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OVERSEAS EDUCATION FUND of the League of Women Voters
1730 M St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

18p.

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT-AID CONTRACT No. La/711
April 15, 1975

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I. Introduction

During the reporting period, OEF field personnel met with the following groups: training teams of eight federations of the Confederación Nacional de Instituciones Femeninas, CONIF, brought together in Cochabamba, Bolivia; four coordinating agencies in Colombia; the coordinating agency in Costa Rica (Federación de Organizaciones Voluntarias, FOV); the two coordinating agencies in Ecuador (Secretariado General de Servicio Voluntario, SEGESVOL, and the Agencia para Coordinación del Voluntariado del Guayas, ACORVOL) and the coordinating agency in Peru (Secretariado Nacional de Instituciones Privadas de Bienestar Social, SNIPBS).

OEF field personnel stressed with these groups the need to move towards their goals in the months ahead, before the AID contract ends in June 1976.

The new field representative for Ecuador and Peru, Margery Sorock, was oriented in Washington in February and had field training with the Field Program Supervisor (FPS) in Bolivia and Peru in March. She also met members of the agencies in Quito and Guayaquil, although she did not provide technical assistance during this period.

The FPS and Ms. Sorock spent four days in Lima, Peru in conference with officers of the coordinating agency, SNIPBS. The latter indicated that continuing OEF technical assistance at the present time is inadvisable as a result of strong government pressures to manage all women's organizations and the fact that SNIPBS is losing its member institutions to the government sponsored Comisión Nacional de Mujer Peruana. OEF proposes exploring other possibilities in Peru later in the year.

II. Self-Help

The concept of self-help was analyzed during a study day held with eight training teams in Bolivia and three agencies in Colombia. To better conceptualize the idea, the group was asked to fit the programs of their agencies into the self-help grid designed by OEF. This exercise helps the volunteers evaluate and then change those programs which are palliative or paternalistic in nature. An example of how the grid is used is attached (Attachment 1).

In Costa Rica the field program supervisor met with the President, Vice-President, and the training team to prepare them for training of the member institutions in a self-help analysis of their programs. Because the FOV Board does not feel capable of doing this training, it is thinking of hiring a consultant to help member institutions mobilize self-help programs.

III. Data Collection

OEF is assisting the coordinating agencies to analyze data received from the questionnaires in order to be able to evaluate programs of the member institutions. The field personnel are emphasizing the need to include in the data outreach of each program. As a result, the agencies are recording the number of recipients affected by their programs.

Data collected by the FOV in Costa Rica, as per the attached action plan or Programa (Attachment 2), is being used to establish a cardex system and to make a map of San José showing the location of each member institution and its type of service. The map will demonstrate the geographical outreach of their affiliates and show areas where there are no FOV affiliates.

IV. Training

OEF personnel trained the eight Bolivian training teams in the fourth level, Administration and Organization. Two one-week courses were given to 45 participants in two groups of four teams each. To date the Bolivian teams have given 18 courses to 394 volunteers.

In Colombia OEF gave the third level of training, Human Relations, to volunteers of the agency in Neiva established about a year ago. Potential training team members have been identified from this group. OEF is assisting the agency in Ibagué establish its training team and is helping the teams of the agencies of Cartagena and Barranquilla improve their training techniques; to date these two teams have given eleven courses to 220 volunteers.

OEF has trained the FOV training team in Costa Rica in the second level of training, Philosophic and Technical Bases of Volunteerism. The team has given two courses in the first level and one in the second. Future training events are outlined in the attached chart (Attachment 3).

V. Surveys of the Needs and Resources in the Community

ACOVOL (Colombia) has decided for the present to focus on the in-depth internal investigation of its agency rather than on the survey of community needs and resources, which was proposed to OEF in the last quarter. The coordinating agency of Manizales (Colombia) has identified a qualified consultant to help with a survey of employment opportunities for women. OEF is waiting for the written proposal.

Training volunteers from the FOV in San José, Costa Rica in how to survey employment opportunities for women is well underway with volunteers from the provinces of Cartago, Heredia and Limón who, hopefully, will do a survey in their regions. The FOV in tabulating data from its survey found that many women are employed as sanders in furniture factories. This has led the FOV to hire a well-known master craftsman to instruct women in the art of furniture carving, so that they can get more and better jobs.

VI. Organization Development and Other Technical Assistance

One issue to be discussed at the May 15 national meeting of Colombian coordinating agencies is a problem common to most of the agencies: not enough volunteers to do the work. The field representative reviewed the proposed agenda for the May meeting with the four corrdinating agencies and guided them in preparing papers to be presented.

The recently established agency in Neiva (Colombia) received assistance at its First Assembly which elected the first Board of Directors.

In Costa Rica the FPS held three days of training in organization management with the Board of Directors of FOV in how to form committees and analyze their functions. She also helped the Board prepare an action plan which was distributed to the membership (Attachment 2).

VII. Intercambio

Attached is the January issue of OEF's bi-monthly Spanish-language newsletter, Intercambio, with an English summary (Attachments 4 and 5).

We have been receiving very positive feedback from the field regarding the newsletter.

EGE/mb
5/13/75

Enero, 1975

(Attachment 1)

Escala para Identificar Programas en Proceso de Cambio Hacia AUTO AYUDA

TRINIDAD, BOLIVIA

(Apuntar porcentaje de programas en cada etapa)

EMERGENCIA	PALIATIVO O PATERNALISTA	PROCESO DE PROMOCION	PROMOCION	AUTO AYUDA
Ayuda a las personas envueltas en una situación inesperada--víctimas de desastre. Inundación 1974 Se organizó un comité Pro-damnificados de la inundación; autoridades organizaciones voluntarias y cívicas, quienes planificaron la forma de hacer llegar las donaciones estatales, extranjeras y del pueblo boliviano (dinero, ropa, medicinas, alimentos.)	Asistencial: afecta síntomas no causas; establece dependencia. Inst: Damas Vicentinas Programa ropero del pobre Piden en la comunidad ropa para vender a bajo precio a la gente de escasos recursos. Las socias recogen la ropa y forman comisiones para atender la venta el día sábado. Los fondos recaudados los distribuyen para comprar drogas, sobre alimentación a los enfermos de T.B. y necesidades imprevistas de la comunidad.	Promoción social.* Reconoce las causas y pretende superarlas basándose en un plan de cambio individual. CONIF formó un equipo de capacitación (5 personas) y le brindó entrenamiento Este equipo de capacitación en un año ha dado 3 cursos a 56 mujeres de diferentes instituciones voluntarias.	Promoción social.* Logra resultados del plan para beneficio individual pero no logra independencia como resultados del esfuerzo. Las 5 integrantes del equipo se sienten más seguras entusiastas y responsables de su trabajo. Ha logrado que 2 participantes del 2° nivel se integren al equipo. Se ha notado y lo han manifestado dirigentes de algunas instituciones que la orientación recibida les está ayudando a dirigir mejor su institución.	Promoción social.* Acción basada en la realidad social atr vés de la investiga ción de causas. Continuidad en los gramas. Resultados cambio en términos superación de la pe sona y su situación como resultado de a que tienda a la red ción de la dependen La Junta Vecinal d barrio "San José" i grado por hombres jeres sintieron la sidad de contar co servicio de agua po que no llegaba a e barrio. Los comun se reunieron y deci aportar con su tra para beneficiarse este servicio. Pidi colaboración a la caldía que consistí cañarías, grifos, llaves y aportando ellos con la insta ción de este servicio como bién en la apertura de cúne- tas para el desague de las

EGE/AG/mb

*Trabajo organizado, coordinado entre personas con el fin de crear y aprovechar oportunidades para superar el nivel de vida.

(Attachment 2)

PROGRAMA

1.- Circular solicitando datos acerca de sus organizaciones, afiliadas..
2.- Hacer un fichero con una lista de las instituciones, con teléfono, Nº de socias, objetivos, programas (1 fail para c/u.)
3.- Calendario anual de actividades, puntualizando quienes se comprometen en cada programa.
4.- Mapa de San José con señalamiento de áreas de servicio.
5.- Puntualizar metas. Posibilidades de crecimiento; cuándo y en qué forma vamos a lograrlo.
6.- Un fail para cada organización con: solicitud de ingreso, reglamento, estatutos, encuesta.
7.- Hacer proyecto de contrato y discutirlo extraordinaria.
8.- Proyecto de información y orientación; Objetivo: información para la Federación, motivación para reclutamiento e información a la Comunidad.
9.- Crecimiento organizaciones afiliadas. (en qué campos y en qué etapa de crecimiento se encuentran)
10.- Crecimiento de Voluntarias de la F. O. V.
11.- Crecimiento de programas de la F. O. V. (Cuántas organizaciones deseamos afiliar en 1976)
12.- Evaluaciones de los cursos de evaluación: a cuántas personas llega el servicio voluntario de las Instituciones afiliadas.
13.- Boletín: cuándo se publicará; y quiénes lo harán.
14.- Se ha pensado en contratar persona que asesore.....
15.- Reconocimiento a Organizaciones por el Nº de miembros capacitados.

EL VOLUNTARIO NO IMPROVISA SE CAPACITA

Fecha

(Attachment 3)

PROGAMA DE CURSOS ANO 1976 COMITE DE CAPACITACION FOV.

HORARIO

PRIMER NIVEL: (18 horas) de 2 y media a cinco
SEGUNDO NIVEL: (27 horas) y media por las tardes.
TERCER NIVEL:

MARZO	ABRIL	MAYO	JUNIO		
Primer Nivel	Segundo Nivel	Primer Nivel	Segundo Nivel		
		Tercer Nivel	Tercer Nivel		
			Cuarto Nivel		

PROGRAMA DE CURSOS AÑO 1975. COMITE DE CAPACITACION F.O.V.

HORARIO

PRIMER NIVEL: (18 horas)
Y
SEGUNDO NIVEL: (27 horas)

de 2 y media a cinco y media, por las tardes.

MARZO	ABRIL	MAYO	JUNIO	JULIO	AGOSTO
Primer Nivel del 13 al 21	Segundo Nivel del 7 al 25	Primer Nivel del 5 al 16 Segundo Nivel del 5 al 23	Primer Nivel del 9 al 20	Primer Nivel del 21 al 1 de agosto	Reservado Para entrenamiento.
SETIEMBRE	**OCTUBRE**	**NOVIEMBRE**			
Segundo Nivel Dos Cursos simultaneos, del 1 al 19	Primer Nivel del 6 al 15 Segundo Nivel del 6 al 24	Primer Nivel del 3 al 12			

(Attachment 4)

INTERCAMBIO

Dimensiones del Desarrollo Organizacional

DESARROLLO • PAZ • IGUALDAD • 1975 AÑO INTERNACIONAL DE LA MUJER

enero 1975 Año 12 Núm 1

Desarrollo Organizacional

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Facultad de Trabajo Social, UPB, Medellín, Colombi.

Introducción

El Desarrollo Organizacional tiene sus orígenes en otro esfuerzo más de la Ciencia de la Administración por encontrar respuestas a las interrogantes que se plantean constantemente en una época de cambios acelerados.

A partir de la Revolución Industrial, el sistema que se estableció para dirigir casi todas las instituciones sociales de la civilización occidental, (gubernamentales, religiosas, militares, educativas, de investigación, industriales, etc.) fué la Burocracia. Definiendo a ésta como un modo de ejercer el control de la organización, tomar decisiones y coordinar esfuerzos para lograr los objetivos propuestos, encontramos en ella las siguientes características: 1. Una cadena de mando bien definida, 2. Un sistema de procedimientos y reglamentos para responder a cualquier contingencia en el trabajo, 3. Una división del trabajo basada en la especialización, 4. Ascensos y selección basados en la aptitud técnica, 5. Impersonalidad en las relaciones humanas.

Estos componentes fueron útiles en su época porque dieron respuesta a la necesidad de controlar los primeros abusos de la Revolución Industrial y otorgar a los trabajadores un trato imparcial y justo.

En este momento nos enfrentamos a otra época de cambio acelerado. Los sucesos presentan situaciones nuevas en las que **la Burocracia ya no funciona adecuadamente**, entre otras cosas **porque la rutina**, que es una de sus características, **frena la creatividad y el impulso necesario para el crecimiento. La impersonalidad de las relaciones humanas y el exagerado tecnicismo se convierten en una amenaza para la persona.** No bastan los reglamentos para hacer que el número considerable de trabajadores de una organización trabajen en armonía y aúnen esfuerzos para lograr rendimientos óptimos. Por el contrario, en la medida en que aumenta el número de personas y se vuelve más compleja la administración, suele crearse un clima en el que la comunicación se hace más difícil y se presentan muchos problemas de relaciones interpersonales.

Frente a esta nueva situación, se ha ideado el método de Desarrollo Organizacional con la esperanza de que su empleo produzca un cambio favorable en todo el sistema interno de la organización. Veamos ahora en qué consiste este método.

¿Qué es Desarrollo Organizacional?

Warren Bennis lo define como "una estrategia educativa que se adopta para lograr un cambio organizacional planeado." También se puede definir como "un esfuerzo de cambio planeado."

Para lograr el cambio que se busca, el desarrollo organizacional empieza por un diagnóstico de la organización. Se propone influenciar el sistema total

(Sigue en la pág. 5)

(Attachment 5)

OVERSEAS EDUCATION FUND of the League of Women Voters
1730 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

INTERCAMBIO February 1975 English Translation

ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Organization development is one more effort of the Science of Administration to find answers to the queries that are constantly posed in an age of rapid changes. Since the Industrial Revolution, the system established to direct almost all social institutions of Western civilization, (governmental, religious, military, educational, research-oriented, industrial, etc.) was the Bureaucratic system. Defining it as a manner of exercising control of an organization, making decisions, and coordinating efforts to obtain the proposed objectives we discover the following characteristics: 1) A well-defined chain of command, 2) A system of procedures and regulations that cover any eventuality, 3) A division of labor based on specialization, 4) Promotions and assignments based on technical aptitude, 5) Impersonality in human relations. These components were useful at one time because they answered the need to control the initial abuses of the Industrial Revolution and to give the workers impartial and just treatment. Today we are faced with another period of accelerated ahange. Events present new situations in which the Bureaucratic system no longer functions adequately, among other things because the routine, which is one of its characteristics--restrains creativity and the impulse necessary for growth. The impersonality of human relations and the exaggerated reliance on technology is becoming a menace to the individual. Regulations are not enough to make a considerable number of workers in an organization work in harmony and unite efforts to obtain optimum yield. On the contrary, as the number of persons and the complexity of the organization increase, a climate usually develops whinh makes communication more difficult and presents many problems of inter-personal relations.

Faced with this new situation, the Organization Developmant method has been created with the hope that its use will effect favorable change in all of the internal system of the organization. We will now see what this method is all about.

Organization Development focuses on the human aspect of the organization. Whenever the above-mentioned technique is introduced into an organization, it is done to respond to a problem, a conflict, a difficulty, paralysis or stagnation. It is hoped that Organization Development will effect a beneficial change in the total functioning of the operation.

Characteristics of an Ideal Organization

1. Efforts are organized by means of a plan to achieve objectives. This must be so understood by all the members of the organization.
2. The function is determined first and then the norm. This avoids formalism and the rigidity into which bureaucratic organizations are apt to fall.
3. Decisions are made at the level where the information is found, without regard for hierarchy. The purpose is to recognize the authority of knowledge on the same level as the authority of hierarchy.
4. The system of compensations, the same as that of sanctions is a short term system.
5. There is ample communication on both levels; this includes a change of values so that human factors and feelings be considered legitimate.
6. There is a minimum of competition. There is more "brain-storming" than rivalry. On the other hand, great importance is attached to collaboration and team work.
7. A certain amount of conflict is accepted but it is based, as stated previously, on ideas, since it is understood that interpersonal conflicts have been resolved.
8. The atmosphere within the organization must be one of security and confidence, not menace. It favors a high level of creativity. There exist mechanisms for self-criticism but these are used only after acceptance among people has been achieved, to avoid resentment or reprisals.

What constitutes the program of Organization Development?

Organization Development implies changes in mental attitudes on the part of the team that directs the organization; it also requires a change in the cultural awareness of those same people. It attempts to create a self-renewing organization. It includes programs for executives. These can be training programs carried out in laboratories, especially for personnel at the highest level, with the goal that they not only attend, but become immersed in the internal program of organizational change.

The work is done in groups, internal as well as external; it tries to create good relations between them, to analyze the structure, communications, the role that they play, and to evaluate the team work. It promotes good relations between the different entities. Organization Development requires a process of constant examination of the norms of planning and execution of social interventions that alter the function of the organization. Once the program is initiated, it must not be suspended because that can cause harm to the organization.

What are the goals of Organization Development?

- To change strategies of the decision-makers
- To change aspects of the organization
- To modify functions of those who form the group, above all those of the directing personnel
- To modify systems of motivation, integration and group collaboration
- To better the planning

- To make the means of communication more effective
- To make decisions based on the information obtained
- To create conditions that resolve conflicts or remedy them before they worsen
- To make positive self-criticism possible
- To teach those who carry out the program to concentrate on the goals.

Conclusions

Organization Development is based on a philosophy of shared responsibility. It considers that, under favorable conditions, the majority of the people want to learn, to progress, to share with their peers and not to be in conflict with them. Organization Development is considered a technique, an administrative policy which, if correctly applied, can produce very effective changes in the organization. It is a long term program which after completing certain steps established in a clear and continuous manner, gains the participation of all. The persons involved sometimes do not notice the process of change. They notice it when individuals change their behavior, when administrative work flows more smoothly, when better resources are available and everyone is better prepared.

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Interamerican Educational Fund, S.A., Organizational Development Series. This series includes the following titles: Organizational Development: Strategies and Models; Building a Dynamic Corporation Through Grid Organization Development; Developing Organizations: Diagnosis and Action; Interpersonal Peacemaking: Confrontations and Third Party Consultation; Process Consultation: Its Role in Organization Development.

The addresses where books of the Interamerican Educational Fund may be obtained are:

Apartado del Este 62361
Caracas, Venezuela

Apartado Postal 19-188
Mexico 19, D. F., Mexico

Apartado 4289
Panama 5, Panama

Apartado Aereo 29696
Bogota, Colombia

PRINCIPLES FOR VOLUNTEERS by Dorothy Kiester

Two interrelated principles or beliefs are basic to the philosophy of voluntary work in social welfare institutions, and provide the goals for the orientation of the action. The first is respect for the dignity of the individual; the second is the belief that people are rational, social beings, capable of controlling their destiny and capable of modifying their social conditions.

Respect for human dignity is not only a Christian concept since many other religions proclaim the same belief when they demand respect for human life as a moral and ethical principle. As a logical extension of this principle, they demand respect for the individual. It is also a democratic concept translated from the religious field to the political and social field, with the implication that the individual is the primary unit of society and that the state is at the service of the individual, and not vice versa. In theory, this is a simple principle, which few would argue with, but in practice, there is great confusion regarding the constant dilemma of the rights of the individual as opposed to the good of the majority.

Before attempting to clarify this point, it is well to consider philosophically what it is that gives dignity to the person. Do two people have the same degree of dignity, if one feels that he possesses that essential dignity, and behaves accordingly and the other considers himself of little value, and act according to this view, thinking he is worthless. The religious point of view is that both have dignity because they are human beings and that their behavior is a product of their life experience. The democratic point of view is that neither race, creed, sect, condition of life, or national origin should be the basis of difference in the rights of the individual as a citizen.

The volunteers' belief is a combination of the two. The individual has an inherent dignity because he is a creature of God, and has the same rights as all other citizens, because we are all equal before the law. The volunteer takes both concepts one step further, because volunteers are dedicated to improve the society in which they live and to try to effectively apply these beliefs to all the people, with special interest for those who have not had equal opportunity to take advantage of the benefits which society offers them. The volunteer must be concerned that all be treated equally before the law--that the poor man be not condemned because he is poor, even before he is proven guilty of violating the law--that the rich man does not evade justice because he is able to influence the law. The organization which the volunteers belongs to may have a program which does not deal specifically with legal justice, but the volunteers' understanding of the concept will influence his way of thinking in many activities for which he and his organization are responsible.

Personal interest always carries with it the risk of violating the rights of others. However, the volunteer will be interested in making people aware of the interrelationship which exists among the interests of all the members of society and how destructive it is to all of them,

in the long run, if a person or a group insists on looking for personal advantages at the cost of the exploitation of others. Undesirable behavior cannot be predicted of only one social class since it is an individual thing and for each individual the basic human necessities--food, home, security, love and approbation--are the same. The measure in which these five necessities are satisfied determines the degree of well-being the person enjoys. Life can be sustained with food, shelter and a minimum of security, but only on the animal level. In order to be aware of his dignity as a person, the individual needs love and approval. In order to obtain the satisfaction of these two basic necessities, the person needs the protection of society. An individual can provide his own food and shelter and can defend himself from physical harm, but only other people are able to give him love and approval, and that can only happen when social circumstances permit it. Everyone needs a biological family or its substitute, as well as the opportunity to develop the capacity to deserve approval. When the person has had the experience to be loved or valued as a person, and has received a little approval, he is able to feel worthy and have faith and hope in the future.

WHAT IS GROUP DYNAMICS?

First, a few words about what group dynamics is <u>not</u>. Due to the fact that it is such a new area of study, some erroneous ideas about it have appeared. One of these ideas is that this area consists of a well-organized school of thought or a cult with individuals chosen to develop a special social action program. It is not. Another false concept is that it consists of a technique or a way of doing things. Also, we have heard it spoken of as "the method of group dynamics," a phrase which, as we shall see, is meaningless. The third wrong notion is that group dynamics is a doctrine of social organization that favors the thinking of the group as opposed to that of individuals. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Four Meanings of the Term Group Dynamics

If group dynamics is not any of these things, then, what is it? The term has four different connotations:

1. In its most basic sense, it is used to describe something that is happening in all groups at all times even though no one is aware of it. Group dynamics in this sense refers to the forces that influence each group throughout its existence and influence its behavior along certain lines. We can imagine each group as possessing certain aspects which are relatively static--its name, constitutional structure, goal, and other physical characteristics; but it also has dynamic aspects: it is always changing, evolving, interacting, transforming itself and reacting, and the nature and direction of its movement are determined by forces that are exercised upon it, both internally and externally. Group dynamics is for the group what personality dynamics is for the individual.

2. The expression, group dynamics, is also used to describe a branch of social science that is dedicated to applying scientific methods to

determine why groups behave the way they do. In this sense one can speak about "researching group dynamics" in the same way as it is possible to speak about researching nuclear energy. As an area of study, group dynamics utilizes the tools and the personnel of various branches of social science, especially for social psychology, clinical psychology, psychiatry, sociology, anthropology and education. It establishes hypotheses, proves them using such techniques as observation of natural groups and laboratory groups, interviews, questionnaires, etc. Based on the facts it gathers, it tries to classify the phenomena of the group, theories, and general principles.

3. The third use of the expression "group dynamics" refers to the body of basic thought accumulated by former investigations. In this sense, one could speak of the "discoveries of group dynamics." This body of thought is found in doctoral theses, in articles from specialized social science journals, monographs, pamphlets, and in a growing number of technical publications.

4. Finally, the expression "group dynamics" has been used to describe an increasing body of knowledge or technology. Applied group dynamics deals with the utilization of knowledge in group processes. In this sense, it is possible to speak of the principles of group dynamics or the basic techniques of group dynamics, but never of the method of group dynamics. There is, of course, a close relation between basic knowledge and applied knowledge; however, when one is trying to understand group dynamics, it is necessary to distinguish between the body of basic thoughts and the technology derived from them. It is necessary to understand also that the principles and techniques derived at do not proceed from an ideological position referring to how groups ought to behave; they emerge rather from the scientific certitude that some types of behavior, under certain conditions, produce consequences which are predictable. So, the works of applied group dynamics do not say idealistically: "Do this or that," but rather: "If you do this or that under certain circumstances it is probable that the outcome will be thus and so."

Adapted from "Introducción a la Dinámica de Grupo," Malcolm and Hulda Knowles, Editorial Letras, S.A., Mexico, D.F., 1969, pp. 11-13.

FEEDBACK - Adapted from RTAC, Mexico

This term was introduced years ago into the language of training laboratories in order to identify a process intended to help a person to consider the possibility of changing his behavior.

The word originated in relation to activities dealing with electronic, self-directed systems, such as computers and rockets. The rocket has a specific objective and, if it changes its course, an electronic mechanism automatically conveys a message which makes it return to the desired route. The correcting message could also originate from a control station, but it is the "electronic brain" inside the rocket which makes the necessary correction in the trajectory of the missile. The message that indicates a change in direction is what we would call feedback and its effect would be to re-route the rocket onto the path that would lead it towards its objective.

Consciously or unconsciously, human beings also try to pursue objectives. But it sometimes happens that as humans we behave in such a way that impedes our pursuit of the objectives which we desire, or places obstacles in our way to attain them. If feedback reaches us, signaling the behavior that is keepin us from achieving what we want, perhaps we would be able to modify our behavior and move in a more productive direction.

However, something happens in our daily life that keeps a great deal of the feedback which is offered from producing the desired effects on those who receive it.

Frequently, it is given or preceived as insulting or disrespectful, or is not understood, or is offered at the wrong moment, or to someone who does not want it, or with the purpose of hurting rather than helping. It is necessary for feedback to be offered in such a way that the receiver hears it, understands it, and interprets it as a token of a sincere desire to help on the part of the person offering it.

The feedback that succeeds can be a useful instrument in the bettering of a person's ability to relate constructively to others.

1. Feedback must be descriptive rather than critical. The avoidance of critical words, helps him who receives it not to feel defensive. It would be more useful for the person to be told that she did not speak at all or very little during the meeting, rather than saying that he was "passive," "paralyzed," "terrified," "dumbfounded," etc. The example would be reversed if someone had talked too much. It would be more useful to tell him how much he spoke in comparison with the others, in terms of minutes or occasions when he spoke, instead of telling him that "he monopolized the conversation," that he tried to "dominate," etc. Even the word "excessive" is more critical than descriptive.

2. Feedback must be specific rather than general. To tell someone he attempted to have his way during the meeting would not be as useful as if he were told: "Several times you tried to gain approval for your idea right away without paying much attention to Pedro, Ana, and Jose, who were against it." It would be more useful for the group to say: "I noted that

each time a discussion arises between Pedro and Ana, some members tell jokes, others try to change the subject, and others read or write," instead of saying: "I noticed that this group fears conflicts among some of its members."

3. Timing is important. Almost always the best time is immediately after the situation or situations which make feedback necessary. Under special circumstances, perhaps it is more convenient to postpone it, if the person who is to receive it does not want it, when the situation is very confusing, when the person offering it feels an uncontrollable anger toward the person to whom it is directed, etc.

4. Feedback must be requested rather than imposed. A clear example of that is when someone asks or demands that they comment on his conduct in general or on some specific action. The manner in which that person reacts later, demonstrates if he really wanted the feedback or if what was offered had the characteristics of useful feedback. If one observes carefully he can notice if someone wants feedback even though he hasn't requested it in words and if someone, even though verbally soliciting it, doesn't really want it.

5. Feedback must be expressed clearly. The one offering it can ask the receiver to repeat the feedback he has been given, to be sure it was understood. He can also illustrate the feedback with examples or ask other members of the group to help him transmit it clearly. The use of very technical or uncommon words sometimes diminishes the clarity of feedback.

6. Feedback must be verified with other members of the group. A learning laboratory offers opportunities to ask others if they share the opinions or perceptions that someone has expressed in giving feedback to a companion. Sometimes it is discovered that the feedback responds to a distorted perception on the part of the person offering it. Other times the importance of the feedback is augmented for the receiver, when it is evident that other people confirm it.

7. Feedback must be directed toward aspects that the receiver could change, if he wanted. When the feedback is directed or refers to something that is very difficult or impossible to change, the result is that the frustration of the receiver grows without constructive results. Here certainly we are referring to the phrases of "escape" that are sometimes heard: "I have always been this way and I can't change now," "That's human nature," and some others. We are talking about being white, black or Indian; being very fat or very slender; having "too much" or very little intelligence, being very ugly or very beautiful, etc.

8. Feedback must take into account the needs, motivations, feelings, etc. of the receiver and not only those of the one who offers it. The most important consideration is that there exist in the giver a sincere desire to help, and that the natural impulses to dominate, attack and win, play a subordinate role. Summarizing, feedback is a means of helping. It is an instrument that helps the individual to realize how his conduct affects others and the level of harmony or discrepancy that can exist between the results of his actions and what he consciously wants to achieve.

AN EXERCISE IN SELF-EVALUATION

Openness

Do new ideas interest me?
Am I friends with people whose points of view differ from my own?
Am I very rigid and bound by tradition?

Flexibility

Can I adapt myself and accept new members of the group?
Do I feel comfortable in unusual situations?
Does the unexpected upset me?

Sensitivity

Am I aware of the needs and feelings of others?
Do I try to put myself in the other person's place?

Creativity

Do I use my initiative and imagination when I am confronted with a new problem or situation?
Do I use my own resources and/or seek the resources of others to meet new needs in the community?

Human Orientation

Am I interested more in the human than in the material aspects of the development process?
Can I establish an atmosphere of confidence that permits others to express themselves freely regarding social changes?

Orientation Towards Goals

Can I communicate a goal as well as the corresponding reasons for achieving it?
Can I make a plan for achieving a goal dividing it into progressive phases?

Knowledge of the Process of Change

Am I up to date regarding the changes taking place in today's world and in my community?
Have I read and am I continuing to read works about the process of change?
Do I observe how groups or individuals who are experiencing socio-economic changes act?

OEF NEWS

Hortense Dicker, who has worked with OEF since 1970, has returned to university life. Besides having functioned as OEF representative in Ecuador and Peru for four years, Hortense was a member of the teams which offered national "cursos" in Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and Colombia. Recently she cooperated in the founding of the Coordinating Agency for Volunteers of the Guayas, ACORVOL, in Guayaquil. We wish her the best of luck.

A Call to Action

We invite our readers to share with us their plans for 1975, International Women's Year, using the columns of Intercambio. We are confident that the end result of many efforts will be the attainment of the goal we have set before ourselves: Development, Peace, Equality.

The symbol which appears on the front cover during IWY reflects our conviction that this development, peace and equality will be the result of organized and persevering community action. We are aware that none of these are static conditions. Rather, we view them as dynamic processes in constant evolution, flowing from tensions inherent in human life and man's social nature. Since we are convinced of the need for all to participate in the creation of a more human and humanizing world, we invite our readers to reflect on this symbol and share their insights with us.