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**ORGANIZING PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY
FOR GROUP ACTION**

BY

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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

ORGANIZING PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY
FOR GROUP ACTION (1976)

by

Leodrey Williams

The success of any community organization or community resource development program depends largely on how effectively the program mobilizes human and non-human resources in the action phase. The best development plans are of little importance unless carried through to action or completion. They accomplish little beyond providing a stimulating exercise for the Extension educators. Mobilizing the resources of a community or area to achieve the objectives of development is a process of social action. Whether projects be a sewer system, water system, community center, clean-up campaign, or adult education classes, the process of attaining the objective is social, since it depends on motivating key people and organizations to become involved and participate actively in the action necessary to accomplish the development objectives. Resources used in carrying out an action program are not limited to those available in the community. Many types of outside assistance may be sought and utilized.

You will be engaged in bringing about changes in communities that will benefit all families and all age groups. This kind of involvement is referred to as community resource development work or just community development. Extension is an educational agency. As an Extension worker, you will be teaching.

Let's look at the meaning of resource development from an educational point of view. It is the process of providing motivation, educational guidance to group action through citizen committees and organizations.

Specifically, community resource development is the bringing about of economic and social change through enlightened group action. The aim is to reach people that need assistance most and involve them in projects for their own good. The job of Extension in the development program begins with identifying and training local leadership, motivating this leadership to desire improvement and to commit themselves to action, providing assistance in the organization of the necessary committees and groups through which leadership may be exercised in utilizing both public and private resources to bring about the desired changes.

Motivation and involvement or participation are essential to any lasting or successful developing program. The families in a community must become a part of the development program and the program a part of them if goals are to be set and reached. In Extension we often used group meetings in our educational programs. Group motivation is the very basic part of a community development program or community organization.

It is known that many people who need to be involved in bringing about changes do not always accept new ideas on the basis of interest alone. They need to be influenced by the pressures and wishes of the group to which they belong. As Extension Aides it will be necessary for you to have some understanding of human motivation. This is not as simple as it may seem, but we believe you can do it. Being able to motivate others to perform some desired action has been considered one

of the qualities of leadership. This is why we believe you can do the job because if you had not had some leadership qualities you would not have been employed to conduct an educational program. Getting people to make changes can be accomplished in a number of ways; (1) through force, (2) fear of force, (3) rewards and (4) friendship. In voluntary groups as worked with by Extension some of the methods just mentioned are useless. Among those that will work, the idea of motivating people on the basis of their "felt needs" is more effective. When desired action is undertaken on this basis, those performing this action are doing so because they feel it is for their benefit and not for someone else. It is important for you to recognize that many of the families in community development areas have different levels of income, education, come in all ages, and have different ideas and desires for improvement. For many believe that the goals set are not possible to obtain, but people must become directly involved in helping themselves. Sometimes their leaderships are not easy to recognize by you but it does exist.

It is not always easy for people to look at themselves as they actually are. Yet this is the place to begin. Achievement should play a major role in an attempt to motivate. One of the most powerful and effective motives that can be called into play in setting the stage for learning is motivation for achievement. Motivation to achieve mean wanting to be able to do something that is worthwhile .

HOW THINGS GET DONE IN A COMMUNITY

I know of three ways that things get done in a community and strangely enough the first way is by:

1. ACCIDENT - Sometimes some worthwhile community accomplishments are the result of an accident. BUT DON'T WAIT FOR AN ACCIDENT TO OCCUR!!

2. THINGS DONE FOR A COMMUNITY

Example: A wealthy businessman wants to leave something to his memory so he builds a recreation center. This would be a generous deed. But somehow people would never have the feeling that it was really their very own. Of course people would use it but the feeling of pride would be missing. The people of the community would have contributed nothing toward the accomplishment.

3. PLANNING AND WORK

This is the way most things get done. Usually, things don't just happen. Very few accidents happen that benefit the entire community. Few people are concerned with leaving community facilities to their memory. In planning and work, weeks, months and even years of planning and hard work precede successful projects.

A few community leaders or neighbors may feel that something is missing or needed but it may be a long time before other families became interested enough to do something about it. But after a lot of talk, group meetings and discussions, committee meetings and advice from trained persons that know how to deal with community problems, the project will be in motion. When this is completed, everyone in the community will feel genuinely proud of their accomplishments.

Work and plans usually result when people seek answers to three questions:
What do we have; what else do we need; and how can we get it?

SUGGESTED STEPS IN ORGANIZING PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY FOR GROUP ACTION

1. BELIEVE IT CAN BE DONE

This is the foundation of a successful community development program. Attempting to conduct a community project with doubt in your mind as to its success is self-defeating. You must believe the job you are attempting to do can be done.

2. KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

(a) Gather facts - if you have the facts you will know what your strengths and weaknesses are. You will know what you need and what resources are available to meet these needs. Your community survey will help you with these facts.

(b) Where is your community located?

Just where does the community begin and where does it end? Wherever it is, it is the area in which the people feel they 'belong'.

(c) Know how the families in the community make a living.

What kinds of work the people in the community are engaged in Agriculture, industry, services or other occupations.

(d) How do People Live?

People must live as well as make a living. They are interested in education, recreation, health, religion, housing, transportation, government, beautification, youth, welfare and others.

(e) Who are the Community Leaders?

- Ministers or other church leaders.
- Person who make announcements and call meetings.
- Ask people who the leaders are?
- Have the known leadership suggest other who might be leaders?
- You may want to hold an informal meeting with the known leadership to discuss the community and some of its problems and needs.

3. ORGANIZE

- a. Organize according to the needs of your community.

If people are to truly work together some type of organization is necessary to direct their efforts and insure a continued program. The size and needs of the community will determine the necessary type of organization.

- b. Utilize the organization for the purpose it was formed.

When a project is completed, there is a tendency for the group to disintegrate.

4. SET GOALS

- a. Type of Goals

1. Short range goals - tells what a group hopes to accomplish in a short period of time.

2. Long range goals - mark a desired destination over a long period of time.

b. How long will it take to reach goals set?

Include both long-range and short-range goals in development plan. If all goals are too short and are reached in one year the families may be slow in setting up new goals for next year. If all goals are long-range, the families may become discouraged. Projects are steps toward goals.

For future success in reaching goals, your first goal should be selected carefully.

As you look at the community that you are working with, you will see many things that need to be done. Some of these things can be done in one year but other will take much longer. Projects should be selected in terms of their urgency and ease of accomplishment.

5. URGE ALL TO TAKE PART

Community development is a job for everyone in the community. People will be more willing to cooperate in carrying out a project if they have a part in planning it. Involve people in determining needs, setting goals, selecting projects to meet these goals, as well as carrying out projects through committees. Give everyone an opportunity to do something, whether it is a large or small task.

5. USE ALL AVAILABLE HELP

There are many agencies and organizations in your parish and state that are interested in your community. Agricultural, economic, health, welfare, religious, governmental, homemaking and social agencies can and are anxious to serve whenever possible.

Their information, personnel, programs and other services can contribute much to your community.

Don't depend on agencies or others to do the job for you. Community development can progress only so far as local people are willing to assume their responsibilities.

7. CHECK UP ON RESULTS

Determine to what extent goals have been reached and needs satisfied. It is necessary to keep a record of what the organization plans and does so that you will have means of measuring how much has been done.

The educator must adjust the educational programs to the way of life of the clientele he is trying to reach. To be an effective planner, he must have some knowledge of the home life and aspirations of families. There is no one best approach to "reaching the hard to reach." As more knowledge of the people is gained, the approaches taken should become more realistic. An important consideration is to have methods appropriate to the people involved.

REMEMBER: Families do not have to move to live in a better community.

Through planning, hard work, and unselfish participation by these families in group action, can make their community a better place in which to live.

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