

1961 the House Foreign Affairs Committee specified that during Peace Corps training each applicant will receive "psychological and psychiatric tests." (See p. 267.)

Each Peace Corps training contract requires the training institution, usually an American college or university, to appoint at least one experienced and qualified psychologist to be what we call a field assessment officer. He is responsible for gathering psychological data throughout training. The only personality inventory he is asked to give all trainees is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, although the field assessment officer may decide in consultation with the Peace Corps' field selection officer to give either generally or individually other personality inventories.

In our judgment the MMPI is the only objective personality inventory which helps identify persons who may have or develop serious personality disorders. It has been extensively used for more than 20 years. More data has been accumulated about it than any other similar inventory, and much of it is relevant to the Peace Corps' selection process.

The MMPI consists of 566 statements which the trainee is asked to designate as true or false as he thinks they apply to him. His responses are then distributed among 14 different scales. The score the applicant makes on each scale is then compared with the scores made by persons who are known to have personality disorders.

In my opinion, a good alternative to use of the MMPI does not now exist. Many persons who have potentially serious personality disorders are readily identifiable. Many are not. It is of critical importance that the Peace Corps' selection process make the best effort possible to identify those who are not readily identifiable.

Clinically, potentially serious personality disorders are identified through individual psychiatric interviews. But it is simply not humanly possible to have a qualified psychiatrist interview each of the approximately 10,000 persons who enter Peace Corps training each year. There are not enough psychiatrists, and since most of the interviews would be routine, individual psychiatric interviews would waste scarce professional resources.

The MMPI represents an effort to recreate objectively a psychiatric interview, and the Peace Corps has substantial evidence in the form of case studies that the MMPI makes a definite contribution to Peace Corps selection. In other words, if the Peace Corps did not use the MMPI, more volunteers sent overseas would fail to complete their Peace Corps service for psychiatric reasons. This would not be in either the United States' or the Peace Corps' interest or, perhaps most important, in those volunteers' own interest.

The MMPI contributes to selection-in decisions as well as to selection-out. A normal MMPI profile can help counterbalance negative data from other elements of the selection process. Moreover, trainees with abnormal MMPI profiles are not automatically selected out. Special attention is paid to them. As a result more data accumulates about them than usually accumulates about a trainee. This has resulted in selection-in decisions notwithstanding the abnormal MMPI profile.

Many MMPI items relate to attitudes toward sex, one's body, religion, one's parents and other personal matters. This is because, as most of us know from common experience, personality disorders often express themselves in relation to these matters. What is significant is not an individual's particular responses but whether or not his aggregate score on the MMPI's scales is similar to that of persons with serious personality disorders.

Because the MMPI involves personal matters it is only given by the field assessment officer. He as we have seen is always a qualified and experienced psychologist. He is trained to respect the confidentiality of an individual's MMPI profile.

Only two other persons have access to that profile, the Peace Corps' field selection officer, who is also a highly qualified and experienced psychologist, and if the profile suggests that a psychiatric interview is warranted, a medical doctor trained in psychiatry.

After the end of the training program all MMPI and any other personality inventory data will be destroyed. Our inquiry into the use of personality inventories during Peace Corps training has indicated that the Peace Corps has not had a consistent policy on this in the past. This was a serious error, and I assure you it has been corrected.

I would like to draw an analogy here between the Peace Corps' selection process as it relates to emotional maturity and mental health and a comprehensive health examination. The Peace Corps is obviously equally interested in an