

LOCAL COMMUNITIES GLOBAL CHANGE

A Conference Report

15-24 May 1981

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INTRODUCTION

Work in the United Kingdom by the Institute of Cultural Affairs has its roots in the late 60's and early 70's, when there was much innovative thinking among church people, teachers and community workers in the fields of community development and practical education. Formally established in 1976 as a Registered Charitable Trust, the Institute of Cultural Affairs has been involved in one-day Community Forums across the United Kingdom aimed at enabling local residents to reach consensus as to initiatives they might take in their own communities. In addition to the development of consensus-based workshop methods, the Institute maintains strong links with third world projects and has been actively involved in enlisting volunteers and community-wide interest in third world projects. Over the past four years, as a direct result of these events and the adaptation of ICA methods, the Institute has worked in association with such groups as the Administrative Staff College in Henley-on-Thames and many locally based organisations. For four years, beginning in 1976, staff of the Institute lived in the Isle of dogs in East London where they participated with residents in a locallybased development project.

The Institute of Cultural Affairs is a research, training and demonstration group concerned with the human factor in world development. ICA programmes seek to address the underlying causes of social problems and allow people to participate more effectively in their local communities. The methods used, help people realise that they can be instrumental in bringing about positive social and economic change in their neighborhood or work place. The Institute is an informal federation of nationally autonomous, non-profit-making organisations working in 32 nations. Its staff is self-supporting. The programmes of the Institute are supported by foundations, businesses, church and service organisations, and concerned individuals. Some specific programmes are supported by government agencies.

What follows are the results of the Regional Consultation, held in May, 1981. Section One, The Symposium, describes the event and highlights the products of the first two days. Section Two, The Practicum, gives a description of the next five days. Section Three, The Assembly, describes the process of the final weekend and possible strategies and initiating steps of ICA activity over the next four years.

THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION

The Regional Consultation was a ten day conference in three parts which focused on the question, "What is required for effective implementation of human development in the coming decade?". The Consultation began with The Symposium which involved participants from the public, private and voluntary sectors for two days in discerning the issues and mandates facing society today. During The Practicum which was the middle five three days of the Consultation, teams of participants travelled to several of the Region's cities and towns holding interviews and visiting with people about their concerns for the future. The final two days, The Assembly, were spent interpreting the data from the Symposium and Practicum and using this data to give directions to future work.

At The Symposium in London, many people gathered to look at the trends facing society, name the issues blocking them and state the mandates for moving through these issues into future directions. The Symposium included speakers, presentations on local and global developmental issues, workshops and plenary meetings. It concluded with a reflection on direct implications for those concerned with human development in the '80's.

The Practicum involved seven teams of people travelling across South East England to examine the work of the Symposium in light of what was actually happening in communities. By visiting people in urban and rural communities teams found practical illustrations of the global issues. Interviews with government officials, business people and community residents provided a broad perspective for naming the new directions open to the local residents.

The Assembly gathered to hear reports of the teams and reflect on the implications for action. Out of the new directions recommended, a plan of strategic action for the next four years was formulated. In addition, the Assembly named the practical ways this strategy could be implemented across the London Region. The decisions of the Assembly are held in the fow your Strategic Components and the Six Month Plan Charts.

SECTION ONE: THE GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM

On the 15th and 16th of May, 1981, The Global Symposium on Human Development in the 1980's began. During these two days participants engaged in dialogue with a panel representing various sectors of society, and met in a series of workshops and plenary sessions. They examined the times, the issues, the mandates, and the implications facing those concerned with human development.

The Symposium was in four sessions commencing on Friday morning and ending Saturday afternoon. The opening session began with a workshop which discerned the major trends by corporately recreating the journey of events of the 20th century. Over lunch, a directed conversation explored the experiences of several local communities in development. The second session listed current issues facing the world today and grouped these issues into eight arenas. The teams analysed the data in each arena and named the major issue and its related issues in short paragraphs. In the third session, on Saturday morning, the group listed actions required to deal with these issues and organised them into action arenas. These in turn were reviewed by teams to discern the historical mandates (perceived necessary directions) for each area, sentences were then written on each mandate. Over lunch on Saturday, a panel representing the private, public and voluntary sectors of society spoke on the issues and local innovations in development. The final session on Saturday afternoon was a workshop on the implications of these mandates for London and the South East.

In looking at the past events and future possibilities, the Symposium discerned eight issue arenas of social disrelation. These issues are described on the following pages:

UNDERLYING ISSUES

1. MAJOR SOCIAL DISRELATIONSHIPS

In the arena of social structures, the major issue is the inadequacy of social structures and skills to enable diverse human beings to grow as individuals and relate creatively to each other. Related issues are the need to invent new structures and skills, discerning how to preserve what works and change that which is no longer appropriate, and the failure of education to function as a key to social cohesion in today's world. This issue is illustrated in London and the South East by

- 1. Preschool age care lagging behind the demand from working women for such structures,
- 2. Housing estates that have limited community life based on reaction or protest petitions as opposed to an active initiative for change,
- Schools (and the present generation of teachers) not being well equipped for preparing children for a world where employment is increasingly difficult,
- 4. The growth of conflict between groups in areas of high unemployment, e.g. the National Front marching in immigrant areas.

2. UNEQUAL DECISION-MAKING ACCESS

In the arena of violence and breakdown, the major issue is unequal access to decision-making within societies. Related issues are powerlessness leading to violent solutions, the isolation of minorities, the crumbling welfare system, and unstable employment. This issue is illustrated in London and the South East by

- 1. Social violence (e.g. Brixton riots) when police policies and communty mores clash head on,
- 2. The struggle to find and enable local leadership in a neighbourhood with few people educated beyond 4th and 5th Form,
- 3. Minorities having difficulty in functioning fully in local community life because of language and cultural barriers,
- 4. Intermediate treatment centres set up to cope with increasing numbers of youth on probation.

3. UNCLEAR CULTURAL PURPOSE

In the arena of alienation, the major issue is the lack of definition of social goals and personal aims. Related issues are the fragmented involvement of youth in society, the cultural isolation of minorities, no clear social purpose beyond basic needs, and limited options for participating in decision-making. This is illustrated in London and the South East by

3. Unclear Cultural Purpose (Cont'd) Youth cynical about society and seeing no way of getting their ideas about local change into practice, Vandalism, racist graffiti and broken windows as symtoms of frustration and disengagement, lack of money and authorisation,

Neighbourhood communities not able to compete with commercial firms for use of space or facilities in local communities because of a

People operating out of images of failure and despondency because of a much publicised national climate of economic decline.

UNSTABLE ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION

In the arena of global economic wellbeing, the major issue is unequal distribution of resources. Related issues are the North/South conflict, inappropriate cultural transfers, the rural-urban imbalance, and inflation and recession. This is illustrated in London and the South East by

A disproportionate amount of money being allocated for shopping centres over against critical needs for housing,

The decline in rural skills as growth of the commuter belts demand urban skills and services,

3. High paying jobs having pay rises more in line with the rate of inflation while some lower paid jobs receive much lower increases,

4. Charitable outreach to third world needs, traditionally oriented toward relief and dependency rather than towards training and local initiatives.

5. ILL-MANAGED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the arena of global economic well-being, the major issue is the absence of structures that ensure balanced economic management and control. Related issues are socially irresponsible production of services, the tension and between the utilisation of manpower and the development of technology, the uncontrolled activity of multinational corporations, and the vested interests of the arms industry. This issue is illustrated in London and the South East by

- 1. Public concern over the cruise missiles proposed near Newbury,
- Outdated equipment in car manufacturing plants,

3. People with university degrees driving taxis and working as labourers as no other employment is available to them,

Shops closing early when the community continues to require their 4. services.

6. UNDER-VALUED CULTURAL HERITAGES

In the arena of cultural commonality and communal symbols, the major issue is the lack of skill in integrating individual heritages and values with the participation in institutions and structures of a multi-heritage nation. Related issues are the difficulty in creating global structures because global consciousness is considered unrealistic, the absence of stories of the global person, the lack of publicity about successful multi-cultural communities, and an over-emphasis on the industrialised notion that productivity equals self-worth. This is illustrated in London and the South East by

- 1. Social clubs that follow ethnic lines and do not mix,
- 2. Incomplete displays in museums depicting the heritage of newer British citizens,
- 3. A group that was set up to promote Third World awareness shifting its concern to strictly local issues,
- 4. The way in which racial disturbance and unrest dominate the media.

7. STATIC EDUCATION SYSTEMS

In the arena of communal wisdom, the major issue is the inadequacy of educational systems to cope with technological progress and new social needs. Related issues are mass unemployment of school leavers, social isolation, and the difficulty of keeping up with technological progress even through continued education programmes. This is illustrated in London and the South East by

- 1. The over-emphasis on the basics and 'the three R's' in the school curriculum.
- 2. The use of teaching methods and subjects that emphasise theory as opposed to skills,
- 3. The increase in the divorce rate,
- 4. The difficulty in relatinghigh school curriculum to the needs of youth facing unemployment.

8. INEFFECTIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEMOCRACY

In the arena of the relationship between government and the governed, the major issue is the absence of effective local democratic structures. Related issues are the need for more open government, the need for greater laws at the local level, and the expression of political frustration through violence. This issue is illustrated in London and the South East by

- 1. Government areas that are too large for people to relate to,
- 2. Citizen involvement in planning processes that is largely limited to talk-back sessions to previously made plans,
- 3. The recurrence of petty crime growing out of boredom,
- 4. The difficulty of involving transient populations in local decision-making structures.

THE HISTORICAL MANDATES

VIABLE HUMAN TECHNOLOGY

Human development in the '80's requires that industry serve rather than direct human values. This could be implemented by

- 1. cooperatives in industry
- 2. decentralisation
- 3. re-training in relevant current skills
- 4. priority funding for small industry
- 5. creating awareness of alternatives for sources of energy, manufacturing processes and resource exploitation.

ARMAMENT RESOURCE REDISTRIBUTION

Human development in the '80's requires a reallocation of resources now utilised in armaments industries to socially useful products. This could be implemented by

- 1. extending SALT multinationally
- 2. lobbying for the Brandt Commission Report recommendations
- 3. local pressure for more resources
- 4. peace education
- 5. international monitoring of weapon development.

LIFE TIME EDUCATION

Human development in the '80's requires new concepts of education, including content, methods and forms. This could be implemented by

- 1. education for cooperative, creative and adaptive living
- 2. emphasis on experience-based learning, especially across cultures
- 3. education and use of media on global and minority issues
- 4. removing stereotypes from media portrayals
- 5. respect given to people over property.

HEALTHY LIFE STYLES

Human development in the '80's requires a major focus on effective disease prevention. This could be implemented by

- 1. health education
- 2. decentralisation of food production
- 3. local diversification of food production
- 4. alternatives to commercial food distribution networks
- 5. increasing international expenditure on disease eradication research.

EQUITABLE RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Human development in the '80's requires the invention of structures which promote equitable resource allocation. This could be implemented by

- 1. an internationally consensed statement of basic human rights
- 2. development of an international taxation system
- 3. setting directives on allocation of the world's resouces
- 4. promoting resource-efficient life styles
- 5. local forums informing regional groups on their relevant resources available for the world needs.

MATERIAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Human development in the '80's requires responsible development, distribution and use of material resources. This could be done by

- 1. education programmes
- 2. developing appropriate new technologies
- 3. expanding structures for community accountability for the use of resources.

GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE AWARENESS

Human development in the '80's requires raising the general awareness of global interdependence. This could be implemented by

- 1. new international monetary and trade mechanisms
- 2. international currency
- 3. routing all aid through independent bodies
- 4. strengthening the United Nations' effectiveness
- 5. removing the U.N. Security Council veto
- 6. promoting a world passport and citizenship.

LOCAL GROUP PARTICIPATION

Human development in the '80's requires that individuals and groups realise their own potential and take their place in the decision-making process of their communities. This could be implemented by

- 1. creating alternatives to party political mandates
- 2. changing traditional attitudes and stereotypes
- 3. utilising all human resources
- 4. developing participatory methods and structures at all decision-making levels
- 5. education for participation in decision-making
- 6. evolving new concepts of leadership.

MANDATES - REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

MANDATE: VIABLE HUMAN TECHNOLOGY

A creative step toward this mandate would be a nation-wide series of forums sharing documented samples of industrial experiments in serving society and considering the future of industry in the U.K. Implications for the sectors would be:

<u>Public</u>: government gives television time to cover industrial services to society.

Private: one page social audits or public accountability from companies.

Voluntary: using networks to formulate and organise forums.

Local Communities: participants finance and support the forums through their local councils and neighbourhood business firms.

MANDATE: ARMAMENT RESOURCE REDISTRIBUTION

A creative step toward this mandate would be effective disarmament campaigning. Implications for the sectors would be:-

<u>Public</u>: reducing armed forces and defence ministries while expanding overseas and local development.

Private: arms factories producing and developing new, relevant and socially useful products.

Voluntary: campaign for creation of local development projects for alternative uses of Defence budget.

Local Communities: peace education in schools and backing for campaigns from local media.

MANDATE: LIFE TIME EDUCATION

A creative step toward this mandate would be exemplary non-institutional multi-age group education system for 6th Form and adults within a borough. Implications for the sectors would be:-

<u>Public</u>: offer education grants in place of dole and press for a responsible education role of media.

Private: union and management thinking through employment of people on half time rather than a few totally redundant people.

<u>Voluntary</u>: create combined classes for the adults on half time and youth in experimental 6th Form with a syllabus stressing functional education and effective life skills.

Local Communities: invite isolated persons to participate in the alternate schools and later engage them in community service.

MANDATE: HEALTHY LIFE STYLES

A creative step toward this mandate would be formation of a network of local comprehensive health centres. Implications for the sectors would be:-

Public: provide or adapt and staff suitable premises.

Private: provide professional staffs, e.g. medical staffs.

Voluntary: train helpers and provide support services.

Local Communities: additional premises available for use by local

groups, e.g. residents' associations.

MANDATE: EQUITABLE RESOURCE ALLOCATION

A creative step toward this mandate would be education of the public in promoting a consensus to share the world's resources. Implications for the sectors would be:-

Public: restructuring of public spending.

Private: supporting small business enterprises that will use local resources.

Voluntary: collaboration of similar services within local communities.

Local Communities: breakdown of special interest groups and move toward common activity.

MANDATE: MATERIAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

A creative step toward this mandate would be launching a resource and materials recycling project. Implications for the sectors would be:-

<u>Public</u>: effectively enable a consensus to emerge across the sectors to conserve resources.

Private: cooperation of industries to improve quality of goods marketed.

Voluntary: maintain bottle, plastic and paper banks, and coordinate and publish the results.

Local Communities: conduct an advertising campaign, including leaflets, media and local newspapers, and competitions among communities.

MANDATE: GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE AWARENESS

A creative step toward this mandate would be the creation of positive programmes outside party politics to facilitate education for world citizenship. Implications for the sectors would be:-

Public: education on all aspects of global interdependence in schools and higher education institutions, including encouragement to participate in development projects and link schemes.

Private: multinational, national and local industries and businesses

to participate in and help fund education programmes.

Voluntary: involvement in community education or action projects.

Local Communities: growth in awareness and consequent involvement in

education projects and local action schemes.

MANDATE: LOCAL GROUP PARTICIPATION

A creative step toward this mandate would be regular community/social audits. Implications for the sectors would be:-

Public: more open and balanced government (proportional representation).

Private: common ownership of smaller units.

Voluntary: providing a mechanism for ensuring appropriate account-

ability.

Local Communities: greater involvement in and responsibility for

decision-making.

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SECTION II: THE RESEARCH PRACTICUM

From the 18th to the 22nd of May, 1981, seven teams worked in London and South East England in the Practicum portion of the Regional Consultation. These teams were hosted by families in Reading, Maldon, Fyfield, Tunbridge Wells, Yateley and Stratford. They visited some 100 people in 29 communities in London and the South East of England. Research interviews were conducted with young and old in rural, suburban and urban settings in a random sampling of English communities. Those interviewed included engineers, town planning architects, the Religious, youth, youth workers, cafe proprietors, retired people, businessmen, volunteer agency personnel, local government employees, housewives, a settlement director, local councilmen, long-term community residents, community association officers, university students and social workers.

Eighteen people were involved as researchers either full or part time. A sampling of the most frequently mentioned concerns are listed on the following pages.

PRACTICUM SUMMARY REPORT

Chief concerns expressed by those interviewed in London proper were the involvement of middle and large business firms in the support of small local enterprises and in the life of the community as a whole; cooperation rather than competition between agencies; the status of women in employment and the multiple factors that affect it; increasing the awareness of landlords and councils as to the need of housing for youth; intermediate treatment for offenders; training for long-term unemployed adults; the involvement of students in the serious issues of the larger society; increasing individual and national funds for international aid; people's increasing tolerance of crime, and the increasing tensions and incidents arising from a multi-cultural community.

The team visiting in Canterbury heard many of the same concerns expressed. Some of the more frequently mentioned ones were the dislocation of youth, the lack of industry coming into the area with resultant unemployment, the fact that older communities are losing their sense of identity in the suburban spread, over dependency on one particular industry (tourism), and the isolation of retired people in housing on outskirts of towns.

In the Brighton area, the chief concerns expressed by those interviewed were access to and improvement of youth facilities and meeting places, the inadequacy of public transport, the crippling effect of divorce and increase of divorce rate, shift work, the intrusion of the gypsy life-style on established communities, population rapidly outgrowing the available community services, matching skilled personnel with job openings, and the utilisation of school facilities for other community events.

Chief concerns expressed by those interviewed in the Ipswich area were educational inflexibilities, pollution, industrial accident dangers, youth unemployment, slow-down in economic growth, child neglect, immigration policies and vandalism.

In the Luton area the main concerns expressed by those interviewed were the sterility of planned environments, the absence of a strong sense of community life, isolation in the urban tenements, the break-up of old family traditions, economic uncertainty and marriage breakdowns.

Finally in the Oxford area those interviewed were concerned about the engagement of youth who are unemployed, care and engagement for the elderly, shortage of housing, unemployment, the need for new industries, the isolation of mothers with young children, and the equipping of those with less formal education to be community leaders.

SECTION III: THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

From 22nd to 24th May, 1981, participants gathered for the third part of the Consultation, The Assembly. The seven research teams reconvened in London to interpret the data from the first two parts of the Conference. The intent of the Assembly was two-fold:- 1) to establish the broad outline of the four year thrust of the ICA in London and South East and 2) to determine appropriate ways for the ICA to be of service in local development.

The work of the Assembly was accomplished through four workshops:-1) reporting activities of the Practicum research teams, 2) discerning the strategic components over the next four years, 3) establishing the intent of each component, 4) creating possible directions for the first six months. Each research team discerned the broad steps needed in their respective geographic area. These steps were organised into similar clusters to discern the strategic components for the four years. The components were then incorporated into a chart to hold the broad outlines of the next four years. Teams named the intent of each component plus the required activities to achieve the intent. The process for determining the intent and activities utilised both practical analysis and intuitive creativity. Points of advantage and disadvantage, social need, and the historical mandates were discussed. Then these components were described and written in paragraph form by teams. Finally, a workshop on the first six months of the plan developed practical steps for the staff in London. VOUE

The results of the Assembly are in two parts: one chart holds a broad outline of directions for the next four years. The 4-year outline calls for a movement network interchange, ethical stance impact, a training function, regular contextual courses, a 4-sector demonstration community effort, company demonstrations, youth programme demonstrations, functional programme probes, inclusive volunteer programme, new depth advocacy and voluntary sector involvement.

A second chart depicts the steps to be initiated over the next six months. They fall in nine arenas of action: strategic house relocation, pilot youth training, local group interchange, volunteer network cooperation, initiate business consultation, India Exposition support, metro coverage systems, expansion of network contact and materials and seminar constructs.

FOUR YEAR STRATEGIC COMPONENTS

MOVEMENTAL NETWORK

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION	ESTABLISHED PROGRAMMES	INTENSIVE DEMONSTRATION	METHODS OUTREACH	EXTENSIVE PERMEATION
MOVEMENT NETWORK INTERCHANGE - Regular Councils - Circuit Rhythm - Movement Training - Information Inter- change	TRAINING FUNCTION - Training Centre - Course Marketing - Conference Consultation - Training Consultant Job	4 - SECTOR DEMO COMMUNITY - Borough Frame - 4 Sector Cadre - Specific Service Focus - Pluriform Demonstrat'n COMPANY DEMONSTRATION LENS - Company LENS break-	FUNCTIONAL PROGRAMME PROBES Training w/ Statutory Sector Groups Seminars w/ Special Group Needs Forums on Special Issues Other Training Possibilities	NEW DEPTH ADVOCACY - Political & Labour Groups - Aristocracy - Private Sector & Business - IERR Committee & Funding
ETHICAL STANCE IMPACT - Myth & Song Creation - Presentations - Expanding Contacts & Outlets - Media Materials & Publications	REGULAR CONTEXTUAL COURSES - Religious Order Seminars - House Orientation - Continuing Involvement Options - Service Forums	open - Workers Coop LENS - Ongoing Training Consultancy - 1 Company LENS Focus YOUTH ROLES DEMONSTRAT'N - Train Youth Leadership - Youth Events - Youth Micro Projects - Other Action Probes	- Follow up with	VOLUNTARY SECTOR INVOLVEMENT - Links with Community Project Workers - Training for Voluntary Sector - Demonstration in Community Education - Secure Appropriate Facility

THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

THE NEXT SIX MONTHS						
		ARY FOUR YEAR FOUNDAT				
PROFILE	INTENSIVE	PRESENT .	EXPANSIVE	SUPPORT		
	PILOT YOUTH STRATEGIC HOUSE	VOLUNTEER NETWORK .: COOPERATION				
		INITIATE BUSINESS CONSULTATION		MATERIALS SEMINAR CONSTRUCTS		
	LOCAL					
	INTERCH AN GE	INDIA EXPOSITION SUPPORT				