

## *Five Approaches to Community Resource Development*

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*Extension personnel concerned with community resource development are often unclear as to its educational components, approaches and boundaries. Present definitions have not helped to make these educational elements visible. Here a typology (classification) is presented that describes five different types or approaches to community resource development. These types are represented as encompassing the several different ways in which Cooperative Extension is going about community resource development. This typology was developed from a study of published materials (progress reports and conference proceedings) and recent observations made in a number of states in which such work is being conducted.*

MANY DEFINITIONS of community resource development may be found in Cooperative Extension Service writings and practices. However, the educational components and approaches of this activity have not been made clear by these definitions. Nor have the definitions been useful in establishing its boundaries. For example, some definitions interpret the dimensions of community resource development as synonymous with all of Extension education; others give this work less breadth.

Community resource development is commonly defined in Extension literature as "a process whereby those in the community arrive at group decisions and take action to enhance the social and economic well-being of the community."<sup>1</sup> However, problems of implementation arise when one tries to establish the components and dimensions of this broad definition. "What sorts of group decisions and actions?" you ask. "Social and economic ones" is the response. "But," you reply, "every acceptable educational activity probably involves some sort of social or economic outcome. When then is an

<sup>1</sup> ECOP Report, Community Resource Development, 1967, p. 9.

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activity not community resource development?" And the discussion continues until what the definer intends is made clear. With this type of definition, the definer must be present to clarify his intent.

Part of the problem of definition and implementation arises from the tendency of community resource development to be defined by the way one is working on it. One's approach to it becomes its definition and goal. Thus, it is the basic assumption of this paper that the practical difficulties faced in advancing Extension work in community resource development are due largely to inadequate understanding of its components and boundaries.

It is time that a typology (classification of types) of Extension's educational approaches to community resource development is attempted. Five major types or approaches have been identified using information from various progress reports and conferences and recent observations in a number of states on how this work is being defined and conducted. These types are managerial development, sensitivity development, environmental development, project development, and organization development. Each type has its own rationale, content, outcome, and method, as indicated in the following paragraphs.

#### MANAGERIAL DEVELOPMENT

In this first approach the Extension change agent undertakes the educating of influentials (representing both public and private life) about the theory, content, processes, and problems of economic and social development and the use of scientific (logical) inquiry. Leaders having this understanding are presumed to be more able to influence desirable community resource development on their own.

A systematic program of education pertaining to development principles, processes, and requirements helps influentials attain a better understanding of how, in a democratic and private enterprise economy, scarce resources are allocated and expended to the satisfaction of human wants. This approach treats subjects such as (1) the method of logical or scientific inquiry, (2) the causes of growth and decline in communities, (3) the ways in which interpersonal relationships and social statuses may influence human behavior, (4) the conditions under which communities and societies may renew themselves, (5) the use of analytic techniques in planning, (6) the community organizational arrangements needed to solve problems and to capitalize on opportunities, (7) the psychological conditions needed in order for creativeness to develop and function, and (8) the importance of entrepreneurial initiative.

The purpose of such effort to educate influentials is to create individuals who are objectively critical, inquiry minded, conceptually oriented, and knowledgeable interpreters of development theory and processes. The educational approach combines group inquiry, self-directed study, and resource person/client cooperation in considering development principles, processes, and requirements.

#### SENSITIVITY DEVELOPMENT

In the type of effort characterized as "sensitivity development" the Extension change agent organizes an educational program for concerned citizens and public officials so they may understand more about (1) local, national, and international issues; (2) community growth potentials and policies; and (3) activities of special interest groups. Citizens and public officials having this understanding are thought to be more supportive of proposed changes in the community environment. Sensitivity development is also expected to help (1) build community relations and loyalties; (2) ease tensions resulting from activities of vertical interest groups such as those of large corporations and governmental agencies; (3) link specialized interest groups in common causes; (4) review various community policies, programs, and shortcomings; and (5) expand citizen understanding of the ways the larger society—state, nation, the world—may affect community circumstances.

The major purpose of the study process is to increase the number of concerned citizens receptive to the actions of change-producing groups and agencies. However, action to solve community problems is likely to flow directly from this process because of the self-identification of community needs and citizen participation in community plans.

The educational effort is largely accomplished through self-administered study—discussion groups, resource person/client seminars, conferences, and mass media.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT

In another type effort the Extension change agent seeks to complement the work of official federal, state, regional, and local planning and development agencies and voluntary development groups. He assumes that these groups, governed by citizen leaders and often served by professional staffs, are the best outlet for initiating Extension education programs in community resource development. By making research and knowledge inputs from the university available

to them, he believes these groups are more likely to achieve community improvement and progress than would be the case through other approaches.

This university aid helps them determine how the mix of physical, social, and economic components of the community may have been disrupted by internal and external forces. It helps them analyze all community resources—people, organizations, institutions, facilities, services, natural resources—and to combine them in a better mix for improving the quality of living and economic base of the community.

The change agent may also be a party to bringing the right people together to consider goals and means for activities aimed at (1) providing cultural enrichment; (2) improving the physical and visual environment; (3) offering land use alternatives; (4) promoting the orderly growth of interrelated community systems (such as transportation, communication, health, education, welfare, law enforcement, and housing); and (5) assessing and linking the growth potentials of communities with those of the region and with national and state goals for development.

Environmental development seeks to build a unified and aggressive approach. The change agent, official planning and development agencies, and voluntary development groups strive together to involve citizens in efforts to modify or eliminate problems and to achieve the optimum mix for community progress.

Since collaborative effort is the focus of this approach, the change agent initially seeks effective rapport with official agencies and voluntary development groups. He does this through gaining a first-hand understanding of their goals and approaches. He attempts to use his knowledge of process and findings of research in ways that will both support and influence them. Effective human relations, painstaking analysis, proper timing, and a significant educational input are all important ingredients of this unified approach. In this approach, the change agent usually does not establish or maintain development organizations on his own.

#### PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

The Extension change agent, or an Extension Service, accepts the need to work on specific problems. He determines, through systematic inquiry with relevant groups and individuals, which projects to focus on. This approach assumes that specialization of staff and division of labor are required to insure effective attention to major development problems. It also assumes that in some circumstances a

vertical approach focusing on specialized and segmented interests—ignoring some urgent community problems—is more effective than a horizontal approach emphasizing locality and interrelated community interests.

Change agents or specialists may be employed to help insure quality education, health, and welfare services; to expand business and job opportunities; to increase recreation variety; and to develop water, timber, and mineral resources, as well as other facets of community resource development. Project development's purpose is to stimulate individuals and groups into taking action on predetermined projects so that significant results may be achieved.

The change agent works with existing organizations (farm organizations, chambers of commerce, public agencies, businesses, development associations) to accomplish his ends. His approach is pragmatic; he guides, leads, and counsels individuals and groups who can aid the project. His role may be that of analyst, advisor, advocator, and innovator.<sup>2</sup>

#### ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

In the fifth type of effort the Extension change agent attempts to establish new organizations with the hope of stimulating local and regional development. He assumes that organized groups of citizens, aided by him, are likely to implement action programs which will enhance the economic well-being and quality of living of the community.

The primary focus of the change agent is on organization development and maintenance. Thus, he emphasizes efforts to organize groups first and then have projects emerge. He helps community, county, or regional groups identify potential organization leaders. He helps leaders prepare meeting agendas, stimulate participation, place discussions in focus, and deal with dissonance. He helps provide knowledge inputs for decision making and may also teach leaders and members about group skills, effective organization, and social action.

Community development organizations may be formed for a variety of reasons. Generally, they are created to identify and work toward the solution of problems and identification of projects requiring community action. They may be established as a source of new insights and ideas for community betterment; they may be devel-

<sup>2</sup> See Art Gallaher, Jr. and Frank A. Santapolo, "Perspectives on Agent Roles," *Journal of Cooperative Extension*, V (Winter, 1967), 223-30, for an explanation of these roles.

oped to qualify the community or region for state or federal assistance programs.

The usual approach to organization development is to join together public and private leaders—representing a broad spectrum of human interests—into a development council. Council members study data and trends, identify problems, select alternatives, decide objectives, and spearhead implementation of projects designed to stimulate development. Numerous committees, reporting to the council, may be organized to insure particular attention to certain problems and projects.

#### SOME INTERPRETATION AND IMPLICATIONS

While these types may be thought of as being mutually exclusive, at the same time it is clear that they may be related to each other. To some degree they represent different stages of the total process of community resource development. Thus, the types might be presented on a pie chart as in Figure 1, or in a set of overlapping cir-



Figure 1. Types of community resource development.

cles, recognizing that there is interdependence between each and that work of only one or two types is hardly adequate to do the total job.

State Extension Services studied were not programming in all five types. Most were programming in from one to three. When two or

more types were included, the usual approach was to program each separately without making one type the building block for the next. Work on these types may also be going on within Cooperative Extension or in different departments of the university, more or less independently of each other. For example, public affairs education frequently provides for what is called sensitivity development, but is often conducted as a separate program administratively unrelated to community resource development.

State Extension Services have several alternatives for programming community resource development. While it is not the intent of this paper to review the logic of alternative approaches, it can be said that change agents or Extension Services could program all types simultaneously, program one or more, or order the types in a sequence so that they become steps in a developmental process. States having access to a large staff in community resource development, or who are able to get a staffing commitment from other segments of the university, can do effective work on more of these alternatives than a state with limited staff resources. Some states with limited staff resources may be better off programming in only one. However, an important point here is to not let the scope and purpose of community resource development become defined as only that which is being done in one of these types.

Community resource development can be a large and extremely complex activity, if two or more of the types are included in either a community, county, state, regional, or federal program. At the same time, an appraisal helps one see possible educational steps and makes more visible the dimensions of this work, as one keeps in mind the basic definition and the total process of community resource development.

In the typology, one can see more clearly and come to appreciate the difficulties confronting the State Extension Service that attempts to initiate an effective community resource development program. If several or all five types are to be encompassed in a state program, the requisites for coordinating, staffing, staff training, implementing, and evaluating this program are extremely demanding.

Additional testing is needed to determine the most effective methods or combinations of methods and sequence of types to achieve desirable educational products for this activity. Systematic study of methods of implementing and ordering community resource development is presently lacking—perhaps because the need for this study has not been made clear.

## APPLICATION

The typology described in this paper is intended for change agents, administrators, and supervisors responsible for community resource development. Use of the typology would seem to help Extension personnel concerned with community resource development:

1. Place in clear perspective its components so they may be more effectively studied and programmed.
2. Understand the different philosophies, outcomes, and methods that it encompasses.
3. Discuss more critically, objectively, and efficiently its intent and dimensions.
4. Have a clear view of the range and complexity of educational choices this activity entails.
5. Think through more precisely than before the programming, staffing, training, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating requirements.
6. Reshape and sharpen their own approaches to this activity.
7. Communicate quickly its nature and intent to institutions and agencies external to the Extension Service.
8. Determine with community or regional leaders the types or sequence of types that would best meet community needs and circumstances.
9. Develop through more refined analysis, new or more accurate conceptions of types so that a theory relating to the typology of community resource development may be established.

Presently, it can be said that the five different types described here seem to encompass the several ways in which the Cooperative Extension Service is going about community resource development in the United States today. All of them are embraced in the task force definition stated before. Other aspects of the total community resource development process, such as organizing, staffing, training, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating, are not described. This is a much larger matter than what was intended for this paper.