

## A Case Study of Area Development

Community development efforts have two main purposes:  
technological development and community activation

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*Because of the current state of our knowledge, community and area development is both an art and a science. In order to have such undertakings become more scientific, they must be undergirded by programs that include evaluation and fundamental, as well as action, research. One way of achieving the objective of more exacting measurements is to develop more precise ways of describing existing efforts. The following case study is directed to that end.*

"COMMUNITIES can be improved and their resources developed. This is the significant fact about Extension community programs of the past, and it is the governing faith behind our programs for the future."<sup>1</sup> However, as has been pointed out repeatedly, there are problems in trying to assess, with any degree of preciseness, the effectiveness of such efforts. Because of the complexities of such undertakings, the case study method offers one means of evaluating this type of program.<sup>2</sup>

This paper is an examination of the community and area development program in North Carolina based on a form of analysis suggested by Professor Melvin Tumin in a review of the literature on community development. Eight generalizing themes or dimensions (size of unit, scope of program, nature of developer, time perspective, goal orientation, welfare vs. science, concern for follow-up, and balance of external vs. local resources) provide points of view from which to examine the case in question.

<sup>1</sup> Bryant E. Kears and O. B. Copeland (eds.), *A Guide to Extension Programs for the Future* (Raleigh: Agricultural Extension Service, North Carolina State College, 1959), p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of "program" is used in a general rather than restricted sense, as developed by Irwin T. Sanders, *The Community: An Introduction to a Social System* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1958), p. 407.

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Community-development type programs have been in operation for several years in North Carolina. The Agricultural Extension Service of North Carolina State University has assumed the educational lead at county, area, and state levels. Local citizens' groups and business and industrial interests have participated extensively, providing leadership and much of the resources required for conducting such undertakings.

It can be seen that this project, like most other community development efforts, has two main purposes: technological development and community activation. Tumin says that the first "emphasizes, predominantly, the need for improvement of the material conditions of life, and measures its success in terms of certain technological gains, or by some indices of economic growth, with only secondary interest in community participation." The second, he says, "emphasizes predominantly the need for the development of concern for problem solving and a spirit of self-reliance in communities which have typically depended on others for the solution of their problems, or who have simply learned to live with their problems."<sup>3</sup>

This analysis will show that these controlling purposes can be capitalized upon so that material development strengthens the capacity of a community to solve its own problems even though the two purposes may be or may appear at times to be in conflict.

The analysis will be made first by summarizing in a brief statement each of eight themes or dimensions identified by Tumin<sup>4</sup> and then by developing the case study material for the North Carolina program.

#### SIZE OF UNIT

*Size of "community" varies from small isolated rural villages to a nation—even to a body of nations referred to as a "cultural-world" or to an underdeveloped area of the world.*

The decision was made quite early in the North Carolina program that an organizational structure is necessary at each level at which important policy is formulated and for which significant decisions must be made. Currently, units are in operation at four levels: community, county, area, and state.

An organizational structure for development was created at the community level because this is the smallest unit with any real social significance and because of the nature of the agency which would have major responsibility for organizing people and pro-

<sup>3</sup> Melvin M. Tumin, "Some Social Requirements for Effective Community Development," *Community Development Review*, III (December, 1958), 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> Tumin, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-39.

viding educational guidance. (Both of these points will be discussed more fully in another section.) In North Carolina the county is an important administrative unit and it has certain powers which are not readily available to the other units in this hierarchical structure. The county development committee or council is an important communication link between the smaller community and the committee for development at the area level.

An area is a multicounty unit and, insofar as is feasible, corresponds to the trade area for an urban center. Each county has equal representation on an area development association. Finally, each area is represented on the North Carolina Council on Community and Area Development by the association president.

It is possible that a fifth level of organizational structure will be established between (but perhaps including) the present community or rural neighborhood and the county unit. An important operational principle is involved in this consideration: the organizational structure for development must be fitted to the existing informal (substantive) and administrative units. Since at least the substantive units are constantly undergoing change, the community and area development program must be flexible.

#### SCOPE OF PROGRAM

*To some degree scope of program varies proportionally with size of unit. However, there is also some independent variability (large-scale projects are started in relatively limited areas and smaller scale projects are tried over larger reaches).*

Three aspects of program scope should be discussed very briefly. At present 12 area development associations embracing 97 of the 100 counties are functioning. About half the counties have organized development committees or councils, and such structures will be established in the remaining counties as quickly as the situation will permit. About 1200 communities are organized, and it is expected that this number will increase substantially each year.

A second aspect of the program scope relates to the people included. An effort is made to involve the total population—youth and elders, men and women, farm and nonfarm, rural and urban residents, etc. In many of the smaller communities, each family is represented on at least one action committee. At the county level, it is not unusual for several hundred people to be engaged in some part of the study or in planning.

A third aspect of program scope relates to the nature of action projects undertaken. At the community, county, and area levels, study and analysis are emphasized as a first, basic step in the development process; every effort is made to match pressing problems

and needs with available resources. However, emphasis is placed on a broad but minimum front including: improvement of the material aspects of life, with special emphasis on increasing income; more extensive and intensive social participation; and development of leadership skills and roles. Thus, the organizational structures become self-fulfilling instruments on one hand and, on the other, represent important communication channels and methods for other educational agencies.

#### NATURE OF THE DEVELOPER

*A major distinction is made between public and private agencies. Other distinctions are made between official agents of separate governments and those of government federations, between small private agencies and agencies with world-wide organization and scope, and between developers who are members of the same society and those who come from outside.*

Extension community and area development specialists function through and with the county Extension staffs in North Carolina. State specialists do not work directly with local communities except for purposes of demonstration and training. County staff members are available and are expected to work with local communities on a continuing basis. The strength of the community and county development program depends upon the promotional and educational efforts of the Extension personnel and their ability to institute a program for the people rather than an Extension program *per se*.

Since the prior training of the county Extension personnel is not in this field, a tremendous amount of time and effort of the state specialists must be devoted to motivating and training. The tools of the trade of the professional sociologist become extremely important at this point. But the fine line between Extension leadership and initiative on the one hand and professional domination on the other is very important and operational adherence to it is crucial to the success of the development program.

State specialists perform these and some entirely different roles with the area development associations, involving direct services to them. However, county personnel provide an invaluable resource, and district supervisors must supply leadership on a very broad action front. This is a new role for district people; thus, development specialists must motivate and train this middle management staff.

#### TIME PERSPECTIVE

*Time perspective varies with size of the unit and scope of the program. However, there is independent variation. There are large-scale programs of shorter duration than some small-scale programs*

*and crash programs of short but intense duration in units considerably larger than some on which prolonged programs are attempted.*

In North Carolina the importance of relating each activity or action project to a time perspective is stressed at every level. Experience has shown that there must be balance among long- and short-term projects. Given the typical American orientation of wanting to "do it quickly and get it over with" once a need for change has been developed and internalized, it is difficult—if not impossible—to maintain a rational, continuing development program.

Every scheduled action must be projected on the basis of a timetable. But this timetable is never exactly the same for two communities. Murray Ross<sup>5</sup> has said (and experience in North Carolina bears this out) that every community has a different tempo of change and each timetable for a proposed action must be geared to this tempo, especially in the very early stage of a program.

Every project must be timed in relation to the previous experience level of the community, the time perspective of the leadership, and the resources available. It is perhaps unfortunate that community projects are an either/or proposition and do not lend themselves either to gradual change or to a trial or partial basis.

Many projects must be planned on a longtime basis; but others can be developed step by step over considerable time. In such cases it is necessary to develop projects or activities designed for short duration. And many short-range projects must be developed which are specifically designed to strengthen the community as an operating group. This, of course, involves the principle of balancing activities which are task oriented with those designed to build a cohesive and mature group.

#### GOAL ORIENTATION

*Goal orientation varies from very limited and specific goals, with easily measured criteria of success or failure, to a welter of goals, ranging from a definable material product to a relatively indefinable spiritual product.*

An effort has been made in North Carolina to build certain goal orientations into the organizational structure, especially at the community and area levels. Also, as the state specialists work with the county Extension staffs, an additional effort is made to build educational goals in relation to community and county programs. It is recognized that action goals and educational agency goals are, and must be, different.

At the community level the action program is built around a

<sup>5</sup>Murray G. Ross, *Community Organization* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955), pp. 186-90.

minimum of four basic objectives, and committees are established accordingly. These are: improving the material aspects of life with special emphasis on increasing income; improving home and family life; developing youth; and improving the total community environment (community-wide projects). Leaders of each community are urged to move beyond these in relation to the results of community analysis.

Selected goal orientations are also built into the organizational structure of the area associations. Each area association has a minimum of four major divisions: agricultural development, industrial development, travel and recreation, and community development. Leaders of the area associations are urged to go beyond these insofar as the study and analysis results indicate. One association has a youth development division; another association has an education division; and still another has a division on education and cultural affairs. The counties have representatives on each area division and these leaders become the nucleus of the development associations.

Projects range from getting out the registered voters, decreasing school dropouts, erecting a community building, and breeding animals by artificial insemination, to increasing understanding of county government and the United Nations. People plan each action project, regardless of its nature, on a voluntary basis at all levels. In such planning, five goal dimensions are given consideration: (1) *time*—short-time, long-time, and intermediate goals for professional staffs and lay people; (2) *destination*—the general direction the community can move in terms of potentialities and resources; (3) *actors*—for whom and by whom the goals are being established; (4) *content*—usually expressed in terms of expected changes in behavior and/or in the material aspects of the environment; and (5) *expected changes* in knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs.

#### WELFARE VERSUS SCIENCE

*The balance between welfare and science built into the definition of a study or project can vary from almost exclusive attention to welfare to an almost equally exclusive attention to scientific research.*

The community and area development program in North Carolina is neither a welfare program with the usual connotation nor a governmental program. Rather, it is a voluntary program from top to bottom, except as may be implied by the nature of the developer—i.e., the Land-Grant University. However, the program is welfare-oriented in the sense of improving the total welfare of all the people. It has the over-all objective of increasing the level and stan-



dard of living of the people. Of equal importance are objectives for increasing the social and economic intelligence of the people, increasing their aspiration level, and improving their performance in citizenship and leadership roles.

At the same time, community and area development is both an art and a science. It is an art because of the current state of our knowledge—science is the goal for which we strive. It is this latter point to which attention is now briefly directed.

Voluntary lay leaders are urged and trained to undertake certain kinds of studies, the results of which form the guidelines for the action phase of programs. The county Extension staff is being trained to work with the community leaders in this capacity. State specialists work with the county and area groups in conducting trend and feasibility studies—an area of work which the Land-Grant University is especially well equipped to perform.

Total community and area development must be undergirded by a program including action research, evaluation, and research of a more fundamental nature. Especially needed is research in relation to motivation, the operation of a complex voluntary organization, and the changing ecology.

#### FOLLOWUP

*Some projects are defined with a definite termination anticipated; others, in a manner that their success or failure is judged, at least in part, on the basis of anticipated and hoped-for followup.*

The North Carolina program is solidly based on the premise that development is a continuous process. The principle of goal succession is of paramount importance. Specific action projects are terminated as a problem is either significantly reduced or completely eliminated. An effort is made in this program to develop action projects within related time orientation goals so that designated activities are beginning and ending on a continuous basis. Some such projects may be related to a specific condition and thus completed very quickly. For some projects there will be a succession of short- or intermediate-range goals but total goal completion may never be reached completely.

There is still another important aspect of the concern with follow-up, particularly at the community level—systematic evaluation over time. It is at this point in community development that the value orientation of competition plays a major role. Annually, each community enters a contest within an area development association.

The judging process is designed with at least three educational possibilities in mind: (1) it is based on goals in relation to material

changes, extent of participation, strength of the over-all organization, etc.; (2) it provides a fundamental educational experience for the judges; and (3) it provides a learning experience in which rural and urban leaders meet on common ground.

#### BALANCE OF RESOURCES

*There is variation in the proportion of external and local resources to be employed in the project—from total external pump priming to total dependence on internal resources.*

The North Carolina program works without external pump priming. From the smallest rural community to the State Council membership and participation are purely and totally voluntary—there is no governmental participation as such except for the professional personnel of the Land-Grant University and in response to direct requests for assistance from some unit in relation to a specific action project.

At each level of organization, the study phase is designed to reveal problems, needs, and potentialities. Within this framework, action projects are developed which will guide the group toward established goals. Part of the planning process involves an assay of the resources which are needed for goal fulfillment. The process further requires an assessment of the availability of local as well as external resources. In other words, internal and external resources are planned for and marshaled as the specific goals and projects require—within limits of availability. For many projects the only available resource is some governmental unit. In such cases, the governmental unit becomes an instrument of the voluntary development association rather than vice versa.

In the process of planning, lay leaders discover that there is a host of educational agencies available regardless of the nature of the project. Through the established system of communication, almost every resource of the Land-Grant University becomes available to the associations. Too, the State Council consists of approximately sixty individuals, representing public and private interests with either general or specialized resources available in the total development effort. Such a concerted effort has had an accumulative effect in that new resources continue to appear on the horizon. The stockpile of resources is amazingly abundant as the leader wills to change and to facilitate development in an orderly manner.