

SR Education

Catch Them While They're Young

Student study and travel abroad added an enormously popular dimension to the American education scene in the years following World War II. Many colleges and universities developed their own junior-year-abroad programs, and some of the more affluent institutions established branch campuses in countries around the world. A variety of agencies, such as the Institute of International Education, sponsored or administered two-way exchange programs for both students and faculty. Other institutions, such as the American Field Service and the Experiment in International Living, developed exchange programs for high-school students. Most of these programs were designed to contribute to international understanding by offering students an opportunity to experience a foreign culture at firsthand and to make lasting friendships with young people of other nations.

Two other student programs pursue similar objectives but differ significantly. Children's International Summer Villages (C.I.S.V.), founded in 1951 by Dr. Doris Twitchell Allen, professor emerita of psychology at the University of Cincinnati, was established specifically to foster international understanding and friendships among children at a relatively early age before national and cultural prejudices have hardened. Thus the plan is designed not for college or high-school students, but for 11-year-olds. From its inception C.I.S.V. has also carried on an extensive research program to determine how effective it has been in achieving its stated objectives.

The villages are composed of about 50 11-year-olds from 10 to 12 different countries. Each national delegation is composed of two boys and two girls and an adult leader. The activities of the village are essentially those of any summer camp. However, both the villages and the delegations from each country are kept small so that individuals will reach out to make friends with those from other cultures.

The most unusual feature of the development of the villages, perhaps, was the decision to limit them exclusively to 11-year-olds. Various ages were tried, but C.I.S.V. finally concluded that 11 was the ideal age, because children at that age, though



they already carry the stamp of their respective cultures, are able to accept each other without prejudice. They are also old enough to be away from home and mature enough to understand the purpose of getting together in an international setting. Children at this active age willingly join in a variety of activities, through which they develop a sense of fellowship. Also, at this age language is not a problem. Children typically have no difficulty in communicating through gestures, miming, pictures, and the like, and 11-year-olds learn a foreign language quickly so that they acquire most of the vocabulary used in the daily life of the village.

A companion program that grew out of C.I.S.V. is the International School-to-School Experience (I.S.S.E.), which Dr. Allen founded in 1971. I.S.S.E. is a school exchange program, also designed for 11-year-olds. A team, consisting of two boys, two girls, and an adult from another country, visits a school for a month in the fall. Each child lives in a family with a youngster of the same age and sex, with whom he attends school. In the spring the host school sends a similar team to the school from which the visitors came.

The visiting students attend school with their young host, but during classes where the language barrier might prove insuperable during a short stay (English and social studies, for instance), they meet with children of other age levels in the school and introduce them to the native songs and dances, arts and crafts, sports and games of the visitor's country. Thus all children in the school are given the opportunity to have contact with a foreign culture. Meanwhile, the adult who accompanies the young visitors (usually a teacher) acts as an interpreter when necessary, may introduce classes to the visitors' home language, and meets with members of the community as a goodwill ambassador. (Information about C.I.S.V. can be obtained from the National Association of C.I.S.V. of the United States, Casstown, Ohio, and about I.S.S.E. from Doris Allen, I.S.S.E., R.F.D.1, Ellsworth, Maine 04605.)

Person-to-person contacts across cultural barriers are by no means a sure bridge to international respect and understanding. The difficulties of achieving One World are far more complex than we believed a generation ago—or have even accepted fully today. But without an increasing number of person-to-person contacts, we are unlikely ever to achieve a peaceful world. Learning a foreign language grows more difficult with age—and so does full acceptance of an alien culture. The evidence suggests, however, that 11-year-olds have far fewer problems with either—that significant changes in attitude do occur and that in a high proportion of cases they are lasting. Perhaps one of the secrets of a peaceful future is to catch them while they're young.

JAMES CASS
Education Editor

The School as Surrogate Conscience

Too many Americans are content to let schools take the rap for society's ills, says an eminent historian who believes that much of education today is "a massive demonstration in hypocrisy."

by Henry Steele Commager

Education has been a central preoccupation of the Western world for 2,500 years, but only in the past two centuries has its function been thought to be chiefly the responsibility of schools—that is, of formal institutions of learning—and it is only in the past half-century or so (a brief time in history) that the task has been handed over almost entirely to such formal institutions of learning.

not until after the Civil War that public high schools outnumbered academies and private secondary schools. As late as 1900, while there were some 15 million children in public elementary schools, the public-high-school population was only 519,000, with an additional 1,351,000 in academies and parochial schools. Proportionately fewer young people went to high schools and academies combined than now go to colleges and universities: 1 out of 40 compared with 1 out of 22.

culturally. But the new habits and practices were not institutionalized, as in the Old World, and could not be relied on for educational purposes in anything like the same way. Americans had no church that could impose its discipline on the whole people, no class system, no hierarchy, no guilds, no professions with rules and titles; they scarcely had families—for families scattered with the wind.

Industrialization and urbanization marked an end to most of the informal education that American children had



Culver



The New York Times

From one-room schoolhouse to experimental social laboratory—"Taking on the function of moral safety valve."

Schools, in some form, and universities are very old, but until almost our own day neither schools nor universities were for the whole population of a society or for the whole education of society. Both of these notions—that schools should educate everyone, and that they should provide the whole of education—are so new that we are still working out their implications. Certainly there was no such thing in the Old World as universal or even widespread education until the twentieth century, though some German states, Sweden, and Scotland provide partial exceptions. Nor, for all the rhetoric of the school laws of the 1640s, was there universal education in the Bay Colony. It was not until well into the nineteenth century that Horace Mann and his followers called for what we would consider universal free education, and

Throughout most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the United States provided formal schooling for more children than did any Old World country. That does not mean that the United States provided more education. For it did not have the numerous and elaborate educational institutions of the Old World: ancient schools, academies, and universities; the church; the court; the guilds; the bar; the army and navy; and, along with these, a stable society on the farms and villages in which all children learned what they needed to know in order to serve in the station to which God had consigned them.

IN THE NEW WORLD everything was different. Nothing could be taken for granted, and almost everything had to be learned anew: climate, soil, flora, fauna, illnesses and remedies, new forms of farming, new tools; within a short time almost everything was new socially and

enjoyed from the early seventeenth century on. This was the first great revolution. By that time the bifurcation between formal and informal education was decisive; education was being assigned chiefly to the schools that were, for the most part, wholly unable to provide more than formal schooling, and education—in the sense in which it had been known in the Old World for centuries and had been provided even in America by the home and the farm—was going by default.

By the mid-twentieth century another revolution in the instruments of education was under way. In the Forties and Fifties, as if to fill the vacuum left by the decline of the household and the church as major educational agencies, the film, radio, television, and popular journalism emerged as full-scale educational instruments. The new agencies competed with the old both in attention and in effectiveness. They competed with schools, to be

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