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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

by

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In every period of history we come across examples of nations which rapidly and dynamically have been able to mobilize their natural and human resources to attain the highest level of economic and cultural achievement of their time.

In our present-day steel and atomic age humanity has, however, reached a point where, for future development, it is no longer possible to imagine that only few nations in their turn will activate the economic and cultural progress of mankind. The development of any country is dependent on the use of total world resources and on peaceful cooperation between nations. When we look around us we realize, perhaps for the first time in world history, that the problems of mankind are, and must be approached as, global problems, and not merely as problems related to a limited group of economically fortunate countries.

Several nations have embarked on programmes intended to speed up their technical, social and economic development. Not all, however, are able to tap their resources without economic and advisory assistance from

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abroad, and one of the main duties of the United Nations (in addition to the political aspect of its work) and of the Specialized Agencies such as the World Health Organization, is to offer assistance to member governments in their various programmes to improve the economic and social conditions of their people.

During the period of speeding up the economic and social development of their country many responsible national leaders have realized that a basic change in the attitude, motives and expectations of the different population groups is necessary. This is particularly true in the case of countries with big rural population groups living in traditional villages, especially if, in the earlier phases of the country's recent history, the people in the villages have played no part in its government and may even have had reason to feel direct hostility against the earlier forms of the central government.

It is understandable that countries with different social structures and cultural traditions will tackle this problem of change in different ways. Programmes designed to achieve this change have, in the English language alone, been described by such various names as "community organization", "community planning", "village development", "rural development", "community action", "community education" and, as the most accepted international form "community development".

#### DEFINITION

"Community Development" is understood, in present international usage, to be a component of the wider concept of economic and social development, and should prepare for and influence the above-mentioned basic change.

Community Development "considers the processes by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of the governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of the communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress". (For further definitions please see Document EM/HEP.Sem/2, dated 22 August 1958 by Dr Lucy Morgan).

#### THE NATURE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

In a Seminar on Health Education of the Public it is of interest to note how similar the basic processes of community development are to those of sound public health practice and health education of the public.

Annex III of the Twentieth Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (E/2931) dated 18 October 1956 describes the nature of the community development processes as follows:

- " In relation to the people, community development is essentially both an educational and an organizational process.
- " It is educational because it is concerned with changing such attitudes and practices as are obstacles to social and economic improvements, engendering particular attitudes which are conducive to these improvements and, more generally, promoting a greater receptivity to change. This implies developing the capacity of the people to form judgements on the effects of activities and to determine the goals to be arrived at, to adopt technical changes and to adjust themselves to changes brought about by outside forces. In actual operations, field workers (or practitioners) must be concerned with getting specific things done. So the immediate objectives of community development can be defined in terms of more literates, improved agricultural production, better health, better nutrition, fuller use of labour, capital formation in the form of roads, wells, community centres, and so on. But community development should not be regarded simply as a series of episodes embodied in concrete achievements. Success in these, important though it may be, is less important than the qualitative changes expressed in attitudes and relationships, which add to human dignity, and increase the continuing capacity of the people to help themselves to achieve goals which they determine for themselves. It is in this sense that community development is an educational process.
- " It is organizational, not only because people acting together are better able to pursue the interests which they have in common, but also because it requires the re-orientation of existing institutions or the creation of new types of institutions to make self-help fully effective and to provide the necessary channels for governmental services. To be fully effective, this demands the emergence and training of a new type of local leaders. The value of organizing the people consists not only in the help which it may give towards

achieving particular concrete results, but also in the general contribution which it may make towards increasing social coherence.

" Successful organization may be expected both to enhance the dignity and welfare of members of the community as individuals, and strengthen the sense of social security which goes with belonging to a group.

" If the full benefits of better education and improved organizations are to be realized, two conditions seem necessary. First, the felt needs of the people should be taken into consideration. People will not participate in community development programmes unless they are getting what they want. Accordingly, the first duty of those responsible for community development programmes is to identify the felt needs of the people. They should also assist the people in making better judgements for themselves on what their needs are and how to satisfy them. Finally, they should be able to identify needs not yet perceived and make the people conscious of them and aware of the importance of satisfying them. It should be recognized, however, that it may be impracticable to satisfy some local needs or that they may be inconsistent with government policy for economic and social development of the nation. Secondly, various forms of assistance are required. These include the provision of technical advice, technical assistance, help with equipment, organization of supplies, provision of credit, or grants-in-aid. "

From the very nature of community development as elaborated above, it is clear to every health worker that the health component also has to be a part of any integrated programme based on the above-mentioned principles.

To achieve the ultimate objective of a fuller and better life for individuals within the family and the community, the technical services (including health services at local level) must be conceived in a manner which recognizes the indivisibility of the welfare of the individual.

A community development programme in an ideal integrated form should have contributions from the following major services:

Agricultural services (including agriculture extension and home economics extension); nutrition services; education (including the role of schools in community development and fundamental education); vocational guidance and training; cooperatives; handicrafts and small industries; social welfare services; housing, building and planning; and health services, naturally all balanced between themselves according to local needs and resources available.

### THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To provide services as mentioned above would normally be the responsibility of the ministry of the department concerned, e.g. agriculture, education or health. However, the actual need for "community development" is usually created by the fact that in the past there have been no services on the spot for most of the villages or other communities (total lack of health services, schools, agricultural advice, etc.), or that there has been no cooperation and understanding or demand from the local population for these services due to the non-existence of responsible local administration based on representation from the people. In some cases only one type of service is available i.e. schools, but not health or agricultural services.

Based on a proper diagnosis of what is lacking in the administration of technical services, and on those resources technically and financially available, various countries have tried to solve the administrative aspect of community development in their own way.

### EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

In the Province of Egypt of the United Arab Republic the various technical services at the village level have been combined into one organization. This so-called "combined centre" has staff representing health services, social welfare, agriculture and education, but its programme is coordinated to meet the needs of the villagers in a more efficient way than would have been possible by each individual service.

Pakistan, with its shortage of technical personnel, has begun to train special multi-purpose village level workers (Village AID programme). These workers will fill the gap existing between village people and existing technical services in the outposts which are not in the immediate future able to reach every village through fully-trained specialized personnel. However, in order to handle the training and administration of village-level workers a new special administrative organization has been created and this works in

close cooperation with "traditional" technical services. In Pakistan also United Nations sponsored urban community development activities are developing.

In some countries community development activities are not yet country-wide activities, being in the pilot phase. Broader community development programmes may develop from projects primarily designed to meet the need for "extension services" for agriculture, health, fundamental education or social welfare. Iraq is an example of a country where projects initiated, sponsored and administered by one technical service, e.g. Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education or Ministry of Social Welfare, have gradually been coordinated to include several aspects in the form of more concerted community development action.

There is also great variation in the way international assistance to some community development activities has been obtained by governments. Some are receiving expert and material assistance from the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies, and actually the United Nations Bureau for Social Affairs has more and more assumed the role of an international coordinating agency. UNICEF is greatly interested and engaged in the maternal and child health aspect of community development projects. Assistance based on bilateral arrangements such as the International Cooperation Administration, or based on direct agreements between interested private foundations and the government has played an important part, especially in the initiation of community development and experimenting new suitable methods. In this region, the Near East Foundation in several countries, and the Ford Foundation are examples of this type of assistance.

## TECHNICAL SERVICE CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

It may be of interest to participants of this Seminar to acquaint themselves in more detail on how the technical services are assumed to be able to contribute to community development. The two cases of health and education are given as illustrations.

Before enumerating a list of the possible contribution of these two services it would appear useful to make a distinction in most cases between services provided directly to the people, supporting services and overall development services.

Direct measures include such services as agriculture and home economics extension, local health services, schools and literacy teaching, vocational training, promotion of handicrafts, organization of cooperatives, social services and other areas in which the technician or practitioner works directly with the people of the village. Supporting measures are one stage removed from the people themselves, but involve such vital functions as training the practitioners, research and experimentation related to specific problems faced by the practitioners, and organization and administration of all the technical services involved in community development. Over-all development measures such as national highway and power plant systems, fiscal reforms and overall social policies may not have an immediate direct bearing on the people as members of local communities but are, nevertheless, important for the success of community development. Others, such as land reform and development of more efficient governmental structure particularly at the local level, may be essential complements of the direct services.

### 1. The Contribution of Health Services to Community Development

In relation to the contribution of health services to community development, the following is an extract from Annex III of the Twentieth Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to the United Nations Economic and Social Council:

- " Health - defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity - is a basic component of the standard of living and is therefore a fundamental requirement for community development.
- " In general, health services are designed to meet the health needs of an area, taking into consideration the social and economic conditions of the area concerned, and they are rendered through intimate cooperation between health workers and the people. Experience has shown that this intimate cooperation can be achieved only if health services are properly integrated and de-centralized, so that they provide front-line services for the protection and promotion of the health of the rural population.
- " In such rural health units, services for the protection and promotion of health of mothers and children; the prevention and control of communicable disease; the sanitation of the environment; the treatment and rehabilitation of the sick and disabled, and the health education of the public have been recognized as the basic provisions. To facilitate planning and effective implementation of these basic health services, supplementary services such as hospitals, laboratories, medical supplies, vital and health statistics, specialists in such fields as nutrition, mental health, health education, sanitary engineering and epidemiology, technical and professional training as well as health legislation, are required at the state or national level. Under special circumstances, health campaigns against prevalent endemic diseases or mobile health units for periodical visits to remote areas are other types of health services commonly used by many countries. In many parts of the world, national or state health authorities have taken the initiative in assisting the local communities to establish basic health services.
- " All types of basic community health services require sympathetic support and active participation of the people. To achieve this aim, an active programme in health education to help people attain health by their own actions and efforts is essential. An effective health education programme should have specific objectives in teaching the public the necessary knowledge of health to enable them to appreciate the importance of health in relation to social and economic development, to acquire a habit of healthful living, to recognize some major health problems of their community, to learn the ways and means of organizing their efforts in solving these problems and to make full use of the health services in the community. Schools and other educational establishments are logical places to initiate such a programme, with necessary sanitary provisions in the school environment for health practice. This calls for adequate training in health for teachers and fundamental education workers and active cooperation on the part of the educational authorities.
- " While rendering their domiciliary services to a family, the front-line health workers, such as nurses, midwives, sanitarians and other types of health auxiliaries from a health unit or a centre, have the primary educational role in encouraging family members to participate in community health activities. Through active participation in health work, the people gradually gain experience and confidence in the value of 'self-help' in the development of their own communities.
- " The success of any programme for health improvement, such as the installation of a safe water-supply, or a mosquito-control, a nutrition, or an immunization programme, depends on the understanding and co-operation of the people. In areas where the front-line health workers have adequately played their educational role, the organized community effort for health improvement has been demonstrated by the voluntary contribution of the people towards the construction of safe water supplies, health centres and hospitals. Local committees or councils consisting of community leaders have also been formed to work very closely with health personnel in the area for the planning and



implementation of community health programmes including the raising of funds for health work.

- " Plans for the education necessary to ensure this understanding and participation should be incorporated with health programmes which should constitute an essential part of social and economic development programmes of any community. " <sup>ii</sup>

## 2. The contribution of Education to Community Development

In relation to the contribution of education to community development the following is an extract from Annex III of the Twentieth Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to the United Nations Economic and Social Council:

" (a) The role of education in community development:

Education can not only teach skills and attitudes necessary for community development, such as improved methods in agriculture and craftsmanship, knowledge of ways of protection against disease, and inculcation of cooperative and civic attitudes, but it also provides the mental basis which serves as a guarantee of the continued interest of the people in their self-improvement. Education for community development can be carried out on various levels and with different groups of people.

" (b) The role of schools in community development:

The establishment of a primary school may be one of the first direct services in a community development programme. Sometimes it may itself be achieved through a combination of self-help and outside assistance, where, for example, the people build the school themselves. Whether this service precedes, accompanies, or follows others, its effectiveness in terms of 'community participation' will depend on the extent to which school teaching is adapted to the complex of interests and needs of the community.

- " The school and its curriculum can be so organized as to make it one of the effective instruments of community development. In the school the children not only learn the usual basic knowledge which in part will be applicable to the needs of their environment but they might participate, through projects and club work, in activities for the improvement of the community which are commensurate to their ages. Thus they are prepared to become good producers, good community members and good citizens.

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\* Extract from ANNEX III of the Twentieth Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to the U.N. Economic and Social Council (E/2931) dated 18 October 1956 (this report also contains statements on other major technical services mentioned on page 4).

- " The school can readily become, particularly in smaller communities, a community centre where a number of community activities such as meetings, dramatics, recreation and adult classes can conveniently be placed.
- " The primary school teacher may himself, if he is trained for such purposes, stimulate or even initiate community action, advise and assist the specialists of technical services, follow up or complement their action. In fact he may be an important agent of fundamental education.
- " The secondary school can play a role similar to that of the primary school, though on a higher level. In this connection its civics courses and its extra-curricular activities can be made significant to community development.
- " Technical and vocational education in schools is directly relevant. It may take the form of pre-vocational training in the upper primary and lower secondary school years; or it may take the form of technical and vocational education within the secondary school or parallel to it, whether in urban areas (training for trades and industries, commerce, home economics) or in rural areas (training in agriculture, village industries and crafts, and home economics). It is of direct service to community development to the extent to which students remain in their home communities (or return to them) after their training, provided the teaching of technical subjects is accompanied by social education.
- " Higher education, whether in the universities or in the various types of colleges and institutes, can be of assistance to community development by training the leaders and policy makers who can take direction of it, and by training research workers for the study of many problems of community living.

(Behind the school system will, of course, be a range of supporting services, especially those for the training, re-training and supervision of teachers, for the production of school books and teaching aids, and the design and construction of school buildings).

" (c) The role of fundamental education in community development:

- Fundamental education aims to help people who have not obtained such help from established educational institutions to understand the problems of their environment and their rights and duties as citizens and individuals, to acquire basic knowledge and skill for the progressive improvement of their living conditions and to participate effectively in the economic and social development of their community, making full use of facilities and techniques brought to the community from outside.
- " The term is generally synonymous with 'social education', 'mass education' and 'community education'. It is not coincident with community development, but is to be regarded as an essential component of community development.
- " Community development may sometimes be initiated by a broad programme of popular fundamental education, perhaps with a focus on the problem of adult illiteracy. In this case, fundamental

- " education is a first phase of community development, which should lead as soon as possible to a composite programme involving other technical services.
- " Where a composite community development project already exists, fundamental education will take its place among other technical services, in a narrower and more specialized role. It then operates in such fields of activity as adult literacy, the organization of library services for literates, of dramatic or recreational activities, or of educational programmes through the cinema and radio. It provides educational support to other technical services, for example by helping the agents of these services to prepare the community for the acceptance of new ideas, to make their technical knowledge accessible to the population or to test and utilize audio-visual aids.
- " Finally, fundamental education has important supporting services to provide. These may be categorized as :
- Experimental study and technical information on educational methods and communication techniques,
- Training in these methods; and
- Producing educational materials, especially for illiterate or newly-literate people.
- " These services are closely related, and, while it may be possible to set up any one service without the others, to do so would deprive it of the mutual benefit which results, for example:
- When training is based on experimental study, and followed up by technical advisory services.
- When educational materials are produced and carefully tested in the field, through experimental study; and
- When the production of materials goes hand-in-hand with the training of those who will use them, and is based on their needs.
- " These services can, therefore, generally be provided most effectively by a fundamental education centre. " x

#### CONCLUSION:

Community development is an opportunity and a challenge to every health worker who is responsible for extending any type of health services closer to the rural populations or to the poor-fringe areas of rapidly growing cities.

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x Extract from ANNEX III of the Twentieth Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to the U.N. Economic and Social Council (E/2931) dated 18 October 1956. (This report also contains statements on other major technical services mentioned on page 4).

Since the health aspect is an indivisible part of any full-scale community development programme health workers, doctors, nurses, midwives, sanitarians, technicians and auxiliary personnel will be asked in an ever-increasing degree to take part in these projects.

The mastering of techniques of health education of the public, the ability it affords to analyze and understand motivations and needs of the people is a great asset for a health worker taking part in a community development project.

In this type of work, as in any public health activity with a sound philosophy, the concept of total health and the techniques of health education will be effective tools, making health personnel able to serve their people, work for their future and for the good of mankind.