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*Report of the International Educational Exchange Service<sup>1</sup>*

THE TEEN-AGER EXCHANGE PROGRAM

December 1957

Private American organizations inaugurated the first exchange programs involving young people of high school age. These programs originally involved only teen-agers from other countries. Their support came from many sources. The private organizations chose the youngsters, made the travel arrangements, and found American communities willing to receive them. The students' families paid their travel expenses, and the American communities supported them while they were here. A single family offered them room and board. Churches and community groups gave money for incidentals, and the school which they attended waived tuition.

Through this cooperative effort many foreign youngsters have been able to spend a year in the United States, attending high school and living the life of the American student. They participate thoroughly in the life of the community, to the mutual benefit of the students and the communities. Since many of these communities are small towns, boasting no tourist attractions or universities, these foreign high school youths represent the only chance these towns have to know exchangees. The American towns have been enthusiastic, and so have been the foreign teen-agers. But a lack of money kept the programs small. The United States Government decided to try to supplement the efforts of these groups.

The United States Government began to participate in a teen-ager exchange program in 1949, when the Department of the Army included grants for teen-age exchanges in its re-orientation program with Germany. The Department of State took over this activity in 1950. Since that time a considerable number of German and Austrian teen-agers have come to the United States under individual Government grants. The Department first included youngsters from certain of the Central and South American republics in 1955 and from Malaya in 1957.

The youngsters who come to the United States under this program are between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. They are citizens of the countries from which they come. Preferably, they should have had no previous experience in the United States. They should have a reasonably good command of English and a good school record. They should be emotionally mature and agreeable people. The De-

<sup>1</sup> Report: CH-BAR#E2200.36-09#1972/18#465\* (K.30.21.1). Author not identified. The report was published as part of the IES Monthly Digest. The text was one of eight attachments to the letter from the Swiss Ambassador in Washington, Henry de Torrenté, to the Head of the Division of International Organizations of the FPD of 27 July 1959, doc. 11, [dodis.ch/54452](https://dodis.ch/54452).

partment has always required that they return to their home countries after their one year here and has refused requests for extension of stay. The reason for this regulation is that these students are so young; if they stay here too long they may become so attached to their host family that they do not wish to return home, or they may return home quite dissatisfied with conditions there. The Department does not wish its program to alienate children from their family or country.

The teen-ager program has one feature which makes its administration unique. This is the youth of the participants. It is to the interest of the United States Government, the families of the participants, and the participants themselves that much closer supervision be given to placement, to schooling, and to arrangements for these youngsters than for the exchange visitors who are more mature and able to arrange their own studies. For this reason the Department has always worked very closely with the private agencies conducting teen-ager exchange. It contracts with these agencies to place the grantees in American homes and high schools and to supervise their activities during the year. These agencies are able to give sufficient time and attention to details to insure that the program works smoothly.

In the 1956 fiscal year, the Department inaugurated a new phase of the teen-ager program. Instead of devoting all the money in the teen-ager program to individual grants, the Department transferred part of the funds as grants-in-aid to the teen-ager organizations to develop and increase their private programs. The individual grant program with Germany ended in 1955-56, and that with Austria stopped after the 1956-57 academic year, since private teen-ager exchanges were sufficiently large in those two countries to insure the successful continuation of the program. During 1957-58, the individual grant program continues only with Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Honduras, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Malaya.

The current grants-in-aid are for very explicit purposes, which fall into two categories, travel assistance and administrative expenses. The money for travel is limited to foreign teen-agers who would otherwise not be able to participate in a private exchange program. This insures participation of the best-qualified candidates regardless of their families' financial circumstances. This is important particularly in the Far East and Latin America, places from which the journey is so long that its cost is frequently prohibitive. The money for administrative expenses is (1) to cover the costs of the agencies' handling the placement and supervision of the Department's grantees and (2) to encourage the expansion or initiation of the agencies' private programs. These funds enabled the agencies to handle larger groups of students, place them in communities where no teen-agers had been before, and find help abroad for selection.

Once a new community on either side becomes interested, it is usually willing to share expenses and sometimes pay them all in order to continue the program. Schools waive tuition and sometimes give books; churches, clubs and community groups give money; and the host families provide incidentals and free room and board.

In 1958-59 the Department plans to end all individual grants. All money for the teen-ager program will go into grants-in-aid, to be used exactly as it was used this year except that since there are no Department grantees, the administrative funds will be used exclusively for program expansion. The agencies have agreed

to maintain at least token programs in all the countries where the Department gave grants in 1957. The 1958–59 program will probably involve fifty-one countries, which is a large increase over the thirty-four countries of 1957–58 program. Most of these new countries are in the Near East or the Far East.

All of these recent changes in the program have been made for one purpose – to increase as much as possible, with the funds at hand, the number of exchanges and of countries.

In the past two years the Department has contracted with four agencies in the teen-ager program: the American Field Service, the Michigan Council of Churches, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and the International Christian Youth Exchange, formerly the Brethren Service Commission. [See *Digest* of November 1957.] The figures below show the number of foreign exchanges involved in each program.

	1956–57	1957–58	1958–59
(Proposed)			
American Field Service	767	1039	1159
International Christian Youth Exchange	29*	101	125
Michigan Council of Churches	21*	62	75
National Catholic Welfare Conference	0*	99	125
Totals	817	1301	1484

\*Not including Government grants

Although the Department has limited its grant and travel support only to foreign teen-agers coming to the United States, it believes in the usefulness of two-way exchanges and supports them through the grants-in aid for administration. Most of the teen-ager agencies prefer a two-way exchange, for exchanges in one direction help increase exchanges in the other. Several of the agencies have begun trying to include more American youngsters in their programs. The American Field Service placed forty-four young Americans abroad for one semester in the 1957–58 academic year. In its 1957 summer program seven hundred fifty-nine young Americans went to other countries. In 1957–58 the International Christian Youth Exchange placed twenty-three Americans in foreign homes. It hopes to increase this to fifty next year. The Michigan Council of Churches sent eighty-eight young Americans abroad in the summer of 1957, and it hopes to begin next year to send Americans to India for the entire academic year. One important reason for the small number of Americans going abroad for the entire year is the problem of language and rigid, rigorous academic schedules. Very few American students of high school age converse sufficiently in a foreign language to be able to attend a foreign school.

The teen-ager program is spreading to include more countries; it is also involving more States of the United States. The current program operates in forty-six States and the District of Columbia. The recent increase in the program and the

hearty support it has found among the American people encourage the Department to believe that the teen-ager program will continue to grow, introducing more young people to other countries at an age which offers one of the finest possibilities for understanding and sympathy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Attached is a list of contacts for the organizations mentioned:* Mr. Stephen Galatti, New York (AFS), Mrs. Robert H. Handy, Washington (National Catholic Welfare Conference), Mr. William A. Perkins, New Windsor (ICYE), Mr. Wilbur Braxton, Philadelphia (American Friends Service Committee), Mrs. Rachel Andresen, Ann Arbor (Michigan Council of Churches), *cf.* CH-BAR# E2200.36-09#1972/18#465\* (K.30.21.1).