Two years ago a prominent Iranian at a conference with American officials reported on an inspection trip through one of the remote rural provinces. He had stopped unannounced at a village school. After addressing a few remarks to the class, he selected a boy in the audience and asked him, "What causes one to contract malaria?"

The youngster answered, "Malaria is carried by the mosquito."

"Does every mosquito carry malaria?" the official asked.

"No, sir, only the female of the anopheles mosquito carries the malaria," said the boy.

"And how can you recognize this mosquito?"

"Oh, it is the one that sits down with its rump in the air," answered the boy.

This experience convinced the Iranian official that mass communications was penetrating into the farthest corners of the country with facts and ideas that could change the destiny of its people.

The boy had learned about malaria as his village had learned about it, from a motion picture. The film was made in an Iranian
village, with the villagers as actors, by Americans working under the United States technical cooperation program.

This film is one of 74 such educational, motivational, and how-to-do-it films made in Iran in the past five years. These films are seen by almost 3 million Iranians a year. They cover a wide range of subjects, including health, agriculture, water management, sanitation, cooperative activity, and so on.

Before U.S. technical cooperation, no one had ever made such a film in Iran for instruction of the people. Today, as a result of this program, the Iranian Government has its own educational motion picture facilities, has a corps of people trained in all aspects of producing and using films, and is carrying on a vigorous nationwide program of audio-visual education in which films play a major role.

The technical cooperation program of the United States is primarily knowledge-sharing with underdeveloped nations. This in itself is nothing new, for American know-how has always been available to those who wanted to and could afford to make use of it. What is new is that the United States Government has undertaken to sponsor this knowledge-sharing program as a part of its foreign policy, so that the relatively high cost of American technicians, demonstration equipment, and materials need not deprive even the poorest country of using them for their own national development.

Technical cooperation, then, is largely a job of introducing new methods and ideas and propagating them. In one sense, it is a teaching job. The “teachers” are some 3000 Americans employed directly or under contract by the International Cooperation Administration serving in some 60 countries, working closely with a somewhat larger number of “counterpart” technicians assigned by their own governments. This teaching staff includes health advisors, educators, agriculturists, engineers, sanitarians, soil experts, malariologists, well-drillers, community development advisors, public administration specialists, and experts in many other fields.

The pupils—those to be taught—number more than 900 million. If the sheer size of the teaching problem were not enough, it is further aggravated by high rates of illiteracy, complexity of languages, lack of informational media, inadequate government services, and the vast differences in social, cultural, and religious backgrounds of the people.

It is obviously impossible for 3000 teachers—or even 30,000—to give effective instruction to 900 million persons.