

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20523
BIBLIOGRAPHIC INPUT SHEET

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Batch 80

1. SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION	A. PRIMARY	Social sciences	SE00-0000-0000
	B. SECONDARY	Sociology	
2. TITLE AND SUBTITLE			
A profile of black leaders participating in extension community development			
3. AUTHOR(S)			
Lewis, P.A.			
4. DOCUMENT DATE	5. NUMBER OF PAGES	6. ARC NUMBER	
1975	10p.	ARC	
7. REFERENCE ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS			
Southern			
8. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES (Sponsoring Organization, Publishers, Availability)			
(In staff paper ser.no.143)			
9. ABSTRACT			

10. CONTROL NUMBER	11. PRICE OF DOCUMENT
PN-AAF-374	
12. DESCRIPTORS	13. PROJECT NUMBER
Communities	Leadership
Community development	Participation
Ethnic groups	Profiles
	14. CONTRACT NUMBER
	CSD-3414 211(d)
	15. TYPE OF DOCUMENT

(ISD-3414 211(d))

Southern

PN-AAF-374

STAFF PAPERS SERIES

**Unemployment and Underemployment
Institute**

T. T. Williams, Director

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

SERIES #143

**A PROFILE OF BLACK LEADERS PARTICIPATING
IN EXTENSION COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

BY

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August, 1975**

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FOREWORD

The Unemployment and Underemployment Institute was created to coordinate all international economic development activities of the 211(d) grant at Southern University.

In 1972, the Agency for International Development (AID) approved a five year grant to Southern University to strengthen and increase its capacity in economic/agricultural economics to enhance Southern's capabilities to contribute to the resolution of problems of rural unemployment and underemployment in developing countries.

The general objectives of the Institute are (a) to develop and coordinate the activities of the University for greater participation in international economic development programs; (b) to make available the capacities and expertise thus developed to public and private agencies involved in industrial development programs; and (c) to conduct research, seminars, and workshops on domestic and international development problems including cooperatives, manpower utilization, small farmers, housing, population, nutrition, leadership training, and community development.

In keeping with objective (a), the University supports several faculty members working towards advanced degrees in the area of economic development and related disciplines, supports undergraduate scholarships to foreign and U. S. nationals in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, provides travel to professional seminars for faculty, foreign exposure to development experiences, and special training on techniques of program design and evaluation.

In keeping with objective (b), the Institute sponsors an International Development Seminar Series, Student-Faculty & Staff Seminar Series, and hosts foreign individuals and groups interested in economic development programs at Southern University.

Results of research projects consistent with the objectives of this program are published under the Institute's Faculty-Staff Research Paper Series. Papers published under this series reflects the diversity of interests and specialties of our faculty and staff.

The above activities of the Institute demonstrate the capacities and expertise of Southern University developed through the 211(d) program. As a result of the 211(d) grant, the Unemployment-Underemployment Institute at Southern University is in a position to offer expert and technical personnel to private and public agencies involved in international economic development programs.

T. T. Williams
Director

Statement of Problem

Extension's role in community development embraces both the social action process aimed at organization and leadership development and the problem-solving method which uses the analytical and technical findings of many social and community agencies. In implementing this role, the identification of local leaders who are likely to participate in community development activities is a critical factor and consequently becomes a major concern of community development educators. The need for an informed local leadership structure is becoming increasingly meaningful to community development efforts. However, participation research in voluntary associations, particularly those of low socio-economic status, has revealed participation for the most part to be sporadic, limited in both quality and quantity as well as differentiated from the mainstream of the larger community.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of participation of black, indigenous volunteer leaders in Extension Community Development work in order to develop a participation profile of the typical community development volunteer leader in disadvantaged communities. It was felt that this profile would be useful as a conceptual tool for Extension personnel in identifying potential community leaders likely to take active part in community development work.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study was to develop a profile of the community development leader based on the level of participation and

selected characteristics of volunteer, black, indigenous leaders in selected community development activities.

The following specific objectives were established:

1. To determine the over-all participation of indigenous leaders from predominately black communities in selected community development activities.
2. To analyze leader participation in Extension community development in relation to personal, family, civic, and socio-economic characteristics.
3. To delineate the distinguishing characteristics of a typical community leader for identifying potential leaders at the local level.

Research Methodology

A sample of one hundred and one indigenous leaders were selected from six predominately black communities of Ascension parish using systematic list sampling procedures. A personal interview schedule was developed and used to collect information from community leader-respondents on their leadership activities, as well as personal, socio-economic, civic and family characteristics. Six null hypotheses were established with regard to leader participation in Extension Community Development. Simple regression and linear correlation procedures were used to test the several null hypotheses.

Findings

1. No statistically significant differences were found in leader participation according to sex, years of schooling, occupation,

employment status and number of years leaders lived in the community. Therefore, hypothesis number one of no differences in leader participation by selected personal characteristics could not be rejected.

2. Higher participating leaders agreed more than lower participating leaders with the concepts that social understanding and integrated community life would contribute toward community development. Leaders who participated to a greater extent in Extension Community Development were more agreeable than low participators to the idea that payment of taxes is a better approach than fund-raising drives for community development on a continuing basis.

The attitudes of leaders toward racially-oriented community development issues were found to be statistically significant on three attitudinal statements and statistically non-significant on three other statements. Based on statistical results it was concluded that community leaders, regardless of their level of participation in Extension Community Development had about the same attitudes. As such, the null hypothesis of no relationship between leader participation and attitudes held by leaders was not rejected.

3. The higher participating leaders were found to have more frequent contacts with Extension Agents and were members of public committees, but at the same time were not personally acquainted with elected officials. Statistically significant differences were found in leader participation in Extension Community

Development according to the above three relationships tested under hypothesis number three. Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected.

4. The findings of this study revealed statistically significant differences in leader participation according to the extent to which leaders felt obligated toward the following community development activities:
 - a. Representing their communities on committees before public bodies.
 - b. Assisting in the development of community improvement plans.
 - c. Encouraging others to support community development efforts.
 - d. Keeping others informed of community affairs.

There was no statistically significant difference in leader participation as related to feelings of obligation toward identifying community problems. It was significant that those leaders who felt more obligated to undertake selected community development activities mentioned above tended to have participated to a greater extent in Extension Community Development. Four of the five relationships tested under hypothesis number four were statistically significant. Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected.

5. Although results showed that the more satisfied leaders tended to participate to a greater extent in Extension Community Development, no statistically significant differences were found in leader participation based on how satisfied leaders felt regarding

their accomplishments in (1) getting cooperation from other community leaders, (2) getting support from community residents, and (3) the development of recreational programs for youth. A statistically significant difference was observed, however, in leader participation according to feelings of satisfaction in establishing working relationships with elected officials. Three of the four relationships tested under hypothesis number five were not statistically significant, therefore, the hypothesis of no relationship between leader participation in Extension Community Development and their feelings of satisfaction with task accomplishment could not be rejected.

6. Leaders who said they had been motivated by someone in their family to become a community leader were found to have statistically significantly higher participation scores compared with leaders who indicated lack of such motivation. Based on these results the hypothesis of no difference in leader participation by family influence was rejected.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following distinguishing features suggest a profile of the average participating black leader in Extension Community Development activities in disadvantaged communities.

The average or better than average community leader-participant:

1. Is a middle-aged person, generally around 45 years old.
2. May be male or female.
3. Generally comes from professional occupations.

4. Serves on public committees.
5. Contacts Extension rather frequently.
6. Feels obligated to (a) develop plans for community improvement, (b) represent the community on committees before public bodies, (c) keep others in the community informed of community development affairs, and (d) encourage others to participate in community development efforts.
7. Is more favorable than unfavorable in his or her attitude toward racial issues and accepted community development approaches.
8. Is satisfied with his or her accomplishment in establishing working relationship with elected officials.
9. Is motivated to participate as a leader in community development work by family influences, primarily leadership influence of the father.

The above features may be viewed as a conceptual tool, valuable to Extension personnel engaged in community development work, in identifying indigenous leaders likely to participate in Extension Community Development work.

Some Implications

The results of this research suggest that:

1. Efforts should be made to involve both male and female, middle-aged community leaders in community development.
2. Since those leader-respondents who said they had served on public committees had higher participation in leader activities, Extension and other agencies working directly with local leaders

should encourage more indigenous leaders to seek appointment to public committees. It was revealed in this study that over ninety-five per cent of the leader respondents had not served on public committees.

3. Efforts should be made to involve those community leaders in community development activities who tend to interact with elected officials and who have more positive than negative attitudes toward racial issues and recommended community development approaches.
4. Change agents might consider looking for potential community development program participants among such occupational groups as skilled technicians and professional educators.
5. There is a need to study this phenomenon of leader participation among white and other ethnic groups in disadvantaged communities.