RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

*Statement of the Pre-Conference Working Party to the Eleventh International
Conference of Social Work*

RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Statement of the Pre-Conference Working Party to the Eleventh International Conference of Social Work

> ... O canavial é a bôca
> com que primeiro vai devorando
> Matas e capoeiras,
> pastos e cercados.
> Com que devora a terra
> onde um homem plantou seu roçado.
> Depois os poucos metros
> onde êle plantou sua casa.
> Depois o pouco espaço
> de que precisa um homem sentado.
> Depois os sete palmos
> onde êle vai ser enterrado ...
>
> João Cabeal de Mello

INTRODUCTION

THE Eleventh International Conference of Social Work, held in Brazil in August, 1962, has adopted a procedure to facilitate the commencement of its deliberations which is similar to the pattern established by both the Ninth and Tenth Conferences. A Working Party met at Recife, from 7th - 13th August, prior to the International Conference. Its participants numbered 23 from 16 countries and 6 international agencies and organizations, with 5 observers.

The aim of this Statement produced by the Working Party is to pose the major areas of concern indicated by the National Reports in discussing the theme of the Conference "Rural and Urban Community Development". An attempt is made to examine some of the underlying theories of community development which have been reflected in these Reports, and to arrive at a working definition as a point of reference both for the Working Party and the Conference itself.

The statement, it is hoped, will provide the Conference as a whole and its various sections with an approach to the study of community development which will be useful to all. The objective of the Working Party has been to indicate general trends, to point out differences and similarities in the practice of community development in the various countries, and to raise the significant issues requiring further examination by the Conference and later by the countries themselves. For this reason the Working Party decided to adopt an outline for its work which would not duplicate the method of approach already requested of the National Committees or the discussion of the specific issues to be dealt with in the Commissions and the Study Groups.

The participants were mindful of the high standard and proven value for the Conference, for other professional groups and for governments, of the Statements of the first two Working Parties, and felt the task expected of them to be essentially important.

The Osaka Statement (1958) contains a number of useful references to the setting of priorities in national planning and in community development. The Milan Statement (1961) includes considerable material on finance and administration, which is related to the sub-

ject of community development. For this reason it was decided not to treat these aspects in detail in this report.

In order to discuss the subject matter of the National Reports in detail the Working Party was divided into four sub-groups, each with the responsibility of reporting on one of the following topics:

1. Theory of Community Development
2. Human Factors in Community Development
3. Practice of Community Development
4. Community Development — Its Future

The main trends characteristic of the world today are rapid change and directed development. Attempts to control the forces of change so that the effects may serve rather than defeat humanity are the challenge of our time.

Efforts to raise the level of living in the world as a whole have met with varying results. The rapid growth of population in the developing countries has tended to offset progress in some aspects. Accelerated rate of progress in the highly developed countries has resulted in a widening gap between the less developed and the more highly developed countries in some of the basic necessities of human life.

Conspicuous gains have been made in the field of health, where the control of diseases has been noticeably successful in a world-wide context, increasing life expectancy and work capacity.

A recent United Nations publication, however, has called attention to the disturbing fact that, in spite of unprecedented scientific and technological advances and progress in many sectors of the world social and economic situation, during the past decade, more people in the world than ever before are suffering from hunger and want. Even in education, where much has been achieved by the developing countries, there has been dissatisfaction with the progress made. As a result of the mounting population figures, the number of illiterate people in the world may tend to increase rather than diminish.[1]

The General Assembly of the United Nations has designated the current decade as "the United Nations Development Decade" in order to try to meet these crucial needs. Its report cited that: "although there has been increasing recognition that the ultimate objective of economic development is social progress, and that social reform is a necessary condition of economic improvement, these principles have not yet come to

guide practical policies everywhere." This same report also points out that one of the unsolved problems in developing countries that calls for the most urgent treatment is the continued neglect of the social aspects of economic development which results in either stagnation in economic progress or in a violent reversal of the existing order. Accordingly, the proposals for action emphasize the development of human resources in order to achieve the objectives of the development decade. Specified as one of the three most important aspects to which the greatest emphasis must be given is the following: "The newer concept of national development planning is central to all proposals for intensified action during the development decade".

Of particular relevance for discussions of the International Conference is the recognition that "development planning is real only if it enrols the cooperation of people by basing development on their aspirations and using the results of development as a basis for social as well as economic progress." This is a fundamental tenet of community development.

The Working Party is not unaware that reservations concerning the viability of community development are held in some quarters. These reservations sometimes arise because of differences in basic assumptions concerning the desirability and feasibility of involving the active participation of the people themselves at the local level. They arise also because of limitations in the way in which community development has been undertaken in some countries.

In recognition of these realities and the critical importance of avoiding ineffectiveness and the wastage of limited resources in the promotion of change and the improvement of human well-being, the United Nations currently is having a comparative study made of community development on a very comprehensive scale. This study is primarily for use by a group of experts being convened by the United Nations early in 1963. Subsequently it will report its findings and recommendations to the Social Commission of the Economic and Social Council. This promises a constructive approach to responsible evaluation.

The complexity and urgency of the present social situation poses new types of problems demanding fresh approaches, different techniques, new thinking. There are formidable problems in the collection of data on which to base effective planning, and in the mobilization and deployment of resources to meet the greatest exigencies. There have been notable contributions made by world-wide organizations in sharpening the

---

1 "The United Nations Development Decade — Proposals for Action", 1962.

tools with which this may be done. The International Conference of Social Work, both at the world level and through its National Committees, can be a valuable aid in contributing to the capacity of the nations to undertake this task, by adding its ideas to the growing pool of international understanding. One way of achieving this would seem to be through making greater use of its consultative status with the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies.

The Working Party included in its deliberations the main areas of concern which the National Committees revealed in their Reports. Although many Committees submitted much valuable material, it was an unfortunately limiting factor that some of the countries which are having the richest experience in community development failed to send in a report.

The material which was available, however, indicated that all countries are thinking of the problems inherent in:

1. Population growth and mobility
2. Family disorganization and tensions in family life
3. Ill health (mental and physical)
4. Poor nutrition
5. Low levels of education (literacy, training for skills and civic responsibility)
6. Unemployment and underemployment
7. Inadequate housing
8. Lack of recreation facilities
9. Urgent strivings by developing countries to reach very rapidly the level of living, in all its aspects, of the highly developed countries, with consequent tensions and frustrations.

In dealing with these subjects in detail the Working Party poses to the Conference some of the matters which require further consideration. These include :

1. Under what auspices should community development be initiated and operated — governmental, non-governmental, or both?
2. What should be the function of community development in the formation of local governing bodies and other local organizations where they do not already exist?
3. What should be the relationships in field activities between community development and local government?
4. What arrangements are required for effective coordination of all the economic and technical resources and services concerned at all levels of activity?
5. What should be the administrative structure for planning and implementing community development? Should the primary responsibility be vested in a Council of the Ministers concerned under the Prime Minister or President, with implementation through the various technical ministries or departments? Should there be a separate administrative body, a ministry or department concerned exclusively with community development? Or should it be the responsibility of the existing technical departments?
6. Is community development a distinctive technical field requiring a specialized discipline? If this is so, what should be the content of the training for this discipline?
7. Should "multi-purpose" workers be trained for community development practice at the field level? What is the function and content of training for auxiliary workers in community development and in the specialized technical fields?
8. How should technical and administrative supervision be provided at various levels of operation?

The spirit of community development is the same wherever people of commitment are striving towards its goals. The variety of forms in which it is manifested, however, are as numerous as human ingenuity can devise within a given situation. No one pattern of community development can serve as a standard, and each country must work out for itself the particular combination of factors which will suit its purpose.

In the growing weight of formal organization which planning demands, we should be alert to the need to temper experience with new ideas and creativity. Old ideas and traditions can be powerless to deal with new forces. The world moves fast. Can those who are engaged in the vital contribution of social welfare to society move at the pace of the changing world?

PART I — THEORY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

I. Concept of Community Development

THE term "community development" was first introduced by the British government in 1942 with the purpose of helping countries to prepare for independence. It was defined as follows:

"A movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active parti-

cipation, and if possible on the initiative of the community, but if this initiative is not forthcoming spontaneously, by the use of techniques, for arousing and stimulating it in order to secure its active and enthusiastic response to the movement. Community development embraces all forms of betterment. It includes the whole range of development activities in the district whether these are undertaken by government on unofficial bodies; in the field of agriculture by securing the adoption of better methods of soil conservation, better methods of farming and better care of livestock; in the field of health by promoting better sanitation and water supplies, proper measures of hygiene, infant and maternity welfare; in the field of education by spreading literacy and adult education as well as by the extension and improvement of schools for children.

Community development must make use of the cooperative movement and must be put into effect in the closest association with local government bodies".

The same term has been used by the United Nations and its specialized agencies since the early 50's. However, the following definition of the term was only agreed upon in 1956:

"Community development is the processes by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress".

The above definition was revised in 1558 as follows: "Community development is a process by which people themselves participate in planning and carrying out programmes designed to improve the quality of their lives. This means that there is collaboration between governments and the people, each being indispensable to achieve balanced and viable schemes of development".

The Pre-Conference Working Party of the Xth International Conference of Social Work (Osaka, Japan 1958) defined community development as follows:

"Community development is the conscious process wherein small, geographically contiguous communities are assisted by the more developed, wider (National and World) community to achieve improved standards of social and economic life. This is done primarily through their own local efforts and through local community participation at all stages of goal-selection, mobilization of resources, and execution of projects, thus enabling these communities to become increasingly self-reliant".

In a paper prepared by the WHO secretariat for this Conference, it is stated that community development is not considered as a separate programme *per se* but as a philosophy and a complex of processes which should permeate the planning and the operation of all the technical services working in the field.

Of immediate relevance in this connection are the proposals for action in "the United Nations Development Decade", submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its current session, as requested by the General Assembly on 19 December 1961. These proposals place major emphasis on "the mobilization of human resources as a precondition for achieving the aims of the development decade . . ." and point out that development planning to mobilize human resources ". . . is real only if it enrols the co-operation of the people by basing development on their aspirations . . ." In line with this emphasis, community development is identified as one of the "three major aspects of human resource development to which the highest priority must be attached". In this context, the following reference is made to community development:

". . . Community development is a method and an approach which is applicable to the problem of rural development as a whole, including the key element of land reform . . . as a further goal for the development decade, the extension of community development to urban areas, is suggested."

Many National Reports prepared for the current ICSW have adopted the 1956 U.N. definition; others seem to have used alternative though similar definitions.

However, many of the examples described in the National Reports do not reflect in reality, the principles inherent in these definitions. At least four concepts of community development emerge from a review of the reports:

1. Community development as a movement
2. Community development as a programme
3. Community development as a process or a complex of processes
4. Community development as a field of practice

In actual practice, the programmes as described by the various countries appear to focus their efforts toward the following objectives:

1. Primarily economic objectives
2. Civic or socio-civic objectives
3. Socio-economic objectives
4. Primarily social objectives

(The term "social" above is used to denote objectives in the field of health, social welfare, education, etc., while the term "civic" refers to the preparation for citizen responsibilities.)

The responsibilities for initiation and implementation of community development as shown by the various Reports rest on:

1. Central government, particularly in developing countries or in countries with a centrally planned economy
2. Various technical governmental agencies at the local, intermediate or central level
3. Non-governmental agencies, local or national

The National Reports reveal varying degrees of coordination and in some cases a complete lack of coordination. However, there appears to be a general agreement that community development has to take into account the total needs of the community. Furthermore, all the National Reports show the necessity of community participation as an essential element of community development.

II.   Related Concepts

1. *Community Organization*

The term "community organization" is used in the National Reports to reflect several different views. Many reports refer to the definition of community organization set forth by Murray Ross as follows:

> "Community organization is a process by which a community identifies its needs or objectives, orders or ranks these needs or objectives, develops the confidence and will to work at these needs or objectives, finds the resources, internal and/or external, to deal with these needs or objectives, takes action in respect to them and in so doing extends and develops cooperative and collaborative attitudes and practices in the community".

It is noted that the reports in referring to community organization regard it as a method, a process, or a technique. This creates confusion and ambiguity. The Working Party is of the opinion that a clear differentiation must be made between the idea of professional intervention involving disciplined method and technique based on systematic knowledge, and the idea of process which refers to a natural condition going on in the community independently of intervention but capable of being affected by it.

The National Reports also reflect considerable confusion between community development and community organization. In some Reports community development is applied to rural zones, while community organization to urban areas. Others consider community development as a way of working directly with the people, while community organization is applied to work with representatives or groups (councils, committees, etc.). In some Reports the terms community development and community organization are used interchangeably.

The term community organization has been longer in use and is better known in countries where social work includes casework, group work and community organization work; in other countries the same concept may be differently expressed.

2. *Development Planning*

The current concept of development planning has emerged during the past decade, largely through the efforts of developing countries to achieve rapid improvement of their standards of living. With the increasing recognition of the inter-dependence of economic and social development, it has become widely acknowledged that the problem of the developing countries is not just increased production of wealth, but also the capacity to produce, which is inherent in people; and not just growth, but also development. As expressed by the United Nations, "Development is growth plus change; change, in turn, is social and cultural as well as economic, and qualitative as well as quantitative. It should no longer be necessary to speak of 'economic and social development', since development — as distinct from growth — should automatically include both".

Development planning, therefore, does not mean a piecemeal approach; it aims at a national action programme for the public and private sectors alike, takes full account of the necessary sacrifices and priorities, mobilizes the necessary material and human resources, and offers opportunities for the development of the potential or latent means for achieving improved standards of living of all the people in the country. Real development planning involves a combination of all these elements of general and sectoral programmes and policies in systematic relationship with one another. While this concept is generally enunciated in terms of national planning aimed at the development of the country as a whole, it may be applied on a local or other area basis within a country and more recently on

a wider international and regional basis which necessarily must be integrated with national development planning.

Although there has been recognition at the international level that development planning at any level must assure "balanced social and economic development", attention is called to the fact that limited or no consideration is given in most places to the necessity of making appropriate provision for the social welfare sector of development planning.

To achieve the objectives of both community development and development planning, it is assumed that where there is development planning on a more comprehensive basis, community development would be incorporated within such a plan and would function as one of the major approaches for mobilization of human resources and implementation of the plan.

3. Social Action and Social Reform

These are traditional approaches used by social workers, other professionals and citizen groups to bring about social change and it is assumed here that these approaches will still be used both to stimulate efforts towards community development and within community development once started.

III. Working Definitions

In the light of the above, the Working Party feels that the concept of community development can be clarified by the following working definition. This definition attempts to show the interdependence of the three main components of community development:

1. Community services
2. Community organization
3. Community participation

Regarding community services it should be noted that the existing services may not necessarily lead to community development as here defined. In order to do so they may need to be supplemented and improved and they will have to be coordinated at all levels of organization.

Community Development is a conscious and deliberate effort aimed at helping communities to recognize their needs, and to assume increasing responsibilities for solving their problems thereby increasing their capacities to participate fully in the life of the nation.

It is obtained by the provision of community services and effective use of resources through rational organization and full participation of the community for the improvement of the economic, social and cultural conditions of the people.

The primary responsibility for community development lies with the government, though the initiative may come from the various communities themselves, from non-governmental groups or from individuals.

Within this context *Community Organization* is a complex of techniques designed to involve people specialists and technical services to mobilize and facilitate the effective use of resources for community development.

PART II — HUMAN FACTORS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

THE key element of community development is motivation and participation of the people. The human factors are, therefore, of paramount importance, and both the extent to which they are given sensitive consideration and the nature of the approaches will determine the constructive achievements of community development or will bring about its failure.

The primordial human strivings for physical and spiritual survival are basically the same for all mankind. This is true only in relation to the vital core of the human being. When this vital core is expressed, the expression is determined by social factors. Such factors cause deep motivations and give them different expressions which constitute the social reality we have to face. Motivation, traditional beliefs and customs play a particular role because of their integrative force both for the individual and for the group.

Facing outside influences the social organism defends itself to preserve its integrity. When these defences or adaptive mechanisms fail, the social group disintegrates. Therefore, the need for social groups to preserve religious and cultural values should always be respected. There are also subconscious roots of values in a given culture. When these are interfered with as a consequence of social changes, tensions appear as the expression of anxiety. This is more important in those communities that are unaware of the subconscious processes.

In arriving at a total appreciation of socio-cultural values, we recognize that community development is not the sole answer to human problems. It aims at the achievement of a programme as well as the preservation of human values. It should enlist the participation of the people in the improvement of the material aspects of life and at the same time it should enhance the quality of living.

As an International Conference we should recognize three large human groups, at least, in order to generalise the motivations that bring about social changes. First, groups where most of the basic human needs are being met reasonably adequately, and where efforts are being exerted to provide opportunities for every individual to achieve optimum personal growth; secondly, groups that have not yet provided either an adequate nutritional basis or mastered the physical and social environment, and therefore have to put their major emphasis on working for physical survival; thirdly, groups in an intermediate situation nearer to the second than to the first, and which strive to assert their economic independence by applying techniques of organization copied from the first; but, from the standpoint of human factors, are frequently linked to the second and are obliged to face similar pressures. This classification may apply generally to some regions and/or nations, but it is important to realize that all countries may have these three human groups represented in their populations.

Community development, being concerned with changes which most often take place on the material level, may tend to underestimate the importance of related socio-cultural factors which ought to respond harmoniously to those changes so that they may not become a cause for social disintegration and disruption.

The involvement of individuals and groups in community development is mainly determined by the cultural past, system of values, economic factors, degree of civic education and patterns of participation by men and women in community life. The agent of change must know which segment of the population needs to be involved and what potentialities of the community are to be used. He must evaluate the capacity of the community to accept this change. He has then to give the community an opportunity for evaluation of the programme and for an expression of acceptance. Agents of change have to be sensitive to all forms of human communication and not rely too heavily on overt expression. Success or failure may depend not so much on technical knowledge as on human endeavour and human relationships.

Social Workers, because of their professional dealings with people facing stress and deprivation, can bring to community development a profound understanding of the meaning of change for the individual and his family. Social workers also have developed skills in helping people to make constructive use of the process of change for new adaptations.

The study of the role of communities in their own development must take into account that some communities are able to plan only to the extent that they have surmounted their basic needs. Other communities, not having reached this level, have to direct their efforts merely towards survival. Still other communities, in turn, have to be aware of their own values and of the practical values of new philosophies in order to foster a new community spirit rooted in their past, which will enable them to use their human resources with a minimum of economic and technical help from outside and to plan for the future realistically.

The participants in community development are the promoter on the one side (be it the government, an institution or a technician) and the community (its groups and individuals). Before speaking of each of the two in more detail it must be clearly established that governments and individuals have a responsibility in the promotion of change, and that community development does not relieve governments of their responsibility to provide welfare to individuals and groups. It also does not free individuals of the responsibility of creating for themselves more beneficial social conditions.

Agents promoting change can belong to the locality or be outside it, but in both cases they are in some way apart from the group. Coming into the life of the community they have to be alert to the need to disturb the existing equilibrium to the minimum, while at the same time encouraging and mobilizing those forces that will bring about as much social change as the community is able and willing to initiate and accept. They must be careful to understand, accept and respect the spiritual and moral values which give security and direction to the life of its members. They will have to be aware that change in itself may have different values in different cultures with both positive and negative meanings.

Community development workers should achieve an understanding of the local culture as well as of the role they will play in it as viewed by the community members. They will have to clarify their task, at the same time assess the extent to which the community is able and willing to accept their cooperation. There-

fore, community development workers have to be able to have an objective and accepting attitude which will enable them to use themselves in a way best suited to the expectations of the community. Training for the various community development specialists should give particular attention to developing proper attitudes and skills that will enable them to cope with the different types of social relationships in which they may be involved.

The people responsible for the implementation of community development should be aware that the planned introduction of change into a community always implies a value judgment, whether it is consciously made or not. The very choice of a programme of action or of one specific type of change instead of another is the result of a selective process which is at least partly determined by culture, attitudes and bias. The agent of change should be aware of the fact that, depending on the approach he uses, different needs

will be expressed, and that real expression of the community's feeling and thinking about their needs will largely determine people's collaboration.

Because leadership constitutes such a crucial human factor in community development, especially since it must be drawn from various professional and scientific disciplines as well as from political and other sectors of the community itself, it is essential that every effort be made to appropriate and apply newer understandings of leadership resulting from highly significant research recently completed and currently under way. The term "leadership structure" may well provide a more accurate and useful conceptual approach to the understanding of the role of leadership in community development. Some confusion can be avoided if a clear distinction is made between the function of leadership and styles of leadership. Styles of leadership vary with different cultures, but the function of leadership is the same the world over.

PART III — PRACTICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

THE practice of community development brings a complex of problems in matching needs with resources and in securing the participation of local communities in working for their own objectives. The importance of educating professional and lay people to assume specific roles cannot be overstressed. It is clear, however, that present training programmes are inadequate to meet the need, and that the content of the courses needs to be reinforced by new material from the social sciences and from practical experience.

I. Essential Elements in Community Development

Whether responsibility for community development is assumed by government or voluntary agency, the essential elements remain the same. These are:

A. Involvement of people in the identification of their needs, in the selection of priorities and in the implementation of activities for the improvement of the economic, social and cultural levels of living;

B. Encouragement of people to initiate self-help projects and to develop essential resources;

C. Utilization to the maximum of existing local, national and international organizations, expanding local programmes and changing emphasis and methods in line with objectives;

D. Provision of resources and technical assistance as required by government and voluntary agencies;

E. Integration of community projects with national programmes to achieve progress.

II Factual Basis for Community Development

Data is required on which community programmes may be planned.

A. The sources of information include:

1. Local, regional and national governmental units and intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies;

2. Institutions of higher learning for scientific data and knowledge about value systems;

3. Voluntary agencies (local, national and international) in special fields of interest;

4. Local leaders, political, business, labour, religious, cultural and professional;

5. Publications, books, magazines.

B. The types of data needed — economic, social, political, cultural, religious, etc. — may be drawn from the following:

1. Census material, such as per capita and

family income, age and racial groups, employment, industry, agriculture, etc.;

2. Material on specific programmes and problems from national reporting systems in education, health, housing, social security and social welfare;

3. Surveys of particular problems undertaken by national or international organizations, such as the United Nations, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO and FAO.

C. The actions necessary to be taken in insuring the availability of data for planning include:

1. Identification of data needed;

2. Development by government or voluntary organizations of plans for the collection of data and the training of local people to carry the task;

3. Development of channels of cooperation among professional and technical persons working in the region and in the community.

The process of planning would require besides research data which may be available, consultation with local government officials and community leaders. It is often desirable for professional and technical people who can supplement one another's skills to be involved in planning as a team. It is also important to consider the complex nature of community needs which necessitates giving attention to problems of integration, coordination and timing.

III. Characteristics of Rural and Urban Communities

Because the particular characteristics of the community in which development takes place affect not only the programme content but also the methods used, it is helpful to identify the features of rural and urban communities.

A. Rural areas show the following:

1. The composition of the population as to age and sex is changing as a result of the outward flow of young adults in search of better cultural and employment opportunities. Generally, employment for women is limited in rural areas.

2. The rural economy is generally dependent on agriculture and many countries are considering decentralization of industry.

3. Frequently, rural areas lack basic utilities, such as electricity, piped water, waste disposal, transportation, and others.

4. There is also a lack of health, educational, recreational and social welfare services. It is often difficult to meet the needs of special groups in the population, such as the aged, the very young, the juvenile delinquent, the truant from school, the disabled and the alcoholic.

5. There is a paucity of indigenous leaders, of technical personnel, and of financial resources, which are all essential for the development of community improvement projects.

6. The necessity for a local organisation with responsibility for the coordination of segmented services is of special significance.

B. For urban centres, the following characteristics seem to be general:

1. There is a high mobility rate in the population that is usually composed of migrants from rural areas unprepared for the adjustments required by city living and, in many cases, with no intention of settling permanently. This leads to lack of identification with the community and the consequent disinterest in total community improvement.

2. The inadequacy of public facilities is the result of a too rapid growth in city population.

3. There is a multiplicity of agencies without effective coordination. As a result, agency loyalties sometimes prove a barrier to joint community planning.

4. In some communities which are adjacent to cities, such as refugee settlements, or in areas to which families have been moved due to disaster and rehoused, people have little in common with one another and no identification with the community.

5. Community development projects often take the form of slum clearance and area redevelopment.

In both rural and urban areas there is always the possibility that people will not have an interest in community development. A number of factors may be responsible for this attitude. In some areas people are too exhausted by their day-to-day struggle against poor health, ignorance and lack of the basic necessities of life. It may also be the result of unawareness of the opportunities which could assist them to improve their lives and of the capacities inherent within every one of them to work for better conditions. Paternalism and patterns of dependency may also be inhibiting factors in the initiation of self-help projects.

IV. Implications of Community Development for Social Work Practice and Contributions of Social Work to Community Development

Social work can make significant contributions to community development. On the other hand, community development has far-reaching implications for social work practice. Its goals encourage social workers practising in particular functional fields to:

A. Broaden their vision, knowledge and skills so as to be able to:

  1. Evaluate total community needs — economic and cultural, as well as social;
  2. Assume greater responsibility for promoting expansion and adaptation of social services to meet mass need for services presently provided only for special groups;
  3. Suggest new social services which may be needed and the ways in which they might be secured;
  4. Participate in the formulation of public social policy, particularly in relation to national development planning.

B. Strengthen their relationships with other professions involved in planning in order to:

  1. Promote the organization of the needed planning structure;
  2. Establish adequate coordination machinery through which integration of various technical services can take place.

Schools of social work should be stimulated by concepts of community development to evaluate their present curricula to see what changes or additions are needed to enable social workers to operate effectively in community development.

The contributions of social work to community development include:

A. Belief in human worth, needs and rights;

B. Ability to start where people are in their thinking in order to help them in the choice of projects that involve benefits both to individuals and to the community;

C. Interest and experience in social action and social reform;

D. Knowledge of how change affects people and how to help people adjust to new situations;

E. Experience in interpreting human behaviour and needs to the public and to agency officials.

The specialized application of casework and group work focuses attention on:

A. The importance of the family as a social institution with major responsibility for the care and training of children;

B. The importance of prevention of family breakdown, of strengthening family life, and of protection of children deprived of parental care or support;

C. The causes of anti-social behaviour and the methods of dealing with such problems.

Community organization as practised in social welfare can be an effective method of promoting community development, since it brings together representatives of social institutions and agencies and the general public to promote specific objectives and programmes. Because of its primary concern for meeting social needs, it emphasizes the importance of integrated and balanced economic and social development, points out the social implications of economic proposals, and interprets the contribution that social welfare programmes can make to economic development.

Education for social work practice should take into account the requirements of community development at all levels.

A. Pre-professional education:

  1. Should stress the need for awakening in students a social conscience, an awareness of prejudices they may have and the necessity for controlling them;
  2. Should include certain knowledge from the social sciences, such as basic economics, sociology, psychology and political science.

B. Professional education:

  1. Should enable social workers to evaluate, on the basis of facts, community needs and problems; to initiate or participate in programmes of social action for the development of resources to meet mass needs; to provide social services for the particular needs of special groups (children, young people, aged, chronically ill, refugees and immigrants);
  2. Should encourage social workers to record, in a uniform manner, data as to unmet community needs and policies or practices that adversely affect human welfare; to make this material available for research and action directed toward meeting such needs or changing undesirable policies and practices;

3. Should include, in addition to present curriculum content, knowledge and skill in consultation, in negotiation, and in methods of participation with other disciplines in community development teams in both planning and operation.

The contribution of social work to community development will depend to a large extent on the calibre and personalities of social workers, together with their ability and willingness to continue their general and professional education throughout their career, and to change attitudes to meet new situation.

PART IV — COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT — ITS FUTURE

THE concept of community development has great potential for influencing social progress. Consideration of its possibilities for the future poses certain issues which require particular study.

I. Possibilities of Community Development for the Future

Relevant ideas emerge as follows:

A. For each community, region and country, community development is related to geography, history, the nature of the population and the available resources. It is the expression of the communities themselves and thus appears in a great variety of forms.

B. Where communities need outside assistance it is most important to begin community development work with the disadvantaged areas, especially in the developing countries.

C. The needs for development in a world context are such that it is necessary to utilize all resources and mobilize all public and private bodies. At the same time, the people in the local areas must be stimulated and local leaders found to direct the action.

D. The urgency and extent of the needs, especially in the developing countries, have led to the increased intervention of the State in the direction of planned national development. National programmes have been established in some countries where a special ministry has been set up, accompanied by a national community development training programme. Some countries have also created special administration units for community development, sometimes attached to an existing Ministry (of Health, Welfare, Education or Labour) and supported by separate budgets. The planning methods used at the local and national levels are important because the chances of success in planning are directly related to the methods used.

E. Since economic difficulties are at the root of the problems of the underdeveloped countries, economic planning is chiefly directed toward increasing the resources available for the population. Agrarian reform is included in the planning in order to increase the potential ability of the rural people to become self-supporting. However, when consideration is given to the point of view of other disciplines directly concerned with people it has frequently been found that the economists have tended to give exclusively economic answers to the problems of development. In order to combat economic underdevelopment, the first obstacle to be overcome is the attitudes of the people. They have to be changed from passive to active, a fundamental change which can be achieved only by education and by the influence of spiritual forces.

F. The goals of community development are the improvement of levels of living and general welfare, and the creation of opportunity for everyone to participate in meeting his own needs as well as the needs of the community. Recognizing that the needs are manifold and must be met by many different measures under different auspices, the following issues arise: Toward which major categories of need that may be found in communities of any size, at either the national or local levels, should community development be directed? Which of the following are most appropriately the concern of community development? To which should priority be given?

1. Social welfare
2. Housing
3. Health
4. Nutrition
5. Economic status
6. Education
7. Recreation

Further discussions during the XIth International Conference of Social Work could give considera-

tion to the need to give priority to educational problems (in and out of school; formal and informal) and to economic problems. Nevertheless the importance of the other factors, such as health, family and child welfare and recreation, must not be underestimated.

Community development can contribute to the achievement of:

A. Investments in health which are long-term but essentially productive for economic development. Economic objectives aimed at immediate results often call for sacrifices of human values which are too heavy. Our concept of health has changed recently. It is now considered to be the right of everyone to aspire to a condition which is more beneficial than just the absence of ill health.

B. The strengthening of family life and the improvement of levels of living. The family, considered as a biological and social unit, is a vital element in physical and moral well-being. A child's mental health requires that he be nurtured in a normal family. Therefore, community development programmes must give priority to the protection of children, insuring that each child has a chance to grow up in a home with a family. This means: civil laws, requiring fathers to take responsibility for their children; material help which provides family services and family allowances; maintenance and protection of family income through such means as social security; education to improve family living; labour laws and their enforcement to prevent the exploitation of human beings, particularly children.

C. The provision of education and recreation. In the fields of education and recreation, emphasis should be placed on the needs of children. Efforts should also be directed toward making it possible for every child to complete his schooling. Recreation facilities and services, such as playgrounds and youth-serving organizations, are needed for the optimum development of children and youth. Also appropriate measures for the prevention of juvenile delinquency should be encouraged. Adult recreation is important as well, but if a priority must be chosen, the needs of children should take first place.

Social work has a unique role to play in community development. It has the technical contribution of its professional discipline. It has an essential responsibility to assess the social resources of the community and to demand better organization to make optimum use of them. Social work must define its responsibility in community development, strengthen its methods of social action, extract from its experience those concepts which can be used effectively, and integrate its knowledge and skills with other disciplines in community development. Every discipline needs training to perform its appropriate functions in teamwork with others. Descriptions of experience in community development, such as presented in the National Reports for the Conference, should be encouraged for use in training social workers.

The characteristics of community development which are effective in the developing countries are equally applicable and fruitful in highly developed countries. These include:

A. Involving indigenous leaders in the social, political administrative life of their countries;

B. Initiating new methods of land use and of agricultural cooperatives;

C. Solving problems of living in new communities or improving community life in old centres;

D. Bringing about the participation in the management of organizations and social institutions of those who use them and improving the coordination of services, thereby extending their scope to serve the whole community.

International meetings within each of the regions of the world, as this one demonstrates, offer many opportunities to move ahead in community development. International and regional organizations provide an important medium for the exchange of ideas, methods and techniques and must be encouraged. The developed regions need to give the same attention to their methods and concepts as the developing regions. New knowledge about social change and group dynamics is emerging from the social sciences (theory and practice) and could enrich practice in community development.

II. Issues Affecting the Future of Community Development

Problems are of two different orders, psycho-social and technical. With respect to the latter, one problem is the difference in training and practice of the various technicians who participate in carrying out a coordinated plan of action.

A. How can we meet the fear that planning is a threat to freedom? Planning enhances and nurtures freedom if it considers such human factors

as individual needs and family and social structures. It is essential that the plans are understood. Only when the individual is involved in a community experience will he exert initiative to improve his own welfare and gain independence. The community experience must lead to greater respect for the individual as such. Citizens should have the right to demand plans which provide not only for economic development but also for the fulfilment of their educational, health, family, social and cultural needs.

B. An especially difficult obstacle is the deep psychosocial attitude of persons and groups, which can militate against community development. Outside help, without involvement of the people concerned, will be viewed as paternalism. Some communities welcome this relationship, others resent it. It is essential to encourage participation and co-operation with self-help as a goal.

C. Another psychological problem, not specifically related to the techniques of community development, is the failure to recognize the depth of work necessary in the small community. This is the only place where the plans of the broad community, such as a national plan, can result in effective action. It is, therefore, essential to base such plans on a thorough evaluation of the needs and ways of living of the small community if they are to be applied by local people for their own development. Planning comes alive at the level of the small community when professional people in charge of community development planning do not forget the importance of the detailed planning which needs to be done with those concerned.

D. When social workers are conscious of the importance of human resources which represent the effort needed to develop a community, they demand planning with and for people. Therefore, they must know and appreciate the human resources offered by the community and take them into account. The core of the problem is that the community is a complex, changing, vaguely defined entity. Professional practice in community development is not only a scientific discipline but also an art which must be reflexible and adaptable. Good training includes training well qualified personnel from the several disciplines together, followed by training of the community leaders themselves. Only a broad training programme can provide the foundation for the tremendous effort required from people to help themselves.

E. The success of community development depends on the personnel in charge of promoting these activities and the willingness of all who collaborate, professional and community leaders alike, to act in the interest of the community as a whole. The day-to-day difficulties in collaboration between private and public bodies must be overcome. The same applies to the personnel in charge of different sectors of community development and also to the different services.

F. It is important to avoid applying criteria developed for industrial and urban areas too rapidly in rural communities. The constant phenomenon of emigration from rural to urban areas that drains off leadership and the inadequacy of available financial resources must be kept in mind.

G. A major problem is the constant need to adjust community development techniques as planning progresses. It is necessary not only to initiate development but to maintain in with the continuing active participation of the people.

H. International assistance is available to developing countries both from international organizations and from more developed countries. The needs of these countries must be made known to the people with resources who are in the most favoured position to provide help. It is also important to coordinate international assistance within the recipient country or community. Otherwise, many efforts will fail.

The threats to well-being and security are very real today. It is urgent that all resources, latent and viable, be mobilized to alleviate the widespread human want and misery which endanger the equilibrium of the world and human existence itself. Community development has possibilities for making vital contributions to this effort. The Conference should therefore apply itself to the search for more dynamic approaches than hitherto tried. The issues which tend to limit these possibilities must be faced squarely, even boldly.

Virginia, A. Paraiso, Philippines, *Chairman*
Heln James, Australia, *Rapporteur*
Erna Sailer, Austria
Balbina Ottoni Vieira, Brazil
Charles E. Hendry, Canada
Marie Louise Ginet, France

Heinz Heusler, Germany

Josette Lupinacoi, Italy

S. K. Sundaram, Malaya

Jose Figueroa Ortiz, Mexico

Jan F. Beekman, Netherlands

Carola Cisnero de Ruzo, Peru

Jean Robertson, Singapore

Kenneth Kindelsperger, United States

Juan C. Chans Caviglia, Uruguay

Espiritu Santo Mendoza, Venezuela

Martha Branscombe, United Nations

Laura Vergara de Santa Cruz, United Nations
Economic Commission for Latin America

Simon Btesh, World Health Organization

Maria de Lourdes Almeida de Moraes,
Catholic International Union for Social Service

Jane M. Hoey, International Association of
Schools of Social Work

Margaret E. Adams, International Federation of
Social Workers

Geraldo Markan, SUDENE (Brazil)