Relations"

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"Behavior and Needs of Volunteers—A Workshop"

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"A View on United States Food Policy"

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"Thinking About the Soviet Union"

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Volunteer Agencies in the International Arena



A Report on the First Annual Session of the Community International Fellow Program