

Sharing Approaches That Work

To Encourage Community Initiatives Across the U.S.A.

This is a commemorative booklet which celebrates the U.S.A.'s participation in the International Exposition of Rural Development during Phase I of the three phased project. It includes a summary of the activities and events that have taken place from January 1982 to December 1983 across the U.S.A.

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Sharing Approaches That Work

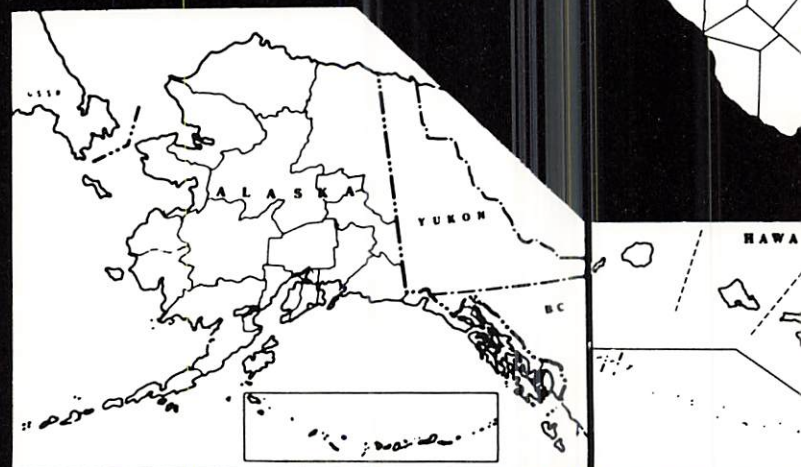
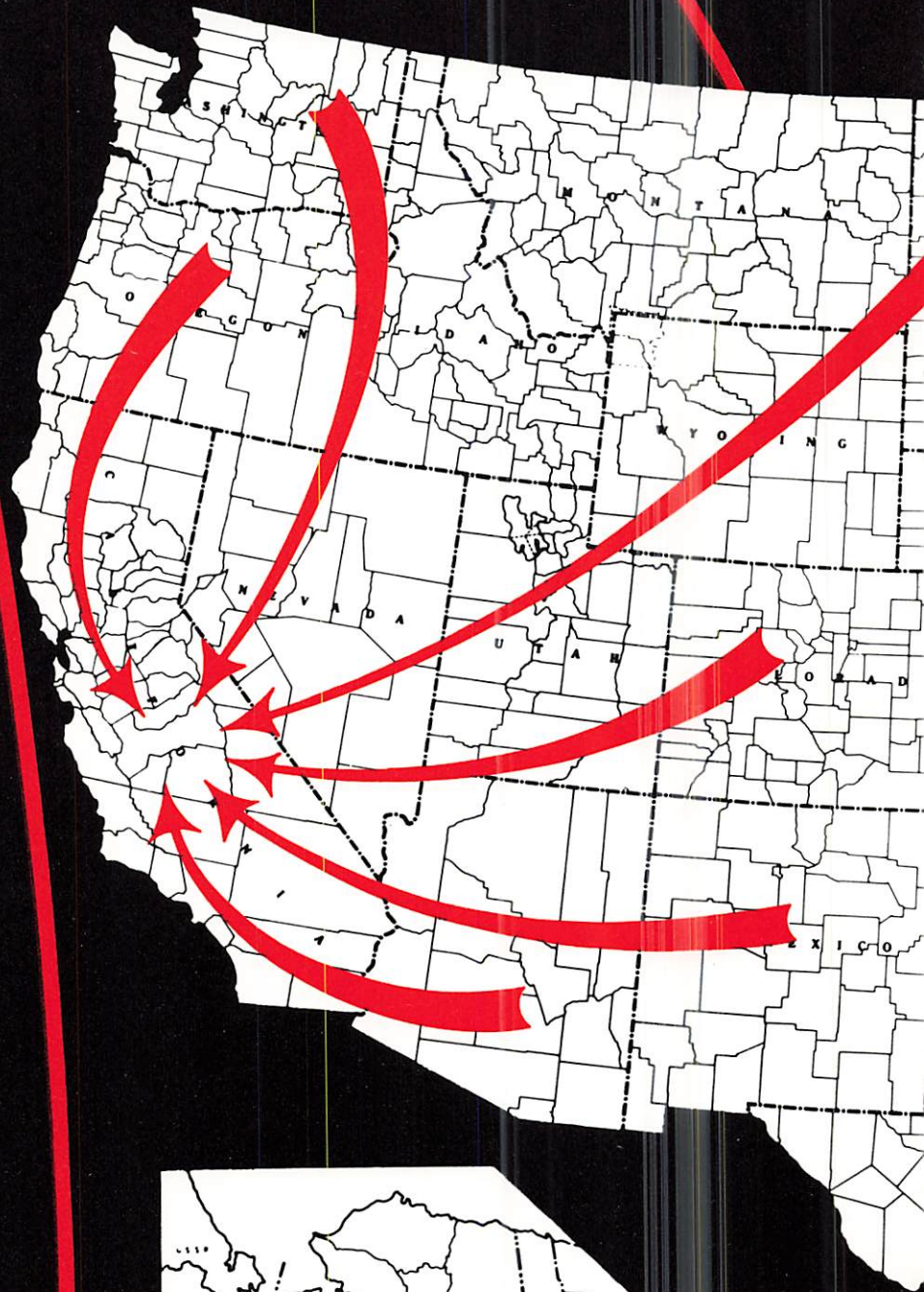
Introduction

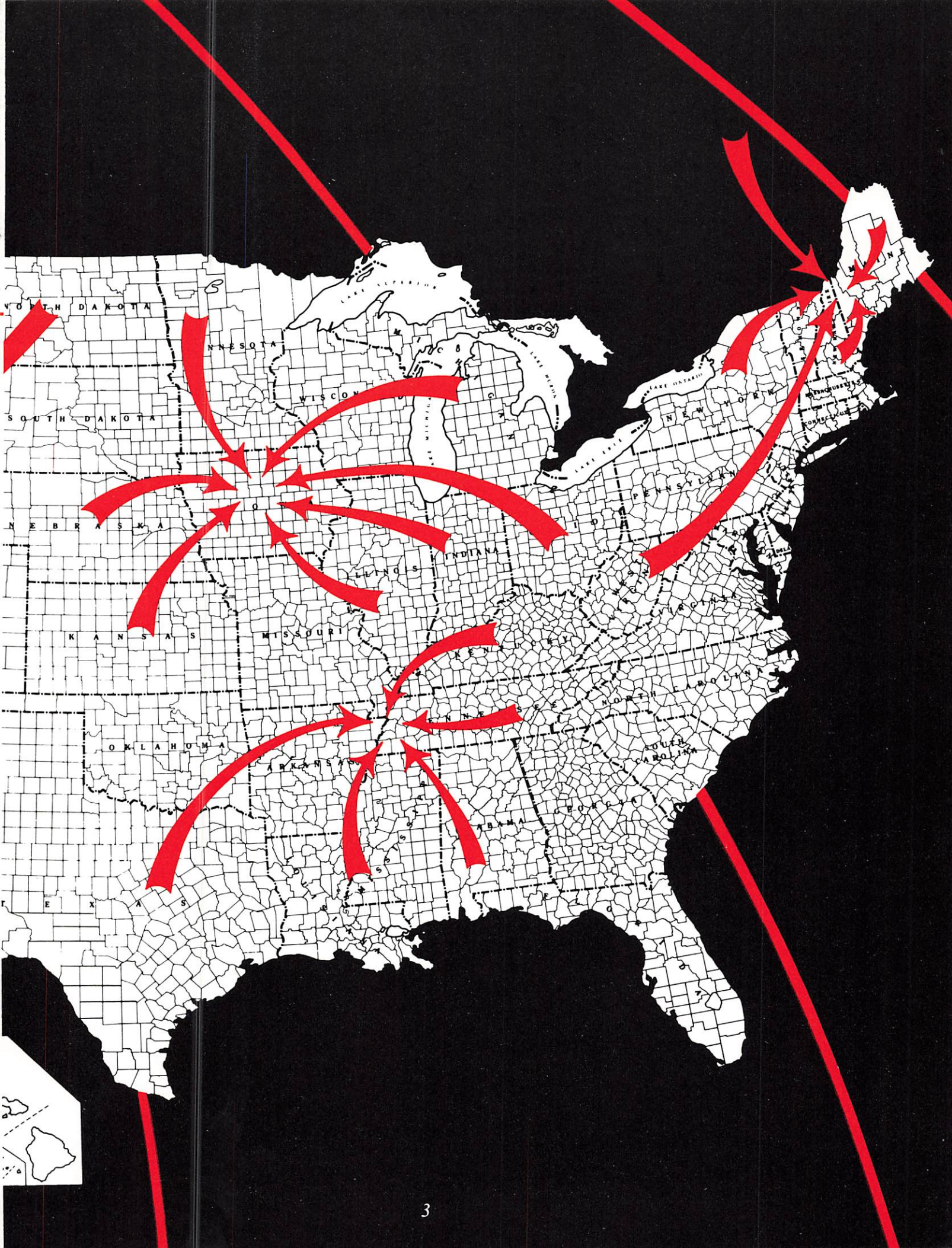
For years social and economic development projects have occupied the time, energy and passion of many Americans. But project workers often feel isolated and frustrated by the complexities of the issues they struggle to solve. Volunteers who comprise a large percentage of the staff have no prior experience to draw upon for guidance or to sustain their motivation. Because of project spread, breakthroughs in local development do not receive much attention. This tends to reinforce the feelings of isolation. As more people become aware that local solutions depend on local initiative, an antidote is required for the experience of isolation and frustration.

Moreover, breakdowns are often highlighted, which tends to underscore the feelings of frustration and creates the sense that every project is fated to invent its own wheels to roll forward or grind to a halt. A practical means for the sharing of breakthroughs is required in order to catalyze and sustain effective development efforts and release more energy for approaches that work.

In response to these needs the International Exposition of Rural Development (IERD) was conceived with the theme of Sharing Approaches That Work. . . The process and purpose of the Exposition has begun to blossom around the globe as local, regional, national and international exchanges have been organized by the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), endorsed by prominent individuals and co-sponsored by various organizations and institutions.

The following pages highlight the activities in the United States through December 1983. The report begins with a description of the three year concept for "Sharing Approaches That Work" and ends with acknowledgements to the many who are making it possible.





INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



The Three Phases

The International Exposition of Rural Development (IERD) is a three year program for sharing approaches that have worked in local development. The program has three phases. In Phase I, local community leadership in 76 nations began documenting how they have improved the quality of day to day living in their communities, particularly among the rural poor. Examples included projects in the fields of agriculture, sanitation, local economic development, housing, nutrition, health and others. People from local communities in many nations met regionally, exchanged their successes in one to three day events called Rural Development Symposia. In these symposia the most innovative approaches were selected for further documentaiton and possible selection by National Steering Committees to participate in Phase II.

Phase II is a ten day exchange conference and workshop series, to be held in India February 5-15, 1984, with exhibits and delegates from over 50 nations. This publication represents a part of the exhibit for the U.S. The delegates from the U.S. and most other nations will be primarily people who have

actually participated in developing approaches that are working in local development.

The conference will begin in Delhi's Taj Palace Hotel for three days. The delegates will review more than 300 project displays. They will write a preliminary statement of methods that are working. The next four days the delegates will visit successful projects in India. Upon their return to Delhi they will use the last three days planning how to take back what they have learned. They will work on ways to use their new insights in their own communities - and devise mechanisms for sharing breakthroughs in the regions surrounding their home projects.

Phase III of the Exposition is the acceleration of local development within the nations that sent delegates and displays. The delegates will return to their home countries with a plan for accelerating development in their own nations. Exhibits, seminars and workshops and speaking engagements will be held in communities which participated in the Phase I symposia. These events will introduce the learnings from the Delhi conference for use in local situations.

Introduction To The Regional Reports

In each major region of the U.S.A.: West, Midwest, South and East, Regional Steering Committees were organized to identify communities or projects which are making a significant contribution to the quality of life in the rural areas.

From four Rural Development Symposia more than 50 additional forums were held by December '83.

Over 200 U.S. communities reporting at these events, and 675 others now have data recorded that can be shared in an international data bank now being developed.

Including approximately 500 who attended the first four Symposia, it is estimated that over 3,000 people have been directly involved in Phase I of the IERD across the United States.



West



In Megatrends, author John Naisbitt ventured that there are five states in which most social inventions occur in this country, with California being mentioned as the key indicator. True to its image of being a pioneer, California hosted the first Rural Development Symposium (RDS) in the United States, from February 9-11, 1983, in Tulare County. People came from eleven states to share approaches that work.

Those who attended the first RDS, and then others who became interested in the work began searching for other successful self-help projects. More than 230 projects have been identified, visited and documented so far in the western area. "We have seen just the tip of the iceberg. Everywhere we go, people ask, 'Have you talked to so and so?'" says Joel Wright, ICA Director for the Western area.

California Points The Way





The Western states have designed a meeting similar to the RDS, called a "Showcase Forum". By December 1st six forums had been held in New Mexico and Arizona; and eight had taken place in Colorado, Wyoming, and North Dakota. Panel discussions have evolved on state levels.

Local Forums Generate Others

Two common trends discerned thus far in the Forums include:

1) an increase of activities in neighborhoods and communities in which local people are helping other local people, whatever their needs, and; 2). the cooperation of agencies, businesses, and voluntary organizations in community efforts, so there is power coming from many sources to improve the community.

Groups in the Forums share "critical ingredients" for generating and sustaining momentum in their work. A key is identifying, locating, organizing and communicating the names of human resources that are available for all kinds of tasks in a community. A common conclusion reached is that a community's most valuable resource is its own people.





Eight Projects Are Highlighted

Eight projects in Western U.S.A. are planning to send representatives to the International Plenary in Delhi:

1. COLUMBIA BASIN HEALTH ASSOCIATION, WASHINGTON: A community organization which provides services to residents of three counties.
2. COMMUNITY OF LAMAR, COLORADO: an economic development, health care and citizen involvement project.
3. DINEH COOPERATIVES, INC., ARIZONA: an economic development project on a Navajo Indian reservation.
4. HOME EDUCATION LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM (HELP), NEW MEXICO: a statewide network of health care and community services, to people in need.
5. PISINEMO, ARIZONA: a community development project on the Papago Indian reservation, in adverse geographic, economic and social conditions.
6. SAN LUIS VALLEY SOLAR ENERGY PROGRAMS, COLORADO: 3000 residents of an economically depressed community demonstrating less expensive energy.
7. SELF-HELP ENTERPRISES, CALIFORNIA: a "build-it-yourself" farm worker housing program.
8. TILTH ASSOCIATION, WASHINGTON: a three state program to improve soil conservation and promote biologically sustainable agriculture.

These communities are anticipating an injection of new insights when delegates return from the International Workshops in Delhi in early 1984.





*The woods are lovely, dark and deep
But I have promises to keep,
and miles to go before I sleep,
and miles to go before I sleep.*



Midwest

Broad Cross Section Meets

According to Joel Garreau, who wrote The Nine Nations of North America, the Mid-west produces three quarters of the continent's wheat and corn, and much of its cattle and pigs. Five years ago, three of the states in this area produced enough for a meal a day for a year for the entire population of the United States and Canada, with some left over! Yet it is becoming more difficult in the Midwest to earn a living, to raise a family and to retain a sense of community.

Capitalizing on the learnings from the Western States' Symposium, a Regional Committee was formed to hold the MID AMERICA: ACCESS TO THE FUTURE Symposium. Dramatizing a belief in the power of local people and demonstrating the practical results of local initiatives, 150 people from 13 states gathered at the three day event at Drake University in Des Moines. One hundred eighty successful local development projects were documented and 45 organizations and communities highlighted their accomplishments through displays.

Since the initial RDS there have been several locally initiated meetings, using the same method. The Midwestern states have identified the following major trends in local development, emphasizing the use of local people in over 200 successful initiatives.

- Environmental conservation
- The expanded role of women
- Self-determination and citizen teamwork
- Cross sector linkages and cooperation
- Increase in volunteerism
- Accessibility to alternative education





Five projects were selected to represent the midwest in the Delhi workshops in February.

1. CARROLL SUSTAINABLE NATURAL FARMING PROJECT IOWA; volunteer farmers work on natural farming methods, lower costs, quality feed and food stuffs.

2. IMPACT 7 INC., WISCONSIN: a successful government-funded six county community development project.

3. COMMUNITY OF BANGOR, MICHIGAN: a small town in the orchard country, struggling from a unified farm life into the technological era.

4. EDMONT SOLAR GARDEN, OHIO: a greenhouse project that has expanded food availability in the inner city.

5. FIFTH CITY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, ILLINOIS: an inner city project, showing how training methods can transform a community - urban or rural.

Five Heartland Initiatives Chosen

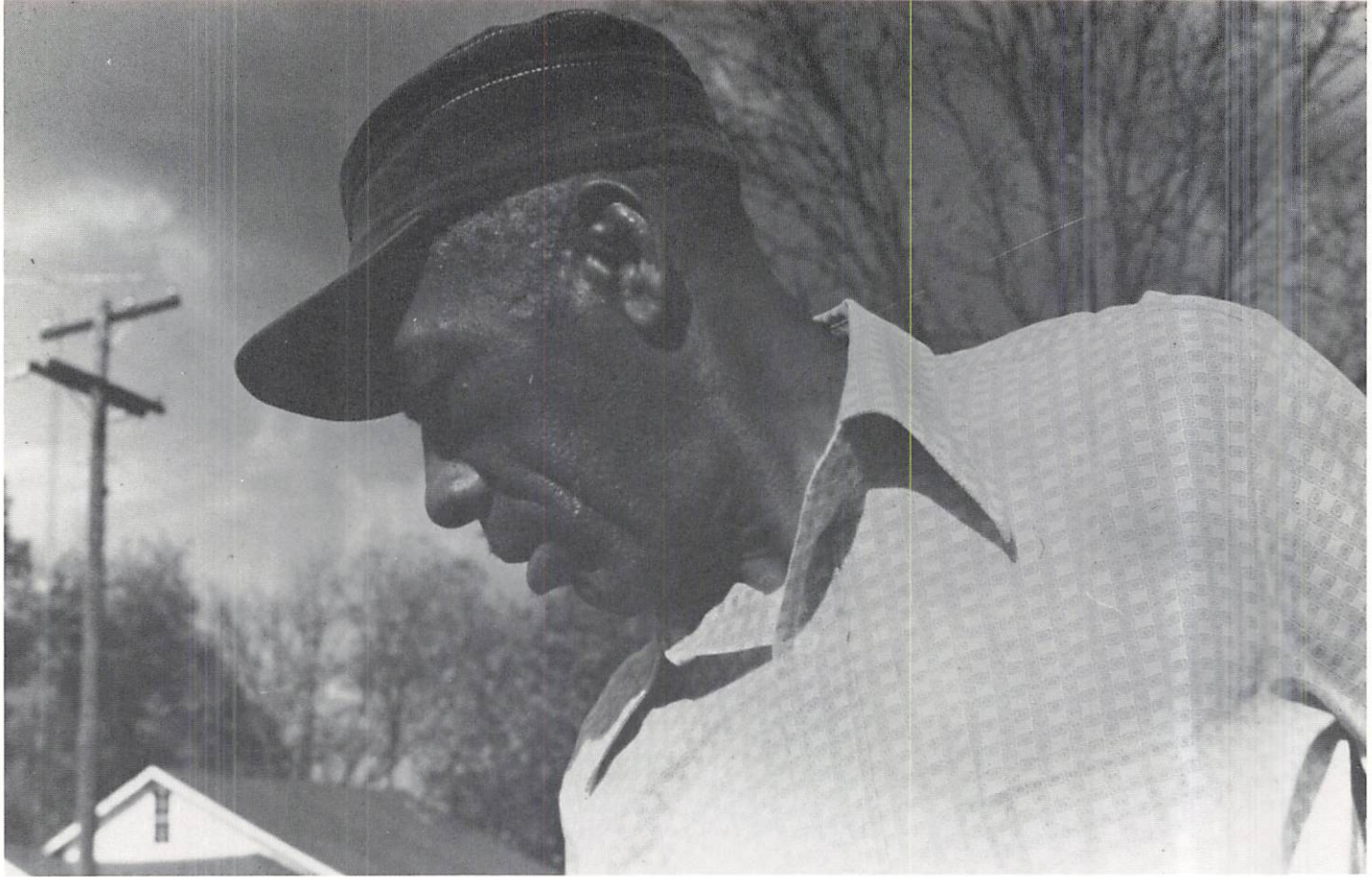




The universe is wider than our views of it.



South



A Cultural Mosaic in Memphis

The South is seen as an industrial frontier, yet, at the present time, 60% of this nation's rural poor reside in the southeastern United States. Many groups and organizations are addressing the needs of the poor, 82 of them on May 11, 1983 gathered at Memphis State University to attend a three day symposium, part of the larger annual "Memphis in May" celebration.

The participants in the meeting, - called "Success Southern Style", - came from eleven surrounding states. They represented the new cultural mosaic which has been emerging in the South, made up of Mexican Americans from the Rio Grande Valley, white citizens from Arkansas, Georgia and Tennessee, blacks from the Arkansas and Mississippi Deltas, Asians from Houston and Native Americans from Louisiana.

Display booths and small group sessions dramatized and demonstrated concrete solutions to rural problems.





How the Exchange Works

The exchange meeting in Memphis followed the same process used in the other RDSs.

By listening to each other's activities, participants in the first session are able to discern trends in rural development.

In the second session the group is divided into interest teams to look for common learnings so they can share their ingredients for effective development programs.

Participants list challenges they face, creative responses they make, and create 'possible future' scenarios in the third session. They use their imagination to project themselves into the next few years to discuss actions and future directions they see themselves taking.

The final session centers on "how". How can we accelerate development in the local situation. They name key actions and practical steps.

Since the Symposium in Tennessee, others were set up for Alabama, the Arkansas Delta, the State of Mississippi, and the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. Concern expressed for dialogue with Appalachia contributed to the recent RDS in Kentucky where 140 project delegates came together from across Appalachia.

From knowledge of these projects and others these local communities throughout the South have been meeting for one to three days, learning from each other.

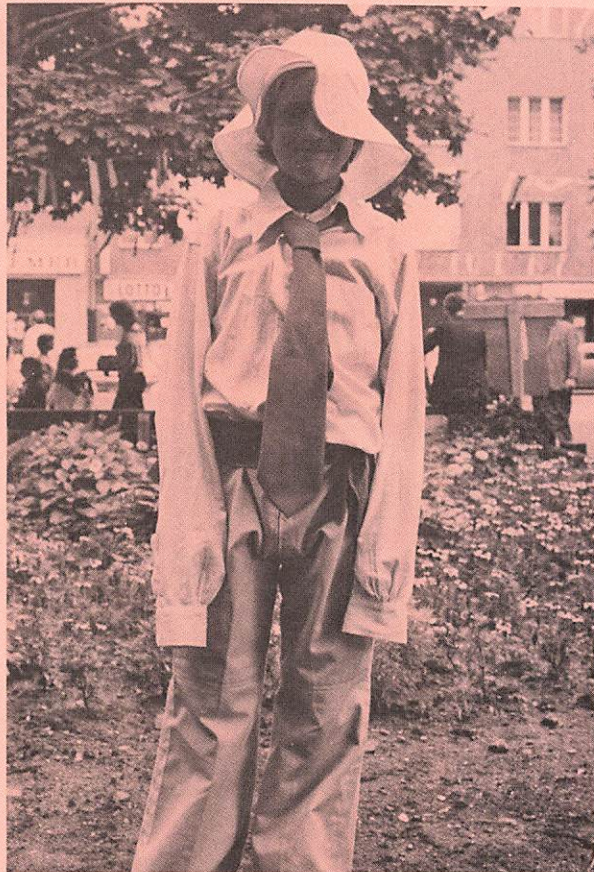




The Activity Begins To Ripple

The National Steering Committee has selected seven projects from the Southern states to represent the U.S.A. in Delhi:

1. SU CLINICA FAMILIAR, TEXAS: a primary health care delivery system for the low income Mexican Americans.
2. GENERAL BAPTIST HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, NORTH CAROLINA: addresses basic health issues in rural black communities through church based networks.
3. WORKER OWNERSHIP MOVEMENT, N. CAROLINA: coalition of business owners interested in employing the poor.
4. CLEAR FORK VALLEY, TENNESSEE: demonstrates the struggle to address human problems without outside money or expertise.
5. MISSISSIPPI ACTION FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION, MISSISSIPPI: demonstrates how 14 people moved beyond racial confrontations and established care that impacts 14 counties.
6. SOUTH GUTHRIE, TENNESSEE: demonstrates minority response to racial discrimination and poverty.
7. BROOKS COUNTY SCHOOL BASED DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE, GEORGIA: demonstrates how to start businesses through the high schools.



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East



Care Crosses Boundaries

As they looked at the common characteristics of their region, the co-sponsors for the RDS in the Northeastern part of the U.S. decided to broaden participation to the Maritime provinces of Eastern Canada. More than 150 people representing eight states and four provinces crossed state and national boundaries to participate in The New England and The Maritimes Rural Development Symposium. It was hosted by the University of Southern Maine and 14 public, private and voluntary co-sponsoring agencies.

Still different boundaries were bridged in the two International Rural Development Symposia held in Washington D.C. and New York City, attended by representatives from 60 international development agencies. United in their common interest in the development of third and fourth world nations, they crossed the boundaries of each agency's concern and geographical responsibility, toward locating effective project efforts, and for documenting them for other's use. To date there have been five RDSs in the East and Northeast and more are being planned.

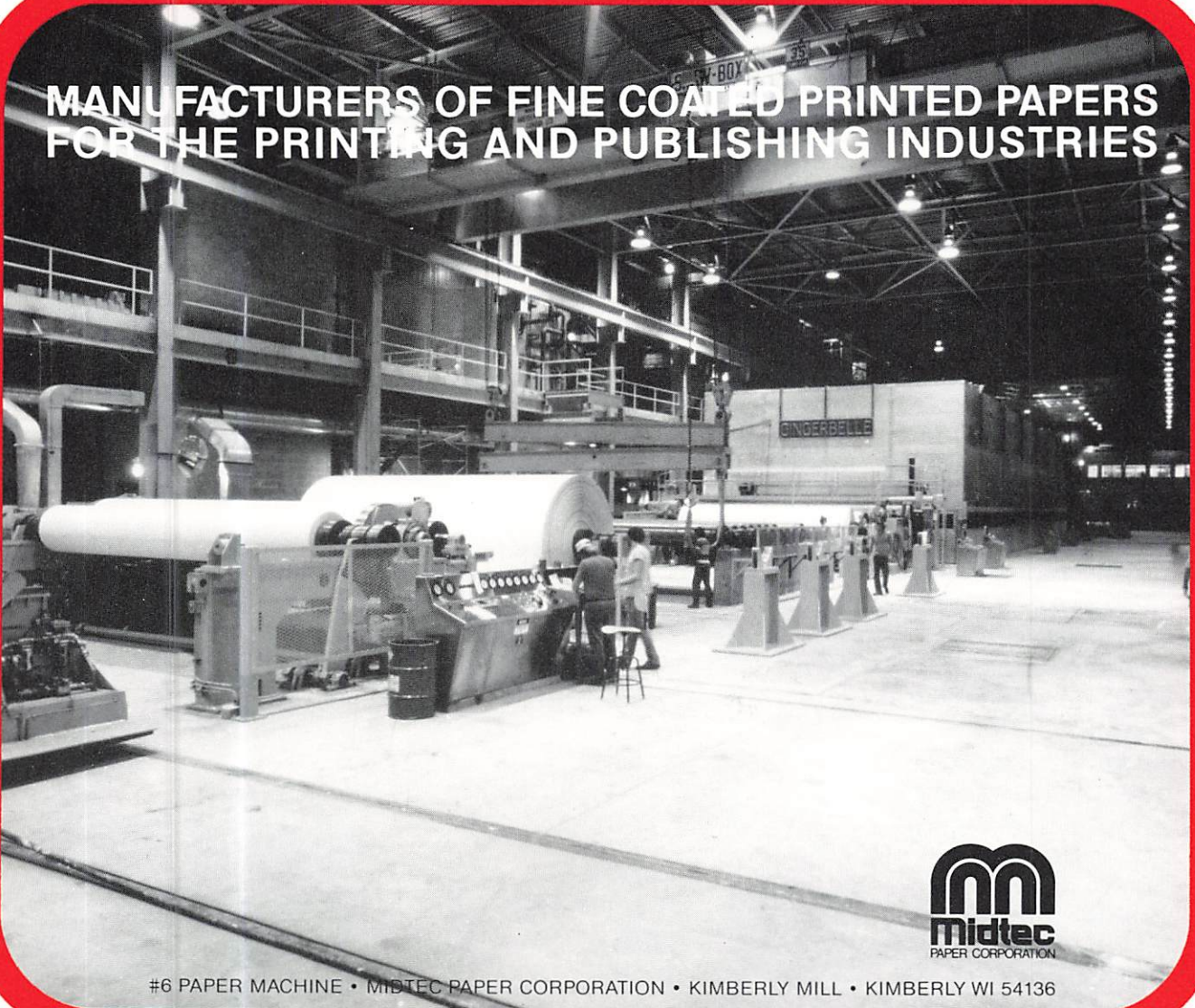


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The National Steering committee of the U.S.A. has selected four projects to represent the Eastern U.S. in the Delhi workshops in February 1984:

1. CENTRAL NEW HAMPSHIRE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING PROJECT, NEW HAMPSHIRE: demonstrates how an effective marketing strategy can sustain viable family farms.

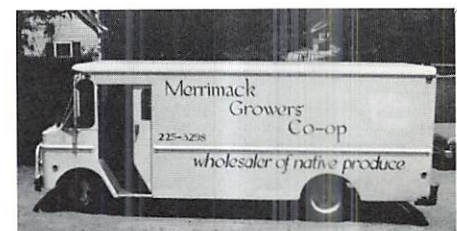
2. COASTAL ENTERPRISES, INC., MAINE: represents economic development and employment for fishermen, farmers and loggers.

3. TOTAL ACTION AGAINST POVERTY, VIRGINIA: a response (covering three projects) to such problems as waste and sewage, crime and unemployment in a racially mixed poor rural area using local people as staff.

4. WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY CLUSTER EXPERIMENT, WEST VIRGINIA: an example of how people in several urban public housing projects are taking responsibility for planning and organizing their work together.

Regional supporters and co-sponsors look forward to the formal launch of Phase III of the IERD next March when the documentation from India is available.

Local Practitioners Share How-To's





You've never truly and totally failed on a cause unless you've given up altogether.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN PHASE I

Global Board Informally Advised

Twenty five Americans agreed to be on the Global Advisory board, joining those from 38 other nations. Their major role has been to provide ad hoc advice and moral support, but many such as Dr. Robert F. Goheen and The Honorable Lindy Boggs have taken an active role in particular events for publicizing or supporting the IERD.

International Co-Sponsors Encouraged Participation

From the beginning the efforts in "Sharing Approaches That Work" required cooperation. Therefore, the ICA and Global Advisory Board members recruited international co-sponsorship to serve as a partnership, representing a mix from the public, private and voluntary sectors of society. Such organizations already served as an informal supporting framework to local development. The International Co-sponsors include the International Council of Women, three United Nations agencies including UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the Association of Indian Engineering Industry, Control Data Corporation, the Canara Bank of India, and the Agricultural Financial Corporation (India). These organizations have encouraged a broad range of participation in Phase I of the IERD in many nations.

National Committee Coordinated Activities

A National Steering Committee of 109 persons joined together to coordinate the U.S.A.'s participation in the program. Their role of assuming responsibility for all three phases of the IERD, has included ensuring local input into the nation's Rural Development Symposia, selecting the 23 projects and delegates, and generating the funding for local participation in the Delhi event and beyond. They have been assisted by a variety of national volunteers and a full time commitment of the ICA staff in the U.S.A.

Supporting Organizations Enabled Events

153 organizations have supported national or regional events. These supporting organizations have also provided access to many networks which are of critical importance to the IERD process for "Sharing Approaches That Work"

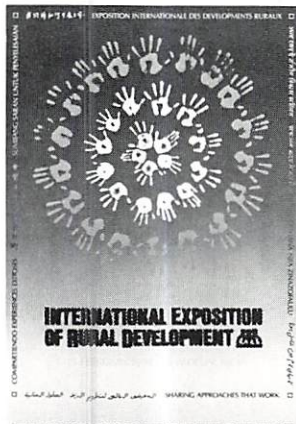
Media Events Increased Interest

Over 50 media and other promotional events were held to increase awareness and interest in rural development.

Multi Communications Systems Created

A communications system was created. Volunteers have worked on radio and television talk shows, press releases, etc. A Communications Manual was created in the U.S.A. and is now in use globally. Nearly all the RDSs have had local newspaper coverage. Magazine articles have appeared. The IERD was discussed on The Voice of America. The publicity has encouraged participation and has built receptivity for Phase III implementation. In August a video tape was made, describing the IERD process. Ben Kingsley, the star of the Academy award winning "Gandhi" introduces and concludes this piece titled "The World of Human Development". It is now being used locally and internationally to inform the general public about the three year program, and to declare the basis for hope.

A multi-media production, suitable for opening the plenary event in Delhi, is being assembled in the U.S.A., which will draw on images from the participating countries, emphasizing the hope for the future that the participating projects represent. This production with the addition of visuals from the Delhi workshops will provide a tool for the co-sponsors and National Steering Committees to use during Phase III, in their acceleration efforts around the world.



A poster has been created and distributed by a noted Colorado artist to commemorate this three year project. The piece is multi colored with "Sharing Approaches That work" printed in several languages.

Data Bank Catalogue Initiated

A Data Bank Catalogue has been initiated. The initial evaluation of data was used to begin the design of this catalogue of successful development activities. Because the data comes from local practitioners as well as the multi-sector participants in the RDSs, it will be useful for creating new categories for selecting, initiating and sustaining development activities. This "bottom up" approach is critical if the wisdom of people who actually conduct development activities is to be honored and used to inform future projects.

Additionally, the CONTROL DATA CORPORATION (CDC) of Minneapolis has committed their company to provide the facilities to assist in developing a global data base that would minimize the loss of data in the build-up phase and then make it all available after the India workshops to enable practitioners and agencies to continue sharing into the next decade. The CDC data base programs will be biased toward interchange rather than analysis. CDC has agreed to bear the cost of this "Special Technical Support", and also contribute to central preparation costs of the three year program.

Initial Reading of Development Trends

These findings were made from the local meetings held across the U.S.A. The trends shaping rural development today include the following:

1. A POSTURE OF SELF-RELIANCE, based upon local initiatives, resources use, and local controls established.
2. DISPOSITIONS TOWARD CREATING DEVELOPMENT COALITIONS, or the creation of partnerships among self-reliant groups.
3. INCREASED GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS, indicating people are seeing how their activities are related to other parts of the world.
4. EXPANDED COMMUNITY BASED DECISION MAKING to include more of the citizenry as decisions are being made in development.

Common Elements for Success Discerned

Four of the most prominent key elements of successful development identified by grassroots symposia participants are listed below:

1. A HIGH DEGREE OF INFORMATION FLOW AND EVENTFULNESS. They saw the necessity of information flowing to and from people and community events to maintain cohesiveness.
3. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION STRUCTURES operating in a larger framework allowing many issues to be discussed and worked through at one time.
3. LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND MOTIVATION: leadership that knows how to lead a group and how to encourage changes as necessary.
4. MOBILIZATION OF LOCAL RESOURCES: the maximum use of local human and material resources for initiation and sustenance of local development.

Sharing Approaches That Work

Conclusion

WHAT if we continued to move from confrontation to consensus - with more U.S. citizens, representing many different races, ideologies, heritages, life styles, and locales, continuing to meet around common tables where differences are resolved, through consensus making methods, to reach commonly hoped for solutions?

What if we could regularly transcend opposites in a practical manner - where the "haves" and "have-nots" continued to form task forces, in which each person's particular gifts are utilized; be they money, technology, expertise or physical labor toward the revitalization of local communities?

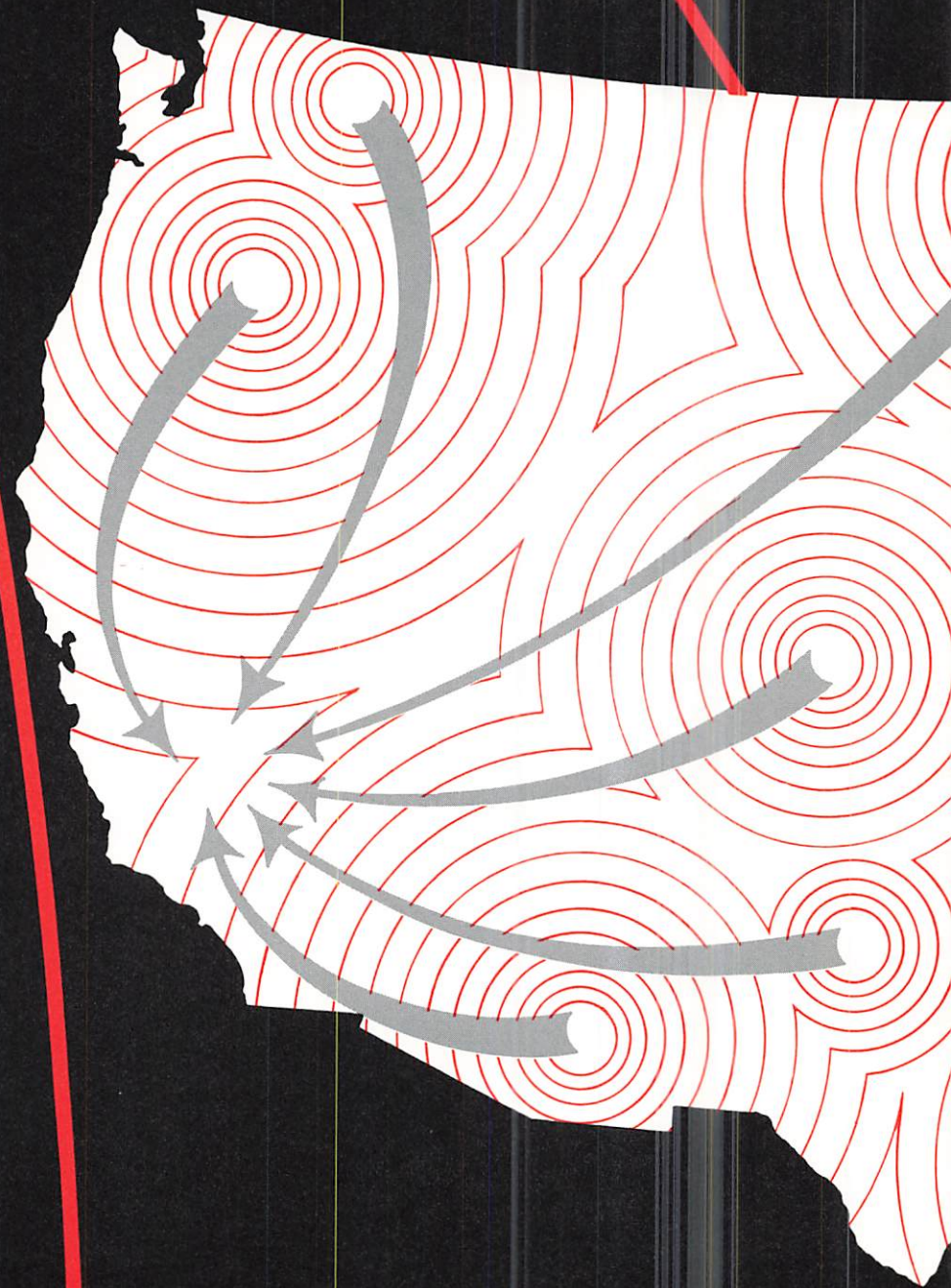
What if we all made the shift from isolation to relatedness - with local residents continuing to meet with those in neighboring communities, and in those of surrounding states, so that our actual relatedness were given more structure and form?

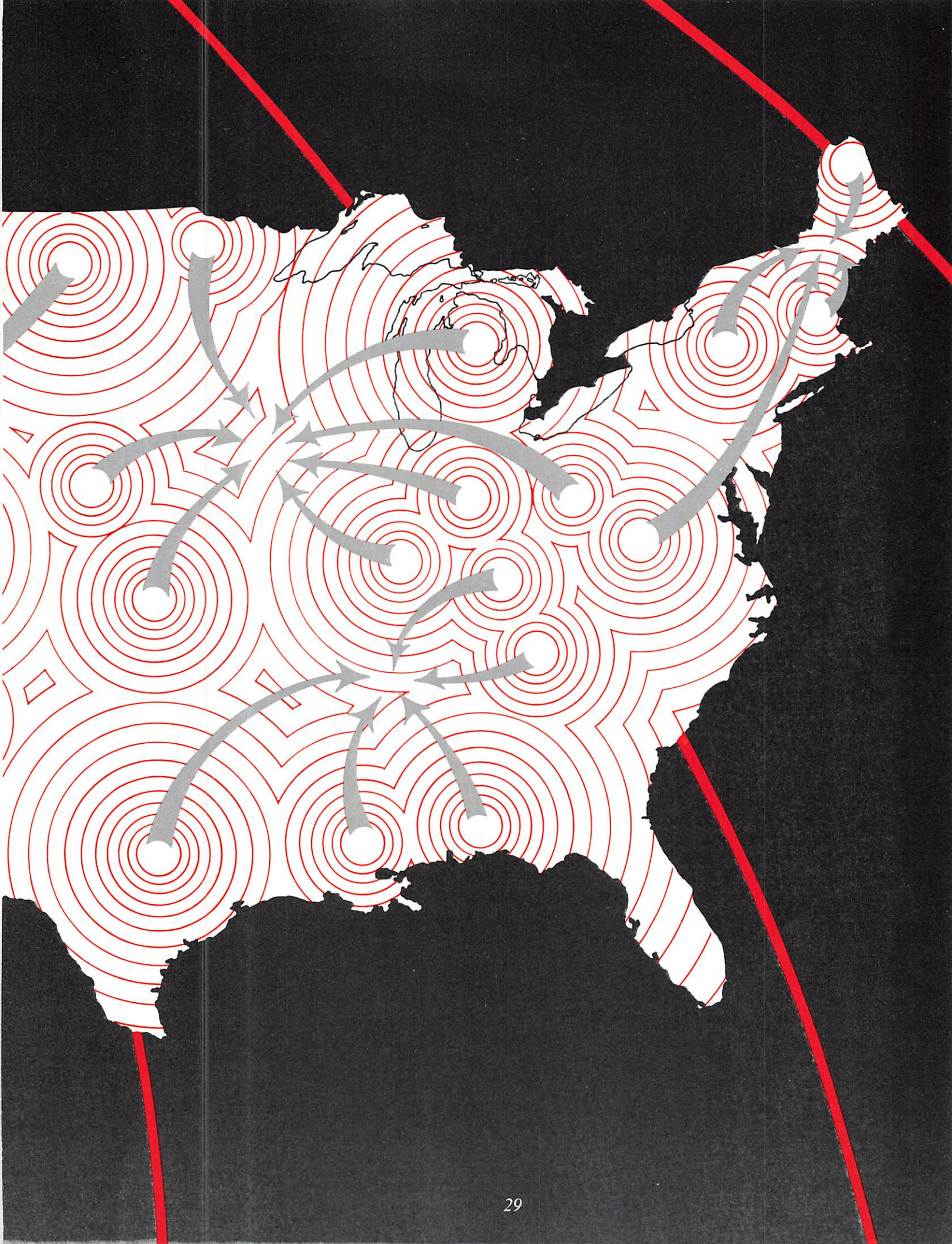
What if we more extensively dramatized the alternatives to giving up - where there was such access to tested solutions and methods for creating them that the word "impossible" became rarely used?

What if the "Good News" in media balanced the despair - where the "breakthroughs" of human creativity and ingenuity received as much attention as the "breakdowns" in human systems and relations?

What if our collective capacity to dream was increased - so that every community or human grouping could formulate a practical vision for its future and set in motion the plans and programs to achieve those visions?

What if . . .





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