

Prepared for the Project on Interactive Interfaces between  
Collective Support Systems and their Users,  
Sponsored by the Support, Survival and Culture Program of  
The University of Amsterdam

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**METHODS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:  
THE WORK OF THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

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## INTRODUCTION

Organizations engaged in development efforts have recognized the need not only for economic development but also for human development. Efforts have shifted from separate projects for transportation, education, nutrition, agriculture, etc. to community development projects that include, in addition, institution building and citizen involvement. The newer point of view sees development not only as a matter of increasing capital stocks but also focuses on patterns of behavior, mental images, organizational skills, appropriate technology, and local self-reliance. Development then becomes something that a community does to itself rather than something that is done to it by others.

In the 1970s and 1980s the Institute of Cultural Affairs established several thousand model villages in countries on all continents and conducted over 100 Human Development Training Schools lasting from 3 to 6 weeks. The purpose of the model villages is to demonstrate what is possible when people work together. To facilitate communication and decision-making in communities, the Institute has developed a set of group process methods that form the core of the curriculum in the training schools. In order to continually improve its methods and activities, the members of the Institute meet in Chicago each summer to review what was learned in the previous year and to plan the programs of the coming year. Since the Institute has been invited to set up model villages and to expand its programs in more than twenty countries, its methods may be of interest to other organizations engaged in development activities.

The methods employed by the Institute constitute a communication and planning technology in much the same way that computer modeling and simulation are a technology. However, their interactive planning methods are more easily understood by people who do not have advanced technical training and hence are more appropriate at the village level. Four communities are described in this report -- one in the United States, one in Africa, and two in Latin America. The methods of the Institute are presented in the context of the planning conferences that began these four community development projects.

### IVY CITY, WASHINGTON, DC, USA

I first became aware of the Institute of Cultural Affairs when a friend of mine, Bill Moore, showed me a report on a community development project in Maliwada, India. I was quite impressed by the report. For several years I had been interested in using computers to facilitate citizen participation in planning (Umpleby, 1970 and 1972). As part of this research I had become familiar with most of the literature on citizen involvement methods. I thought that the report on the project in Maliwada used methods that were at least as insightful and thorough as any I had previously seen. Bill said that the Institute of Cultural Affairs was about to begin a project in Ivy City, a poor black neighborhood in Washington, DC. He invited me to attend as an observer. I did and was even more impressed by seeing the methods in practice.

After the planning conference for Ivy City, I expressed interest in seeing how the methods worked in a Third World country. The people from the Institute invited me to go to a planning conference in Zambia. I was able to go due to financial support from my University and relatives. The "consultants" who take part in the Institute's programs pay their own way, since the "clients, the residents of poor communities," are not in a position to pay international airfares.

The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) is a private, non-profit organization that is engaged in community development activities both domestically and internationally. The full-time staff of the Institute was originally a group of Americans, but now the largest group is Indians, because there are a large number of projects in India. The Institute conducts several programs:

1. Human Development Projects are begun with a planning conference that lasts a week. Then they write a report on the planning conference during the subsequent week. Hence, the start-up activity takes about two weeks. They then leave a group of five to ten people in the community for a period of about two years to implement the plans that were created during the planning conference. Every six months they evaluate the progress they have made and then conduct another planning conference. Each time they do a planning conference, the people in the community take on more responsibility for designing and leading the conference.
2. A Town Meeting is a one-day event with follow-up only in the form of occasional visits. The intention of the Town Meeting program is to give the people in the community an opportunity to get together and to plan some new programs. The communities that have had a Town Meeting stay in touch with each other through newsletters in each region of a country. ICA also holds a regional conference about every six months to a year so that the people who have been working on the programs initiated at the Town Meetings can get together and exchange ideas.
3. LENS, which stands for Leadership Effectiveness and New Strategies, is a two or three day conference for business corporations and government agencies. LENS uses methods very similar to those used in communities. It is an activity that helps a group redefine what its goals are and decide how they can be implemented.

### SHANTUMBU, ZAMBIA

Shantumbu, Zambia, is a community about an hour by car from the capital city of Lusaka. Zambia is located in southern Africa. Formerly it was called Northern Rhodesia (Figure 1). The planning conference for this Human Development Project took place in November, 1976. Shantumbu is actually a set of about six villages located near each other.

The planning conference was preceded by several weeks of preparatory activity during which the facilities for the conference were obtained and set up. Since there were no hotels or rooming houses, the people who came in from overseas were housed in tents, two people to a tent (Figure 2). The tents and beds were loaned by the Zambian army (Figure 3).

The assembly tent, where we had our meals and where the plenary meetings were held, was a very large tent constructed out of large pieces of canvas (Figure 4). It took one afternoon just to construct this large tent (Figure 5).

The bathroom facilities were grass huts (Figure 6). The huts with grass roofs were the latrines. The huts without roofs were the baths. In each bath enclosure there was a large barrel of water and some concrete blocks to stand on. The procedure was to take a splash bath by dipping a cup into the barrel of water. There was a table nearby where the men could shave and where people washed their faces and hands. One advantage of these facilities was that one could work on one's tan while taking a "shower."

The day's activities were arranged so that the consultants and the community people ate all three meals together (Figure 7). We would get together in the morning for breakfast, and there would be an explanation of the day's activities. Then we would divide into five teams. The teams were a business team, an education team, an agriculture team, a cultural events team, and a housing and public services team.

The people who participated from the local community were selected by the local people. The consultants emphasized that they wanted a cross section of sexes, ages, professions, and religions. In this community the authority figures were headmen.

Each village had a headman and the older men made up a council that governed the village. Social status increased with age. Men could have more than one wife. Frequently a man would take one wife when he was young and then another, younger wife when he became older. It was not unusual for a woman to have seven children.

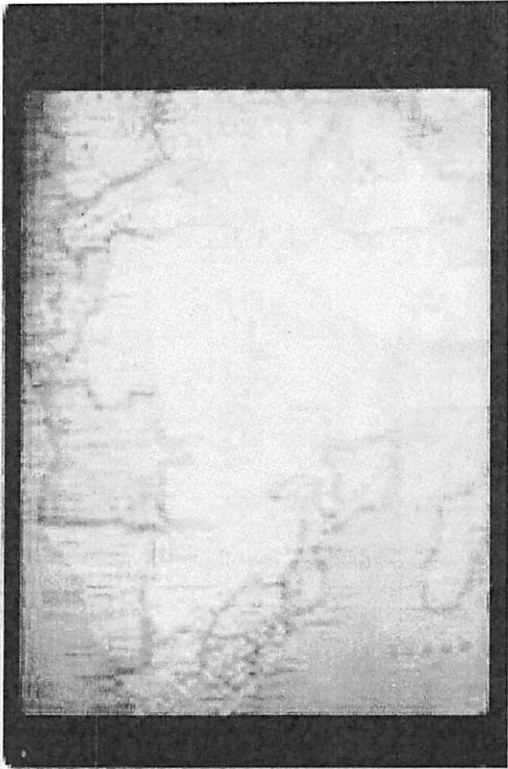


Figure 1. Map of Southern Africa



Figure 2. Tents in Shantumbu, Zambia



Figure 3. Children helping to set up camp



Figure 4. Building the assembly tent



Figure 5. A man attaching canvas to a pole

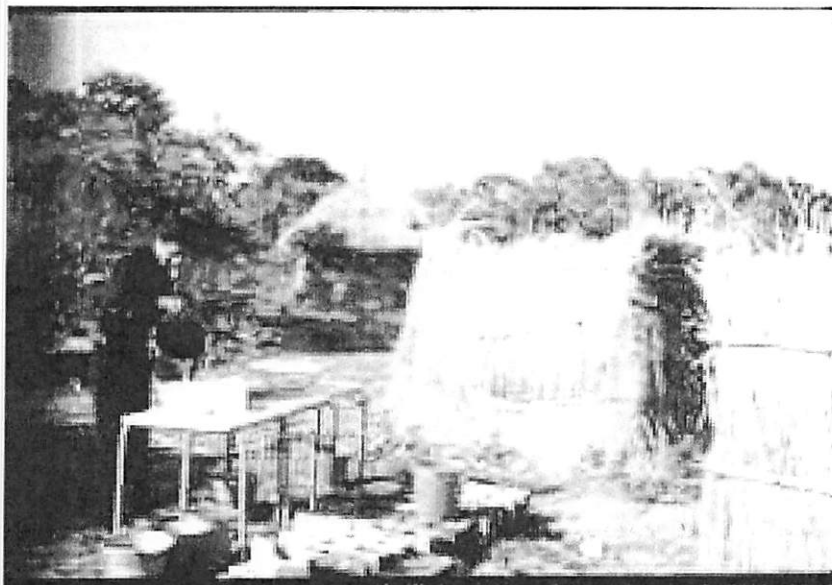


Figure 6. The bathroom facilities

### *How Villages are Selected*

People often ask how the Institute finds a community to work with. Many of the members of ICA, at least the Americans, were originally trained in the ministry. They graduated from seminary schools. The Institute is closely connected with the World Council of Churches. Hence, their contacts with communities are often made through local ministers or active church members. The Institute does not go into a community that they have not been invited into. Usually the first contact with a community is through a one-day event like a Town Meeting. The Institute has conducted a very large number of Town Meetings. For example, in 1976, the two hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, they arranged a Town Meeting in every county in the United States. They have conducted thousands of Town Meetings around the world. In contrast to Town Meetings, Human Development Projects are only done in poor communities.

In order to be chosen as a site for a Human Development Project, the community must meet several criteria.

1. The community must be known in the surrounding area as being very poor. The idea is that if that community can change its circumstances, then surely other communities can as well.
2. The local people must want their community to be a human development project.
3. The village must be the right size. Two to four thousand people works well. If the community is too small, there are not enough people to work with. If the community is too large, efforts become diffuse and less visible.
4. The boundaries of the community need to be clearly defined so that there is no ambiguity about whether some people are in the project or not. A clear boundary prevents confusion over who is included and prevents diffusion of efforts.
5. The community should be easily accessible to a major international airport so that consultants and visitors can be brought in easily. A location that is not too remote also ensures access to medical facilities for the ICA staff.

Although many of the permanent members of the ICA staff are quite religious, they do not try to win converts to their religious views. Perhaps the most overtly religious thing they do is that they describe themselves as "those who care." They encourage other people to care about their communities by doing volunteer work. Mainly, they teach skills -- primarily planning and organizing skills, but also skills related to agriculture, business, health, and housing and skills in obtaining services and resources through liaison with government and the private sector and non-profit service organizations.

Figure 7. Beginning the day's activities over breakfast



Figure 8. Henry Tambo, a community leader

### **Learning about the Community**

After breakfast and a plenary meeting to explain the day's events, people divide into groups to take field trips in the local area. On these trips the local people are the experts and the consultants are the learners (Figures 8 and 9). Shantumbu is an agricultural community. Tomatoes are a major cash crop (Figure 10).

In this part of Africa there are two seasons -- the rainy season and the dry season. In the past crops were only grown in the rainy season. But with irrigation the people have learned to grow crops year around. In fact the crops grown in the dry season are better than the crops grown in the rainy season because there is less fungus and mildew in the dry season. In addition to tomatoes the people grow bananas, oranges, and corn (Figure 11). The plots of land in the foreground are small, whereas those in the background are larger. The land in the foreground is farmed by the native people with oxen. The land in the background is worked by a white farmer who has a tractor.

After the morning field trip we came back to camp, ate lunch and talked about what we had seen. During the first day we asked people what they would like to have happen in the

community (Figure 12). They said that they wanted a local health center, a better water supply, better roads, and better schools (Figure 13). At these brain-storming activities in the afternoon, we frequently had some observers -- the children seemed to be fascinated by this unusual activity (Figure 14).

We made notes of what people said on a blackboard and then at night we typed reports on mimeograph stencils. We also wrote the results on large sheets of butcher paper which could be displayed at the plenary meeting the next morning. In this way each group could find out what the other groups had learned the previous day.

The next day there would be another field trip. Traditionally the houses were made of mud bricks with thatched roofs (Figure 15). The advantage of such houses is that they are biodegradable. If someone abandons a house, in time it collapses, forms a mound in the soil and then is eventually plowed over. In these small villages there is no private property. All the land is owned by the community. When a couple marries and decides where they want to live, they ask the headman and his council for permission to build a house in that village. If a family decides that they cannot get along with the people in one village, they move to another village.

Some of the newer houses have walls made of concrete blocks, concrete floors, corrugated iron roofs, and steel window and door frames (Figure 16). The materials are purchased with money obtained from selling agricultural products. The contrast between the newer and older style of construction makes it clear who the more prosperous people in the villages are.



Figure 9. Taking notes

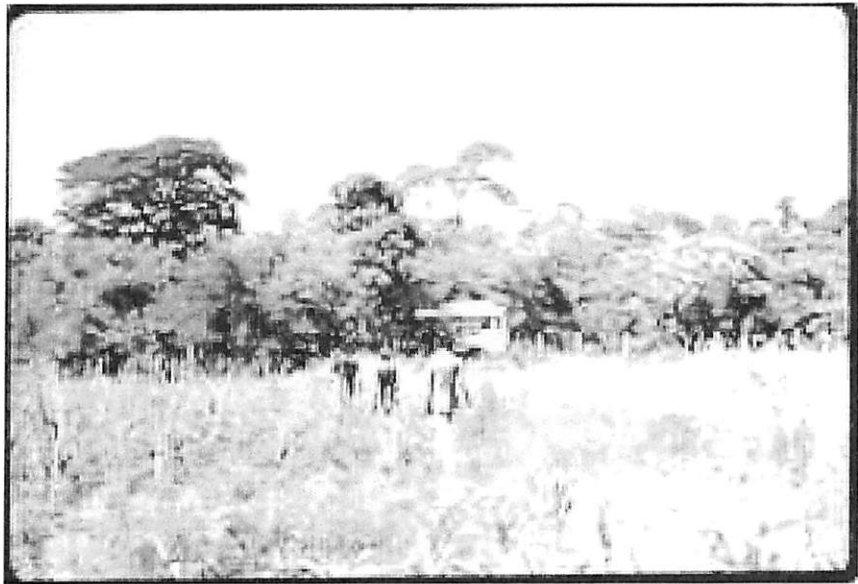


Figure 10. Tomatoes were a cash crop



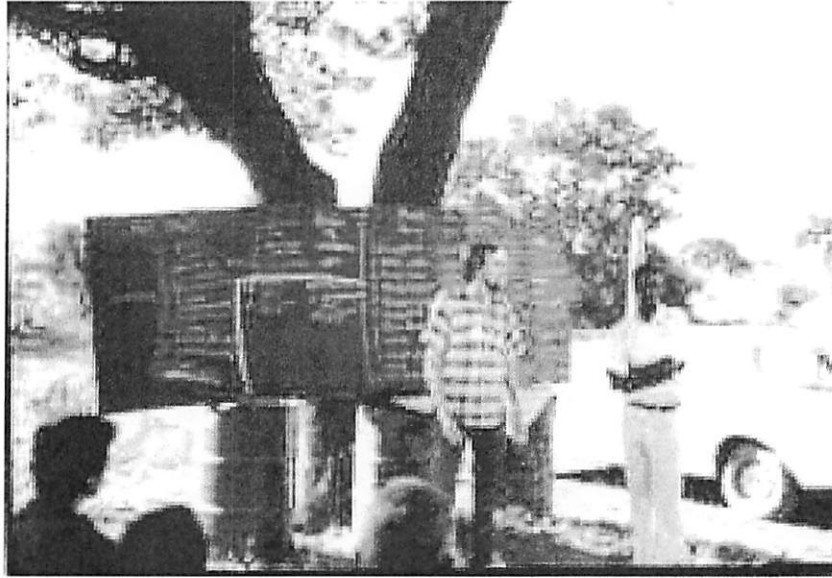


Figure 13. Discussing the morning field trip



Figure 14. Children watching the discussions



Figure 15. Traditional style mud houses

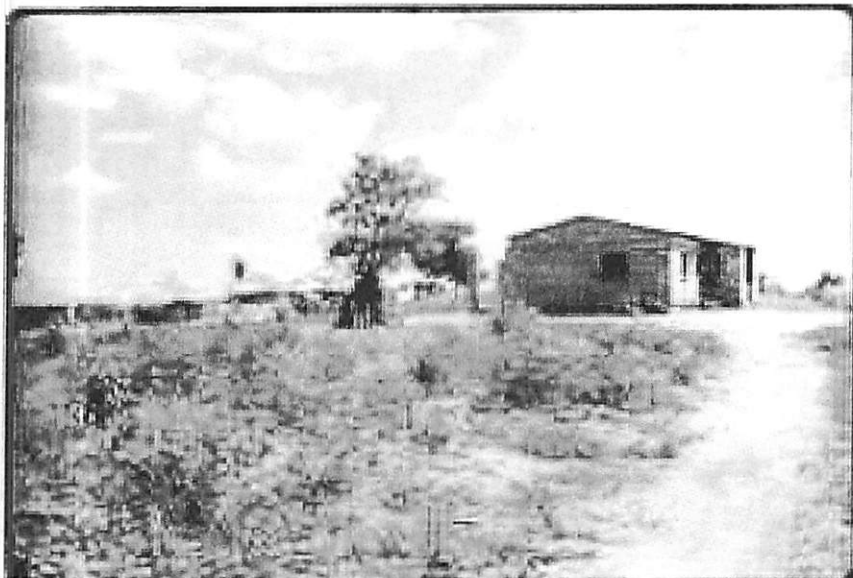


Figure 16. A newer house made of concrete blocks

A village sometimes consists of a cluster of houses around an open space (Figure 17). When one enters a village or a household compound, it is polite to stand on the perimeter where the grass stops until the people motion for the visitor to enter. The common courtyard is considered part of the structure of the village. In the afternoon many people sit outside in the shade of the houses and drink locally brewed beer. Alcoholism is a problem in these villages, as it is in most poor communities.

In the early days of the planning conference, we worked at night by candlelight (Figure 18). However, during the conference, a businessperson in town donated a generator and we had electricity. Typing outdoors in Africa by candlelight is a unique experience. Insects attracted to the light fly into the candles. In Africa, the insects can be quite large relative to North American insects. The dragonflies were awesome creatures. During the day, we encountered rhinoceros beetles and black and white striped millipedes about two inches long. One woman left her briefcase on the ground under her bed in the morning and returned in the evening to find that an ant colony was building a nest in it. As we worked at night, we could hear hyenas and other large animals in the distance.

The structures for housing domesticated animals were quite primitive (Figure 19). The animals were poorly fed and some of the children had open sores due to vitamin deficiencies. The sores could be cured simply by eating the tomatoes grown in the villages, but the tomatoes were regarded as a cash crop to be sold in the city. The doctor, who was one of the consultants brought in for the planning conference, organized an evening meal of tomato sandwiches for all of the children in the community. The event began well, but there were so many enthusiastic children that the event quickly became chaotic with children grabbing for sandwiches and not waiting their turn. Most of the children found at least something to eat, though some of the food ended up on the ground. The doctor told the adults that each child should have tomatoes or some other vegetables every day.

The local diet consists mostly of corn with an occasional tomato, onion, or pumpkin. Only rarely do the people eat meat or fish. Meat is eaten immediately after it is slaughtered. The people say that there is no way to preserve meat in the village because there is no electricity to run refrigerators. They know about refrigerators, because they have seen them in the city. The people I talked to had never heard of preserving meat by drying it, salting it, or smoking it.

Water for irrigation is taken from springs, is trapped behind rudimentary dams, or is stored in tanks built of concrete blocks (Figure 20). On the field trips we found that many of the local people had not seen a concrete block tank before. Simply touring in their local community was an eye-opening experience for some of them.

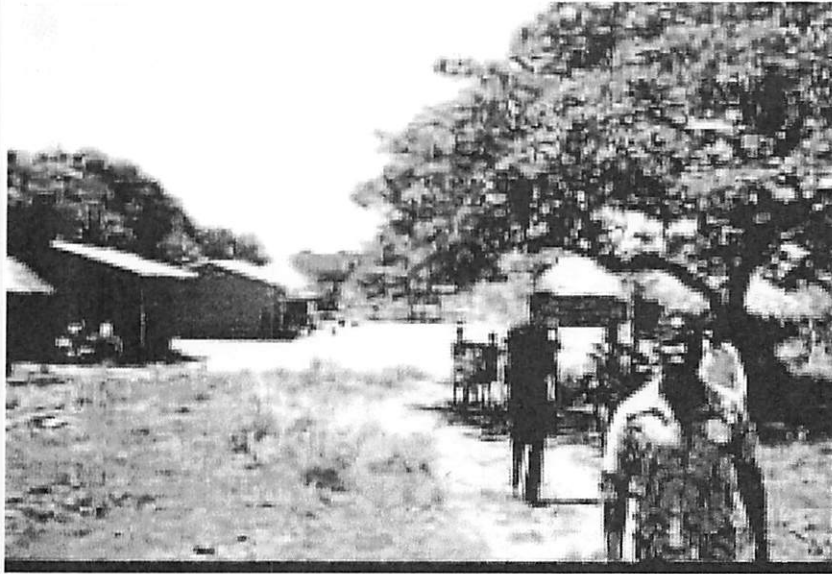


Figure 17. A village consisting of several houses



Figure 18. Writing reports at night by candlelight

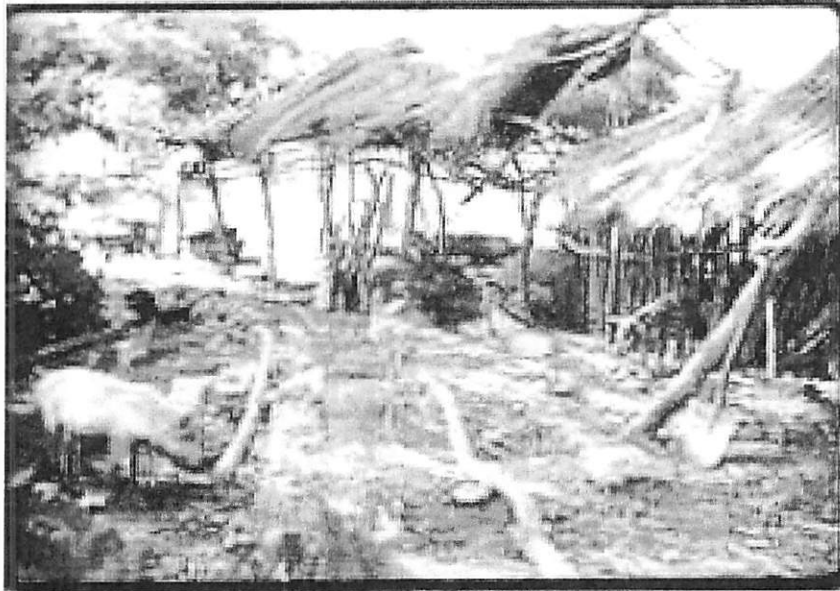


Figure 19. Farm structures for pigs and chickens



Figure 20. A tank for holding irrigation water

### *The Effect of the Conference on Social Structure*

When we visited a low earthen dam (Figure 21), one of the young men suggested that if the dam were raised to make the water deeper, fish could be grown in the lake behind the dam. The older village people in the group were unimpressed by the suggestion, but the consultants thought it was a fine idea. The consultants pointed out the need for protein in the diet. After this conversation, the standing of this young man seemed to rise somewhat in the community. The consultants did not intend to disturb the social structure of the villages. Indeed, in the beginning we did not know what the social structure was. Nevertheless, as the week progressed, it was clear that the patterns of communication within the community were changing. Those people who felt comfortable talking about change, innovation, and technology became more vocal and received more attention.

In this community there were three occupations in order by descending status -- shopkeepers, farmers, and charcoal burners. The shopkeepers had the highest status, even if their shops were nearly empty and they had few if any customers (Figure 22). Next, there were the wealthy farmers, then the less prosperous farmers. The charcoal burners seemed to hold the least respect. The charcoal burners would chop down the small, scrubby trees, partly burn the wood in a covered ditch, and then take the charcoal into town in large sacks precariously balanced on bicycles. The charcoal was used for cooking by the people in Lusaka. One shy, middle-aged charcoal burner attached himself to me and carefully watched everything I did. During the more boring parts of the meetings, I taught him the alphabet and a few English words. On the last day of the conference, he began speaking in complete English sentences. I was amazed. Since Zambia is a former British colony, the children are taught English in school, but most of the people in this community had had only a few years of schooling at most. Nevertheless, the translations back and forth between the tribal languages and English during the conference seemed to revive the English that this man had learned.

In our field trips in the community we saw how the people store their grain (Figure 23) and the depot where fertilizer and seed are brought in and harvested grain is picked up (Figure 24).

Clean water was a major problem (Figure 25). The people dug their waterholes by hand, so the holes were large. They were large enough for a man to go in and come out. They were often 15 to 25 feet deep. The holes were large enough for cows, children, and small animals to fall into. Large animals could be kept out by laying logs across the holes, but small animals often fell in and polluted the water.

What the people wanted was what they called "bore holes" or small holes drilled by machines mounted on the back of a truck (Figure 26). These holes were usually topped with a slab of concrete and a hand pump. Small animals could not fall into these wells, and the pump made it easier to raise the water. Such a pump was installed before the planning conference to insure a clean supply of water. It immediately became a community-gathering place.



Figure 21. A dam built to hold water for irrigation



Figure 22. A local store owner and the sign for his store



Figure 23. A silo for storing harvested corn

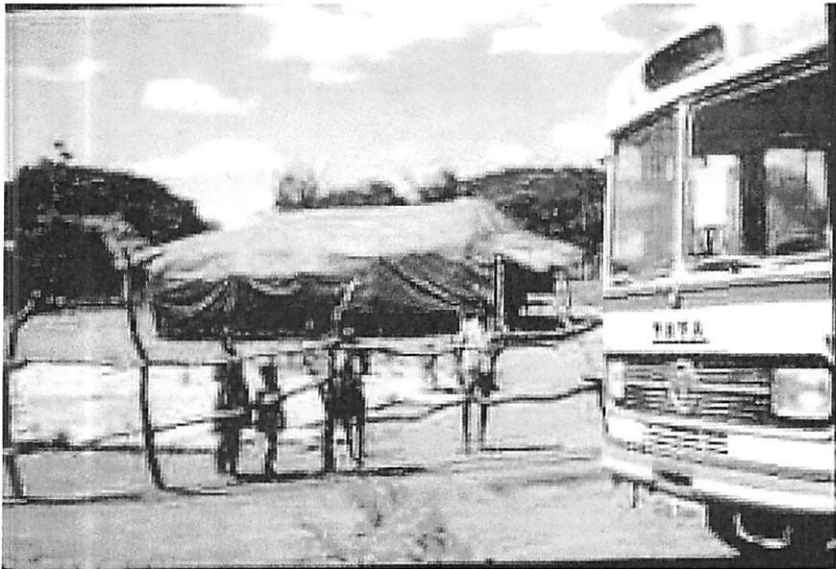


Figure 24. The depot for seed, fertilizer and harvested crops

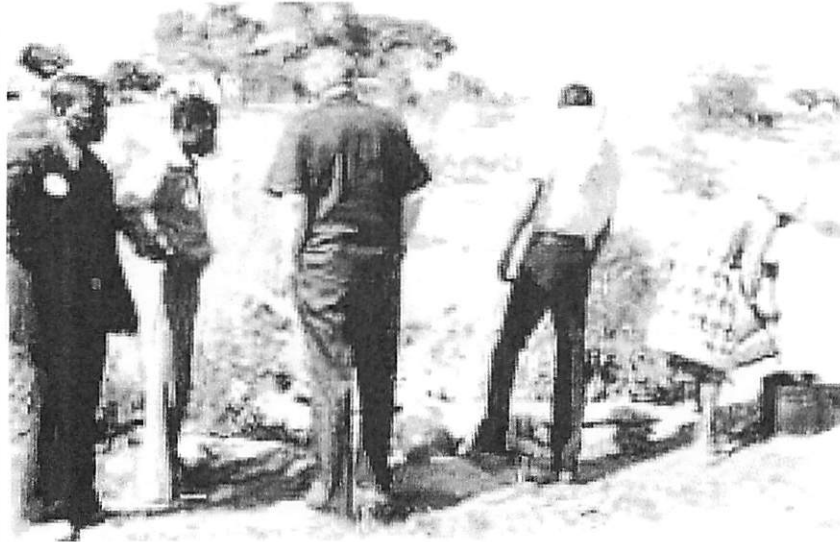


Figure 25. A well dug by hand



Figure 26. A well drilled by machine

In Africa, the women and children carry the water. Often they have to carry it for a distance of one or two miles. All of the water used in the home for drinking, cooking, washing, and bathing has to be carried.

### *Topics Discussed during the Conference*

On the first day of the conference we discussed the "vision" the people had for the community and what they wanted to see happen in the future. When one asks villagers such questions, it is important to wait for an answer. This is a question most villagers have not thought about before. They need time to think through the question.

On the second day we asked a rather controversial question. If this is what the people in the community want, why do they not already have it? That is, what are the "obstacles" to achieving the vision? Often people blame someone else, such as the government, for their troubles. When this happens, the consultants ask them what they could do to take charge of the situation. For example, in this community the dirt roads were a problem. The people said that the government rarely came out to grade the roads. The consultants asked whether there was a committee that was in charge of communicating with the government to insure that the roads were graded regularly. The people said that there was no such committee and then added that even when the road grader did come out to grade the roads, it left before all of the roads were repaired. The consultants asked whether the road committee could go around with the road grader and make sure that the work was done correctly and completely. The people said, "Yes, that could be done." The consultants then asked, "Will you do it?" The people, enthusiastically now, said, "Yes, we will."

The consultants stress that by organizing themselves and working together, much can be accomplished. Frequently discussions of contradictions raise issues of mutual trust. For example, the people in this community wanted a local health center so that people would not have to walk or ride a bicycle several hours into Lusaka for health care. At one time, the people took up a collection to build a health center. They entrusted the funds to one of the local shopkeepers who used the money to build an addition to his house. The man was never prosecuted. People just refused to do business with him. From this incident, the people concluded that they could not trust each other. When this story was told, the consultants explained that it is possible to open a bank account that requires two or more signatures before funds can be withdrawn. They asked whether such an account would solve the problem of raising money for a health center. The people said they thought it would.

Blaming and distrust often emerge as themes during the discussion of obstacles or contradictions. The task for the consultants is to bring these issues out into the open and then show that these problems can be solved.

On the third and fourth days we took field trips outside of the community. Whereas on the first two days the consultants learned about the community, on the third and fourth days the consultants and the local people learned about the resources available to the community. I led a small group to the University of Zambia where we met a professor in the business school who was willing to arrange for people to come out to the village to teach business skills such as accounting. We also met a Pakistani agronomist who was looking for some farmers who were willing to experiment with growing wheat in addition to corn. After returning to the village I typed a report on the people we had met (Figure 27). Typewriters and mimeograph machines were kept in a metal hut at night to protect them from theft and fire. One afternoon one of the latrines was accidentally set on fire by a cigarette (Figures 28 and 29).

In the afternoon of the third day we discussed "strategies" for removing the obstacles to achieving the vision. Strategies could include selecting a committee to manage the maintenance of the roads and establishing a committee to open a bank account and to collect money for building a health center.

On the fourth day we discussed "tactics." What steps needed to be taken in order to implement the strategies for removing the obstacles to achieving the vision? For example, in the case of a bank account, the people needed to decide who would be in charge of the bank account. Those people needed to learn how a bank account operated. They then needed to choose a bank to work with. They also needed to arrange transportation into town.

On the fifth day, we drew up a schedule of activities indicating who would do what and when and how much each activity would cost. Each group was also asked to prepare a song for the closing celebration (Figure 30). The Zambian National Dancers, who have given performances around the world, came to the village for the closing celebration.



Figure 27. Recording notes on a trip to the University of Zambia

Figure 28. A latrine catches fire

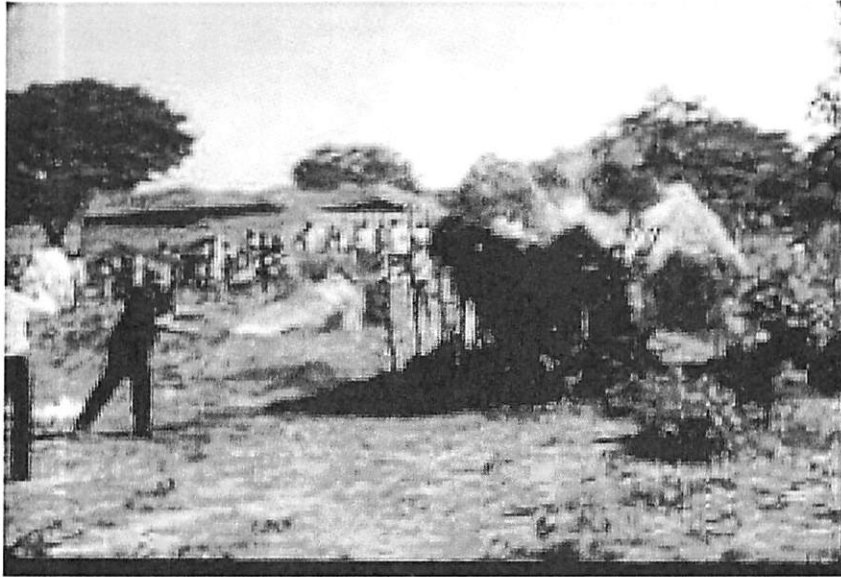


Figure 29. Cooling the embers



Figure 30. Practicing songs for the closing celebration

### *Stories, Songs, and Symbols*

Symbols are a very important part of the Institute's methods. For each Human Development Project they work with the local people to design a symbol for the community. The symbol is usually a stylized map. The symbol becomes readily identifiable to people both inside and outside the community and serves as a reminder of boundaries. The symbol is used on reports, on products, and on meeting places.

The story that a poor community tells about itself often describes how times were better in the past and how bad things are today. As long as people tell such stories about themselves, there is little hope that they will make dramatic progress. So the story is rewritten to emphasize positive events and to praise the courage, hard work and resourcefulness of the people. Part of a positive story is that this community is serving as an example to other communities of what can be accomplished by working together. The new story is retold frequently at celebrations and community meetings.

Since people often like to sing at gatherings and as they work, the Institute uses songs to convey the new story. The songs use tunes from popular local songs, but the words are rewritten to tell the new story of the community.

After the planning conference several days are spent writing a report that describes the vision, contradictions, strategies, tactics, and implementation steps that were discussed and agreed upon (Figure 31). Every report on one of the human development projects is organized in the same way – story, vision, obstacles, strategy, tactics, and actions (Figure 32). By reading these reports one can learn what the major problems are in poor communities around the world, whether rural or urban. One comes away from such a reading with a better understanding of the nature of poverty and the underlying similarities of poor communities in very different countries.

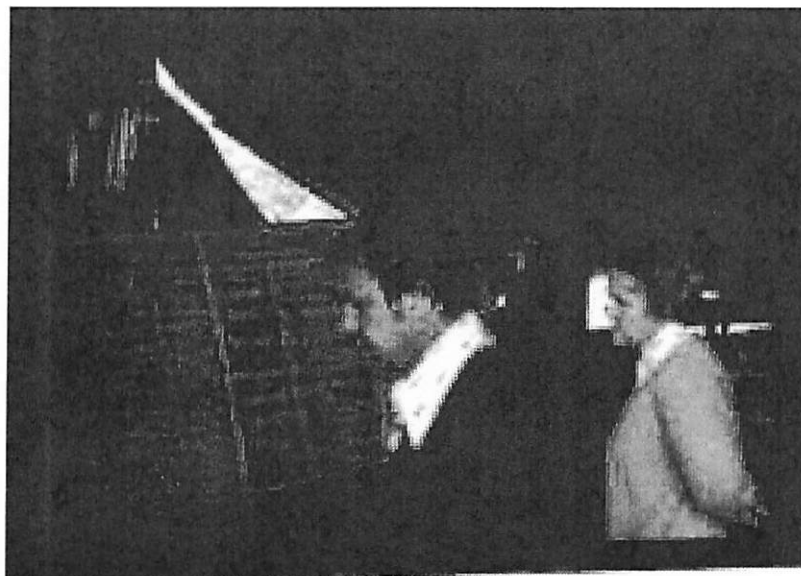


Figure 31. Studying the data while writing the report



Figure 32. A copy of the report on Fifth City, Chicago

## CONACASTE, GUATEMALA

Conacaste, Guatemala, is located about an hour by car from the capital of Guatemala City. At the end of the rainy season the countryside looks quite green (Figure 33), but water was a major problem in the dry season. The houses were made of mud bricks with clay tile roofs. The houses had no chimneys. Cooking fires were built in the houses and smoke was allowed to escape at the open eaves of the roof. One consultant suggested that chimneys over the cooking fires would make the houses less smoky.

Dogs were allowed to run free (Figure 34). Many dogs did not belong to owners. Walking through the dark village at night with a pack of dogs following and barking was a frightening experience. Yet people constantly fed the dogs scraps of food. The dogs constituted a health hazard and a hazard to children. During the planning conference it was suggested that the female dogs be spayed and that pet dogs be kept on a leash. Eventually, the only dogs in the village would be pets.

Additional latrines had to be built for the conference (Figure 35). Consultants were housed in people's homes. Some of the newer homes were built of concrete blocks with corrugated metal roofs. The metal beds were loaned by the army (Figure 36). I was told where to put the bed and my bag, because the roof leaked in some places. The officer who arranged for the beds was shot to death on the porch of his home a few days before the conference began. Guatemala has a high level of political violence, like much of Central America.

The assembly building where we met had been enlarged with extensions on each side (Figure 37). Down the center of the ceiling were the map-based symbols of other Human Development Projects around the world. The message that went with these symbols was that Conacaste was no longer a remote, forgotten village. Rather, it was now one of a very few villages that were being called upon to show thousands of other villages what could be accomplished when people work together and care about each other (Figures 38 and 39). The local people were told that the presence of the consultants was proof that people elsewhere know about them and care about them. They were told that they should work to implement the projects that they were planning not only to help themselves but also to show other people that they, too, can improve their lives.

The meetings were usually opened and closed with songs. This practice gave people a chance to learn songs about community development and created a festive atmosphere. The songs also served as examples for additional songs and, unexpectedly, created a desire, particularly by the young people, to learn English, since most of the songs were in English.

A woman from an earlier Human Development Project attended the planning conference in Conacaste in order to testify to what had been achieved in her village. The woman had founded a sewing business in the village of Cano Negro, Venezuela, the first ICA project in Latin America (Figure 40).

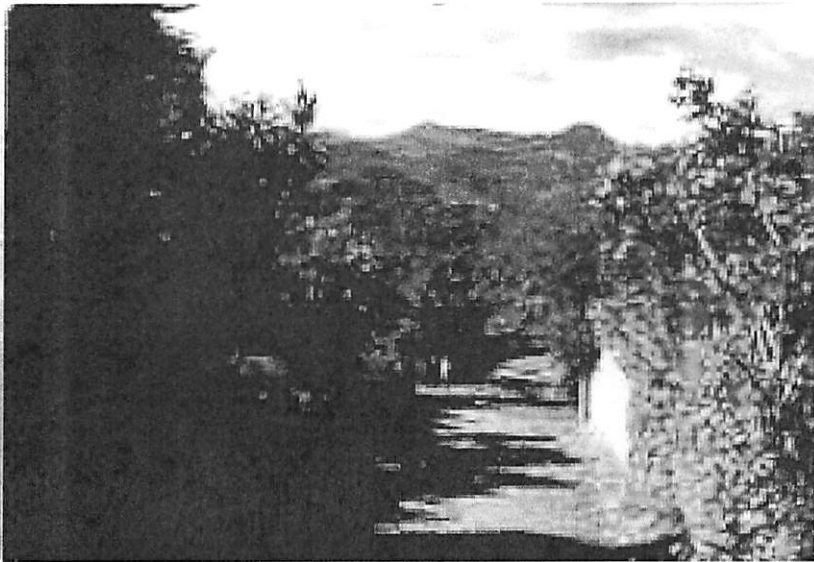


Figure 33. A road in Conacaste, Guatemala



Figure 34. Dogs running loose in the village



Figure 35. Building additional latrines

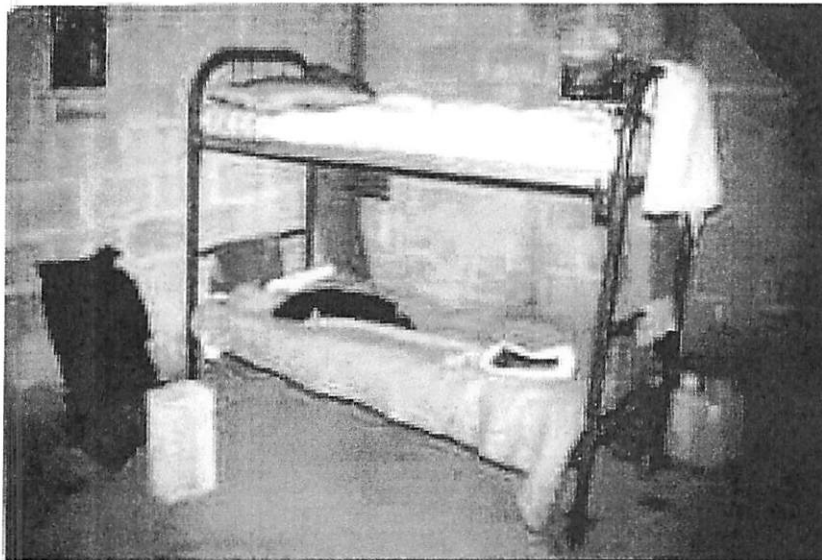


Figure 36. Army metal bed in a new house



Figure 37. The assembly building



Figure 38. Reviewing the findings from the first day



Figure 39. Discussing items that were generated in groups



Figure 40. A community leader from Cano Negro, Venezuela

Some of the water in Conacaste was collected in barrels that caught the run-off from roofs, but much of the water was carried by women in jugs from wells dug by hand (Figure 41). One reason why water was such a problem in this village is that a recent earthquake had lowered the water table.

The village has an interesting history. Back in the 1930's there was a land reform program. At that time every family received a plot of land of equal size. Some of the families had a large number of children and either had to divide the land up among the children and/or some of the children had to move to the city. Those families who had only a few children were more prosperous because there was more land to feed each person. We discussed this situation one evening after dinner (Figure 42). When I pointed out that the families that had only a few children were more prosperous, the people seemed stunned. Apparently, they had been taught that it was good to have large numbers of children. The people left early that night. I worried that I had offended them. But many more people attended the next day, and they were very attentive.

### *An Underlying Source of Tension*

The land reform of the 1930's had another very important effect on life in the village. When the land was divided up, some plots were better than others. In particular, some of the plots had water and some did not. Those people who had water on their land were in a position to supply water to their neighbors, whereas those who did not have water had to ask for water from their neighbors. Although there was much talk about buying water, the story that people told about the village was that those who had water would always give it to those who needed it. But whether a well was located on public or private land was a very important fact about a well. Also, I had noticed that some of the people in the village were very proud. They had a quiet dignity and carried themselves with unusual grace. It turned out that these were the people who did not have water. At one of the plenary sessions, I offered the explanation that those people who did not have water were in fact paying for it with pride and self-respect. They constantly had to reconstruct their pride in order to give some of it away in exchange for water.

The local people were moved by this explanation. No one contradicted this interpretation. Instead, the way water was discussed changed. Immediately, the building of a public well in the center of the village became a top priority. Previously ease of access to water determined one's rank in the village. But once the issue of water was openly discussed, and attention was focused on how water affected people's self-respect, attitudes regarding water changed dramatically. The community seemed to be more unified than it had been before. It was as though they now understood many puzzling tensions and antagonisms.



Figure 41. Drawing water from a well



Figure 42. Discussing the day's events over dinner

On the two field trips outside the village we visited a cement plant (Figure 43) and a double-knit weaving factory (Figure 44). The factory was owned by a German company that sold the material in the U.S. and Europe. The machines were very sophisticated. The foreman, who wore a pistol in his belt, said he would save scraps of material for us and gave us some samples. One of the women said that she would make the scraps into dresses for children. On the way back through the city we were stopped and searched for guns or bombs (Figure 45). There was a national election in the country that day and the police were afraid that people might bring guns into the city.

### *Principles of Village Economics*

I was put in charge of the business team for this planning conference. The approach to economics that the Institute uses in its projects is simple but effective.

1. Increase the amount of money brought into the village by selling agricultural products or manufactured goods.
2. Reduce the amount of money flowing out by providing goods and services inside the village.
3. Increase the number of times that money changes hands before it leaves by providing more services, for example restaurants, laundries, and hair styling salons.
4. Increase skills through education and cooperatives that bring in speakers on business and agricultural topics.
5. Obtain equipment through donations, grants, or by pooling resources.

In this village, a major cause of money flowing out was that people bought their bread in a neighboring town. We found a woman who was willing to begin a bakery to keep some of this money in the village. She would still have to buy flour and other ingredients, but the work of the bakery would be inside the village. Another woman said that she wanted to establish a hairdressing salon in her home, and we encouraged her to do so. By the last day of the conference one woman had made some dresses, one woman had baked some bread, and several people had made signs labeling these two businesses (Figure 46). The word "Panadaria" means "bakery" (Figures 47 and 48).

The team that was concerned with public works set out to define the town square more clearly (Figure 49). Previously cars and trucks had been parked almost anywhere in the center of town. The people wanted certain areas to be limited to pedestrians. So they found some rocks to serve as markers and painted them white. They also widened and straightened out some of the roads near the center of town (Figure 50).

Figure 43. A nearby cement plant



Figure 44. A double-knit weaving factory



Figure 45. Being searched by police while entering Guatemala City



Figure 46. Making signs for the bakery and the sewing shop

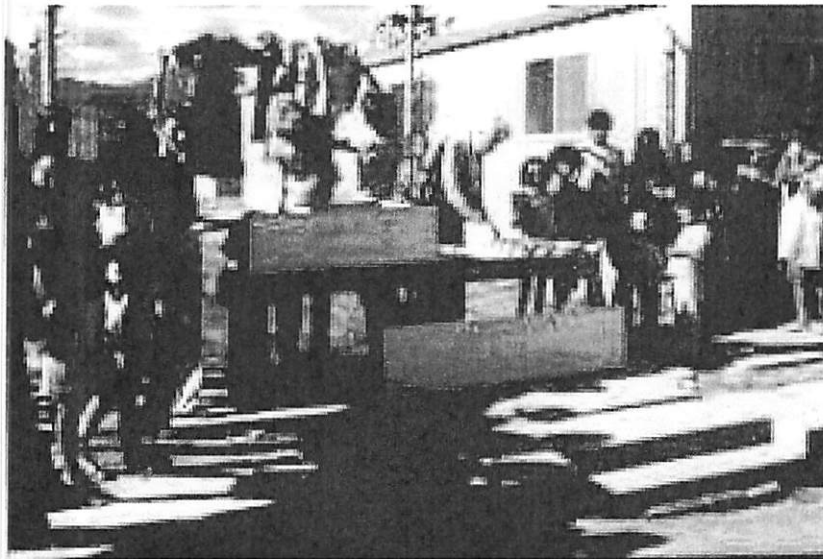


Figure 47. The first products from the bakery and the sewing shop



Figure 48. The local seamstress and a Peruvian song writer



Figure 49. Marking the pedestrian areas in the town square

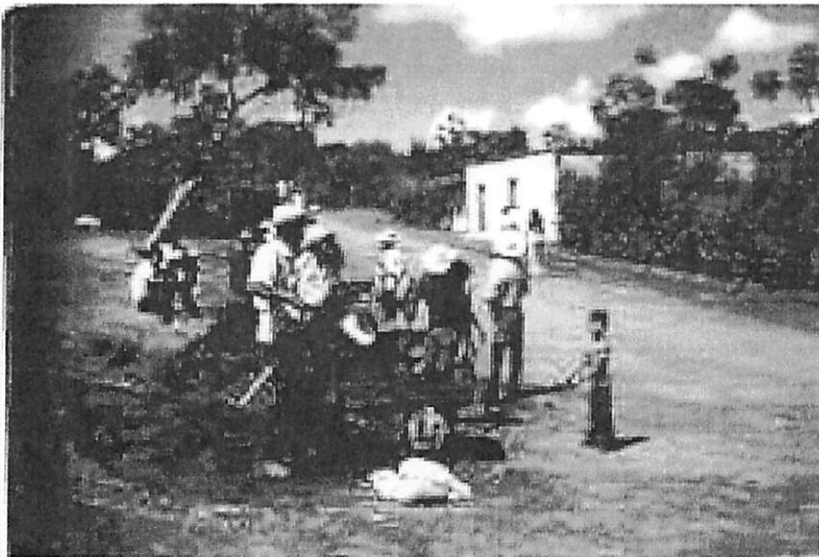


Figure 50. Straightening out the road through town

## WOBURN LAWN, JAMAICA

Woburn Lawn, Jamaica, is located in the Blue Mountains about two hours drive from the capital city of Kingston on the southern side of the island of Jamaica (Figure 51). Many fruits and vegetables grow in the mountains -- mangoes, papaya, bananas, breadfruit, carrots and coffee (Figure 52). Marijuana also grows well. Carrots and fruit are important crops today. In the past there were coffee plantations in this area. Most of the people are the descendants of slaves brought to Jamaica to work on the coffee plantations. The flowers, such as hibiscus, are spectacular.

Most of the people in this village live in wooden shacks with corrugated metal roofs (Figure 53). The more sturdy houses are stucco and are painted (Figure 54). Some of the consultants were housed in a former coffee plantation house (Figure 55). There was running water but no hot water, so the showers in the morning were quite cold. There was wiring for electricity in the house in anticipation of the future electrification of the area, but it was not yet working. We used flashlights and candles instead.

The church served as the meeting hall for the planning conference (Figure 56). This area is so hilly, level ground is greatly prized (Figure 57). One advantage of the terrain is that there is always a nice view. Our meals were prepared in an outdoor kitchen (Figure 58).

The families are large. Ten to twelve children in a family is not uncommon. Often the older children go to London looking for work. Jamaica is still a part of the British Commonwealth. The Rastafarians, who use marijuana in their religious practices, are numerous in Jamaica.

The sequence of topics discussed were the same as in the other Human Development Projects – vision, obstacles, strategies, tactics, and actions. Each morning after breakfast the groups would report what they had learned the previous day (Figure 59). The ideas were written on note cards and then clustered on display boards (Figure 60). This exercise showed that people in different groups were generating very similar ideas. Consequently, the people learned that they were not alone in what they wanted for their community. Clustering the ideas also showed which ideas came up most often (Figure 61). Frequency of mention was one indicator of importance.

Figure 51. A view of the Blue Mountains in Jamaica

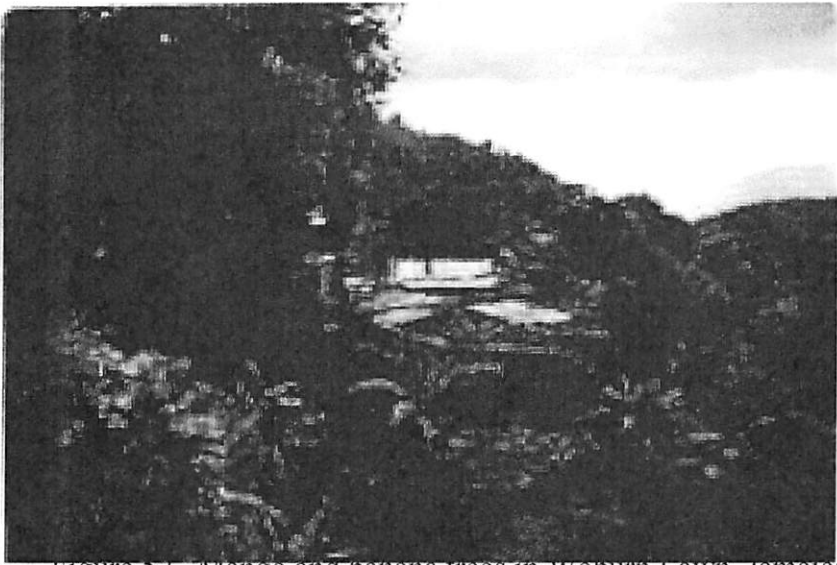


Figure 52. Mango and banana trees in Woburn Lawn, Jamaica



Figure 55. A wooden house

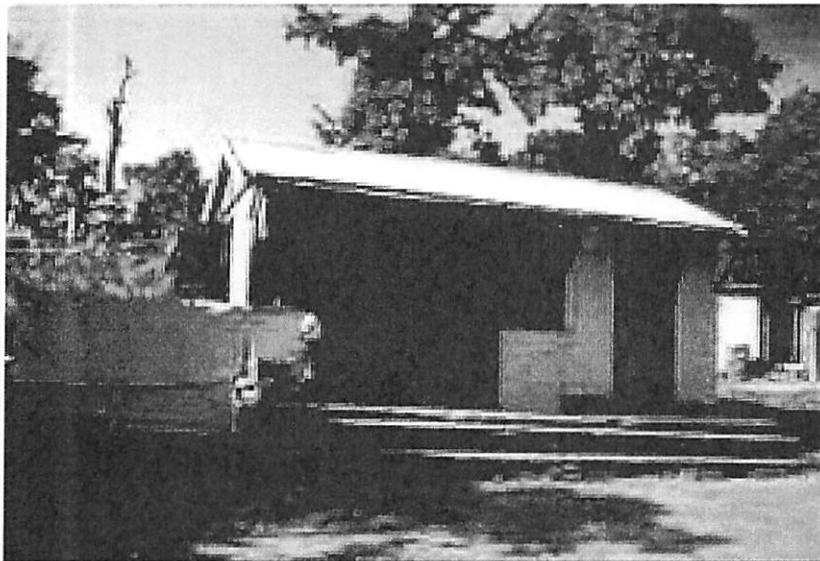


Figure 54. A newly painted store

Figure 55. An old plantation house



Figure 56. The church were meals were eaten and meetings held



Figure 57. The church from above



Figure 58. The kitchen where food was prepared



Figure 59. Groups reporting findings



Figure 60. Combining the findings of the various groups

### *A Procedure for Generating Consensus*

The method of clustering the items is as follows. People are seated according to their groups -- business, agriculture, education, services, and celebrations. Each group is asked to select five of its most important items. Then, speaking to the whole group, each specialized group states an item. The second group states an item. The third group states an item and so on. The process is repeated until each group has reported all five items. By the end of this process the most important clusters are identified. From time to time items need to be explained, and occasionally the clusters are rearranged. Items can be discussed or clarified, but not rejected. Everything that anyone says is accepted. There is no debating and there are no winners or losers. The items reflect the thoughts of the people in the community.

After an hour or two in the mornings clustering and discussing the ideas that were generated the day before, we went on field trips. The farmland is very hilly. Farmers often have to walk 40 minutes or an hour and a half from their homes to their fields (Figure 62). The school in this village was unusually good. The teacher was very dedicated. The children attended school regularly and all wore uniforms (Figure 63).

After lunch we discussed the topic of the day -- vision, obstacles, strategies, tactics, or actions. In the afternoon there was another field trip and then at night we wrote down what we had learned during the day (Figure 64). The evening work attracted a great deal of attention (Figure 65). Perhaps the children had not seen people doing so much paperwork before (Figure 66).

The field trips outside the community are very important to give the local people new ideas about business and job opportunities (Figure 67). The idea is to expand their conception of what is possible. My group went to a canning factory, where fruit is cooked and canned for export, and to a furniture factory.

The people of Woburn Lawn had a very visible experience with what could be achieved by listening to consultants and working together. There was a granite outcropping on the cricket field (Figure 68). The sports enthusiasts had been playing around this outcropping for many years. They wanted to get rid of the rock. I looked at it and decided that dynamite was the only way. But one of the consultants had worked on building roads in Nigeria. He thought that by alternately building a fire on the rock and then throwing water on it, it would be possible to crack the rock and eventually break it into pieces.

They started by banging on the rock with a sledgehammer and chisel (Figure 69). They built a fire on the rock (Figure 70) and then threw water on it (Figure 71). They repeated these operations several times a day (Figure 72) and within three or four days had reduced the size of the rock considerably (Figure 73). After the planning conference was over, I was told that they reduced the height of the rock to below ground level and then covered over the spot. The unobstructed cricket field became a symbol of what could be accomplished by working together. On the last day of the conference a preschool was organized (Figure 74).



Figure 61. Discussing the clusters of ideas

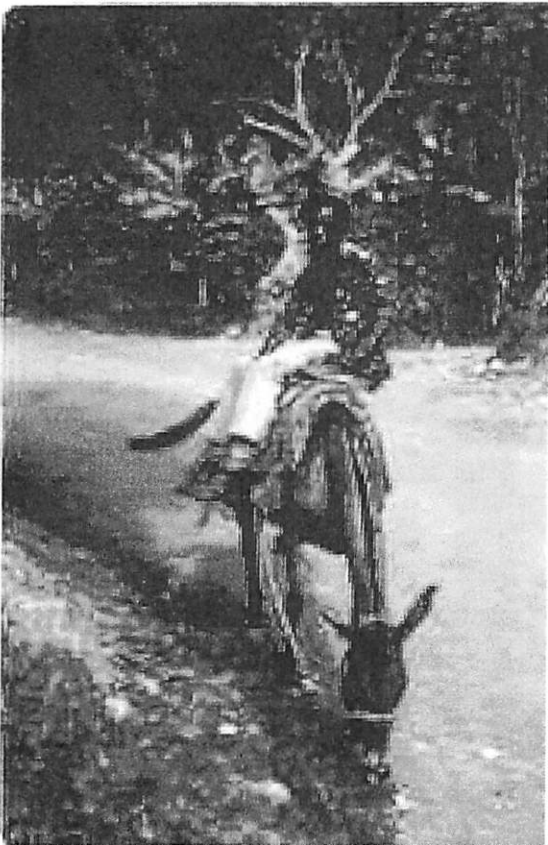


Figure 62. A local mode of transportation

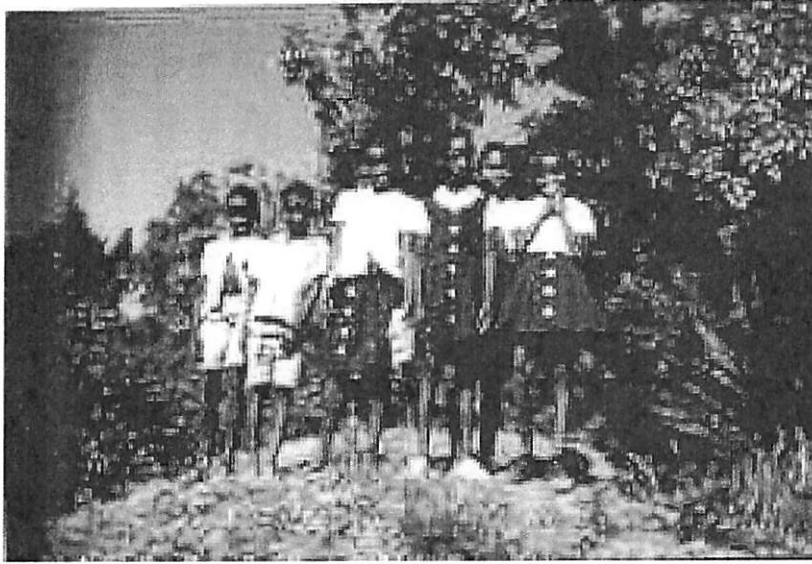


Figure 63. School children in their uniforms

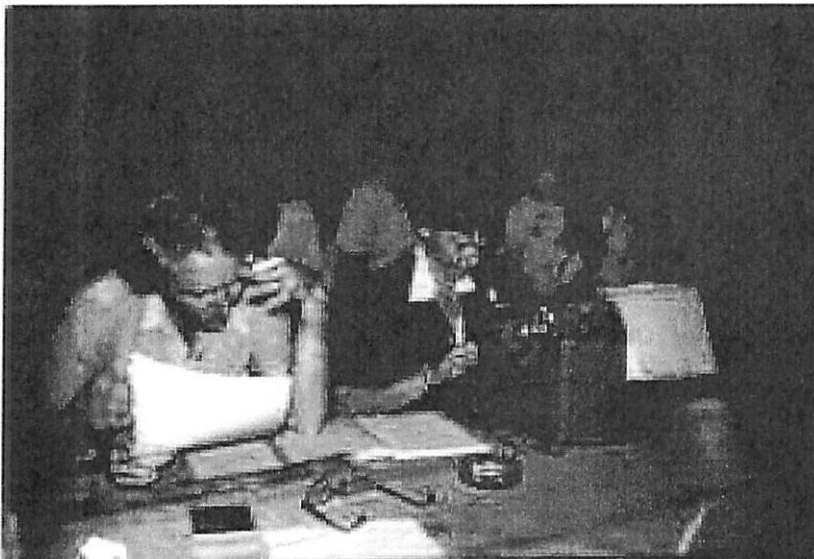


Figure 64. Writing up results at night

Figure 65. Evening work observed by children



Figure 66. Children observing the report writing



Figure 67. Buses used for field trips



Figure 68. The rock in the cricket field

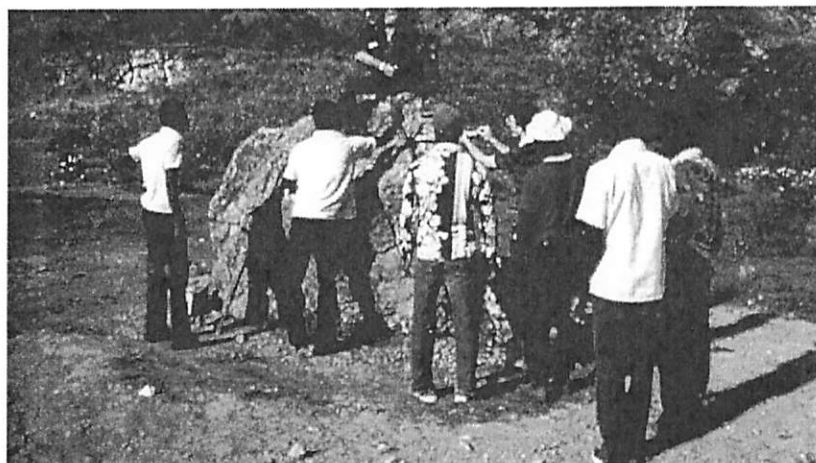


Figure 69. Chipping at the rock



Figure 70. Heating the rock with fire



Figure 71. Dousing the rock with water



Figure 72. Chipping at the rock



Figure 73. The rock after a few days



Figure 74. Starting a preschool

## BACKGROUND ON THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

When the Institute started its community work in Chicago in the 1960's much of their money came from the Headstart Program, a federal program designed to increase the performance of poor children in school. There were other programs funded in other ways.

The people from the Institute taught the children not only reading and writing but also self-confidence. The children learned a ritual. When asked, "Who are you?" The children replied, "I am the greatest!" When asked, "Where do you live?" the children replied, "In the universe!" When asked, "Where are you going?" they replied, "To bend history." However, The people in the Institute discovered that it was necessary to work with all age groups. They found that some children would go home and be told by a parent or grandparent, "You're just a dirty little kid, and you'll never amount to anything. Where you gettin' them big ideas?" They learned that everyone in the community needed to share the vision and needed to be involved.

### *How the Institute Began its Work*

Joe Mathews was invited to Chicago to be Dean of the Ecumenical Institute, which had been established by a resolution of the World Council of Churches. He brought with him a group of clergymen and seminary school graduates from Texas. They decided they did not want to work in suburban churches, that they would go where the need was greatest. They started a project on the west side of Chicago in a black community called Fifth City. In 1968 in the riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. their facilities and many other buildings in the community were burned. They had to decide whether to give up or to try again. They held a meeting with representatives of all of the groups in the community to decide what to do.

The meeting was very successful. Every six months or so they would repeat the planning activity. They felt that they had developed an effective set of methods for working with communities. They decided to try the methods in a Third World setting. Their second project was in the Marshall Islands, a U.S. protectorate. They used the same methods and once again, the methods worked quite well. They set up some local industries and rewrote the history of the people there. The islanders had been occupied by the Japanese, the British, the French and the Americans and had lost their own history. They did not know what the original names of the villages were or even what their own family names were other than the English names. The consultants reconstructed as much of the history as they could from historical records.

The people in the Institute, now called the Institute of Cultural Affairs, decided to do eight demonstration projects. Not long thereafter they decided to do one demonstration project in each of the 24 time zones around the world. The projects in Ivy City in Washington, DC, and in Shantumbu, Zambia, were two of these 24 projects. The Human Development Projects in Guatemala and Jamaica were part of the second wave of human development projects.

At several of the original 24 projects they set up Human Development Training Schools. People from surrounding villages were brought to the original village where they were taught the organizing methods. They then returned to their own villages and started projects. Training schools were conducted in India, Venezuela, the Philippines and South Korea. In India, they have done several hundred projects.

The methods have evolved over the years. Every summer around the Fourth of July representatives from all of the various projects come back to Chicago where for two or three weeks they review what they have learned, modify the methods, and then go back to the field. These summer planning sessions included reading assignments from contemporary authors -- both religious authors such as Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr and social scientists such as Kenneth Boulding and Hazel Henderson. The organization operates like an on-going social experiment.

### ***Building Village Organizations***

The Institute organizes a community along two dimensions. The various professions are called "guilds." Geographical areas are called "stakes." There is usually an agriculture guild, a business guild, an education guild, a health guild, and a celebrations guild. Stakes are defined by villages or neighborhoods. The guilds focus primarily on training and sharing information and resources. Stakes focus more on families and their problems. The leader of a stake tries to know everyone in his or her area and what their special needs are. The stakes may help to find jobs for adults or tutors for children. At stake meetings the plans developed during the planning conference are presented and thoroughly discussed. The stakes also perform a periodic census so that data is available on the needs that exist and the progress that is being made. There is an elected Community Assembly and a Secretariat that manages the work of the guilds and stakes.

The celebrations guild is very important. It arranges parties for the various holidays during the year, for example, in the U.S. the Fourth of July, Halloween, Christmas, and New Year's Eve. They arrange parties for children, parties for senior citizens, and Saturday night dances for teen-agers. Admission charged for these events covers costs and brings in money for equipment and other activities.

On the walls in the community center they put a calendar of events, an organization chart, and slogans and inspirational quotations. Simply by walking into the community center and looking around it is possible to learn a great deal about what is happening and how the various activities are organized. This open display of timetables and organization charts broadens participation.

### ***Financing and Modes of Participation***

These projects are financed in a variety of ways. The consultants who take part in the planning conference pay their own way. The people who stay in the community for a period of about two years are usually two or three couples. It is common for one person in a couple to have a regular job, such as teaching English in an embassy school. The other member of the couple works full time in the community. If they need equipment, they try to have it donated or loaned. In the United States a corporation such as McDonald's can donate hamburgers for a Fourth of July event and deduct the retail value as a charitable contribution. These donations are an effective form of advertising because they build good will. If a community center needs furniture, a furniture store may donate furniture that has been in stock for a while and has not sold.

Whenever possible the Institute receives development grants for things like irrigation equipment from the local government or other government agencies, such as the U.S. Agency for International Development. Some individuals give money to the Institute in addition to or in place of giving money to a church.

The Institute serves as a link between those who have skills and resources and those who need them. Many professional people would like to devote some time to helping others, but they do not know how to make contacts. Of course there are many voluntary organizations, but the kinds of labor that these organizations require does not make full use of the skills that professional people have to offer. The Institute has devised a way to use the skills of professional people. Consultants who participate in planning conferences use their management skills, report writing skills, their personal networks, and their knowledge of how large organizations function. Attendance at planning conferences is an excellent learning opportunity for the consultants. For people who do not want to devote two years to the Peace Corps, the planning conferences that precede Human Development Projects and the projects themselves provide a first-hand introduction to poverty, its causes and remedies. These experiences in Third World countries can be any length of time that is desired. I find that traveling to a Third World country in order to take part in a Human Development Project is a much more meaningful way of traveling than staying in hotels and visiting museums, monuments, or ski resorts. Because one lives and works with the people in the country, it is rather like an anthropological version of mountain climbing. It is an experience that tests one's character and abilities.

Imagine for a moment a scale of various travel opportunities stretching from the Club Med on one end to the Peace Corps on the other end. There is a large gap in between. Sometimes one travels for pleasure and relaxation. At other times one travels to learn and to make a contribution. There may be new business opportunities in providing various combinations of these very different kinds of travel.

People from developed countries often underestimate the knowledge and skills they have that can be useful to people in developing countries. Let me mention a few of the ways I was able to make a contribution to the communities I visited. In addition to teaching a little reading and writing, I demonstrated and taught the use of a typewriter, mimeograph machine, camera, and tape recorder. I talked to the people in Zambia about different ways of preserving meat. When I saw the precarious way that bicycles were loaded, I drew a sketch of a tricycle. One young man was so intrigued, he began to make inquiries about where he could find a cutting torch and a welding machine. Since the climate in Zambia was hot and dry, I drew a sketch and explained how one could cool a community center or a home by hanging up wet sheets. When people were skeptical about the cooling effects of evaporation, we built a small evaporative cooler for milk and cream. One woman, who brought her knitting, found herself teaching knitting to some teen-aged girls. People who have lived in developed societies know many things and have many more skills than they realize. People in developing countries are eager to learn. But perhaps the main thing that people in poor communities learn from visitors is how to organize themselves, how to work together, and how to approach other people -- whether in government, business, or universities -- for assistance.

### *Dangers of these Methods*

For the villagers the principal danger in these methods is that hopes will be raised and then dashed, leaving the people even more dispirited than before. The people in the Institute are aware of this danger and work very hard to prevent it. They marshal considerable resources to support the Human Development Projects. The local people are involved at each step so that they themselves meet the resource people and engage in the negotiations. Furthermore, the consultants deliberately "work themselves out of a job" by turning over more and more responsibility to the villagers during their two years in the village. The Institute has several times stayed beyond two years when the village has seemed to be not yet ready.

Life in poor communities involves considerable hardship and self-sacrifice for people who could have comfortable professional jobs. Burnout is a problem in the Institute as in other social welfare organizations. As in many religious communities, leadership is crucial. The Institute's period of greatest innovation occurred under the leadership of Joe Mathews. After he died in 1977, the Institute's activities became less daring but more business-like, partly as a result of the need to provide long term care for their older members.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has described several community development projects in which the ability of local people to deal with their common problems has been increased. The means of increasing abilities has been to use interactive planning methods to build institutions and networks such as preschools, agricultural cooperatives, and ties of friendship between rural and urban people. The success of these methods has been demonstrated in poor communities in a variety of countries.

Communication between those with skills and those needing skills has been the basis of education since before schools were established. The modern world, with separate neighborhoods and professional groups, has tended to isolate people along class lines. Meanwhile, technology, including air travel, roads, and telephones, has created new opportunities to share ideas and experiences. Our knowledge of others is formed in large part by the mass media which tends to report extremes, such as violence in poor communities and materialism among the rich. Personal experience with people from other communities and other circumstances is the most effective way to change our mental models of each other.

When people from different communities come together to define and resolve the problems of a particular community, a certain style of communication (planning methods) has been found to be very effective. Furthermore, it is important to be aware of the way that the people in the community talk to each other on a continuing basis and to design the pattern of these conversations to insure that the conversations are healthy and productive (a positive story).

The people in the Institute operate on the assumption that 15% of the Earth's people control 85% of the Earth's resources, and 85% of the Earth's people control 15% of the Earth's resources. They build organizations and patterns of communication that allow people to share knowledge and resources effectively. By their example they encourage people to care about each other. Technologies based on the physical sciences have long been used in development efforts. The Institute has developed a set of technologies based on the social sciences.

National and international organizations engaged in development efforts have recognized the need not only for building infrastructure but also for community development and citizen involvement. Development agencies often hire organizations such as ICA to manage rural development projects. For example UNESCO hired the Institute to conduct a series of meetings around the world which culminated in a conference in 1983 in New Delhi, India, called the International Exposition on Rural Development under the slogan "Sharing Approaches that Work." (ICA, 1985, 1987, 1988)

Through its practical work the Institute has learned the importance of participation and has devised methods to enable individuals and groups to reconstruct their mental images in the direction of group cooperation and self-reliance. I was so impressed with the effectiveness of the Institute's methods that I used them in two planning conferences for the American Society

for Cybernetics (Umpleby, 1981 and 1983). Their methods can be thought of as a way to increase the adaptive capability of communities (Umpleby, 1986).

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Stuart A. Umpleby, is a professor in the Department of Management Science at The George Washington University where he teaches courses in cybernetics and systems theory. Other interests include interactive planning methods and applications of computers.

He received degrees in engineering, political science, and communications from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. While at the University of Illinois he worked in the Biological Computer Laboratory and the Computer-based Education Research Laboratory

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He has been using and designing computer conferencing systems since 1970. Between 1977 and 1980 he was the moderator of a computer conference on general systems theory supported by the National Science Foundation. This project was one of nine experimental trials of electronic information exchange for small research communities." About sixty scientists in the United States, Canada, and Europe interacted for a period of two and a half years using the Electronic Information Exchange System (EIES) located at New Jersey Institute of Technology.

Umpleby teaches a course in system dynamics modeling. He constructed a system dynamics model of national development for the US Agency for International Development.

Between 1982 and 1988 he arranged scientific meetings involving American and Soviet scientists in the area of cybernetics and general systems theory. In 1984 he spent part of a sabbatical year at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, an East-West research institute located near Vienna, Austria.

He is a past president of the American Society for Cybernetics.

Between 1976 and 1984 he worked for short periods of time as a volunteer in the United States and overseas with the Institute of Cultural Affairs, a private non-governmental organization specializing in human development.

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