AREA APPROACH TO SOCIAL WELFARE PLANNING

DISTRIBUTION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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1959

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PREFACE

Recording this preface brings a rare satisfaction to the writer. It is the time when he can see at a glance the entire process of thinking, listening, talking, reading, travelling, writing and organizing gone through since the idea of this research was conceived in the early fall of 1957. The satisfaction is even greater as the final product emerges clearly as an embodiment of the generous cooperation of several individuals representing innumerable councils, community organizations, civic and professional associations, government departments and schools of social work.

The preface provides a chance to formally recognize the highly cooperative nature of this project and to acknowledge the writer's debt of gratitude to all those whose kindness made it possible. At the same time, there is the thought that it is impracticable to mention all the names of the large number of individuals, spread as they are, in more than half a dozen cities of this country. In fact there is the additional likelihood of inadvertently omitting someone who contributed a great deal. This indeed is a disconcerting thought. That it is not intentional is the only solace, which is not too satisfactory.

To Professor Everett C. Shimp goes the writer's most sincere thanks and gratitude. His uncanny understanding led him to suggest the area community councils of Cleveland for the field project with the prophetic remark, "You might learn something worthwhile and useful to your country." As the writer's faculty adviser, Professor Shimp's help in securing cooperation from all the community welfare council
leaders in conducting this study and his guidance in its planning were very valuable. Despite his very busy schedule as the Director of the School of Social Administration, his standing instruction, "You should never hesitate to drop in to see me whenever you want" made him very accessible for consultation. The writer wishes to record that he has never come out of Professor Shimp's office without being profited from his understanding, efficiency and encouragement.

The writer thanks the other two members of the dissertation committee, Professors W. C. Batchelor and Merriss Cornell of the School of Social Administration, for their guidance, reading of the chapters and valuable suggestions.

Professor Cornell's help, especially in methodology, was very valuable. But his help and guidance started well before he came to serve on the dissertation committee. His friendly smile, informal ways and never-failing generosity meant that wherever and whenever the writer met with him he had consultation, advice and encouragement. He has truly been an inspiring personality. The writer is at a loss to find suitable words to thank Professor Cornell.

Messrs. Edward D. Lynd, C. F. McNeil and Campbell Murphy, the executive directors of the Welfare Federation of Cleveland, Health and Welfare Council, Philadelphia and Social Planning Council, St. Louis, respectively, extended their cooperation to conduct the study, offered their office facilities and consented to be interviewed. Messrs. Daniel Elliott, Sidney Markey and Hollenbeck, their associates helped in preparing the local schedule of interviews and in arranging for the contacts. Mr. Leo Bohanan, executive director of the St. Louis Urban
League and Mr. Philip Waring, head of the community organization department of the League helped in studying the League sponsored area councils. Miss Adelaide Dinwoodie and Mr. Kay Shumberg, field workers of Cleveland and Philadelphia introduced the writer to several individuals and groups and helped to work out the details of the schedules in their respective cities. The writer is very much thankful to all of them.

It is a great pleasure to acknowledge the debt of gratitude to all the professional field workers, the area community council presidents, leaders of the many neighborhood organizations, community welfare councils, city government officials and others who so generously gave of their time and so frankly discussed the questions raised by the writer. Without their unstinted cooperation the study would have been impossible.

The writer had easy access to all records and invitation to attend all kinds of meetings, conferences and programs. In fact, one of the meetings was convened to discuss whether the area community council should continue to exist at all.

During the field project with the Central Area Community Council, Cleveland, the summer of 1957 which eventually led to this study, the writer had the pleasure of working with Mrs. Katherine P. Williamson, the council field worker. This association was one of the most meaningful experiences the writer had and from that he got a basic understanding in community organization.

The writer wishes to thank Miss Violet Sieder, Professor, New York School of Social Work, for her help. Apart from profiting from her extensive writing on the subject, the writer had the good fortune of
consulting her several times and get his thoughts on the subject clarified.

In a very important and informal way two of the writer's good friends and colleagues, John Rehling and Stanley Kim, both Ph.D. candidates at the Ohio State University, gave a patient hearing to the limitless number of queries the writer raised, went through the manuscript and offered many valuable suggestions. The writer's sincere thanks go to them.

The part time employment at the Godman Guild Association, Columbus, Ohio, since September 1958 gave the writer timely financial help as well as valuable experience in working with an area community council.

It is only legitimate that the writer should go on record as absolving all the individuals and organizations mentioned above, of any personal responsibility for what is written, the way it is written or the things that are not written. That is the exclusive responsibility of the writer.

The greatest satisfaction in writing this preface, however, arises out of the realization that this research project has been an intimate part of the broader and more thrilling study of the great people of this country. It provided splendid opportunities to get a first hand experience of the warm hearted nature, generous hospitality and straightforwardness of the people, their problems and weaknesses, and the ways they went about meeting them.

In each of the three cities visited for the study, data collection took the writer to all kinds of situations in the community. Many generous friends opened their homes to him and invited him to social gatherings and cultural programs, thus providing a better insight into
the fascinating life of the people in this country.

The Fulbright and Smith Mundt Scholarship that enabled the writer to come to this country, therefore, is mentioned here most appropriately and with a high sense of gratitude.

Finally, the preface is a reminder that the most memorable period of the writer's life he spent in this country is coming to a close. His stay and study in this country and particularly this research project have helped a great deal to restore in the writer a faith in the essential worth of Man and a desire to work to make it a reality. With this great value, the most formidable tasks in his home country provide an attraction to him.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

First Experience with the Area Community Councils

During the summer of 1957, the writer undertook, with a view to supplementing his theoretical training in social administration, a field project with the Welfare Federation of Cleveland, the city-wide community welfare council which coordinated and planned for more than two hundred social welfare agencies and organisations. While the opportunity was utilized to study the whole field of social welfare, his major assignment was with the Central Areas Community Council. This was an independent council of citizens, civic and neighborhood organizations, professional groups and social service agencies. It was assisted by a professional field worker assigned by the Welfare Federation. The main objective of this Council which covered an area with a population of more than 110,000, was, "to study the social needs of the community and promote programs designed to strengthen the general welfare of the area." ¹

The interesting experience gained with the Central Areas Community Council led to the study of similar area community councils in metropolitan Cleveland. The initial impression about these council was that they played an important role in the social welfare field, with a fine record of accomplishments to their credit.

¹ Constitution and By Laws of the Central Areas Community Council. Revised, October 1955. (Mimeo.)
The Present Research Project

On return to the campus in the Autumn Quarter, the faculty adviser was consulted regarding the possibilities of selecting the area community councils for the research project. Before the project was approved, a preliminary survey of the field was undertaken to secure the necessary breadth and depth of the field. It was observed that no major research commensurate with the significance of these councils had been undertaken to analyze and evaluate their effectiveness.

A closer examination of the area community councils revealed that despite the diversity in relation to their external aspects and organizational matters such as their character, composition and structure, and despite their extremely dynamic qualities, a basic approach was common to all the area community councils. This was the area approach. The adoption of relatively small geographically, and, to a large extent, economically and psychologically compact areas to base programs on was the significant element in all the area community councils. Several questions arose from this preliminary survey concerning the real meaning, significance and implications of the area approach to social welfare planning that indicated the broad scope of research.

The Hypotheses. The project to study the area community councils was approved by the faculty adviser and the dissertation committee. The following were the hypotheses:

1. The area approach as symbolized by the area community councils in the metropolitan cities of the United States represented a positive step toward constructive decentralisation and a productive participation of people in social welfare planning;
2. The principles of community organisation for social welfare distinctly formed the basis of the area approach; and

3. The area approach constituted an experiment that had validity and usefulness to India, the writer's home country.

The main purpose of the research project was to identify the real meaning and major objectives of the area approach and to assess its significance. This was sought to be accomplished by a study of the area community councils which were the machinery developed to translate the area approach into action.

**Methodology**

**Selection of Representative Cities.**

The research project was conceived as a descriptive-cum-analytical case study. Three cities were selected which represented three distinct geographic regions, and in terms of sponsorship, composition, structure and so on, manifested three major patterns:

1. Cleveland, Ohio, with independent, autonomous councils, assisted by professional field workers assigned by the Welfare Federation;

2. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with the area planning committees under area directors, set up by the Health and Welfare Council;

3. St. Louis, Missouri, where, in the absence of a uniform approach on the part of the Social Planning Council, there was a multiplicity of projects.

**Methods of Collecting Data**

Three case studies were conducted to collect data, and for this purpose the three cities of Cleveland, Philadelphia and St. Louis were
visited in the spring of 1958. Data were collected by means of observa-
tional trips to the areas covered by the councils, interviews, perusal
of records, minutes of meetings and special reports, attendance at
meetings, and observation of and participation in the programs sponsored
by the councils.

A month's time was spent in each of the cities, starting with
Cleveland and ending with St. Louis. A total of thirty councils were
studied for the purpose of this research. In Cleveland the fourteen
existing councils were studied, nine of which were served by seven full
time professional field workers from the Welfare Federation of Cleveland.
All the five area planning committees set up under the area directors by
the Health and Welfare Council together with one independent community
council were included for the study in Philadelphia. In St. Louis, the
four Urban League-sponsored area councils, assisted by professional
coordinating secretaries, and five independent councils under the auspices
of settlements, community centers and the Housing Rehabilitation Project
of the City Planning Commission respectively were covered.

Interviews. The initial survey of the area community councils had
shown the area approach as an integral part of the over-all citywide
social welfare planning. Accordingly, care was taken not only to study
these councils per se, but to study them in their truly total perspective.
So individuals connected with these councils but functioning at various
levels, were interviewed. Mainly two categories of individuals were
interviewed, professional and lay. Among the first category were
nineteen field workers helping the area community councils, nine field
workers of Cleveland, seven area directors of Philadelphia and three
coordinating secretaries of St. Louis. At the city level, twelve professional members of the community welfare councils who were associated with the area community councils were interviewed.

Among the lay leaders interviewed were thirty-four presidents of the area community councils, five lay leaders of the associations or federations of the area community councils, four lay leaders of the community welfare councils and sixteen neighborhood, block unit and other community organisation presidents. Eight city government officials who had experience with the working of the area community councils completed the list of those who were interviewed.

An interview guide was prepared in consultation with the faculty adviser and the dissertation committee. The interviews were directed to secure information in three broad spheres:

1. circumstances under which the area community councils came into being

2. their organisational structure and mode of operation; and

3. their accomplishments, significance, limitations and future

On an average each interview lasted about two hours. Only very important points were recorded during the interview leaving the full interview to be written after it was over. A standardized procedure was adopted in recording the interviews under the main and subheadings so as to facilitate easy recording and subsequent analysis of the data collected.

Meetings. The meetings attended for the study included those of

2. Appendix.
the various sub-committees, executive committees and general assemblies
of the area community councils; of the field staff, joint staff, board
of directors and general meetings of the community welfare councils;
and of the associations and federations of the area community councils.
Meetings of the executive and general bodies of the street clubs, of
their presidents and also of various other neighborhood associations
were attended.

**Programs.** Fairs, town meetings, garden contests, clean-up
campaigns, and work at the hearing in city halls in connection with the
zoning code discussion, were some of the programs observed or partici­
pated in by the writer.

**Records.** Perusal of records for data collection was done at two
levels - area community councils and the community welfare councils.
They included the files of the minutes of the meetings, reports of the
field workers and any other special studies.

**Final Phase of the Study**

**National Conference.** As data collection neared its completion,
the biennial conference on Neighborhood Councils under the auspices of
the United Community Funds and Councils of America, Incorporated, and
the School of Social Administration of The Ohio State University in
June 1958 afforded the writer with an excellent opportunity to conclude
this phase of the study in a broad national perspective. The papers
presented and the discussions and comments that followed reflected the
situation pertaining to the area community councils in many more cities
of the United States.

**Practical Experience with a Council.** As a part-time community
organization worker with the Godman Guild Association, Columbus, Ohio since September 1958, the writer was mainly assigned to work with the Near-North Side Neighborhood Council. This council was the only area community council in Columbus. The practical experience obtained with this council provided a very useful setting to complete the analysis of the data collected.

**Analysis of the Data: Presentation of the Findings**

The data collected are analysed and the findings presented in the following chapters. Chapters II, III, and IV deal with the factors that were responsible for the emergence of the area community councils, their structural and operational aspects, their relationship with sponsoring bodies, the relationship between lay and professional leadership and an evaluation of their records in the three cities of Cleveland, Philadelphia and St. Louis, respectively.

Chapter V is a comparative study of the programs in the three cities, highlighting common characteristics which underlie all the councils and indicating unique aspects possessed by some of them.

An attempt is made in chapter VI to bring out the real meaning and significance of the area approach to social welfare planning. Its implications, accomplishments and potentialities as well as the community organisation process it makes possible are discussed in this chapter.

The project concludes with chapter VII devoted to a discussion of the validity and usefulness of the area approach to the social welfare field in India. The training and experience in the field the writer had before he came to this country supplemented by relevant material available have constituted the main basis for this discussion. Seven important
factors which were identified as factors responsible for the emergence and effectiveness of the area community councils in the three cities of the United States, serve as frame of reference for this discussion.

Clarification of the Terms

Area. The word 'area' as employed in the present study in the context of area approach, area community councils, area committees, and so on, needs clarification. The 'area' used in this dissertation relates specifically to the geographical subdivisions of large cities in the United States. As the cities became too unwieldy and extensive physically, too complex socially and too varied economically, the need for organizing people of these smaller areas for effective solution of continuously increasing problems, was recognised by the thinking people of these areas themselves and by the city-wide community welfare councils. In some instances the word 'district' is used to indicate the same unit. The Cleveland Conference on District and Neighborhood Community Organisations sponsored by Community Chests and Councils, incorporated, and the National Federation of Settlements, Incorporated, in 1947, recognised the need for common understanding of terms and devoted itself to the task of defining them.\(^3\) The Conference used the word 'district'. It is worth mentioning in this context that in agreeing on these definitions, it was recognised that they will be used only for the duration of the sessions and would not necessarily be urged for common usage of the sponsoring bodies.

\(^3\) Report of the District and Neighborhood Community Organisations Community Chests and Councils, Incorporated (Mimeo.), 1947, p. 3
The district was defined by this Conference as

the area within a metropolitan community in which the functional
needs of a major part of the population are met and in which
voluntary associations take place. It is usually made up of a
group of neighborhoods and has certain characteristics --
psychological, physical and political -- which differentiate it
from all other districts. 4

Bounded by industrial belts, major railroad and highway lines or rivers,
this is roughly the area served by a high school. The word area used
in this study will have the same meaning attributed to district in the
above definition.

The first characteristic that emerges about the area is physical
extent, geographical entity or a unit in space. Viewed from this angle,
y any kind of program has to be based on such a unit. Consequently, there
has taken place a subdivision of cities for various purposes. There are
school districts, districts designed by the health departments, districts
for recreational programming, police districts or precincts, districts
for census purposes, municipal wards, postal zones and so on. Such
confusing and even conflicting subdivisions place greater hurdles in the
path of understanding and action. Attempts have been made from time to
time to ensure better understanding in the matter of such subdivisions,
one of the earliest being the one made in the city of St. Louis in 1926. 5

Depending upon the special nature of their objectives, fresh sub-
divisions are brought about by several interested parties. However, a
general agreement in thinking between the city planning commissions

4. Ibid., p. 3.

5. Blanche Renard, "Uniform Districting in a large city for social
and civic purposes," Proceedings of the National Conference on Social
and community welfare councils of various metropolitan cities, is discernable in recent years regarding the basis on which such subdivision should be effected.

**Neighborhood.** Often the words 'neighborhood,' 'district,' 'area' and 'community' are used, especially in relation to councils, as though they all mean the same thing. However, from the above definition of the area as utilised for the purpose of the present study, a neighborhood is a much small unit "in which needs of pre-adolescent children can be met (generally speaking, the area served by an elementary school)." A compact unit, served by small stores, and bounded by major thoroughfares, neighborhood is a residential area with facilities children can use without hazards of crossing heavily traveled streets.

One of the reasons why a large number of people prefer to use the word neighborhood even when they are referring to an area is to be traced to an 'emotional content' of this word which becomes clear from the above definition. The word neighborhood brings to the mental eye a fine face-to-face relationship, a friendly, informal, warm neighborli-

ness, qualities which are all but lost in a complex, impersonal metropoli-

tan situation. These qualities are attributed to the councils and associations with a view to derive this psychological satisfaction. This aspect will become more obvious when the real meaning of the area approach is discussed in chapter VI.

**Community.** Community for the purpose of this study relates to the people living in the areas or districts defined above. The people

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living there, by virtue of this fact, have a community of interest. Differences in race, religious affiliations or economic status are considered to be irrelevant although in practice the areas have tended to contain people belonging to the same race or religion and same income brackets. The fact of geographical continuity and common residence thus becomes the main source of community. The councils set up in those areas, therefore, are designated as 'area community councils' or 'district community councils'. Generally these areas have assumed names taken from objects of local importance such as parks, streets, names in common use which describe them, or names of old real estate subdivisions which still have significance. Hough area, Central area, Northside area, Tremont area are a few examples. The councils in these areas, consequently, are named Hough area community council, Central area community council, Northside community council and Tremont area community council.

Community Welfare Council. City-wide social welfare planning and coordinating bodies are referred to as community welfare councils. In different cities they have different names. In Cleveland it is called the Welfare Federation of Cleveland. In Philadelphia it is the Health and Welfare Council and in St. Louis its name was Social Planning Council, changed to Health and Welfare Council when the study was being made in that city.

Social Welfare Planning. Another phrase used in the title of this study needs clarification in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding: 'social welfare planning.' This phrase is conceived in its broadest possible sense. Both welfare and planning refer at once to
the total well-being of the people living in an area, embracing all factors which directly or indirectly affect their welfare. All measures taken to set up appropriate machinery to study them, and to 'do something about them' constitute planning for social welfare.
CHAPTER II

INDEPENDENT AREA COUNCILS, STAFFED BY THE FEDERATION

At the time of the study, in the spring of 1959, there were fourteen area community councils in metropolitan Cleveland. The oldest of these came into existence in 1937. Nine of these received the full-time professional services of area field workers assigned by the Welfare Federation of Cleveland, while the rest of the councils came under the influence of the Federation by virtue of their being members of the Area Councils Association sponsored by the Federation.

How the Area Community Councils Came Into Being

General community problems, mainly arising out of the changing character of the urban scene; some specific problems such as inadequacy of recreational facilities, safety measures, nuisances, unpaved streets or unkempt sidewalks; a vague realisation that there was a positive connection between the general and specific problems; a conviction that if they, as the persons affected, got together and worked out some measures, these problems could be solved -- these factors brought into being the earliest area community councils in Cleveland.

Where the Initiative Came From

Teachers, ministers and other public-spirited individuals got together, called the initial meetings which were attended by a few people and which discussed and debated the need for a community or citizens' council, its objectives and organisational aspects. Subsequently other details were worked out, constitutions drafted and approved,
officers elected, various committees appointed and programs developed.

In two or three instances the wide and persistent publicity accorded to the mounting social problems, particularly juvenile delinquency, influenced the Welfare Federation to assign field workers to these areas to assess the situation and seek ways and means to solve these problems. Subsequent to such appraisals and mainly through their initiative, representative community leaders interested in solving these problems were brought together and their joint efforts resulted in the setting up of area community councils.

The lead taken by local settlement houses whose comprehensive programs led them to take an active interest in neighborhood work was responsible in the emergency of still other area community councils.

The success registered by the early ventures and the popularity of the programs they undertook attracted the attention of community leaders in other areas. They sought information about the 'why' and 'how' of these organizations. The officers of successful councils were invited to meet with those interested groups. This, too, led to the adoption of the pattern from the successful ones to create more such councils.

The Role of the Welfare Federation

Recognising the potentialities of these ventures for increasing people's participation and bringing vitality into social welfare planning, the Welfare Federation of Cleveland took an active interest in these councils from the beginning. Consequently, encouraging and assisting the ones which were functioning satisfactorily and enabling those people who were interested in forming new councils in other areas to realise their objectives, became a major part of the Federation's
policy. Possibilities of professional persons working with lay people with a view to strengthening these ventures was recognised early enough. Mainly, the Federation's role in this connection has been the following. It

1. made studies through field workers to determine the need for councils and offered organisational help to local leaders;

2. assigned field service to some of the councils, in the beginning on a part-time basis and later on on a full-time basis;

3. provided an area field consultant to give professional guidance to all those councils that did not receive individual area field workers (this service was withdrawn shortly before this study was under way);

4. set up the Area Councils Association composed of representatives of all the area community councils, representatives of key city-wide organizations and members-at-large representing various community viewpoints; and

5. created an Advisory Committee on Field Service to serve the staff on questions of personnel and other policy matters, including the development of criteria on the basis of which field workers may be assigned to area community councils.

The fact that an Associate Executive Director of the Welfare Federation is primarily occupied with this entire program is further evidence of the interest and importance the Federation attaches to the area projects.
**Nature of the Councils**

**Area Covered.** The Area Community Councils are independent, autonomous bodies, with their own constitutions, elected officers, and freedom to act independently on any community issue. The areas within which they operate and the population they represent and serve vary considerably in size. The population ranges roughly from 14,000 to over 110,000. As is to be expected, the areas differ also in terms of density of population, racial composition, 'slum-content', the relative number of homes owned by the occupants, economic status of the people and the number and type of social welfare agencies serving the area.

**Purpose.** As stated in the constitutions of almost all the councils, the purpose of these bodies is "to study the social and civic needs of the community and to promote programs designed to strengthen the general welfare and unity of the area.

**Organisational Structure.** The Area Community Councils display several common features relating to their structure. In a typical council, the ultimate powers are vested in a delegate body, generally called community assembly, composed of representatives (usually two each) from social welfare agencies, neighborhood organisations, civic groups -- schools, churches, street clubs, parent-teacher associations, libraries, nationality groups, settlements, business organisations and so on -- and interested individual citizens.

**Community Assembly.** The community assembly elects the executive committee and this committee conducts the affairs of the assembly during the period when it is not in session. It should be mentioned, however, that each assembly elects only a limited number of members-at-large
from among the private citizen members and the officers. The representa­tives of the organizations and social welfare agencies who are also members of the executive committee are not elected by the assembly.

The number of the elected members-at-large varies, the minimum found being five and maximum, thirty-three.

Committees. The executive committee, in its turn, appoints other committees, standing committees and special committees whenever a need for such committees exists. These committees develop programs, make recommendations and implement approved projects. The chairmen of all these committees are ex-officio members of the executive committee.

In most cases the tendency has been to create special committees whenever there was a special job to be done instead of having large number of standing committees. One council had thirty sub-committees. The most common committees were those for health, schools, youth, recreation, membership, safety, housing and zoning, publications, public relations, budget and human relations.

Membership. The membership dues vary from council to council; however, all of them have different rates for individual members and organizational membership, the latter being always considerably higher. With a view of enabling a maximum number of people to become members, the rate is usually a small amount, one dollar the standard. Some councils have encouraged entire families to become members by offering concession rates to the rest of the family when one member is enrolled.

Program. The program developed by the councils is very com­prehensive and is directed towards the strengthening of the community's ability and resources to further its well-being. Neighborhood
conservation and beautification, health and recreation, liquor control, projects designed to strengthen family life, are some of the major concerns revealed in their programs.

Office Space. The councils have worked out arrangements for office space and meeting rooms. They have received rent-free space in public library branches, settlement houses, schools and public housing projects.

Finances. At the time of the study seven area field workers assigned by the Welfare Federation of Cleveland were providing professional services to nine councils. Secretarial services to the field worker and the services of the field worker were the Federation's contribution. All other expenses incurred by the councils are met by them from membership dues, contributions and funds raised through other means.

The Dynamic Character of the Councils

The annual reports of the councils, the minutes of their meetings, field workers' reports and interviews amply show that the area community councils have, with the passage of time, successfully reflected the changes in their own areas; they have displayed in a remarkable way their dynamic qualities, their programs and projects as well as their structure and membership, reflecting the concerns of the times.

Composition. Most of the councils were organised, as was pointed out earlier, on an individual basis; only a small number of interested and enthusiastic persons were the sole supporters and active members. Later, attempts were made to secure participation on the part of organised groups. Efforts to broaden the membership base and to make these councils truly representative in their character have been rather slow and, it must be pointed out, primarily through the deliberate and
systematic steps suggested and pursued by the field workers. In most cases, the number of organizations as well as individuals showing interest in and readiness to cooperate with the council activities has steadily increased. Special standing committees on membership have carried out, in at least two instances, highly planned membership drives. One of these enjoys a membership of 2,000 individuals.

**Area Boundaries.** There are also evidences to show that for a considerable time, the boundaries of the areas the various councils were to serve were rather nebulous and, consequently, efforts to enlist cooperation proved meager and ill-conceived. By no means are the boundary lines accepted now thoroughly satisfactory or based on rational considerations. However, the changes that have occurred in this connection show signs of conscious attempts to redraw the area boundaries.

**Representativeness.** As significant changes took place in the areas, their councils have tended to reflect them faithfully. Some of the areas have become predominantly Negro. After the initial slowness in effecting appropriate changes in the leadership and composition of the councils in order to preserve them as truly representative bodies -- during which period the councils witnessed a slackening in their activities -- the transition had nonetheless been accomplished and the councils once again enabled to assume their genuine role. Competent leadership has been found among the Negro residents and proper encouragement provided to enable it to assume responsibilities.

**Limitations.** At the same time, rapid changes in other areas have left them very inactive. The redevelopment and the laying of new expressways as part of an over-all urban renewal scheme have completely
changed the very face of these areas, displacing large numbers of families. These radical changes led many residents to look to their councils for guidance, leadership and help. There was a renewal of interest in the programs initiated by the councils at that time; large numbers of people came to attend the meetings organized by them, raised questions about the redevelopment programs and readily volunteered to serve on committees and assume responsibilities. That hope, enthusiasm and activity proved to be nothing more than the bright glow before death. The councils proved to be too inadequate and helpless to meet the situation.

It should be mentioned in this connection that the area community councils which underwent the necessary changes successfully had professional guidance whereas the others were operating on their own. However, no attempt could be made to determine to what extent satisfactory results of the successful category were due directly to the professional leadership or to what extent the failure of the others could have been avoided by its presence. On the basis of the information gathered, however, it can be maintained that the field worker with his knowledge of the changing nature of the area, and with professional skills in social work, aided to a great extent in making the much needed transition fairly smooth and not too-long-drawn-out. Taking into account the very complex and fundamental character of the problems that confronted the councils which faded away, the chances of the professional persons avoiding the fate that befell those councils should be regarded as rather slim.

Program

Housing. Housing is a serious problem in most of the areas where
the councils are functioning effectively. Zoning, rehabilitation and discriminatory practices are but a few of its aspects. The recognition of this as a major problem and the importance attached to the work of subcommittees on housing and zoning is yet another sign of the councils' growth. Cases of violation and complaints about spot-zoning and other malpractices are studied thoroughly, city officials consulted and the interests and points-of-view of the citizens involved represented at hearings.

**Emphasis on Prevention.** Another significant trend discernable in the planning and the programs of the area community councils is the emphasis they place on preventive measures. Reliance seems to be placed on the inevitably slow but enduring educational process. The Family Life and Health Project, spread over a period of one year, involving large numbers of people and almost all the schools, churches, parent-teacher associations and other community organisations and social welfare agencies, which culminated in a mammoth fair was a pioneering project undertaken by a council in an area where more than fifty percent of the families had serious problems.

It is appropriate to mention in this connection that the success achieved by the Family Life and Health project has led to the creation of a new position for a field worker to be exclusively in charge of the extension of the long range aspects of this project. This new post, made possible by funds provided by the Cleveland Foundation, is in addition to that of the regular field worker assigned to the council by the Welfare Federation. It is provided initially for a three year period. The appointment of a special field worker to devote efforts
exclusively to one single project is an entirely novel development in the area approach and deserves close and careful observation for future guidance.

Neighborhood conservation has been adopted as a convenient and effective tool to promote educational and preventive programs. In many instances the resources available in the area are mobilized and applied, with the attendant publicity that housing rehabilitation and conservation could be made a reality through cooperative measures. Two councils undertook with great effect, such demonstration projects. The local organizations, especially the labor unions, were fully utilized.

Help at Grass Root Level.

Street Clubs. Equally significant is the lead given by the area councils in encouraging individuals to form street clubs. The area community councils gave them recognition, membership privileges, professional services and coordinating services. Through these measures the councils have successfully attempted to enhance their own representative character, to reach out, involve, and depend on the really grass root organizations, and to make their programs more meaningful and realistic.

The street clubs have been encouraged to form an association of street clubs and a committee of the presidents of street clubs. While all the area community councils show a real concern for the successful operation of the street clubs, two of them have standing committees concerned with these clubs. The arrangement of dividing the whole area into nine or ten zones, each one with a captain who acts as a liaison
officer between the clubs within his zone and the chairman of the
standing committee on street clubs, illustrates the systematic approach
that has been adopted by some of the councils in accomplishing a planned
decentralisation.

Some of the street clubs are quite inactive; but such clubs are
relatively small in number. The active ones, though not in all cases
quite well-versed with the exact nature and role of the area community
councils, do participate actively in many of the council activities,
thus facilitating their task, drawing large numbers of individuals who
otherwise would have been, in all probability, outside their sphere
of influence.

Local Business Associations. Most of the councils have organized
the local businessmen and have encouraged them to take active interest
in and show genuine concern for the community's needs. Such groups
have joined efforts with the councils to help secure recreational
facilities, further neighborhood conservation projects, fight nuisance
problems and in general, cooperate on all programs.

The Inactive Area Community Councils.

Of the fourteen councils studied, only eight were well organized
and functioning effectively as representative bodies in their respective
areas. Lack of interest on the part of the people concerned, the
feeling that they do not have any serious problems, unwillingness to
share responsibilities, the displacement of large numbers of families
consequent to the redevelopment programs, easy recourse to other methods
to get things done, among other factors, have left these six councils
more or less inactive. They have been reduced to the position of civic
associations or neighborhood clubs of a few individuals, managed by the same president and other officers for a number of years. They provide a convenient meeting opportunity at regular intervals for exchanging views and airing any known complaints. The sphere of their influence was very limited; representativeness questionable and they were content with a few routine activities. In no way can they be regarded as area community councils.

The Role and Position of the Field Worker

The data collected clearly underline the important role played by the area field worker. In fact there seemed to be a direct relationship between the quality of his leadership and the character of the council's program. All the same, his role was by no means unambiguous — as perceived by himself, by the council he served, or by the Welfare Federation which assigned him to the council.

As Viewed by the Welfare Federation.

The position of the area field worker is rather unique. He is selected, appointed and paid by the Federation and functions within the framework and under the regulations of the latter. The Federation expects the worker to help his area solve its health and welfare problems by

1. encouraging the people who live and work there to seek solutions by joint action on their specific local problems;
2. working to strengthen the various existing organisations so they can combine for this strong cooperative effort;
3. assisting in bringing individuals together into new groups to join this program;
4. developing effective communication between local groups and city-wide, state and national bodies for the achievement of common objectives;

5. providing scientific, accurate and comprehensive social information to assist the areas in achieving worthwhile goals of social and civic betterment. All these are to be realised by promoting lay leadership.¹

The field worker is to cooperate with the councils, act as consultant and carry certain responsibilities in helping them to carry out their programs.

As Viewed by the Workers Themselves.

There appeared to be a lack of clarity in the minds of the workers themselves as to their exact role. Some of them were not happy about the all-too comprehensive nature of the work they undertook. They wanted to confine themselves strictly to the health and welfare sphere. They were at a loss to find any relationship between the street clubs, clean the backyards campaigns, rat control measures, air pollution discussions, and so on, and their own professional backgrounds.

'Enablers' was the phrase employed by the majority of the field workers to characterise their role in the council setting. Providing advice, presenting alternatives with their respective consequences, leaving the choice and the attendant responsibilities to the officers and the council as a whole, was regarded as their function by most of the workers. But at the same time, three of them viewed themselves

¹ Approved by the Federation Board of Trustees, February 6, 1953 (Files).
as something more than mere enablers; they were "asserting their leadership, guiding and leading" their councils.

Four area field workers wrote the minutes of the executive and general body meetings, whereas the other three did not consider it their function. It is interesting that the workers who did write the minutes, did so for several reasons. "I am taking down points for myself anyway and so I can as well write the minutes and help them to that extent", was the reason for one; another one viewed it as a temporary measure— the council in question was being revitalized and the worker was taking the 'community where it was'. The other two felt that the council people could not do a good job of it and therefore recognized the need to assume that responsibility.

In one instance, the position of the area field worker is spelled out in the council constitution with the designation of executive secretary, who along with the president is to sign all warrants to be drawn on the treasury. This constitutional provision and designation together with the basis on which this has been effected -- "since the field worker has been authorized to serve the interest of the council" --raise several questions: whether or not 'the interest of the council' cannot be served, and perhaps served more effectively without that designation? Whether or not the elected officers cannot be relied upon for the handling of the funds?

It should be added that the role of the executive secretary in the above instance was not different from other field workers. In fact, in several respects, the way the programs were developed and solutions sought showed a genuine concern for people's participation.
The ways and means adopted by the executive secretary to ensure peoples' participation were more effective than the ones adopted by workers who were not styled as executive secretaries.

As Viewed by the Council Presidents.

Four out of the nine presidents regarded the field worker as a person to 'put into action the decisions we have arrived at'. It was apparent that they were relying on the worker to a considerable extent and were not conscious of the fact that the various committees were intended to put their projects into action.

The fact that the worker functioned from the office most of the time, knows the various problems of the area and has established contacts with individuals and groups, whereas the officers of the councils are voluntary workers, doing other kinds of work for their living, has often times served to give the impression that the field worker is the council.

The rather ambiguous position he occupies has enabled the worker to assume different roles in different contexts. Frequently, he presents himself as the Welfare Federation's field worker; on many occasions he is the voice of the council.

The presidents of the councils described the field workers as trained people who "can do the job well". They are "resource people". It was apparent that all the presidents had immense confidence in the efficacy of training. They found that the usefulness and status of their councils depended to a large extent on these field workers.

When the Councils and Field Workers Disagree with Each Other.

Based on the differences in terms of the position and role of the
worker as perceived by all the three parties, is the important question: what happens when the field worker, as the man on the spot, identifies a problem in the area, reports it to the president of the council, who, together with the executive committee, for some reason, does not find any need for the council to move into the matter? Does he still hold to his views and go ahead, independent of the council's decision, as a representative of the Federation, and help solve the problem through other individuals or groups? Or, does he accept the council's decision?

The Workers. Three of the seven field workers were definitely opposed to the idea of going ahead of the councils, especially when they have expressed themselves unequivocally. If the councils were not yet ready or willing, the field workers were in favor of waiting.

However, the rest of the field workers wanted to proceed. They were for "preparing" the councils, for taking the initiative, giving the lead, as an employee of the Federation. They considered it their duty to take the necessary measures whenever they felt they were called for, regardless of the council's position.

When time was of the essence, most of the workers have acted promptly without waiting for a formal discussion and prior sanction of the council, both as responsible Federation employees and as council staff. However, such actions have been taken in good faith and in most instances were reported to the president. The answers of the presidents and the workers indicated that whenever any worker represented the councils and took any definite stand, it was duly reported to the presidents subsequently, thus keeping the lay leaders well posted.
Only one field worker evolved a regular, formal arrangement for a scheduled weekly meeting with his president when the things done in the past week and matters for the next week were discussed and issues clarified. This was in addition to the unexpected personal discussions and phone calls to the president to discuss any unanticipated but important and urgent business.

All the workers considered that their responsibility was to the councils, though assigned by the Federation and consequently, in the ultimate analysis, accountable only to the Federation. Since the workers are expected to be familiar with the Federation's over-all policies, they are obligated to interpret those policies to the council and acquaint it with the consequences of taking a step that runs counter to the Federation's policy.

The Presidents. Three out of the nine presidents who had field workers assigned to their councils, were not even aware of any possibility of major clash of opinions with their field workers. The rest, while mentioning that no such problem had arisen in a major way, held that the worker, as a resource person with professional training, should give the committees and the council in general the benefit of his knowledge and experience, but having done that, should leave it to the council to take whatever decision it deemed appropriate. The worker as a helper to the council should abide by that decision. Not to do so—to act as he had originally planned to, after the council specifically decides against it—would be to weaken the very organisation he was assigned to help, support and strengthen.

It is very significant that all the presidents saw these workers
as professional people responsible to the councils, although paid by
the Federation. And this, for an entirely different reason. The
Federation, of course, is paying them; but it pays out of the Community
Chest funds and so actually, the people living in all the areas, pay
them.

All the presidents emphasised that their councils were quite
independent.

The Federation. The Federation, in its turn, also impressed upon
the workers that they show consideration and respect to the requests
and aspirations of the people of the councils.

The appointment of the workers is finalised only in consultation
with the executive committees of the councils, apparently with a view
to giving the councils a chance to decide what type of a person they
would like to work with them and to give the worker an opportunity to
know the leaders with whom he will have to work. Moreover this tends
to create confidence and good will for the Federation among council
leadership.

In reality, however, as more councils seek field services than
the Federation can assign, when it decides to assign some one, it is
very rare that the executive committee rejects the candidate. The
lay leaders seem to have great confidence in the Federation's judgment.
Relevant to this is the fact that the Federation can withdraw the
services of a worker, without consulting the council and in fact,
sometimes, without even informing it before hand. In two instances at
least the council members had to read about it in the newspapers. In
one instance even the customary post-withdrawal explanation was not
provided by the Federation.

**Fine Cooperative Spirit.** The noteworthy point, however, was that although the arrangement by which field service was assigned appeared to be full of technical holes, in reality it worked quite satisfactorily and smoothly. Leadership, at all levels, was quite understanding and accommodating. There was an unusual understanding on the part of the Federation leaders, area community council leadership and the field workers. Fine, informal relationships seemed to have been established between the field workers and their respective council leaders. The idea was deep rooted that all had the interests of the people of the area at heart. Indeed this aspect was so impressive that oftentimes the lay leaders were surprised by the question relating to the relationship between them and their professional workers. The willingness to work together and accommodate to one another's views was sufficient enough to offset any technical deficiencies in the arrangement.

**Accomplishments of the Area Community Councils**

**Long Range Preventive Work.** Regarding their programs and projects as was observed at the beginning of this chapter, there is a definite trend towards long-range planning, seeking more enduring results, while not evading the pressing day-to-day specific problems.

Three field workers were convinced that projects spread over a couple or more years, producing no spectacular results, would constitute a right approach to their area problems. Accordingly, they were engaged in the slow, intensive measures, neighborhood by neighborhood.

**Comprehensive Programs.** Different areas had different problems and consequently the emphasis given by one council at a given time varied
considerably. However, the common characteristic of the programs
developed by all the councils was their all-inclusiveness, embracing
as they did anything that affected the well-being of the people of the
areas. Some of the main activities of the councils will indicate this
broad sweep. The councils sponsored from time to time workshops and
institutes on current problems with accent on various methods to solve
them through the mobilization of locally available resources. Leader­
ship training programs and youth-oriented projects also formed part of
their activities. The councils showed great concern in neighborhood
conservation and beautification projects, housing and zoning, traffic
safety, air pollution, and health projects. Directories with infor­
mation on individuals and agencies people could approach to secure
various kinds of services, and bulletins and news letters giving news
about the happenings in the area were also brought out by most of the
councils.

Better Social Relations. Through their Human Relations Committees,
the area community councils have attempted to promote better inter-
racial and inter-denominational understanding. One of the councils
has been sponsoring folk festivals offering excellent opportunities
to various religious and nationality groups. Their effectiveness in
this regard is to be sought not only in the activities directly focused
on this problem but in the effects upon attitudes resulting over a
long period of time. The field workers and their presidents cited
again and again instances of misunderstandings and dislikes which were
so very rampant: ministers belonging to some denomination were not
inclined to attend meetings in 'other' churches or attended by 'other'
people while some community leaders refused to cooperate with citizens who belonged to a certain race. The attraction provided by the steady success of the councils, working together on problems of mutual concern, coming to know 'other' people and their points of view, have helped many of them to adopt a broader understanding and helpful attitude.

Watch-Dog. 'The watch-dog' function of the area community councils pointed out by most of the lay leaders and the professional workers is a very real and important one. The feeling that the councils are always on the alert and would be ready to move in to champion people's interests gave the people much confidence. This, moreover, had a salutory effect on the attitude of the city officials. They listened to the people's representatives and acted on their complaints, requests or suggestions promptly, and with consideration and due respect.

Utilisation of the Federation's Social Services. Another strength of the council program in this city is the utilisation of the specialised skills and knowledge of the Federation staff whenever there is need for so doing. The obvious way this operates is, of course, when a council is confronted with a problem that has ramifications far beyond its own boundaries; the council discusses it and decides to approach the Federation to secure the specialised services of its staff. Several studies, particularly in the field of recreational facilities, have been made in the past at the request of some council. In most of the cases, the Federation first ascertained whether the same kind of problems and consequently the need to conduct similar studies existed in other areas and if so, proceeded to conduct extensive studies, again
by ensuring active cooperation and participation of the concerned councils themselves.

Monthly individual conferences are held between the field workers and the associate executive director of the Welfare Federation in charge of the field services. There are also area staff meetings at which city officials from allied departments are invited to talk on specific matters of interest, and joint Federation staff meetings attended by the field workers. Besides all these, the area field workers have many opportunities to call on any expert staff member of the Federation for consultation on any specific problem. These facilities ensure an indirect, invisible but nevertheless a positive permeation of specialised knowledge and accumulated experience throughout this program. These opportunities incidentally have the added effect of promoting inter-council understanding.

**Cooperation of the City Government.** The city, county and state officials in metropolitan Cleveland have a healthy attitude toward cooperation with private, voluntary leadership in all kinds of welfare projects. The Federation has in no small measure contributed to this understanding and cooperation, and it has helped bring about the extension of this relationship to the area community councils' sphere of operation.

While in many instances, the area community councils have received support from city councilmen in furthering their projects, the councils have mobilised public support to strengthen the stand of councilmen on specific issues. However, care was taken to steer clear of politics. The constitutions of all the area community councils studied have made
specific provision to exclude any political parties or organizations from membership; they have also prohibited any political officeholders from becoming officers of the councils.

Cooperation of City-wide Voluntary Organizations. Similar cooperative arrangements have been made between the area community councils and many other city-wide voluntary health and welfare organizations. The councils cooperate in the mass x-ray campaigns organized to fight tuberculosis.

Cooperation of the Newspapers. Of equal significance was the excellent cooperation secured by the area community councils from the local newspapers. One of the two prominent dailies thought so highly of these councils that it assigned a special correspondent to cover all their major activities. This has helped considerably in raising the community status of these councils, in lending them a city-wide prestige so very essential in their dealings with the city, in attracting people's participation, and boosting their morale.

Decentralisation Without Losing City-Wide Perspective. One of the major contributions of the area community council program has been that while a consistent decentralization in planning is being achieved and the street clubs and neighborhood units encouraged to think and plan at their grass-root level, they are at the same time helped constantly to see beyond neighborhood problems to visualize these as an integral part of the wider problems of the area. Without letting this healthy advance stop there, this assists area leaders to understand the positive relationship between their problems and the problems of the metropolitan area and develop an appreciation for concerted efforts to deal with them.
Development of Local Leadership. Developing sound local leadership should be viewed as one of the accomplishments of the area community councils. The success of their operation to a large extent, depends on such leadership. Most of them have provided the training ground for local people. Nevertheless, almost all councils complained about the lack of leaders and individuals ready to assume responsibilities. Besides, many of the persons who are active in the councils are also found to be actively associated with several other professional, social or civic organizations. The question under such circumstances has been raised: Do the area community councils actually succeed in identifying potential leadership, attracting it, providing encouragement and training so that it could, in due course, assume major assignments? The following observations are made on the basis of the data obtained:

1. The type of opportunities provided by the area community councils were not usually provided by many other organizations in the community. To that extent, it could safely be assumed that even those who were active in other organizations, received special opportunities at these centers.

2. Some of the individuals have developed leadership in social welfare field only through their efforts in the councils. It is quite conceivable that they would not have assumed such roles but for these councils.

3. The councils provided excellent training to several individuals who later on became city councilmen. As the presidents and executive committee members mentioned in this connection, "For all accounts, they are better councilmen". Therefore,
although a loss to a particular area community council, this too should be regarded as one more of its contributions to the wider community.

4. Almost all the council officers indicated that the cooperating agencies and organizations, themselves in need of fine leadership, did not send their best persons to these councils.

5. The problem of recognizing leadership and ensuring a continual change in it so that it does not fall into a rut or tend to develop into a strongly entrenched vested interest, continues to be a major one. Some of the councils have started youth councils, sponsored youth programs, leadership institutes, all designed to attract and hold fresh interests.

Need for More Recording and Research.

The essentially dynamic nature of the entire program was quite apparent throughout the study. The minutes and reports of most of the councils and of the Area Community Councils Association, of the Advisory Committee on Area Field Service and the remarks of the field workers and the persons immediately concerned with the program in the Federation in particular, all revealed that although these councils have been in existence for a relatively long period and seem to have established a high reputation, they were still operating on a highly experimental basis. The professional members at all levels emphasized over and over again that "we are still looking for answers."

The strength, status, influence and usefulness of the area community councils depended so much on the personality of the field workers, the qualities of the officers of the councils, forming the
other blade of the scissors. That there was a high turnover in the field service was, therefore, of great significance. Some of this cannot be avoided and the attendant need for facing the transition is apparent. But the strain put on the council officers and members in knowing and understanding the new workers can be minimized if more reliance is placed on recording the methods adopted by individual worker, and their consequences, so that they could form a useful basis for evaluation, discussion and generalization with suitable modification, for future reference of the workers as well as for the selection and assigning of new workers.
CHAPTER III

WELFARE COUNCIL-SPONSORED AND STAFFED AREA COMMITTEES

Background of the Planned Area Approach in Philadelphia

The most noteworthy feature of the area approach to social welfare planning in Philadelphia is the manner in which this has been, by clear design, integrated into the total central planning. This has been of recent development. Joint attempts of private citizens and civic organisations to set up associations and councils to meet general and specific problems are not new in Philadelphia. However, practically none of them reached the stage of development nor assumed the status and prominence which the area community councils of Cleveland did. This fact left its distinct mark on the area approach in this city.

In the final designing of the area approach which is in operation in Philadelphia, the Health and Welfare Council was very much guided by the situation described above. A brief outline of the Council's early history is, therefore, appropriate to bring into focus its philosophy pertaining to the area approach.

Early History of the Health and Welfare Council

From the early days of the Health and Welfare Council in 1921 when it started its career under the name of the Council of Social Agencies of Philadelphia and Vicinity, as an integral part of the Welfare Federation, to the time of its consummation as the Health and Welfare Council, incorporated in 1947, this central planning body has undergone substantial changes, functionally as well as organisationally. By 1940 the base of planning was broadened by inviting members of non-Fund
agencies, both voluntary and governmental and conferring on them voting privileges. In 1944 the administrative independence of the Council was recognised. Finally in 1947, the Delaware County Welfare Council and the Montgomery County Council were absorbed by the newly organised body. Also included in the membership were the Nursing Council of metropolitan Philadelphia, the Council on Volunteers and some functions of the Philadelphia Recreation Association. ¹

Caught in the slow and vexing process of reorganising itself, this body did not have any positive policy toward the large number of neighborhood and community councils. One of the major examples that prove this was expressed by both the Council staff and the officers of the Federation of Community Organisations, an organisation that received its sponsorship and active support from the Education Department. It was pointed out that the need for such a Federation was felt by some individuals who approached the Health and Welfare Council for guidance and professional assistance. The Council was obviously unprepared or unwilling, or both, to assume this responsibility and consequently let it pass, leaving the Education Department to give the leadership.

It was not until 1947 when the solid foundations for the newly reorganised Council were laid, did it concern itself actively and systematically with this area approach to social welfare planning. However, when this change occurred in their approach, the philosophy governing it was different. It was too late and there were too many neighborhood and community councils and associations with no one particularly assuming a significant leadership role in any area.

This led the Health and Welfare Council to give up any idea of utilizing the existing organizations. It was the Council's desire to cover the entire metropolitan area and to carry the principle of decentralized planning as embodied in the new organization to its logical ends in a more deliberate fashion so as to weave it into its broader framework. This desire further prompted the Council to sponsor area planning committees. Thus, the process of integration, consolidation and centralization has gone hand in hand with the process of decentralization. The Council not only proceeded to set up three District Councils for the three counties of Montgomery, Delaware and Philadelphia, but also to organize area planning committees for the six areas within the city of Philadelphia. These area planning committees were placed directly under the Philadelphia District Council.

The area planning committees had representation on the Philadelphia District Health and Welfare Council. The District Council was locally selected by Council delegates living within the county. The District nominated certain number of members for election to the central board of the Health and Welfare Council, Incorporated.

**Structure, Function and Programs of the Area Committees**

**Size of the Areas Covered.** The population of these areas ranged from three hundred to five hundred thousand. The Philadelphia District Council assigned an area director to each of these areas and he was selected and paid by the Health and Welfare Council. In addition to these six area directors, the Council had on its staff a field worker, who, although not enjoying the same designation, functioned as a sort of detached area director, helping any area director whenever his help
was sought and servicing such of those areas which were not reached by any one of them.

**Structure.** The area directors have organized advisory committees composed of individual citizens who either as representatives of organizations or agencies or in their private personal capacity were considered to be competent enough to serve on these committees. Often times these were styled as Health and Welfare Councils, with the names of the areas within which they served affixed to them. The Health and Welfare Council frequently referred to them as area planning committees, while some of the area directors called them just advisory committees. After these committees were set up they went ahead to appoint nominating committees to recommend new names for membership on the area planning councils and for offices. More or less standard procedure has been evolved to decide on the questions relating to membership.

**Composition.** While they have invited many individuals not representing organizations, to serve on them, these committees have tended to apply themselves to the tasks of offering coordinating services to the health and welfare agencies in their respective areas. Two of them have made use of the community councils and neighborhood associations in accomplishing their results. They offered their services to such organizations and facilitated new ones to come into being.

The large size of the area covered by each committee, coupled with the actual circumstances under which and the way in which these have been created, have lent them a character that distinguish them from the area community councils of Cleveland. The structure of these committees was found to be different. Unlike most of the councils in Cleveland,
very little effort was directed towards enlisting large number of members. There was no need for raising any funds for the operation of these units as not only did the Health and Welfare Council offer the services of the area director and a secretary assigned to him, but it also met the other incidental expenses (except in one case which will be discussed later on in this chapter).

Function. One of the chief functions of these area committees, as seen by the District Council and some of the area directors, was to rely on and make use of the well established and well functioning community councils and other organizations, helping people to create similar ones whenever there existed a need for them; encourage the ones which have been formed, by bringing in their representatives on the committees and various standing committees; coordinate their services with a view to increasing their efficiency and the avoidance of duplication. The area planning committees were supposed to be the spokesmen of all these grass-root organisations. They were expected to offer these community organisations professional assistance and help them in viewing their problems in a broader perspective.

The policy of the District Council has been to encourage these area committees to be quite independent and truly representative of the entire community. Consequently, the area directors were encouraged to be the spokesmen of the area they served. Even when their committees took a stand opposed to the one taken by the District Council, the area directors stood by their respective committees. Just before this study was conducted in Philadelphia, two of the area committees took a stand on an important iss, in opposition to that of the District Council.
The area directors knew the District Council's general policy in this respect and so explained it to their respective committees. But after that was done, the area directors respected their committee's decision. In this, the area directors had the support of the District Council.

The director of the District Council also encouraged the area directors to locate fresh leadership and provide necessary encouragement, attraction and training opportunities. There was a general recognition that finding suitable local leadership was a major function of the area committees.

**Program**

Regarding their program, there were two points of view held by the area directors. One believed that the area committees should concentrate in the health and welfare field. Consequently, those who held this view offered their services mainly to the social welfare agencies in their areas to help them evaluate their work and whenever necessary to rearrange, extend, coordinate or to plan in general their services. The other viewpoint relied on an all comprehensive approach. Those who subscribed to this viewpoint undertook programs indicated by the needs, problems and resources of their areas. The first category of area directors considered beyond their scope the attempts to help organise neighborhood associations and block units and other grass root organisations.

There was a close similarity in this respect between the situation in Philadelphia and that in Cleveland where also the field workers were divided in their opinion about the scope of their councils.

There was also a similarity between the kind of programs undertaken
by the area committees of Philadelphia and the area community councils of Cleveland. In general, their activities were comprehensive. The area advisory committees sponsored from time to time workshops, institutes and town meetings to exchange views and facilitate better understanding on controversial issues that faced the community. Most of them engaged in varied fields of recreation, health and welfare, youth activities, neighborhood conservation, housing, zoning and schools.

Publication of directories giving detailed information about the various social agencies and community organisations was another program undertaken by many of the committees. Some of them arranged fairs which attempted to heighten community consciousness through cooperative efforts of the agencies and associations functioning within the areas.

The area committees functioned through various sub-committees. These sub-committees studied problems, took appropriate measures to secure necessary resources and cooperation to implement their policies. As in the case of Cleveland, the trend was toward creating a minimum number of sub-committees and setting up new ones whenever there was scope for them.

The area planning committees enjoyed rent-free offices provided a university, bank, school, hospital, college and city government.

**The Position and Function of the Area Directors**

As in the case of the field workers in Cleveland, the area directors occupied a very significant position in the area approach in Philadelphia. They provided continuity to the programs, helped to shape to a large extent the content of the programs and in general supplied the professional leadership. Their personalities left an unmistakable stamp on
the committees. Nonetheless, their role was by no means less ambiguous. As pointed out earlier, two area directors wanted to confine themselves to the health and welfare field. The rest of the programs had little significance to them. But whether they subscribed to an all-inclusive role for their committees or only a health and welfare function, four of them saw themselves serving the Health and Welfare Council in the general interest of the areas; the area planning committees to them were merely advisory committees, although they valued their advice. The area directors exercised a greater responsibility in the selection of members to serve on the area committees, in the selection of projects and so on. Therefore, the question as to what happened when there was a difference of opinion between the committee and the area director did not actually arise in their case. They, however, hastened to point out that very rarely did such situations arise. Generally, the cooperation and understanding between area directors and their committee, was quite dependable.

*As Viewed by the Planning Committee Presidents.* The presidents of the area planning committees maintained that their committees were quite independent bodies and that the working relationship between them and their area directors was smooth and cordial. It was interesting that as in the case of their counterparts in Cleveland, most of the presidents in Philadelphia considered these area directors as serving their committees, on the basis of their being paid from the Community Chest funds. They cited several instances to show that the area directors had sided with them in all important matters affecting the interests of their areas.
As indicated earlier, the Philadelphia District Health and Welfare Council encouraged the area planning committees to be independent bodies. It wanted the area directors to be the spokesmen of the areas. The District Council director was guided by the philosophy that unless the area directors represented the area and went along with the wishes and plans of the people, they would not create confidence in the people and therefore would not be able to function with any reasonable degree of effectiveness. The District Council appointed the area directors but the recruitment was made in conjunction with the area committee. The application blanks of the candidates were reviewed by the committee and they were interviewed for selection by the committee when the District Council director was also present.

Of the six area committees studied, two had area directors who had been employed recently. They were, therefore, more or less experimenting with ways of attacking problems. They were still in the process of setting up their committees on a firm basis. Two of the area directors possessed no training in social work, but their previous experience with settlements and youth work qualified them to do an effective job with the area committees. All the area directors were men; but this, according to the District Council director, was not based on any policy to exclude women. In fact, he wanted to have qualified women as area directors.

An Independent Area Community Council

There was one council functioning in one of the areas which could be favorably compared with the most successful area community council in Cleveland. This was called the Germantown Community Council.
Relation Between the Health and Welfare Council and the Germantown Council. A special cooperative arrangement between the Health and Welfare Council and this council left the latter to retain its separate identity and to receive Chest support through the Health and Welfare Council in recognition of its work for the total area program of the Health and Welfare Council. The Germantown Community Council, which has been in existence for about twenty-five years, has had a professional worker guiding it well before the Health and Welfare Council developed its area program. The professional person was designated as executive director and was appointed by and responsible to its Board of Directors. He had the status of an area director of the Health and Welfare Council, but he was not on the council payroll.

The area as demarcated by the Health and Welfare Council was wider than the area which the Germantown Community Council originally covered before it developed the working relationship with the Health and Welfare Council. A part-time worker, who works under the executive director of the Germantown Council serviced this extended area. Notwithstanding the fact that the professional person was styled as executive director and that his salary was on a different level, for all practical purposes he functioned more or less on the same basis as the rest of the area directors. Moreover, a sound relationship had been built between him and the District Council. Both the district director and the executive director of the Germantown Council emphasized that this relationship had been very fruitful. The executive director attended along with area directors the monthly staff meetings under the district director.

The president of the Germantown Council also found the cooperative
arrangement between his council and the Health and Welfare Council very productive. There were very few occasions when the choice for the executive director had to be between the Health and Welfare Council and the Germantown Council. There had been no irreconcilable issues between the two. The executive director enjoyed the vast experience of his colleagues serving other areas and the specialized services of the Health and Welfare Council. At the same time he found more freedom to plan the activities of his council, in consultation with and with the approval of his board of directors.

While this arrangement proved satisfactory, it should be pointed out as an indication of the philosophy guiding the policy of the Health and Welfare Council, that the district council director who gave direction to the entire area program, was in favor of creating its own independent area planning committee, instead of entering into and continuing the relationship with the Germantown Council. This seemed to be completely in tune with the Health and Welfare Council's policy of starting with a clean slate, recognizing no existing council to serve as vehicle in this area program.

Reasons for Its Success

The Germantown Community Council coordinated about one hundred twenty organizations -- social welfare agencies, churches, schools and neighborhood associations. Its membership included not only these organizations but individual citizens also. This council functioned very effectively and enjoyed a high position in the community, mainly because the community within which it was situated had a core of civic minded, well-to-do people ready and able to join forces with it by
offering their time and resources. It had been in existence for about
twenty-five years and had stuck deep roots in the course of that period.
It enjoyed sound leadership, lay community leaders showed a preparedness
to play their role well in the council affairs and it has had paid staff
leadership for a long time. The approach it developed during these
years had been a sound one: that of enlisting active cooperation of all
community organizations and social welfare agencies in that area and
without stopping at that to proceed to attract private citizens. Its
very location - right in the center of a part in a palatial building -
contributed to the creation of a favorable attitude toward the council.
A program, rich in variety and meeting the requirements of various
sections of the community further enhanced its usefulness and popularity.

The Germantown Council was the only council that raised funds,
although it received through the Health and Welfare Council an amount
equal to that generally spent on each area project. The difference in
the salary scale and the council's activities and commitments necessitated
the raising of additional funds. This was done through several ways,
the most important one being an annual fair which served both as an
effective program designed to promote community consciousness and
solidarity as well as to raise the required funds.

Another Area Advisory Committee Comes Into Being

In another area, until recently there was a joint Chest-Council
area committee, with standing committees on campaign and on planning.
Paid by the Chest, the staff person served both the Community Chest and
the Health and Welfare Council. This proved to be not too satisfactory
an arrangement and so change was brought about in it. At the time of
this study these two functions were discharged by two different persons on a full time basis. Thus one more area was brought on a par with other areas under the direction of an area director.

Three Unique Projects

Area Community Workers’ Conference. Three projects developed by two different area advisory committees were unique and therefore worth mentioning:

1. Area Community Workers' Conference;
2. Prenatal Clinic; and

All of them were more or less permanent arrangements devised by the area directors and their respective committees. Area Community Workers' Conference was started in recognition of the need for coordinating the multiplicity of efforts put forth by various community workers from public and private agencies offering staff guidance to community lay groups in that area. This was sought to be achieved by

1. developing better lines of communication between workers;
2. better understanding of programs and needs of the area;
3. sharing and interpreting information on the city-wide and local program affecting the area; and
4. serving as a resource for new and existing community groups.²

That this Conference can serve a useful purpose and had a vast scope had already been proved by the worthwhile nature of the program it undertook.

It brought out an exhaustive directory of community workers who

² North Central Area Community Workers' Conference, 1958. (Mimeo.)
functioned in that area, representing various organizations. Monthly
meetings were also conducted when some of their members were requested
to give an account of the work they perform as well as details about
their sponsoring bodies. Above all it promoted the healthy practice of
members consulting one another and referring cases to one another
whenever they saw it appropriate.

Prenatal Clinic. Classifying its various neighborhoods according
to their 'problem content', one area discovered that in some of its
neighborhoods the infant mortality and particularly neonatal deaths
rates were the highest in the city. This led to the creation of a
Health Committee for that neighborhood. With the encouragement and
assistance from the area planning committee, the health committee
succeeded in establishing a free prenatal clinic. The combined support
of a church which provided rent free accommodation, and others who
offered free medicines and free professional services, brought this
clinic into being. The area committee did not engage in direct service,
but at the same time, its pointing out the need for that service
together with the efforts it made in helping the interested individuals
to set up the clinic helped the neighborhood in meeting this major need.

Schools Community Council. The Schools Community Council sponsored
by another area council offered, without being an adjunct to the parent
body, an excellent opportunity of civic participation to the young
people of one public and eight private high schools. The school com-
munity council serves as a training ground for future community leaders.
By reading out in the schools, an important source of potential leaders
was tapped. Their varied programs of visiting institutions, studying
various services, discussing assignments, evolving solutions and offering voluntary services illustrated the highly imaginative, useful and challenging nature of the activities the council was pursuing.

The above mentioned unique projects underline the dynamic nature of the area approach and the vast virgin field that exists and awaits development.

Health and Welfare Council and Its Area Approach

The Task of Over-all Coordination

The Federation of Community Councils. There was a Federation of Community Councils in Philadelphia, a body, as the name implied, that helped to coordinate the activities of the community organisations -- community councils, neighborhood associations and civic groups. As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, this Federation had the blessing and active support of the Extension Division of the Education Department. Secretarial service was offered from that Department. The Federation was managed by lay leaders of the community.

The Federation of Community Councils had as members various community organisations, civic and neighborhood associations which were affiliated with the area planning committees. The area planning committees in turn had been offering professional services to such neighborhood groups and associations. The area committees themselves were members of the Federation. This arrangement was motivated by the desire on the part of the Health and Welfare Council leadership to secure the good will of the Federation through it of the Education Department itself. However, it cannot be said that there was clear understanding
regarding the exact functions each should discharge so as to avoid
duplication of efforts. Nor could it maintain that the Federation was
concerned purely with the educational aspects of the program undertaken
by the Area Committees. The nature of their program as revealed part-
tially by their committees which were on air pollution, youth activities,
sooning, recreation, transportation, health, education, legislation,
publishation, civil defense, showed that the Federation was by no means
confining itself to the narrow aspects which its sponsorship and help
might indicate. It appeared that the Federation's sphere of interest
was more or less the same as that of the area committees. In reality,
however, in the absence of a fulltime professional staff member, there
were grave limitations on the Federation's capacity to undertake much
work. It conducted from time to time, workshops and institutes, brought
out its publication giving particulars about the activities of various
Councils and served in general as a clearing house of information for
all the affiliated organizations.

**Internal Communication.** There were several ways in which communi-
cation channels were kept open among the area directors, between the
area directors on one hand and the District Director and the Health and
Welfare Council's functional divisions on the other. These were more
or less the same as for the area community councils of Cleveland: the
area directors' monthly meetings, general staff meetings, availability
of the specialised staff for consultation and making of special studies
pertaining to any problem faced by one or more areas. While these
communication lines have been kept open, it was observed that full use
of the specialised services under the Health and Welfare Council auspices
had not been made by those in charge of the area committees. One of the main reasons given in this connection was that these specialists themselves were so busy with other types of work that it was not practicable for the area directors to seek their services.

Community Relations. With regard to publicity, the Health and Welfare Council worked under some handicaps. As a carryover from the past, its publicity was tied to that of the Chest, managed by the latter. The excellent relationship built up between the Welfare Federation of Cleveland and the local newspapers was absent in Philadelphia. Consequently the area committees did not enjoy wide publicity which their counterparts in Cleveland did.

The entire arrangement of the area approach as developed from above by the Health and Welfare Council, the tendency to style them as Area Health and Welfare Councils, the designation of the professional worker as area director, and the large size of the areas each project was supposed to cover, these among other factors, tended to present the area committees as somewhat official, too professional, and to make them look like the area chapters of the Health and Welfare Council, which they were, in reality. It appeared that whereas in Cleveland the Welfare Federation sent its field workers to assist the existing independent councils started and managed by people, in Philadelphia the Health and Welfare Council divided the city into convenient areas, assigned area directors to each one of them and then invited people to cooperate with and help these professional persons.
CHAPTER IV

AREA APPROACH IN THE ABSENCE OF A UNIFORM POLICY

Area Approach Under Multiple Auspices

Social Planning Council's Policy. The city of St. Louis presented a unique situation in the sphere of the area approach to social welfare planning. The Social Planning Council showed no major interest in this respect. The only exception to this was the assigning of a part time consultant to the Inter-Agency of Community Councils, a body which was set up a year ago, to coordinate the efforts of various community organizations and to serve as a clearing house of information for them. This service too was withdrawn when the present study was in progress. However, it may be pointed out that the Social Planning Council leadership in recent years recognised the need for a definite change of policy in this field. The appointment of the part-time consultant was an indication of the Council's concern about the existence of several organizations functioning without knowing much about one another. The withdrawal of this service was explained by the executive director of the Council as a prelude to the initiation of a well-thought-out policy towards a decentralized approach to social welfare planning.

The failure of the Social Planning Council to recognise the need for an area approach and to give effective and timely leadership, did not mean that nothing had been done in this field. Efforts were made under all types of auspices to fill this vacuum. Many neighborhood

1. Its name was changed while this study was in progress, to Health and Welfare Council.
associations and area councils were set up from time to time. Of the latter there were ten. Four of them formed part of the block unit program sponsored by the community organization department under the St. Louis Urban League. Two were started under the auspices of community centers, which were actually settlement houses under parochial aegis. Three received encouragement and help from the Housing Rehabilitation Project and one was started by private citizens, not representing any particular organization.

Settlements - Sponsored Councils. The councils established under the settlement auspices relied heavily on their sponsoring bodies, for office space, stationery, and leadership. No clear-cut line divided the settlement activities and files from those of their councils. Their program was not comprehensive, continuous or covering all community organizations in their areas. Nor were the areas they covered well defined. Although in itself a valuable one, their program tended to interest and involve only the people living in the immediate vicinity of the settlements. It was indeed an extension of the settlement activities. Their work was invariably adjusted to the main functions of the settlements and consequently, one of them was not active for the past year. These councils cannot be compared with the area community councils functioning in other cities studied.

Housing Rehabilitation Project Sponsored Councils. Under the urban renewal plan, three major types of work were visualised: complete tearing down for fresh construction; rehabilitation wherever the houses and other structure were certified as capable of serving for twenty-five to thirty more years; and conservation with a view to avoiding their
deterioration into slum conditions. A special department was created for the second purpose, called the Housing Rehabilitation Project. Although armed with the necessary powers to inspect and secure compliance with the stipulated standards in this respect, this Department proceeded on the assumption that an intelligent participation of the people concerned was absolutely essential for the successful execution of their project and to ensure that the good work done in inspecting, repairing and remodeling to enhance the value and utility will not be a fleeting affair. With this in view, the Department appointed a person with the nebulous designation of Public Relations Consultant, sometimes called Community Organization person. The head of this Department and especially the person in charge of this aspect of the program believed that housing rehabilitation had far wider implications than the mere physical side. Economic and particularly social and human aspects were kept in the forefront.

As a result of the lead given by this Department, three associations or councils have come into being in three different areas, offering the people in those areas opportunities to study their problems, ventilate their grievances and take measures to get them redressed. In recognition of the wider aspects of housing accorded by the Housing Rehabilitation Project, the comprehensive character of the programs undertaken by the councils it helped to set up was a natural sequency. One of these three councils was very active, primarily because of the effective leadership provided by two or three influential and able persons. The Housing Rehabilitation Project did not develop any permanent relationship with these councils. Nor did the project personnel interfere with their working.
Police Community Relations Committees. To add to the variety of auspices under which area community councils and associations came to be established in the city of St. Louis, there were Police Community Relations Committees, organized by the department of police. Their main objective was to span the undesirable gulf between the police and the community.

Community Stewards. The Teamsters' Union has to its credit Community Stewards who have gone ahead in their respective communities to form committees to advise and help in the solution of problems. No detailed study of their methods or the actual program they sponsored could be made. However, on the basis of the data available it may be said that this constituted an interesting development and that this arrangement was rather popular because whenever the Union representatives took a stand on any issue, the pressure that was brought to bear on the city officials and others was sufficient to ensure a prompt implementation of their projects. It was also observed that they were seriously competing with other organizations in attracting their leadership and active membership.

Civic Education Center. Besides all these, Washington University, through its Civic Education Center, also attempted to reach the community. They designed special television programs which discussed current community problems with an accent on the means to solve them. These programs invited the public to refer questions on the basis of the earlier presentation and discussion. This was found to be effective and in fact, some of the councils came into existence as a result of the inspiration community leaders derived from these television programs.
Area Councils of the Urban League

Block Unit Oriented Program. The most important organized approach in this regard, however, was that of the Urban League. The program, directed by the community organization department of the League is block unit oriented. (The block unit of St. Louis was the counterpart of the street club of Cleveland and was an organization of people who lived on both sides of a street.)

Organizational Setup.

Primarily with a view to giving direction to these block units, coordinating their activities and making them more meaningful and effective, the community organization department created district councils composed of several of these units, and area councils which embraced several district councils. There were four area councils and at the apex was the federation of the block units.

To each of these four area councils was assigned a coordinating secretary. (At the time of this study, however, there were only three secretaries, one of whom managed two councils.) The main function of these secretaries was to help people organize block units wherever there was need, to offer them professional assistance and to coordinate their activities. There were about two hundred and fifty block units organized and serviced by the area councils.

Composition of the Area Councils. The representatives of all the block units and district councils within their boundaries formed an area council and elected its officers. However, these area councils differed much from the area community councils of Cleveland and from the area committees of Philadelphia or even from some of the councils functioning
in St. Louis outside the Leagues' leadership. Their membership was confined to the block units whereas elsewhere it included any citizen who was not a member of any organization or association, and representatives of social welfare agencies, churches, parent-teacher associations, and other organizations. The area councils did not have their own offices. The Urban League office served as their office also and they secured space for their meetings in the same building. The area coordinating secretaries functioned from the League office.

Although the areas were large, the secretaries seemed to be close to the block units and neighborhood associations. The rather restricted nature of their membership was explained by the secretaries in the following way. Since the members of the block units were members of churches, schools, parent-teacher associations, veterans' clubs and so on, the membership of these units covered almost all interests and viewpoints.

Character of the Area Councils.

Integral Part of the League. There was a clear awareness both on the part of the area councils' lay leaders and the coordinating secretaries that the area and district councils were an Urban League project and formed an integral part of the block unit program intended to ameliorate problems through people's participation.

Influence of the Sponsorship. The sponsorship of these projects by the Urban League, an inter-racial body receiving the Community Chest support, nonetheless served to leave the impression that these councils and block units were Negro organizations, started and supported by and functioning for Negroes. The fact that these operated in predominantly
Negro areas by itself, did not explain this impression. For, in
Cleveland also some of the area community councils were situated in
areas with a vast majority of Negroes, but they were not styled as Negro
councils, primarily because they enjoyed the auspices of the Welfare
Federation of Cleveland.

*Influence of Restricted Membership.* The experience of area
community councils in Cleveland and area committees in Philadelphia
indicated that broadening the membership basis by including all types of
community organizations and social welfare agencies increased the chances
of bringing other racial elements and other points of view into the
program and making the area council bodies practicing community organi-
sation in social work. Besides, this will have the effect of exposing
the block units to other major forces at work in their field. It must
be pointed out in this connection that the area coordinating secretaries
did maintain close relationship with the social welfare agencies and
other civic associations in their respective areas and, therefore, to
that extent kept themselves in touch with their communities' resources.

*Efficient Record Keeping*

A very noteworthy aspect of this program was the importance attached
to the maintenance of records. Their files seemed to be complete with
information about each block unit, the date of its establishment, membership,
officers, number and dates of meetings, number attending and the
nature of the business transacted, activities sponsored and so on.

The annual reports of the community organization department provided
detailed information about the total number of block units affiliated,
number of active and inactive ones, number of new units that were
organized during the year, number of reactivated ones, number of area
council and district council meetings, with the size of the attendance,
the topics discussed, breakdown of the coordinators' time, - attending
meetings, interviews and counseling, speeches and so on. Attempts were
also made in the past, from time to time, to evolve standard forms for
the use of the block units and the area councils to improve reporting
and recording.

The annual reports of the community organization department gave
further evidence of the advance planning done by the department and the
area councils in terms of short range objectives and long range goals.
More important, the reports attempted an item by item evaluation of
their activities to determine what objectives fell short of realization
and their reasons.

Nature of the Program

A review of the work carried on by the area councils showed a
striking similarity between their programs and the programs initiated
by area councils elsewhere. They took active interest in the enforcement
of the zoning and sanitation codes, in keeping the business and especi­
ally the taverns out of the areas zoned for residences, in neighborhood
conservation projects, garden and Christmas lighting contests, youth
service and other allied activities. Nonetheless, it was obvious that
as a result of their exclusive preoccupation with the block units, these
councils had tended to be associations of street clubs and consequently
their programs not as broad-based as the programs of their counterparts
in Cleveland or in Philadelphia. Their influence on social welfare
agencies and other community organizations did not appear to be very
great. At the same time, the block units, district councils and the area councils were so much the poorer as a result of this exclusion of a variety of organisations and agencies within their fold. One of the chief values of the area approach was the working together of inter-thinking organisations and individuals, engaged in different activities, with different backgrounds, professional and lay.

A problem in relation to the block units was to prevent their becoming mere pressure groups, or complaining bodies, concerned only with their difficulties by impressing upon them the presence of a world beyond their immediate concern and by helping them to identify the relationship between their own units and this wider circle. The emphasis placed on these units by the Urban League, the exclusion of social welfare agencies and other civic and community organisations from the area councils together with their predominantly Negro character underlined the need to tackle this problem. All the coordinating secretaries were found to be fully aware of this need to foster a sense of relatedness and unity and actively engaged in activities designed to meet it.

Effective Indigenous Leadership

Finding effective and dependable leadership to carry on the activities continued to be a difficult task for which no easy solution had been found by the area councils. In addition, the labor unions and other organisations that had set up community relations programs were making all possible attempts to attract the leadership functioning within the block unit system.

Several measures adopted by the area councils have had an indirect effect on the emergence of local leadership. It was very significant
that the need for any block unit or area council to continue under the same leadership for a long time was taken to be a major sign of its failure and attempts were made to help it to get fresh leadership. Leadership training programs, as mentioned earlier, were undertaken from time to time. For the benefit of elected officers, special training was arranged with a view to orienting them to their new assignments. The practice of awarding different types of pins according to the number of years the leaders served the block units and according to the quality of their services was a further incentive for potential leaders and encouragement for those working to continue their good work.

**The Role of the Area Coordinating Secretaries**

*As Viewed by the Secretaries: Enablers.* The coordinating secretaries visualised their role as enablers. They endeavored to locate and encourage real community leaders. They also helped the block unit leaders to appreciate problems which are strictly beyond their scope, but the solution of which was essential for the elimination of their own. Again, the coordinating secretaries provided from time to time, leadership training for the block unit and district council officers so that they could discharge their functions more satisfactorily.

The area coordinating secretaries recognized the dangers of pampering and eventually stifling local initiative and participation in the name of the relatively low educational standards of the people in these areas. Consequently, care was taken not to impose themselves on the local leaders and this was particularly seen reflected at meetings and during the programs sponsored when the secretaries preferred to take back seats.
As Viewed by the Council Presidents: Helpful Executives. The presidents of all the councils also saw the coordinating secretaries' role as enablers. The question of any conflict between the secretaries and the presidents had not occurred to two of the presidents whereas the other two said that such conflicts had never come up. They felt that the secretaries and the lay leaders had the interests of the people at heart and that they could always work out compromises.

The presidents saw their position as an expression of the continuous attempts to enlist local participation, bringing home the idea that the real power rested in themselves as people. They looked upon the coordinators as executives, to give advice and guidance and to help in implementing projects evolved by them.

In addition to area council duties, the coordinating secretaries had responsibility for a specific assignment in which specialisation may be developed: housing, recreation, child welfare, and health. They were in charge of these services. This further tended to strengthen the impression that the area councils were an integral part of the Urban League and functioned through the latter instead of showing complete autonomy.

An Efficient, Independent Area Community Council

Of all the area councils which were functioning outside the Urban League leadership, one that was started about three years ago by a few thinking citizens of that area, was the most effective one. It was more or less patterned after the area councils of other cities. With an executive committee, board of directors and fourteen standing committees on which served about one hundred and twenty persons, the council,
called West Side Conference, had about eight hundred members. Its membership included representatives of social agencies and other organizations and associations.

As mentioned earlier, no area council in St. Louis received any professional service from the Social Planning Council. Of all the councils studied in all the three cities, this was the only one that felt that it had crossed the hump, had learned who to approach, what to do and when, by trial and error method without any help from a trained field worker. This conference needed no such help at this stage. The leaders of this conference were of the opinion that as there were many other councils which were not functioning as effectively as their own, the Social Planning Council could assign their field workers, when they had them, to such councils.

It is quite appropriate to point out in this connection that the attitude of the conference leaders towards the role of trained personnel was not one of scepticism or hostility. In fact most of the ideas on the basis of which this body was organised and made to function, appeared to be quite sound and the result of careful study of the successful councils which were assisted by professional staff members. Two illustrations will serve to prove the above point. First, they showed a genuine concern to give a representative character to their conference. This led them even to overlook the claims of some very competent members to serve on the executive committee on the ground that they hailed from localities which were already well represented on the committee. Second, as many area community councils had done in Cleveland and in Philadelphia, this conference proceeded to identify
neighborhoods with their special characteristics and problems and to take steps to solve these problems on an intensive basis.

While showing their willingness to accept any consultation services offered by the City-Wide Community Welfare Council, the conference leaders said that their ambition was to appoint, eventually, their own staff member. But even here their thinking was quite revealing. They were conscious that as the conference progressed and expanded its activities, the board of directors and other committee members had gone farther and farther away from the people in the area. This, they felt was largely due to their having no paid staff member. So their idea of having a professional person was to help bridge this undesirable gap between the conference officers and leaders on the one hand and the people whom they were supposed to represent and help on the other. Therefore, they wanted, to begin with, not an executive director, but a person who could broadly be styled as a neighborhood worker and who would be in touch with the block units and other neighborhood organisations.

This conference was the only area community council studied which had its office in a rented building. The conference leaders had no explanation for this measure that failed to make full use of the community's resources. Considering the fact that this organisation had very cordial relations with the schools and the public library in the area, it was surprising that it did not think of utilising their facilities on a rent-free basis as most of the area community councils in other cities had.

**No Leadership Problem**

The conference did not suffer from lack of leadership. People were
found willing to assume responsibilities. Indeed, this was the only council that did not advance lack of leadership as a factor hampering its movement. With a large number of people residing in the area showing active interest in the conference, they were able to secure volunteers to manage their office with regularity and almost on a full time basis, constitute many committees and undertake many worthwhile projects to further the wellbeing of the community.

Yet another interesting point was brought out by the conference leaders when they suggested that if they had a full time, paid, professional staff member right from the beginning, there was a good chance of the people in the area developing too much of a dependency on him and thereby showing an unwillingness to assume any type of responsibility. 'Let him work; that is what he is paid for', would have been the general attitude of the people. But because there was no such person, a healthy self-reliance resulted from the very start and continued to grow.

Achievements and Programs

With regard to the programs sponsored by this conference it may be said that they were similar to the ones initiated by the area community councils in other cities. It attached special significance to the problem of housing and discrimination. Effecting cooperative relationships with the Housing Rehabilitation Project, the conference assisted the community to maintain the homes in good condition.

With regard to the problem of racial discrimination, the conference took a positive stand that integrated communities will eventually become a reality. Consequently, it drew its policies and designed its programs to meet such an eventuality, bearing in mind the interests of an integrated
As Negroes started to move in, therefore, efforts were directed by this conference to help the community to realise integration peacefully. This policy of the conference had a weakening effect on itself, especially in terms of the number of people willing to take part in the activities. But this was only during the initial stages of these developments and proved to be of only passing significance.

From their programs as well as from the information furnished by the leaders, it was clear that one of their most important achievements during their short period of existence, was in the field of human relations. Opportunities were provided in the community for the first time for people professing different religions and belonging to different races to get together to study their common problems in a calm and helpful environment. The conference leaders took special pride in pointing out the significant strides taken in this sphere. It is worth recording that the executive members of the conference belonged to different religions and races, and that their meetings were held in the cordial and informal atmosphere of their own homes. In a small measure, but in a very significant way, its programs have helped to promote better understanding in the community. It is also appropriate to point out that most of those who had left the conference because of their dislike of the racial policy of the conference returned to the organisation as they saw the good results of that policy.

That a council, simply because it was not sponsored or staffed by or affiliated with a community welfare council, need not necessarily be handicapped with regard to securing adequate publicity for its activities in the newspapers, was effectively proved by the conference.
It also proved that an independent council need not suffer from lack of status in dealing with other agencies or city government officials. Their activities received adequate coverage in the local newspapers, and the city government departments always gave prompt attention to their requests and complaints and extended full cooperation to them in all important matters.

Factors Responsible for the Success

As pointed out earlier, this was the most active council in the city of St. Louis. In considering this fact and in considering the fine record of its accomplishments, the following points are pertinent.

The city did not have a systematic area approach sponsored by the community welfare council. The attempts made under various auspices resulted in the emergence of councils which displayed many defects and a stunted growth. Under these circumstances, the fine record of the conference's achievements assumed a greater brilliance by comparison. This had the effect of attracting the attention of the city at large. More important was the psychology of achievement this had created leading to even greater efforts and achievements. The local newspapers found interesting information about the activities of the conference. This interest and cooperation from the newspapers helped it to gain city-wide recognition and brought helpful leadership from outside the area. The conference successfully forged good relationship with several such leaders and city government departments.

The emphasis laid on the necessity to preserve the worth and value of the property and improve and expand the qualities and facilities of the community with a view to maximise the welfare of the people living
in the area, helped in no small measure, to attract and hold the
attention of the people concerned. This made it possible for the
conference to rely on sufficient number of willing and competent leaders.
This was especially so because the conference came into existence and in
fact continued its career at a time when radical changes were taking
place in the character of many other communities, mainly as a result of
unusual mobility of population, particularly the Negroes. The timely
warning administered by the conference and the promises it held out that
if united efforts were made by the entire community, the integrity of
the area could be safeguarded, had a positive effect in mobilising the
public interest and participation in the conference programs.

A combination of all the above factors brought about a fine team
of competent individuals who showed an eagerness to learn from their
own experience and from the experience of others.

Need for Uniform Area Approach

The situation in St. Louis showed that there was a definite need
for a decentralised approach to social welfare. The failure of the
Social Planning Council to advance an all-embracing plan in this regard
did not mean that there was a clean slate. As described above, there
were many attempts by people and organizations to set up councils and
community organisations, more or less on the same basis on which area
community councils had come into being in other cities. The Social
Planning Council itself provided professional services, on a part-time
basis, to help the lay leaders of these area and neighborhood organi-
sations set up an inter-agency council of community organisations, as a
first step to create understanding and planned approach in this matter. Although some of the area and neighborhood associations have served well in their respective spheres, they showed many shortcomings and pointed up the need to coordinate their activities so that all would benefit.

As was brought out in chapter II, a combination of factors goes to ensure the effectiveness of area community councils. Professional services were one of these major factors. Majority of the councils studied did not enjoy such services which only a community welfare council can provide. This situation further prevented the councils that were functioning from learning from one another. In fact, there were misunderstandings, some of which came to the surface during the attempts to set up the inter-agency of community councils. The leaders of various councils were confused about the conflicting auspices under which their councils had come into being.
CHAPTER V

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

Against the background of the preceding three chapters that gave a descriptive-cum analytical account of the area community councils, committees and conferences as they have emerged and as they operated in the three cities of Cleveland, Philadelphia and St. Louis, an attempt is made in this chapter to identify the basic characteristics which are common to all of them. At the same time any unique features possessed by any of them will also be brought out. This is designed to bring to focus the exact character of the area approach to social welfare planning, the factors that helped to bring it into being, the way it operated and its meaning and significance to the various communities within which it has been put into operation.

Moreover, this will provide the basis upon which the applicability and desirability of applying the area approach to India can be discussed in the last chapter of this study.

Origins of the Area Community Councils

The origins of the various area community councils can be traced to the almost universal habit of human beings getting together in the belief that that would go a long way in solving problems that hampered their well-being.

There seemed to be a remarkable similarity regarding the individuals or groups of individuals who recognised the need for concerted action, realised the power of this 'method', took the initiative in doing the
initial work and guided the efforts during the early stages of uncertainty and enthusiasm. They invariably came from among teachers, ministers, staff of the local young men's Christian association or of a settlement house. They were the people who were sensitive to the problems that undermined the social fabric, and who were never content until they thought these problems through and did something about them.

These circumstances of their origin, more or less, determined the composition of the group that eventually took positions of influence and power as officers and managed these councils for a considerable period. Usually they were composed of those who enjoyed some recognized position of prestige, influence or general acceptance as leaders. Also, they were individuals who tended to come from, at any rate for some length of time, the immediate environs, and known to one another.

Also, there appeared to be a close similarity regarding the type of problems which gave rise to such organizations. The earliest attempts were prompted by and directed towards the solution of a combination of specific as well as generally vague problems, such as juvenile delinquency, taverns and other nuisances, neighborhood deterioration, inadequacy or total lack of recreational facilities and so on.

Regardless of the area from where the individual members were drawn to serve the organization - on the executive or on any other committees - and regardless of the area that was reached in the attacking of the recognised problems, these ventures assumed, naturally and in the normal course of events, names of the areas which were invariably broader than the ones actually covered by their respective councils. However, the boundaries of the areas covered were not well defined. The people
concerned had a rough idea about the area. The need for this clearer defining was not recognised for a considerably long time.

The recognition of the role of trained social workers was yet another significant feature underlying all the area community councils studied. No doubt there was considerable variation in terms of the time it had taken for the various councils to come to this conclusion and the intensity with which this had been accomplished by the concerned community welfare councils, lay leaders and the professional workers themselves.

As was brought out in the last chapter, the entire study revealed only one instance of a council whose officers felt that they were not in need of services of a professional worker. Even in that instance, the lay leaders' views were not based on any lack of confidence in the ability or usefulness of trained social workers. There were other community leaders and members of different committees who felt that their respective field workers' attitude was unhelpful and even authoritarian. But it must be said that such instances were very few and moreover, related to some specific aspect of a worker's assignment.

There was a definite recognition and appreciation of, and a general looking to, the services and guidance of professional field workers everywhere. The role of the professional worker was so well established that no doubt seemed to remain about the usefulness of the worker; his role was taken for granted.

The role of the professional social worker formed part of a wider, deliberately planned arrangement involving more than one worker under the guidance and over-all direction of city-wide community welfare
councils: the Welfare Federation of Cleveland, the Health and Welfare Council, Philadelphia and in the case of St. Louis, the Urban League, which had the only well organised area program, relevant in this context. Earliest experiments in the field witnessed the assigning of part time workers, followed by full time personnel.

Development and Present Character

The professional workers, acting no doubt in conjunction with and under the general guidance of the lay leaders, have been the most important single factor in ensuring the growth and proper channeling of the area community council movement. This growth that has left the councils as they are today, may be summed up as a positive systemisation, decentralisation, and democratisation; a continual expansion of the activities carried on to include all-comprehensive and exhaustive coverage in terms of membership and the problems of the areas, and more emphasis on studies and surveys to get a more thorough and dependable basis for social action in terms of long range goals. Regularity and order characterized the activities of the councils. A structural refinement had gone on. While more and more committees and special committees came to be set up with well clarified functions and with better lines of communications between them, steady improvement was realised in the quantity and quality of the projects undertaken by the area community councils. Better coordination became possible and more efficient reporting and recording also came to be relied upon.

No longer were these councils and projects treated as organisations of individual citizens exclusively. Nor was it assumed that social welfare agencies exhausted the responsible sectors of the social welfare
field in any given community. Not even the complete list of all the community organisations and neighborhood associations was, by itself, thought of as completely and thoroughly representing the entire community. The area community councils grew into bodies on which served a combination of private citizens, representatives or organisations and associations and professionally competent individuals. This development, together with an ever-expanding membership that included not merely persons living in the immediate neighborhood, or occupying positions of influence, radically transformed these councils.

Thus, the area community councils became a mouthpiece of the community, composed of a healthy combination of lay citizens, professional workers, and representatives of organisations, representing the diverse character of the community, proceeding on a systematic basis to grasp and grapple with long range problems, constantly remaining alert to the new and emerging difficulties and striving to reach new goals through community involvement and general assuming of responsibilities and leadership.

There was an upward movement in this sphere, in so far as these councils were related to the city-wide organisations, emphasising the extensive nature of the problems faced by these councils, a downward movement, to the extent to which many more informal grass root organisations were encouraged to come into being as an admission that these area councils, while ensuring a decentralisation nevertheless covered too big an area to make total community participation a reality. Finally, there was a movement sideways, through the setting up of permanent bodies such as the federation of community councils in
Philadelphia, inter agency of community organizations in St. Louis and the Area Councils Association in Cleveland, which made it possible for all the councils to keep in touch with one another and exchange notes and be profited by one another's experience.¹

Programs

Consequent to such a transformation, there was a very close similarity in the program undertaken by them in all the cities. No doubt problems varied in their nature and extent from city to city, from area to area, and even from neighborhood to neighborhood and accordingly, the emphasis laid by different councils varied. Major changes added new problems to the long list: increasing mobility of population, overcrowding, congestion, violation of zoning regulations, neighborhood deterioration, problems of minorities, rising curve of juvenile delinquency, the spectacular urban renewal projects, highway construction and many other projects. At the same time developments taking place in the field of social work education also contributed to the methodology of studying and solving of the new problems.

Goal-setting, program developing and setting up of appropriate machinery to realize these goals were done consciously and on a planned basis.

Structural Pattern

The structural pattern of most of these area community councils showed many common features. The general membership of individuals and representatives of social welfare agencies and civic associations

¹. The Association in Cleveland especially was very active and efficient. It undertook several city-wide studies and initiated joint action whenever necessary.
constituted the supreme body in which the ultimate powers were vested. The executive committee, which acted on behalf of the general assembly while it was not in session, and the various standing and sub-committees worked out details of the programs approved by the general assembly and ensured their effective implementation. Although the general tendency was to have as few of these standing committees as possible and create more as circumstances indicated, there were several councils which relied on large numbers of these committees. In Cleveland, as pointed out in an earlier chapter, one council had more than thirty committees, most of which being very active. The healthy rivalry created among these committees led them to put forth their best in their attempts to surpass one another. They constantly looked for original ideas to attract the attention of the community and to embark on programs in order to increase the well-being of the community. This committee structure ensured a wide community participation and a fine training ground for prospective leaders in the community.

Again, it is appropriate to point out in this connection that wherever the councils and projects had a successful program, it was observed to be the result of the field workers' effective encouragement and guidance to these committees to assume well-defined functions. Long-range planning with accent on preventive aspects of problem-solving was also considerably facilitated by these committees.

Community Welfare Councils and the Area Approach

The city-wide community welfare councils which developed relationships with the area councils and projects, viewed the existing community councils, and neighborhood associations as peoples' ventures to tackle
problems and recognised them as major agents for effecting decentralization in welfare planning and ensuring community participation. They offered assistance to the people wanting to establish more such organizations.

In Cleveland

As was pointed out earlier in this chapter, the need for a definite approach towards these councils on the part of the community welfare councils, came at different times in their career. And so were the subsequent steps taken by them. The Welfare Federation of Cleveland, as shown in an earlier chapter, was the first in this respect, not only in relation to the other two cities, but also in relation to the emergence of the area community councils. In fact the Federation took a lead in getting some of the earliest ones started. Thus, from the very start, the course and character of the area community councils in Cleveland were more or less set by the Federation leadership. In Philadelphia and St. Louis attempts to organize area community councils were made quite independently, and unrecognised, at any rate, unaided actively by their respective community welfare councils. When at last the need for an approach towards the area community councils was recognised by the community welfare councils in these two cities, their guiding philosophy was different.

Of all the factors responsible for this difference, the early association of the Federation of Cleveland with the organisation and functioning of the area community councils, an association that was maintained ever since, and the happy partnership that was thus entered into, were the unique features of the Cleveland experiment. The influence
exerted by the Federation through its field service and through the setting up of the Committee on Area Community Councils which was renamed later on as the Area Councils Association, helped these simple neighborhood citizens' groups, which they were, to transform themselves into broad, well-founded organizations capable of undertaking comprehensive programs. Also, this early interest of and measures by the community welfare council, enjoying a high reputation, obviated any pressing need or genuine scope for any fresh machinery to accomplish the goal of maximizing the community's welfare through people's participation. This avoided a multiplicity of councils.

By being very alert to the developments in the community, and sensitive to the needs, aspirations and efforts of the people and by displaying a preparedness to go along with these efforts and help improve and strengthen the machinery that the people's genius and aspirations had brought into being, the Federation in Cleveland built on the foundations indicated by the people.

In Philadelphia

In Philadelphia, the large size of the city coupled with the belated decision of the Health and Welfare Council to assume responsibility in the field of decentralized planning brought about a different pattern. During this period a large number of community organisations and neighborhood associations were started, more or less haphazardly, but with a set way of doing things in a relatively small neighborhood. A federation of community councils under separate auspices and leadership was estab-

lished. These developments led the Health and Welfare Council to give up as impracticable the idea of working through these councils by
assigning field workers to each one of them or to some of them, and developing them into suitable instruments to realise the area objective.

Wherever the community welfare councils gave the lead it resulted in the assignment of professional field workers, with different designations: field workers, executive secretaries, coordinating secretaries, area directors, executive directors and so on. The relationship between the area community councils and the community welfare councils, developed mainly through the professional workers was smooth and based on understanding and cooperation.

**Sponsorship**

All individuals interviewed, professional as well as lay, were in favor of the community welfare councils taking the initiative to provide the auspices and direction to area community councils. They thought that the community welfare councils were the natural bodies to undertake this responsibility. They were fully qualified and well equipped to give the leadership. The community welfare councils could secure the much needed funds; but more important, they had at their disposal various experts in specific fields of specialization and accumulated experience in the welfare field. Above all, the high status the community welfare councils generally enjoyed and their reputation of being free from politics enhanced their claim to sponsor area community councils.

The lead given by the community welfare councils and the relationship they developed with the area community councils, no doubt, brought a certain amount of rigidity and formalism in otherwise loose, informal, people's organisations. But the study indicated that by deliberate planning and sympathetic understanding this could be kept to an irreducible
and harmless minimum level. Moreover, it was observed that the area community councils were most effective when they were an integral part of the city-wide system of social welfare planning with professional workers assigned to them. The reasons for this were enumerated earlier.

Area Community Councils and City Government

The attitude of the city officials towards the area community councils and the relationship that is built between them are of great consequence to the successful operation of the area approach. In chapter II it was pointed out that when the area community councils were connected with a community welfare council that enjoyed the confidence of, and cooperation from, the city government, their effectiveness was very much enhanced. At the same time the success experience of some of the area community councils in St. Louis (Chapter IV) indicated that the area community councils can independently strive and succeed in promoting cordial working relationship with the city government officials.

The present study brought out a few instances of misunderstanding between the area community councils and the city councilmen on the grounds that the area community councils organised the grumbling and vocal sections of the community and attempted to interfere in the councilmen's sphere of activities.  

area community councils were rivals to the local government, attempting to usurp the latter’s legitimate functions.

**Democratic Process**

The present study underscored the fact that the area approach to social welfare planning was an integral part of the over-all city wide welfare planning arising out of the ever expanding boundaries of the cities and the staggering growth of population to unwieldy proportions with an attendant rise in the number and complexity of the problems. It marked an admission that many day-to-day as well as long range problems faced by people living in different parts of a city cannot be solved with any reasonable degree of enduring success unless the people concerned were themselves made to realise their responsibility, and encouraged to think and act together. In essence, therefore, this represented a recognition that the means adopted in reaching the results were as important as the results themselves.

**Exceptions.** In four instances of all the individuals interviewed – professionals and lay community leaders – this basic position was doubted, questioned and even challenged. These four were from all the three cities studied and were all professional workers. They thought that this eager striving to get full community participation and to arrive at decisions after making sure that all the people concerned were consulted and given their say in the matter, however, laudable, was strictly beyond their scope. They agreed that the results achieved through this method, though attained slowly, would, on attainment, be more enduring. That in the very process of public participation people experience a growth and tend to become informed and responsible citizens, was also accepted
by them. But these four field workers were of the definite opinion that that was the function of other organisations specifically geared to that type of work.

Furthermore, these four field workers even feared that by claiming that the area community councils were realizing these goals and proceeding on this assumption they will only promote subtle confusion and raise false hopes.

These field workers appeared to be representing a school of thought that was opposed to any membership campaigns with their claims to broaden the representative character of these projects. They did not see any meaning in the efforts to set up innumerable standing and special committees. In their view the efforts they were putting forth in helping the executive members and board members to set up all those committees and then help the latter to function effectively, to guide all of them in drafting constitutions and make them workable, were not only fruitless, but also decidedly a hindrance to their speedy tackling of problems. To them these efforts were cumbersome and not worth the trained social worker's time and attention.

Free from the cramping effects of constitutional requirements and structural niceties, these professional leaders preferred an arrangement under which professional field workers, appointed and assigned by and responsible to the community welfare councils in their respective cities, will function as a sort of roving or floating workers, going around, meeting with the representatives of organisations and agencies in the effort to diagnose problems, studying them thoroughly and finding solutions. Interested and capable individuals will be approached and requested
to cooperate and if necessary will constitute an ad hoc committee that would automatically dissolve when once that problem was solved.

Associated with the above views were the misgivings expressed by these four professional workers about the functions of the area community councils and the activities they ought to be undertaking. They would like to have these councils devoted exclusively to coordinating the services of social welfare agencies and if possible to offer professional advice to any other community organizations in their respective areas and not dissipating their energies and resources to engage in civic activities such as rat control, lawn maintenance, securing new traffic lights—activities which would be carried on anyway and needed no expert advice from professional social workers.

Size of the Area Covered

On the basis of the data collected, it may be observed that this broad question of appropriate function of the area community councils and the misgivings or a "frustrated feeling" experienced by a few professional workers interviewed, was tied up with the issue of an optimum size of the area to be covered by each council—an area that will be just an ideal unit to base the approach on, not too big, not too small in terms of its needs and resources and the time and capacity of the professional worker.

The conflicting boundary lines drawn by different interests, school districts, census tracts, city planning commissions' divisions, municipal wards, police districts, all with the set objective of promoting better community relations and securing public participation, added to the
complexity of this problem, but did not, by themselves, create it. (It may be mentioned that this conflicting boundary arrangement was particularly prominent in St. Louis which appeared in this aggravated form mainly because the community welfare council had no program of its own with boundary lines for each area project clearly drawn.) All those who were interviewed were of the opinion that this discrepancy should be resolved with an understanding and agreement arrived at by the parties concerned rather than by attempting to do away with these differences altogether. It was reasonably certain that a community welfare council will not be able to find compact community areas within the boundary lines drawn by the city planning commission for urban renewal or by the police department with an entirely different set of considerations.

Independent of these conflicting boundary considerations, the very size of the area to be taken as a unit for decentralization is of utmost significance. In this respect also there was a consensus that this task of determining the optimum size of an area should be undertaken by the field of social welfare and specifically the community welfare councils which have shown a responsibility in the area approach.

While too much work arising out of an unduly large area cannot be considered as conducive to efficiency and maximum results, too little work as a result of either too small an area or a combination of other factors, could lead to that "frustrated feeling" on the part of the professional worker that would be inimical to progress in this sphere.

**Difficulties Faced by the Councils**

There was striking similarity in relation to the difficulties the area community councils faced. Lack of adequate financial resources was
a serious handicap to some of them. The area community councils of Cleveland, as was pointed out earlier, received only the services of the field workers and their secretaries from the Federation. Operational and program expenses had to be met by the councils themselves from the membership dues and funds raised by other means. However, the data collected indicated that whenever any council had evolved a workable and worthwhile project, the Welfare Federation of Cleveland had succeeded in securing the necessary funds to enable that council to embark on the project. In general, the council leaders also were satisfied with the arrangement under which they had the responsibility of securing funds for their operation. They felt that that would provide added incentive to be more active and secure fuller participation from the community.

To most of the area community councils, inadequate and halting participation of the community was a far more serious handicap. Only three councils out of the thirty studied maintained confidently that they did not experience this difficulty. However, there was unanimous recognition of the importance of community participation and of lay leaders providing the needed guidance to their council activities. The steps taken by various area community councils to meet this problem were on the same lines. They relied on their members and leaders to recruit and bring in new individuals. Attractive programs, institutes and other leadership training programs, citations and awards of pins and special recognitions, and wide publicity to council activities were also made to attract more and more individuals. Professional field workers have played a unique role in this respect.
Importance of the Field Worker

The function and importance of the field worker has been discussed previously. Much depended on these workers and the way they went about their task. Their attitude determined to a considerable extent the character and composition of the councils and the results of their operation. That did not mean that to appoint a field worker was to guarantee complete success, that no council had been successful without the services of a trained social worker or that all the councils that enjoyed their services were effective.

Oftentimes a combination of factors paved the way to success and some of these factors have already been discussed in earlier Chapters. There were factors which were clearly beyond the control of a council or a single field worker and these slowed down the councils and sometimes left them almost dead. This did not take away from the professional worker any credit for the good work he did in this field. As has been pointed out earlier, there appeared to be a certain relationship between the quality of the field worker and the success of the council he served.

Wherever a council was set up independent of any community welfare council's help and without the guidance of a professional leader, and was found to be functioning very successfully, it was observed that a more than casual resemblance was present between their patterns and the pattern evolved under the guidance and leadership of professional workers, warranting the conclusion that there had been an extensive borrowing from the accumulated experience of the councils aided by the professionals under the general auspices of the community welfare councils.
Achievements

In the sphere of the achievements of the area community councils there were many striking similarities. The fact that they were not direct service agencies, assuming mainly coordinating and planning functions, however, made the task of evaluating their achievements difficult. Most of the professional and lay leaders while listing their achievements were inclined to attach greater importance to the "intangible" results.

It was interesting that as more and more interviews were carried out, it became very obvious that credit for the same project was claimed exclusively by many agencies and organisations. The annual reports of many an organisation took virtually all credit for the same projects. It was difficult to come to any conclusion as to which organisation made the first, all-important decision and provided major leads. At best it could be said that the council operations were highly collective in nature. They were joint enterprises involving many individuals, organisations, and agencies.

It is worth mentioning that one of the basic considerations governing the working of the area community councils was that they were not to engage in fields which were already the concerns of some other agencies. Rival to none, the area community councils were expected to strive to strengthen the existing services and arrange for the provision of new services whenever need for them was recognised. One of the cardinal principles governing their working was cooperation. Considered from this point, the fact that credit for the same project was claimed by many agencies and organisations in a given area should be taken as an
Indication of the councils' sound functioning. Effective cooperation from several agencies and organizations seemed to have been secured by area community councils for the implementation of community-wide projects, without letting them lose their individuality or without depriving them of their sense of importance and pride.

In the eradication of the seemingly petty things which injured the community's interests and in providing positive amenities to add to its welfare, the record of the area community councils was very notable. 'The watch-dog' function, brought out again and again by various council leaders showed the important role the councils have been assuming in safeguarding the interests and rights of the community. The councils provided a definite center people can turn to in their difficulties and in moments of doubt. There was a feeling of assurance that through these councils their wishes and requirements will be heard and respected in higher circles, and that these considerations will certainly enter into their decisions.

The area community councils have not only attempted to ensure maximum utilization of social welfare resources available within their own areas. They have shown that in a united way and representing a large number of people it was easy to secure resources in leadership and money from state and national organizations.

The programs undertaken by the area community councils revealed their dynamic qualities. Perturbed by the high incidence of family problems in its area, an area community council in Cleveland, in conjunction with the Family Service Agency, set up clinics for the engaged and newly married couples. These clinics dealt with such problems as
family budgeting, household planning, and physical and emotional aspects of marriage. In another area, recognizing the special needs of the old people, its area community council started craft programs for older people.

The area community councils have shown interest in new and emerging problems. There has been a gradual recognition that race relations, housing and urban renewal in general are welfare problems.

As shown in earlier chapter, the work of most of the councils in the field of human relations was not directly aimed at creating a racially integrated community. Many of them helped in making the transition from a white to Negro community smooth. Their role as 'rumor demolition outfits' and as agencies initiating newcomers to expected norms of community behavior and helping to reduce acts of violence and hostility toward the in-mover, has generally been regarded as effective. 3

However, their major contribution in this respect should be viewed in terms of the cooperative efforts these councils initiated to solve such common problems as inadequate recreational facilities, rat control, air pollution, and neighborhood beautification. In more than half of the councils studied, they proved to be the first opportunity for the community to come together and work together on such problems on an inter-denominational and inter-racial basis. The councils thus contributed, though not in a very spectacular way, to the creation of a climate of tolerance and understanding among people of different races and nationalities.

Some of the most successful area community councils in all the cities were in predominantly Negro areas. The problems of these areas were very complex. But it is one of the most notable achievements of the area community councils that they have demonstrated that the Negro community, in spite of its serious handicaps, possessed the leadership and vision to put forth organized efforts on a democratic basis to solve their problems. This served to raise the morale of the Negroes themselves and to erase the stereotyped images of this minority possessed by others.

The urban renewal developments involving large sums of money and what is more, the well-being of large numbers of people, have constituted another field of concern for the area community councils. Only a few of them have designed definite programs concerning all phases of this development such as recognition of the need for renewal, difficulties regarding family relocation, and housing for the minorities. But there has been a steadily increasing awareness that social work represented by the area community councils has a positive role in this respect. There is also an appreciation of their role on the part of the city planning commissions and others engaged in this activity.

It is appropriate to recall the statement attributed to Mr. Harry Hopkins who was the administrator of the huge public works program during the depression years of the nineteen thirties. Asked as to why he was having a large number of professional social workers on his staff for projects which had very much to do with construction calling for engineers, cement experts, contractors, road builders and the like, Mr. Hopkins' reply was that he wanted them "to make sure that the program did not
become so interested in construction that it lost sight of the people it was designed to serve."

This has even greater significance to urban renewal developments.

**Factors Contributing to the Common Characteristics**

This chapter has served to bring out the remarkable uniformity regarding several aspects of the area community councils studied in the three cities. Basic to all the councils was the area approach. Its real meaning and significance will be elaborated in the next chapter. There was uniformity with regard to the problems that gave rise to these councils, their structural patterns, their nature, objectives, programs and so on. It is important to point out that this uniformity is not an accident. The study leads to conclude that the following factors contributed towards this uniformity.

1. The very fact that the area community councils were based on the area approach and that this approach was a people's approach, contributed a great deal to its easy adoption by people in various parts of a city and in different cities. The idea of starting a council or club or association, in its barest form, to meet the common problems, came to the people almost naturally.

2. The problems that gave rise to these councils were more or less the same in all the areas within a city and in all the three cities studied.

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3. The early association of professional field workers with the councils meant that they enjoyed the services of competent individuals who had the time, desire and responsibility to draw from the experience of other councils in their own cities as well as in other cities.

4. Since the professional field service was offered by the community welfare council centralized organization like the Urban League, the area approach came to be regarded as an integral part of the total social planning for the entire metropolitan city. The policy of the sponsoring bodies to attempt through their field workers to impress upon the people in the areas and neighborhoods the need to view their problems as part of the city-wide problems also helped to create a certain amount of uniformity in their approach. The regular meetings of the field staff enabled the workers to compare notes and incorporate new ideas in their individual councils.

5. Organizations like the Area Councils Association in Cleveland, and the Inter-Agency of Community Councils in St. Louis, and the city-wide institutes, workshops and publications they sponsored from time to time facilitated exchange of ideas among these councils.

6. National workshops on district and neighborhood councils and the informative articles and pamphlets that were published by national organizations invested the area community councils with a national prestige and expedited the process of exchange of ideas on a national basis.
CHAPTER VI

THE AREA APPROACH

As pointed out in chapter I, conceived as a unit in space, area becomes indispensable to base any kind of a program. In this respect the whole world may be considered as an area and is, in fact, for several international organizations. So are the areas of countries. Within each country there are further subdivisions, areas called states or provinces. For one purpose or other, usually to ensure easy, economic and efficient administration, the states too are further subdivided into districts or burroughs, villages and neighborhoods.

Purpose and scope determine the size and the character of the area. For the purpose of promoting social welfare, the same pattern is discernable. Depending on the scope of the organization, the entire world, a nation as a whole, a state, district and neighborhood have all been adopted as areas to base their programs.

Area Approach to Social Welfare Planning

The area approach studied in this study has concentrated on the divisions of metropolitan cities normally enjoying the services of community welfare councils.

People's Approach. As indicated in the last chapter on Common Characteristics, the beginnings of the area community councils could be traced to an almost instinctive practice of human beings living in small neighborhoods to get together whenever they were confronted with
some common problems. Many of the evolutionary stages gone through by these councils in Cleveland which were some of the oldest area community councils in the United States clearly showed the close similarities between the area community councils during their infancy and the traditional efforts put forth by common people. The area community councils have been described as "the rediscovery of the art of cooperation which has its roots in the town meeting".  

**Enlargement of the Area.** One of the major changes that took place in this adaptation of the traditional practice was the very size of the area covered. As the earlier chapters have brought out, when the area community councils were initiated by local residents, the area of their operation was rather limited, invariably the neighborhood. Subsequent developments witnessed their enlargement and clearer demarcation of their boundaries.

**Unique Association of Professional Leadership.** The early association of professional leadership with the local people and the subsequent growth of a healthy partnership between the two may be regarded as a major characteristic of the area approach. Besides, it was one of the main factors responsible for its success. Such partnerships between lay and professional leadership were not uncommon at other levels. They had entered into similar relationship at the city level. However, the distinction between these instances was quite real. The concept of "down town people" with its implications of formality, distance and power, associated with the city-wide community welfare councils, was

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conspicuous by its absence in the case of the areas. The size and the characteristics of the areas made it possible for the professional personnel to function jointly with lay citizens in a friendly, informal and warm way. This relationship made it possible for the community leaders to benefit from the field workers' professional knowledge and skill without losing their feeling of importance and dignity. When it is borne in mind that the community leaders concerned were the individuals who ordinarily stood no chance of being considered for any direct representation on city-wide organizations and yet were so very essential for the welfare of their own communities, the real meaning of the area approach to social welfare planning becomes obvious. It accorded them the much needed recognition, encouragement and opportunity to be of service to their immediate communities.

Facilitates Grass Root Efforts. The area approach was by no means a really grass root approach. The physical extent of the area and the size of the population—from twenty to one hundred ten thousand in Cleveland and from one hundred fifty to four hundred fifty thousand in Philadelphia—did not entitle it to that distinction. But the following considerations will serve to bring out the significance of the area approach in this respect. The area approach is an essential and convenient half-way house between the ever expanding city-wide community welfare councils and the all but forgotten face-to-face organizations. It occupies a unique position from where it can encourage and assist real grass root organizations, neighborhood associations, street clubs and so on. The grass root organizations can be serviced by the professionally competent field workers assigned to the area community councils.
In all three cities studied area field workers did utilize their time to help people establish such grass root organizations and give encouragement and service to them whenever there was need for it.

Both from the practical financial point of view and a satisfactory work load for field workers, professional service to all existing grass root organizations cannot be considered. Therefore, the area provided more or less optimum sized units to which professional help could be assigned.

Decentralization and Democracy

Community Participation. Decentralization and people's participation assume a special significance in the area approach. Especially in the instances where the urge and initiative had come from the people concerned, the real control of action remained with them, leaving the professional personnel to play an enabling and consultative role. Even when the first steps were taken by the community welfare councils, importance was attached to the people, and their involvement was sought after systematically.

Although people's representatives did serve on the community welfare councils, the very size of the metropolitan area covered and the comparatively high status of these representatives did not make it easy for the people to comprehend the representativeness of such an arrangement.

Also, the basic principle of community organization, "secure people's participation as early as possible" and not merely approaching them with a ready-made "plan" with an appeal for cooperation in implementing it, is found to govern the working of the area approach to social
welfare planning. Active interest and participation from the neighborhoods concerned are enlisted right from the beginning.

It is worth mentioning that many who were discouraged from taking an active interest in the community affairs because of unfriendly response to their requests and suggestions from the government officials, have found in this area approach a very effective device to make their voices heard.

Community Organization Principles. The major outcome of this decentralization is the embodying of community organization principles in the area approach. The basic community organization principles of studying the problems that prevent the community from realizing highest possible levels of welfare, surveying the social welfare resources to meet these problems, drawing up of a priority list so as to ensure the allocation of the resources to meet needs on the basis of their importance, setting up appropriate machinery to strengthen, mobilize and coordinate the resources to reach the desired goals, evaluation of the results in order to plan more intelligently - were found incorporated in the area approach to social welfare studied in the three cities.

Maximum Utilization of Community Resources

The area approach has succeeded in effecting maximum utilization of the community's resources. The fact that various social welfare agencies and organizations operating within the same area had the same objective of serving the common good of the entire community did not automatically bring about a community of outlook in them. The area approach, by striving to enlist the active cooperation of various public
and voluntary agencies, city governments and many groups in the community has attempted to rectify this. Unmet needs have been identified and the community's resources brought to bear on the attempts to meet them. The field services that the area approach made possible have been availed of by various community organizations and agencies in their attempts at improving, altering or expanding their programs to suit the emerging needs in their own neighborhoods. As described in earlier chapters, the area community councils have succeeded in securing the involvement of several groups and associations that had never had the opportunities to be part of community-wide projects. This habit of working together has broadened the vision of the community organizations and agencies, and has fostered a unity of purpose in them.

The area approach has thus made possible a concept of service based on the building up and unifying of many groups and agencies without destroying the diversity which lies at the root of democracy.

**A New Concept of Social Welfare**

Another important contribution of the area approach is the all-comprehensive or total viewpoint of social welfare that it makes possible. The high degree of specialization and professionalization, so very essential for the growth of a field that is designed to meet the dynamic needs of a community, has nonetheless led, not infrequently, to an unhealthy compartmentalization and a rigid adherence to the principles. The area approach has as its main objective the helping of communities to grow into healthy, integrated and creative communities. In trying to realize this objective, the individual and his problems were viewed
as an integral part of the total community and its pathological conditions. This contribution of the area approach has helped to correct the lopsided development resulting from over specialization.

The comprehensive approach to social welfare fostered by the area approach has created in professional field workers a preparedness to deal with virtually any problem with a bearing on the well-being of the community, whether or not the problem came strictly within the confines of health and welfare. This philosophy widened the area community councils' sphere of operation and resulted in their embarking on activities which were more meaningful to the people concerned, and consequently, capable of enlisting their enthusiastic support and participation. Besides, this comprehensive approach enabled the area councils to preserve their dynamic character and be effective in a fast changing situation. As mentioned earlier, neighborhood deterioration, minority problems, housing, social legislation are a few of the many such meaningful concerns the area community councils have adopted as their own.

As indicated in the previous chapter, without any exception, all the professional field workers who were working with the area community councils stated that they benefited immensely from their association with the community leaders. The comprehensive nature of the programs enabled them to be more familiar with maximum forces at work in the social welfare field. The benefits derived by the field workers from such partnership were carried over to the community welfare councils and the city government departments, helping them to reflect the wishes and aspirations of the local people. A greater appreciation of the tasks and responsibilities of the government officials on the part of the
people, and a genuine attempt on the part of the government to seek people's participation in matters which affected them vitally, formed part of the climate of mutual understanding created by the area community councils.

The Real Meaning and Significance of the Area Approach

Some of the major accomplishments attributed to the area community councils have been discussed in the previous chapter. As pointed out in that context, the things they had failed to do and the instances wherein they had failed to reach their goals were many also. However, the real significance of the area approach is to be sought in the unmistakable awareness it has fostered in the people that if they got together they could solve many of their problems, and that they had a positive responsibility in the creation and preservation of good conditions in their own respective areas. The area approach helped the people to realize that the city officials who framed the policies meant to improve their conditions did that as servants of the people and would, therefore, be acting on the wishes and desires of the people. But at the same time the people were encouraged to appreciate that in the ultimate analysis, the conditions in their areas would depend on the collective decisions they took and the steps that followed those decisions.

In other words, the area approach served to highlight the cause-effect relationship in the field of community well-being in the urban setting. The sheer vastness and complexity of modern urban setting make it very difficult for ordinary man to grasp the most elementary connection between his efforts and his well-being. The connection
between community's efforts and its well-being, and his role in the
total picture becomes even more hazy. The forces of anonymity, mobility
and profit motive make his task virtually impossible. Yet it is in
such a complex situation the need for ordinary citizen to be aware of
this connection the greatest. Through studies of day to day problems
that affected the citizen and through action against these problems at
levels where he can understand and appreciate them with ease, the area
approach has made a positive contribution in helping the ordinary citizen
to find the connection between his action and the results regarding his
well-being.

The area approach has done more than highlighting the cause-effect
relationship. Through simple, informal machinery, the area community
councils have brought about results which an ordinary man can see and
feel. This has helped to replace indifference and fatalism by hope,
enthusiasm and action. Thus, in the area approach, the ordinary man has
found a chance to come into his own. Above all, with its emphasis on
cooperative efforts to achieve highest community well-being, the area
approach underscored the interrelatedness of the problems and the in:
dependency of the individuals and groups composing the community. This
has facilitated concerted action, and more significant, a community of
outlook.

More and more people came to realize that in spite of all kinds of
programs and projects under voluntary and public auspices, their neigh-
borhoods did not automatically improve unless they evinced keen interest
and offered full participation in the activities from beginning to
finish. Similarly, more people came to recognize that no neighborhood
deteriorated and disintegrated under the pressure of major problems unless the people living in those neighborhoods let them.

While helping the individual to appreciate his own responsibilities, the area approach has enabled him to be conscious of his rights also. By acquainting him with the functions of various government departments, agencies and organizations, the area approach has made it possible for the citizen to approach, through his own organization, appropriate departments and fully utilize their services.

The developments arising out of a clearer understanding of the cause-effect and rights-obligations relationship by the citizens have changed the thinking of various government officials and leaders of city-wide agencies and organizations. There was a growing appreciation of the great value in the people's participation in all projects affecting their well-being. The existence of the area community councils, representing the cross section of the community and enjoying the professional services and guidance from community welfare councils provided the government and city-wide bodies with suitable machinery to seek community's participation.

Equally significant is the fact that geographical contiguity and common residence came to constitute the rational basis to develop the new concept of social welfare. People sharing differing religious faiths and political beliefs and belonging to different races were brought together on the healthy assumption that the community interests were of prime importance. The area approach has been instrumental in inculcating in the people this sense of unity and cooperation at levels where the need for it is real.
The foregoing analysis supports the first hypothesis of this study, viz., "the area approach constituted a positive step to ensure a productive people's participation in social welfare planning". It may be summed up that the area approach is an adaptation of the practice of "neighbors get together to meet the felt needs and difficulties", especially common in rural environment, to the fast changing, complex, impersonal urban scene. It was a recognition that the new urban environment demanded the application of the area approach in a more deliberate way.

Basic to the approach was the realization that never did the actions or inactions of one or more individuals leave such definite and direct results on the well-being of so many people in the same neighborhood and area.

During the process of adapting this practice several changes analyzed in previous pages had taken place. Nonetheless, the area approach to social welfare planning is essentially a sophisticated version of the age-old people's approach, adapted, systematized and refined by professionals with training and imagination and above all, respect for common people and their aspirations.

The Area Approach and Community Organization Principles

Development of the Area Approach

Regarding the second hypothesis of this study, viz., "the area approach has as its basis the principles of community organization for social welfare," it was indicated earlier in this chapter that the basic principles of community organization were found incorporated in the area
approach. A detailed consideration of the fundamental characteristics of the area approach as an evolving concept and a closer examination of the true nature of community organization for social welfare will help to bring this hypothesis to focus.

The following important stages in the development of the area approach studied will serve to bring out its basic characteristics.

1. The area approach got started as a people's approach and in the initial stages, relied almost exclusively on individual membership.

2. At a later stage, the membership base was broadened to include social welfare agencies, civic, religious and professional associations, organized labor and various other community organizations.

3. Started as an exclusive body, to watch, study and assist the area approach, professional social workers joined this approach.

4. For some time its efforts were concentrated on coordinating the welfare services provided by several agencies within the area. It was more like the work of the community welfare councils at the area level.

5. The scope of concern for welfare planning was broadened to include such problems as urban renewal and neighborhood conservation, housing, race relations and minority problems, mental health and preventive health care.

6. At another stage, the area approach went beyond the function of strengthening of the existing agency services, to make available direct services to the community.
The ultimate objective was conceived as the achievement of an integrated community through a practical involvement of individuals and groups in identifying their problems, determining their own needs and evolving the services meant for their use. These direct services, intended to meet the community problems, cut across fields of service.

7. Importance came to be attached to the methods adopted and process involved in reaching the goals and not merely to the latter. A conscious attempt was made to ensure an intelligent participation of the people concerned from the very beginning of the study and identification of the problems. Manipulating and operating skills were relegated to the background and recourse was made to the role of enabling, helping and guiding.

8. Maximum utilization of all the available social welfare resources was emphasized. More and more such resources were identified, approached and utilized in an effort to realize the agreed-upon goals. Public agencies and departments, indeed, were also included in this.

9. The area approach eventually represents not merely a decentralization in social welfare planning, but also a steady infusion of democratic principles in it. This is worth reiterating since decentralization and democracy are not synonymous. There are many instances when decentralization was designed solely for the purpose of introducing efficiency and effective control over the people.
Development of Community Organization Principles

The relevant thing that becomes clear from the above analysis is that the long, evolutionary development of the area approach traced above, epitomizes and symbolizes the equally slow-paced development of the conceptual base of community organization as a social work practice. Substantial changes in this field have taken place only in the last two decades. Late nineteen thirties still thought in terms of "the process of organizing a community", and of bringing about a "progressively more effective adjustment between social welfare resources and social welfare needs."¹ Those who relied on methods, structures and skills to solve problems held the sway in all the questions relating to methods versus process. Invariably, tributes came to be paid to manipulative skills and methods that brought results 'somehow' and gave the community what in their judgment was the best in its interests.

Within less than ten years, however, a shift took place from ".... the attainment of specific, preconceived products", to "the development and guidance of the process by which people find satisfying and fruitful relationships." The indispensability of "a democratic philosophy and faith which respects the right and responsibility of communities" and of discarding a "controlling relationship" was brought out.²


By 1955 the stage was set for the introduction of an entirely new concept of direct service role assigned to community organization practice. This brought about the much needed balance between process and goals on the assumption that process though important must be related to social goals.

This development has had the effect of:

1. broadening the scope of community organization in terms of the organizations and individuals involved.
2. broadening its scope in terms of programs and projects undertaken, with an emphasis on preventive facets.
3. deepening the democratic moorings of the process involved and the methods adopted.

Area Approach - Applied Community Organization Principles

The area approach thus represents applied community organization principles. It should also be pointed out that in the very evolution of the conceptual base of community organization, the area approach as exemplified by the area community councils, has left its own marks. There is room to think that the area approach has contributed a great deal to one of the major changes by which a "community organizer" started assuming an enabling, consulting and helping role of a "community organization worker" and is at present on the verge of shedding the

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"organization" altogether and take up the designation of a "community worker". This change in the designation, though may seem to be unimportant, signifies the scope, meaning and philosophy of the area approach to social welfare planning. The concept of comprehensive services according to the requirements of the community and a deepening of democratic aspects in terms of conscious striving to secure meaningful participation of the people concerned is a distinct contribution of the area approach to community organization practice.
CHAPTER VII

APPLICABILITY AND USEFULNESS OF

THE AREA APPROACH TO INDIA

Following the discussion of the exact meaning, nature and significance of the area approach to social welfare planning in the three cities of Cleveland, Philadelphia and St. Louis, this final chapter is directed to a consideration of the third and final hypothesis of this study, viz., that the area approach has an applicability and usefulness to India.

Major Factors Responsible for the Emergence and Effectiveness of Area Community Councils

The present study indicated that the most important factors responsible for the success of the area approach to social welfare planning were the following:

1. Presence of problems which the people felt could be solved by joint action.
2. Recognition of needs and problems
3. Preparedness to work together
4. Appropriate structural machinery
5. Adequate funds
6. Participation and cooperation from professionals and city-wide community welfare councils
7. Local leadership that is competent, popular and willing to assume responsibility
In discussing the adaptability and usefulness of the area approach to India, these factors will serve as the frame of reference.

**Socio-economic Problems**

The socio-economic problems which gave rise to the earliest community councils in the metropolitan cities of the United States and continued to provide inspiration for more and more councils, are more or less the same that are present in the metropolitan areas of India. There is a lack of recreational facilities and an inadequacy or total lack of many other civic amenities. While the education and recreational needs of children and youth are inadequately met, the special needs of senior citizens have not even been thought of, much less planned for or provided. Problems of overcrowding caused mainly by the large number of immigrants from rural parts of the country in search of productive employment are acute. It is estimated that more than two-thirds of the houses in the cities of India are sub-standard. Indian urban population increased from twenty-three to sixty-two million since 1930. With all the industrialization projects being undertaken, the rate of increase is likely to be higher in the next generation. There is a wretched inadequacy of appropriate social welfare agencies to look after the needs and interests of not only the immigrants but also of the permanent residents of the cities. Practically every city has its slums. Although not of equal magnitude, the impact of juvenile delinquency is also felt by the metropolitan areas of India.

The caste problem (untouchability and segregation) has been attacked since independence of the country in 1947 on an all-India basis, through constitutional provisions and executive measures adopted by the governments of the country and of the states. But it continues to be a perplexing and pervasive problem not merely in villages, as has been erroneously felt, but even in towns and cities and in fact in an aggravated form.  

Recognition of the Problems and Readiness for Concerted Action

History of social welfare affords innumerable instances to support the contention that needs and problems are of no consequence if they are not recognized as such and if there is no preparedness to get together and work together. As for the Americans, they are the most peculiar people in the world. You'll not believe it when I tell you how they behave. In a local community in their country a citizen may conceive of some need which is not being met. What does he do? He goes across the street and discusses it with his neighbor. Then what happens? A committee comes into existence and then the committee begins functioning on behalf of that need, and you won't believe this but it is true. All of this is done without reference to any bureaucrat. All of this is done by the private citizens on their own initiative.

This shrewd observation made by Alex de Tocqueville one hundred and twenty-nine years ago can be considered as a valid description of many of the communities studied for this project.


The cramping effects of the problems described above have been recognized by some sections of people in the cities in India. Consequently, many neighborhood and civic organizations have come into being long ago. Some of them are under religious auspices, others on a political basis and many more as non-religious and non-political bodies.

Regarding readiness to come together and work together in order to solve the recognized problems, the idea has not been entirely foreign to the people of India. The village council or the Gram Panchayat as it was called, was a very effective body for a considerably long period in Indian history. The Panchayat was even a more comprehensive area or district community council. Generally it has been hailed as a basic institution of democracy. A good proportion of the citizens in urban India, and especially those who are in great need of social welfare measures, are people with Panchayat background.

**Negative Factors**

**Complex Urban Situation.** However, two things are relevant in this context. First, the altered urban circumstances leave the villagers so completely bewildered by the frightening complexity and magnitude of the problems that very rarely do they get together to solve the problems one by one.

**Democratic Institutions in Disuse.** Second, even in the villages, despite the Panchayat traditions, a history of autocratic rule by kings and maharajas, the prolonged British occupation, the gradual solidification of caste system and the degeneration of the villages into self-sufficient and self-contained units, cut off from the rest of the world, served to undermine people's self reliance to a great extent. They were
encouraged to look to the government for the solution of their problems, instead of making efforts on their own.

Equally relevant is the fact that for a long time the growing apathy on the part of a large number of people has left many of the village Panchayats as powerless bodies controlled by vested interests and sometimes by caste members, not particularly well known for their competence or ability to arouse public enthusiasm and participation.

Joint Family. The overriding factor, however, is that while the strong joint-family system and a large network of relations encouraged individuals to think in terms of members of a big family and thus created a cooperative, team spirit, it failed to ensure an extension of this fellowship and 'responsibility towards others' to wider circles so as to include all people regardless of their blood relationship, religion or caste. The joint-family system indeed evolved a type of social security capable of containing minor dislocations and problems such as death, disability, orphans, the widows (custom prohibits widow remarriage), and the aged. Consequently, it obviated the necessity for specialized institutions. But oftentimes it exhausted the individual's allegiance. Hence it may be said that the village people who migrate to the cities in search of job opportunities are by no means ready or well-equipped to assume a role designed to meet the innumerable problems in the field of social welfare. Often, the new circumstances find them unduly self-centered, and too much concerned about themselves.

New Type of Family. In fact, in an urban situation which is totally different with husband-wife type of families and a high degree of industrialization, commercialization and anonymity, their village
tradition is more of an anachronism. The process of giving up the reliance on the traditional institutional arrangements which are absent in the new environment and evolving a new approach to suit the circumstances has been slow and halting.

Furthermore, there are large numbers of people born and brought up in the cities and therefore outside the Panchayat tradition.

Positive Factors

Community Development. It is appropriate to point out in this context that changes occurring all over the world and within India after independence have left permanent marks on the thinking of the people, both rural and urban. One most important single program initiated by the government has been Community Development. Apart from the many worthwhile concrete results of these projects which have covered practically the entire country, their psychological effects have been even more important.

During the short period these projects have been in operation, a large scale injection of catalysts such as the community development projects, National Extension Services and the community welfare centers, have generated "a ferment of the spirit of self-help amongst millions of our rural population." Moreover, "the people have demonstrated convincingly their desire for progress and their willingness not only to adopt, but also to contribute towards any measures about the utility of which they are convinced." 4

It is also very pertinent that the progress of the program and public cooperation have been on a much better scale where well-constituted Panchayats existed than in areas where such agencies were absent.

Expanding Public Welfare. Since independence, the urge on the part of the government to improve conditions and meet the special needs of physically, emotionally, socially or economically handicapped sections of population has been very prominent. As a result, many social welfare agencies and organizations have been brought into being. This trend is likely to continue and at a greater pace.

Unique Features of the Urban Areas. The metropolitan areas of India, however, display significant differences from the picture of the rural areas presented above. These differences which are relevant for the present purpose have been the result of the following factors:

1. Connected more closely with the rest of the world, the metropolitan areas in India are more exposed to optimistic, liberalizing and democratizing forces. These forces have, moreover, weakened the hold of a blind faith in the force of fate.

2. The metropolitan areas were the nerve centers of the long drawn out fight for independence of the country that in due course became a general movement directed against any kind of autocracy.

3. The diligent work carried on by the political parties both during the pre and post-independent days served to build up people's self-confidence. The emergence of trade unions and enactment of labor welfare legislation also strengthened
the weaker sections of metropolitan areas and demonstrated conclusively the good results that could accrue from concerted action.

4. The achievement of independence witnessed, especially in the urban areas, very radical changes in people's outlook and raised in them all kinds of hopes and expectations.

5. Slow progress during the post-independent decade in relation to people's impatience to secure higher standards of living provided the critics of the government with more opportunities to organize people to demand more, and work towards the realization of those goals.

These chief factors have introduced in the metropolitan areas of India a heightened awareness of the pressing difficulties under which they lived and worked and the readiness to work together in an attempt to solve them. They played a major role in activating democracy and in multiplying self-help efforts. This again helps to explain the presence of many neighborhood and community organizations in the metropolitan areas.

Cooperation from Professionals and Sponsorship

Importance of Sponsorship

The importance of sponsorship has been brought out in earlier chapters, especially in Chapters II, III, IV and V. The experience of the area community councils in the United States indicated that a council through which all groups and interests work together must be staffed by a central planning body and not by one operating agency, be it a school, court, recreation, welfare, health or any other field of service. An
agency-sponsored council which attempts to plan and act on problems broader than the function of the sponsoring body runs the risk of becoming advisory to a program or causing confusion in the city-wide planning picture.

Among others, there are four major factors which serve to highlight the importance of sponsorship of the area approach in relation to India.

**No Community Welfare Councils.** First, no city in India has a community welfare council or a community chest. The nearest approach in this connection has been that of the Guild of Service with its head­quarters in the city of Madras. Affiliated to the Guild are social agencies and neighborhood organizations not only within the city of Madras, but also in other parts of the state of Madras. However, the Guild is a rudimentary step towards a full­fledged community welfare council. It assumes almost none of the major functions discharged by the community welfare councils in the United States. It has no professional staff, no division or bureau. Nor does it undertake any coordinating or planning responsibilities in behalf of the affiliated bodies.

The area approach in the absence of city­wide community welfare council, therefore, will be deprived of the specialized knowledge and experience usually found at their disposal and above all of the benefit of their prestige and good will.

**Excessive Reliance on the Government.** Second, as has been pointed out earlier in this chapter, the tendency on the part of a large number of people in India, even in the metropolitan areas, has been to expect everything from the government and blame it for all the shortcomings. This attitude, the changing of which is one of the main objectives and
achievements of the area approach in the United States, will, instead, be strengthened considerably if the government is left with a large responsibility in sponsoring or staffing these projects.

**Expediency.** Third, in their eagerness to fulfill their promises to the electorate and to the community in general, the government representatives have been expanding the sphere of their activities. To seek government sponsorship or large assistance from them would only lead unwittingly to increase peoples' dependency on government, instead of helping them to rely on their own resources and efforts.

**Tradition of Almsgiving.** Fourth, handicapped by poverty, lack of education and low social status, a large number of people have not been able to assume a leadership role in the affairs of their own communities. Much of the social work done has been done by kind hearted people with plenty of leisure and resources for the unfortunate. One of the major purposes of the area approach to social welfare has been that of generating self respect and self-help through combined efforts. The question as to who will sponsor the area approach and who will staff them, therefore, has vital significance. To let the philanthropists exert undue influence in this respect would be to defeat the very purpose with which the area approach is conceived.

**Criteria Concerning Sponsorship**

In considering the question of sponsorship, attention should be given to the following factors serving as a set of criteria:

1. The prestige and status it can bring to the area approach, thus securing a general acceptance of the community at large; non-political, non-official and non-religious nature of the sponsoring body will greatly help in this respect.
2. The healthy response and cooperation from the city government officials, city-wide and neighborhood organizations that it can secure.

3. The professional knowledge and specialized skills and methods it can make available.

4. The extent to which it can realize the needed funds, on its own or from other sources.

5. Its desire and ability to offer all the above benefits without interfering in and overwhelming or stifling the independent nature of the area approach, so that the professional field worker will have enough latitude to pioneer.

The fact that no city in India has a community welfare council or a community chest limits the choice still further. In terms of the above stated considerations, the claims of the government as a suitable sponsor of the area approach in India should be ruled out for reasons brought out earlier in this chapter. The chances of the area approach being considered as just one more of the government projects and of relapsing into red tape and bureaucracy cannot be dismissed easily. In the socio-economic and cultural context of India, a close association of the area approach with the government is sure to deprive it of those qualities which are its hallmarks and which are indispensable for it to discharge its unique functions.

**Joint Auspices.** Joint auspices seem to be most appropriate under the existing conditions. The unique position occupied by the Indian
Conference of Social Work* leaves it pre-eminently qualified to give
the lead and secure the cooperation from other national, state and
city-wide organizations, schools of social work and appropriate
university departments. Such an arrangement will satisfy the criteria
indicated above.

Role of Professional Field Worker

The present study has brought out the important role of the profes­sional person and especially the field worker. In fact, it was the
happy partnership between the field worker and lay community leaders
that gave unique characteristics to the area approach to social welfare
planning in the United States, described in the last chapter. In the
light of the findings of the present study, any application of the area
approach to India suggests a significant role to the professional workers
in this respect. The following circumstances make their role even more
significant.

1. The tradition of working for the people militates against
the concepts of total community participation, individual
human dignity and self-help embodied in the area approach.
This entrenched paternalism cannot be unseated so long as
the hold of voluntary social workers continues.

2. Very frequently, the fact that there is a high degree of
illiteracy even in the cities, is taken as an excuse for

* The Conference is the central, national organisation for the
promotion, coordination and stimulation of social work and for the
scientific study of social problems. During the ten years of its
existence it has steadily expanded the sphere of its useful activities.
the continuation of paternalistic and even authoritarian approach in social welfare.

3. Closely connected with the above is the fact of substantial differences in the socio-economic status of various communities. The area approach implies not merely encouragement and ensuring the participation of all the people, but also a harmonious relationship among people belonging to different religious and economic groups. Such a sensitive task requires the skill and knowledge of a professional person.

4. When it is borne in mind that the study had revealed that it was not a practical proposition to employ professional competent individuals to every one of the innumerable neighborhood organizations in the metropolitan areas of the United States, the importance of the area approach with its capacity for utilizing the services of professionals for all such grass root organisations in India needs no elaboration.

5. Overriding all the above considerations, the social system in India has not yet outgrown the philosophy of charity and almsgiving, of doing something to help the poor and the suffering unfortunate, out of sympathy and kindness. Both the leaders and people have been accustomed to this arrangement. Hence there appears to be a lack of expectation, a definite claim, a demand or a conscious striving for enlisting peoples' participation on the basis of understanding and equality.

The basic principle of working with the people in a consultative, enabling role, to build up their morale and help them assume responsi-
bility to study and shape their own day-to-day life patterns can be effectively introduced by the professional field worker. By virtue of his professional knowledge and skill, he can undertake this essentially slow process of realizing a change in community's attitude and developing its inner strength.

**Appropriate Structure**

**Need for Simplicity.** Regarding appropriate structure to put the area approach into practice, the experience of the area community councils in the United States indicates that being essentially a people's approach to their problems, the structural devices should be as simple as possible. It has been observed that simple structures could be easily comprehended by the community. It also aided informal relationship and relaxed participation. Even with the background of working through innumerable committees, the individuals interviewed in the three metropolitan cities showed their definite preference for simple organisational structure.

The socio-economic and cultural factors related to this and described above strongly suggest a minor emphasis on large number of committees and conferences, technicalities and rigid structures.

**Size of the Area**

Related to the above aspect is the size of the area on which to base this approach. Factors governing this in the United States will certainly be the same in the metropolitan areas of India. However, in view of the relatively difficult transportation and means of communication, a relatively smaller "area" will be more appropriate and practical.
As in the case of the United States, geographically compact areas are found to be inhabited by people predominantly of the same religion, caste or economic strata. By narrowing the area, the selection of communities that had so many common interests will be further facilitated. This is significant because there are major psychological blocks that make it difficult for the "high caste" or "high class" people to sit with the representatives of the "low caste" or "low class" people and work together.

Mobility of Ideas and Ideals. It is appropriate to point out in this connection that as a result of highly developed means of communication and transportation, advanced universal education and other historical circumstances, groups of people living in different neighborhoods and areas of the American cities, have been exposed to the same set of values, evolving traditional views and behavioral patterns. This has set in motion a remarkable process of adaptation, imitation and assimilation of the practices of one group by another. This, of course, has not meant that various religious, racial, economic or ethnic groups have completely given up their distinct characteristics or lost their identity. But it has accounted for the permeation of many basis values, ideals and everyday philosophies of life in all the component parts of the urban community in the United States. It has also accounted for a consequent absence of any wide divergencies in the attitude of various urban communities regarding some of the democratic practices that govern the area approach to social welfare planning.

Social Distance in Indian Communities. The same is not true in India. The relatively under-developed fields of communication and
transportation, great disparities in the income distribution and inadequate educational opportunities for all people have blocked the channels of transference of ideas, philosophies and practices from one group to another. Groups of people have been living in isolated islands even in a corporate situation of a city with relative ease. Distance between communities has been considerable.

Implications of Social Distance

This significant difference in the socio-cultural situations imposes certain difficulties in the application of the area approach to the Indian cities. It underlines,

1. the need for proceeding slowly, for avoiding any imposition of "superior" sets of values on unwilling and unprepared people and avoiding a condescending approach,

2. the desirability of sponsoring timely educational projects that would help the new comers to the cities in overcoming language and other difficulties,

3. the need for the sponsoring bodies to remain in the background, securing the much needed good-will and public relations in the city and not to overwhelm the simply community by its high prestige and status,

4. the importance of giving the trained field worker maximum freedom to function, unfettered by the restrictions imposed by external forces, avoiding any possible impression that the field worker is a tool in the hands of city-wide organisations,
5. the need to play down technicalities and high-sounding
designations which are generally associated with government
officials - designations such as "Executive Director",
"Executive Secretary" used in the case of some of the
community councils in Cleveland and Philadelphia, and
6. the usefulness of providing an all comprehensive program
of activities and tangible results which the people could
feel and experience.

**Indigenous Leadership**

The ultimate success of the area approach must be calculated in
terms of the community participation it brings about through effective
leadership that has its genuine roots in the community itself. While
the problem is admittedly a difficult one, it should be stated that
social welfare projects undertaken from time to time have witnessed much
enthusiasm on the part of many people who were concerned. A large
number of people have cheerfully devoted much time to help set up and
work out such projects. Selfless individuals who are noted for their
integrity and ability and who enjoy the confidence of the people among
whom they live are present in almost all communities. Careful work by
professional field workers can make excellent leaders out of such people.

**Scope of the Area Approach**

On the basis of the findings of this study pertaining to the
accomplishments of the area community councils and on the basis of the
foregoing analysis of all the relevant factors in India, the vast scope
of the area approach to social welfare planning in India becomes clear.
The scope of the area approach in effecting maximum utilisation of all social welfare resources available in the community assumes a great significance in India. For one reason or another all available resources have not yet been fully tapped. Schools, trade unions and religious institutions are three of the several resources that need to be drawn into the very center of community's activities. The area community councils of Cleveland and Philadelphia have shown the strength possessed by such resources and the significant role the councils could play in bringing them out. In Indian cities no serious attempts have been made to help them see their genuine role in this regard and provide proper opportunities to enable them to make their own contribution.

**Cooperation Between Voluntary and Government Agencies.** The fine cooperative spirit displayed by government-sponsored agencies and city departments and the happy working together that has resulted between them and private agencies and organisations cannot be solely attributed to the working of the area community councils of the United States. However, the study underlined their unmistakable contribution in fostering such a spirit and extending it to many related spheres. In India the general atmosphere has not been very conducive for such a cooperative spirit. The part played by the government compared to the one assumed by people has been stupendous. There is a remoteness and a lack of response between governmental machinery and the general public.

A combination of apathy and positive craving on the part of the people for governmental measures to set every thing right has served to shroud government departments and the officials who head them in a bureaucratic aura. It has also left them unwilling to come down to
the level of voluntary efforts with a view to developing a fruitful partnership. Whenever they did so, they completely overshadowed the voluntary efforts and took on themselves the limelight and glamor.

**Inadequate Staff Development.** The field of social welfare in India has not yet reached a high degree of specialization. Therefore, not only are there not adequate numbers of agencies, but the few there are do not cater to the highly specific needs of the clientele. Only a small proportion of these agencies enjoy professional staff services. Those agencies that have professional staff, have done very little in the sphere of staff development. The successful experience of the area community councils in Cleveland and Philadelphia proves the significant role which the area approach can assume in this regard. The area community councils in those cities through their activities made many of the social agencies conscious of the need for staff development. They kept open the channels of communication between them, and helped them to share each other's experience. Besides, the area community councils undertook special training programs for the benefit of the community leaders, enabling them to function more effectively. This function can meet one of the depressing aspects of welfare service in India, viz., the woeful absence of satisfactory communication among the existing agencies and organisations. Seminars, workshops, institutes and conferences are few and far between. Whenever they are held, the large number of participants are not the persons immediately concerned with the programming or administering the agencies, but the honorary presidents and patrons who have the prestige, leisure and means to go around and attend these conferences.
"Voluntary" Worker and the Professional. The field of social work in India is still dominated by powerful untrained social workers, generally styled as voluntary social workers. They view professional workers as a potential threat to their entrenched position. The days of their looking down upon the trained workers are not yet over. What is worse, when at last trained workers are employed, the role that is expected of them, is one of subservient, meek, titled clerks and not of bold, imaginative leadership.

Professional Workers' Self-Image. This has had a very unfortunate effect on the trained social workers themselves. They have lacked in self-assurance. In the absence of a network of agency arrangements which have provided an excellent framework for the professional workers' functioning, and faced with so many pressing basic problems which are totally different from the ones faced by the middle class in the United States, the professional social workers often became utterly helpless.

The successful operation of the area approach in the three cities studied shows the power of this approach in this important respect. If it could be proved to the professional workers themselves as well as to the people at large that the former can play a highly useful role in this vital sphere, the area approach would have served an important purpose of restoring the professional social workers' faith in themselves and in the training they received. Moreover, the area approach can provide further opportunities to the professional social workers who staff social welfare agencies to gain professional growth through bulletins, institutes or workshops.
Integrated Community Approach.

One of the valid criticisms levelled against trained social workers in India has been that they have devoted themselves with the zeal of new converts to the fruitless tasks of transplanting the social service systems found effective in other countries. This arises out of their failure to assess the realities in India and evolve services and techniques appropriate to these realities in terms of socio-economic and psycho-cultural factors. The first and foremost alteration as a result of such an evaluation will be the discarding of the traditional narrow concepts of social work as a remedial, "adjusting", white-washing, post-mortem technique of relief of the sick and afflicted sections of society. In its place a new concept of a healthy and integrated development of communities will have to be adopted. The application of the area approach with its emphasis on an all-inclusive coverage can facilitate the above-mentioned transformation.

The fact that there are not many social welfare agencies and no community welfare councils, instead of becoming a point against the area approach, should be taken to indicate the necessity for it. For, as was shown in earlier chapters, although the area community councils of Cleveland and Philadelphia did not operate services and were promotional, educational, coordinating and action bodies, many of them, nonetheless, proceeded when the need for some definite service was established, to seek appropriate auspices for the needed service. By providing a focal point for people to express their concern, complaints and aspirations and by giving a definite direction to all important efforts made in the field, the area approach can serve a high purpose in influencing
community thinking, planning and acting ahead of time, thus relying on preventive measures.

**Social Research**

Social sciences in general and social welfare field in its scientific context in particular, are in a state of stunted growth in India. The number of universities and colleges having departments of sociology or anthropology is insignificant. Only in recent years a growing appreciation of efforts to encourage basic research in social sciences is discernable. Faced with the need for up-to-date, reliable data to base their nation-building policies, the Planning Commission of the Government of India has secured in recent years through its Research Programs Committee, the services of schools of social work and university departments in undertaking research in spheres that had never been explored until recently. The United Nations and many Foundations have also been undertaking several very useful research projects. From the experience of the area community councils in the United States, it may be maintained that the area approach is in an especially advantageous position to encourage studies that could furnish very useful information for the proper understanding of the forces at work in the communities and thus help in the intelligent formulation of policies.

**Comprehensive Program**

The present study has indicated that there was scope and even need for differences in the content and character of programs undertaken by

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the area community councils. This was so because of the differences in
the socio-economic conditions and level of expectations of the people
in different communities. The discussion in the earlier part of this
chapter relating to the socio-economic and cultural forces operating in
India provide useful hints in this connection. In order to be effective
and meaningful, the area approach should, at any rate in the initial
stages, place an accept on broad-based, comprehensive programs which
will border on the activities generally styled in recent years as
Community Development. That this has been done by several area com-
munity councils in all the three cities of the United States goes to
support its practicability and appropriateness to India.

The adoption of such broadly conceived projects would ensure many
good results.

1. It will lend a sense of realism to the area approach because
it will be based on a sound community organization principle,
    viz., accept the community where it is. The approach will
be in tune with the prevailing socio-economic needs of the
people.

2. It will generate adequate community interest, a prerequisite
of community participation. This is so because it will be
undertaking activities in which the people are interested.

3. It will provide incentives to lay leaders and make their
task easy because the "concrete" results of the area approach
will enhance their prestige and bring about more community
interest and participation.
4. It will help in reversing the deeply ingrained scepticism about voluntary efforts. Large sections of populations have lacked so many of the essential services for so long a time that no emphasis on relationships, processes and intangible achievements will suffice to convince them of the efficacy of self-help.

5. It will effectively highlight the cause-effect relationship in community well-being in the urban setting in a way that could be grasped by people very easily. Through this people could be convinced that there did exist a definite connection between their efforts and their well-being. This also will help in countering the psychology of resignation and replace it with a spirit of self-confidence and a determination to make concerted efforts to change their circumstances.

6. It will facilitate the acceptance of professional social workers by the community by raising their prestige and thereby enabling them to play a more useful role.

The Area Approach and the City Government

The relationship between the area approach and city government assumes a special significance in India. It was shown in chapter V that not only was there no need for any rivalry between them, there was unlimited scope for healthy cooperation. In all the three cities the relationship was found, in general, very cordial.

The non-official, non-religious and especially non-political character so assiduously built in by the area community councils of
the United States has a special message to Indian situation. Practically no major project is undertaken under the private auspices which does not, sooner or later, get dominated by high-ranking officials or political representatives. Many a time this is at the invitation of voluntary workers themselves, mainly on two assumptions. First, the prestige and influence associated with the government is considered to be so high and necessary for success that it is sought after. Second, after independence, government representatives regard themselves as the real leaders of community and hence claim a vital role in the conduct of its affairs.

The above situation has brought about, among others, two undesirable results.

1. It has helped to perpetuate, if not to create, an over-concentration of leadership in few hands.
2. It has also helped to perpetuate the tendency to glorify the role of the government.

Clearly, these do not provide the right circumstances for the growth of democratic practices or for the increasing self-confidence and self-help in the people. The task is essentially a two-pronged one:

1. that of convincing the people that there is nothing basically unsound about managing their own affairs and that whenever government help and cooperation are indicated they could be secured without inevitably letting the government representatives take all the credit and glory, and
2. that of convincing the government representatives that all the efforts made by the people are not necessarily a revolt against organised government and that whenever their cooperation is
sought by voluntary efforts it could be offered without overwhelming, dominating and consequently stifling private efforts.

By serving as "ground-level indicators" the area approach can help the government machinery, wrapped in red tape and paper work, to become more realistic, responsive and responsible. Above all, this will have the effect of accomplishing a diffused leadership, spread throughout the community. The area approach can thus evoke and develop the inner strengths of the community on the basis of self-help by instilling in the people a sense of importance, a sense of belonging and a sense of accomplishment.

**Applicability of the Area Approach to India**

The foregoing discussion concerning the major factors identified as being responsible for the emergency and effectiveness of the area community councils in the United States points out the definite need for and the vast scope of the area approach to India.

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, there is a close similarity between the problems faced by the urban areas in India and those faced by their counterparts in the United States. Undoubtedly, there are significant differences in terms of their number, complexity, and magnitude. Lack of many primary necessities for an excessively large number of people in India introduce new elements in the situation. However, such differences should be viewed as situational differences signifying different stages in the historical development. These differences point up the need for flexibility regarding the content and phasing
of the programs. They also indicate the relevancy and significance of the principle of differential treatment. But these situational differences do not alter the fact that there is basic similarity in

1. the circumstances under which the problems invariably take root and become a network of interlocking complex,
2. the repercussions of these problems on individuals, groups and communities and the way they react to these repercussions, and
3. the efficacy of the basic methods of meeting the problems and the general pattern of response to these methods on the part of the individuals, groups and communities.

This basic similarity, moreover, serves to highlight the fact that the ultimate objectives of the area approach, the fundamental principles governing it, the process involved and its guiding philosophy will be equally relevant and applicable to India. For, as was shown in the last chapter, these objectives, principles, processes and philosophy are those that underlie community organization and social work itself.

Essence of the Area Approach. Removed from all technicalities, the most important aspects of the ultimate objectives, philosophy, principles and process of the area approach may be summed up in the following way.

1. In the ultimate analysis, what the area approach strives to achieve is the building up of the inner strengths of the community, to instill and enhance individuals' self-respect and self-confidence, to stimulate and release their desire and capacity for self-help so that they can think and act for themselves, and to motivate them to work together to
meet common problems.

2. Basic to the above is respect for the dignity and worth of the individual human being.

3. On the basis of such respect and to realize the stated objective, the area approach makes a firm commitment to

(a) a democratic process with an emphasis on the fair means to be chosen to reach the commonly-agreed goals--the role of guiding, assisting and enabling and not one of controlling, manipulating or directing, and

(b) a scientific process of problem solving—all the steps from fact-finding and analysis to the evaluation of the results.

4. Cooperation and coordination are emphasized throughout—among voluntary and governmental agencies and organisations between lay and professional workers and among all people regardless of their religions, languages, status or regional considerations. This serves not only to avoid duplication and ensure maximum utilization of all the available resources; more important, it attempts to foster a genuine community outlook and a cooperative spirit.

It will be a needless repetition to elaborate that the social work profession has already reached a stage in its growth where it is in possession of a body of knowledge, techniques and skills which have a great bearing on the entire process outlined above.

Applicability. That the above mentioned basic principles and philosophy of the area approach are applicable to India is indicated by
the earlier discussion on the socio-economic and cultural forces at work in the metropolitan areas of India. It is also based on the fact that India too like the United States is firmly committed to democratic ideals. Its constitution proclaims these ideals unequivocally. All major political parties in the country also have made their stand in this context clear. The government and the major parties are not merely wedded to the ideals of democracy but also to the establishment of a "welfare state" in India.

**Contribution of the Area Approach**

Since India achieved independence twelve years ago many ambitious projects have been undertaken. They have been classified under different categories and are designed to meet all kinds of age-old and deep-seated problems. All of them have a common objective of raising the standards of living of the people. But in the final analysis, all these projects and programs represent a definite attempt initiated by the inspired leaders to carry forward the ideals of independence and all that they entail to their logical completion, viz., vesting in the people the power to participate in forging their own destinies and making them conscious of this power and helping them use it wisely as their right and obligation. The task is admittedly a difficult one. The area approach to social welfare planning is one more step that can help the leaders and the people at one more level to achieve a goal they say they are committed to realize.
APPENDIX
INTERVIEW GUIDE

I  Circumstances Leading to the Creation of the Council

1. When was your council started?

2. What factors pointed up the need for it?

3. Was any study made before it was established?  
   If so, by whom?

4. From where did you get the idea to start the council?

5. Who took the initiative in setting up the council?  
   individuals, settlements, community welfare councils, others.

6. What steps were taken in establishing it?

7. What hurdles they had to face in their attempts?

8. How were they finally overcome?

9. What was the role of the community welfare council during  
   this initial period?

10. What is the area covered by your council? size and  
    boundaries; size of the population; race composition;  
    its socio-economic characteristics.

11. Number, size and types of civic and neighborhood assoc-  
    iations, social agencies and professional bodies function- 
    ing within the area.

II  Modus Operandi

12. Does your council have a constitution? When was it framed?
    By whom?

13. Describe the organizational structure of your council.  
    How does it operate?
14. Committees and sub-committees. Their number, size, composition, functions and frequency of meetings.

15. Membership. Individual members, social welfare agencies, civic associations, neighborhood and community organizations or a combination of all.

16. Relationship with institution or organization members.

17. Relationship with sister councils.

18. Relationship with the community welfare council.

19. Do you have a professional social worker helping you? since when? part-time or full-time? who appoints him? who pays? to whom is he responsible?

20. What is the role of the field worker? Relationship with lay leaders.

21. Role of the community leaders.

22. What happens when there are differences of opinion between the field workers and council presidents?

23. Role of the community welfare councils.

24. Programs and projects undertaken. How they are planned? How they are executed?

25. What are the major sources of finances and major areas of expenditure?

III Accomplishments and Their Future

26. What are the major achievements of your council?

27. What changes have you observed over the years in your council in relation to:
   a. the size and boundaries of the area covered,
   b. size and composition of membership,
c. professional services,
d. peoples' enthusiasm and participation,
e. number and size of committees and subcommittees,
f. number and type of programs undertaken,
g. number and type of neighborhood and community organizations helped by it,
h. organizational set up.

28. In what connection and how often do you make use of the research and other specialized knowledge and skills of the community welfare councils? with what results?

29. Are you in favor of the continued relationship with the community welfare council?

30. Are you in favor of the continuation of professional services of a field worker? If so, who should assign and pay for him?

31. Do you think the area covered by your council is too large? too small? just right?

32. Do you find the organizational aspects satisfactory for efficient working? If not what changes do you recognize?

33. Do you want the council to undertake new projects?

34. What are your major difficulties in the council operation, if any? Financial, lack of interest and enthusiasm on the part of the people, apathy of the government officials, any other.

35. Do you have any specific plans to meet these difficulties?
36. Have there been any attempts to evaluate the work of your council? If so, when, by whom and what measures were taken on the basis of their findings?

37. What is the future of this movement as you see it?
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