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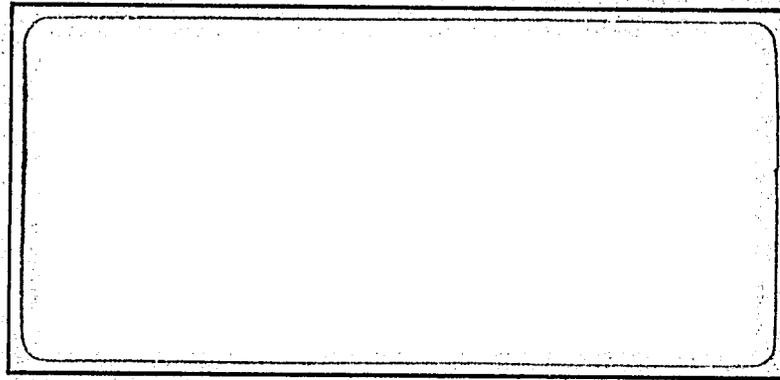
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**INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**



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SOME FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE EFFECTIVENESS  
OF LEADERS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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



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INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the extent of participation of leaders in existing community organizations and determine the roles of community leaders in selected community development projects.

A secondary purpose of this study was to determine the impact that an organized intensive leadership training program has on the development of community leaders, and to document the efforts and success of these leaders in implementing development programs into their respective communities. It was also intended to reflect the knowledge that leaders have of leadership roles, and characteristics associated with their participation in community projects and organizations.

The study was limited to six rural communities in two Louisiana parishes, namely, East and West Feliciana. The communities included in the study were selected mainly because they were predominantly rural, predominantly black, and the income of the population was generally low.

Ninety community leaders were selected to participate in the study with 15 leaders being selected from each of the six communities involved.

### Specific Objectives

The three specific objectives of the study were to:

1.) Determine the roles of community leaders in selected community development projects. 2.) Determine the extent of participation of community leaders in existing community organizations. 3.) Evaluate the effects of different training environments on the development of leaders in a leadership training program.

In the interview schedule there were two ways one could arrive at an estimate of how important a role leaders played in community projects undertaken in the several communities. In the first instance, leaders were asked to examine themselves on a scale of inactive to active in regard to each project. In the second instance, the author made an evaluation of leader activity in the several projects from their description of the things they had actually done. It was felt that both procedures were reliable indices of leader activity. To test this assumption, simple linear correlation was run between the co-variables using summary scores obtained by leaders on a two-point scale of More Active, Less Active, assigning values respectively to these scale points. The correlation analysis yielded an  $r$  value of .3221, significant at the .0062 level, indicating a positive correlation between the self-evaluation of leaders and the author's estimate of the leaders with regard to leader activity. This would imply that the use of either variable would provide similar result. The author decided to choose his own evaluation of leader activity as one of the major dimensions of leadership and labeled it role of leaders.

This study set out to test the significance of variables that influence the effectiveness of leaders in rural areas of Louisiana. Discussed below are the ten variables that were used to test their impact on leadership effectiveness.

1. Years Lived in the Community

It was observed that leaders in the communities studied had resided there continuously for an average of 37 years. However, there was no statistical significance observed in the role of leaders in community projects nor in their organization participation according to years of residence.

2. Age

The range of age for community leaders was 23 to 85 years with a mean age of 56. Older leaders tend to play a "more important" role in community projects, but this was not statistically significant. In regard to organization participation, older leaders tended to participate to a greater extent than younger leaders. In this case the difference was statistically significant.

3. Sex

Female leaders tend to play a more active role in community projects than male leaders. This difference was statistically significant in both the church improvement and voter registration projects. Female leaders also participated more in community organizations. However, the difference here was not great enough to be statistically significant.

4. Marital Status

Seventy percent of the leaders participating in this study were married, while 30 percent were either single, divorced, or widowed.

The role of leaders in community projects was not found to be statistically significant according to marital status. The same was true for organization participation according to marital status.

#### 5. Education

The range in years of schooling for leaders was two to twenty years with a mean of 8.9 years. This finding coincides with the 1970 U. S. Census of population. Leaders who played a "more important" role in community projects as well as participated to a greater extent in community organizations also tended to have more education than those leaders who played a "less important" role in community projects and organization participation. However, the differences in the education of leaders who played a "more important" and "less important" role in community projects were not great enough to be statistically significant. The positive correlation between education and organization participation was also not significant.

#### 6. Employment Status

Slightly more than one-half of the leaders in the study were employed. The relationship between employment and leadership roles in both the church improvement and voter registration projects was statistically significant in favor of those leaders who were employed. The employed leaders also participated to a greater extent in community organizations than unemployed leaders. This relationship was statistically significant.

#### 7. Income

The income among leaders in this study had a range of \$1,500 to

\$21,000 with an average of \$6,673. The correlation coefficient of .22 suggested a close positive relationship between income and organization participation. This meant that leaders with higher incomes are likely to participate more in community organizations than leaders with lower incomes.

#### 8. Contacts with Elected Officials

It was found that those leaders who played a "more important" role in community projects also had a greater number of contacts with elected officials -- police jurors and school board members. It was also found that leaders with a higher score for participation in existing community organizations also had a greater number of contacts with elected officials.

#### 9. Obligations of Leaders Toward Community Development Activities

Leaders were presented five community development activities and asked how obligated they felt to perform these activities. Leaders felt highly obligated to perform all these activities. Positive and statistically significant correlations were indicated between the leaders' feelings of obligation toward the five activities and their importance of their role in action-type community projects as well as their participation in existing community organizations. The only relationship which was statistically non-significant was the one between leaders' obligation to represent their communities before public bodies and organization participation.

#### 10. Parliamentary Procedure

A high correlation was found between leaders' competence in

parliamentary procedure and the importance of their roles in community development projects as well as their participation in existing community organizations. This means that leaders who participated more in community development projects and existing community organizations were likely to learn and utilize parliamentary procedures. These findings were found to be statistically significant.

#### Impact of Leader Training Program

In the leader training program, three different training environments were tested as to their effect on leadership development. The training environments studied were: (1) community only, (2) community and university, (half and half), and (3) university only. Leaders from one community in each parish received training in each of the three environments. It was observed that differences in importance of leader role by training environment were found to be statistically non-significant. Problems mentioned by leaders before training began had diminished greatly after training for leaders receiving training in each training environment. This would imply that location of leaders training programs, either within a community or outside of the community, is not likely to significantly influence the outcome of such educational efforts.

None of the three training environments proved superior of the other that could be observed from this study. However, there were some findings that are important.

Perhaps the most important finding was that concerning problems

mentioned by leaders before and after training program. The problems mentioned before training had greatly diminished after training regardless of the environment in which the training took place.

Leaders are now experiencing frustration because families are not taking advantage of the services that they have learned are available to improve the quality of life for families in their communities.

With regard to the church improvement project, leaders playing a "more important" role were about evenly distributed among the three training environments. Among the leaders playing a "less important" role, more of them had been trained in their own community.

In the voter registration project, larger proportions of leaders playing a "more important" role had been trained either in the community or at the community-university environment. The university only approach had the least number of leaders playing a "more important" role in the voter registration project.

The differences in the importance of the role of leaders by training environments were not found to be statistically significant. This would imply that the environment in which leader training takes place is not likely to have a significant influence on the outcome of such educational efforts.

#### Findings

The findings of this study suggest certain characteristics of community leaders that can be relied upon to play major roles in action-type community development projects and participate readily in community organizations.

The profile of community leaders who are likely to play important roles in community development projects and participate in community organizations is as follows:

1. A slightly older individual, perhaps in the fifties.
2. May be male or female according to this study, however leader tasks need to be considered in making judgements with regard to male and female abilities to handle these tasks.
3. Likely to be married.
4. Has frequent contacts with elected officials such as police juror or school board members.
5. The income is likely to be above average for the community.
6. Likely to hold membership in several community organizations and have a good attendance record at meetings by the organization.
7. Have a level of education slightly higher than the average citizen in the community.
8. Feel a sense of responsibility to perform various activities to further community development.
9. Have a good level of competency in the use of parliamentary procedures.

#### Implication of the Study Findings for Leadership Development

Effective leadership at the local level is imperative in action-type community development programs.

The suggestions listed may be useful to informal adult educators who are responsible for the job of leadership development.

1. In recruiting community leaders, change agents should expect to find most recognized leaders to be over 50 years of age and to be found in both sexes.
2. Since it was pointed out in this study that a larger percent of leaders who played a "more important" role in action-type community development projects also had higher income and higher educational level, compared to the general population, these characteristics might be considered in recruiting for such programs.
3. Selected leaders should be given training in the areas of leadership roles, services available through the various agencies and be taught to utilize both human and community resources in order to further maximize their leadership potential.
4. It is suggested that leaders who feel obligated to perform certain leadership activities be recruited for participation in community development programs in that they are likely to have frequent contacts with elected officials that may be called upon to sponsor and support financial arrangements for community development programs.

The study findings have implications for economic development in the United States and Less Developed Countries.

There are obvious implications for further research, seven of which are stated below:

1. Comparisons of the extent of community activity in similar

communities whose leaders have not received extensive training could be made with these communities where training has been given.

2. Research should be done three or more years after the leadership training in order to assess the longitudinal effect of such training.
3. Similar studies should be done in rural communities in other areas.
4. More research involving larger numbers of leaders should be made concerning the relative value of various leadership training environments.
5. Research should be done involving leadership training of cadres of young leaders and/or potential leaders and their effectiveness in community development programs.
6. Research should be done with potential community leaders that have less than average income and education for their community in order that they be motivated to improve their efforts by making special attempts to involve them in community development projects.
7. Research studies are needed to test the commonality of the role of leaders for economic development in Less Developed Countries.

This report was extracted from the published dissertation of the author entitled: "Factors Associated with the Effectiveness of Leaders in Black Rural Communities".

The terminal degree was received by Dr. Williams from the Louisiana State University in December, 1975. The Institute for Economic Development at Southern University supported a part of the graduate study of Dr. Williams. The Institute is funded by the Agency for International Development under the 211 (D) Program.

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