

CIDA's International Youth Apprenticeships Programme

apprenticeships for Canada's future

By **DONBOUDRIA**

International job experience. For many recent graduates, those three words can make the difference between landing a good job and landing in an unemployment line. That's why Canada's recently-announced Youth Employment Strategy includes several opportunities for international internships. One of these is offered by the Canadian International Development Agency to provide young Canadians with job experience in international development.

This two-year International CIDA Youth Internships Program will create short-term job opportunities for more than 800 recent university and college graduates in private sector businesses and voluntary organizations. CIDA will coordinate the work placements, and provide up to \$15,000 to finance each of them. The

internships, which can last up to a year - including up to six months overseas - will help Canada's young people overcome that frustrating vicious circle: "You can't get a job without experience, and you can't get experience without a job."

While the explicit purpose of these internships is to help young people compete in a tough job market, the value for Canada goes beyond that.

By giving young Canadians work experiences in developing countries, we will enable them to build bridges across generation gaps and national borders.

In our globalized economy, which emphasizes knowledge industries and information technology, recent university and college graduates, who are often on the cutting edge in these new areas, can create new opportunities for themselves and oth-

ers.

This new internship program, and other aspects of CIDA's youth strategy, will give young Canadians a competitive edge in their search for a job, and Canada a competitive edge in world markets.

While the internship program is focused on job creation, CIDA's youth strategy will also create greater global awareness among youth, and strengthen their instinct for helping others less fortunate than themselves, at home and abroad. By broadening their exposure to new and different cultures, it will foster tolerance, understanding and awareness.

The new strategy builds on the success of existing programs supported by CIDA. For example, CIDA helps Canadian Crossroads International send 140 young Canadians every year to work on

community projects in 25 developing countries. The Royal Architectural Institute uses a CIDA contribution to send 25 Canadian students to work on human settlements projects in the developing world. CIDA support enables the Canadian Society for International Health to place 75 medical and nursing students on two-month work-study assignments in hospitals in selected developing countries.

These projects are a handful among many. CIDA finances other youth programs managed by non-governmental organizations, and youth are involved in our own programs at CIDA. They are recruited to fill CIDA staff positions, and they participate in youth programs that Canada supports at international institutions.

The experience gained by CIDA's young international interns will benefit all Canadians. We will need more and

more citizens able to work in a globalized economy, to work abroad and to represent Canada with distinction wherever they go. Realizing the potential of our youth is vital if we are to take full advantage of globalization. By designing the right approaches, we can nurture this potential, and make it flourish. CIDA's Youth Strategy is a step in this direction.

The Honourable Don Boudria is Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for La Francophonie.

For more information on CIDA's International Youth Internships Program call (819) 997-5006 or internet:

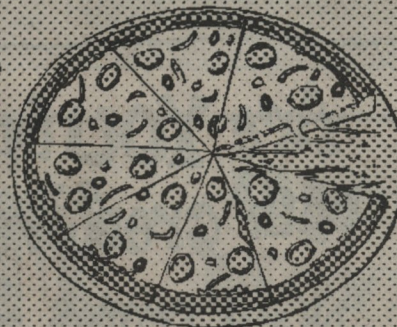
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