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Harvesting Another's Crop?

By John Rohe

Non-profit charitable, community, educational and athletic projects for youth exact a big investment of time, talent, capital and determination. The cost of the investment is relative to the wealth of the donor.

According to Lester Brown's *Full House* (Worldwatch Institute, 1994), 70 percent of family disposable income in poorer nations goes for essential food items. The relative sacrifice required to develop educational and athletic programs in the Third World is far greater than in ours.

As a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines 23 years ago, this writer recalls with pain a community's efforts to provide a swimming pool for their children. The adults worked in the rice paddies from dawn to dusk, and weekends were not set aside for leisure or rejuvenation. It was hard for them to take on the swimming pool project. Nevertheless, initial obstacles were overcome and construction began. But the cost became too great and the project was abandoned before completion. What was to have been a swimming pool ended up a rain-fed cesspool.

Providing education carries the same burdens and risks in the Third World. Notwithstanding the challenges, efforts have been made. Exceptional and recognized talents have emerged, but not without a substantial investment from their community.

Do we appreciate the effort and respect the commitment? Do we support Third World communities' aspirations? Do we help them reap the benefits of their investment? Do we encourage the talented to serve their fellow citizens?

Well, not really.

Visas for immigrants and non-immigrants are available for those of "exceptional ability," high educational status and prominent reputation. Our federal immigration laws specifically lure persons of "extraordinary ability" in the sciences, arts, education or athletics. The legislation also attracts outstanding professors and professionals holding advanced degrees. In other words, our immigration laws encourage us to harvest the best of the rest. Meanwhile, we watch the nightly news and continue to wonder why these countries can't seem to lift themselves up by their bootstraps.

Scanning Recent Legal Developments

Some developments in immigration law include:

- Seven Romanian stowaways have sued the INS for

allegedly providing an incompetent interpreter. A federal judge has, accordingly, blocked the deportation of the Romanians.

- Under a new 1994 federal law, an illegal immigrant entering with false documents is no longer required to return to a home country before applying for legal status. Under the accommodating new procedures an illegal immigrant can just apply for a green card, citing family or employment circumstances, without first returning home.

- Five Filipino security guards have settled claims against the U.S. General Service Administration and their employer for \$87,500. The claims alleged discrimination based on race and national origin under the Equal Protection and Due Process clauses of the U.S. Constitution. The Filipinos were employed as security guards by American Mutual Protective Bureau, and assigned to the U.S. Treasury Department. GSA had requested the guards be replaced by others speaking "better English." The case was settled before any depositions were taken.

- A Disneyland spokesman denied knowingly employing undocumented workers, yet the INS investigation disclosed 1,156 violations in Disneyland's employee records. Disneyland has agreed to pay \$260,000 to the INS.

- The Clinton administration will now be enforcing a law denying housing assistance to illegal immigrants. HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros claims the decision to withhold housing assistance from undocumented aliens was long overdue. On the other hand, the Latino advocates in Washington, D.C. claim HUD's action is "part of a trend to penalize immigrants as a whole." ■