

(iii) Changing nature and roles

139. CUSO, in its early days, was renowned for the dominant role of youth in its operations. It is significant, as CUSO's Executive Director, Mr. Bogdasavich, pointed out to the Subcommittee, that in the last few years the average age of CUSO teachers has risen from twenty-one to twenty-four or twenty-five years. Mr. Bogdasavich put the reason for this change quite simply.

"The overseas governments are the people who make the requests to us annually. We try and find people to fill them. These requests have been escalating in terms of professional qualifications."
(35:227-8)

140. This change is in itself clear testimony to the progress achieved by many of the developing countries. More and more positions can be filled by their own nationals, generally trained at their own institutions. The need for external help is thus narrowing to fewer categories of highly-trained and experienced specialists. This kind of change, of course, has implications for the whole tenor of relationships between voluntary agencies and their host countries.

141. Goodwill, generosity and enthusiasm no longer suffice. Attempts to impose non-indigenous values or methods will be resented and resisted. The people of developing countries refuse to be made to feel that they are recipients of "charity" from rich countries. Rather than direct personal philanthropy, they increasingly ask of concerned individuals in the industrialized world that they press for the kind of changes in international economic relationships that will allow poor countries the opportunity to progress through their own efforts. Assistance is sought, where it is specifically needed, on a basis of cooperation, to fit in with their systems of values and their development priorities.

142. Judging from the Subcommittee's evidence it seems clear that, in general, the non-governmental agencies are sensitive to these changing conditions and are attempting to respond to the new challenges. CUSO, for instance, has de-centralized its administration with the object of providing better liaison with, and service to, the authorities in host countries. In recognition of the fact that its personnel are paid at the same rate as their local counterparts, the organization has dropped the term "volunteers". Another sign is that CUSO, like many other agencies, is placing much greater emphasis on its informational and public-educational activities in Canada.

143. This new role for the voluntary agencies at home has been discussed in a previous section of the report. It was mentioned not only that existing agencies are devoting a greater share of their resources to these activities,

but that a number of community-based groups have sprung up with this as their primary objective. The communication and coordination activities of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation have expanded, and intensified attempts have been made to use fund-raising events like the "Miles for Millions" marches to inform and arouse large numbers of Canadians about the deeper causes and consequences of world poverty.

144. These new roles, in particular, are changing the nature of the non-governmental agencies and are affecting their relationship with official bodies. An active concern with international development is now less likely to be manifested in unobjectionable sentimentality and periodic donations. People are increasingly exposed to the real clash of interests which occurs in the world economy and in international society. The non-governmental agencies sometimes provide a forum for this kind of debate though they usually refrain from taking official positions on political questions. Their members (and returned volunteers) are often very active participants.

145. The urgency of the development task intensifies this debate and the criticisms which result from it. As mentioned earlier, the Subcommittee believes that the intent behind this debate is constructive from an overall Canadian point of view. All Canadians concerned with the maintenance and improvement of the national effort must recognize that unrestrained acrimony or the introduction of controversial issues unrelated to development cooperation could seriously undermine Canadian participation.

146. In view of the fact that religious organizations account for well over half the value of non-official aid, and for approximately 51 per cent of the overseas personnel of non-governmental groups, it is important to note that their activities are very much in line with the general trends. In fact, Mr. Archer made the following appraisal:

"Of the 150 organizations, about 50 are religious in character, but of course this doesn't mean that they are exclusively concerned with proselytizing or evangelizing. In fact many of the religious denominations are undertaking some of the most innovative development programs overseas.

"I might say in passing on this point that our own organization did a study of Canadians who are serving overseas. We were concerned from the beginning of this study about the work of the tremendous number of religious in various areas. We found in practically all of the categories including trade union leadership; skills and carpentry; teaching in technical and vocational institutes; that personnel from religious organizations were involved. In fact, we even discovered two nuns who were responsible for the organizing of a trade union movement among stevedores in Uruguay."