

# INNISFREE

## PROPOSAL

### "Innisfree Growth Laboratory"

**THE INNISFREE GROWTH LABORATORY: An Opportunity For  
Experiential Student-Intern Field Placements In A Weekend  
Encounter-Group Setting For Graduate Students In Counsel-  
ing, Social Work, And Related Fields.**

11/30/85

*All contributions are tax deductible.*

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## P R O P O S A L

**Project Title: "Innisfree Growth Laboratory"**

### 1. Background

For over 20 years, Trenton State College in Trenton, New Jersey has offered a twice-yearly weekend encounter experience called "Personal Growth Laboratory" (P.G.L.) with undergraduate Student Activities Fee funding. In October of 1985, the scheduled weekend was cancelled at the last minute. The college threatened to withdraw its financial support of the organization when it was learned that a large number of the registered participants were actually graduate students or alumni who did not contribute to the S.A.F. general fund with their tuition.

The Innisfree Growth Laboratory was formed in the fall of 1985 to meet the immediate need for a surrogate administrative structure, in order to provide the type of learning experience participants expected and desired when they registered for the college-sponsored weekend. Twenty-five participants attended the lab, October 4-6, 1985, each paying \$50, with both Innisfree Corporation and the individual facilitators taking a substantial financial loss on the weekend. Ninety-one percent of those responding to a post-lab questionnaire (92% response rate) indicated that they would like to attend a similar weekend workshop at Innisfree in the spring of 1986.

### 2. Need

Many college and university schools of counseling, psychology, and social work place little emphasis on what Rogers (1961) termed the "basic encounter", stressing instead the theoretical and practical study of group dynamics in smaller and more long-term counseling groups. One purpose of the Innisfree Growth Lab will be to provide an

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opportunity for supervised encounter-group practicum experiences for interns from participating colleges and universities.

Other recipients of benefits from the proposed program will be the participants in the program. All of these people are self-identified adults who are willing to pay for the experience of taking part in the weekend.

### 3. Nature Of The Program

The Innisfree Growth Laboratory consists of biannual weekend sensitivity-training/encounter groups (see Appendix A for definitions of terms), facilitated by trained professionals with varied humanistic theoretical orientations and backgrounds. Brief vitae of each facilitator and intern will be made available prior to the start of the spring 1986 lab.

A. Community Meetings. Twice over the weekend all participants meet together in the recreation hall for a wide range of large-group learning and diversionary activities. Both of the "communities" will revolve around a central topic such as "reaching out" or "courage" which sets the theme for the weekend. In community meetings, one goal is to help participants feel more alive, become more spontaneous, be more aware of their total experience, and overcome feelings of isolation. Through such varied activities as guided fantasy, encounter ("new") games, massage, sensory-awakening or trust-building exercises, and other verbal and nonverbal modalities designed to foster interaction.

The process of these meetings sometimes tends to be more didactic in nature than the small group sessions. Examples of specific types of activities conducted at community meetings may be found in Shutz (1967), Pfeiffer & Jones (1976), Fluegeman (1976), and elsewhere. Frequently, feelings generated in community meetings become "grist for the mill" in the encounter group sessions.

B. Encounter Groups. One aim of this type of experience is to facilitate individual awareness and sensitivity to the manner in which one's behavior interacts with others' experiences in the world and to develop a sense of empathy. Strong positive values are placed, in group, upon honesty, spontaneity, trust, risk-taking, confidentiality, and a commitment to "work things out". The intensity of such a group experience adds power, by way of social reinforcement, to the learning process. The emphasis is clearly placed upon emotions and experiencing and expressing those emotions fully; therefore, confrontations in the group are encouraged.

Through group interaction, directed activities, role-playing, and other facilitative techniques, participants gain more of an understanding of their own ultimate responsibility for the events which shape their lives. By a combination of introspection and group feedback, participants gain insight into themselves.

Encounter groups at the Innisfree Growth Laboratory, and formerly at Trenton State College's P.G.L., are composed of relatively healthy adults who participate in the weekend experience for the purpose of gaining new insights into themselves and improving their functioning and ability to communicate. (It has been said, however, that while insight makes excellent fertilizer for growth, if it can not be applied, it is so much manure.

A basic premise is that humans naturally aspire to self-actualization when given the opportunity (Maslow, 1968). When provided with a psychologically safe "laboratory" setting such as is proposed, in which to experiment with new behaviors, the person, it is believed, will do so and thereby learn by experience how to get what he or she genuinely wants in the process of inter-relating with others.

Group members share in their commitment to abide by certain ground-rules and principles which are constructed and discussed in the opening session on Friday

night. Following is an example of a group contract:

1. Confidentiality. Each person commits to hold in confidence all that goes on in group. (Facilitators could be ethically bound, however, to take appropriate action if a participant were to (a) express current suicidal ideation, or (b) make threats to injure someone else.) Any exceptions must be unanimously agreed upon.
2. Commitment To Stay. Participants agree not to leave the group before the end of any one session, to attend all sessions, and to be prompt.
3. Honesty And Genuineness. In the context of the group, members agree to work on being as spontaneous and open as possible in relating to others their own internal experience, "here and now", as close to the moment as possible.
4. No Physical Violence. This commitment extends outside of the group as well.
5. Unaltered Consciousness. Participants promise not to come to group under the influence of any kind of mind-altering substance. Drug and alcohol use is strongly discouraged for the duration of the weekend.
6. No Sexual Contact. Because of the occasionally highly-charged emotional nature of encounter groups, group members might feel themselves physically attracted to one another. Participants are advised that it could be unwise, or possibly even emotionally harmful (if the new relationship is transference in nature) to engage in physical intimacy on the weekend which might later be regretted.

C. Facility. The weekend encounter workshop is held at the Innisfree Hostel and Conference Center in Milanville, Wayne County, Pennsylvania, located at the center of the upper Delaware River recreational corridor near the Skinners Falls rapids.

Home-cooked meals (brunch and dinner on Saturday, and brunch on Sunday) are prepared and served by Innisfree staff in the main lodge. Participants and facilitators eat together "family-style", and work together on dining hall cleanup, along with the camp staff. Participants who desire additional meals will be referred to area restaurants during unscheduled time.

D. Schedule. Detailed schedules are worked out at a pre-lab planning meeting held before the weekend. Said meeting is to be attended by Growth Lab participants who wish to attend, all facilitators, the Resident Consultant, Administrative Coordinator, and a representative of the Board of Trustees of Innisfree Corporation. A sample schedule is attached as Appendix B.

E. Screening. Individuals who have either attended Trenton State College's P.G.L. or the Innisfree Growth Laboratory in the past may attend, unless their facilitators believe that the type of experience as is offered would be detrimental to the person's emotional well-being, or detrimental to the group process.

Participants complete an application giving name, address, phone number(s), and an explanation of why they wish to attend. All new applicants will be contacted and interviewed by telephone by the Administrative Coordinator or other staff member.

F. Ethical Standards. All staff members, including interns, will adhere to the American Psychological Association's policy statement, "Guidelines for Psychologists Conducting Growth Groups" (APA, 1973). See Appendix 3 for text.

The purposes of the Innisfree Growth Laboratory are primarily educational in nature, so according to APA's statement (Guideline 4), the staff "assumes the usual professional and ethical obligations of an educator".

A brochure or introductory packet will be developed and given to all prospective participants, containing the following information:

1. An explicit statement of the purpose of the group;
2. Types of techniques that may be employed;
3. The education, training, and experience of staff members;
4. The fee and any additional expenses that may be incurred;
5. A statement as to whether or not a follow-up service is included in the fee. (Follow-up counseling services, if appropriate, will be arranged on a case-by-case basis.);

6. Goals of the group experience and techniques to be used;
7. Amounts and kinds of responsibility to be assumed by staff and by participants; for example, (i) that a participant maintains absolute freedom not to follow suggestions or prescriptions of the group facilitators or members, although they are encouraged to do so; (ii) that a participant retain's the "freedom" to leave the encounter group at any point, but makes a commitment not to do so until the session closes, or the group agrees; and
8. Issues of confidentiality.

(See APA, 1973, Guideline 4.)

#### 4. Organization

##### A. Staff. Paid personnel will include the following:

1. Three facilitators or as many more as may be required (one per group, each to work with a student intern), to allow for a group size of 12 to 15, inclusive;
2. One Resident Consultant (preferably a college-level professor of counseling or social work) to be available to participants outside of group, for special counseling needs for the duration of the weekend; and
3. One Administrative Coordinator to organize, promote, and otherwise administer the weekend.

Participant volunteers will be recruited before and on the weekend to assist and supervise with specific tasks.

B. Salaries. All five staff members will be paid by Innisfree Corporation the same amount per weekend (including the planning meeting). This uniform amount will be \$200.00 per person. Out-of-pocket expenses, such as for publicity, printing, or materials incurred by staff or volunteers will be reimbursable from program revenue.

C. Advertising And Publicity. Innisfree Corporation will advertise and promote the weekend experience. The Administrative Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring appropriate publicity in such media as newspapers (e.g., T.S.C. SIGNAL and ACCENT (alumni paper), Association for Humanistic Psychology (A.H.P.) newsletters,



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PRINCETON PACKET, RIVER REPORTER, VILLAGE VOICE, etc.) and radio announcements (non-profit spots).

D. Projected Budget. The following projected budget is based on 30 participants, divided into three groups. (If more than 30 attend, or if a contracted facilitator or intern is taken ill, the Administrative Coordinator will serve as an alternate, but will still receive only the basic \$200 fee.

Salaries (five paid staff)	\$ 1,000
Lodging (30 participants 8 staff)	532
Advertising	500 *
Food (3 meals)	456
Post-lab workshop	150
Printing and office	100 *
Telephone	50
Miscellaneous	<u>50</u>
	\$ 2,838
* (requires advance capital)	\$ (650)

E. Cost For Participants. Each participant will pay \$100 for the weekend experience. A discount will be offered to those who pay at least 30 days in advance, bringing the cost to \$95. After all expenses have been paid, any remaining monies will be placed in a special account and applied toward the next lab, with the possibility for financial aid in the fall of 1986.

Dated: Milanville, Pennsylvania  
November 30, 1985

Respectfully submitted,  
INNISFREE CORPORATION

By: Thomas S. Rue, M.A.  
Corporate Secretary/  
Administrative Coordinator

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A P P E N D I X A

Definitions Of Terms

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Encounter groups (sometimes known as personal-growth groups) offer an intense group experience designed to assist relatively healthy people in achieving better contact with themselves and others. The ground rules of encounter groups are that participants be open and honest in the group setting, that they avoid intellectualization, and that they talk instead about their feelings and perceptions. The emphasis is on eliciting emotions and on expressing these emotions fully; therefore, confrontations within the group are encouraged. Encounter focuses on the here and now and on teaching people to live in the present.

Most people who join an encounter, or personal-growth, group seek increased intimacy with others and intend to explore blocks within themselves that keep them from realizing their full potential. Their goal is to feel more alive, become more spontaneous, be more aware of their total experience, and overcome feelings of isolation.

Besides verbal techniques, encounter groups use a wide range of nonverbal modalities designed to foster interaction; touching, the use of fantasy, encounter games, sensory-awakening exercises, massage, meditation, and centering are just a few of them. These groups are usually time-limited; they often meet for a weekend or longer in a residential setting away from the distractions of daily living. During this time the participants are encouraged to become increasingly aware of their feelings and to engage in risk-taking behavior to discover different dimensions of themselves.

In sum, some of the goals of encounter groups are:

- o to become aware of hidden potentials, to tap unused strengths, and to develop creativity and spontaneity;
- o to become more open and honest with selected others;
- o to decrease game playing, which prevents intimacy;
- o to become freer of "oughts", "shoulds", and "musts" and to develop internal values;
- o to lessen feelings of alienation and fears of getting close to others;
- o to learn how to ask directly for what one wants;
- o to learn the distinction between having feelings and acting on them;
- o to increase one's capacity to care for others;
- o to learn how to give to others;
- o to learn to tolerate ambiguity and to make choices in a world where nothing is guaranteed.

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A P P E N D I X B

Sample Schedule

## SCHEDULE

### Personal Growth Laboratory

Innisfree  
Milanville, Pennsylvania

October 19-21, 1984

#### FRIDAY

9:30 Departure from campus  
1:00 Arrival at camp; lunch  
2:00 - 2:30 Committee/facilitator meeting  
2:30 - 3:00 Opening community (Rec Hall)  
3:15 - 5:00 T-groups  
5:15 - 6:00 Free time  
6:00 - 7:00 Dinner (Dining Hall)  
7:30 - 10:30 T-groups

#### SATURDAY

8:00 - 9:00 Breakfast (Dining Hall)  
9:15 - 11:45 T-groups  
12:00 - 1:00 Lunch (Dining Hall)  
1:30 - 3:00 T-groups (leaderless)  
3:00 - 5:30 T-groups (facilitators return)  
6:00 - 7:00 Dinner (Dining Hall)  
8:00 - ? Community (Rec Hall)

#### SUNDAY

8:00 - 9:00 Breakfast (Dining Hall)  
9:15 - 11:45 T-groups  
12:00 - 1:00 Lunch (Dining Hall)  
1:00 - 1:30 Closing community  
2:00 Departure from camp  
5:00 Arrival at campus

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A P P E N D I X C

Guidelines For Psychologists Conducting  
Growth Groups

## GUIDELINES FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS CONDUCTING GROWTH GROUPS<sup>1</sup>

The following guidelines are presented for the information and guidance of psychologists who conduct growth or encounter groups. They are not intended to substitute for or to supplant ethical practices for psychologists specified elsewhere.

The development of these guidelines was prompted by the concern of several units within the American Psychological Association that there be a set of operating principles for the use of psychologists active in such groups. The guidelines do not presume to specify or endorse any professional procedure or technique used in a group, but only to aid psychologists who offer groups to present themselves in a manner that is ethically sound and protective of the participant.

The present statement attempts to accommodate those suggestions from various psychologists in response to the draft statement published by the Board of Professional Affairs in the *APA Monitor* of December 1971 (Vol. 2, No. 12, p. 3). It is to be expected that these guidelines will be subject to modification as they are put to use, and also in the light of the evolution of new knowledge and practices in the utilization of growth groups.

1. Entering into a growth group experience should be on a voluntary basis; any form of coercion to participate is to be avoided.
2. The following information should be made available in writing to all prospective participants:
  - (a) an explicit statement of the purpose of the group;
  - (b) types of techniques that may be employed;
  - (c) the education, training, and experience of the leader or leaders;
  - (d) the fee and any additional expense that may be incurred;
  - (e) a statement as to whether or not a follow-up service is included in the fee;
  - (f) goals of the group experience and techniques to be used;
  - (g) amounts and kinds of responsibility to be assumed by the leader and by the participants; for example, (i) the degree to which a participant is free not to follow suggestions and prescriptions of the group leader and other group members, (ii) any restrictions on a participant's freedom to leave the group at any time; and
  - (h) issues of confidentiality.
3. A screening interview should be conducted by the group leader prior to the acceptance of any participant. It is the responsibility of the leader to screen out those individuals for whom he or she judges the group experience to be inappropriate. Should an interview not be possible, then other measures should be used to achieve the same results.
 

At the time of the screening interview, or at some other time prior to the beginning of the group, opportunity should be provided for leader-participant exploration of the terms of the contract as described in the information statement. This is to assure mutual understanding of the contract.
4. It is recognized that growth groups may be used for both educational and psychotherapeutic purposes. If the purpose is primarily educational, the leader assumes the usual professional and ethical obligations of an educator. If the purpose is therapeutic, the leader assumes the same professional and ethical responsibilities he or she would assume in individual or group psychotherapy, including before and after consultation with any other therapist who may be professionally involved with the participant. In both cases, the leader's own education, training, and experience should be commensurate with these responsibilities.
5. It is recognized that growth groups may be used for responsible research or exploration of human potential and may therefore involve the use of innovative and unusual techniques. While such professional exploration must be protected and encouraged, the welfare of the participant is of paramount importance. Therefore, when an experience is clearly identified as "experimental," the leader should (a) make full disclosure of techniques to be used, (b) delineate the respective responsibilities of the leader and participant during the contract discussion phase prior to the official beginning of the group experience, and (c) evaluate and make public his or her findings.

<sup>1</sup>Approved for publication by the Board of Directors of the American Psychological Association on February 15, 1973. An ad hoc committee consisting of Donald H. Clark, Wilbert Edgerton, and John J. McMillan (Chair), the Board of Professional Affairs, and the Board of Directors were successively responsible for development of the statement in its final form.



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A P P E N D I X D

News Releases

# Inner growth from sharing one's own perceptions

BY TOM RUE AND BOB MEHLMAN

If you weren't at the Personal Growth Lab on October 19th through the 21st, you missed something special. On that weekend a group of about 50 students had a lot of fun and learned a great deal about themselves and other people.

At the same time, they enjoyed the natural beauty of the northern Poconos. And the weekend was both exciting and relaxing for almost everyone.

So how did this happen? Since the mid 1960's the Personal Growth Lab has provided a unique chance for learning in groups. In a setting away from the campus participants, under the guidance of trained professionals (called facilitators), spend time together in groups of eight to 12 people. The focus in these groups is on sharing feelings and perceptions. The process is one of self-learning in a warm and supportive social environment.

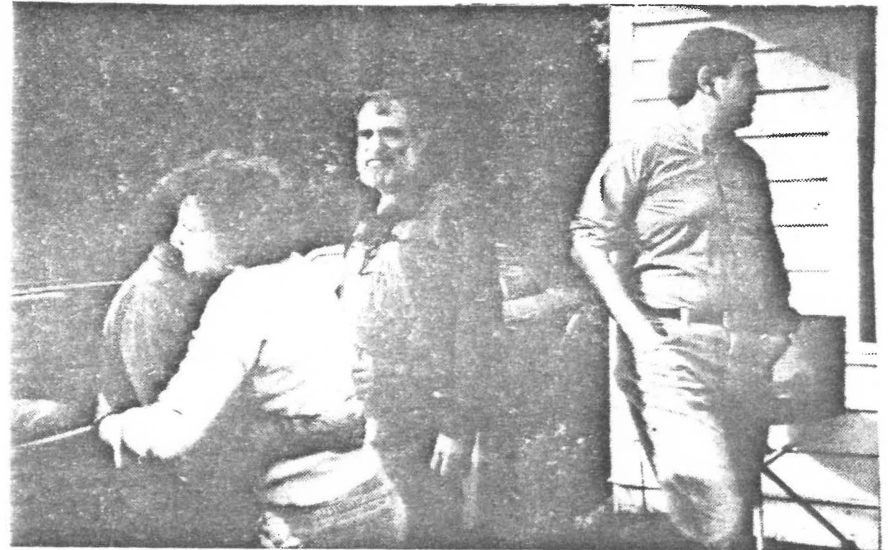
Because of this opportunity to explore their own behavior (the reason why this is called a Personal Growth Lab), most participants learn how to listen more

effectively to other people, to respond to them with empathy and understanding, and to become more effective communicators. At this lab, too, students often develop deep and satisfying friendships which continue long after the weekend.

A major characteristic of the lab is the emphasis on personal choice. Although participants often share aspects of themselves that they did not believe others would understand, the supportive atmosphere, the high level of trust, and the sense of power gained from taking responsibility for the conduct of one's own life, make the risk possible.

The changes in the faces of participants tell the story of the weekend. At the beginning of the PGL, most participants are guarded and a little anxious and faces are tense and drawn. Conversation sounds like a cocktail party. By the last day there is more laughter, more spontaneity, more openness; people are relaxed and look at each other when they talk.

Nearly 90 percent of the participants said they found the weekend so



**On the weekend Personal Growth Lab trips, people learn about themselves and each other by sharing their feelings and perceptions. At a recent PGL weekend trip, Rae Fulco, undergraduate Trenton State student, shows her affection for Bob Mehlman, English professor and PGL facilitator, as Nate Passen, another PGL facilitator, looks on.**

photo by Tom Rue

rewarding that they plan to return for the spring lab next April. One student wanted to do it again "because the experience, the feeling, and the atmosphere were a refreshing and helpful change." Another person reported that he would like to return "because I believe in PGL; because I like the quality of my own personal experience, and because I like what I see happen here."

The PGL is entirely student run and is supported by the Student Finance

Board. An opportunity like this usually costs upwards of \$200. Trenton State College students can go for \$10. The committee meets Wednesdays in Ely House at 7:30 p.m. and would like to see even more Trenton State students and faculty attend in the spring on the weekend of April 11th to 14th. Plan for it now though, because those who have gone want to return. Who wouldn't want to go to a place where you can be appreciated for just being you?

## Innisfree — 15 year reunion

MILANVILLE — Innisfree has been on the River Road in Milanville for over 15 years, yet few locals know exactly what goes on there; or if they think they do, their impressions may be based on old memories of Innisfree Corporation's organized camp program in the summers of 1970 and 1971.

Spearheading the energy behind obtaining the funding to make the original down-payment on the organization's Milanville facility were Bud Rue as president, Bill Brown, and Clarke Maylone, three teachers from Montclair, New Jersey. The educational program they and their associates organized was idealistic and not atypical of that era.

Since the discontinuation of the original camp program in 1971, Innisfree has remained open, with some interruptions, as a not-for-profit "public eating and drinking place." It now operates a hostel and conference center, in addition to providing corporate sponsorship to the Innisfree Growth Laboratory.



An informal 15 year reunion of 1970 Innisfree campers was held recently in Milanville. Pictured (from left) are: Ann, Tom and Bud Rue in the back row; Nick Koechln, Catherine Clifford, Ron and Elaine Burger, and Michael Schlanger in the front row.

Ann Rue, who with her husband Bud, makes the 250-mile round trip from their suburban New Jersey home every weekend (and has for the last three years), explains that one of Innisfree's present services is "to provide lodging and meals for young people of limited means who have an appreciation for the area."

The people Ann was talking about have been coming, sometimes alone or in couples, and some in groups as large as 70. Nearly every weekend, Bud and Ann serve as host and hostess to educational and recreational groups from secondary schools, social service agencies, colleges, and private industry. Since no one at Innisfree draws a salary for their efforts, costs are kept to an absolute minimum. Home-cooked meals are served family style in the main lodge.

The most recent group to stay at Innisfree was a student organization from Lawrence High School in New Jersey, where Bud Rue is a teacher. The group is called the **Innisfree Club**, and exists to foster peer-group interdependence and friendships in the school. Members of the club commit not to use drugs or alcohol or create a disturbance in the area on their weekend visits to Milanville and the river at Skinners Falls. (Winter groups enjoy sliding down the hill on truck innertubes.) Typically, before each warm-weather group goes home at the end of the weekend, Rue accompanies them to the rapids area there, and together the group collects several garbage bags full of empty beer cans, broken glass, etc. discarded by canoers and others who are not concerned about the ecology of the area. Rue reports that he witnesses positive effects from these group-building experiences at Innisfree when he sees the students in school, back in New Jersey.

An example of the type of large group which Innisfree would like to attract more frequently is the Personal Growth Laboratory (PGL) from Trenton State College. Beginning in October of 1984, PGL began using the Innisfree facility for its weekend workshops in interpersonal communications, sometimes filling the place to its capacity.

When the college cancelled the weekend experience early last month for budgetary reasons, Innisfree and some of the professional group-facilitators who were involved stepped in and agreed to take a financial loss in order to salvage what they viewed as a valuable program. The ensuing weekend was a success, and there seemed to be sufficient interest to warrant planning another similar Innisfree Growth Lab in the spring of 1986.

Tom Rue, presently the resident caretaker in Milanville, is

a clinical mental-health counselor who holds an M.A. in counseling services from Rider College and a B.A. in psychology from Trenton State. He hopes to organize a weekly or bi-weekly counseling and personal problem-solving group at Innisfree, for eight to ten adolescents from Wayne and Sullivan Counties. Since Innisfree currently receives no foundation or other outside funding, an appropriate fee will be charged to each referring agency or parent.

The annual meeting of Innisfree's Board of Directors is scheduled for Sunday, December 1, 1985, at the camp. Members of the corporation are invited to attend. The membership of Innisfree is an open group of people who work collectively, as often as they can, and without pay, to maintain the physical facility and to further develop educationally oriented programs there.