

Seeking Prosperity

With the Flux of Today's Problems, the Institute of Cultural Affairs Is Here To Help

By Alison Parker

On Sheridan Road in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood, there stands a conspicuous stone building with lettering above the door that reads, "Institute of Cultural Affairs." It's large and looming, but most people would be clueless regarding what this building holds within its stone walls and what this organization actually does.

"We're not very commercially publicized," says ICA member Mary Laura Bushman. "We mainly just go by word-of-mouth."

For those clueless, the ICA is a private, not-for-profit social change organization whose primary objective is to promote positive change within communities and individual lives in the U.S. and internationally. Their philosophy is based on the idea of people finding their own solutions to problems. From the time it began, the ICA has helped effect change within governments, local communities, corporations, and volunteer organ-

creates sustainability in order for communities, organizations, and individual people to have thriving lives. How did they achieve this form of education? Mainly through old-fashioned trial and error, says Bushman. "We're well-known for developing a method to train others to lead groups. We did it by leading groups for years and years across the country and internationally. We still do, but now we do a lot of teaching other people how to teach through these courses."

A current example of the ICA's programs is

also an example of the non-hierarchical, all-encompassing method the ICA embraces and seems to think is the best possible way to create sustainability throughout. That is, that everyone can learn and what is learned should be passed on. "Right now, we're working a lot with schools and young mothers. We train the teachers, so they can train other teachers and they can teach parents. They teach them how to play and learn in a hands-on way," says ICA member Carol Pierce.

Aside from various programs, the ICA

in the building have to be non-profit with a social service mission close to ours. There's a real serious criteria to be in this building. It creates a kind of synergy," says Bushman.

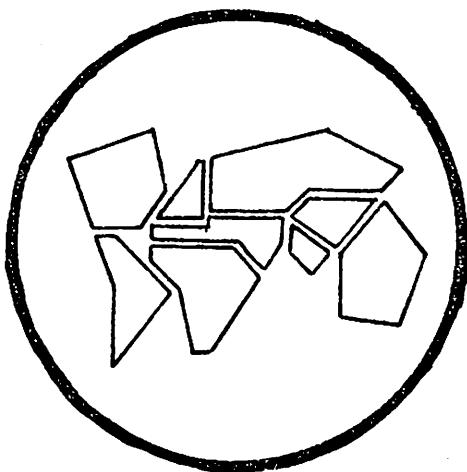
The building also is home to the International Conference Center, which non-profit groups are able to rent out, even for multi-day meetings. "A lot of church groups have used us for their conferences," ICA member Bob Hawley says. "We'd love more people to use us as a hostel. Many times they call us up, seek us out. A lot of the time it's all word-of-mouth."

Its methods are intended to generate ownership, create clear goals, open lines of communication, broaden perspectives, and motivate people to...

training and demonstration focused on development of local community potential. The methods of the ICA are designed to catalyze and co-ordinate locally initiated development. The continual adaptation of the methods, training events and planning formats have established their effectiveness in releasing human creativity.

The I.C.A. works in 32 nations through co-ordinated efforts of locally registered groups and international staff. Co-ordinating centers are in Hong Kong, Singapore, Bombay, Nairobi, Brussels and Chicago. The work is supported by a wide range of funding sources. Generally, foundations and corporations account for 40%, individuals 50% and churches and governments make up the remaining 10%. Base funding sources within each nation are sought to insure the stability of programs on the local level. International monies are sought as needed.

The programs of the ICA include a wide range of seminars, work shops, problem solving and program designing consultations, as well as the Human Development Projects. All programs are offered on the basis of cost or mutual benefit to interested people. The ICA staff, national and extra-national, are voluntary, self-supporting, work on a residential basis in pilot projects, and hold in common a concern for the well-being of the future world.



WAYA - CON
(+)
DIOS