INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
1 EAST 67TH STREET, NEW YORK 21, NEW YORK

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Date __________________ Signature ___________________
A PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE

by the

Committee on Educational Interchange Policy

President-elect Kennedy and many other public and private leaders have recently advocated the establishment by the United States of a program to enable large numbers of young Americans to contribute to educational and technical development projects throughout the world. This is an appealing and inspiring idea. There is abundant evidence that many young Americans are eagerly seeking means to participate in development programs in the countries of Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. Experience has already demonstrated the feasibility of youth service abroad.

The Committee on Educational Interchange Policy strongly endorses the objectives of Senator Kennedy's proposal that the talents and skills of young Americans be channeled into helping developing nations help themselves. To contribute to wide public discussion of this important question, the Committee presents a specific proposal for the creation of an International Youth Service by the United States Government, and outlines certain policies which should govern the program.

The Purpose of the International Youth Service

The purpose of an International Youth Service should be to enable talented young American men and women in their twenties to provide specific services overseas in the development programs of other nations, under conditions that broaden the international understanding of the participants and give them meaningful and useful experiences.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL INTERCHANGE POLICY
1 East 67th Street, New York City
December 15, 1960
The Policies that Should Guide the International Youth Service

1. An International Youth Service will be most effective if it works through the machinery already established by the United States Government, private organizations, educational institutions and international organizations. The rich variety of present and proposed development programs of existing groups should be strengthened by the infusion of the enthusiasm and skills of more young Americans. The problem is not to create additional agencies overseas, but to create additional opportunities for young Americans.

2. An International Youth Service must contribute to the development plans of other nations if it is to be of real usefulness abroad. It must, therefore, aim to meet specific national needs as identified by these countries. Most existing programs which send young Americans abroad, chiefly for short-term work-project assignments, provide excellent experiences for the participants although they have usually involved manual labor. Labor is not in short supply in most underdeveloped countries. The young Americans selected for the International Youth Service must have skills which are needed and can be used. Young Americans will probably be most helpful in such jobs as teaching in elementary and secondary schools; teaching English to adults who are eager for such knowledge; assisting in the provision of basic health and welfare services; providing technical know-how on construction projects; serving as trained interns in technical, industrial and government services.

3. Although a limited number of young Americans may be needed for shorter periods of work, participants in the International Youth Service will be most valuable if they are committed to one to three years of service. A major concern must be careful selection and training of young Americans. In addition to possessing useful skills and knowledge, the participants must be able to communicate knowledge and ideas to people who may speak a different language and whose customs and traditions differ from our own. Domestic and overseas training periods for participants must be provided, including refresher training in particular professional knowledge or technical skills as well as the adaptation of these skills to the foreign situation. An introduction to the culture and language of the country where they are to work is imperative.

4. Over a period of years, it should be possible for many thousands of young Americans to work in the International Youth Service. The Committee believes, however, that since the program must be planned to meet realistic expressed needs of foreign countries and that the long-term success of the venture will depend on the selection of the most talented and adaptable young Americans in the initial phase, not more than one thousand qualified young people should be chosen during the first year of operation. Clearer definitions of the needs of other countries and the experience of the pilot group will provide a sound basis for expansion of the program in future years.

5. Since the young Americans would, for the most part, be working individually or in small groups in foreign countries under difficult living conditions, the International Youth Service will need to set standards for the operating agencies that assure minimum health safeguards for the participants.

6. Since the members of the International Youth Service will benefit professionally by a year or two of responsible experience abroad, modest salaries for service could be paid.

7. Participation in the International Youth Service should not itself be a substitute for military service under the Selective Service System, but individual participants should be eligible for consideration for deferment in the same way that some graduate students in the U.S. are allowed to continue their studies.

The Proposal

An International Youth Service should be established by the Federal Government with necessary funds to perform the following functions:

a. Serve as a clearing house for programs and plans of all agencies, public and private, interested in utilizing young Americans in work overseas.

b. Provide accurate information regarding the opportunities and problems in work abroad to educational institutions, public and private agencies, and individual young men and women.

c. Make supplementary grants-in-aid to private and public agencies already involved or which may become involved in development projects, in order to enable them to use larger numbers of young Americans. Grants-in-aid would be used to:

(1) Assist in recruitment and arrangement of specialized training for young Americans.
(2) Provide necessary international travel and maintenance grants.

(3) Cover special costs that will arise from the inclusion of young people in overseas development programs.

d. Arrange for the recruitment on a national scale of young Americans who may be needed by existing or new agencies to man youth service activities abroad.

**Conclusion**

The Committee on Educational Interchange Policy believes that an International Youth Service, carefully organized and skillfully administered, can increase the total contribution of the United States to the national development of other countries and at the same time enrich the international experience of young Americans. The Government's encouragement of such a program would help expand the role of young people in the programs of public and private agencies and institutions. U.S. Government funds would supplement the already substantial contributions of U.S. foundations, private organizations and foreign governments.

**Committee On Educational Interchange Policy**

Harlan Cleveland (Chairman), Syracuse University
Leo Dowling, Indiana University
Luther H. Evans, Brookings Institution