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DEVELOPING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY: A DESCRIPTION

OF THE PROCESS AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

by

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B.A. University of Prince Edward Island, 1979

THESIS

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DEVELOPING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY: A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Abstract

by

Patricia Irene McInnis

This study develops an understanding of the process of community development. The first part of the study presents a historical and theoretical consideration of the value of a psychological sense of community and the absence of this in today's society. This section also introduces the concept of community development and its potential for creating a sense of community within a specific locality.

The research approach is described and is supplemented by an explanation of the role of the researcher as a part of the setting. The researcher's entry and effort to gain a sense of legitimation in the setting is also discussed. A specific community project was used as the vehicle for this study and community characteristics and project history are illustrated as background for the researcher's involvement. A model of community development was developed and illustrated through specific activities. The value of a community needs assessment in the community development process is highlighted and

illustrated by the researcher's work in the community.

Finally, this study provides a consideration of
the importance of community development, both for its
initiators and participants.   Based on the research
findings and a discussion of their importance,
conclusions were made about the value of local
community efforts to individual and community health.
Insights into community organization ' practice are
presented.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter 1   The Community Development Process and a
              Psychological Sense of Community

        The   focus   of   community   development is the
organization of people in a specified area to deal
with   problems   that   affect   their lives (Cary, 1970).
The aim of this research is to study the process of how
a community development effort originates and evolves
and   to   explicate   a   model   to   facilitate this.   The
vehicle for this study is the Lang's Farm Village
Project,   in   Cambridge,   Ontario.   This   particular
project will be used to better   understand   what
community   development   means   to   a   neighbourhood.
Striving to encourage a community's awareness of its
needs and   its ability to utilize indigenous resources
as solutions is a part of this research.   It is also
concerned with a community needs assessment which was
utilized as one step in the community development
process.

Thesis Format

Chapter   1   This   chapter   is   concerned with
theoretical and historical considerations of the value
of community life.   It also discusses the problem of
gaining a psychological sense of community within a
neighbourhood.

Assumptions: Many problems in living occur within the community and the resources to solve these problems are also located within the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood involvement in identifying community needs and implementing planned programs is a primary prevention technique which provides a neighbourhood with the psychological sense of community necessary for individual well-being. The loss of sense of community can be overcome through community development efforts.

Chapter 2   This chapter describes the research approach utilized to study the process of community development.

Chapter 3   A detailed description of the project's origins and development is provided in this chapter.

Assumptions: History is an important aspect in the development of any setting. In community development the background of a community development effort is cruical to its eventual evolution. A more complete understanding of the creation and development of the Lang's Farm Project can be achieved by studying its history.

Chapter 4   My entry and involvement in the community is discussed in this chapter and a major aspect of this process is my interpretation of the problems of a researcher who is immersed in the setting.

Assumptions: The researcher, as part of the setting often experiences role ambuguity and a lack of legitimation. However, these drawbacks can be overcome and the advantage of in depth involvement provides the researcher with a view of the process that is unattainable through traditional quantitative research. Personal growth is another aspect of an individual's involvement in action research.

Chapter 5   This chapter illustrates the mechanics of the community development process by describing the activities of the Lang's Farm Project.

Assumptions: The community development process can be broken into four different elements which together form a cycle that must be repeated frequently as a community effort grows and develops. The process involves an action strategy, feedback, refocusing and redefining, and eventually a new action strategy. These steps

create the community development process which will occur again and again during a community development effort.

Chapter 6   The importance of assessing community needs is included in this chapter. It also describes the specifics of the needs assessment conducted in Lang's Farm Village.

Assumptions: A community needs assessment provides a starting point or motivation for a local community initiative. The information gained through a needs assessment is one step in the process of developing a neighbourhood's sense of being a community.

Chapter 7   The concluding chapter provides insights into the community development process and suggests implications that it has for the future of neighbourhoods and the individuals living within them.

Historical Considerations

This chapter concentrates on the historical and theoretical basis of the difficulities experienced by individuals living within modern communities.

> The quest for community will not be denied, for it springs from some of the powerful needs of human nature - needs for a clear sense of cultural purpose, membership, status, and continuity. Without these, no amount of mere material welfare will serve to arrest the developing sense of alienation in our society and the mounting preoccupation with the imperatives of community (Nisbet, 1953, p. 73).

This excerpt illustrates the value of membership in a community*, as well as society's present preoccupation with personal insecurity and isolation. Both Mills (1959) and Bennett (1970) identify and clearly illustrate these conditions and their effects on man in society. This research focuses on the quest for community as a solution to an individual's need for a sense of purpose, membership, and status. This study is concerned with the process of developing a neighbourhood effort to create a psychological sense of community.**

A sense of community is sought as the solution to

the public issues of isolation and alienation. It is important to distinguish the lack of sense of community as separate from personal problems of milieu. The latter are concerned with individual concerns, while public issues have to do with the organization of many such individual difficulties into the structure of social and historical life (Mills, 1959). Individual feelings of anomie and isolation are the result of the larger social and historical problem of lack of community. Instead of approaching individuals and attempting to solve the personal problems of their immediate milieu, a community development effort attempts to deal with the public issue on a community wide level.

Historically, changes in primary associations of society have occurred because of the restructuring of the western political state (Nisbet, 1953). As the political state takes over more and more of the duties of the family and the community, the more alienation is created within individuals. The family and the community have become dysfunctional and as a result individuals are insecure and social problems are prevalent. A sense of isolation and anxiety exists because of man's lack of small primary relationships in

which he can assume functional and psychological

significance.   C.W. Mills describes this as   the,

"malaise of our time."

> The uneasiness, the malaise of our time is due to
> this root fact: in our politics and economy, in
> family life and religion - in practically every
> sphere of our existence - the certainties of the
> eighteenth   and   nineteeth   centuries   have
> disintegrated or been destroyed and, at the same
> time, no new sanctions or justifications for the
> new routines we live, and must live, have taken
> hold...   Among white collar people: the malaise
> is deep rooted: for the absence of any order of
> belief has left them morally defenseless as
> individuals and politically impotent ·as a group.
> Newly   created   in a harsh time of creaion,
> white-collar man has no culture to lean upon
> except the contents of mass society that has
> shaped him and seeks to manipulate him to its
> alien ends.   For security's sake he must attach
> himself   somewhere,   but   no   communities   or
> organizations seem to be thoroughly his (Mills,
> 3951, p.XVl).

How was the sense of community lost and how has

this loss effected individuals in the modern western

world? The fundamental changes in society which Nisbet

is concerned with are reflected in social relationships

and personal identification.   Nisbet emphasizes the

influence of certain concepts of political power on

social organization in modern western society. Perhaps

the most evident impact on the western world is the

loss of sense of community. Present systems of

politics, religion, kinship, and community cannot be

understood without a comprehensive overview of the disruption in the economic and political conditions of medieval society.

Man's need for status and security (that is community) is timeless and natural. It does not reflect the cultural values and needs of any particular time but it is an innate element of human nature. The present pre-occupation with community is a result of basic dislocations in primary relationships (for example, family, profession, class, community) which have been instigated by the structure of the western political state. In short, the family and the community have become dysfunctional and the organized political state is able to operate independent of them. The organizations controlled by the state have taken over previous functions of the family and community thus creating the alienation indicative of present society. Alienation is the result of man's lack of functional and psychological significance, within his profession, his family, and his community (Nisbet, 1953). The state is now able to relate directly to the individual without the distracting effects of family, community, and other associations. From the perspective of community and family the development of

the state's power has been destructive. To understand society's progression to this point a historical background is necessary.

In the middle ages society demonstrated the following characteristics:

> The small group dominated politics, economics, and religion through such organizations as family, guild, village, community, and monastry. The group was the primary unit of the social system and group membership was central in personal status. Family was an established system which performed numerous, indispensible functions. Each town had its own guilds based on occupation and responsible for mutual aid, religion, and politics (Nisbet, 1953, pp.81-83).

The spirit of kinship, moral certainty, and social community perceived in the preceding characteristics appear to be what is lacking in today's society. The major catalyst in the destruction of these qualities was the development of the central state . The solidarity of family and local community which existed in the Middle Ages was possible because the state or central power was weak and unstable. The lack of authority necessitated a community system of self-help and control. The state did not originate with the family and the community but instead developed out of the necessity of war. The earliest responsibility of

the centralized state was defense but law, economics, and religion were added until gradually, almost all aspects of human life came under the direct control of a centralized, powerful state. As the state gained increasing importance and control in the lives of citizens within its jurisdiction it had a destructive effect on all other institutions and groups within society.

The state's struggle to become absolute was originally blocked by the power and responsibilities held by other associations . The real conflict in political history occurred between the state and these social groups. The central state's desire for absolute authority conflicted with the authorities of guild, class, religion, and community and therefore the development of the state depended on the destruction of these groups. The medieval man was characterized by strong local and personal attachments and was ruled by the customs of his trade and locality. The centralized state attempted and succeeded in reversing this characteristic by making the centralized authority more powerful and the local authority weak and useless.

The trend towards the centralized state was aided by two elements. The first was the state's promise to

free the individual from the "binding" ties of kinship, class, and community. The notion of the autonomous individual was presented as a natural condition which could only be achieved by cutting loose society's traditions and moral constraints. The state, of course, gained its power by the surrender of individual power and rights. The state portrayed itself as the individual's liberator from the control of society by offering a free life under the centralized and all powerful state. All human relationships became forms of contract, which were controlled by the state and individual rights, liberties, and security were provided by the "law and order" offered through the state. This law and order could only exist if the intermediary social groups and their control over individuals were destroyed. The emancipation of the people from the control of church, class, family, and local community was achieved by encouraging individuals to grasp the newly available freedom offered through identification with the will of the majority (actually that of a small elite) which was initiated, expressed, and administered by the central government. The bait offered by the state was freedom and individual liberty.

Secondly, the trend towards individualism and the centralized state explains why this bait was readily accepted by society. The acceptance of change, as progress, is rooted in the idea that history is independently organized in leading the way to higher conditions of living (Nisbet, 1953). Progress is almost, always regarded as good and history is relied upon to supply the solutions to any problems which occur in the transition. In this context, class, religion, family, and community were viewed as obstacles to the unavoidable progress of history. The idea of the individual as the basic unit of socity was promoted and accepted. The associations which blocked the individual's freedom were destroyed as an aid to progress. The close relationship which developed between the state and the individual resulted in the weakening of the area of association that was intermediate to man and the state. The by-products of the "progress", just described, are human beings who are alienated and maladjusted in today's society. When the centralized state designed and implemented its plan for the atomization of society it also created a social and cultural vacuum for the individuals living within that society (Nisbet, 1953).

Nisbet offers several remedial techniques to solve the problem of the rootless, insecure, individual in our culture. Nisbet suggests the new role of the central government as one of providing and administering a system in which different institutions and associations can maintain a degree of power. The government's planning must include families, professional associations, schools, unions, churches, and communities in terms of maintaining their group personalities. Under these conditions the basic unit of society will change from the individual to the social group. The small social group will return society to a human scale and allow social relationships to regain a degree of the authority and purpose which was originally surrendered to the centralized state. This thesis will focus on the potential of the community in initiating this process.

The loss of power and security experienced by members of society results in social disorganization at the individual level. Individuals attempt to regain control and power by various techniques. For example, labour unions seek long-term security through their contracts, and a university education is seen as a source of social status. The individual is no longer

essential to his family and community, he must use other sources to recapture his self-esteem (Goodman, 1956). His place in the social strata becomes very important as a source of self worth. The individual attempts to substitute the need for community with his social position. Where he fits into the social strata in terms of power, prestige, and material resources will determine how much control he feels he has over his life. Such aspects of the social process as socialization, education, and occupational certification attempt to explain who receives what from life and to help each individual cope with what he did or did not get. The legitimation process explains why you are, where you are in the social structure.

Individual self-concept is developed through the legitimation process - from this process an individual is given a certain amount of power and authority, depending on where he is in the social strata. The self -concept that is the result of the legitimation process will lock the individual into a pattern of living over which he feels he has no control (Senett and Cobb, 1973). Even though a feeling of helplessness exists for that individual (that is, he has already internalized messages about what he will get from life)

society continues to tempt him with rewards such as a more prestigous job, a larger home, and most importantly, respect. To feel good about himself he feels he must move up the social stratification ladder and meet the terms of reference of the people who are already existing at that level. He attempts to prove his ability, usually through his job, and thereby further legitimize himself and give himself more authority and power. He feels he must prove his worth to win the respect of himself and others. However, he expends so much time and energy attempting to succeed in society's terms that he is unable to recognize that it is society that prevents him from possessing control over his life. In a class society there is room for only a few to feel fully self-developed, that is , to achieve a high ranking badge of ability (and the accompanying power). The failure to reach that goal, may be switched into a problem of self, a blaming of personal inadequacies. The individual blames himself for "not making it." Feelings of inadequacy, powerlessness, and alienation are prevalent (Senett and Cobb,1973).

How can the alienation and powerlessness experienced by many individuals be eliminated? One way

is by returning to these individuals the power to
control their own lives. Through this process man will
become conscious of himself as a member of a family and
a community which he must represent if the the
decisions he influences are to be beneficial to these
groups. In this way, the family and the community will
become functional again - they become a source of
self-worth. Man will feel a sense of belonging to a
community if he can help the members of the primary
groups with which he is associated. It is important
that the individual belong to a primary group in which
he knows and interacts with other members. As a member
of a primary group, such as a community, the individual
has a function, that is, he has some control over what
happens within that group. The present structure of
society, does not allow this usefulness and power to
exist. If man is to overcome the apathy and
alienation, he is presently experiencing, the power to
control and be useful within a primary group (for
example, the neighbourhood) must be restored to each
individual. Only within such groups can a sense of
community be found. Primary groups provide security
and stability - an individual feels as if he is an
integrated part of that group. In contrast, in

secondary groups (such as a corporation or an isolated neighbourhood), an individual will likely see himself as an isolated unit within the larger organization. He experiences no sense of belonging.

A sense of community develops when decision making occurs within the community (whether that community is a neighbourhood or a large corporation). If the decision making power in a community comes from an external or centralized source, it becomes impossible to maintain a sense of community. This sense of community can only be achieved through group involvement and collaboration. Nisbet describes the development of community:

> Community is the product of people working together on problems, of autonomous and collective fulfillment of internal objectives, and the experience of living under codes of authority which have been set in a large degree by the persons involved (Nisbet,1953, p.xvi)

Essentially, Nisbet is saying that the control over what happens within a community must be returned to the community members. Under these circumstancs an individual does not have to perform well in his job to prove his worth. As he becomes an indispensible member of his family and community his self-esteem is

increased. He no longer must continue to prove himself
through his social position, instead he has become
valuable to the others within his primary groups. His
status now comes from group membership. Man's need to
do worthwhile work, to develop a sense of self esteem,
and to have a community to be loyal to and to have a
voice in, will be provided by a community where
residents are essential ingredients in the decision
making process.

Obviously, Nisbet is calling for major changes in
our society. Both attitudinal and structural changes
can be encouraged through the community development
process. The objectives of community development are
complementary to Nisbet's idea of returning control to
smaller social groups. Community development attempts
to develop a sense of community within which
belongingness and growth are possible. This is
achieved by facilitating man's ability to identify his
own needs, to become actively involved in a problem
solving process and by doing so, to improve the quality
of community life. The problem solving process is
self-sustaining and community based, so it is valuable
in creating self-esteem and a sense of pride within the
people and community involved. This thesis looks at

community development as it relates to one small
community. Each community effort is a vital step in
the grand attempt to restore community control to
community members.

Introduction to Community Development

The community development process stresses that
communities can play an integral part in planning and
implementing a new setting as a viable solution to a
neighbourhood problem or concern. A setting, "... may
be defined as any instance in which two or more people
come together in new relationships over a sustained
period of time in order to achieve certain goals."
(Sarason, 1976, p.3) The formation of a self-help
program or a neighbourhood association are examples of
a creation of a new setting. The energy and resources
required to create new settings must be found in the
local neigbourhood (Kelly, 1971, Rappaport, 1981).
Many problems in living occur within the community and
can only be solved in the community (Bennett, 1970).
Neighbourhoods are a positive resource that can and
should be used as a basis for identifying community

needs, and implementing planned programs (Naparstek, 1978). Through this process the community experiences a sense of competence and ownership. Neighbourhood involvement is a primary prevention technique that provides the locality with the psychological sense of community essential to individual well-being (Sarason, 1974).

Initially the question is, why is a community effort to create alternative settings necessary? The abundance of mental health facilities and social services seems sufficient to meet the demands of individuals experiencing difficulties. However, individual feelings of stress, lonliness, aliention, and isolation are prevalent mental health concerns (Mann, 1978) despite elaborate human service networks. Ryan (1972) identifies centralization and lack of citizen participation as the problems which make it difficult for these networks to provide effective help. If problems are consistently turned over to specialized professionals the individual's ability to come up with his own solutions and to experience a degree of self-reliance is systematically undermined (Warren and Warren, 1977). Nisbet (1953) has already provided us with the historical overview of this problem. These

inadequacies suggest the need to develop community based programs which focus on promoting growth by emphasizing the strengths and competencies of individuals. A strengthening of the quality of community life could "... have a benefical mental health effect either by reducing sources of stress in the social environment or by increasing the personal competencies and social resources that could aid in resisting the effects of stress." (Mann, 1978, p.9) The community's potential for solving problems in living should be viewed as supplementary to the efforts of social service networks.

Discovering methods of utilizing a neighbourhood's resources to solve its problems appears to be a legitimate problem for community psychology. Rappaport (1977) defines community psychology as, "...an attempt to find other alternatives for dealing with deviance from societal-based norms." (p.3). Neighbourhood resources are a major alternative that can be utilized in increasing the psychological well-being of the individuals living within them. Community psychology blames neither the individual nor the environment for people's problems in living but instead the fit between the two (Rappaport, 1977). Change efforts are not

directed at specific individuals beacause these interventions are, "... short sighted and temporary at best, and may take the form of blaming the victim at worst." (Ryan, 1972, p.5) This concept assumes that given a suitable alternative (created by a community intervention) most individuals would be able to solve their own problems. Community self-help efforts assist in building a psychological sense of community that can provide an effective problem solving process for individuals within the community. Community psychology has created a movement away from traditional treatment programs and towards the creation of settings geared to appreciating the diversity of human behavior and accomodating that diversity whenever possible. Rappaport (1977) terms this the ecological approach to community psychology and describes it as, "... a view of social intervention stressing the creation of alternatives to maximize person-environment fit." (p.3) This view also accepts , "... the value of human diversity and the right of people to choose their own goals and lifestyles while maintaining their fair share of society's material and psychological resources." (p.3) Using this approach community residents become an important part of an integrative approach to solving

community problems. Their ideas and feelings are considered as valuable as the experts involved in the process (Grinell, 1969). The more input and influence they are granted by the professionals involved the more likely the community development effort will succeed. A community development project initiated and controlled by community residents has the greatest possibility of surviving and designing creative solutions to community problems. Within this process professionals may serve as a resource within an integrative approach to problem solving (Appendix 1).

Rappaport's concepts suggest that a neighbourhood, such as Lang's Farm Village, is the appropriate location for new programs or settings created ideally through the community development process. As emphasized previously programs must apply themselves to the interaction between the target population and the surrounding environment (Ryan, 1972). This approach searches for defects in the community environment rather than in individuals. It looks at the neighbourhood's problems as a function of the social arrangements of the community. The solution to these problems lies in identifying and developing the resources that are hidden in the community (Kelly,

1971). Sarason (1974) identifies this as the autonomous alternative setting strategy based on helping to build on exising resources with the end goal of creating a psychological sense of community. This process and how it is initiated is the focus of this study.

Defining the Problem

Social service programs now offered at the community level are often "parachuted" into the neighbourhood (Naparstek, 1978). Instead of basing programs on the strengths, resources, and diversities existing in the community these programs operate with few if any linkages to informal community support systems. The service is not based on a neighbourhood's characteristics an d needs and is usually not coordinated with other professional help efforts in the area. Services are fragmented and residents lack any power to control their focus . The problem can be identified as lack of citizen participation in the planning and implementation. Citizens do not experience any sense of ownership and control over the

programs that are developed. The neighbourhood also does not experience a psychological sense of community and the positive effects which accompany it.

How can a sense of ownership and control over a community's fate be returned to community residents? The community development process strives to transfer decision making power back to the community. The facilitator(s) of the process (the initial force for organizing often comes from a source outside the immediate community) may help residents collect data which they will use themselves in program development efforts. Using this model, experts become collaboraters with community members. The facilitator's role is to help the neighbourhood learn to define their needs and to serve as a consultant in the problem solving process which follows the needs assessment. Residents are viewed as having abilities and competencies useful to this process. The appropriate role of the community developer in the neighbourhood is, "... that of an idea person, resource obtainer, general facilitator, and at times, instigator." (Collins and Downes, 1976, p.35) The community development worker does not impose his own perceptions on community residents but instead assists

them in recognizing the problems (and the potential) of

their particular neighbourhood.

To further define the problems of this process we

can examine the experience of the facilitator or

community development worker. Often as an outsider he

enters a community setting and must:

1. Obtain a sense of the community.
2. Develop a non-threatening presence in the neighbour-
    hood.
3. Determine the community's receptivity to a community
    project.
4. Identify indigenous resources in the community.
5. Encourage community involvement in identification
    of needs and program planning and implementation.
6. Insure that the community feels a sense of owner-
    ship over the programs developed and thereby
    create and maintain a psychological sense of
    community.

The facilitators interaction with the community should

be integrative and have the potential for using the

resources of the environment (Sarason et al, 1966,

Levine, 1970, and Grinell, 1969). The overall

objective of any community development effort is

self-help. The community worker must tap the capacity

of the community to solve its own problems (Ryan,

1972). Self-help deals with individual need and

isolation through the formation of a self-interest

group for mutual assistance. Successful self- help

efforts demonstrate a high degree of independence and significant input from the target population itself (Uplift, 1976). In this perspective it is a form of primary prevention. The community development worker is the facilitator of this process.

Summary

Historically, it appears that a psychological sense of community does not exist for most individuals in today's society. This thesis is concerned with studying community development as a process which will restore the psychological sense of community necessary for individual well-being within a specific locality. The study will utilize the case history of a community development project to illustrate the process. Every community has the potential to solve its own problems and the aim of this thesis is to provide insight into how to initiate and encourage a process which will enable a neighbourhood to help itself.

* Community refers to a social group.

** A psychological sense of community is the sense that one is part of a readily available, mutually supportive network of relationships upon which one could depend and as a result of which one did not experience sustained feelings of loneliness that impel one to actions or to adopting a style of living masking anxiety and setting the stage for later and more destructive anguish (Sarason, 1974, p.1).

Chapter 2   Research Approach

How can we study the processes that occur in a
community development project? Ideally, long-term
participation in such a project would provide rich
qualitative data about the nature of this process. A
case study approach to this data will offer the richest
interpretation of it. During the past two years I have
been involved in the development of a community project
whose main objective is community participation, and I
can therefore trace the project from its origin to its
present state. The process of my entry into the
community, and my struggle for legitimation will be a
part of this summary. My interpretation will be
supplemented by significant others who have been
closely involved in the project (Appendix 2).

These significant others include citizens, school
personnel, local churches, and social service workers.
Many of these individuals have been involved since the
conception of the project idea, but others have begun
to participate in the project at various times during
its development. Each individual or group's
involvement varies in intensity and purpose. The
interviews I conduct with these individuals will be
informal because of my personal relationship with each

(Appendix 3). My goal is to discover why they initially became involved and how they perceive their present involvement in the project. Each individual's story will fit into my larger intrepretation o f the process of the project's development. The case history then, will be supplemented by personal interpretations other then my own.

The present problem inherent in the neighbourhood is the lack o f citizen involvement that has been so actively sought. This lack of involvement and its probable causes will be discussed. As a second part of my research I will attempt to improve this rate of participation. A series of informal interviews with key informants living in the community will serve as a needs assessment and as a vehicle for gaining citizen trust, interest, and cooperation. It is preferable, whenever possible to use an informal grass-roots-network approach to identifying problems and needs rather then relying on formal organizations (Warren and Warren, 1977). Often the information received about a community from formal sources (such as social service agencies) may not be entirely valid. Despite the question of validity the neighbourhood itself cannot be expected to work towards solving problems unless they are involved in the process of identifying those problems.

A few carefully chosen "key informant" interviews can provide much insight into the lives of the people who live in the area. The initial interviews will be carried out with community contacts which already exist. These individuals will be questioned about other community residents who would be willing to participate in the interview and a community network will be identified as the interviews proceed. In this way I hope to have an "in" to each home I enter. This method is being used to encourage trust among community residents and to increase the likelihood that information received from the interviews will be valid. The network approach may also increase the potential for later action. The community has several types of housing and an equal number of interviews will be conducted within each to eliminate any differences which may exist (Appendix 4).

A needs assessment study attempts to answer the question: "What are the most pressing needs of a geo-social area?" (Milord, 1976, p.260). A needs assessment must be designed to systematically achieve pre-determined objectives. Objectives for this need assesment include:

1. Identify conditions or situations that are distressing residents.
2. Identify priorities for action.
3. Identify residents level of support for locally initiated community improvement efforts.

4. Encourage creation of resident's sense of community
(Blake, Kalb, and Ryan, 1977).

The results of the needs assessment will be presented in a form that the community can use and will want to use. An outlet for community feedback is essential at this point. The research must provide directives for action and to ensure this utilization the gap between the citizen and the researcher must be decreased. Brown (1972) has shown that the content of communications and the development of relationships between the interviewer and the resident are improved by a mutual sharing of information. This information sharing will take the form of feedback and informal discussion of interview results with each resident who participates. The ultimate step in this process will be a community forum to discuss the action impact of the interviews and discussion.

This approach requires that as the researcher I am actively involved within the community. In studying the community I will not be, "...divorced from the target community by the wall of objectivity and formality that is typically associated with surveys and the like." (Milord, 1976, p. 23) Interviews will be conducted with a number of residents who live in the specified area. Although a structured interview outline will be used, an informal atmosphere will

encourage discussion beyond the responses to structured items (Appendix 5). As the interviews procede the structured items will likely undergo changes. The focus of the research will be centered around providing information relevant to community change through citizen involvement. To facilitate this, the final form of the research will be a brief informal report. Ideally, the research will identify key concerns around which a grass-roots community group can be created.

Chapter 3   History of the Project; Its Origins and
                Development

The concept, creation of settings (Sarason, 1976)
provides the theory to introduce and explain the
development of the Lang's Farm Village Project.   The
creation of settings may be defined as, "... any
instance in which two or more people come together in a
new relationship over a sustained period of time in
order to achieve goals." (Sarason, 1976, p.1). The
Lang's Farm Project, just like any new setting, has a
history which has influenced its development. In this
chapter I will write the history of the project in an
attempt to explain the contexts of its creation and
development. Sarason (1976) identifies the lack of
detailed historical description as a serious barrier to
understanding the creation and development of any
setting. I will try to overcome this difficulty in the
case of the Lang's Farm Village Project.

The history of the project that occurred before
its actual conception is the earliest phase in the
creation of settings. I will borrow another concept
from Sarason and call this phase, "before the
beginning." The difficulties, errors, and solutions of
this stage must be documented in a way that can be used
productively, now and in the future, both by the Lang's

Farm Project and other community efforts. Particularly
for Lang's Farm, the "before the beginning" stage was
cruical to the setting's evolution. I will pay
particular attention to what occurred during this phase
and how these events became a part of the new setting.
An important aspect of the "before the beginning" phase
is the individuals involved, and the combination of
their personalities, intellects, and motivations.
These all become a part of the setting's heritage.
Once again, this aspect is particularly applicable to
the Lang's Farm Project. It is esential to utilize
historical knowledge to insure the new setting's
viablility and consistency with its original goals.
Studying the events that preceded the creation of the
Lang's Farm Project will explain the development of the
setting and demonstrate if the project has remained
true to its original purpose. Creating a setting is a
complex process but from each attempt something can be
learned. I will use Sarason's concept of "before the
beginning," to document how and why the Lang's Farm
Village Project developed.

Community Background

Lang's Farm Village is a subdivision located in Cambridge (Preston), Ontario (Appendix 6). Appendix 7 illustrates the specific location of the subdivision, as well as defining the specific streets included within the Lang's Farm area. Until the early 1970's this area was farmed by Mr. Tom Langs (therefore the name, Lang's Farm Village), who had preserved this area as farmland (and that is another story!). Mr. Langs remains a resident of the area and maintains a strong interest in the project's activities. Within the last ten years the area has grown from farmland to a community . of approximately 1,200 residents. The majority of community residents live on or adjacent to Walter Street and therefore are physically isolated within this dead-ended, fenced area. Also within a fenced-in area is the Ontario Housing Townhouse complex located on Langs' Drive. The other townhouse and apartment units in the community are owned by absentee landlords. Other housing includes semi-detached and quadraplex units but less then 10% of the total family units in the area are resident owned. Also located in the center of the neighbourhood is an Ontario Housing Senior Citizen's Home and directly behind this (although unaccessible because of a six foot high chain

fence) is Fairview Mennonite Home, another seniors complex. Within five minutes walking of the neighbourhood are three schools: Coronation Public School, William G. Davis Senior Public School, and St. Michael's Separate School and two churches: Preston Mennonite Church and St. Andrew's United Church. One mile to the east of Lang's Farm is highway 24, a strip of fast-food resturants and shopping malls. A mile and a half west is the downtown Preston core and directly to the north is a working gravel pit. To the south, across Lang's Drive are middle-class, single-family homes. The only businesses in the area are the Becker's Store and the beauty parlour located in the small mall in the center of the neighbourhood. Recreational facilities include a creative playground at Coronation School and playing fields at both public schools.

Community Characteristics

Capturing the personality of a community is a difficult task and I have decided to use the words provided by the project creators and supporters (Appendix 2). This group will be quoted extensively, both in this chapter and in Chapter 7. The following

is a cross-section of how these individuals view the community (each statement represents the view of one individual):

The village itself, when it was built in the early 70's, the nature of the village was such that it lent itself to being highly mobile, the row housing meant that alot of people didn't have roots, moved in and often moved out. Many people moved in temporarily until they got work in this particular part of Canada and then they moved to where their work was, so that people stayed maybe for the weekend in some cases and in some cases for a few months. They didn't have to sign a lease so there was nothing to hold them and that created problems in that people weren't there long enough to get to know each other, to get to know their neighbour, to develop any identity with the neighbourhood. And those that were there felt that it wasn't useful to do that because people would move anyway, which meant that a lot of people, in spite of the fact that they were there for awhile didn't want to be there and and were sort of living in hope that they could move. In my opinion, that was a very unhealthy situation for the neighbourhood to be in.

Also, what is unsual about the community is that it has a whole range of housing possibilities, ranging from high density stuff behind Coronation School, including senior citizens stuff to fairly nice single family dwellings. Gravel pit serves to make at least one side of that somewhat circumscribed. The rest of it fades out into Preston and is bounded by the river and Eagle Street. In that sense it does have somewhat of a limiting boundary to it. I think it's unique because it has a concentration of schools, and it also has churches that are in that community. I think it is rich in some ways - it's not as poor as some communities I know and it probably has some geographic definitions that are different than some areas I am familiar with in K-W area because of factors I mentioned.

Human nature is human nature and people have similar kinds of problems where ever they live and when people live in closer proximity to each

other, the problems are usuallly intensified or
kind of heightened. I think the Lang's Farm
Village area is one where people are more
transient and move in and move out, and so they
don't really plan to make a long- term home there.
It's easy for them not to take an interest in the
community and so the experience of interrelating
with other people in the community really isn't
there. So this has a tendency to mean that they
don't learn to get to know each other and there
isn't quite the respect for property, there isn't
the community spirit that might exist elsewhere.
It's possible for people to move and stay a few
months or a couple of years and not really have
felt that they are part of the community and I
guess you call that alienation.

When alot of people rent it's with the idea of it
being temporary whether it's a month, a year or
longer. So when you think in a temporary frame of
mind you're not going to put alot into this, not
only into a property and a unit, but into
attachments in the neighbourhood. I think that's
one reason why it is a very isolated area and
hardly anyone knows their neighbours. Because you
don't want to get involved and feel the pain of
moving or watching your friend move away. So, you
just stay in your own unit and look for the day
when you are moving away.

I think the continuing hassle in that community
has to do with the concentration of multiple
dwelling units in and around Coronation and
William G. Davis School areas. I think because of
that it brings to that community the kinds of
people and problems that would make it difficult
for any community. I think trying to develop some
sort of programs on identity or something that
would tie together that multiple dwelling part of
the community instead of making it a problem area
of the community; actually making it more of an
involved and important part of the community would
be helpful.

At the same time there was always a core group of
people who lived there who were really positive
people, who were there for a period of time and
were interested in their neighbourhood and worked
hard. And some of them just finally just gave up
and left. And some are still there and are
interested - there are certain aspects of the
neighbourhood they like, it's close to school,

it's close to work, the industrial area, close to
the 401 - whatever reasons, and wanted to make it
a better place to be.

There is a really high concentration of people and
not a lot of stuff to do or places to go. Not a
lot of open spaces where kids can do things. I t
has a real hemmed in feeling - just not a lot
there.

My concept is that there are alot of people in
this area that aren't using it as something to
build on and grow...it's just a place to stop
over.

And then it is a fairly condensed population for
an area like that too, with very little space for
the kids to really do something. So, what else
can they do except loiter on the sidewalks and
under the street lights and in Becker's parking
lot - where else can they hang out?

Alienation, isolation, delinquency, population density,

and transiency are several of the problems identified

consistently by this group. These problems convey the

lack of sense of community experienced within the

neighbourhood. The community difficulties identifed

appear to be a part of the social structure of the

community and not personal problems of specific

individuals (Mills, 1953). Surprisingly, community

residents reiterated what project creators and

supportors have reported. Community resident's

descriptions of their neighbourhood are included in

Chapter 5. With this series of impressions as a

background I will discuss the collection of events and

personalities that lead to the project's beginning.

The Project Begins...Or Does It?

The community development project which developed in Lang's Farm had two beginnings. For the reader's clarification, the initial attempt to organize the community was initiated by social service agencies and will therefore be termed the "agency approach." This series of events will also be referred to as the "before the beginning" stage. The second attempt to develop a community project was initiated and supported by community contacts and will therefore be termed the "community approach." This effort will also be referred to as the "beginning" phase of the project. This thesis will discuss both settings and will concentrate on the agency approach as cruical to the later development of the community effort.

Three personalities are closely tied to the sequence of events which lead to an agency effort to alleviate community difficulties. The three individuals were: Jim Dudeck (Behavioural Consultant, Waterloo County Board of Education), Don Herald (Director, Cambridge Family and Children Services), and Gerry Steinman (Principal, Coronation Public School). The motivations and perspectives of each of these individuals was important to the nature of the project they eventually purposed. A brief background of each

member   of   this   core   group   will   be   provided   to
illustrate   their   individual   motivations   and
perspectives.

Gerry Steinman describes his involvement as necessitating from the
school's influence within the neighbourhood and within the social ser-
vice community:

> I guess I saw my involvement as being somewhat in the middle
> because for most of the agencies that were involved the common
> factor was Coronation School, in one way or another. Public
> Health dealt with the kids from Coronation, Children's Aid
> dealt with the kids from Coronation, and there was a sense
> that because of proximity, the church dealt with some of the
> kids from Coronation. Jim Dudeck dealt with us. So the school
> kind of took on some focus, simply because the children were the
> clientele and they were at Coronation School. I had responsi-
> bility for these kids and therefore I was a connecting link.
> There were a lot of other connecting links. Another role that
> I guess I saw myself having was simply because of my work at
> the school, I had a perspective of the problem which was some-
> what different from the perspective of Public Health, or Child-
> ren's Aid, or whatever. So, I think it was an additional in-
> sight that I felt the school could provide. I guess I saw those
> as the integral parts but at the same time I didn't see the school
> or myself being involved as the central force in making things
> happen. In its purest form it wasn't an educational matter and
> yet indirectly it did effect the education of all those kids. I
> was also interested from the standpoint that I lived there. It
> was my neighborhood in a sense. The church that I attend and the
> emphasis of the church as far as trying to provide some of the
> needs of the community, involved me as well.

Don Herald describes his perspective and also the initial meeting
(in the fall of 1978) that lead to a collective agency movement focusing
on Lang's Farm Village:

And the reason that several of us decided to focus on Lang's
Farm was how it came about. As I recall, and Jim may have had
a different perception of it, Gerry Steinman was the Principal
at Coronation and Jim was the consultant there.

Through a common friend who thought that because of Jim's
position and mine it would be a good idea for us to get
together, we met for lunch. We spent a long time together
and got into the whole issue of prevention and concepts.
And I think we were sort of literally testing each other
out about where I was coming from and where he was coming
from. We both thought at that time that we had a similarity
in views, and that there must be a better way than having
each agency go into the community. Both Jim and I had a
community organization bent. Jim thought I should meet with
Gerry Steinman, principal of Coronation School. One thing
lead to another and one day I met with Gerry and Jim at
Coronation. We sat down and talked.

Gerry, of course, lived in the community and had been there
a long time. We all talked for two or three hours and
thrashed out some ideas. Gerry provided the on-site knowledge
of the area and was concerned about the situation in the com-
munity. He was intimately familiar with the people and the
issues. So, he was the eyes and ears of the three of us.
Jim and I had other orientations. We talked and decided we
should perhaps start something here.

We again had a very stimulating meeting where we realized we
had enough things in common to try to focus on a neighborhood.
We had been talking about Lang's Farm for a variety of reasons,
which I'll get into, and try to pull the project off. The
concept was essentially to assist the community. The basic
concept that we all believed in right from the beginning was
that the way to go about making it a better community for
everybody would be to identify the health strength in the
community - personnel, people, services, whatever. Instead
of the agencies going in there primarily on a pathology basis,
start using some of agencies on a flip side which was providing
resources, materials, etc. To facilitate the community's
strength...particularly people. And eventually get the com-
munity to identify what they saw their needs as being.

Finally, Jim Dudeck outlines his own involvement and goes one
step further in describing the "before the beginning" phase of the
Lang's Farm Project:

> I was really one of the initiators, frankly. It all
> started when one day Doug Brown asked me if I'd like
> to have lunch with him and the new director of FCS.
> His name is Don Herald. I said sure. So we met at
> the Knotty Pine over lunch. Don had just finished
> his M.A. at McMaster, and was interested in looking at
> community and social service intervention in different
> ways that they were typically administered. So what
> started out as casual but sort of an interesting lunch,
> we decided to meet again, and I suggested we could start
> involving some other key people in the community. At
> that time I was thinking of Gerry Steinman and I knew he
> had a circle of contacts in the community. So we set up
> a time to meet Gerry, Don and myself and just started
> throwing around some ideas as to what might be possible.
> And so after several meetings like that we ended up
> involving Irene Ferrier (supervisor of Public Health
> Nurses, Cambridge), ,yself, Don and maybe Muriel Bechtel.
> We basically had an idea of looking at a different way of
> delivering services in that community.

Before this group reached a project proposal stage a number of
informal events involving various individuals occurred indepen-
dently of each other. It wasn't until these three key individuals
met, that a clearly defined storyline can be identified. Previous
to that Muriel Bechtel and Bill Breckbill, both of Preston Mennonite

Church, and Mary Proudfoot, a Public Health nurse, had also been involved, to a lesser degree, in identifying the neighbourhood as an area of concern. The project's origins were based in a multifaceted combination of factors; personalities and occupations being two of the major ones. A group of individuals saw a problem and made individual efforts to work towards solving that problem. Fortunately, these individual efforts were able to come together and through this cooperation create a collective effort that would later play a major role in the project's shape.

The community development project which developed out of the concerns of these individuals represented an effort to bring together members of human service organizations, with decision makers, and consumers. The project's initial planning group instigated a general meeting of human service organizations in early 1978. This meeting was attended by over 80 representatives of twenty-five community organizations. Discussion revolved around the feasibility of initiating a drive to assess the community's problems and create viable solutions. The larger group meeting offered its support to the initial planning committee. The core group was given the mandate of creating a

tentative research proposal, based on perceived community needs. The proposal was to be used as an application for a Community School Development Grant from the provincial Ministry of Education. In the grant proposal, such problems as vandalism and adolescent delinquency were identified as occurring at an alarming rate. These problems had been recognized as:

> ...clear and disturbing trends toward the establishment of strong delinquency oriented sub-groups among local adolescents. The social consequences of such a process are most obvious in the smashed and defaced public and private properties, increased police surveillance, and public pleas for action from outraged citizens and politicians. Many social agencies and education services in the Cambridge community have identified these major problems; excessive and disruptive loitering increasing vandalism to private and public property , harassessment of neighbours and increasing delinquency rates (Application for New Community School Development Grant, 1979, p.2).

From these concerns the group envisioned a union of many community agencies in a community development project that would attempt to:

> -Identify troublesome adolescent behavioural problems in the community.
> -Explore the community's perceptions of the problems.
> -Determine youth's views of school, police, social agencies, and current problems such as vandalism.
> -Assess the capacity of individuals and groups for a structural and constructive response to the problem.
> -Most importantly, identify and utilize the formal and informal leaders among the community's youth.

(Application for New Community School Development
Grant, 1979, p.2)

These objectives can be summarized as a needs
assessment of the youth problem in the Lang's Farm
Community. The research proposal suggested occassional
meetings to update the inter-agency group and allow for
their input into the project. It also emphasized the
research team's ongoing involvement with the young
people of the community.

Despite . the potential value of this research
project, it was refused funding by the provincial
government in the winter of 1979. Although this was
only a temporary setback in the project's ultimate
development, this is the end of the "agency " or the
"before the beginning " approach. Although agency
interest and involvement has been maintained over the
last two years, at this stage in the project's history
a community oriented effort gained control. At this
point many questions should be addressed; What did the
agency group do wrong? (ie. Why was a change to a
community focus necessary?) Why did this first attempt
fail? Did this group use an effective method to reach
their objectives?

The project's "beginning" would not have occurred
without the "before the beginning" stage. For this
reason the efforts of the agency group should not be

viewed as a failure. The efforts of the agency group formed much of the pre-work needed for the "beginning" to be initiated. This relationship must be stressed. The second stage would not have occurred without the first. The agency effort, although it did not reach an active stage, served as an exploratory and organizational background for the community effort. A consideration of the "before the beginning" errors and oversights are cruical to understanding the eventual development of the project. The individuals involved in the agency approach describe their experiences as follows:

We decided we would try the idea on the community by trying to invite as many of the service agencies as we could think of including - just about everybody, except we made one major mistake - we didn't involve the political folks.

I really learned some lessons about getting involved. That was being very inastute about not involving the political people. That caused us some negative pubilicity that we really shouldn't have had, and really didn't help us all that much. We had some patching up to do after that toward that. If we had been thorough and had planned ahead carefully, we would never had been where we were with that. It really didn't deserve the kind of negative attention it got.

Looking back on it, we had talked about who we were going to involve in a working group and we had talked about the political people and as I recall the discussion, we knew that they were important but we said, let's leave them out at this stage because if we involved them from the beginning we're upping the anti and reducing the chances of it getting off the ground.

One of the major oversights was neglecting to involve all groups that had an interest in the neighbourhood. This oversight brought negative attention and criticism to the core group's effort to create a positive presence in the community. The press coverage received by the agency approach was also a negative aspect of the agency effort. Public relations and public sensitivity to such efforts should be considered carefully. A non-threatening, low-profile, approach must be utilized to prevent alienating community residents. A massive agency effort, in any particular community creates speculation and investigation by the local media and Lang's Farm Village was not an exception. It received extensive scrutiny and criticism from the press which further destroyed the neighbourhood's image and weakened the agencies' ability to further pursue its objectives.

Another, more basic oversight of the agency approach, was emphasized by the agency core group members:

> The whole idea was the community organization approach. One of its problems was, none of the citizens were represented, but we decided to run with it anyway.

> I think it was fair to say that out of that meeting came a general agreement that the concept was well worth exploring. The dollars were an

issue and the other major issue was what about citizen/ neighbourhood involvement?

This oversight was perhaps the major reason the agency effort did not reach an action stage. It did not remain true to the concept on which it was created, that was the concept of identifying and utilizing community strengths, particularly people. By limiting its focus to agency involvement a tremendous oversight was made. Bill Breckbill describes his intrepretation of the outcome of this error:

I think the first effort was seeing if there was a way of coordinating the service agencies to see if we could set up a kind of clearing house. As that developed, as we played with that idea more, I had the feeling that that was really not going to be helpful. Number one, the agencies were not quite ready to do that and number two, that it was really going to make it more difficult for the community people to get services because it would have given them only one channel. It would have helped to clarify them but it would have looked like, it would have helped them to know where to go for resources, but it seems to me that it would also have felt to community persons that this was a structure which was really controlling them and in other words, it would have become more of a protection for the agencies, then it would have been really useful to the community people, in my mind. It felt like what we were thinking about at that point in the history was to see if we couldn't provide a community coordinator who would be the contact person for any body who wanted to be in touch with any of the agencies, which narrowed down the channel and made it simple for them to control. And it was, looking back on it, it seemed right at the time. But, as time went on, it really looked like it wasn't the right way to go. It was really taking away from the people responsibility, rather then giving it to to them. It wasn't helping them to gain strength - it was

> trying to simplify things for them which really
> put a lot more control and protected the agencies,
> rather then helping the people. It seemed right
> at the time, but I'm sure it wouldn't seem right
> to me if I lived in that community.

This was the major lesson passed on to the community

approach which followed the efforts of the agency

group.

The Beginning...

Again with the community approach to the project,

several personalities served as the catalysts in the

initiation of the "beginning" stage. The key

individuals were; Richard Mason (Wilfrid Laurier

University), Bill Breckbill (Pastor, Preston Mennonite

Church), Muriel Becthel (Preston Mennonite Church), Don

MacLean (Minister, St. Andrews United Church), and

Kathy and Dana Schiebel (community residents). Dr.

Mason's involvement in the "beginning" of the Lang's

Farm Project necessitates defining his role within the

community. Richard's presence in the school system is

explained by the personnel exchange described in

Chapter 4. He explains how and why his orientation was

expanded to focus on the community surrounding the

schools:

> First, the work was to assess the possibility of some kind of collective effort in the community to problems that were coming out of the high population transient neighbourhood. So basically, as I approached it, what I started to find out was what kind of people were there, what sort of resources they had and how they had previously tried to relate to the community - what worked, what hadn't worked. And maybe some of the different options that would help it. I did what I enjoyed doing and what I thought would work. I didn't take any kind of elitist attitude, going out and passing out pamphlets, for people to come to a workshop on how to be better parents, would work. Initially, I worked with Steinman. A great deal of success there because Steinman was so open and he recognized what I loved and couldn't do and didn't try to make me work in areas which were not adaptive for me. I really see him and Jim Dudeck as key people in the success of that because they were able to see that and let it go without forcing it into form. It was a great deal of informal stuff a great deal of people informal interaction, like with Muriel and Kathy.

It was the informal interaction Richard mentions that sparked the "beginning" of the Lang's Farm Project.

There were several individuals who were involved in both the "before the beginning" stage of the project and the "beginning." This carry-over involvement provided an opportunity for the project's vision to remain alive and also to allow the "beginning" stage to benefit from the oversights and errors of the previous stage. Bill Breckbill describes how this overlapping group managed to remain intact during the transition from the agency approach to the community approach. He also clarifies the major distinction between the focus of the two groups:

It would seem like at the next meeting we were
going to disband because we didn't have any other
direction to go and then at that meeting a new
idea would come up and spark interest again and
keep it going. And I'm glad for that. At one
point, one thing that sparked our interest again
was the one building on Barbara Court that was
open. I saw that and I thought that would be a
place for persons, that are interested to develop
some programs. We could do something in that
community and get going there. When I talked to
Gery Steinman, I remember him saying something
that stays with me, he said, "Unless some group in
the community really assumes responsibility to see
to it that something happens, it won't. That one
group, or nucleus of people really need to put
their minds together and decide that something was
going to happen." I felt at that point, that the
church became rather important to it, not as a
church as such, but the people in the church who
committed to that activity. I think Gerry's
statement encouraged me to say, "Well, I want to
be a part of that for the good of that community
and it is in line with what we as a church see as
our concern." And that's an interesting thing
because nothing developed out of that because they
wanted $400 a month rent - which was outrageous.
So, that was again the end of the thing that
sparked our interest but didn't materialize. But
it was the kind of thing that kept the vision
alive. And then it was Richard Mason that helped
us to think about grants that might be available
to us. It was Richard that brought the thing into
a new focus by saying what we need to do as
administrators, or as agency people was not to
make decisions about it but really to start
visiting neighbourhood persons and find out what
their feelings are. I think that was the right
direction. It was through that, that we contacted
the Killorans (a community family who has lived in
the neighbourhood for over 7 years) and the
Schiebels and got some interest going. And then
that felt like the right direction and still feels
right to me. That the identified needs are
discovered by being in contact with people in the
community rather then us. And that's the
direction that your research has taken us. So, I
think that's a good direction.

Despite the differences in the focus of the agency and community efforts both are based on identical theoretical background. That background was rooted in the concept that community based programs should focus on the strengths and competencies of the individuals within the community. Both approaches realized that a sense of ownership and control over community life should be returned to its residents. The community approach distinguishes itself from the agency approach in its efforts to make and utilize contacts with community residents. In the commmunity effort action was taken to insure community representation existed - the search for community involvement became a part of the project's mandate. The credit for this new approach cannot be given to any one source. The carry-over group of Bill Breckbill, Muriel Bechtel, Gerry Steinman, and Don MacLean shared responsibility for this innovation, as did Richard Mason. Perhaps, it was Richard's ideology and approach that helped the community group come to the realization that a more community oriented emphasis was necessary to insure success. The origins of this realization though, went back to the "before the beginning " stage of the project's development. This example illustrates the importance of history in the development of a setting. A simple cause and effect statement does not apply to

this multi-faceted situation, but instead a combination

of independent events and personalities lead to the

beginning of the "beginning" stage.

Richard Mason first met Muriel, Bill, and Gerry in

the fall of 1979 but it wasn't until early 1980 that

this group began to meet around applying for a summer

grant which would address the needs of Lang's Farm

Village. Once this group decided to go ahead with this

application a larger meeting was organized. Kathy

Schiebel describes her feelings about this meeting:

> I think one of the reasons why we really got
> involved or stayed involved was the first meeting
> we went out to we felt this has a good chance.
> There were two ministers, two principals, a rep
> from Ontario Housing, a university rep, a rep from
> Fairview, and some residential representatives.
> We figured this isn't just blowing hot air. It
> looks like a few people have talked together about
> this and we figured we had some support from more
> then just people in the neighbourhood. Possibly,
> if it had been in the preliminary stages...just
> sitting around talking and not really doing
> anything, we might have wandered a bit too. But
> when we got involved, there was those people
> involved, and they were talking about applying for
> a grant right then and there. We could see things
> moving fast and I think that's one reason why we
> stayed involved...we figured it had a really good
> chance of succeeding or at least getting something
> done, working, and not just talking.

From Kathy's description it appears as though

agency input was the major force behind the effort.

The professionals involved at that time were either

residents of the immediate community or had a strong

interest in Lang's Farm in particular (for example WLU and Ontario Housing). These individuals were involved not only as social service representatives but also as concerned individuals who sought to improve the quality of life within the area. This effort operated independently of a particular human service organization, and was therefore able to function on a grass-roots level, unhindered by agency red tape. Neighbourhood representation was also a significant element of the "beginning" stage. The initiating and sustaining (at least for a period of time) element of a community development project almost always comes from outside the immediate neighbourhood. Lang's Farm was not an exception, however it was unusual in that all key individuals came from either the fringe of the community or the community itself. The project's core group included; Bill Breckbill, Muriel Bechtel, Don MacLean, Kathy and Dana Schiebel, and later myself. Further reference to the core group indicates this group of people. Richard Mason also played a key role in the creation of the setting but is not included in the core group because of the brevity of his involvement.

The core group and members of the Advisory committee (the organizational framework of the project is included in Chapter 6) worked diligently during the

first months of their existence to complete an
application for a Summer Youth Employment Grant. The
objectives of the Lang's Farm Village Project and
probable project activities were described in the grant
proposal:

> The objective of the project is to work at the
> process of developing a sense of community in an
> area characterized by transience and high density.
> It is our hope that through the cooperation of
> local volunteers there will evolve among residents
> a cohesiveness and concern for one another and for
> their neighbourhood. The project will focus on
> two areas; assessing and understanding the needs
> of residents and developing programs that respond
> to those needs.

> Activities will likely include; recreational
> programs for children of a variety of ages from
> preschoolers to youth, encouraging
> cross-generational activities among residents of
> the community, which includes a number of senior
> citizens, developing a Community Resource Centre
> which would be used to provide information and
> coordinate services, involving residents and
> volunteers in the above activities and researching
> needs of residents and the community through
> personal contacts and public meetings. (Summer
> Youth Employment Grant Application, 1980).

The group was successful in receiving a grant! The
"beginning " stage of the Lang's Farm Project was
complete and was replaced by an action phase. The
process that followed incorporates many aspects of the
project including organizational framework, research
and programming, and a chronological history of the
project's activities. The conflicts, frustrations, and

successes revolving around these aspects will be detailed in Chapter's 4 and 5.

This chapter illustrates the importance of history in the development of a setting. Both positive and negative aspects of the "before the beginning" stage were utilized by those involved in organizing and shaping the "beginning." This second stage would not have occurred without the first. The "before the beginning" phase provided the context or background necessary for the creation and further development of the "beginning." The end of the "before the beginning" phase represents the first complete cycle of the model of community development discussed briefly in Chapter 1. It included an action strategy, feedback, refocusing, and finally a new action strategy, which was the community approach to the neighbourhood's problems. The agency approach was a mini-cycle in the larger problem solving model which is an element of community organization. Even the chain of events included within the term the "beginning" may later become the "before the beginning" stage for the later refocusing of the Lang's Farm Project. History builds on history to influence future actions and creation of settings.

Chapter 4 Entry and Legitimation; The Researcher as Part of the Setting

The focus of this chapter is my entry into the Lang's Farm area, my effort to gain a feeling of legitimation within the neighbourhood, the nature of my involvement in the community, and the development of my relationships with the individuals involved. This presentation will include a description of my experiences and will attempt to capture my feelings and perceptions during these experiences. My involvement in the Lang's Farm community has stretched over a period of two years and during that time the intensity of my involvement has varied greatly. Both my sense of committment to the community and my feelings of ownership of community problems has increased enormously during that period of time.

I was first introduced to the Lang's Farm Community in September, 1979. I had just entered the Master's program in Social-Community Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University and was searching for a placement to fill the program's practicum requirement. Dr. Jim Dudeck, part-time faculty at WLU and a behavioural consultant with the Waterloo County Board of Education (WCBE), offered his perceptions of the community and its problems and suggested the

possibility of a meaningful practicum placement for one or more graduate students. Another graduate student, Rob Saltstone, and myself were interested in becoming involved. Our involvemnt was to be facilitated by a personnel exchange between the WCBE and WLU. Through an agreement between the WCBE and the Social-Community Psychology Program, WLU, Richard Mason and Geoff Nelson each were to spend one and a half days working in the school system (in the Lang's Farm area) and in return Dr. Jim Dudeck was to spend two and a half days of time within the Social-Community program. Jim Dudeck and Ed Bennett (also a faculty member of the Social-Community program) had developed the initial exchange proposal and prepared the setting for the involvement of other faculty members and students.

Bennett, Dudeck, Mason, and Nelson served as resource persons for both graduate and undergraduate practicum work in the community. As a graduate student, I was involved in this entry phase of the project to familiarize myself with the community and the previous work of the agency effort to organize a project in the area. During the fall of 1979 the above faculty members, myself and Rob Saltstone attended two meetings with the reconstituted agency group. This group stated its desire to work cooperatively with both the faculty and student group. These meetings were

useful in attempting to focus on community problems and how the resources offered by the university could be most effectively used to solve community problems.

Initially, the university group's entry into the community involved attempting to form a sense of the community and its problems, as well as legitimizing its involvement by cooperating with the original steering committee. Bennett (1970) derived a series of questions from Mills (1959) that should be answered during the entry process to obtain a sense of the social context of the community and to develop a collaborative relationship with the community:

What is the structure of this particular community as a whole? What are its essential components, and how are they related to one another? Within it, what is the meaning of a particular factor for its change and the people within it?

Where does the organization stand in its development in terms of goals and their realization? What are the mechanisms by which it is changing? How does it affect and how is it affected by the larger social system? (Bennett, 1970, p.66).

In terms of our entry into the Lang's Farm area more specific considerations were defined. They emphasized the necessity of understanding the social milieu of the community and becoming aware of its problems before attempting to address them. These considerations included such questions as:

1. What is the community structure in terms of housing, industry, major employers, schools, and churches?
2. What is the demographic data of the community? (ie. population size and distribution, migration, and other statistics).
3. What is the historical background of the community?
4. What are the political influences in the community and how can this resource be used?
5. What facilities are available, for example in recreation?
6. What human service organizations work in the community and how can this resource be used?
7. Who can we talk to, to realize the flavour of the community?
8. What are the major areas of concern in the community (as recgonized by its members)?
9. What are the indigenous resources of the community and how can they be used?
10. What is the committment in the community to work with us?

These questions were answered by meeting with people in the various human service organizations in the area. Through these interviews the group sought a clarification of the goals and values of the community. This information enabled us as a group to focus on a problem of mutual concern.

The initial entry process identified public perception of the community as important. Based on the impressions of school official I further refined this problem to the image of William G. Davis School in the Lang's Farm area. The public perception of the school was that is was a "tough" school and it was responsible for many of the delinquent behaviours occurring in the neighbourhood. This aspect of the community became the

focus of my assessment because of the importance of this school in the community. Not only the children in Lang's Farm but also those from the surrounding areas attend William G. Davis School and the school's image (whether deserved or not) may be carried out of the Lang's Farm area and then generalized to the community as a whole. If this was occurring the community may be unjustly labeled. The school's image may touch several facets of how the community is perceived by both those living within and outside it. As my practicum, I choose to investigate this to determine if these perceptions did actually exist and if they did why they did, and what could be done about them.

I decided to involve the two groups most closely tied to the problem - the students and their parents. My work at William G. Davis involved a series of informal group discussions with groups of 5 or 6 students. The interviews focused on the student's perception of the school and its place in the community. The parents were asked to complete a mailed questionnaire to determine their perceptions of the school. Both positive and negative aspects of the school were mentioned in the student interviews and parent questionnaires but summarized briefly, the positive aspects of the school outnumbered the negative. Most students and parents felt that any

reputation that the school had was based on past years and was not necessarily what was happening now. Several problems were identified as contributing to the negative image of the school and a number of solutions were suggested. A detailed report of my findings was made available to students, parents, and teachers. The report was also presented to a staff meeting at the school and as well was presented at a Professional Development Day for the WCBE. In the following academic year William G. Davis further developed a community volunteer program as a part of an effort to develop a positive image within the community. This was a student/parent suggestion that I relayed to the administration.

While I was working with the school, Dr. Richard Mason was meeting with a community group planning for a summer program to confront the needs of individuals living in the Lang's Farm Village community. The project was to focus on two areas; assessing and understanding the needs of residents and secondly, developing programs that respond to those needs. This group applied for and received federal funds from the 1980 Summer Youth Employment Program to employ four students. At this time Dr. Mason approached me about applying for a position. I was hired as program coordinator and during the summer of 1980 I worked

full-time in the Lang's Farm neighbourhood. The summer's work concentrated on providing recreational activities which were not otherwise available to children in the immediate area. Programs included a daily playschool, a community newsletter, craft shops, a youth group, and playground activities. A community needs assessment had preceded program planning and implementation. A core group of children attended these programs and we felt we had provided an adequate variety of activities for children, and in doing so, had met a need for both the children and their parents. The summer's work gave the project visibility in the community. Encouraging community support and participation requires time and the summer project had initiated this process. During the summer, the schools and social service agencies were kept informed of the community group's work and were supportive of its approach.

The summer's end did not signal the end of the project's efforts to create a sense of community within Lang's Farm Village. Without student involvement the project was forced to continue on a less intense level but maintaining an effort, on any scale, was important to developing continuity and community awareness. I saw the opportunity to remain involved as a potential thesis producing situation and as well, I enjoyed

working with the community and the Advisory and Executive committees. During the fall of 1980 and the winter of 1981 I became a "jack-of-all-trades" and my activities included; raising funds, writing grant applications, editing the community newsletter, developing programming, recruiting and nurturing volunteers, interviewing community residents, and collaborating with the citizen Advisory and Executive groups. My time committment varied from an average of 10 to 15 hours weekly. As the summer of 1981 approached my involvement gradually decreased, until my contact was limited to being a member of the Advisory committee. I have traced my involvement for the fall of 1979 to the summer of 1981 but the process of becoming progressively more involved and committed to the project and the community is not obvious in my chronological account of what occurred. I would like to address the concerns, frustrations, successes, and failures I experienced during that period of time.

Role Definition and Legitimation

Questions around role definition and legitimation would become the major concern in my work in Lang's Farm Village, but initially my role was easily defined.

During the first eight months I saw myself as a student completing a part of a degree requirement. This was the entry and discovery phase of my involvement and I felt no internalized sense of committment or concern for the area. As I became involved with the school in the winter of 1980, the feelings of being an outsider began to dissipate and feelings of concern and interest replaced my sense of floundering for direction. I had been able to suggest some viable solutions, and most importantly, had begun to make the personal contacts which would later become important in building my sense of ownership and identification with the community. These factors provided me with a legitimate reason for being in the community. However, I did not realize that I was a long way from being involved with the community on a grass-roots level, and until I had reached that level of involvement, achieving a sense of legitimation would not be difficult.

Defining my role during the summer project was also not difficult. The needs experienced by the children in the area were obvious and therefore the neighbourhood children easily served as a legitimizing factor. The summer's work was a time of concentrated learning about the nature of community organizing, its rewards, and frustrations. Initially, I felt the manpower provided by four students working over three

months was more than adequate to turn this neighbourhood into an "ideal" place to live. I failed to realize that I had no right to attempt to mold a community into what I felt was a "good" place to live. Secondly, I learned that community organizing takes an extended period of time during which many frustrations occur, failures often out-number successes, and awareness and trust are the building blocks necessary to enable a community based effort to work towards mutually agreed upon goals. Eventually, awareness became the focus of our efforts that summer. We wanted to let people know we were there, but more importantly why we were there. We wanted the project to be viewed as a community resource, to be utilized by community residents to meet their own needs. Although this was the ultimate goal, we decided the method to initiate this process was by attempting to meet some community needs and by successfully doing that, building a trusting relationship between the project and community residents. This theory was supported by the project's Advisory and Executive committees.

The summer of 1980 was seen as the first step in a process of gaining resident involvement in planning and implementation of programming developed to meet community needs. The spin-off of achieving citizen involvement is the sense of community which occurs

simultaneously with this effort. This is the ultimate goal of the community development process and an important objective of the Lang's Farm Project. The major frustration I experienced at the end of the summer was the feeling that our efforts had not significantly helped us to achieve that goal. Accompanying that feeling of failure was a sense of loss because our efforts were to be discontinued just when the potential for resident involvement was increasing. This was one factor in my decision to continue working with the project. The second factor that influenced my decision were the feelings of ownership and protectiveness I felt towards the neighbourhood and the individuals I had come to know there. I had begun to realize the potential for action that existed. We simply needed more time. Fortunately for both myself and the Lang's Farm Village community the project's Executive committee had the same vision, but more importantly they also had the dedication and perservence necessary to continue working in the neighbourhood. Apart from helping the community I also hoped to develop a master's thesis out of my continued involvement.

Without the focus that the summer project had provided us, the Executive members and myself were unsure of what would happen during the fall and winter

of 1980-81 but the original objectives and goals remained intact and although they were reached for with somewhat of a "hit and miss" approach the important consideration was the continuation of the project. Despite the perseverance and dedication illustrated by the actions of the core group, the project was not making the grass-roots contacts in the neighbourhood that I felt were essential. We appeared to be floundering, searching for the magic solution to the lack of resident involvement. Without those grass-roots individuals I felt out of touch with neighbourhood and began to seriously question what my involvement was accomplishing. I experienced concerns about my role in the community and attempted to answer questions about my involvement to legitimize my existence; Why was I there? Did I have the right to be there? Could community residents identify with me? Was the Executive group serving the best interests of the community and in turn was I? Cherniss (1976) identifies three important issues that a consultant (a term I will use temporaily to describe myself) must answer before entering a setting:

1. Should one do consultation in this situation? Why?
2. Whose interests will the consultant serve?
3. What will be the primary focus of the consulation?

These questions were unavoidable for me in the fall of 1980 and were a prominent aspect of my awareness during this part of my involvement. I did not however, have the answers for them. I feel as a novice consultant, working with a group whose focus was unclear, a necessary part of my growing experience was to feel confusion and ambuiguity about my role - it was a part of my development as a consultant, and as an individual working within the helping professions.

I attempted to find the answers by trying to define my role. Was I actually a consultant performing a service for the Lang's Farm Project? Cherniss (1976) defines consultation as, "...a process in which one or more individuals possessing certain knowledge and skills, help individuals and groups within a particalar social system on one or more work-related problems." (p.13) Did I have a certain knowledge or skill that the executive required to solve problems? No, at the time I was unaware of any, except my concern and caring about them as a group and the neighbourhood in general. I had difficulty dealing with my own competence - I felt inadequate, anxious, and hesitant. Could I help the core group? How? I almost abandoned the project because of my own feelings of inadequacy and doubt. I was encouraged to remain involved by the Executive committee, who were and continued to be highly

supportive of me. I was also encouraged by the individual Executive member's committment and enthusiasm. Their interest and dedication set an example for me to follow.

I eventually dealt with my feelings of inadequacy and doubt by assessing what I actually hoped to accomplish for myself, for the core group, and for the neighbourhood. I began to see myself as a facilitator, a helper, rather than a consultant. I recognized that I could assist by taking the core group's directives and the directives of community residents and facilitate the completion of these directives. . I realized to my surprise that I was actually doing social action research! Sarason (1974) provides an accurate definition of how I saw my role within the Lang's Farm Project:

> By social action as a vehicle for learning and contributing to knowledge I refer to any instance in which an academic person takes on a socially responsible role - in government, politics, business, schools, or poverty agencies - which will allow him to experience the "natural" functioning of that particular apect of society. The role must be an operational one with responsiblilty and some decision making powers. He becomes an insider. He is not a consultant with the luxury of giving advice without responsibility for implementation. He is at bat. He is not sitting in the stands passively observing the game and passing judgement on the players. He is in the game and he is a player. Finally, he assumes the new role not only to learn but to move and change things. He is there to "win", and winning is not defined in terms of

ideas and theories about the game that he or others developed prior to assuming the new role. He assumes the new role to test the adequacy of ideas and theories, to see how they fit with social realities. The period of time he spends in this role will vary, but there is no doubt in his mind that at the end of the period he must discharge the obligation to determine and communicate the general significance of his experience. Part of winning is in contributing to new and general knowledge about man and society (Sarason, 1974, pp.247-248).

Social action research means diagnosing a social problem with a view of helping improve the situation (Blum, 1955). The social action researcher must:

...pursue social action for the purpose of applying basic theory to the problems that occur in communities.

...become a participant in a local community and help it to build a psychological sense of community. This can only be accomplished if the researcher becomes committed to and cares about a specific community.

...get to know all he possibly can about the heritage, conflicts, and people within his community.

...develop relationships with those sharing the experience. Friendship, trust, and respect are important aspects of these relationships.

...be dedicated enough to endure the rough spots (Kelly, 1971, Blum, 1955, and Sarason, 1974).

Was this what I had been doing in the previous two years? Yes! I believe the concepts of social action had been brewing inside me and until I attempted to formulate a theory for my thesis, I was unaware of the

value of what had occurred. Now I realize that one can be involved in very practical kinds of actions and extract from them an understanding which may influence both theory and practice. Both aspects are important – my contribution to the community effort and also my contribution to developing a theory of communities and how they work. Realizing this helped me design a community needs assessment based on informal community networking. The needs assessment and what I hoped it would accomplish became the primary focus of my intervention. It was formulated in collaboration with the core group and represented a serious attempt to tackle the reoccurring problem of lack of citizen involvement. This aspect of my involvement with the project is discussed in Chapter 6.

The interviewing I did, as part of the community needs assessment, increased the level of grass-roots involvement and thereby lessened my feelings of lack of legitimation. By utilizing community residents as experts and resources, I increased my own feelings of legitimation. I was no longer forcing my values and judgements on a docile community. By attempting to build trusting relationships, I was seeing and hearing about the community as it actually was. The executive committee and now several community residents accepted me as one of them. What better stamp of legitimation

could a social action researcher require? I began to feel a sense of belonging that climaxed at the open house/community meeting, discussed in Chapter 6. Another source of legitimation was my own sense of growing committment. As my sense of committment to the project and the community increased, my sense of legitimation was also increased.

The value of social action research as opposed to experimental research has been discussed extensively in the literature. I would like to reiterate what the literature states with my own experience. First, the qualitative data I gathered consists mainly of emotions, some of which are mine, some belong to others. I feel that these feelings are as real and as significant as those facts which can be expressed statistically. The value of this type of data should not be underestimated. Secondly, the social action approach is valuable because it places the researcher in the middle of the setting and from this vantage point, I was able to view several small, but significant, scenarios which indicate a slowly increasing sense of community within the neighbourhood. I will discuss these instances in the concluding chapter but here it is important to recognize these incidents as an illustration of the value of the researcher, as a part of the setting. Individually,

the incidents could have been overlooked, but because of my intense involvement in all aspects of the project I was able to recognize the holistic value of these separate situations. The principles of social action research have been invaluable in interpreting my experiences in the Lang's Farm Village community.

Summary

What is the most effective method to learn how communities grow and change, and how they can become valuable assets for the individual living within them? Ideally, studying a community or facilitating constructive change within a community can be accomplished most effectively by becoming a part of its everyday life. The facilitator must be involved in the action of the community, not just in formulating ideas that will be implemented by others. Without indepth personal contact with the community, outside intervention lacks the applicability it needs to succeed.

I was involved on a front line basis with the Lang's Farm Village community and learned an enormous amount about both community dynamics and myself, through this involvement. Community organizing

requires personality growth and from success in the community development process emerges an effective community organizer. On several occassions I felt the survival of my ideals and my self-esteem were endangered, but without overcoming these obstacles the skills I emerged with would be meaningless. Community organizing skills must be accompanied by the dedication required to carry oneself over the rough spots, the ability to relate to, respect, and care about people who are unlike oneself, a committment to risk-taking, and the ability to work with others as an equal. Community work is uncertain and often lacks the clarity that usually accompanies a work role. This initial lack of focus later becomes unimportant as the community takes responsibility for itself. However the patience required to achieve this must be balanced with the enthusiasm necessary for achieving the short-term objectives that are a steady path to the long-term goal of community responsibility for its own future. Learning how to develop this balance is crucial to success as a community organizer, but I believe it is a struggle which accompanies that individual on every community intervention attempted. The personal and professional struggle experienced in attempting to find the appropriate balance must be equalized by a supportive environment. By building relationships of

trust and a climate of reciprocity, a community organizer not only insures the success of the community effort, but also builds a safeguard for his own mental health. This support and an unwavering belief in the potential of people to help themselves and others, are the primary tools for the community developer. I was fortunate in being surrounded by a core group of individuals who supported and guided me, and as well, provided excellent role models. With this support , learning to meet and relate to community residents taking risks in programming, and dealing with the project's lack of focus, became easier to manage.

* For additional reading in this area I would refer the reader to Granek (1979). She discusses the student's feelings of ineptness, confusion, and helplessness while learning consultation. These feelings are documented as common among trainee's involved in a consulation practicum and several factors related to these feelings are discussed.

Chapter 5   The Community Development Process:
               Presentation of a Model

This chapter will attempt to develop explanations

that make sense of the community development process.

I will use the experiences of project creators and

myself as illustrations of the process and how it

functions. Initially, several definitions of community

development or organizing will provide an understanding

of the objectives of the process:

> Community development is a movement designed to
> promote better living conditions for the whole
> community with the active participation of, and if
> possible on the initiative of the community, but
> if this initiative is not forthcoming
> spontaneously, by the use of techniques for
> arousing and stimulating it in order to secure its
> active and enthusiastic response to the movement
> (Blakely, 1973, p.186).
>
> The organization of people in a locality to deal
> themselves with problems and opportunities close
> at hand that affect their lives and patterns of
> living, is the central theme of community
> development (Cary, 1970, p.1).
>
> Community development has been defined as
> organized efforts of people to improve the
> conditions of community life and the capacity of
> the people for participation, self-direction, and
> integrated effort in community affairs (Dunham,
> 1970, p.171).

Theoretically, community development appears to be

the solution to the lack of sense of community,

identified earlier in this paper as the major ailment

of the modern western world. However, implementing this solution is a lengthy and arduous task. A psychological sense of community cannot be created through community development without a collective, cooperative effort, but this effort is unlikely to exist in an alienated and isolated community. How can a cooperative community movement be encouraged in a community such as Lang's Farm? Can the community realize its potential for action? Does it want change to occur? The cycle of alienation and isolation is repeated from one generation to the other and without an outside change agent, individual and collective potential will not be identified and utilized. Richard Mason provides an illustration of this roadblock to a speedy and effective implementation of community development principles:

> It's not that the community doesn't want it, it's that for that program to succeed, you're taking a very real coping device away from the people of the community. They are using their alienation as a device to say we're not responsible for this neighbourhood. Who cares if someone dumps garbage all over the street - whenever you go out and ask people to become involved with something you take that defense away from them. They can't turn off anymore. They have to say sure, I'll come to the meeting, I'll plan a picnic for the kids. But when you start extending yourself that way then you also put yourself up to being disappointed or hurt or angry that nothing happens. The major block against it is that people don't want to have to make a committment. That's their way of dealing with social stress.

The process of how community development occurs is a difficult question to answer. Chapter 3 provides the project's history to the point of its beginning action and it is at this point where we will begin to study the events that are a part of the community development process.

The Process

Community development describes a community's efforts to improve the conditions of community life. The community residents who participate in this effort are the vehicle of the community development process. This core group and their attempts to understand the dynamics of their community and its needs are the key elements of the community development process. As this group initiates and attempts to maintain a community development effort a process evolves. Community development is used as a method to encourage change within a neighbourhood.

Although the process lacks a master plan, there is a pattern obvious in community development efforts. Community organizing is usually initiated by a group of individuals (initial organizing aid may be provided by

a group or individuals , outside of the immediate
community), who feel a common motivation, who want to
achieve a goal which is common to all. With this goal
as the basis of a self-help effort, they are faced with
the problem of achieving their desired goal. The core
group creates an image of how they would like their
community to be and then they must decide on a strategy
to attempt to move towards it. The first step in the
process is stating a clearly defined goal or problem
statement which will become the basis for action
strategy decisions. Once the group determines an ideal
solution to community concerns they must switch their
emphasis to immediate activities that are readily
achievable. The process of achieving a complex goal
must be broken into achievable steps.

The process of focusing on achievable goals is a
trial and error method of understanding a community and
its needs. The community development process can be
broken into four different elements which together form
a cycle that must be repeated frequently as a community
group grows, learns, and develops. The process
involves:

1. ACTION STRATEGY
    An initial taking of steps to achieve an immediate goal
which is a part of the group's overall objective.

2. FEEDBACK
    The core group must consciously seek community feedback

to their action strategies. This feedback may be received from either formal or informal sources.
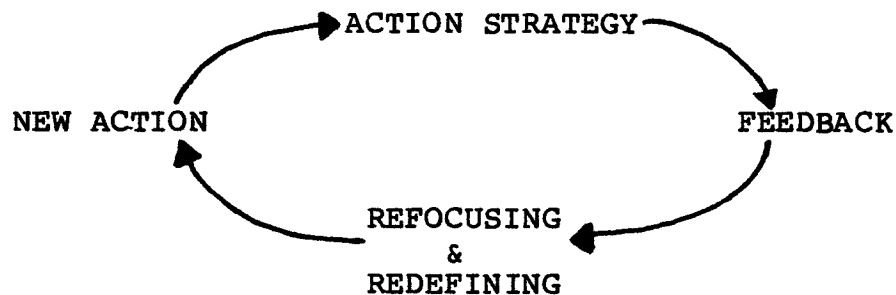
3. REFOCUSING AND REDEFINING
Utilizing this feedback the group may have to refocus their objective and therefore redefine the tasks they will use to achieve this objective. Within this stage other considerations may also play an important part. They include; availability of personnel, input of various community groups or facets of community life (for example, churches), availability of funding and the dynamics of the group itself.

4. NEW ACTION
A new action strategy may be taken as a result of the previous steps.

These four steps create the community development process:

ACTION STRATEGY

NEW ACTION   FEEDBACK

REFOCUSING
&
REDEFINING

As each new cycle begins the NEW ACTION becomes the ACTION STRATEGY and may be replaced by another NEW ACTION. The REFOCUSING AND REFINING stage of the process is an evaluation or assessment of how effective the implementation of an action strategy has been in meeting goals and objectives. This evaluation procedure becomes an integral part of the community development process, both on a formal and informal level. This process supports and encourages the

necessity of modifying action plans. The development
of the core group and in turn a community development
project does not occur smoothly. Growth occurs in the
midst of conflict, ambiguity, anxiety, disappointment,
and at irregular rates of progress. Times of
enthusiasm, frustration, hesitation, and activity are
all part of the process as it moves on to achieve its
goals. The remainder of this chapter will illustrate
the failures and successes, the floundering and
committment, that are a part of the events that make up
the activities of the Lang's Farm Village Project. The
four stage process of community development will be ·
utilized in an attempt tounderstand the chronological
events of the project.

A Chronological Review

The meeting that marked the beginnning of the
Lang's Farm Project was attended by representatives
from local churches, social service agencies, schools,
and the Lang's Farm community itself. This group was
to be called the Advisory Committee of the Lang's Farm
Project and membership remained open to all interested
individuals. This group tends to have a membership
between 15-20 people, representing a cross-section of

the above groups. From this group an Executive was chosen. This is the project's organizational chart:

Advisory Committee (membership is open to all interested persons).

Executive Committee
    Bill Breckbill - Chairman
    Dana Schiebel - Treasurer
    Muriel Becthel - Community Liaison
    Don MacLean
(Changes in personnel will be noted as they occur).

Community Liaison (Muriel Becthel)

Project Staff/Community Volunteers
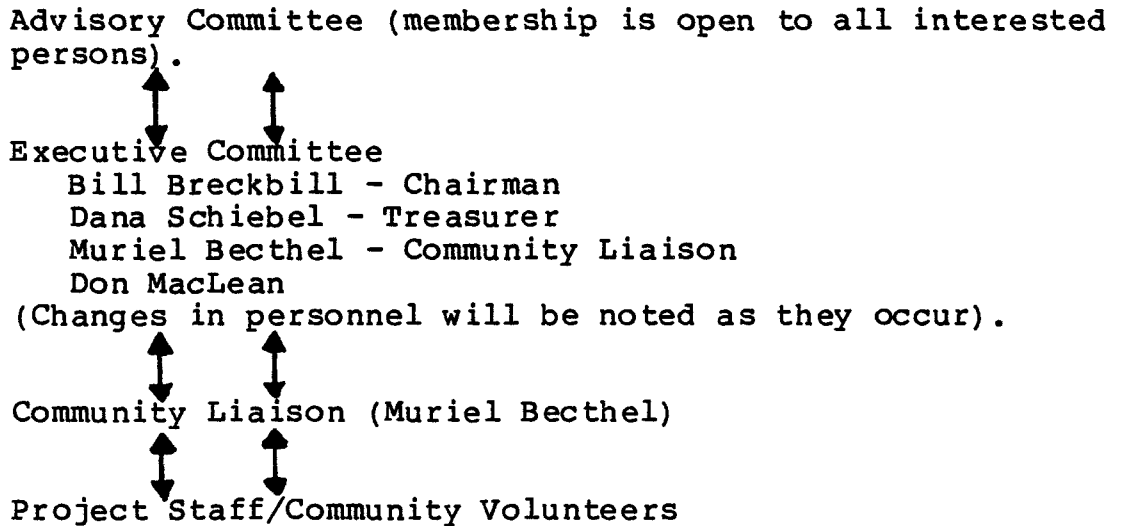
This organizational framework illustrates the flow of communication between the groups involved and does not represent a power ranking. However, the Executive Committee is responsible to the directives received from the Advisory group. As well, the community liaison is accountable to the directives received from the Executive Committee. Before describing the chronological events of the project, I would like to make a distinction between the Executive group and the individuals who make-up the core group. The core group or working group consisted of Bill Breckbill, Muriel Becthel, Dana Schiebel, Kathy Schiebel, and myself. This distinction became more obvious in the fall and winter of 1980-81. In describing the chronological

events of the project I will not include all project meetings and activities. I have identified certain events as significant and will concern myself with the importance of these.

March 14, 1980

During this initial advisory meeting a general discussion of community problems was held. From this discussion the group discovered a motivation common to all present. This motivation involved creating a sense of community within the neighbourhood. Problems such as delinquency, transciency, and loitering were all viewed as stemming from a lack of sense of community. The group recognized the need for a community project to address these problems and selected an Executive Committee as a first step in developing a community effort.

ACTION STRATEGY: The group decided to apply for a grant to receive a Summer Youth Employment Grant to employ four students during the summer of 1980.

OBJECTIVES: The objective of the project was to work at the process of developing a sense of community in an

area characterized by transcience and high population
density. It was hoped that through the cooperation of
students and local volunteers there would evolve among
residents a cohesiveness and concern for one another
and their neighbourhood. The project focused on two
areas: 1. Assessing and understanding the needs of
residents. 2. Developing programs that respond to
those needs.

OUTCOME: Funding was received, students were hired and
the project began in May, 1980.

THE PROCESS: As a self-help effort both the Advisory
and Executive groups agreed upon a common goal which
became the basis for the action strategy decision made.
The ultimate goal of creating a sense of community was
broken down to first, assessing and understanding the
needs of the residents and then developing programs
that would respond to those needs. The initial step in
the process was to apply for funding to attempt this.

May 29, 1980.

This advisory meeting was used basically to introduce the student team to the Advisory Committee. The students outlined their objectives and plans for reaching these objectives.

ACTION STRATEGY: The students planned (I am writing this in the third person although I was a member of the student team) to distribute a door-to-door questionnaire/newsletter. This action was supported by both the Advisory and Executive groups. An open house and community field day were also planned.

OBJECTIVES: The objectives of the door-to-door canvassing included:

1. Creating community awareness of the project and its activities.
2. Becoming aware of community problems and needs.
3. Becoming aware of community resources (ie., people).

The open house and field day were also planned to increase the project's visibility in the community.

OUTCOME: The door-to-door canvassing was not effective as a needs assessment. It appeared to be too early to use such a method to discover community needs. It was unclear why this was ineffective - possibly lack of

interest and trust were the major deterents. The open-house and field day activities were minimally successful in attracting community participation.

THE PROCESS: The difficulty of discovering community needs became more obvious at this time. An evaluation of the door-to-door questionnaire/newsletter suggested that it was successful as an initial introduction of the project to community residents. However, it did not identify specific needs. What did we learn from this experience? Perhaps, that residents themselves were unaware of their own needs or they were unwilling to express them to a new community group which appeared to be invading their neighbourhood. If the needs assessment was ineffective because of a lack of trust and committment then, obviously the next step for the project was gaining the respect and confidence of the community. Redefining the project's action strategy was necessary. At this time the students decided to emphasize work with the children in the area. The lack of activities for children was an obvious need and programs were planned to meet these needs. The actual programming included playground activities, a playschool, craft shops, a youth group, and a babysitting course.

June 23, 1980

During this advisory meeting the students presented their impressions of the neighbourhood's responses to the door-to-door canvassing. They also explained their programming ideas for the summer months.

ACTION STRATEGY: The students were encouraged to proceed as they had planned. They were also encouraged to involve the adults in the community in activities which would not require a great deal of committment. The open house and field day were given as examples of this type of activity.

OBJECTIVES: By meeting the obvious need presented by the large number of children in the neighbourhood the project hoped in turn to, meet the needs of their parents. The summer activities were planned to create community awareness and trust for the project's efforts.

OUTCOME: Through involvement with the neighbourhood children, contacts were made with several adults. Encouraging community support and participation requires time and the summer project initiated this

process. It was viewed as successful in increasing the project's visibility in the community.

THE PROCESS: The change of emphasis from research to action (ie. programming and increasing community awareness) illustrates the pattern of trial and error which is the major facet of the process of community development. The ultimate goal remains the same, but new experience, awareness, and knowledge prompts a new action strategy. The realization that community organizing is a long, frustrating process became obvious after the summer months. Despite initial discouragement, hope for the future was the most evident feeling at the end of the summer effort. The process of gaining community cooperation and trust had begun and both Executive and Advisory groups wanted this process to continue. With the loss of student manpower, a new focus and a new action strategy was necessary.

September 22, 1980

Discussion at this advisory meeting revolved around plans for the winter months, available manpower, and funding possibilities.

ACTION STRATEGY: The project planned to utilize the resources provided by Wilfrid Laurier University. I was to work with the project in a coordinating capacity and in interviewing community members for a needs assessment. A WLU student, Jan Ferri, was to work with Kathy Schiebel to start a neighbourhood women's group. Another student, was to offer a series of community lectures. Funding was to be sought from the A.R. Kaufman Foundation and a local landlord was to be contacted about renting a unit in the neighbourhood to replace the summer's center.

OBJECTIVES: At this time it was very important to maintain the project's visibility in the community. The Executive attempted to do this by maintaining the project's Resource Center and by acquiring funding to provide permanent staffing within the community. Volunteer support was also encouraged by using volunteer help to run a garage sale. By using student involvement in program planning it was hoped that community participation would be encouraged. Programming was seen as nesessary for continuing the project's efforts in the neighbourhood, and at that time no community residents capable of doing this had been identified (except Kathy Schiebel, who was to lead the neighbourhood women's group).

OUTCOME: My involvement with the project was maintained
throughout the fall and winter months, both in terms of
aiding with programming and doing a grass-roots
community needs assessment (see Chapter 6). Jan
Ferri's involvement with the women's group was
maintained well into the winter of 1981. Kathy
Schiebel's involvement with the women's group was
essential in its success. This group provided an
opportunity for meaningful interaction between several
neighbourhood women. The project's struggle to obtain
a free rental unit in the neighbourhood was rewarded by
a neighbourhood landlord and a centrally located town
house unit was obtained. The project was unsuccessful
in obtaining an A.R. Kaufman Grant but it was able to
survive, using money it was able to raise. These
efforts illustrate the determination and creativity of
the core group. Also at this time, WLU provided me
with a Teaching Assistantship which permitted me to
work in the neighbourhood with other student resources.

THE PROCESS: A change in personnel (the end of summer
funding) created a need to refocus the project's action
strategy. Suddenly, both manpower and funding became
important. Programming emphasis also required change
because the children had returned to school. Also the
project's goal of creating a sense of community could

not be achieved until the programming included the adults in the community. The new action strategy involved creating programming that encouraged adult participation. Identifying specific needs was again difficult and therefore part of my involvement was to design a needs assessment that would effectively discover community needs. Despite this realization by both myself and the core group, I felt uncertain and confused about my own role and the project's expectations of me (see Chapter 4). The project itself was also experiencing doubt about its direction and resources. At this time no specific action plan was organized. The desire to maintain the project's effort was strong for all those involved but the project's development was occurring at an irregular rate at this time. With the university's involvement the lines of accountability and responsibility were unclear and a part of the new action plan was clarifying the project's direction, goals, and lines of accountability.
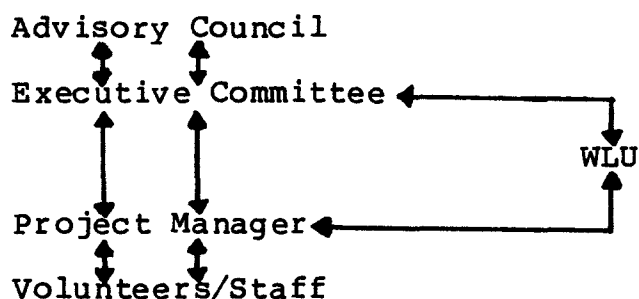
November 14, 1980

The focus of this advisory meeting was redefining the project's goals and ways to reach them. Accountability and role definition were also discussed.

ACTION STRATEGY: Bill Breckbill, Geoff Nelson, Ed Bennett, Muriel Bechtel and I were to meet before the next Advisory meeting and report to the committee a clearer definition of these roles and responsibilities. Kathy Schiebel and I were to meet about ideas and possibilities for operating a play-school within the neighbourhood.

OBJECTIVES: Many members of the Advisory committee expressed apprehension about the project's organization and lines of accountability. Although there was agreement that the project must attempt to involve residents in planning and implementation of programs there was confusion around the process necessary to achieve this. There was a strong desire to clarify lines of accountability. Despite these concerns, several individuals expressed a desire to organize specific programming , even on a trial basis. The play-school idea was developed to meet this need.

OUTCOME: An excerpt from the December 1, Advisory meeting describes the lines of accountability eventually accepted by the group:

Muriel Bechtel then reported on organization and responsibilities. Using charts, she described the flow and accountability.

```
              Advisory Council
              ↑    ↑
              ↓    ↓
           Executive Committee ←─────────────┐
              ↑    ↑                          │
              │    │                        ↓ WLU
              │    ↓                          ↑
           Project Manager ←──────────────────┘
              ↑    ↑
              ↓    ↓
           Volunteers/Staff
```

The Advisory Council is to brainstorm and come up with ideas and options when needed for the Executive and Project Manage r to work on. The Executive is to aid the Project Manager with planning, supervision and information; with support and encouragement: to make community contacts and to evaluate the work of the Project Manager. The Project Manager is to initiate programs agreed upon, provide training and assist in finding staff and volunteers. WLU is to provide resources and experienced help for the Executive and closely related to the Project Manager's responsibilities (Minutes, Lang's Farm Village Project, December 1, 1980).

The organizational framework of the Executive Committee was also discussed but was left unchanged. The Project Manager role describes my own involvement in the project and it was also clarified as a result of the action strategy adopted at the previous Advisory meeting. It was decided that my major responsibility was to develop community contacts. This was to be facilitated by regular meetings with Muriel Becthel (Community Liaison) for the purpose of feedback, planning, and support.

THE PROCESS: During this period it appeared as though the project was not task-oriented. It lacked clarity regarding accountablilty and had an inadequate concept of the resources available to it. Until the organizational and accountability framework was clearly defined, action strategies could not be developed. Attempts to concentrate on actual programming (for example, the play-school) became less important as effort was focused on finalizing the project's goals and methods of achieving that goal.

December 1, 1980

This Advisory meeting was used to discuss and finalize the lines of accountability and responsibilities described above. Plans for the community play-school were also discussed.

ACTION STRATEGY: It was decided to hold two trial play-school meetings to gain an insight into neighbourhood interest. Neighbourhood participation was to be encouraged.

OBJECTIVES: The play-school was offered to serve a perceived need within the community. Parent volunteers were invited to provide citizens with an opportunity to feel ownership over what happened within their neighbourood. It was believed that the project's ultimate success was based on resident interest and participation.

OUTCOME: It was eventually decided to operate the play-school at the same time as the Village Voices (the community women's group). Limited funding, staff, and community interest indicated it would be easier to manage if it were integrated with another program. Although the service was limited to one afternoon per week it was hoped community interest could be sparked both through the Village Voices and my community interviews.

THE PROCESS: With organizational problems solved (at least temporarily) the group felt as though they were able to proceed with concrete programming. Again, resources and personnel became a problem as programming was designed to encourage community participation. Both the Executive and Advisory groups were aware of the value of promoting community ownership over project activities and this concern was becoming obvious in project activities and Executive discussions.

January 26, 1981

Now in its second year the group began to focus once again on plans for the summer months, as well as programming for the remainder of the winter months.

ACTION STRATEGY: Village Voices was to be re-opened for the remainder of the winter and the spring months. A community canvass was to be used to increase participation in this group. The project decided to operate a program for children during the school break in March. Summer funding would be applied. for as in the previous year. In addition, a municipal playground grant would be sought. A community meeting/open-house was planned to celebrate the project's first birthday. This was to be the final activity of my community needs asessment.

OBJECTIVES: Programming was planned and carried out to meet perceived community needs. Funding was sought as a valuable resource in discovering community needs and in developing programs to meet these needs. The needs assessment I was involved in initiated the process of discovering community needs and developing the human contact and community awareness necessary to encourage resident involvement in the project. The open-house was planned to encourage this involvement.

OUTCOME: The Village Voices was successful in collecting and cultivating a group of neighbourhood women in an environment that encouraged meaningful interaction. The March Break program was a failure but in terms of learning, the group managed to utilize the experience and analyze what was done incorrectly. The Lang's Farm Project was succcessful in receiving a Summer Youth Employment Grant and a municipal playground grant. The results of the needs assessment and the community open-house are discussed in Chapter 6.

THE PROCESS: Once again, evaluation of previous activity indicated that an emphasis was needed in programming and forming community contacts. These efforts were based on community feedback and Executive perceptions of community needs. With the approach of the summer months funding applications had to be completed and this too, required redefining the project's focus. The development of the summer project and its focus will not be discussed in this chapter because I was not personally involved in this process. I will provide an update of project activities in the concluding chapter.

In conclusion, an overview of the project's activities indicates the uncertain pace at which a

community development project evolves. It does not follow a specific plan, but instead is constantly forced to stop, evaluate, and redesign new action strategies. These changes and the need for refocusing are not undesirable but are instead a part of the nature of the process. Community organizing lacks a definitive action plan and it is important to maintain a mindframe which is open to change as the need develops.

Chapter 6   Needs Assessment as a Building Block

Introduction

The creation of a new setting, in this instance an effort to build a sense of community through community development, will not be successful unless it addresses the relevant needs of the individuals within the setting. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the importance of assessing the needs of a community. The information gained through a needs assessment is a building block in the process of developing a neighbourhood's sense of being a community. Ross (1955) illustrates this relationship:

> Community organizing...is a process by which a community identifies its needs or objectives, orders these needs or objectives, develops the confidence and will to work at these needs or objectives, finds the resources (internal and/or external) to deal with these needs or objectives, takes action in respect to them, and in so doing extends and develops cooperative and collaborative attitudes and practices in the community.(p. 12).

Identification of needs is the crucial link in the development of a community. A needs assessment provides the information required for the community development process to happen. Without the problem or

needs statement that grows out of this process the community development effort has no focus, no starting point, no motivation for local decision making and action.

Needs in Lang's Farm Village

The community effort in Lang's Farm Village was initiated and developed by individuals both from within the immediate community and from the surrounding community. Despite different backgrounds, the project's core group unanimously expressed concern about the lack of community spirit within the Lang's Farm neighbourhood, but each individual had his or her own perception of the concerns and needs of the residents. How accurate were these perceptions? Were they really aware of the nature of the community and its concerns? Often action was taken without a complete understanding of the nature of the problem. Although the project tended to place an emphasis on program development, both the Executive and Advisory committees realized being aware of community problems and concerns was an important aspect of the project's mandate:

> I'd like to see it (the project) come to grips
> more adequately with the stated purpose of
> discovering what people there see as their needs.
> If you've got people who mainly don't care or who
> have no desire to stay there any way or get
> involved, that's a pretty difficult thing to put
> before the project - that they find out what they
> (the community) see as the community needs or
> their personal needs, that can be met on a
> community basis.

Concern has also been expressed about the lack of

understanding of the community's needs:

> So, when you talk about needs it's really hard to
> determine what needs are, because no matter what
> you try to do and come up with you may please a
> few but you're probably going to have a few
> against you. So, that makes a community group in
> itself diffcult to operate...I often wonder if
> people really do know what they want, myself
> included, for their neighbourhood.

In this chapter I will discuss my intervention in

the neighbourhood - a needs assessment. I have termed

this an intervention because I approached the Executive

committee with the idea and although they were highly

supportive, I do not think this type of assessment

would have taken place without my initiative. During

the needs assessment process the project's core group

maintained a strong interest in my work and provided me

with encouragement to continue. I became involved in

the needs assessment late in my involvement in Lang's

Farm community. Why did the needs assessment occur at

that time and not earlier? The need for awareness of

community needs and problems was a concern of the project from the beginning but the needs assessment could not have occurred earlier because neither myself nor the Executive were prepared to be involved in such an action. As our understanding of community dynamics increased we both became more aware of the need for a community needs assessment. Another consideration was the community's readiness to be involved in this type of research. The Lang's Farm Project required viability and community trust before a needs assessment would be effective. Eventually my needs, the needs of the executive committee, and neighbourhood readiness matched and I planned a study which included community residents as active participants. Waiting for the appropriate time meant the research would be more meaningful - to me, to the core group, and finally to the community.

A neighbourhood is a setting where people interact and affect other people through their actions and their responses to other people's actions. As stated earlier, within any neighbourhood there are problems and needs and within the same neighbourhood the resources exist to solve many of these problems. A needs assessment is basically an attempt to find out the needs of a community and to identify indigenous resources which may be utilized to meet the identified

needs. Once the needs of a setting are assessed and the resources recognized, an attempt can be made to create a setting which will match needs to resources. The needs assessment is an initial step that could be used in the project's wider planning process. Milord (1976) further pursues the importance of needs assessment utilization:

> ...the needs assessment program itself is not merely a collection of data, but should also provide directives for action (p. 261).

How could I most effectively gather information that could be utilized for future planning? The obvious answer was to talk to the people who lived in the neighbourhood. Several door-to-door surveys had already taken place in Lang's Farm and I saw no point in simply adding more of this type of data to what was already known. The door-to-door approach did not yield the quality data necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the community. A member of the core group discusses these early research attempts:

> One of the things we did last year was to try to talk to people to find out what they wanted and the reaction last year wasn't over-whelming. I don't think we found much.

As a representative of the core group I felt that I should attempt to make contacts with people at grass-roots levels, looking for motivations that might become the basis for local decision-making and action. I felt the door-to -door survey approach yielded superficial information which was not appropriate for action decisions. This approach was also not successful in encouraging community involvement. I wanted to talk to people over a cup of coffee and find out what it was like to live in Lang's Farm Village. What kinds of problems did people experience? What could be done to change things? I felt people would be more responsive to an informal, open-ended interview schedule (Appendix 5), as opposed to a more formal, limited response format. This approach required that as a researcher I was actively involved in the community. This was to be a "grass-roots" needs assessment involving a series of informal interviews with key informants living in the neighbourhood. It would also serve as a vehicle for gaining citizen trust, interest, and ultimately involvement. It is preferable, whenever possible to use an informal, grass-roots network approach to identifying problems and needs, rather then relying on formal organizations (Warren and Warren, 1977). Often the information received about a community from formal sources (such as

social service agencies) may not be entirely valid. In addition to increasing the validity of data gathered the neighbourhood itself cannot be expected to work towards solving problems unless they are involved in the process of identifying problems.

I felt strongly that a few carefully chosen "key informant" interviews could provide me with much insight into the lives of the people who live in the area. The initial interviews were carried out with community contacts which already existed. These individuals helped me to identify other community residents who might be willing to talk to me. Two housing superintendents in the neighbourhood were important in completing my interview contacts. I used this informal community networking system as a way of identifying interviewees, to encourage residents' trust in me and in turn to increase the likelihood that the information received from the interviews will be valid. My previous contacts increased my sense of legitimation in approaching community residents. Each time I knocked on a door, I was able to explain who I was, not only in terms of the project but also by identifying a mutual contact. This method worked well for me, it increased my sense of security and surprisingly I was welcomed into every home I contacted. The community has several types of housing and an equal number of

interviews were conducted within each to eliminate any differences which may have existed.

A needs assessment study must be designed to systematically achieve pre-determined objectives (Blake, Kalb, and Ryan, 1977). I designed my needs assessment in Lang's Farm to meet three objectives:

1. Identify the needs of the neighbourhood and how people look at their neighbourhood.
2. Increase community awareness of the project and what it was doing.
3. Identify people who would be interested in working with or getting involved with the project in some way.

Meeting these objectives would obviously be of value to the Lang's Farm Project and its future. However, I also felt the results of the needs assessment should be presented to the community in a form that the community could use and hopefully would want to use. An outlet for community feedback was essential and I choose to use a community forum as my method of presentation. The project was celebrating its first anniversary and had decided to hold an open house/community meeting to celebrate this birthday. This provided the ideal outlet for my report. I organized my presentation in a brief, informal format to insure that it focused on providing information relevant to community change through citizen involvement. The open house encouraged

community involvement and I hoped that this involvement, and my findings would increase the potential for action within the neighbourhood.

When the evening of the open house arrived I was delighted to see six of the individuals I had interviewed in attendence. By this time I had become a "seasoned" community organizer, who no longer viewed quantity as the only indication of success. Six community residents was definitely success! By their attendence I viewed these six individuals as strong community resources.

The following is a verbatim description of what I reported to the community meeting which followed the open house:

> Before I report on what I learned from my interviews I would like to give everyone some background. There were three reasons for doing the community interviews and they were; to make people more aware of the project and what it was doing, to find people who might be interested in working with or getting involved with the project in some way, and to find out what are the needs of the neighbourhood and how people look at their neighbourhood. I talked with twenty-five people in the neighbourhood and these people were identified in several different ways; the superintendents, through our women's group, Village Voices, and by the people I had already interviewed. The interviews were well distributed throughout the neighbourhood and I tried to have the different types of housing equally represented. Tonight I will discuss the points that came out in almost every interview.
>
> Most of the people I talked to feel this neighbourhood has a poor image or reputation.

When I asked why, they said, kids hanging around Becker's and the street corners, vandalism, and the number of people who move in and out of the neighbourhood. One women expressed the problem well when she said, "Any area this small, with so many people will always have problems." Another aspect of this, is that many people do not own their homes, and so don't feel any responsibility for their neighbourhood and so they don't get involved. Another person I talked to said, "I have the feeling people live here temporarily and don't want to put an effort into the neighbourhood." The high turnover of people in the area makes it difficult to make friends with neighbours. Some people said they have a few neighbours that they rely on or can share a coffee with but the majority of the people I talked to do not know their neighbours. One person I interviewed said, "I just get to know my neighbours and then they move!" I think this problem adds to the fact that many people do not like to live in the neighbourhood – they don't have friends or even acquaintances in the neighbourhood and most dont't own their own homes, so they do not feel responsible for what happens here.

The problem that was recogized most consistently across all the people I talked to was the lack of things for the children in the area. Everyone recognized that the large number of kids in the area have nothing to do so they get bored and that's when problems happen. There appears to be a tremendous need for space and activities for the kids. This goes for every age group. Many people identified the lack of facilities in Preston as a large part of this problem.

The final area of common concern is the planned development for the gravel pit area directly behind the Lang's Farm area. Many residents are concerned that the problem of green space and other recreational facilities would be increased if more high-density housing is built in that area. This would become more of a problem to the Lang's Farm neighbourhood.

The three areas of concern I have identified appear to be the major problems that people in the area feel are important. I do not feel that these problems are unsolvable and I was encouraged by resident's interest in the neighbourhood and by

the way they welcomed me into their homes and talked so openly to me. I would like to thank those people for their time.

Following my presentation the meeting was opened for questions and discussion. The discussion centered around the action impact of the interviews. Bill Breckbill, project chairman, focused the discussion on shaping a problem statement out of the needs assessment data. To my delight, it was a community resident who pinpointed the problem. He said the problem is basically one of community awareness, of problems and of the project's potential to help community residents work together to solve these problems. He continued that it was up to everybody to work together to solve those problems and through that cooperation relationships would be created that would provide the area with more of a sense of community. The problem statement centered on the difficulty of creating community awareness, both of the project and its potential. But how? Suggested ideas included a community newsletter, a community clean-up and tree planting, and a neighbourhood baseball tournament. These activities focused on reinforcing the project's image in the community, as well as encouraging community involvement. This was the first step in attempting to solve the problem statement but more

importantly these directives had come from community residents and not the project alone.

The community meeting had been specifically organized to encourage community involvement. My presentaion was informal, and brief, the discussion was focused and pragmatic - these precautions were taken to maintain citizen interest and to prevent citizen feelings of inadequacy. By approaching community residents as experts on community needs and solutions, the resulting action plan is owned by the community and therefore the chance of it succeeding is increased. So, what next? The implications of the needs assessment data, the problem-solving tactics will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The benefits of an informal, networking needs assessment are twofold. First, it provides the community organizer with an ideal method of gaining an indepth sense of the community, its problems, needs and strengths. The information I reported to the community was not intended to convey the understanding of the community that I gained during the process of the interviews. The community organizer is also provided

with an opportunity to build the personal relationships
which are important to the success of any community
effort. The only way to do this is through personal
contact! Newsletters and other forms of impersonal
contact cannot match the effectiveness of a
face-to-face meeting where the community resident is
considered an equal and a resource. Besides developing
a keen sense of what life in Lang's Farm is like, I
also learned that there are a number of individuals in
the community who are barricaded in their home waiting
for the encouragement and opportunity to destroy these
barriers and become involved in their community.
Unfortunately, time restrictions prevented me from
further encouraging these individuals. However, had I
been able to devote more effort to making and
strengthening these grass-roots contacts the rate of
resident involvement could have been increased. My
belief in the value of an informal, grass-roots
approach to community development had been reinforced.
Without community involvement a community development
project is guilty of placing its preconceived solutions
on a population which lacks interest in the project's
goals and therefore will make no effort to insure its
success. However, community involvement must not be
measured by quantity - often the quality of involvement
is a more appropriate indication of success.

Second, a grass-roots needs assessment provides the valid information required to create a problem statement and eventually a solution. Community change cannot occur without community involvement in problem identification and goal setting. I cannot over-emphasize the value of citizen involvement in this process. A neighbourhood group's success in developing a sense of community is directly related to its communication links to community residents and the relevance of its programming to community needs. Pragmatic solutions to significant needs will encourage community interest and involvement. With this interest and involvement comes a sense of caring for each other, for the neighbourhood, that is, a sense of community.

Chapter 7   Insights and Conclusions

In this concluding chapter I would like to provide the reader and /or the potential community developer with an overview of the process of community development , its value, and personal insights into my experiences. I will also provide an update of the activities of the Lang's Farm Village Project and projections for its future. Finally, the role of community development in the future of neighbourhood restoration and preservation will be considered.

Project Update

My direct involvement with the project ended in May, 1981 and it was at that point that I ended my account of project activities. I will now provide an update of the project's activities. This information was gained through personal contact with core members, the summer student team, and attendence at project Advisory meetings. A Summer Youth Employment Grant was received from the federal government to hire a four member team to work in Lang's Farm Village during the

summer of 1981. The initial activity of this group was involvement in an orientation week, which I helped plan and in which I participated. This orientation process was important in the development of the focus which the summer would eventually take. It was designed to provide the student team with information about previous project activities, both failures and successes. The objectives and goal of the project were also stressed. From these discussions several problem and goal statements were created. The summer of 1981 began with more confidence, focus, and concrete objectives then the previous summer. This student group benefited greatly from the experiences of the previous summer, the winter effort, the aid provided by a more experienced core group, and finally my needs assessment data. As stressed in Chapter 5, the community development approach encourages redefining and refocusing the effort's objectives and action strategies using the information gained through previous actions. This process was again evident as the project and the student team organized their objectives and brainstormed about the most efficient methods to reach these objectives.

Summer activities included a play-school, a playground, a teen group, a pool program, a babysitting course, a self-improvement course, a community baseball

game, a women's group, and a community garage sale. Although activities for children were an important part of the group's programming, the focus was expanded to involving adults, either as participants or as volunteers. Registration numbers in these programs were greater than those in the previous summer but more important was the development of the project's presence in the community. Community awareness of the project was increased and many personal contacts were built between the project and community residents. The student team also cited several instances of friendships being made or strengthened through project activities. Inroads were also made in the areas of increasing volunteer involvement and in reaching the youth in the neighbourhood. Both the project's Advisory group and I consider the summer effort a tremendous success. This accomplishment was easily identified in the progress felt from the summer of 1980 to 1981.

Once again at the summer's end the Lang's Farm Project had to decide whether to continue their effort into the fall and winter months. With a successful summer behind them, a decision was easily made to begin fall programs and to locate a permanent source of funding. Three programs are presently in operation and the most important aspect of these activities is that

they were organized and are operated by community residents. This was a first for the Lang's Farm Project! Without any government assistance, the community is helping itself through resources available within its own boundaries. I feel this is a milestone in the project's struggle for independence and community involvement. The three programs are the Village Voices (a group for neighbourhood women), supervised pool nights (a pool club for 10-16 year olds), and a women's quilting group. All three groups have an enrolment of between 10-15 community residents.

At the Advisory meeting held November 2, 1981 the process of community development was again evident. The topic of refocusing and redefining was the project's organizational format. Discussion revolved around expanding the present organizational chart (see Chapter 5) to include a Board of Directors. Both advantages and disadvantages of this change were discussed. However, the Advisory group decided the project was not ready to support this expansion and instead the present Executive was expanded to include seven members. Bill Breckbill had previously resigned as chairman. Therefore there were now four vacancies on the Executive committee. To update, present members included Dana Schiebel (acting chairman), Muriel Becthel, and Kathy Schiebel. This group was given the

mandate to recruit new members from the neighbourhood itself or from other interested individuals. This example illustrates the outcome of the group's consideration of enforcing an organizational change. Based on the feedback provided by the Advisory group the Executive was able to refocus and redefine the proposed change to meet the needs and concerns of Advisory group members.

This meeting also marked the beginning of the project on an all-year-round basis. The Executive announced three sources of funding which enabled this phase of the project to begin. The financial aid included $2,000 from the Preston-Hespeler Rotary Club and $3,000 from the Preston Mennonite Church. The project also received free rent from the investment firm which owns the complex in which the resource centre is located. Project programming based on these new sources of funding is presently undecided, but the immediate action taken was to begin the process of hiring a half-time, permanent coordinator to maintain and create community contacts and to help volunteers operate project programs. This action strategy begins a new focus, a new emphasis for the Lang's Farm Project. However, community contact and involvement remained the Advisory group's main concerns despite the availability of a new staff person. This ends my

coverage of project activities and I will now
illustrate the value of these activities to both the
community and to those who were touched in some way by
the project's work.

Impact of Project

At this time I would like to provide supporting
data to further clarify the impact the Lang's Farm
Project had on the neighbourhood itself. These outcome
measures are impressionistic and anecdotal, but
considered collectively, they indicate a trend towards
the development of a psychological sense of community
and the development of the Lang's Farm Project as an
actual community development effort. I will use four
different sources of data to clarify the project's
impact on the community. The first is a description of
outcome measures, then reports from project creators,
self-reports from community residents, and finally, my
feelings. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, my involvement
in the setting, as a part of the community, was
important to gaining an overview of these
illustrations, as well as an understanding of their
collective importance. As I note these examples I
would like the reader to keep certain questions in mind

as he considers the value of the community development effort in Lang's Farm. These questions are: Has the value of community life increased? Does it have the potential to be more? Did project activities provide the opportunity to meet the need of shared relating, the need for self-esteem, and the need to achieve and create?

Outcome Measures

1. Evaluations from the summer of 1980 stressed the importance of providing neighbourhood children with opportunities to interact. The availability of recreational programs was as important because of lack of available activities. In the following spring, Community Services of Cambridge was approached by several residents of Lang's Farm Village, inquiring about the continuation of these recreational programs. This is concrete evidence that our efforts had an impact on the community.

2. Village Voices is now entering its second year as a community women's group. It has maintained a core group of individuals and provides an opportunity for neighbourhood women to interact and build friendships. The members are encouraged to provide input into group

programming and activities. I worked closely with Village Voices and feel secure in pointing to this group as an illustration of individuals experiencing an improved sense of community - this program provides its members with a sense of belonging of which I was fortunate to be a part.

3. My needs assessment interviews provided me with insight into the value that community residents place on the efforts of the project. Many individuals expressed their gratitude and interest. The hope that the project would continue was expressed frequently. These experiences helped me to realize that project activities were not being overlooked by community residents, they were appreciated and of value to the community.

4. During the winter of 1981, the core group met with the members of the Preston Mennonite Church to provide this group with an update of project activities. The core group was encouraged and supported by individual accounts of how the project had affected several people. Several residents of Fairview Mennonite Home (located on the edge of Lang's Farm Village) described an improvement in their relationships with neighbourhood children. They credited project

activities with this change. Occurring simultaneously with project activities, William G. Davis Senior Public School expanded its volunteer efforts at Fairview Home. This program was developed to improve relations between the students and seniors and was evaluated by both groups as a success. Fairview Home has donated $200 to help the project continue its efforts. Several seniors attend the Lang's Farm Advisory meetings and provide valuable insight and suggestions. This illustration provides information about another group which was influenced by project activities and project spin-offs.

5. The open house/community meeting in April, 1981 illustrated community concern and interest through the attendence of several community residents. More importantly, it was a community resident who helped formulate the problem statement which was a result of that meeting. In terms of my direct involvement this meeting was the culmination of our efforts to develop a sense of community in Lang's Farm.

6. At a recent Advisory group meeting Roy Steckley, Principal of William G. Davis School, reported a marked decrease in vandalism at his school, over the previous year. Several community residents also remarked on the lack of incidents occurring at Halloween time. In past

years, that had been a difficult time. Both these reports indicate an improvement in the youth problem in the neighbourhood.

7. The activities in the summer of 1981 illustrate many examples of the project's impact on community residents. For example, the interaction between the mothers who were bringing their children to playschool led to the creation of a neighbourhood women's group. This group provided these mothers and several other community members with a meaningful opportunity to interact. Volunteer involvement was also an important aspect of the success of the summer effort. A member of the student team summarizes the general feeling created by the summer project, "Everybody knew about the Resource Centre and what we we're trying to do in the community and they were 100% in favour of what we were doing. People were genuinely concerned about the project ending and some of them were even willing to do something about it."

8. Recently, one of the neighbourhood's building superintendents approached the investment company by which he is employed and sought a rent free unit for the project. This was his own initiative because he values the project's effort and would like to see it continue.

9. Presently, four community members are involved in orgainizing and operating two programs at the Resource Centre. This is an indication that the community wants the project to continue and is willing to get involved to work towards that end.

Summary Observations of Key Participants

In this section I will provide a summmary report of observations shared by the key participants, on what they feel are the positive effects of the project:

> Positive effects...the biggest one is that people become aware that there is an opportunity for them to do something for themselves and also to work with their peers and neighbours in developing recreational and other programs.
>
> As far as positive effects are concerned, the open house was an example of things that can happen. There was, I felt, a very positive feeling – people were coming, were interested, were saying what is going on. There seemed to be interest, I think on a broader base, on having it continue this year than there was last year. I think people within the community are saying, "Let's see what we can do to make this a better place to live." I've been impressed with the people who are serving as superintendents in the buildings. They're saying, "Let's see what we can do here. Let's work along with each other, not in opposititon." I think the positive effect is what it does for the people that are doing it – the motivators, the initiators. And you can just be happy for the kind of thing you saw happening at the open house where there were a number of people present from the immediate community and you felt some of their interest and excitement about what was going on and to feel how Mr. W feels about it and other persons. There's a positive effect in

that number one, it affirms people. Number two, it helps them to learn about each other and so some community is developing. I think for the people that are trying to initiate and help the program along - it's a growing experience for those people. Maybe it bridges the gap between people who are in that community and may feel isolated from the rest of the world. So there is something good about that interaction which may build bridges from people in that community to outside.

The last excerpt raises another facet of the project's impact and that is the effect it has had on the individuals involved as motivators and initiators. As this group has worked together toward a commonn good, a sense of community has developed between those individuals. As a member of this group, I felt a sense of belonging and ownership of not only the project, but more specifically with those individuals who I had worked most closely with in the core group. I will use excerpts from the interview I had with Kathy and Dana Schiebel to illustrate the value their involvement had for them as individuals. As community residents, I feel they exemplify the opportunity that involvement in community development has for an individual living within a neighbourhood. Kathy speaks first:

For me, I've personally grown alot. I was never really a person to go and get involved or to go knocking on doors and say hi, I'm so and so. That way I can reach out to people and be friendly and open. I think I've matured alot because with the women's group I'm leading that and I'm responsible for that. And I'm proud of it too - I think it is

successful. It might not be alot of people but we're meeting regularly and I'm giving some people a happy feeling, at least for a few hours. I like our involvement (ie. her and Dana) because it's something we can talk about and share and scream about and feel frustrated about, but it's brought us closer. I like it because I feel I'm doing something for my children, as well by being involved, that I'm going to work hard at getting them involved with not only what we're doing here but other activities. So, I feel it has alot of good points too. It's really good when people phone you for information, heh, I'm really getting up in the world - people think I know something. That makes you feel good too.

Dana also describes his experience:

I would say its affected me personally in that it's something completely different to me, to deal with people on a volunteer basis where you're right at the level where decisions are being made. Just to know that what you're doing is having some effect on the neighbourhood. That some people really respect what is going on and other people respect what the organization is trying to do and in turn what you're doing. I think that is important. I think I've learned to communicate more with people. I'm still not an expert at it. I think its helped me in my attitudes towards my job. You get to see the organizational problems. And like I said, I think it's interesting, like Kathy mentioned working as a family together, it's for the benefit of us, our children, and for the neighbourhood, so it gives you a little bit of pride in what what you're doing and that you're trying to make improvements in an area that you feel has some serious problems. So , that makes you feel like you're growing, you're more of a citizen.

The Lang's Farm Project has affected the Lang's Farm neighbourhood and many of the individuals living within it. As more community residents become involved

I feel they have the potential to benefit from the ir involvement in the same way that both Kathy and Dana have. Their experiences represent the opportunities that community development creates for those who become involved in it. A community development project must procede with the belief that each community has any number of Kathy and Dana Schiebel's who must be found and cultivated. As this identification and cultivation process procedes more and more individuals are provided with the opportunity to experience a psychological sense of community within their own neighbourhood.

My Thoughts and Feelings as Facilitator-Researcher

The project has also had an impact on me as a person and as a researcher. My feelings of ownership and belonging in Lang's Farm Village were important to my role as a community developer but when I completed my involvement it was these emotions which created difficulties. My participation in the Lang's Farm Project began at the project's beginning and I maintained my involvement while the project struggled to establish itself as a force in the community. During this process I often felt I was contributing little or nothing significant to the project's development but at other times I viewed my involvement

as key to the project's evolution. Despite these contradictory feelings, I valued the core groups' efforts to create a sense of community and I was willing to be involved in any way. When my involvement ended I felt both a sense of relief and a fear that the project's future was doubtful. However, after I left the project began to develop more independence, more of a presence in the community, and finally and perhaps most important, increased involvement by community residents. These achievements were and continue to be the objectives of the project. In its own terms, the project had become a success! My own hopes for the project had become a reality. As I look at these developments, now as an outsider, I find that success is difficult to accept. I am forced to deal with two emotions. On the one hand, I could look at the project's new success as a natural progrssion, in which I played a part. In this instance, I feel pride, a feeling of loss, and a desire to be credited for this achievement. On the other hand, I feel concern about why this progress has occurred after I left. Perhaps, my skills had been inadequate or my sense of committment not strong enough. This instance creates feelings of inadequacy and defensiveness.

I have not yet completely dealt with these feelings. My desire to work with the community towards

its independence was accompanied by a desire to feel
both wanted and needed by the project and in turn the
neighbourhood. I had a need to create, to achieve, and
to feel successful. During the latter part of my
involvement I had begun to feel partially successful
but perhaps my exit from the setting occurred
prematurely in my development as a community organizer.
I had not received enough positive rewards in return
for the arduous struggle which I had been involved in
since the project's creation.

What then is an appropriate time for a community
organizer to leave a neighbourhood? I am convinced
that there is no such time. Because the emotional
committment is so strong, withdrawal will also be
difficult and create many ambiguious feelings. Another
difficult issue is the problem of concluding who or
what is responsible for the success of the community
development effort. Community development is a
lengthy, complicated process and success cannot be
pinned on any specific individual or activity. Each
community organizer or worker, whether volunteer or
paid, an outsider or a community resident, must deal
with these concerns on a personal level. There are no
easy answers, but I believe an awareness of the
potential difficulities can serve as a preventive
technique for the individual who become s involved in

community work. He or she should be aware that for each time their efforts are recognized and rewarded , there will be instances when they are ignored or criticized. Each success may be matched or outnumbered by failure. Personal feelings of security and accomplishment are easily overcome by self-doubt and lack of direction. I have not included these warnings to deter anyone from becoming involved in community development, but rather to alert them to the risks and difficulties that arise while involved in the process and often even after withdrawal from the setting. Despite the difficulties I have described, the success of the Lang's Farm Project creates for me a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of warmth towards those involved in it. The experience has been worthwhile in terms of providing me with new skills, and a career direction. The relationships I developed in Lang's Farm have been an important aspect of my involvement and have played a major role in the personality growth that occurred in me during that time. Finally, the Lang's Farm Project has provided the data to complete this research paper. My hope is that the information provided here will enable others to utilize their own skills and the skills of others to solve the problems experienced within their own community. The resources that exist in our neighbourhoods have been overlooked

and must be recognized and cultivated to create the sense of community necessary to recapture the value of life within a warm, social environment.

Insights into Community Development

These insights or advice to a potential community developer are based on my own experiences in Lang's Farm Village. I am presenting them as guidelines for entering a community as well as coping with difficulties that arise after entry has been achieved. They do no t provide a detailed, "how-to" guide to organizing a neighbourhood, but instead are "helpful hints" to be used by an individual or community interested in developing resources within a specific neighbourhood. The nature of community development does not allow a specific method of entry or organizing to be developed. Each community and its problems are different and therefore the method of organizing that neighbourhood is also different. The following insights include action strategies, coping devices, and finally advice to the potential organizer:

1. When a group or individual decides to develop or organize a community's resources to meet its own needs,

the initial work must involve developing an awareness of the neighbourhood. This is best achieved by talking to key persons in the neighbourhood, such as, ministers, public health nurses, school principals, teachers, and long-term residents. Often these initial contacts will provide the community developer with the names of other neighbourhood residents. These interactions serve two purposes. First, the community developer is introduced to the community, its problems, and its resources. He develops a sense of what it is like to live in this particular community - without this awareness he could not understand the neighbourhood's problems or be of value in developing solutions to these problems. Second, they allow the community developer to initiate the personal contacts which will be essential later in the process. My initial involvement in the Lang's Farm community involved talking to key informants as a method of gaining a flavour of the community. Later, my needs assessment data served to sharpen my awareness of the community.

2. The community developer's role is to initiate community interest and involvement. To create this motivation he must look for an issue or problem that affects a large group of people. For example, in

Lang's Farm the initial focus of the project was providing recreational programs for neighbourhood children. This affected almost every family unit in the community and therefore gained the support and interest of many of those living in the neighbourhood. Identifying an issue and developing a problem statement is the major focus of the community organizer. Without this focus, community involvement will not exist. The community organizer should be aware of this as he interviews individuals in the community. The information and contacts gained in those interviews (and through casual interaction) will be crucial to initiating community interest and involvement.

3. The community developer must make a conscious effort to build solid one-to-one relationships. They are the basis of community work and are important for two reasons. First, there is the danger that community residents may feel as if they are being used as subjects in some form of social experiment. To overcome these suspicions, friendships and trust must be cultivated carefully. Second, one-to-one relationships are important in encouraging an individual to become involved in a community project. In the fall and winter of 1980-81 I became involved in project programming to make friends with community

residents. Many of these contacts were useful in my needs assessment research and in attracting community involvement.

4. The time factor in community development is an important element for a community organizer to consider. Progress relies on building trusting relationships and therefore the time committment is a large one. Gaining the sense of legitimation and belonging that accompanies the development of good neighbourhood relations, takes place over a period of months, even years. Using this framework, the community organizer must develop the patience to endure the periods of frustration and discouragement which occur during and even after initial entry and the formation of introductory relationships with community residents. This time factor is evident in Lang's Farm Village. From the time of the initial agency approach until the project began was a period of two years. From the project's beginning to the success it is now achieving, a year and a half has lapsed.

5. Programs may fail or the local press may provide negative coverage of the neighbourhood, but if the community knows you, trusts you, and believes in what you are trying to achieve they will overlook these

errors. Again the importance of building personal relationships within the community is evident. As a community development project attempts to meet its goals, problems will arise and plans will "backfire", but strong community suppport can overcome these difficulties. In the summer of 1980, the Lang's Farm Project received unfavorable press coverage. However, this report did not influence attendence at project activities because we had already developed personal relationships with the participants.

6. Measuring the success of a community development project requires an innovative and unique evaluation method. Evaluators must consider success in unorthodox terms. It is salient to learn to value small but significant events and to remember that numbers are not important as long as you are serving the needs of some individuals. I will discuss evaluation again, later in the chapter. My involvement in Lang's Farm required that I rely on minor incidents as subtle indicators of success. For example, success is encouraging a resident to attend a program and being rewarded by having that individual return, again and again. That success becomes evident, when that individual expresses gratitude for the opportunity the project provided.

7. The outside commmunity organizer must bear in mind the objective of this work within a specific neighbourhood. He wants the community to take ownership for itself and therefore he must be prepared to build for the long term. The basis of his efforts is to seek and cultivate neighbourhood resources, that is, people, to take the responsibility for themselves. By encouraging self-help, the initiator's eventual objective, is to leave the setting in a state of independence that can be maintained after his exit. The Lang's Farm Village Project has encouraged community involvement, and is now collecting the rewards for these efforts. This involvement provides insurance that the project will continue, using community support. The support that now exists is not strong enough to independently maintain a community project but here again, time is a factor. The project's future emphasis must be in encouraging the development of skills and leadership qualities in these individuals.

8. A reliable source of funding is an important aspect of fostering a successful community development project. It is difficult to sustain an effort and encourage community involvement without financial support. For example, in Lang's Farm, the 1980 summer

project would not have occurred, unless Richard Mason had suggested applying for a Summer Youth Employment Grant. Applying for this grant helped in the creation of the core group and a crystalization of their objectives. The availability of funds, for two summers and now over the winter months has helped the project focus its efforts, maintain the interest of a core group, and encourage commmunity involvement. The funding also allowed the project to develop its presence in the community and spark the interest of community residents. Any group or individual interested in organizing a community should investigate the availability of both long and short term funding. Sources of funding include all three levels of government, private individuals, local service clubs and "do-it-yourself" fund raising.

9. The community organizer has many resources at his disposal and an awareness of these resources is important in his work. Several groups or organizations provided assistance in Lang's Farm. Wilfrid Laurier University was cruical to the project's beginning and has provided support and resources since that time. My involvement began as a practicum experience, then as a member of the 1980 student team, and finally as project manager in the fall and winter of 1980-81. This last

involvement was possible through funds provided by the university. WLU faculty have also been involved in consulation with the core group and Advisory committee. Jim Dudeck and the Waterloo County Board of Education were important because they developed, with WLU, the personnel exchange that led to Laurier's involvement in Lang's Farm Village. The project also received support and assistance from Cambridge Community Services, the local school principals, Public Health, Ontario Housing, Family and Children's Services, local churches, and local politicians. Preston Mennonite Church has been particularly valuable in providing support, financial assistance, and manpower. More specifically, both Muriel Becthel and Bill Breckbill, key elements in the project's development and success, worked with the project as part of their church's effort to reach out into the community. Every community organizer must be aware of and be prepared to use the formal resources available to him. These resources complement those already available in the neighbourhood itself.

10. As suggested by my model of the community development process, setting goals and action strategies are important aspects of community organization. Redefining goals was discussed as a

natural facet of the process. However, the community developer must realize the importance of limiting goals, and not attempting to achieve too much, too soon. By setting small goals and achieving success, both the community developer and the community itself is provided with enough positive reinforcement to continue their efforts. The value of these success experiences cannot be underestimated. In Lang's Farm, the work of the previous year and a half can be seen as a continual progression from one small success to another, despite many failures and disappointments. The successes occurred often enough to maintain the interest and support of project creators. The value of these smaller successes increases as community residents become involved and require positive feedback to maintain their involvement. This is becoming more evident in Lang's Farm, as community residents are organizing and operating programs. For example, the individual who operates the weekly pool evening has been so encouraged by the success she has experienced, she would like to expand this program to two evenings a week.

The researcher's immersion in the setting is valuable in gaining an understanding of the social phenomena being studied. This research method supplies qualitative data and requires a holistic analysis. Direct participation in and observation of the setting was supplemented by detailed quotations from individuals involved in the process. This research methodology has both strengths and weaknesses. I cannot emphasize enough the value of being completely immersed in the setting as an action researcher, however this immersion may create several unintended consequences. To understand the complexities of what was being researched I sought to capture what people had to say in their own words, and to document what people's experiences mean to them in their own terms and in their natural setting. The difficulty arises in providing a framework within which people can respond in a way that accurately represents their view about the situation. My own theoretical background created for me certain expectations which may have influenced how the respondents reacted to my questions. My theoretical biases were known to the individuals I interviewed and their responses may have reflected what they thought I wanted to hear. Conversely, my committment to the project and my willingness to be involved in project activities increased my legitimacy

with the project creators and supporters. I felt that this closeness may have increased the likelihood that the data I received was a valid description of the individual's feelings and experiences. Being a part of the setting then, can either increase the validity of the data collected or create a reconstruction of what the respondents feel the researcher would like to learn. I don't feel that the issue is one of avoiding my bias, but rather one of being aware of it and incorporating guards against these biases. Seeking verification from independent measures such as police records, school reports, and indicators collected from social service agencies would provide another check on the conclusions drawn on the qualitative data.

I attempted to gain control over my own biases my balancing by observations against the observations of those individuals I interviewed. Basically, I checked to see if we both viewed the situation in a similiar manner. Once I had received that verification I began to study the process that had occurred. Measuring other independent measures as another source of verification is my recomendation for future research. The fear of either researcher or respondent contaminaton would be alleviated by using the baseline and post-intervention data collected on a variety of independent measures. These numbers would either

verify or contradict the perceptions derived from the qualitative data collection.

Another potential disadvantage of the researcher as a part of the setting is the lack of control experienced over the project's goals and activities. By becoming a part of the setting I adopted the limitations of the setting and worked within them. Particularly in community development, the researcher must learn to deal with the problem statements identified by the community. I relied on my core group and later the community itself, to discover the concerns that were prevalent in the neighbourhood. In Lang's Farm we initially dealt with those problems which were easy to define and feasible to solve. Perhaps, they were not as far-reaching as anticipated but when a community development project begins it has a limited scope, in terms of time, resources, and energy. It pragmatically attempts to solve the problems which are within its immediate control. Initially, the focus of the Lang's Farm Project was the children in the area. Its focus has now moved to providing services to the adult population and such problems as women's issues and unemployment are being addressed. As a researcher, I was a part of the project's progression to being able to deal with larger issues, such as unemployment. The lack of control I

experienced was natural within the setting and my role was simply to facilitate and provide feedback. For me as a researcher, the process was slow but for me as an involved community organizer, it was a necessary process.

The Future

What does the future hold for the Lang's Farm Village Project? Once again, interviews with project creators and supporters provide an overview of their image of the project's future. Here are several responses to my question, "What are your hopes for the project's future?"

> I think ideally to have a permanent resource
> centre providing the kind of resource I talked
> about at the beginning, of helping people to gain
> a feeling of power, a feeling of being able to
> accomplish things. I don't know if that is the
> end result. The end result I would think is that
> nothing is needed. The whole project can be taken
> out and we have a healthy community. But going
> back one step, from that I think would be the kind
> of resource that would really help people to get
> moving in that direction. That they could depend
> on that . They could say, "Hey, we can go there
> for help and the people there are interested and
> involved in helping to create a better
> environment." That requires funding, I guess a
> lot of things could plug into that - certainly the
> university could plug into it, the schools, Public
> Health, Family and Children Services would be able
> to work through that rather then each one doing
> their own thing. I guess in that process I would

like to see the community take the responsibility
for the program in some way. The school is a part
of that community and so is the church, but in the
sense of having the people for whom the program
was developed take initiative and directions would
be a long term goal that I would like to see
happen, where people would say, "Hey, this is our
responsibility. We're going to use these
resources." I think a neighbourhood association
in the sense of being interested in the
neighbourhood and trying to improve the community
is a good idea.

I'd just like to see, I'm from Lang's Farm Village
t-shirts made up. Ha, ha. That to me is a sign
that I'm proud of where I'm from.

My hope is that this project can grow quickly over
the next 2 to 3 years because I think it's either
going to live or die within that period of time.
If nothing new develops this summer (that is the
summer of 1981) chances of it running next summer
are 50/50. So, my hope is that we will be able to
expand our programs to get more people involved
and make more people aware of what we're all about
so that they can become interested to make this
thing mushroom a little bit. For overall goals,
to be met this thing has got to become more
accepted and have more people participate and its
got to happen relatively quick, before the small
core that's involved now gets discouraged and
gives up. In a way my long term goal personally,
is to put in my share of time and then get out and
have someone else do some of the work. That may
sound selfish but I think it's a community group
and it will always have alot of demanding jobs and
those kinds of jobs have to have turnover, I
think.

Ultimately , both this group and myself want the

Lang's Farm Project to develop as an area which has a

sense of itself as a community, to increase resident

involvement in the project, and to develop resident's

sense of responsibility for what happens in their

neighbourhood. The community is presently making

progress in attaining these objectives and I feel confident that the future holds more positive moves in this direction.

The Final Issues

There is no magic formula for how to instill and maintain a psychological sense of community but I am certain that the absence of this sense of belongingness and security is a destructive force. By enhancing the possibility for people to control their own lives, community development provides a framework within which a psychological sense of community can be created. Through community development techniques, community psychology can be useful in providing the resources to return power to the members of a community. Community psychologists intervene at an aggregate level and therefore must seek out the ideas and concerns of the lay people involved in a particular problem or living in a specific area. This feedback should be used in determining public policy and in determining utilization of resources. By doing this, political and psychological power is returned to the people who can use it to do the most good for themselves. By putting the control of people's lives back in their own hands,

individuals will be able to live as they feel they should.

In terms of action, community psychology emphasizes the creation of alternative settings by developing existing strengths and resources instead of looking at the weaknesses of people and their communities. Rather then labeling a person or an environment as inferior, community psychology focuses on the match between the two. It avoids blaming the victim. As community psychology strives for a fairer distribution of material and psychological resources the individual should experience less feelings of inadequacy and more feelings of control. Community psychology must attempt preventive action by creating change in the emphasis of the social service system. This involvement necessitates political lobbying. When the government recognizes a psychologist as the spokesman for a community, the people are represented. Government will not be prepared to do this until it accepts the importance of primary groups to the healthy functioning of individuals. Government must stop trying to act as a substitute for family and community and instead promote these two groups as essential to society's ability to function.

The people's participation in the problem identification and solving process gives the control

over what happens in the community back to the people
to whom the changes will effect most. Even Lang's
Farm, a beginning community development effort,
illustrates this transfer of power to the community.
As the Lang's Farm community takes responsibility for
itself, the individuals involved in this process will
experience a sense of worth and a feeling of belonging
provided by their changing role within their primary
group, that is, their neighbourhood. The freedom,
independence, and power provided through the family
and/or the community, provides security, stability, and
a psychological sense of community which creates a
positive climate for the development of healthy
individuals who experience life as worthwhile and
productive.

How then, can government aid in the creation of a
psychological sense of community in the neighbourhoods
which make up the towns and cities of Canada?
Community development seldom occurs without outside
intervention. Each community requires varying degrees
of outside involvement depending on its own resources
and ability to utilize them. The role of the community
developer is to assess the resources available and to
help create a balance between the extent of his
involvement and encouraging community independence.
Bill Breckbill talked about the importance of
developing this balance:

I think there's a point where we need to always be
alert and that is the planners, initiators,
motivators, that they do not impose programs and
activities on the people there. That they are
very sensitive and very careful that they do not
take over for the people. So there is, it seems
to me, a very delicate balance between being
helpful and allowing people to help themselves.
Sometimes, being helpful, we get in the way of
other people allowing their own skills and
resources to come out.

I asked if he felt we had maintained a good balance in

our efforts in Lang's Farm. This was his response:

Well, it's hard to know. I don't know what it
feels like if I were a person in that community.
When people are made to feel inadequate because
somebody else with more skills and abilities comes
in - at what point do they feel as if someone else
is running it or somebody else can do it better
than I can, so I shouldn't be doing it. It seems
to me that is the delicate balance I'm talking
about. Maybe in the framework of helping people,
we can also be oppressing people. Just the
ability to articulate, to come up with new ideas,
the ability to plan programs - may cause people to
say, "Oh, goodness, I can't do that, so I'm not
worth much." And then, by helping people there is
a tendency to control them and then that control
becomes oppressive and they feel that they may be
involved in what is going on but may feel that
they are subject to higher powers and so they have
the freedom to break out and do their own thing -
so it can be very controlling.

A major responsibility of the initiators is to

encourage community residents to resist their feelings

of inadequacy and to instill within the community a

self-sustaining group of residents who are aware of

their capabilities to maintain the community work which

was perhaps begun by outsiders or non-residents. The outside intervention is essential but more important is the resolution on the part of that outside force to work towards creating an independent, self-sustaining community group. It is this goal which creates many of the initial problems experienced by the initiators of the process. These difficulties were very evident in Lang's Farm. At the beginning, involvement by community residents was limited and the project's success had always been measured in terms of this participation. Perhaps this is the only measure of success which indicates the effectiveness of community organizing. However, falling into the "numbers" game is also a danger. Gerry Steinman points to the major difficulty:

> The success will be gauged on the attitudes of people and I don't think you can measure that in that kind of a setting. A lot of the successes you'll never hear about.

As Gerry mentioned, many of the personal successes will never be documented. The overall success of the project will not be evident for 2, 3, or even 5 years. The potential for children to learn and develop in a neighbourhood which encourages involvement is great. These influences may accompany these individuals into adulthood and into the communities in which they choose

to live. However, there are useful ways of quantifying the outcome of a community effort. For example, school records, police reports, project participation numbers, and the transiency rate in the neighbourhood are less abstract indicators of project influence. It is obvious that evaluation will be complex and must occur over a number of years. Despite this difficulty the emphasis for community development must come from all levels of government. A comprehensive plan to develop community strengths and resources could have a preventive effect on the psychological well-being of individuals. The long-term effects of a broadly based community development effort could be a lessening of the demand for all front line social service programs. Federal, provincial, or municipal governments could encourage local initiative projects, like Lang's Farm, by providing the funding and manpower needed to create a community effort. Outside aid is necessary to facilitate the initial effort and to encourage community support and involvement. By providing this assistance, government could utilize the resources that exist within a community and in the long term lessen the demand for front line services. However, community development has not yet been fully recognized as a preventative technique. Perhaps, successful endeavors such as Lang's Farm will provide the initiative to

spark government interest and support. The potential of each such project is unlimited and collectively these efforts may successfully alter the social service network to value the strengths of individuals as opposed to focusing on their weaknesses.

The Lang's Farm Village Project and my involvement in it are significant because they illustrate, as Sarason (1974) and Rappaport (1981) suggest that communities do have the abilities and resources to help themselves. The project's present success is an extension of that theoretical premise. The newly-evolving sense of community in that neighbourhood replicates Sarason and Rappaport's belief in the potential of self-help. The direction I gave to the core group in Lang's Farm came from my contact with the ideas of Blum (1955), Sarason (1974), Rappaport (1981), and Patton (1980). My intervention in the project reflected these ideas and distinguished my contribution from that of the others involved in the core group. My influence on the project's direction and action strategies indicates that a theoretical guiding influence is important in community organizing.

My involvement in that process has provided several clear-cut guidelines and insights into how to apply this theory to a neighbourhood setting. I feel that these insights are a valuable contribution to a

community organizer or a neigbourhood which would like to create or strengthen the psychological sense of community within their locality. They provide specific directives for action planning and are applicable to a small community effort. My research, then has been significant to the development of the Lang's Farm community itself, and as an illustration of the value and potential of these types of efforts to other communities. It has documented the process that occurs in developing a sense of community. It illustrates that the theory does work and can be applied to a setting. The community development model created is also important as an illustration of the process of action and redefining. The model reinforces Sarason's (1976) concept that neighoburhoods must continue to solve and resolve their problems on a reoccurring basis. This research identifies this process as natural and an important aspect in the eventual development of psychological sense of community. The success and continuation of the effort in Lang's Farm Village provides the proof.
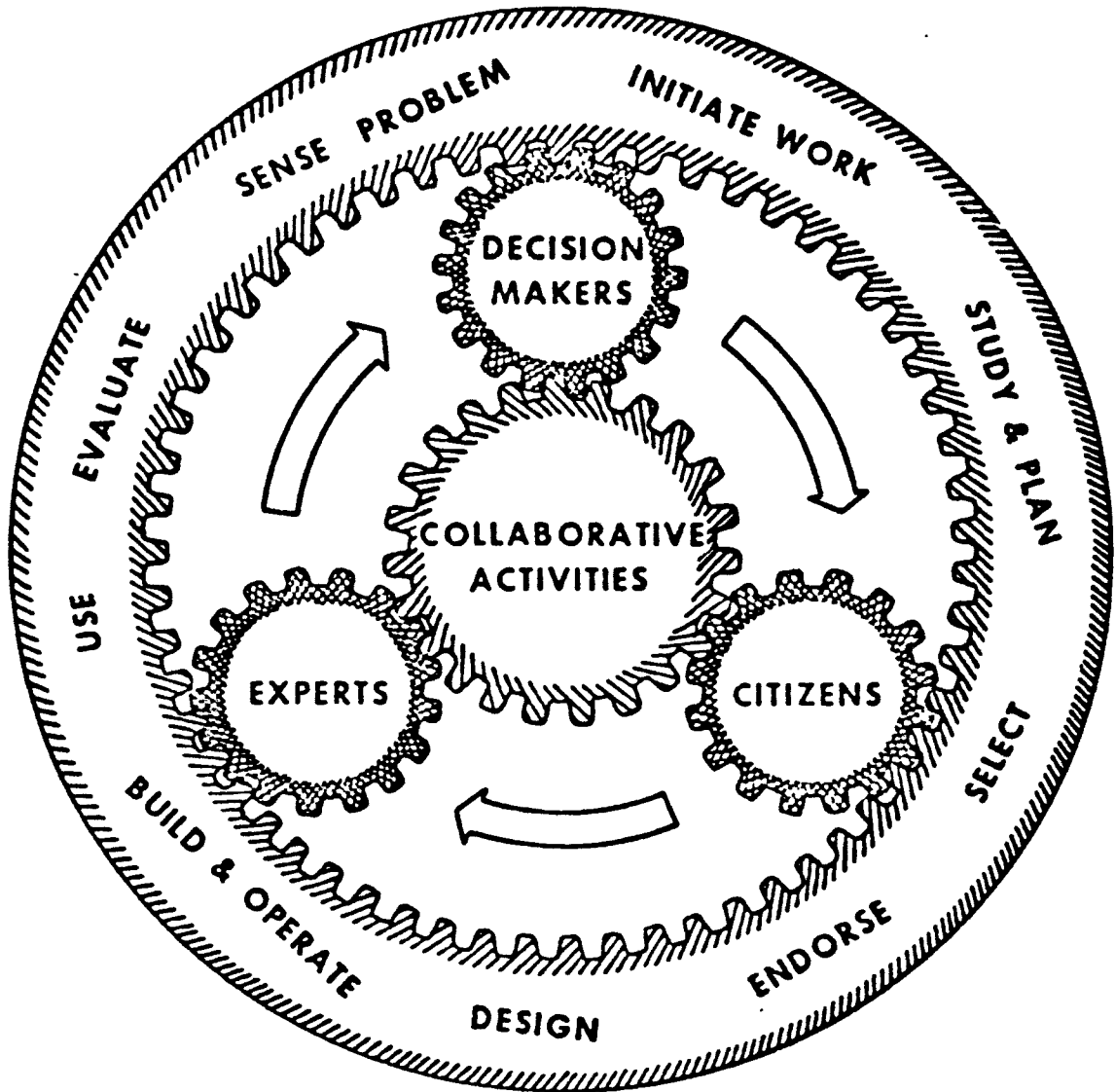
The integrative process.

APPENDIX 2

Interviews with project creators and supporters included:

Bill Breckbill - Preston Mennonite Church
Muriel Bechtel -   "   "   "
Kathy and Dana Schiebel - Community Residents
Richard Mason - WLU/Waterloo County Board of Education
Geoff Nelson -   "   "   "   "   "   "
Jim Dudeck -   "   "   "   "   "   "
Gerry Steinman - Principal, Coronation School
Roy Steckley - Principal, William G. Davis Public School
Don Herald - Family and Children Services
Community Development Coordinator - Cambridge Community Services
Public Health Nurse - Waterloo Public Health Division
Don MacLean - St. Andrew's United Church
Manager - Ontario Housing Corporation
Field Staff -   "   "   "
Alderman - Cambridge Town Council
Present Principal - Coronation School

APPENDIX 3

1. How familiar are you with this neighbourhood?

2. In what capacity do you work in the area? (What is your involvement with the neighbourhood?)

3. Do you think this neighbourhood is basically any different then others with which you have contact? Why or why not? Do you feel your opinions may be biased due to the nature of your contacts in the neighbourhood?

4. Do you think the armchair suppositions initially made about the community are still valid? Were they ever?

5. What do you see as the needs of this community? How do you think these needs can be met?

6. When did you or your agency become involved in the Lang's Farm Project? Why?

7. What shape has your involvement taken? (ie. What is your role in the project?) Would you like your involvement to change in any way? How? Why?

8. Ho w has your involvement effected you personally?

9. How has the core group involved with the project developed and changed?

10. What do you feel are the positive effects of the project? Negative effects?

11. Do you feel the neighbourhood has more of a sense of community now then a year ago? Two years ago? Or do you feel that the residents what to be left alone?

12. Would you reflect upon your awareness of the development of the the Lang's Farm Project and how it relates to the WLU/Waterloo County School Board Exchange? The community project is in part, a spin-off of this exchange. What other benefits are you aware of? Can you elaborate?

13. What are your hopes for the project's future?

14. Are you aware of any community residents who could be identified for the neighbourhood interviews I am doing?

APPENDIX 4

Interviews with community residents included:

Ontario Housing - 6 interviews
Row Housing - 8 interviews
Home Owner's - 4 interviews
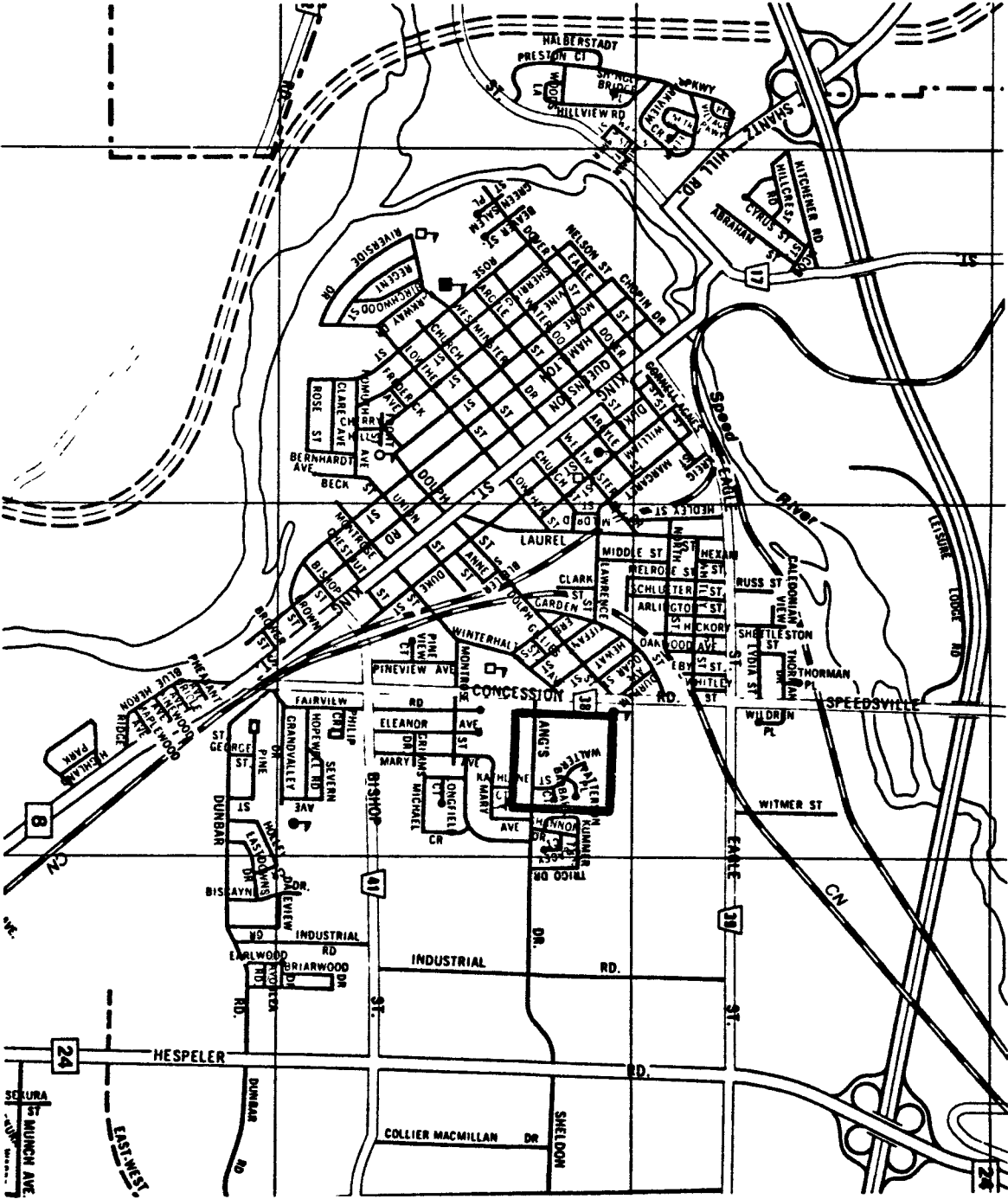Apartments - 4 interviews
Seniors - 4 interviews

This is the minimum number of interviews , which will provide a meaningful core of residents. Interest in the project and/or the community are the requirements for a meaningful interview. The above number of interviews is based on 10% of each area's population.
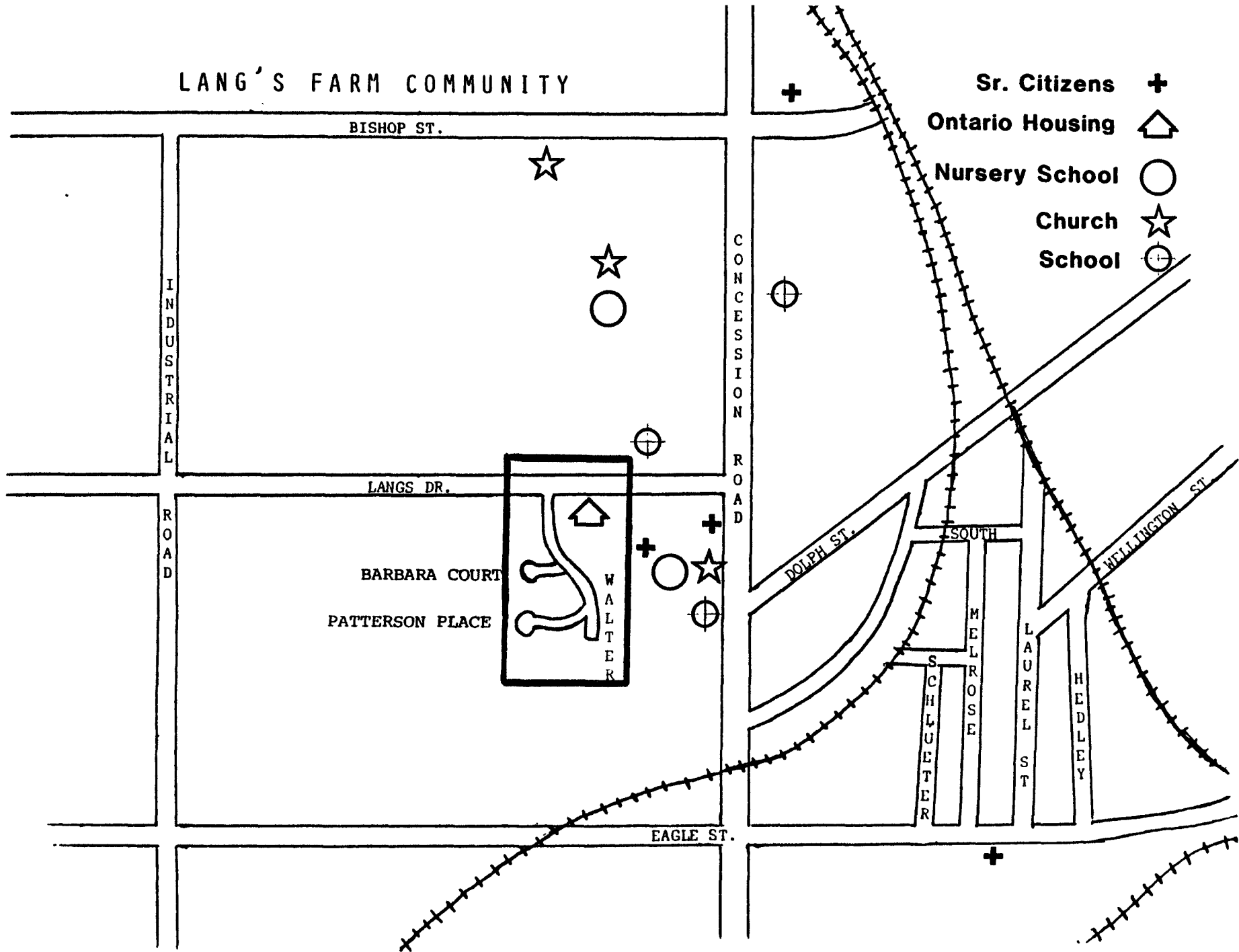
APPENDIX 5

1. How long have you lived in this neighbourhood?
    Why did you choose to live here?

2. How long do you expect to live here?

3. Have you noticed any changes in the neighbourhood
    in the past year?

4. Are there many people who move in and out of you r
    neighbourhood?   If yes, why do you think this
    happens?

5. What are the things you like about this
    neighbourhood?   What are the things you dislike
    about it?

6. If I were to talk to your children, what problems
    do you think they would say they are having?

7. How much time do you spend in your home/
    neighbourhood?

8. Are you active in groups or activities outside the
    neighbourhood?   If yes, which ones?

9. Do you feel you have a great deal in common with
    the people in the neighbourhood?

10. How often do you get together with people in the
    neighbourhood?   Why?

11. What kind of reputation do you think this
    neighbourhood has?   Is a change necessary?

12. Do you have suggestions for changes that would
    make this neighbourhood a better place to live?

13. What programs and services do you think are needed
    in this neighbourhood?

14. Would you be willing to contribute any spare time
    or talents to help organize these services?

15. Are you aware of the Lang's Farm Community
    Project?   What was your response to the community
    newsletters?   Have you or you r family been
    involved in any of their programs?   Do you feel
    the project has has any positive effects on the
    community?

16. Would you be willing to participate in a group
    discussion about your neighbourhood?

APPENDIX 6

CAMBRIDGE (PRESTON)

LANG'S FARM COMMUNITY

Sr. Citizens +
Ontario Housing ⌂
Nursery School ○
Church ☆
School ⊕

BISHOP ST.

INDUSTRIAL ROAD

CONCESSION ROAD

LANGS DR.

BARBARA COURT

PATTERSON PLACE

WALTER

EAGLE ST.

DOLPH ST.

SOUTH

SCHLUTER

MELROSE

LAUREL ST

HEDLEY

WELLINGTON ST.

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