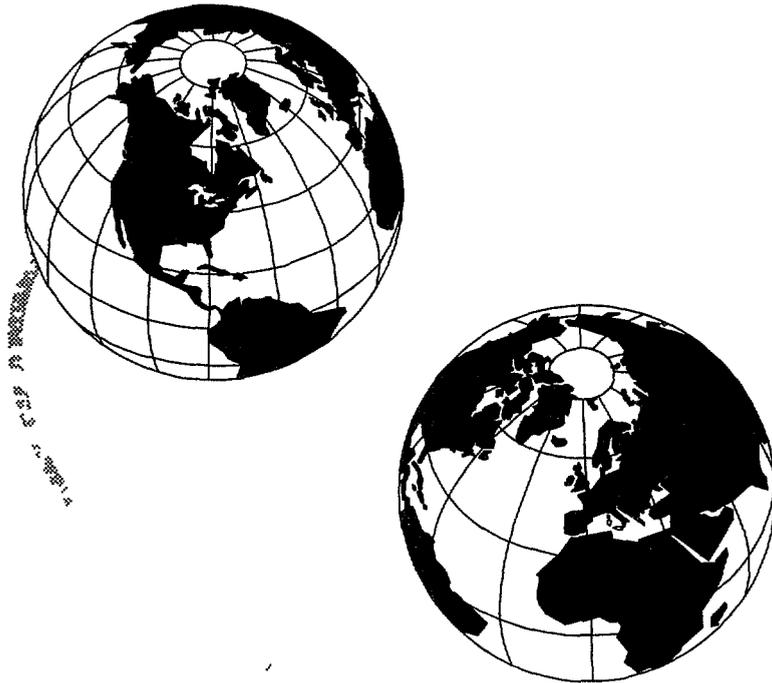


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Instructor's Guide



Civil Society: A Foundation for Sustainable Economic Development

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Mercy Corps International

**Coalition for Christian Colleges
& Universities**

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Introduction

Fifteen professors from a variety of disciplines were commissioned by the Coalition for Christian Colleges & Universities and Mercy Corps International to develop curriculum modules for use in undergraduate classes. The resulting five modules are an introductory exploration of the “global-local linkages between business, economics and civil society.”

- Module 1 – Foundations Development and Civil Society
- Module 2 – The Essential Triad Business, Government and Civil Society in Economic Development
- Module 3 – Stewardship Responsible Management of Social and Natural Capital
- Module 4 – Globalization Human Rights and Civil Society
- Module 5 – Community Building A Key to Civil Society

Each module is intended to stand alone as a supplementary unit. In this manner, professors may choose to use one or more modules as appropriate for their courses. It is our hope that these materials will be used in business, economics, and political and social science courses. This is an exciting, emerging field of study that has application for much of what we teach.

The curriculum was written with the premise that, although the modules were being developed by professors at Christian universities, the material would be of interest to professors and students in both secular and Christian settings. For this reason the curriculum has been written in a way that does not specifically target students of the Christian faith. However, in the course of their research into the topics covered in the curriculum, the authors explored many ideas particularly relevant to teaching in a Christian setting. To enable Christian professors to help students more carefully explore the connections between this material and their faith, we have placed some of these Christian insights in this instructor’s guide. We believe that for the modules to accomplish their desired goals in a Christian college setting, the insights contained in the instructor’s guide (along with those of the professor teaching the course) should be integrated into the material in the modules. We hope Christian instructors find this approach useful and would welcome feedback/suggestions on how the material can be used even more effectively.

wealth creation. These include the value of national parks, exchanges through barter, volunteer services, longer life, good health, happy marriages and good personal relationships, enjoyment at work, job security, free time, and even freedom. Others have noted that GDP tells us nothing about income distribution and its effect on the quality of life of the people in a society.

- The Sustainable Development Wheel is included to give students a visual image of the complex interactions involved in development and a broadened understanding of the term capital. We also hope to call attention to less obvious, but nevertheless critically important, inputs to development such as social, governmental and spiritual/moral capital. Instructors should engage students in a discussion of development from a Christian perspective, using the Sustainable Development Wheel as an integrative illustration. In the process they should verify that students understand the forms of capital and the wheel analogy.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. Give examples of development that does not jeopardize the opportunities of future generations to continue to develop.
2. In what ways is the good life (per western lifestyles) a poor model of broad-based sustainable development?
3. What respective roles should development workers, governments and community members play in the development process?
4. Why should Christians care about development?
5. Is our definition of broad-based sustainable development consistent with a Christian perspective on development? What might Christ-centered development look like?
6. How does development relate to God's redemptive work through his son and the Holy Spirit?
7. What does it mean that God desires us "to be made whole" or "have life to the full"?
8. What values are essential to healthy development?

Biblical Framework for a Discussion of Development

Jesus defined His mission at the beginning of His ministry by reading from Isaiah 61, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and the recovery of the sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4 18,19). In His life and mission, Jesus became an example of what God intends for His people.

When John the Baptist asked if Jesus was really the Messiah, Jesus responded, "Tell John that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the gospel is preached to the poor" (Luke 7 24). In other words, Jesus pointed to His holistic ministry as evidence that He was indeed the Messiah and that the Kingdom of God was breaking into this world. His leadership and servant life fleshed out and epitomized the values of God's new future.

On the cross, Jesus died not only for our sins, but to bear the full consequences of the fall in His own person. He died not only to reconcile us to God but to reconcile all things to himself (Col 1 19,20). In Scripture, salvation always relates to the individual person's relationship with God, but it never stops there. Salvation must take place in all spheres of relationship. It is not complete until the broken places of a person's inner life are healed. It is not complete until people are reconciled to one another. It is not complete until the broken systems of society are restored and the structural injustices are eradicated, and it is not complete until

the abuse of the earth is reversed. In other words, God's redemptive purposes in history are to set right everything that was ruptured in the fall and return us to the Edenic state where we are once again in harmonious relationship with God, with ourselves, with others and with the natural environment.

Through Christ, we are reconciled to one another in order to fashion a new society in which distinctions of race, sex, social status and culture are no longer a basis for discrimination and exclusion. God's love and concern for His people reach into every dimension of life. Despite our current, temporal deficiencies, God's desire for us in this life is one of abundance. In John 10:10 Jesus says, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." God intends to create a society of dignity and justice for all people in which there is no more hunger and the poor, the widows, and the strangers are no longer oppressed (see Is. 58:6-9, Ps. 35:10, Ps. 68:5-6, Luke 1:46-55, Luke 3:9-11).

The new order that God is seeking to establish is both present and coming, both now and not yet. Although complete redemption and reconciliation will not be realized until Jesus returns and ushers in the "age to come," this portrait of God's intentions should set the agenda for us today. This vision of an abundant life from God's perspective is wonderfully captured in the Old Testament vision of the prophet Isaiah (65:21-23):

*They will build houses and dwell in them
they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit
No longer will they build houses and others live in them
or plant and others eat
For as the days of a tree, so will be the days
of my people, my chosen ones will long enjoy
the works of their hands*

*They will not toil in vain
or bear children doomed to misfortune
for they will be a people blessed by the Lord,
they and their descendants after them*

This biblical vision of wholeness is God's desire and goal of "shalom" for His people - a personal and corporate wholeness where peace, justice, righteousness and wellbeing reign because our relationships are "right."

Capital and Holistic Development

Discussion. As Adam Smith noted, specialization, economies of scale and free exchange (including international trade) greatly multiply output. As an observation of both companies and well-planned infrastructure projects make clear, most things can be produced more efficiently through voluntary cooperation. Infrastructure projects have some of the highest returns of any investment (e.g., highways, clean water). Cowan's research (BBS, 202) shows that the most important household productivity enhancers are provision of utilities, basic health care and enhancements to human capital.

Ideas and values are the ultimate building blocks of wealth. Ideas add tremendous value to raw materials and values add tremendous efficiencies to organizations and processes. Both can be reproduced cheaply. At the same time, neither have diminishing returns (like other inputs) nor subtract from endowed capital (like the extraction of natural resources). Examples of values related to a Christian lifestyle which contribute to

development are a desire to work vigorously, intelligently and productively, a willingness to save and invest in important ventures, including risky ventures, spending habits that build individuals, families and communities up, rather than break them down, self control (limits to selfishness), and self sacrifice by parents, taxpayers and philanthropists for the sake of future generations, good stewardship so that resources may be used to produce new goods and services rather than to replace things that were poorly cared for, respect and concern for others resulting in a willingness to share information for their good, an emphasis on talent development/education, widespread trust relationships, morality and ethical behavior, well defined property rights and security of property, and equal treatment under the law

Ultimately a society focused primarily on providing incentives for responsible behavior rather than on rights will be more productive. But an emphasis on rights is healthy because it forces people to also focus on their responsibilities. Basic human rights such as safety, income, health care, security, access to information, etc. can be viewed as an investment both in people and in an infrastructure of trust relationships, which in turn enhances economic efficiency. Secure property rights are critical to economic development because granting the right to use property makes responsibility and accountability for misuse possible, protects innocent people from those who would damage, steal or waste their resources, encourages stewardship (since if an owner depletes or abuses her property she generally bears the full cost), and gives producers a place to store up the fruits of their labor. Research indicates that the presence of civil liberties, relatively small government, and the rule of law contribute to economic growth, (Barro, 1995). (For other examples see the 1997 World Development Report.) Non-discrimination and freedom greatly enhance wealth creation since they free all members of a society to use all their human resources as productively as possible.

The Origins of Civil Society

Purpose. To introduce and define civil society as a critical “third sector” contributor to development, show how it has developed, and to introduce students to the principles of civil society.

PEP. The instructor may want to introduce this section by reminding students that the correlation between economic development (narrowly defined) and the Human Development Index is imperfect. Similarly the correlation between democracy and economic development is imperfect, as is the relationship between democracy and social trust, and democracy and membership in voluntary associations. These positive but imperfect correlations can be illustrated by data from the 1997 World Development Report (Figures 1 and 2). Clearly there is a complex social reality that allows humans to develop and the quality of life to improve. A significant piece of this social reality is civil society, which is the focus of this section.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What is the appropriate task of government? Where does the task of government end and the task of other legitimate authorities (e.g., parents, NGOs, churches) begin?
2. What or who legitimates or limits government authority? To whom should rulers be accountable?
3. How should we define responsible activity in the public square?
4. How should we define stewardship: freedom, honesty, power, rights, law, justice or community?
5. What constitutes a civil society? Are alternative definitions of civil society equally valid? Why or why not?

Worldviews and Civil Society

Purpose. To identify the importance of engaging the subject of civil society at the its foundational (world-view) level and to help students develop their Christian perspectives on civil society.

PEP Using the discussion resources below, attention should be given to the centrality of worldviews to any civil society discussion. Instructors should help students begin to see how and why civil society arose out of a context significantly influenced, among other factors, by Judeo-Christian religious values and to develop insights into a Christian perspective on civil society.

Here, we should help students wrestle with how to “decently disagree” with those holding opposing worldviews. Ethical relativism, and ethical relativism’s unspoken assumptions that man is at the center of the universe and master of his destiny, are unacceptable. But careful listening, reasoned argumentation, and tolerance for opposing points of view are essential if we are to have a truly civil society.

Biblical Framework for Discussion of Worldviews

It may be helpful to examine more specifically how the Bible has influenced our beliefs and conclusions about civil society. We know that the Bible emphasizes the kind of responsible activity and attention to duty that both assumes basic human rights and civility and increases the likelihood of our achieving them by illustrating how we should live before God. Additionally, there are significant Biblical teachings which relate, at least indirectly, to politics and economics, in areas such as the nature of stewardship, freedom, power, rights, law justice, etc., which we now summarize in the following paragraphs.

Rather than looking at the government as an adversary (or enemy) to be thwarted, or as a powerful friend who may be able to help secure an advantage, the Bible calls Christians to view government units as having been delegated legitimate authority by God, and thus as partners (or potential partners) for doing good. The principles of civil society are consistent with the commission of public justice delegated to those with authority and responsibility. These public justice concerns should also guide the state when it uses its coercive powers to, for example, tax, punish evildoers or prevent economic entities from gaining so much power that they can take advantage of competitors or customers.

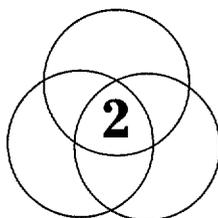
God, in his word shows us that we bear his image. He thus calls us to be image bearers by being responsible caretakers of the creation, community minded, compassionate, upright, etc. To a great degree we are to be “our brother and sister’s keeper.” Christ has reconciled us to God, to each other and to the creation. In other words, His kingdom is already manifesting itself, and this kingdom clearly encompasses the field of politics and economics. Christ also provides a beautiful historical model of ‘peaceful change’ which we should emulate and seek to apply, even in our complex global political economy.

More specifically, Christianity has a great deal to say about how we relate to other people (and especially the poor and disenfranchised). This should have a strong influence on how people should be treated and how we should structure and run our public institutions. It should also make us think about the degree to which we should focus more on developing the kind of social infrastructure that enhances relationships, rather than focusing almost entirely on economic infrastructure.

As Christians, we must isolate and promote the values that complement civil society principles. For example, we must ask how civil society principles will better allow people to do what God calls them to do, such as work hard, express their concern for others, act justly, provide for the needs of others, contribute to their communities, mold their institutions, develop their talents and seek the truth. In this sense, when we ask if civil society allows markets to function in a way that stimulates economic development, we are ultimately less concerned about markets than we are about people. So we must ask both how civil society promotes healthy values, and which values constitute the kind of “healthy soil” in which civil society can grow and thrive.

Additional Discussion Questions

- 1 Do all belief systems provide an equally solid foundation on which to build a civil society?
- 2 What values are essential for a civil society to grow and thrive?
- 3 What mistakes have Christians made in the past which have prevented them from reaching common ground with people from other religious persuasions? How does the promotion of civil society help us avoid these kinds of mistakes?
- 4 To what extent should government allow people the freedom to live out their beliefs?



THE ESSENTIAL TRIAD: BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT, AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Paul R Koch, Yvonne S Smith, and Roland G Hoksbergen

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

General Learning Objective Upon completion of this module, students should understand the relationship between sustained economic development and the healthy interaction of private business, the government, and civil society

Specific Learning Objectives Students will

- Understand that sustained economic development includes growing incomes, justice in production and distribution, and enlightened stewardship of the environment
- Be able to explain the respective roles of government and civil society in fostering sustained economic development and in holding business accountable to accepted community standards of behavior
- Understand how these roles play out in two illustrative cases the privatization of public enterprises and the promotion of microenterprise among the poor
- Explore the important role that international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) play in promoting sustained economic development in the developing world

BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION

There has been a healthy and controversial debate over the years on Biblical principles and guidelines for business and economic affairs. Hundreds of Biblical passages have been cited in this debate. To encourage your students to join this important and ongoing discussion we would simply like to list a sampling of passages relevant to business and economic affairs and suggest that you engage your class in open discussion about the relevance of these passages for the respective roles and responsibilities of business, government and civil society.

Leviticus 19 9-15, 35-36

Leviticus 25

Deuteronomy 15 1-11

Deuteronomy 16 18-20
Deuteronomy 28
Ecclesiastes 5 8-20
Isaiah 1 10-17
Isaiah 10 1-4
Amos 5
Micah 6
Luke 4 18-19
Matthew 25 31-36
Romans 13
Ephesians 4 28
II Thessalonians 3
I Timothy 6 6-10

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Based on their analysis of the Old Testament, John Mason and Kurt Schaefer have derived the following characteristics of a “just and righteous” society (See J D Mason and K C Schaefer, “The Bible, the State and the Economy A Framework for Analysis” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 20 1 (1990) 45-64)
 - a A special concern for those in need because of circumstances beyond their control
 - b Protection of the freedom and economic viability of the extended family from economic adversity or social and political arbitrariness
 - c An emphasis upon the importance of work
 - d Honoring contracts and commitments
 - e The creation of wealth - that is, the promotion of economic conditions that encourage more jobs and higher incomes

What should be the relative role of business, government and civil society in fulfilling these goals?

- 2 NIKE is one company that has been in the spotlight for its overseas operations Indonesia is one of the counties in which it employs a large number of people NIKE had been under great pressure to improve salaries and working conditions However, with the drastic changes in the Indonesian economy, as well of the economies in other Asian nations, demand is down and NIKE is closing some of its factories

What do you think will happen there and in similar situations? Will conditions improve? Will the lack of demand push salaries and conditions lower? What effect would civil society have?

- 3 There are frequent stories in the mainstream business and economics periodicals (e g The Wall Street Journal, Business Week, The Economist and Fortune) that revolve around the relationship among the business sector, the government and civil society Privatization is a common theme, as is enterprise development among the poor Find an article related to one of these themes and determine if civil society had a role in the situation or the solution

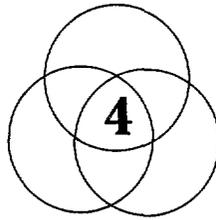
- iii) We are to care for creation the way the Creator originally intended (Rom 8 19-23)
 - iv) God's own testimony of what it means to "do good" is the giving and sustaining of life on earth (Acts 14 17)
 - d The earth is the Lord's (Ex 9 29, Deut 10 14, Neh 9 6, I Sam 2 8, Psalm 24 1-2, 47 7, 90 2, I Cor 10 26) and it is the Lord who holds us accountable for our treatment and use of all creation
 - i) We are tenants and caretakers, not owners, of God's earth, commissioned by God to be its stewards and trustees (Gen 2 15, Lev 25 23-24)
 - ii) God is transcendent to, yet involved in, creation (Prov 8 22-31)
 - iii) God's earthly immanence (Gen 1-3, Job 38 4-12, 41, 39 1-2, 5, 19-20, 26-7, Psalm 104, 146, 147)
 - (1) We are responsible for correcting our negative impacts God judged the people of Israel because of their disregard for caring about God's creation or maintaining God's justice (Isa 5 8-17)
 - (2) The future judgment of humanity will include how the earth was used and treated (Rev 11 18)
- 5 The hope offered by the Hebrew prophets is rooted in a future messianic kingdom where creation will receive the benefits of salvation (Isa 55 6-13 [compare with Isa 24 4-6], Hosea 2 16-23)
 - a This future kingdom is characterized by people and nature living together in peace and harmony (Isa 11 1-10)
 - b The hope of salvation comes from God's love for creation (John 3 16-17)
 - c We are called by God to join Christ in this redemptive process which includes all of creation (Col 1 21-23)
 - d Paul writes of a plan designed by the Creator to gather everything together in Christ, everything in heaven and on earth, and that in Christ those who have been faithful in their entrusted stewardship will receive an inheritance which includes the earth Able to be entrusted with the administration of God's intended plans and activities, the steward has been commissioned by God to responsibly work out and oversee this creation-directed plan of salvation, a plan rooted in the message and ministry of reconciliation (I Cor 4 1-2, II Cor 5 17-20, Eph 1 9-11, I Peter 4 10)
 - e Isaiah wrote of the destructive capacity of our technologies, especially those intended to be used in war when he wrote, "beat swords into plowshares" (2 4) The people of God were to take the "gadgets" of war and transform them from technologies which were environmentally and social destructive and into tools for cultivation and peace which would benefit society and creation Take elements that formerly degraded or destroyed nature and now use those technologies to carefully manage and serve natural and human processes We have no less a challenge today to perform similar activities with all the pieces of "advanced" weaponry available to make war as stewards of God's earth and people commissioned to be makers of God's peace We are called to transform the technologies that seek to control our lives into tools that can be used to help sustain life on earth
 - f All of creation continues to suffer and eagerly awaits the revealing of God's children who will work to set things right (Rom 8 19-21)

The term "stewardship" relates to the responsible administration of material provisions and resources In order to be considered a "steward of God" a person must be found to be faithful in what he or she has received as a trusteeship from the Creator (Luke 12 42-48 16 1-31) Jesus teaches about stewardship and its implications in a number of stories and parables

- The prudent manager (Luke 12 42-48)
- The story of the unjust and mismanaging steward (Luke 16 1-31)
- The Kingdom of Heaven is portrayed in the relationship between a vineyard, a landowner and laborers (Matt 20 1-16)
- Stewardship implies contentment and being fulfilled It is possible to live well with God, with each other and with the land (Psalm 37 3,29, Matt 5 5 I Tim 6 6-9)

Stewardship from a biblical perspective suggests not only the everydayness of housekeeping within our homes, communities and cities, but extends to the breadth of our larger home - the whole created earth. Human stewardship of creation indicates that we are simultaneously interdependent with and unique to the rest of creation. Like the rest of life on earth we depend upon water, light, air and nourishment. We cannot live without these elements. Likewise, everything that is biotic depends on the same sources of energy to go throughout its life cycle. In this way we are inter-related with and inter-dependent on all other life forms in the fragile ecosystems of earth. This points to the uniqueness of our place in Earth's ecosystem for we are commissioned by the Creator to care for its nurture and are entrusted to tend to its ongoing, life-giving cycles. What we call "ownership" (whether referring to property, our home or objects of significance) is really stewardship of some little bit of God's creation which has been entrusted to us by the Creator.

We have received a covenantal trusteeship from the Creator as responsible keepers of the earth to faithfully care for and participate in the complex workings of creation on behalf of its rightful land-Lord. God promises that as people fulfill this covenant by maintaining a right relationship with the Creator and creation then they will live well on and with the earth even in the largest, most densely populated and culturally heterogeneous setting, our cities. This place we call "home" is in desperate need of being managed well.



GLOBALIZATION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Mark R Amstutz, John E Charalambakis and Norman J Ewert

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

General Learning Objectives Upon completion of this module, students should develop an understanding of the relationship between civil society in global economic relations including trade, finance and governance

Specific Learning Objectives Students will

- Explore how the global community has become increasingly interdependent
- Discuss how this growing interdependence has affected the welfare of different groups in society
- Gain insights into the tensions between forces of efficiency in the marketplace and principles of human dignity
- Understand the impact of civil society on globalization
- Be able to categorize the institutions that influence transnational relations

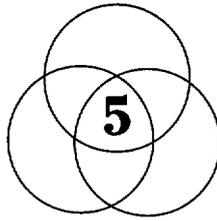
BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION

For further discussion, please see items relating to trade, economics and government relations under Modules 1 and 2

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Is there an inherent tension between globalization and civil society? Are there potential ways of reducing such tensions?
- 2 What institutional developments can best further the development of civil society?
- 3 Lawrence, referring to regulatory differences states that in “a fundamental sense, cross-border trade is valuable because the playing field is not level ” Should nations attempt to become homogenous in major social and cultural respects?

- 4 Human rights have become an important force in global events. Do you think this regime will continue to strengthen? How will human rights influence globalization in the next several decades?
- 5 Can civil society make the results of globalization more equitable? If so, how?



COMMUNITY BUILDING: A KEY TO CIVIL SOCIETY

Robert T Weaver, Ronald P Mahurin, and Donald J Isaac

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

General Learning Objective Upon completion of this module, students should understand the importance of community to sustainable development

Specific Learning Objectives Students will

- Understand the importance of social capital within the context of building community
- Explore the complexities of community building within the context of conflicting goals, conflicting values, various tensions (racial, ethnic, religious, etc) and limited resources, to suggest only a few issues
- Discuss the development and use of criteria to assess the level of social capital existing in a community
- Understand what government and business can and cannot do relative to developing social capital and building community
- Understand the role of nongovernmental organizations and other civil society actors in building community through the promotion of social capital

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTION

In the following quotation, Mangawaldı suggests that community does not exist, and that Christians can only meaningful change only at the individual level Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?

The renewal of society begins with renewal of individuals who pass from death to life from unrighteousness to righteousness It is a modern folly to assume that the key to the economic prosperity of a society depends primarily on its collective programs or cooperatives This misguided belief moves even Christians to spend their energies in trying to work exclusively for community organization or community development The fact is that very often no entity called community (intentional bonding in an organized social structure) exists in a given situation What exist as social realities are individuals, families, and castes A reform movement which seeks to go to the roots must therefore go to the individuals and families Righteousness is the personal dimension of moral law, justice is its societal expression (Vishal Mangalwadi, Truth and Social Reform, 3rd ed (London Spire, 1996) 78-79)

EXERCISES

Frogtown

This case study (page 126) puts the reader into the center of a real community in the United States which has worked hard to rebuild through grassroots empowerment. Enough information is given about the “before” and “after” Frogtown to enable students to frame an action plan to include issues such as what additional information must be obtained? How might it be obtained? How will community residents become involved in the process? How can they be motivated to do so? What will encourage them to cross racial/ethnic boundaries?

Assignment

- 1 Prepare a plan for assessing the needs of the Frogtown community. What indicators would you use to measure the needs of Frogtown? How would you determine how significant the needs are? Be specific.
- 2 Once needs are assessed, discuss methods for addressing these needs. Be sure your suggestions are placed within the context of civil society.
- 3 What specific actions should be taken to assure social capital formation within the Frogtown community?
- 4 What types of organizations might you form within the community? Describe them! What will be their purpose? Their makeup? How long will they last? Who will staff these organizations?
- 5 How would you recreate civil society in Frogtown? Develop the rudiments of a comprehensive community action plan.

The Creation of a Setting - UNIBUTZ in Space

This exercise is part case study and part role-play. While it can be done in an hour, it is best conducted over a longer period of time such as a quarter or semester. The aim of UNIBUTZ is to give people the opportunity to “build” a community, to engage in intra-team discussion as to the best way to achieve their design task, to engage in inter-team discussion as conflicts over method or goals must be resolved, and to get a “feel” for the process of give and take with its attendant frustrations. Finally, the participants can ‘see’ the community take shape as they and their teams work together to form this unique community.

The group should be divided into eight teams, with each team either choosing or being assigned one of the design tasks. The teams are then instructed to concentrate on the conceptual issues involved rather than the operational ones. In other words, the “education process” team should concentrate less on how many teachers there should be, etc., and more on the meaning of education, methods for delivery, etc. Those designing economic structures must decide if there is in fact scarcity on UNIBUTZ, and if so, what resources are scarce. If scarcity does not exist, then the economic system we use may not be appropriate. This type of thinking fits for all of the design tasks in building the community.

Teams need time to meet together to begin strategizing and forming goals. Periodically a member of each team should meet as a group to share goals and methods with each other. They then return to their groups with this new information and begin re-thinking their own design in light of what others are doing. This process continues until negotiated settlements allow for the new community to function effectively.

Community Assessment

This goal of this exercise is to get students thinking about how social capital is created and how we can tell if it exists and at what level. As students think about the question of what a model community might be like, they will undoubtedly begin to explore issues of quality of life and the values that enhance that life. Encourage them to think broadly about all facets of life and livelihood in the communities they know. What factors might be consistent among all communities? Which will differ and why?

Questions number 1 and 2 in the exercise are designed to help elicit these value responses that will help students focus on a model. [Note: When we have used this exercise in class, students have developed a matrix that lists social values and their indicators (trust, participation, pride, etc.) on one axis and various social institutions on the other (the police, education system, health system, government, etc.) This matrix then allows them to rank the levels of each value or indicator present in the community they visit.] The next step is to have students visit various “communities” and talk with several citizens to ascertain how they feel about their community (or what level of social capital presently exists). Students should be challenged to visit “communities” they are not familiar with and to try and speak with a wide range of people who can represent those communities.

Once students return with their completed matrix or other measurement tool, they will have the opportunity to note similarities and differences among their “communities.” This can provide valuable insights into how and why social capital contributes to community building and, potentially, economic development. It may also give students concrete examples of those types of civil society actors and activities that can help create greater levels of social capital, and thus help strengthen communities. The goal is not to assess the community itself, but rather to sensitize the participants to the ideas of social capital and civil society by attempting to apply a model to a community.