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*Community Development, Extension
and
The Village AID Synthesis*

TRAINING MATERIAL

Series A

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PREFACE

This pamphlet, "Community Development, Extension and the Village AID Synthesis," is the fifth in a series of seven publications which have been devoted to Community Development Training.

The following volumes comprise this series:

- 1. An Introduction to CD for Village Workers**
- 2. Making Council Meetings More Successful**
- 3. Community Development in Urban and Semi-Urban Areas**
- 4. Community Development and Social Change**
- 5. Community Development, Extension and the Village AID Synthesis**
- 6. Conference on Conference Planning**
- 7. The Village AID Worker and Democratic Program Planning**

The purposes of this series of publications are to provide simple training materials for those countries which have just begun or are about ready to begin Community Development programs, and to share field-tested materials on a wider basis.

The Community Development Division of the Agency for International Development is pleased to present this publication which has been adapted by Mrs. Jean Ogden from materials prepared by Dr. J. D. Mezirow, former Senior V-AID Training Advisor, USOM/Pakistan.

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Introduction: The Nature of Community Development

During the past twenty years the term *community development* has come into very general usage as a planned movement. Many attempts have been made to define it. In fact almost every conference on the subject has included at some point such an attempt. They all seem to indicate that there is no one simple definition that includes what those working in this specialized field read into the meaning of the words as applied to practice. It has many facets in its actual application.

As the idea has spread rapidly, and programs have been initiated throughout the world, the approach has continued to be experimental, and evaluation has been continuous. There are an increasing number of people concerned in the work who believe that it is more than a mere program. It is a very special kind of activity through which communities can find self-realization in matters economic, social, and cultural.

The professional literature in the field offers many definitions. But fundamentally the concept remains the same. It is based on a faith in the ability of people to learn how to help themselves attain a better way of living through building better communities by taking one step at a time. In the progressive steps they gain control of the process of self-directed self-help. The importance of participation and effort on the part of those whose lives are to be affected by the program is basic in all the definitions.

Because of the need to see clearly the role of community development in relation to other programs concerned with the welfare of people, particularly that of Extension, Dr. Mezirow has set down some of his ideas on the subject. He sees no conflict if the roles are clearly understood. In fact, as his title indicates, he points a way to a synthesis of community development and Extension work in the Village AID programs as they have been developing in Pakistan. His suggestions grow out of experience and observation, as well as a wide study in the several disciplines that contribute to the definition and application of the concept of "helping people to help themselves."

He recognizes the multiplicity of definitions that one finds in the professional literature. But as the basis for his discussion, he takes the relatively simple definition as formulated in the Ashridge Conference in England, 1954; and reconsidered and expanded in a conference in Malay, 1955. The statements follow:

"Community development is a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation and on the initiative of the community."—*Ashridge Conference*

"The term community development has come into international usage to denote the processes by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic and social and cultural conditions in communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress.

"This complex of processes is, then, made up of essential elements: The participation of the people themselves in efforts to improve their levels of living with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative; and the provision of technical and other services in ways that encourage this initiative, self-help, and mutual-help to make these more effective. It is expressed in programs designed to achieve a wide variety of specific improvements.

"These programs are usually concerned with local communities because of the fact that the people living together in a locality have many varied interests in common. Some of these interests are expressed in functional groups organized to further a more limited range of interests not primarily determined by locality."

This, like most of the other definitions Dr. Mezirow points out, deals with the *concept* of community development. It states its economic, social, political, and philosophical nature and implications. But in this paper, he is primarily concerned with the *process* which the practitioner uses to make this concept a reality. The process requires that the job of the community development worker be "fundamentally educational." He must help the people to acquire the attitudes, skills, and ideas that will enable them to take democratic action based on self-directed citizen responsibility and initiative. He is a "procedural technician." What then is his relation to other agencies and workers who are likewise concerned with improved living conditions and standards for all? This is the query on which this paper seeks to throw light.

—JEAN OGDEN

The Community Development Process

Fundamentally the job of the community development worker is educational. He must help people to learn. What he must teach is not as tangible as the ABC's. In fact, it is not a *what* that he must teach; it is a *how*. He must *teach people to learn how to help themselves*. There are, of course, certain tangible and specific things to be taught—and learned—as the program progresses. But these are to be learned in relation to helping the villager gain control of the *process* by which he is being taught so that he can become more and more capable of learning through his own efforts and thinking.

The community development process is, in essence, a planned and an organized effort to assist individuals to acquire attitudes, skills, and concepts required for democratic participation in the effective solution of a wide range of community problems in an order of priority determined by their increasing levels of competence. The degree to which self-directed citizen responsibility, initiative, and democratic action is generated will be the result of how well these understandings are acquired. How well they are acquired will be the result of the skill and effectiveness of the community development worker in imparting them. This is what we mean when we say he is a technician in *procedures* of helping people to learn how to help themselves. That is, he is performing an educational function closely related to the improvements that must be made though he is only *indirectly providing the actual techniques for doing the job*.

Community development seeks to help villagers become increasingly competent in the cooperative problem-solving process. It seeks to help them not only to become more effective in their participation in solving community problems, but also to develop greater skill in judging the relative importance of problems and to set their action priorities accordingly. A long sequence of self-help projects which solve problems irrelevant to their real needs will fail to meet the requirements of community development. But if the community development worker does not *guide* the villagers in their selection of a project for action or *motivate* them to try a solution recommended by a Nation Building Department, how can he work to help them set meaningful action priorities? There are several ways in which this may be achieved through community development.

SOME OF THE WAYS

In several Asian countries, increased food production is seen by economists and government leaders as a first priority need. Cultivators must somehow be made to increase crop yields by adopting new agricultural methods. Governments have sponsored *Grow-More-Food* campaigns with intensive publicity and promotion efforts. These campaigns have almost always failed. They have failed

because of two factors. The first is the lack of confidence on the part of the cultivator in the government agents proposing the change. In his past experience he has been deluded, cheated, and exploited when law enforcement and tax collection, rather than development, have been the major concerns of agents of colonial government. A second factor in his resistance to this change is his fear of the not unknown disastrous consequences of failure. For a subsistence cultivator to try a new agricultural practice that does not work can mean literally that his family will starve.

The cultivator should, of course, be permitted to see the results of the improved practices through demonstrations conducted in a situation with resources as like his own as possible. But this is not enough. He can be influenced to actually try these practices out himself only by those he trusts. If they are willing to try them, he, too, may have the courage to try the suggested innovation. If he has been trained in an agricultural college and can afford to take a risk, he may be influenced to innovate by experts, some of whom he has never known personally but whose recommendations in agricultural publications he accepts. If, however, he is an illiterate and suspicious cultivator with a single crop and only a few acres, his circle of confidence is likely to be confined to those he knows and trusts in the village.

The villager is likely to be far more willing to cooperate in such projects as the construction of drains, a road, latrines, a medical dispensary, or a sanitary water supply. These projects may fail due to inexperience, incompetence, or lack of dependability of his leaders, his neighbors, the community development worker, or even himself; but such failure will mean much less of a personal threat than crop failure. The community development worker who accepts this can use these projects as learning experiences. Through them he can guide individuals to acquire confidence in collective problem solving. This, in turn, will provide the basis for building the villager's confidence in his neighbors and in the community development worker. This will make it possible for him to take the greater risk implied in innovating with new agricultural practices.

Helping the villager to carefully identify his problems is another step in the educational process of community development by which he is encouraged to reconsider *the order* in which he undertakes action projects. Village concern over the lack of a school for the children may, upon analysis, be found to involve an expenditure of money for future operation and maintenance beyond local means. The principal source of village income may be from the sale of rice. In their search for ways to increase this income, they can learn from the community worker about the advantages of the Japanese method of cultivation. Thus the villagers may find a solution to the problem of financing their school by focusing their energies upon the solution of the collateral problem of increasing rice production. They may also find it necessary to do something about malaria which may have been keeping cultivators out of the paddies. They may discover the importance of a road needed for marketing the rice, or of a cooperative or a cottage industry in which they may work during the rainy season.

Because most village problems are closely related, this is frequently the pattern problem solving takes. A *direct effort* by the government, out of this

context of related problems, is quite a different matter. It would probably fail to convince or *motivate* the villagers to adopt the Japanese method of rice cultivation. It would be much more likely to be met with suspicion and apathy.

There is still another phase of community problem solving in which villagers may be guided to reassess action priorities. They have carefully identified and studied a problem. They have formulated as many tentative solutions as possible. At this point they must be assisted to anticipate systematically the long- and short-range consequences of each possible solution. It is in this procedure that they may find that previously unanticipated costs of constructing, maintaining, and operating a proposed project are prohibitive. The whole idea may have to be, at least temporarily, set aside, and a lower priority community problem given precedence for immediate action. Usually, the chance degree that a given project will be successfully completed is in direct proportion to the position it has on the villagers' list of action priorities. If the community worker can suggest a hitherto un-thought-of solution to another problem on the list, this problem will probably be given a higher action priority.

Thinking about community development in educational terms suggests the nature of the relationship between the urban programs found in large metropolitan centers in Europe and the United States, and the national programs of self-help under way in the villages of underdeveloped countries. The nature of the problems in the two situations varies markedly; those resulting from urban social disorganization in the West differ greatly from those of economic survival in the East. But whether the problem is one of increasing the rice production, building a mud school, getting adults to learn to read and write, renewing an urban area, organizing a community council, or building a neighborhood social center, the *process* of community development remains essentially the same. Problems, programs, and methods vary; but the process is fundamentally one of stimulating citizenship responsibility, initiative, and action through teaching the motivations, understandings, and skills of effective democratic participation in solving common problems.

Community Development and Extension— Some Basic Distinctions

The educational nature of the community development process affords the basis for making a needed and critical distinction between the functions of: (1) the community development practitioner, and (2) the extension agent who also works with people in the villages but as a technical representative of a department of government. Both of these workers make use of democratic group participation methods in three ways: (1) to involve people in formulating policies that will affect them; (2) to identify common problems; (3) to secure consensus and commitment to action. But the use of these methods by an extension agent is to assure *acceptance* after an administrative policy or government target has been determined and must be implemented; or after the need for a new technological practice is identified and requires adoption by the villagers. This distinction is fundamental to understanding the difference between community development and extension.

The extension agent is faced with the necessity of securing the acceptance of the solution to the community problem which he knows, by virtue of his training, that *the villager must accept* for his own good and for the good of the community. The villager may have been intimately involved in identifying this problem, and he may have shared in discussions democratically conducted in which the proposed solution was explained and demonstrated. But once the solution has been arrived at, the villager is expected to go along with it, and special efforts must be made to secure his support.

Whereas the community development professional is expected to function solely as a technician in community problem solving and human relations, there are practical reasons why the extension agent is unable to do this. Government and agency policies, requirements, and development targets have been set. These must be implemented in accordance with some kind of time schedule. Jobs and agency budgets must be justified periodically on the basis of tangible achievement.

As Brunner and Yang have noted, extension procedure does not require that programs be determined entirely by the people. "The agent cannot surrender the function and obligation of leadership. While he knows and works with people, he also represents the . . . Department of Agriculture. He must, if necessary, present his own analysis of what is needed."¹ Agricultural programs exist to increase agricultural production through disseminating improved practices or, in other words, "to extend science to farming." Extension information and methods are designed for this purpose. Major emphasis is on publicity,

¹ Brunner, Edmund deS. and Hsin Pao Yang. *Rural America and the Extension Service*, N. Y. Teachers College, Columbia University, p. 106.

promotion, and selling methods to secure the consent of cultivators for specific solutions of agricultural problems.

The extension agent may help the villagers meet felt needs when they happen to coincide with the interests and targets of his agency. But he is equally—or more—concerned with *directly creating specific newly felt needs in the villagers* and helping them to meet these particular pre-determined needs. For extension, leadership training pertains to cultivating a continuing readiness to innovate with and adopt new technical practices. The extension worker with a target to achieve or an improved practice to encourage may assist villagers to solve other problems *as a means* of later securing the required consent for his program. But there are very real limitations to this approach.

One can imagine the distress of an agricultural extension worker faced with a community which, in spite of obvious problems of agricultural production, places improved agricultural practices about two years in the future in its assessment of its own needs. Often of more immediate interest is the construction of a link road, a school, a medical dispensary, a drain, an improved supply of drinking water, the reduction of infant mortality, or adult literacy. Few extension agents could justify putting their agency's primary goal in limbo for such a period of time while they engage in helping the villagers construct a school, organize literacy classes, and build a dispensary. Brunner and Yang describe the role of the extension agent thus: "Sometimes staff members can follow the analysis of the community leaders; sometimes they must develop an awareness of needs not seen by the local people, though clear to the professional worker."²

In the United States in recent years, agricultural extension agents have frequently come to assume a greater degree of responsibility for community development in rural areas. This has been made possible by the existence and ready availability of a rich variety of professionally trained advisors in education, youth work, health, industry, social welfare, mental health, recreation, and almost every other field in which communities may require specialized help in solving their problems. By assisting community groups to find, at the time they need it most, the appropriate source of help from a welter of colleges; universities; school systems; federal, state, county, or local governmental agencies; and private and religious institutions—the agricultural extension agent serves a coordinating and switchboard function. He can do this when he encounters a problem outside—or sometimes even within—his own area of specialized competence in agriculture. In doing so, he is working at community development. However, the characteristic paucity of professionals and skilled technicians in the under-developed communities generally precludes the use of this particular form of community development.

The extension agent by the very nature of his job must solicit consent. The community development worker does not do this.

The latter has no pre-determined goals that the villagers must accept for their own economic or political or social salvation. He has no administrative program or technological practice to sell as the solution of their problems. He

² *Ibid.*, p. 180.

is in the community to assist the people in it to *learn how*: to acquire certain understandings necessary for their democratic participation in more effectively solving whatever problems they choose, in whatever priority they desire. The emphasis of community development in leadership training is to produce as many citizens as possible who are equipped with the attitudes, skills, concepts, and perceptual sensitivities which will make the effective use of the democratic problem solving process self-perpetuating.

In countries racing to develop their rural areas and especially to increase agricultural production in the face of desperate shortages, the perfectly legitimate question is often raised as to whether community development's educational approach is not too slow. Some planners are earnestly searching for "crash methods" and short-cuts. If agriculture is the number one priority, they take a chance on an extension approach as more likely to produce quick results. It concentrates on agriculture *per se*, they point out; and it has had an impressive record of achievement in the United States. Community development, as one writer put it, concentrates on educating people for self-directing responsibility rather than working exclusively on promoting obviously needed change in a specific technical field. It is, therefore, often felt to be too theoretical or not sufficiently dependable to meet exacting time schedules set for development. There is evidence--both empirical and experimental--that refutes this contention.

The value of community development as the fastest and most effective approach for achieving extension's goals has been established in a major, controlled statistical study conducted by the Allahabad Agricultural Institute in India over a two-year period and published in 1957.³

This study, involving 428 villages, compared the relative effectiveness of four approaches to changing agricultural practices: (1) agricultural extension; (2) adult literacy; (3) social welfare through work with the home and family; and (4) community development through helping villagers meet their felt needs in their own order of priority.

The community development approach resulted in a significantly higher percentage of changed agricultural practices than any of the other three. Placing primary emphasis on agriculture resulted in the smallest number of agricultural practice changes. There is no contradictory experimental evidence in the literature of rural development. This study should reassure us of the soundness of community development's faith that people know what is best for them if they are given the understandings they need to cope with their own problems.

³ Allahabad Agricultural Institute. *Extension Evaluation*. Allahabad, India, 1957. 56 pp.

The Village AID Synthesis

This conclusion from the study does not imply that community development can take the place of agricultural extension. What the facts do suggest is that in underdeveloped countries, with their dearth of trained technicians, fewer extension workers should be more highly trained in agriculture and each of the other technical specialties. These highly trained technicians could take advantage of and support the community development worker's educational efforts. Such a plan would be more efficient than squandering limited resources to put into the field a host of less adequately trained technicians who confuse their role with that of the community development worker. The nature of these respective roles is such that neither can assume the full responsibilities of the other without losing his original identity and effectiveness. Extension information and 'propaganda' programs are a perfectly legitimate activity for agriculture and other technical departments. There is nothing inherently evil in trying to convince someone to do something for his own good, to *motivate* villagers to do certain things. But doing this should not be confused with community development. If these methods succeed in interesting villagers to assign a higher order of priority to certain of their agricultural or health or educational problems, then the community development worker's job is to help them solve these, with whatever technical assistance is available, sooner than might otherwise be the case.

The worker cannot be a promoter and an educator at the same time. Nor can he be instructed by a technical department or public administrator to *get* or *motivate* the villagers to plant fruit trees, to meet some national target, or to accept administrative decisions on which for reasons of their own, they are not prepared to act. What he can do is to help motivate village people to think about their community problems, among which those involving agriculture will inevitably emerge. He can then help them to systematically examine these problems and look for the best solutions. These will often be the same ones which the extension agent has anticipated and has been promoting. He can then put them in touch with the technician able to help them, work with them, try out their solutions, and evaluate what they have done.

In Pakistan, where village AID (Agricultural and Industrial Development) workers have been called multi-purpose extension workers, there is a special danger of role confusion. Practical experience and experimental evidence both strongly support the contention that the *effective village worker must be a community development practitioner*. He is multi-purpose in the sense that the more he knows about the many facets of community problems the better; but he is not primarily an extension agent. The Village AID plan provides these community development workers with the support of highly trained specialists

in smaller crops, representing the various Nation Building Departments at the development area or block level. These technicians are the principal extension agents of their respective departments and represent these departments in the village.

The Village AID worker's function is to enhance the effectiveness of the extension specialist by: (1) helping villagers identify the need for the technician's help; (2) preparing them to make the best use of the technician's visits and apply his recommendations; (3) keeping the technician informed on the villagers' readiness to act which will permit the formulation of more realistic departmental targets and more productive extension efforts; (4) identifying problems which require special extension information or professional attention by the technician; (5) helping villagers solve less demanding problems with a minimum of help from the technician; (6) helping villagers solve their top priority problems which are outside the technician's field of competence, thereby paving the way for their more effective participation in projects he feels are important; and (7) involving villagers in self-help projects which generate opportunities for the technician's guidance.

The community development worker with his first-aid competence in the several technical fields cannot usurp legitimate extension jobs of the technically trained specialist, nor can the technician fulfill the community development function in the village. Village AID provides for a mutually beneficial partnership between extension and community development which gives the greatest promise of success for aided self-help in the villages of Pakistan.

ADVANTAGES OF VILLAGE AID APPROACH

That at least 85 per cent of the population of Pakistan is living in villages is common knowledge. Cities are overcrowded and urban unemployment is a serious problem. Migration to the cities appears to be increasing sharply. The major task at this time is to stem the flow and to encourage rural and smaller urban activities. Pakistan will remain rural for many years. The expansion of the level of living and a change in attitude by rural people toward rural life will be one of the most important stimuli to healthy urban and big industry expansion. Pakistan is *labor rich*, and labor is not being fully utilized in either urban or rural areas.

Rural Development is the most pressing need of this new nation. How can it be done most effectively and economically? It is quite evident that Pakistan cannot afford half a dozen or more duplicating extension services, one for each Nation Building Department which seeks to reach the villager with new ideas and practices. Village AID provides a unique answer. The advantage of community development as an approach to helping villagers acquire the knowledge and motivation for self-help has been established by some fifty countries and territories all over the world. The Allahabad experiment lends objective evidence to community development's speed and effectiveness in terms of securing villager adoption of new agricultural practices on the sub-continent. *Village AID is much more than a community development program. It is an*

integrated approach involving both community development and extension. The Nation Building Departments provide a coordinated extension service in the development area which gives depth, flexibility, and support to community development activities.

Village AID's integrated approach means a savings of scores of rupees which would otherwise have to be invested by each Nation Building Department to train, equip, and administer thousands of field people, all of whom would be vying for the attention and cooperation of the villager. Under the Village AID plan, a much smaller number of selected field personnel can be given a far higher order of technical training and accomplish far better results. When posted in the development area, the extension efforts of each can be pin-pointed and enhanced thirty-fold by the cooperative efforts of Village AID workers, Supervisors, and Development Officer. The nature of this mutually beneficial relationship between the extension technician and Village AID worker doing community development has been described in the preceding pages.

In the approach to rural development through V-AID aided-self-help projects, the outlay per project is much smaller than if the approach had been by any other method. A tangible indication of the impressive potential of V-AID in tapping an otherwise unexploited source of wealth for development is reflected in the size of the contribution made by the villagers themselves in carrying out self-help projects. Nearly 12,700,000 villagers living in the 106 development areas operating up to March 31, 1959, contributed a total of Rs. 10,420,436—a per capita contribution of Rs. .82. Of that total, 67 per cent was in the form of labor and 33 per cent in cash. The number of villagers making this contribution make up less than 16 per cent of Pakistan's total rural population. The period covered is roughly four years. The multiplying effect of the program is reflected in the fact that the total contribution of villagers increased 47.8 per cent in the last six months we are considering; and the per capita contribution was more than doubled during those last months. If the entire rural population were covered by the program, the same rate of per capita contribution would yield a total annual contribution from the villagers of Rs. 59,000,000 to Pakistan's rural development.

Community Development— Philosophically Imperative

Problems solved and tangible evidence of progress are found in increased agricultural production, economic prosperity, good health, adequate housing, good schools and high literacy rates. But for many educators, progress, and growth itself, is a matter of increasing the level of competence of individuals and groups to solve an ever-widening range of their problems more effectively. How is effectiveness in problem solving measured? The measure is in terms of both immediate and long-range satisfactions produced by a solution without its impeding the growth of other people in solving their own problems. Because of their enormity, the problems of controlling and giving direction to change require the most creative contribution of every individual in their solution.

This is why democracy, which provides the greatest opportunity for growth to the greatest number, is implied as a condition for effective problem solving. The attitudes, concepts, and skills which determine the effectiveness of such participation may be acquired by historical accident as they were, for the most part, in the United States and in other Western democracies. Or they may be systematically taught and learned, as they must be when the natural rate of development is accelerated in a country which has lacked conditions conducive to the growth of democratic traditions. But without this foundation of motivation, understanding, and know-how of democratic participation at the village level, the parliamentary forms of representative government do not endure. For these reasons, community development is a social and political as well as an economic, imperative.