

BOOKS AND REVIEWS

Youth's role in development, by Michael U.R. von Schenck, *Assignment Children, Fise-Unicef, Paris, 1968, No. 8.*

Youth is not only a reason for the medium of development. Youth can also be its subject by having an active constructive role in it. Beyond being the main reason for development efforts, youth can be an agent, a performer of constructive work that serves development.

About 30,000 so-called volunteers, coming from virtually all industrialized countries, and 15,000 ' *detachés militaires* ' of the French army, now work in almost every field of development in overseas countries. They are teachers and doctors, mechanics and farmers, secretaries and nurses—covering almost the whole spectrum of human activities.

These volunteers are critically important. They are important not only in function of their number, and because their skills are urgently needed by developing countries, but mainly because they work at the most critically needed level: at the level of the people. They work hand in hand with the working population, or they teach in villages, cities and slums. Their number could be raised substantially if more funds could be made available for the sending organizations.

The idea of people volunteering to engage in full-time development work for a year or two, even three, is not new. Neither is the idea of using these volunteers in planned national development programmes, of recognizing volunteers as a necessary part of such planning efforts, and of enabling them to work, an old one. It started only a few years ago. However, it has proved to be such a success that, today, the 30,000 export and 80,000 domestic long-term volunteers working world-wide have become an integral and necessary part of country development efforts.

To many people, volunteer service is a suspiciously romantic, unrealistic notion. But is it unrealistic to invest in one's future, to invest a few years in one's life to contribute to a better tomorrow in the life we all share more and more in the increasingly unsplitable future of the modern world? And is it romantic, indeed, to realize that only a mass mobilization of manpower can truly achieve such development, that the entire people of the developing nations must mobilize their energies? And that they need the help of the men and women of the technically and economically more advanced countries? Is it unrealistic to begin to recognize that the war of development is a people's war, that it has to be fought by the people and at the level of the people? And that the army that will win such a war cannot be composed of officers only?

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OECD, not known for romanticism, stated last year that the importance of export volunteers will increase so dramatically that their number will be doubled before 1972.

However, volunteers are an instrument of, and not a substitute for, planned development efforts. Their efficiency, the worth of their work, depends upon the way they are enabled to work. Their activity has to be integrated more in existing development plans, both national and international. Development poses a multitude of problems, for which multitudes of synchronized approaches on a multitude of fronts are necessary. But these multiple approaches must be covered by one basic plan of operations. Volunteer work should not consist of separate crusades but should be an integral part of a basic plan.

Increased and well planned international co-operation in the volunteer field could also bring important advantages. More development projects could be undertaken by the many private and governmental organizations sending long-term volunteers to work overseas, if those organizations would begin to 'pool' their personnel resources. A kind of 'free exchange of volunteers' arrangement could bring similar advantages that many countries find in 'free-trade area' agreements. Equally, an intensified use of volunteers in international projects would help not only to overcome basically similar problems but, at the same time, would increase international co-operation among different nations—a side benefit becoming even more important in our modern world, and, incidentally, being urged by our young generation. . . .

In the service of all, *World Health*, World Health Organization, Geneva, January 1969.

The International Atomic Energy Agency is the youngest of the agencies of the United Nations. There are a number of reasons for this. Immediately following the Second World War the idea of such an agency was almost inconceivable. One country held a monopoly of the secrets of the atom, and world opinion, disturbed by the staggering examples of nuclear destruction, was far from imagining what peaceful uses atomic energy might have.

In 1953, atomic monopoly ended and the mood changed. President Eisenhower proposed to the United Nations that an international organization be created allowing the technically developed countries to devote a portion of their resources to this new source of energy for the good of mankind rather than for its destruction.

The following year, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution on the peaceful uses of the atom and expressed the desire to create, as soon as possible, an international atomic energy agency. A conference in October 1956, at which 81 states were represented,