

Developing Community Leaders

in the Rocky Mountain Workshop

PERHAPS the most effective way to develop community leaders is to invite them to a residential workshop. Here, working in small groups with other leaders from various community organizations, they will almost certainly develop new insights, awareness and skills for working with people.

The Rocky Mountain Workshop for Group Development offered by the Adult Education Council of Metropolitan Denver sponsors a variety of short-term workshops. These workshops combine sensitivity, human relations and group process training for participants from a broad cross-section of the community. The workshops are short, relatively inexpensive, and are easily accessible to the community. The Council cooperates with the Rocky Mountain Speech conference. It also accepts requests from a variety of organizations and agencies to conduct leadership training programs for their own membership; and supplies persons skilled in the techniques of discussion leadership and who are knowledgeable about planning for a wide variety of community conferences and meetings.

Evelyn Lewis is Executive Director, Adult Education Council of Metropolitan Denver, Colorado.

The program is of, for and by the people it serves. Participants who have attended one or more introductory workshops plan, carry out and attend the advanced workshops and the various short, two-to-three-hour workshops. Every workshop is designed for the particular group of participants who attend, with emphasis upon their interests, and is constantly redesigned and evaluated during the workshop sessions. In effect, participants are planning their own experiences as they go along. For those who are interested in developing their own training abilities, a progression of learning opportunities leads to planning, administering and staffing the introductory workshops and filling requests for assistance from other organizations.

Organizing for Work

All of the workshops, whether three-day or three-hour, whether for a diversified clientele or for a single organization, utilize variations of a simple but effective design. Participants work together in small groups and analyze the effects of their actions upon the atmosphere and productivity of the group. Theory is presented through lecture, dis-

cussion, demonstrations, films, charts, graphs, dialogues, panels, role playing or a combination of methods. The participants themselves apply the theory to their own behavior with the assistance of training consultants. Whether the group is fifteen or is several hundred, the participants spend most of their time in small group activities. The cognitive learning is about theory and methods; the affective learning concerns feelings and reactions. The hoped-for outcome is an understanding of the way to work with people so the theories may be applied, the methods may be used effectively, and so the jobs will get done.

Participants in the Rocky Mountain Workshop come from many segments of the community and represent a wide variety of backgrounds and interests. A deliberate effort is made to attract attendance from the public schools; the vocational education program; the universities and colleges; governmental agencies; social service agencies including health, welfare and recreation; voluntary community organizations, including churches, professional associations, unions and service clubs; and from business and industry.

Delegates to each workshop include teachers, professional staff, supervisory and management personnel and officers and committee chairmen of voluntary groups. The diverse representation gives these community leaders an opportunity to exchange ideas and develop an awareness and understanding of the similarities and differences of leadership responsibilities in the various aspects of community life.

As the Rocky Mountain Workshop draws its members from many groups in the community, so it returns them to the same groups, where their growth and development can be used to help the

programs and activities of their own organizations. Because leadership development is personal development, it is difficult to measure the effect upon the program of an organization. It is possible, however, to point to some organizations where the growth of the organizational program and the identification and development of some individual members in leadership capacities are at least coincidental.

Affecting the Community

Project Laity, a research program for lay leaders and ministers in Protestant churches, was brought to Denver as a special project of the National Council of Churches. With the cooperation of the Denver Area Council of Churches and the Rocky Mountain Workshop for Group Development, committees in fifteen churches were trained in short-term workshop sessions and then met together over a period of eighteen months.

These people are active today in many community projects and the churches involved report really important outcomes. One church, struggling with a finance drive, developed a plan whereby every small group in the church reviewed its purposes and made a budget. Then every group reviewed all the budgets. The result was that the membership of the church voted a 33 percent increase in the budget and raised the money. Another church reexamined and revamped both the young adult and adult programs.

The Park Hill Action Committee, made up of concerned citizens and sponsored by Protestant and Catholic churches, devotes its efforts to maintaining an integrated neighborhood by working on fair housing, fair employment and a public education and information program. Leaders of subcommittees trained in the

Rocky Mountain Workshop and other human relations workshops were instrumental in introducing workshop training in small groups as part of the program. The organization is receiving city-wide attention for its work and is drawing leaders from other sections of the city.

The parent and preschool education program in Colorado is a small-group program planned by mothers with the guidance and assistance of personnel from the vocational education office. A number of these groups have requested help in training their leaders and teachers. One program in a nearby suburb was revised as the result of a series of workshops devoted to an examination of goals.

The greatest number of participants in the Rocky Mountain Workshop come from the health services—public health, nursing league, department of health and hospitals, mental health associations and practical nurses. These groups take advantage of all available training programs and also request assistance from local and national resource persons in developing their own workshops.

A Wider Service

The number of organizations requesting at least one workshop each year for their own members is growing and includes such groups as the local chapter of the National Accountants Association, the Colorado Education Association, the Practical Nurse Association, the School of Good Churchmanship, the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the American Society of Training Directors, the Public Personnel Association, young adult and parent-teacher groups. In some instances the programs are planned and conducted by members of the organization; in others, outside resources are requested.

Another community service of the Rocky Mountain Workshop is supplying discussion leaders for city-wide conferences. Often information is given in large group meetings with delegates then going into small groups for discussion. Since decisions and recommendations for action are made in small groups, it is important for conferees to have ample opportunity for discussion. Community leaders trained in discussion methods and an understanding of the decision-making process can help assure understanding of the issues presented and pave the way for recommendations that will lead to action.

A timely program utilizing trained community leaders is the "Sense of Urgency Conference on Equal Opportunities for all Coloradoans" called in response to the President's request. A team of discussion leaders has assisted members of management, labor and professional intergroup agencies in considering a comprehensive program designed to get action which will assure equal job opportunities for members of minority groups. A follow-up committee is now studying ways to implement the recommendations, one of which is an educational program which will utilize small groups in developing understanding and skill in the area of hiring, training and promoting minority group members.

Impact of the Workshop

The Rocky Mountain Workshop draws upon the top resources of the country to assist in planning and implementing the local program. Training associates from the National Training Laboratories have given advice and consultation and furnished training consultants for the introductory and advanced workshops.

(Continued on page 196)

been predicted that every member of every family of every community can identify.

Franciscus hopes the series will do for teachers what others have done for lawyers and doctors. Really the series is an experiment in communication that may alter the stereotype of teachers established via television—"Our Miss Brooks" and "Mr. Peepers," two series which could not be admired for anything except their comic images. NEA is now consulting and advising MGM-TV in what has been described as "breaking ground into the hitherto untouched field of education . . . which could well turn into the next pattern for television series."

Just as Mr. Novak is communicating an image of teaching in a modern high school, we hope News and Trends

. . . in ASCD units

. . . in teacher education

. . . in cooperation for improving instruction

. . . in communicating

will make it a bit easier for readers of *Educational Leadership* to develop the image of ASCD as an organization made up of educational leaders with broad concerns, a wide range of interests and tremendous responsibilities for what happens to the children and youth in the schools.

—MARGARET GILL, *Executive Secretary, ASCD.*

Community Leaders—

Lewis

(Continued from page 160)

The background and interests of the consultants include not only the behavioral sciences but also business, industry, religion, community development, and speech and communication.

Through the facilities of the public

and university libraries members of the Rocky Mountain Workshop have access to extensive bibliographies and may draw upon a wealth of books, pamphlets and articles. The Rocky Mountain Workshop is collecting in the office of the Adult Education Council a reference library. This includes materials from the Adult Education Association of the USA, the National Training Laboratories of NEA, Leadership Resources, Inc., the national offices of a number of voluntary and church organizations, and materials prepared for the Workshop's own program during the past 14 years.

The impact of the Rocky Mountain Workshop for Group Development on the community will probably never be fully measured. Some estimated statistics are interesting. Approximately 800 community leaders have attended three-day introductory workshops; another thousand have participated in the Rocky Mountain Speech conferences and single-session or one-day institutes. More than 2500 leaders and members of local organizations have taken part in workshops staffed by persons from the Rocky Mountain Workshop.

This kind of program could be adapted to any community as the resources are available to any locality. In fact in Denver the program was started in 1951 by a small group of community leaders interested in developing their own leadership abilities. Since that time the Rocky Mountain Workshop for Group Development has organized and used small groups in a variety of settings to develop leadership in many segments of the community. The program is designed and carried out by the participants drawing upon top local and national resources and is continuously giving opportunity for follow-up and a progression of planning and training experiences.

Copyright © 1963 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.