

FIFTH CITY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Project Description Lab Report

December 1983

FIFTH CITY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT  
Project Description Lab Report

I.  
PROBLEM ARENA

In 1962 the ghetto resident was faced with a sense of despair. It was not that these people had lost their sense of humor. Neither was it their environment, nor a fear spawned by their neighbors. The resident of the ghetto was faced with the impact of hopelessness. Fifth Citizens were victims without roots; a people caught in the American transition explosion of urban decay, racial discrimination, local apathy, unequal distribution of resources, and ghetto crime. The ghetto citizen was disenfranchised, untrained and victimized by their situation. This hopelessness had driven people to despair of participating in the economic and decision making process when ballot boxes were "stuffed" by the political machine and housing and jobs were managed by absentee landlords.

The solution to this immense social situation was the radicality of a grass-roots program. A comprehensive, bottom-up approach to local neighborhood development was the response of this community. To achieve this purpose it was necessary to find ways to comprehensively rebuild the whole social, economic and organizational life of the community.

The major strategy was the creation of a cradle-to-the-grave education system. This involved programs for pre-schoolers--two years old to six years old--young adult skills training and elders continuing education. In this way the gaps not served by public education could be filled. This strategy also met the specific needs of releasing home-bound mothers to find employment, to re-train people to meet the unemployment crises and to serve the physical, mental and social needs of the elders and other family age groups.

The project, initiated through the efforts of the Ecumenical Institute (now the Institute of Cultural Affaires--ICA) in 1963 sought out concerned local people who saw the desperate need for urban renewal and had a vision of demonstrating hope and possibility in a situation where despair and hopelessness abounded. Local people took responsibility and by participating became trained in leadership and participatory methods. This training process has allowed local citizens to take over the operation of the Fifth City Project and its programs. The ICA is a consultant to the project.

## II.

### FUNDAMENTALS OF DEVELOPMENT

#### Presup-

positions: The keystones upon which the success of this comprehensive approach are based can be described as The Five Presuppositions and The Five Learnings.

The five principles of community redevelopment were applied providing a new and creative approach. Effective development (1) uses all the strengths, resources and gifts of the local people; (2) identifies all of the problems faced by the people involved; (3) defines the arena of service within a geographically defined area; (4) addresses the underlying spirit issue; (5) sustains the community with a strong symbol system.

#### Learnings:

The five learnings that are important to the success of Fifth City and relevant to the success of other ventures are: (1) The foundations of Imaginal Education philosophy and methodology; (2) a sensitive and responsive core of committed people is necessary for success; (3) a method of keeping the purpose or mission before the local people is crucial to their understanding, appreciation and involvement; (4) local leadership must have opportunities to share their successes and failures with other groups outside their home turf to stimulate interest and expertise; (5) the involvement of the public, private, volunteer sectors with local citizens is basic to generate a cooperative relationship.

From the beginning Fifth City has had an image of itself as a social pioneer developing a workshop where experimentation in the arena of social renewal could be explored. The edge of this experimentation is revealed in the Five Presuppositions in the previous paragraph. For the past twenty years Fifth City has placed itself in a position where research in new methods could be tried and/or other ideas could be verified.

The Des Moines, Iowa (USA) Rural Development Symposium (RDS) identified a series of "Keystones of Rural Development." When this screen is put over the activities and accomplishments of Fifth City three conclusions can be reached. First, motivational methods are used that begins by involving local people who are called upon to use their own insights in identifying the hopes and dreams they have for the future. Second, these methods call forth grassroots wisdom on what is blocking the practical implementation of this future. Third, a practical plan is created by the people themselves since they are the ones who must do it. This plan is created so that a timeline and an assignment rationale is made a part of it. Fourth, the creative use

of facilities and resources is adapted. Fifth, the plan is representative of the private, public, and volunteer sectors meeting with local people to create the future of their community.

### III.

#### UNIFYING STORY

"On behalf of":

What is it that attracts people to participate in this project? What is it that keeps participation and leadership at a high level? Without reservation it can be said that the STORY one tells is the unifying principle of this project. It is not a success story or a story of failure. It is a story about the larger purpose served by this project. It is understood that this project is done on behalf of the world community. It is story of self-less service to create a more humane environment for all the world's peoples which also creates a more human place to live in Fifth City.

The story is also related to Fifth City's self-understanding as being the fifth city. This name has historical roots and also a sociological application. In the original project, 5th Avenue was one of the major geographical boundaries. The people of this area of Chicago understood themselves as belonging to Fifth City--a political and social characteristic. At another level, sociologists have created five artificial definitions of living space. These designations include (1) the inner city, (2) the transition area, (3) the suburban, (4) the ex-urban or country side and (5) the renewed city. It is this play on words that helped to made the idea of Fifth City something more than just a renewal project.

Importance: The role and importance of symbols cannot be understated. The fifth of the Five Presuppositions states that "Symbols are key." In light of the human victimization and social collapse visible in this black community during the 1960's it became important to present an understanding of unshakable strength and solidarity. The IRON MAN statue is created out of one inch plate steel, standing ten feet tall and buried in a concrete base. This statue, with its human image and up-raised arms provides a sign of hope; a sign of the uncollapsible. A Biblical story for such an Iron Man can be found in the book of Jeremiah where it is told that the prophet went out into the desert during the social collapse of the people of Israel. He was sent out to be "a fortified city, a pillar of iron...to stand fast against the whole land." (Jeremiah 1:18 from the Old Testament.)

Ritualization of this community story has provided

another method to rehearse the story of 5th city's role in community renewal on behalf of the world. Each meeting of its various boards, agencies, councils and community wide events begins with the following ritual:

THE DRAMA OF HUMANNESS

Leader :Let us come to terms with life.  
Response :Our life is the city.  
The city is brokenness.  
Scattered, burnt pieces.  
Leader :Let us give the broken city to to  
the world.  
Response :Tomorrow the world is a city.  
Tall visions rise from the  
wreckage;  
Powerful, hard, black.  
Leader :Let us labor for the renewed city  
future.  
Response :Today our life is poured out.  
The whole world waits for our  
creation  
As we build, share, construct  
order.

IV.

PROGRAMMATIC SUMMARY

Imaginal Ed.: The first of the five basic keys to the success of this approach that works is the Imaginal Education Philosophy and Methods. This method is used throughout Fifth City in general and in the educational endeavors in particular. Simply stated, Imaginal Education is the understanding that when a person's picture of life changes that person will change his attitude and take a new relationship to his situation. The operating principle is that these foundational changes can be changed by providing alternate pictures of life.

The practical implementation of this philosophy resulted in a cradle-to-the-grave educational model. This model teaches all ages with a formal and an informal curriculum in which the social, psychological, recreational and life-spirit needs are addressed. Using a "spiral education process," each participant is met at their level of comprehension.

The process can be applied to other educational ventures in rural and urban, formal and informal settings. It also can be used to train others in model building, problem solving and consensus creation using large groups of diverse points of view. This process is an effective process for conducting meetings, and providing management and leadership training.

Preschool: The Fifth City Preschool celebrated its twentieth year of continuous operation in 1983. The longevity of the program itself is a testimonial to the importance it is

given by the community. It has graduated over 3000 youngsters and trained approximately 100 teachers and assistants. It has indirectly impacted the entire 8000 residents through contact with parents, grandparents, community events, celebrations and social gatherings.

This activity has been instrumental in changing the victim image by grounding the life pictures of hope and possibility early on in the lives of children. Each day they rehearse what it means to be black and to live on Chicago's Westside creating a sign of possibility for the world in the midst of seeming impossibility. Daily these children rediscover the great pictures of heroic black role models and retell the stories that illustrate their African roots. Daily they are given the opportunity to see first hand what it means to be great men and women who just happen to live in Fifth City.

They are also given a head start on the educational process. The Fifth City Preschool was selected in 1969 as one of the top ten pre-schools in the nation. This selection was granted by the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). To illustrate the dramatic change in the lives of young people it is told that when Mr. Sargeant Shriver, then the director of HEW, visited the Fifth City Preschool program, he had the following conversation with one youngster: Mr. Shriver asked, "Who are you, young man?" The young man replied, "I'm the greatest!" Mr. Shriver then asked, "And where do you live?" "In the universe!" the youngster responded.

Fifth City  
Business  
Careers:

In 1975 the Fifth City Business Careers was begun to provide basic skills training, practical skills applications and employment refinement to its graduates. This is a community-owned and operated business.

Community  
Center:

In 1980 the Community Center was opened as a service agency of Fifth City. Today it is the hub of activities that reaches into every age group in the community. One of its major contributions is in the area of elders' continuing education. The center provides a creative program of appropriate subjects covering timely topics as health and diet, and develops social and travel opportunities.

The Community Center has its own full time director who is responsible for its operation and program development. Within its educational perspective it provides for celebrative events that mark the journey of the people it serves. Following the completion of certain courses of study a graduation ceremony is

conducted for the elders. This is a fully developed ritual with caps and gowns for the ladies and gentlemen about to be graduated. Pomp and Circumstance is played while the graduates process and a graduation speaker points to the significance of this event.

A daily lunch is served to an average of 85 residents. A hot lunch is delivered to shut-ins and those incapacitated and unable to travel. The elders are encouraged to come to the Community Center because it provides an opportunity for social encounter.

## V

### PROJECT TYPOLOGIES

**Activities:** When Fifth City decided that cradle-to-the-grave education was a key solution a plan for preschool, youth summer and after-school activities, adult arts, job training and recreational, health, nutrition and study programs was proposed. The perceivable results include a licensed preschool for 100 children, a Youth Booster elementary recreational program for afterschool hours and summer days while parents are at work, Block Clubs, family, environmental, skills development and an Elders Program serving 65 ambulatory citizens five days a week and 10 shut-ins who receive carry in meals.

Because education and training has been a high priority, the Preschool has been training children twenty years and giving them a head start in the learning process. As a result the community has experienced a pride in the development of their children who begin their public school education ahead of others in their age group. The development of self-reliance ("I am."), self-confidence ("I can.") and self-respect ("I'm great."), and academic skills necessary to succeed in school and in life are the goals of this educational process.

Fifth City programs have organized under the directorship of five corporations that are audited annually. These organizations are the Fifth City Commercial Corp., Fifth City Chicago: Reformulation Corp., Fifth City Industrial Promotion Corp., Fifth City Business Association, and the Fifth City Child Development Institute.

**Support:** Public and governmental support is provided by the Illinois Department of Family Service, Public Aid, Illinois Board of Education, CETA (Now, Job Training Partnership Act--JTPA) and the US Department of Education. The City of Chicago provides funding for the Fifth City Business Careers.

Local support is provided by local business, the twenty

project directors and the local police.

**Volunteers:** Fifth City projects and educational ventures are gems of volunteerism. The Preschool was originally staffed by volunteers, some of whom worked twelve hour days in classroom management and in preparation. Other people have provided hugh amounts of time in work days, and community clean-up/paint-up parties. The creation of the Block Club and Stakes and Guilds (geographic and social organizations) have provided a structure through which volunteers could be creatively engaged.

Through the investment of their time, local volunteers operate the community center, unite in Block Club activities, participate in sharing their training with other West-side leadership and utilize state, federal and private grants to update their training, the facilities, equipment and materials.

**Independence:** The Fifth City project, while it has a twenty year history of cooperation with the Institute of Cultural Affairs, the Ecumenical Institute and many other organizations, is now rapidly moving to its independence. Evidence of this new thrust is the responsibility it has taken for the creation of the new economic development seen in the new Auto Center which is presently finishing construction. Also this independence is seen in the leadership provided in the West-side Leadership Institutes where the methods are being shared with the leadership of a wide variety of groups in near by neighborhoods.

## VI.

### PERCEIVABLE RESULTS

What is it one looks for when determining the impact of the project upon the community? What are the screens used to determine the significance of what has been accomplished? When such questions are asked, the results are usually numbers and percentages.

Because education and training has been a high priority for Fifth City, the Preschool has been serving children for the past twenty years giving them a head-start that administrators share an enthusiam with 5th citizens for the enrollment of these young people in the public school system.

The Fifth City educational structures provides symbols that hold before the community its purpose, accomplishments and the dedication required to continue development. These symbols are seen in the red and black uniforms of the staff and children's dress. Large murals decorate the sides of buildings rehearsing again

the story of their African heritage. The IRON MAN symbol standing in the plaza in front of the Shopping Center is a constant reminder of what it means to keep on keeping on. Singing occupies a part of every meeting.

The Fifth City Business Careers produces opportunities for local people to be trained to get clerical jobs which brings money to local families and helps keep the urban transition under control. This professional organization has received city and state recognition for its 70% job placement and 85% job retention record. While the competition for the city dollar has been keen, FCBC has been awarded another contract by the city for this next fiscal year because of the excellence of this record.

Continuing education opportunities abound at the Community Center for adults and elders to build their skills and methods training. This supplies to the community a better educated and better skilled citizen.

## VII. LATERAL INFLUENCE

The educational methods and philosophy embodied in Imaginal Education have literally been shared with the world. Preschools have been established wherever the ICA has been invited to establish its work. It is possible to go to another country and encounter children dressed in red and black and singing at the top of their lungs "When Iron Men Go Marching In" to the tune of "When The Saints Go Marchng In." When this happens you know you are in the midst of a globally replicated project.

The Fifth City Business Careers model, developed in a twin program entitled Training Inc., has been extended to five other places. Four of these are in the United States and one recently began operation in India.

Using these same models to serve the peoples of the world has been the expressed purpose of Fifth City since its beginning. These people have always known that their experiments in human development would be on behalf of the peoples of the globe. To this end, Human Development Projects have been established in over 800 communities. Most of these are located in the Third World. Significant demonstrations have been made in rural India and Africa.

Recently, Westside Leadership Institutes were created to take the methods of leadership training to a broad base of leadership on Chicago's west side. This is a project where Fifth City leaders have been trained to train others in conversation, presentation, workshop and meeting methods. Before the end of the year 1983 over

200 people will have been impacted with these skills.

#### VIII.

##### APPROACH LEARNINGS

There are five fundamental learnings to be shared with the world. There is a consensus among the Fifth City leadership that these have been important criteria for Fifth City and could be used anywhere in the world. There are:

1. The Imaginal Education philosophy and methods.
2. A sensitive and response core of leadership.
3. Symbols and story that hold the purpose of the project and invites participation.
4. A leadership exchange in which the leaders of Fifth City personally share their skills with those in other communities.
5. Four-sector involvement.

#1. The Imaginal Education philosophy and methods have been described in detail in other places in this document. In summary it is an understanding that people live out of a life picture (or "image") of themselves which colors or alters the way in which they relate to themselves, others and the environment. If these images are not helpful, but are depreciating, then that individual is incapable of making rational decisions about their style of life. The methods provide a number of ways to change these unhelpful images by providing a new operating picture. These methods can be called "life methods" and encompass the totality of human experience.

#2. A sensitive and responsive leadership core is critical when it is understood that local development is not done by outsiders. This core is those who have a vision for the future of the community and are willing to expend the time and energy to make their dream a reality. The criteria determining leadership is that local residents be available to be trained and to provide leadership at events and meetings. One key to the success of the Preschool is that it is staffed by trained local residents. Also the participation of this leadership in planning and consensus building is important to their motivation and continued service.

Today this core is made up of the program directors and incorporation leaders who meet weekly to share their problems, create new approaches, determine and present their budgets, receive the investments of economic support and determine the best use of funds. These are volunteers who hold the well-being of all the programs in their determinations. A Board of Managers meet daily to document their learnings and establish the programs

that best meet the needs of the entire community.

#3. The significance of symbols and story can not be overstated. The role that symbol and story has played in Fifth City has been well documented in other places in this report. It is to be remembered that people do not give their service to buildings of brick and mortar. Rather, they are willing to give their time, effort and resources to a cause that is greater than they. People are willing to fight for the renewal of their local community if they see the flag of their cause leading them into the battle. When people are tired and find more work than they bargained for it is then that singing and art-forms keep them going.

#4. Leadership exchange is important not only for the impact upon another community but also for what happens the those who decide to participate in the sharing. Outreach works both ways. It allows for an exchange of what works and stimulates new methods of working on old problems. The extention of the methods and models occured during the first eighteen years of the 5th City Human Development Project during which leadership and staff were sent out to consultaions in local communities. The Pre-school staff traveled to other towns to teach the methods. The FCBC staff created and shared three hour modules with other organizations and businesses. The Community Center staff has taken the methods and created one day training institutes across Chicago's westside.

#5 Four-sector involvement is fundamental for effective community development. The representation of these four sectors maintains credibility, finds funding and publically enables the story to be quickly and effectively shared across the environment.

#### IX. PLANNING PROCESS

Congress, Council, Core and organization meetings provide the framework for the planning process. Each of these employ the problem solving process pioneered through the educational ventures in Fifth City.

First, this process establishes the hopes and dreams that local people have for the future of their community. Second, a consultation of local people meet with outsiders who provide perspective and with experts to bring a depth of insight. This consultation is facilitated by a group who serves as leadership in a dialogue to identify the underlying contradictions (real blocks under the control of those who can do something about them) and to build a model to solve these blocks out of their own local effort and resources.

A yearly Congress is held that invites the entire community to come share in the evaluation of the past year and to bring freshness to the vision of the future.

Quarterly Councils are held to provide problem solving or to bring new insights and implementation for the work of the next three months.

The Core, as previously described, is charged with the responsibility of making daily and weekly assignments, and to oversee the direction taken as the work progresses.

#### X.

##### MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Management skills are developed in a variety of ways by seizing every opportunity for training of local people and giving the chance for creative involvement. Over the years people have become trained through hands-on experience. People have developed skills through participation in organizations, in different programs and in businesses established in the community.

Formal training in management skills goes on at Fifth City Business Careers where local citizens become trained in marketable skills.

The Community Center teaches leadership and management skills to interested elders. The General Education Diploma program (GED) is presented several times each year. Fifth City Business Careers also makes the GED available as a regular part of their curriculum.

The Preschool teachers are constantly updating their skills. These teachers have taken advantage of an opportunity to obtain certification through the city's accreditation plan. Their Parent Advisory Board and volunteer substitute roster all combined to give the needed support to ensure that proper classroom time and preparation could be made. In this way the teachers received their Associate of Arts degrees.

#### XI.

##### WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT.

Women play a significant and major role in this project. They are highly visible in every facet of the work from up-front leadership to maintenance and repair work. They serve on the decision making boards, serve as faculty, direct program arenas, and serve as heads of corporations that direct the programs. Fifth City's participation and leadership is egalitarian. In fact, some have commented that the contradiction of the project is not the visibility of women directing the project, rather it is how to involve the black male whose operating principle is that of a victim of his

situation.

The Preschool program was established early on as a method of releasing mothers to provide primary and secondary incomes for their families. The Fifth City Business Careers is directed by a women. The majority of students in attendance at FCBC are young ladies.

## XII.

### THE HUMAN FACTOR

It has been said that what changes lives, changes community. This statement describes the human factor in community development. If lives are not changed, then the project has failed to meet its intended purpose. The sole function of Imaginal Education is to altar the operating pictures that prevent people from living whole and humane lives. Already described is Sargeant Shrivens confrontation with the black youngster who understood himself to be "the greatest" and whose dwelling was "in the universe." A list of testimonials would document such life changing experiences as those who arrive at Fifth City Business Careers with a fourth grade reading comprehension level and leave with employment skills. Or the testimonies could tell the story of local people whose vision of the future was limited to eighteen square blocks but now have seen the world, and not from the perspective of rich tourists but in the person to person contact with villagers whose vision has likewise been expanded because of the care and concern of others to come to far away places with strange sounding names to share the methods of community renewal.

## XIII.

### METHODS AND MODELS

There are basically three major catagories of human methods that can be replicated in any community and/or organization. They are 1) Imaginal Education Methods, 2) Participatory Planning Methods, and 3) Spirit Motivation Techniques. Imaginal Education Methods are used in all the educational ventures in Fifth City: the preschool, the elders' program, the Westside Leadership Institute and Fifth City Business Careers. Participatory Planning Methods are used in the Westside Leadership Institute, which is training others to use these methods. The yearly Community Congress, the quarterly Community Councils, and all weekly meetings use participatory methods. Spirit Motivation Techniques, such as working in teams, singing, saying the Fifth City rituals at meetings, using symbols and intentional decor are examples of the kinds of activities that keep the leadership going over the long haul and bring the leaders and members into a common purpose.

#### XIV.

##### TECHNICAL/FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

In earlier days, the prevailing philosophy was that those in power and with all the money were the ones who decided what happened in communities. But Fifth City developed a philosophy of "partnerships" among the four sectors--local, private, public and volunteer--that created a workable and creative atmosphere which set the stage for integrated development. In this "partnership" all four sectors have important roles to play to occasion and sustain local development. All sectors participate in discerning the issues and decide what to do. But the local is the most important because they are the ones who must implement the programs.

The resources of all four sectors are integrated to create a successful program. In the Fifth City Preschool, the local sector provides staff, the volunteer sector provides the technical assistance, the public sector provides basic funds and the private sector provides additional funding and in-kind materials. At FCBC the private sector becomes a "partner" through finding and providing jobs for the trainees. The public sector is a "partner" by recruiting new trainees.

#### XV.

##### LEADERSHIP AVAILABILITY

Fifth City has been asked to share Imaginal Education Methods, Participatory Planning Methods and Spirit Motivation Techniques with many other communities. Leadership and staff of 5th City are available for consultations in these arenas. Formal and informal courses are available and individual needs can be met through pre-event planning to insure a sharp focus. The Imaginal Education course is a formal instruction course. Models for the Fifth City Preschool and Fifth City Business Careers are available. Other models include the Elders' curriculum, social analysis process and a problem solving process. The Human Development and Economic Development Presuppositions are available. Two other formalized courses for leadership training are the LENS (Leadership Effectiveness and New Strategies) course and the Westside Leadership Institute (WLI) training course

Staff from the Fifth City Preschool, Fifth City Business Careers and the Community Center are qualified to share with you and your organization these methods and models.

#### XIV.

##### TECHNICAL/FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

In earlier days, the prevailing philosophy was that those in power and with all the money were the ones who decided what happened in communities. But Fifth City developed a philosophy of "partnerships" among the four sectors--local, private, public and volunteer--that created a workable and creative atmosphere which set the stage for integrated development. In this "partnership" all four sectors have important roles to play to occasion and sustain local development. All sectors participate in discerning the issues and decide what to do. But the local is the most important because they are the ones who must implement the programs.

The resources of all four sectors are integrated to create a successful program. In the Fifth City Preschool, the local sector provides staff, the volunteer sector provides the technical assistance, the public sector provides basic funds and the private sector provides additional funding and inkind materials. At FCBC the private sector becomes a "partner" through finding and providing jobs for the trainees. The public sector is a "partner" by recruiting new trainees.

#### XV.

##### LEADERSHIP AVAILABILITY

Fifth City has been asked to share Imaginal Education Methods, Participatory Planning Methods and Spirit Motivation Techniques with many other communities. Leadership and staff of 5th City are available for consultations in these arenas. Formal and informal courses are available and individual needs can be met through pre-event planning to insure a sharp focus. The Imaginal Education course is a formal instruction course. Models for the Fifth City Preschool and Fifth City Business Careers are available. Other models include the Elders' curriculum, social analysis process and a problem solving process. The Human Development and Economic Development Presuppositions are available. Two other formalized courses for leadership training are the LENS (Leadership Effectiveness and New Strategies) course and the Westside Leadership Institute (WLI) training course

Staff from the Fifth City Preschool, Fifth City Business Careers and the Community Center are qualified to share with you and your organization these methods and models.