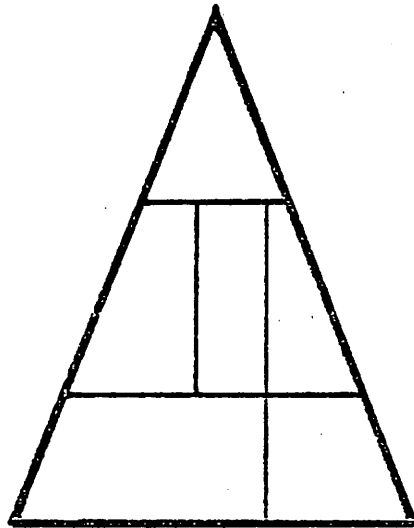HUMAN   DEVELOPMENT

IN   THE   80's

REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM
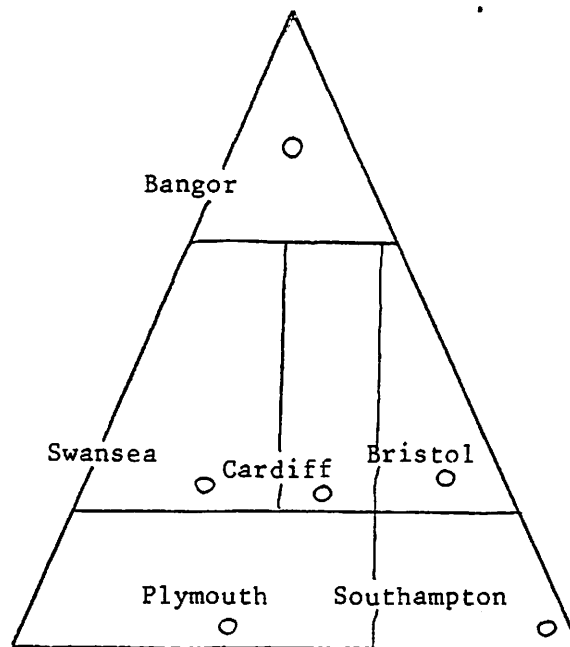
Bristol   U.K.

21-23 November, 1980

The Institute of Cultural Affairs

This is a report of the Regional Symposium that was held
in Bristol from the 21st until the 23rd of November, 1980.
The methods and overall design of the symposium were
being tried for the first time to research into its value
for use in other Regions around the world. The Region
chosen included the whole of Wales, South West England as
indicated by the grid below.

Bangor O

Swansea   O Cardiff   Bristol
            O   O   O

Plymouth   Southampton
   O   O

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE 80'S

BRISTOL REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM REPORT

The Regional Symposium on Human Development in the 80's was a weekend
research event which was held from the 21st until the 23rd of
November, 1980. Thirty-three people met in Bristol to study articles
and books, listen and talk with guest speakers and take part in work-
shops and plenary sessions. The aim of the weekend was to examine
sociological trends developing in today's society with a cross section
of people from many age groups and professions. After discussing the
trends, the group began to consider some of the issues inherent within
the trends. Then they attempted to predict the possible directions
that society might take in the future and their implications for those
concerned with Human Development within the Bristol Region.

The results of the Symposium were as follows:-

The group saw six major concerns for human development in the 80's.

1. Methods of decision making
2. Ways of encouraging self-respect
3. Relationships within local community
4. Ways to effectively structure social services
5. Finding ways to stabilise a rapidly fragmenting society
6. Informed use of resources - seeing people's involvement as a
   vital resource.

During discussion of these concerns, eleven "Necessary Directions"
were discerned as ways of beginning to deal with them.

1. Developing Roles for Senior Citizens
2. Promoting a World-wide Perspective
3. Making Use of Buildings and Other Community Resources
4. Encouraging the Renewal of Social Ethics
5. Creating Opportunities for Community Cooperation
6. Bringing New Vitality to Public Meetings
7. Supporting Responsive Representation
8. Renewing Social Mythology
9. Giving a Structure to Grassroots Communications
10. Reviewing the Principles of Mass Education
11. Ensuring the Relevance of Academic Training

THE ISSUES

The following paragraphs outline the issues that made up the concerns proposed by the Symposium.

I

Methods of Decision Making: The issues that were seen as contributing to this concern were as follows:-

- confrontation is often seen as the most effective way of making decisions.
- little or no training in ways of making decisions is available to groups or individuals.
- decision making is often seen as the exclusive right of the government and other established structures rather than something that happens on the local level.

Examples of these issues in the Bristol Region were as follows:-

- local people are often confused by or unaware of the existing avenues open to them for catalysing change.
- Many citizens are under the impression that councils make all their decisions, especially ones that concern the spending of public money, without reference to anyone else.
- regional and national decisions often seem to take priority over community preferences.
- even when public meetings are arranged, they are often poorly attended.

II

Ways of Encouraging Self-respect: The issues that were seen as contributing to this concern were as follows:-

- people often feel unimportant and insignificant in their communities and the increasing breakdown in 'community spirit' contributes to this.
- many people seem to be seeking ways to escape from reality.
- different cultures tend to protect their interests, rather than share their resources with other cultural groups.
- there is a prevailing preoccupation with consumer values.

Examples of these issues seen in the Bristol Region were as follows:-

- the desire for separate ethnic schools.
- the dramatic decline in church attendance.
- the social stigma attached to people who are not earning a wage.
- the belief that self respect depends on maintaining the status quo.

Relationships Within Local Communities: The issues that were seen as
contributing to this concern were as follows:-

- people are less attached to one particular community these
  days and therefore find it difficult to get involved in
  being responsible for the well being of their community.
- the sense of resentment that is often provoked by the changing
  attitudes to the traditional roles of the different sexes
  and ages.
- the inability of communities to involve all their residents
  in community life and therefore the feeling among individuals
  that their contribution is not valued or needed.
- physical and social isolation creating an increasing depen-
  dence on institutions to provide people with care.

Examples of these issues in the Bristol Region were as follows:-

- the absence of community spirit in large housing estates.
- the isolation of the elderly in old peoples homes.
- the increasing cutbacks in social services.
- the feeling among many people that the government should
  provide all services.

Ways to Effectively Structure the Social Services: The issues that
were seen as contributing to this concern were as follows:-

- the growing demand by local people for a say in how the
  government organise the social services.
- the increasing demands of different minority groups.
- the realisation that existing social services are ill
  equipped to cope with necessary plans and priorities.

Examples of these issues in the Bristol Region were as follows:-

- the tendency for different elements of a community to be
  represented or catered for as opposed to the whole community.
- the trend towards centralisation of social services, despite
  the increasing diversity of particular communities, and
  their needs.
- the trend towards specialisation within the social services,
  making access to the correct department difficult.
- the feeling that only by knowing someone within a particular
  department can one get a response from that department.

Finding Ways to Stabilise a Rapidly Fragmenting Society: The issues
that were seen as contributing to this concern were as follows:-

- the increasing crime rate.
- the increase in the use of violence.
- the increase in social unrest.

Examples of these issues seen in the Bristol Region were as follows:-

- the unrest in multicultural areas of the city.
- the informal social consent to public crimes, such as tax evasion.
- concern for the individual or family, taking priority over concern for society as a whole.
- a trend towards drug dependency.

Informed Use of Resources - Seeing People's Involvement as a Vital
Resource: The issues that were seen as contributing to this concern
were as follows:-

- the lack of a common plan restricts the opportunity for people to care for their environment.
- the growing trend for enforced early retirement.
- the frustration of young people who see few ways to be creatively engaged in society.

Examples of these issues seen in the Bristol Region were as follows:-

- some people subscribe to the myth that though Welsh are good workers, they do not make good managers.
- the trend towards earlier retirement age.
- the growing numbers of youth unemployed and unoccupied.

THE NECESSARY DIRECTIONS

1. Developing Roles for Senior Citizens

Human development in the eighties requires creative schemes to use
'elders' skills. Suggested proposals include:-

      a. Regional elders meetings.
      b. Influencing government services.
      c. Systematic campaigns that publicize activities.

2. Promoting a World-wide Perspective

Human development in the eighties requires people who understand the
broader (global) significance of their local actions in community service.
Suggested proposals include:-

      a. Organising visits to different nations and cultures.
      b. Developing an international volunteer service programme.
      c. Coordinating scholarships for educational travel and service.
      d. Projects linking the developed and developing world - e.g.
         groups, schools and towns.

3. Making Use of Buildings and Other Community Resources

Human development in the eighties requires a new spirit of creative
involvement in our communities to make use of buildings and other commun-
ity resources. Suggested proposals include:-

      a. Using school buildings at night.
      b. Broadening activities in church buildings.
      c. Using petitions to expand use of public spaces. e.g. parks and
         libraries.
      d. Service schemes that systematically involve all ages.

4. Encouraging the Renewal of Social Ethics

Human development in the eighties requires   opportunities for people
to reflect upon the meaning of their role in the social process. Suggested
proposals include:-

      a. Seminars that explore the significance of various aspects of
         community life.
      b. Media features spotlighting local initiatives.
      c. Research projects and forums to recover local history.

5. Creating Opportunities for Community Cooperation

Human development in the eighties requires large scale community cooperative
ventures. Suggested proposals include:-

      a. Regular street meetings.
      b. Rotation of leadership at street meeting level.
      c. Community Forums that involve everybody in the analysis of
         problems, the building of plans and the implementation of work
         projects.

6. Bringing New Vitality to Public Meetings

Human development in the eighties requires new forms of public meetings that elicit broad local creativity.
Suggested proposals include:-

a. Using consensus-building workshop methods rather than a
   debating style in policy making meetings.
b. Involving representatives from all sectors of the community
   in the creation of local plans.
c. Establishing an informal 'coalition' of private, public,
   volunteer, academic and religious organisations committed to
   development.

7. Supporting Responsive Representation

Human development in the eighties requires enthusiastic interchange between neighbourhood groups and elected leadership. Suggested proposals include:-

a. Inviting elected councillors to report to and participate in
   street group meetings.
b. Special Issue Forums.
c. Newsletter distribution through street group representatives.

8. Renewing Social Mythology

Human development in the eighties requires the reawakening of profound local culture. Suggested proposals include:-

a. Local festivals.
b. Story and song writing.
c. Heritage exhibitions at the local community centre.

9. Giving a Structure to Grassroots Communications

Human development in the eighties requires access of local groups to the media. Suggested proposals include:-

a. Exchange of local news (community to community) across the world.
b. Contributing local news items to local and national press.
c. Grassroots news service in every nation.

10. Reviewing the Principles of Mass Education

Human development in the eighties requires universal guidelines for appropriate education. Suggested proposals include:-

a. Research into universal values in education.
b. Designing curriculum constructs that hold universal values and
   that are relevant to local needs.
c. Holding seminars with teachers that assess and share new educa-
   tional methods.

11. Ensuring the Relevance of Academic Training

Human development in the eighties requires an academic training for youth involving practical experience of social skills needed to participate in society. Suggested proposals include:-

    a. Experience in understanding requirements of common bureaucratic procedures.
    b. Participating in local community meetings.
    c. Vocational guidance programmes that include opportunities for job experience.

| BRISTOL REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM | | NECESSARY DIRECTIONS | | NOVEMBER 1980 |
INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS				
EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY ROLES	EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES	REVITALISATION OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	RENEWAL OF COMMUNITY SYMBOLS	RENEWAL OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION
ENCOURAGING A RENEWAL OF SOCIAL ETHICS	MAKING USE OF BUILDINGS AND OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES	CREATING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY COOPERATION	RENEWING THE SOCIAL MYTHOLOGY	REVIEWING THE PRINCIPLES OF MASS EDUCATION
		BRINGING NEW VITALITY TO PUBLIC MEETINGS		
PROMOTING A WORLD-WIDE PERSPECTIVE	DEVELOPING ROLES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS	ENABLING A RESPONSIVE REPRESENTATION	GIVING A STRUCTURE TO GRASSROOTS COMMUNICATION	ENSURING THE RELEVANCE OF ACADEMIC TRAINING