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Community organization principles in gaining citizen participation for obtaining a playground in a deteriorated area

Coralyce Lawtonya Williams

*Atlanta University*

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COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PRINCIPLES IN GAINING CITIZEN
PARTICIPATION FOR OBTAINING A PLAYGROUND
IN A DETERIORATED AREA

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY
CORALYCE LAWTONYA WILLIAMS

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
AUGUST 1960
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express her appreciation to Miss Elfriede Friese, Director of Operation Poplar, Friends Neighborhood Guild, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for her assistance and guidance in gathering the necessary materials for this study, and to Mr. Zollie Stringer, Jr., also of Operation Poplar, for his help in assembling materials pertinent to this study. The writer also wishes to express her appreciation to Miss Frankie V. Adams, Atlanta University, for her patient guidance in writing this study. To my husband, Theodore Carten, for his encouragement, the writer wishes to express gratitude.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter

### I. INTRODUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Procedure</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Limitations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### II. A DESCRIPTION OF THE POPLAR AREA SHOWING EARLY EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE AREA'S PROBLEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### III. A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE POPLAR AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL AND ITS PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Poplar Area Community Council</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. FACTORS AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions to Determine Cooperation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions on Accepting Responsibility</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions Requiring Interpretation</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming a Playground Council</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### V. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PRINCIPLES UTILIZED IN GAINING A PLAYGROUND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiating and Stimulating Organization</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing and Ranking Needs</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating Public Officials and Citizens</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration and Coordination through Conferences</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing Discontent</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilizing a Problem-Centered Group</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## APPENDIXES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Street Map of West Poplar</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Poplar Area Community Council By-Laws</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Letter, Office of the Development Coordinator</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Interview Schedule</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

Citizen participation suggests action by the people on behalf of themselves and for the goals of their community. In effect, the concept of citizen participation implies group deliberation, fact finding, decision making and social action whereby individual citizens have a direct role in facilitating a community project.

Effective citizen participation for a project requires the involvement and responsibility of all interest groups that in any way may be concerned or affected by the results of some physical or social change.

Citizen participation requires effective organization through which purposeful action by citizens can take place on a planned basis.

If people are to accept a program, they must participate in reviewing the facts, and must accept the facts as real and pertinent. They must participate in the planning of ways of meeting the social needs indicated by the facts. They must accept implementation of any program as their plan, as their goal, as the thing they see their community needing. They must assume responsibility for seeing that the program or goal, when it materializes, is properly administered. They must participate as board members, as community consultants, and as members of citizen advisory committees in the continued operation of the program once it is established.1

Citizen participation as a process is usually slow. According to Elmer Tropman:

There are many factors which complicate or impede

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the interrelationships of National, State and Local Planning.

1. There has been a lack of adequate structure through which to plan. Despite the forty years history of local planning councils, many local communities have no planning structure, and in others, it is most inadequate.

Without adequate planning structure, the process of interrelationships becomes extremely difficult, because of local, state and national groups need an effective mechanism through which to work or to which to relate their respective planning activities.

2. Real planning has been at a minimum. Much of what we have called planning has been coordination, teamwork or united action, but at best only isolated or "spot" planning.

Most local communities have yet to develop any integrated plans of what they want and how much they want, and the priorities in meeting their particular needs, and who should meet them.

3. Local communities cannot always recognize their responsibilities for teamwork with state and national groups.

They have not always treated "non-local" groups too cordially, and even resisted or were indifferent to offers of help or calls for assistance. There has too often been a smugness about the local program.

4. Many national agencies, because of their specialization, control of local units and promotional activities, have tended to develop an attitude of isolation and independence on the part of their local units which, in turn, has had its influence on local planning activities.¹

Since organized services including planning bodies are necessary at the neighborhood, local and national levels, it is necessary that carefully structured relationships between these levels of participation are encouraged. No one of these levels is self-sufficient. Each part must recognize equal partnership with the other parts for citizen participation.²


It is increasingly evident that successful planning of any type rests on a broad foundation of citizen support and action.

Prior to the Mid-century White House Conference, at which the focus was upon increasing youth participation in planning efforts, the New York City Youth Board had been organized. One of its most recent projects dealt with the multi-problem families which contribute to the rate increases of juvenile delinquency. This project was established and guided by the New York City Youth Board, acting together with almost forty public and private agencies serving the designated area.1

The Brownsville neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, was selected because it was a rapidly and distinctively changing neighborhood and had a high delinquency rate. In addition, a long tradition of organized community concern for social problems was also characteristic of the site selected.2

Organized citizen participation, involving the coordination of public and private agencies, may be the most sensible approach in arresting blight and providing services designed for the alleviation of juvenile delinquency.

In Philadelphia during May, 1957, the Community Chest of Philadelphia and vicinity launched a three-year demonstration project known as "Operation Poplar." The Philadelphia Health and Welfare Council designated an experimental program on juvenile delinquency. This project was


2Ibid., p. 7.
administered locally by Friends Neighborhood Guild.¹

According to the criteria established by the Health and Welfare Council, the area selected was to have had a history of juvenile delinquency, and the agency chosen was to have been respected in the community. It was to have had professional workers to deal with specialized aspects and problems, such as casework, group work, and community organization. Also, the agency was to have had some coordination with other public and private welfare agencies. In addition, the Council suggested some sixty agencies and organizations that were to have had some stake in the program's objectives and should serve as a sponsoring group.

The Friends Neighborhood Guild, being located near the West Poplar area - the area with the greatest need - and meeting the criteria set up by the Health and Welfare Council, was selected to operate this program.

The Redevelopment Authority, the North Central District Philadelphia Health and Welfare Council, and the Department of Licenses and Inspections also began to plan what each could do to arrest blight in this area. It was decided that the Melon Block in the Poplar Area was one of the greatest menaces to the area and promoted juvenile delinquency. In order to conserve the surrounding neighborhoods and to demonstrate that something could be done to arrest blight, it was decided that the block would be a pilot project to; (a) test and coordinate legal procedures, (b) organize the latent neighborhood council, block organizations, and interested

individuals for self-help in clearing and supervising the area, (c) bring together public officials and neighborhood residents in a common approach to area improvement and, specifically, to build a playground.

Although discussions and plans had been made around the approaches to arresting blight in the West Poplar Area for years, these plans had never before materialized because of the lack of city funds.

The writer became interested in this project because it appeared to utilize certain principles of community organization which the writer desired to explore.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to describe the use of community organization principles and practices in a prescribed program in which public and private agencies were coordinated in efforts to arrest blight and curb juvenile delinquency in the Poplar Area and, specifically, in the Melon Block.

**Method of Procedure**

In this study the progress and agency records by community workers regarding the Poplar Area and the Melon Block prior to March, 1960, were used. Interviews were used with residents in the Melon Area to gain information on their willingness to cooperate. Various negotiations, such as letters, records of telephone calls, and notes involving public and private agencies' efforts at curbing juvenile delinquency and arresting blighted conditions were used.

Books and materials on community organization principles and articles
and proceedings on juvenile delinquency were used.

Scope and Limitations

This study was descriptive and there was no attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the community organization principles used in working with public and private agencies.

This study was confined to the use of the materials listed above. It was concerned only with those community organization principles that were related to the eliciting and use of citizen participation in community programs.

The office of Operation Poplar was located in Friends Neighborhood Guild, a social settlement, whose purpose and philosophy are based in the religious viewpoints of the Society of Friends. In this study, the writer did not find it necessary to describe the agency.¹

CHAPTER II

A DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULAR AREA SHOWING
EARLY EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE AREA'S PROBLEMS

The Popular area was located in Northeast Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Its physical boundaries were Broad Street on the West, the Delaware River on the East, Vine Street on the South, and Girard Avenue on the North.¹

The area was mostly residential, mixed with business and light industry. The residential section of the area was composed of various ethnic groups. Three races and twenty-five nationality backgrounds were represented. Most streets and neighborhoods in the area were culturally mixed. Negroes predominated in the northwest and white groupings in the northeast. The southern section was thoroughly mixed.² The major groups, excluding Negroes and Puerto Ricans who live throughout the area in abundance, living in the entire area were Eastern European, Russian, Ukrainian, Polish and Slovakian. The religious groupings in the area include Eastern Orthodox as well as Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant. Also, there were approximately 400 Kalmucks (Mongolian Russians of the Buddhist Faith.)³

The area had been divided into five distinct sections, which were as follows:

¹ For a better view of the Popular Area, see the Map in the Appendix A.


³ Socio-Economic Characteristics, Popular Area, Friends Neighborhood Guild, 1957, p. 3. (Mimeographed.)
1. East Poplar; Spring Garden Street to Girard Avenue, Fifth Street to Ninth Street; is a residential area.

2. Fifth Street to the Delaware River, Spring Garden Street to Girard Avenue is named by residents "No Man's Land," since no definite plans have been made for its future.

3. South of Spring Garden to Noble Street is a mixed neighborhood of residential pockets and industry, and in the process of being swallowed up entirely by industry. Since no one knows for certain when this will happen, here too, people are plagued by uncertainty.

4. Skid Row; below Noble Street to Vine Street, with its many problems of homeless men, squalor, bars, etc.

5. West Poplar; Ninth Street to Broad Street, Girard to Spring Garden, is the most deteriorated section of whole Poplar.\(^1\)

In the West Poplar Area, there were several blocks covered with rubble or condemned buildings. It was not uncommon for passers-by to see or hear parts of the brick row-type houses falling. The living quarters found in the area were in slightly better shape in that they had not yet begun to fall completely apart.

Rubble covered those lots that were either vacant or were partly used. When one observed these rubble filled lots, cracked sidewalks, and partly destroyed row houses, one was no doubt reminded of newsreel pictures of the damage done in war-torn Europe, Circa 1945.

The vacant houses and rubble filled lots were breeding places for rats, and the area had been so frequently bothered by these pests that even the most apathetic residents had been disturbed. There had been several cases of rats spreading disease, attacking children and incapacitating adults, and causing extensive property damage. Rat control attempts

\(^1\)Community Organization Progress Report, op. cit., p. 1.
had been tried several times. One, the Vector Control Program, will be discussed later.

The "Skid Row" section of Poplar Area was located within less than a mile from the heart of the business district. The area was characterized by deteriorating buildings, most of them housing missions, saloons, cheap stores, or "flop-houses" hotels. On the sidewalks, especially near the missions around time for services (at which some food dispensed), and near the bars, one saw shabbily, often inadequately, dressed men. When the weather permitted, some of these vagrants were seen sleeping in shop doorways.

Liquor stores, pawn shops, and cheap or used clothing stores also were prevalent in the area. Most of these boasted signs saying, "We buy anything," and, perhaps, were used as a source of money by the frequenters of Skid Row who had something - anything - to sell. It might also be well to note that in the entire Poplar Area, there was one bar for every 31½ persons (the total population is 36,400).¹

The East Poplar Area was presently being redeveloped. There were several recently built units. However, in one section, there was an open air market, in which meats, poultry, fish, vegetables, fruits and other foods in addition to dry goods were sold on the sidewalks and in the streets. This market attracted insects and other pests as the food was kept in the open. Moreover, the streets were not adequately cleaned after a day's sales.

¹Socio-Economic Characteristics, op. cit., p. 2.
In the Poplar Area there was a total population of 36,400, which was 1.3 per cent of the city's population. Between 1940 and 1950, the area's population increased 21 per cent with an increase in the non-white population of 109.5 per cent. In 1950 the non-white population was 55.6 per cent of the total population (of the Poplar Area). The white population was 44.4 per cent, with 25.7 per cent of the white population being foreign born. ¹

The median income was near the lowest in Philadelphia. In the Poplar Area, there existed a higher per capita of old people than in any other section. Many of these people survived on pensions or social security. Aid to Dependent Children Grants were given to many of the fatherless families. The Department of Public Assistance estimated that for the first six months of 1957, 16.2 per cent of the residents of the Poplar Area received public assistance. ²

Approximately half of the housing units in the area were unfit for human habitation. Over half of the units have no bathing, toilet, or washing facilities, while other units had no piped water, central heating and were overcrowded. ³

As pointed out earlier, there were twenty-five nationality groups represented in the Poplar Area. It was possible for a person to walk three or four blocks and hear several different languages or dialects.

¹Ibid., pp. 1-3
²Ibid., p. 2.
³Ibid., p. 3.
Along the streets and in shop windows, especially in the East Poplar Area, hung signs printed in the language spoken by the shop owner, i.e., Russian, Polish, Greek, Chinese, Spanish, Yiddish, or any of the other languages spoken in the area.

Although some of the new comers to America have learned to speak some English, there was very little interaction among nationality groups. This was due primarily to the language barrier, but also to the many different customs to be found among these groups, and to a small extent, to the differences in religions.

The Poplar Area had a high rate of tuberculosis. In 1954, the percentage of newly reported cases of tuberculosis was approximately three and one-half times as high (0.67 per cent), as compared with the city's percentage (0.17).¹

Recently, the Philadelphia Health and Tuberculosis Association placed a mobile X-ray unit in the Skid Row section. For eight days, the nurses and technicians attempted to persuade the frequenters of the area to submit voluntarily to an X-ray test. As a result of their efforts, 171 cases of infection were identified.² This, perhaps, illustrated the high incidence of tuberculosis to be found throughout the area.

One of the major problems being presented by the Poplar Area was the high rate of juvenile delinquency. The Juvenile Aid Bureau stated that the sixth Police District, which included the Poplar Area, ranked as the

¹bid., p. 3.

²"Skid Row Vagrants Rounded Up in Drive Against Tuberculosis," Philadelphia Inquirer, October 7, 1959, p. 53.
eighth worst district of the twenty-three districts of the city.¹

The area had very few recreational facilities for teenagers. One
of the recommendations made by the Urban Research Center of the Depart-
ment of Sociology and Anthropology of Temple University was that the area
should provide more recreation and entertainment facilities for the teen-
age population of the Poplar Area.²

In the research done by the Temple University group, several essays
written by girls attending one of the public schools in the area were
studied. The students were asked to write on the title, "My Neighborhood,"
showing what they liked and disliked about the area in which they lived.
The results were as follows:

Most of the students expressed a negative or posi-
tive attitude toward the area in which they lived. They
either liked or disliked the neighborhood. Their reasons
for liking or disliking varied, but a majority of the re-
sponses tended to emphasize the negative aspects of the
area. Such things as delinquency and drunkenness, nosiness
of neighbors and noisiness of neighbors and trash strewn
about the streets were most often mentioned. Positive
comments mentioned were the friendliness of the people,
cooperation shown by many and the physical improvement
of the area.³

The comments from the students indicated that the residents of the area
were somewhat aware of the problems with which they were faced. It may
also be assumed that some of the residents in the area were satisfied with

¹Socio-Economic Characteristics, op. cit., p. 3.

²Edwin Eames and Jacob W. Gruber, "Delinquency in Poplar Philadelphia,
1957-1958, (Philadelphia, Urban Research Center, Temple University, 1959),
p. 63. (Mimeographed.)

³Ibid., p. 9.
the way things were, as there were some positive responses to the question.

Within the West Poplar Area was the Melon Block, with which this study was primarily concerned. The Melon Block was bounded by Fairmont Avenue on the South, Melon Street on the North, Marvine Street on the East, and Twelfth Street on the West. On this one square acre block, there were twelve empty boarded up houses which had been adjudged unfit for human habitation. Between Fairmont Avenue and Melon Street was Potts Street, which was a narrow dead-end street that extended half way into the block entering from the West.

At the time when this writer first visited the Melon Block, there were eight dilapidated houses, all three floors high, on Potts Street. Only two of these structures were occupied. On the left of one of the occupied buildings was a vacant, unboarded building. The floor of this empty house was filled with old beer cans, an old mattress, and paper. Decaying on a window sill was a dead rat. Among all of this was the obnoxious odor of urine and decay.

On the left was the dwelling of a fatherless family of three children. Two children were in elementary school, with the oldest boy being a teenager. Living next door to this family was an elderly woman.

On the South side of Potts Street, the unoccupied buildings revealed torn, crumbling walls, which had been stripped of wood by destitute men who wanted to build fires when the weather was cold (when the weather is cold, drunks usually occupy these structures, often making fires for warmth). Also, junk dealers have been known to strip empty buildings of their wood, fixtures, pipes, etc.
Where Potts Street ended, there were twelve vacant lots. Garbage, tires, grease, paper, and other rubbish covered the entire area. This region looked as if it had been destroyed by a bomb. Yet this area was the playground of children and teenagers.

There was a Protestant Church in the vicinity. Also, just North of the Melon Block, there was a disciplinary school, of which the windows were constant targets for rocks thrown from the Melon Block.

As it stands, rubble filled, rodent infested, with vacant, unboarded houses that have collected filth and have produced an atmosphere conducive for crime, the West Poplar Community had become a major problem area. The concern of private and public agencies had been focussed upon the area, this had led to the organization of men, ideas, and resources to deal with the social problems revealed in the area.

The Poplar Area had many social service agencies. The Poplar Area Community Council was the major community council, representing the entire Poplar Area. There had been several neighborhood councils related to the Poplar Area Community Council. However, these neighborhood councils were presently not too active.

Friends Neighborhood Guild, the Salvation Army, North Broad Community Center, Fifth Street Community Center, Beth Eden Settlement, Northern Liberties Community Center, the Philadelphia Center for Older People, the Episcopal Community Services, and the Crime Prevention Association were some of the social agencies operating in the Poplar Area. The Big Brother Association and the Girl Scouts were also active in the area.

The area had one full sized public playground and one public recreation center. There were also a few private and church sponsored recreation
Since this area had at least twenty-five nationality backgrounds represented, many churches and nationality clubs were present in the area. Mission churches and benefit societies were prevalent around Eighth and Vine Streets. Labor union headquarters were located from First to Fifth Streets. The North Marshall Street Men's Association and the Spring Garden Street Business Men's Association were active in the Poplar Area.

Before the start of Operation Poplar, several other attempts had been made at improving the area. The Poplar Area Community Council was an organization composed of residents of the area. There were various neighborhood councils composed of residents of the areas within the Poplar Area and block clubs which had attempted to undertake some project aimed toward community improvement. The Poplar Area Community Council, formed with the help of the staff of Friends Neighborhood Guild, had taken responsibility in the development of the city's Urban Renewal Program for the Poplar Area and was trying to obtain better neighborhood services in health, welfare and recreation. The neighborhood councils mentioned above included the Jefferson Council, the Wallace Street Council, the Girard Neighborhood Council, and the Penn Towne Council. Friends Neighborhood Guild also worked with housing problems, code enforcement, sanitation, law enforcement, etc.¹

¹Friends Neighborhood Guild (Friends Neighborhood Guild Publication), Philadelphia, 1958, p. 7.
A Vector Control Unit was established in the area in 1956 which greatly alleviated the rat problem. At that time thirty-eight carloads of rubbish were removed from the block bordered by Melon Street on the North, Twelfth Street on the West, North Street on the South, and Eleventh Street on the East.¹ This rubbish was taken from the basements of the buildings of this block. The Police Sanitation Squad also helped in this project.

Operation Poplar was started in 1957. It was a pilot project designed to test the value of concentrated social services in a part of the Poplar Area. A staff of skilled social workers gave direct service and enlisted and coordinated the services of public and private agencies. These agencies included state and city departments, schools, churches, and neighborhood and fraternal organizations concerned with serving neglected, disturbed and delinquent children and youth and their families.²

Some of the other agencies, in addition to Friends Neighborhood Guild, that had been allotted special funds for Operation Poplar, included: The Boy Scouts, the Protestant Episcopal City Mission, the Crime Prevention Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association. In the first eight months that Operation Poplar had been working in the area, the rate of juvenile arrests dropped considerably.³

¹Interview with Director Elfriede Friese (Operation Poplar, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 14, 1959).

²Friends Neighborhood Guild (Friends Neighborhood Guild Publication), Philadelphia, 1958, p. 6.

³Ibid., p. 6.
CHAPTER III

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE POPLAR AREA
COMMUNITY COUNCIL AND ITS PROGRAM

Introduction

Prior to discussing the Poplar Area Community Council, it seemed wise to consider some background information pertinent to all district or area community councils. This was concerned with the nature of the district community council and included membership patterns, general objectives, reasons for their organization, their program activities, and the procedures and steps in their formation. Later in describing the Poplar Area Community Council, the background information will serve as a frame of reference.

The term "Community Council," as used by the writer, means an organized effort of individuals within a specific area. The purposes of such councils are to improve community conditions through locating needs and defining problems, and locating resources which might be used in dealing with the problem. While providing remedial measures, the council also may undertake preventive measures for the welfare of its community.

According to a handbook prepared by Community Chests and Councils of America, Inc., a district (area) community council is defined in the following manner:

A district community council is a voluntary association of organizations and individuals within a geographical sub-division of a city or metropolitan area, the purpose of which is to improve conditions of community life in its own district. Its membership includes a cross-section of community interests, drawn together on a non-sectarian, non-partisan and
non-commercial basis, by a desire to get united community action on problems of common concern.¹

It may be helpful to identify some of the motivating factors which stimulate and bring about the organization of community councils. Generally, a community council can be created when citizens and neighborhood leaders are aroused by such problems as juvenile delinquency, poor living conditions, community blight, poor health conditions, or any other problem-causing aspect of community life. It may be said that district community councils usually get started for the following reasons:

1. A crisis arises in the community . . . .
2. A social or health agency (either within the community or serving it from outside) points out the need for citizen action on a specific problem; juvenile delinquency, health education, recruitment of foster homes for child care agencies; need for more coordination between schools and citizen groups or community backing for some health and welfare bill before the legislature or city council.
3. An organization conducts a conference which stimulates local leaders to see some aspect of community life which might be improved.
4. Block organizations and other organized groups grow in interest and maturity to the point where they recognize the need for a council.²

In order that community councils may prosper, there must exist within the community residents a genuine interest in the council and its objectives. The council, once formed, must study the problems existing in the community realizing that all problems cannot be solved at the neighborhood level. Therefore, the residents or members of the council should anticipate meeting

²Ibid., p. 8.
their problems through cooperative action including city, state, and, if necessary, national planning.\(^1\)

There are numerous steps in the organization of a community council. For example, the council should represent a cross section of the community. This includes representatives of the different racial, religious, economic, and social levels. From these representatives, a steering committee should be formed to aid in focussing upon some ideas of possible projects on which the council can function adequately. After enough interest has been developed, a community-wide meeting should be arranged to which agencies, clubs, organizations, and other groups are asked to attend or send representatives. This is done so that all can hear about the nature, purpose, and probable program of the council. In doing this, it is important that notices, such as fliers, letters, etc., should be sent out well in advance informing the citizens of the community-wide meeting.\(^2\)

When sufficient support from community agencies, civic groups, etc., is attained and an agreement to organize is reached, temporary officers should replace the steering committee and the constitution should be drawn. This constitution should be kept simple but should define the objectives, powers, and function of the program.\(^3\)

As far as membership in the council is concerned, the councils usually welcome interested individuals, but emphasis is usually placed on organizational membership since this offers an opportunity for the council to

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\(^1\) *ibid.*, p. 9.

\(^2\) *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

\(^3\) *ibid.*, p. 11.
reach and represent hundreds or thousands of people. When the council serves a large geographical area, it may have block organizations and neighborhood councils as affiliates.¹

It is a wise practice that the council membership and leadership should be largely composed of laymen rather than professional persons.² This serves to increase the amount of concern given the problems faced in the community, and in which the average citizen has a stake in the process.

The objectives of district community councils are as follows:

1. To provide a way for citizens and their membership organizations to participate in the shaping of their own community life.
2. To promote cooperation among the various organizations by providing a place where ideas from each can be voiced and passed along to all others and on occasion to the community at large.
3. To determine the important needs and problems of the community, through exchange of information and effective research.
4. To enable the entire area to marshal all of its forces and to coordinate all of its efforts toward coping with the solving community problems.
5. To sponsor alone or with other organizations, programs of education on subjects of significant interest to the entire community.
6. To act as a district clearing house, point of contact and source of volunteer personnel for city or county-wide projects such as Community Chest or United Fund Campaigns, Civil Defense, traffic safety.
7. To interest, develop and prepare citizens to take their place as community leaders.
8. To provide the machinery through which people of the local area can speak out in its behalf, and be heard beyond its boundaries in calling attention to community problems.

¹Ibid., p. 12.
9. To serve as a channel through which plans and projects of city and county-wide public and voluntary bodies can be understood.¹

Ideas for council projects may originate from the council body which is composed of organizational members, council officers, members of standing or program committees, community residents; organizations not connected with the council who are interested in some aspect of community life; or suggestions from the community worker.²

The emphasis of the council's program is in its effort to resolve community problems. These problems arise through housing, health-sanitation, educational, or any other problems arising in or causing concern within the community.

The council should attempt an atmosphere of community teamwork, a sense of community responsibility, and a permissive atmosphere in which people feel free to participate in an organization in which they recognize that they have a stake in its program.³

Council action is the result of the full knowledge and discussion by the members. Action should be taken when it is clearly the wish of the majority of the members. Organizations may declare themselves either in support of or in opposition to the action of the council. However, action by the council does not commit the members unless they specifically give consent. The strength of the council rests in its ability to bring like-minded groups to strengthen their individual voices through jointly

¹Neighbors Unite For Better Communities (New York, 1956), pp. 5-6.
²Ibid., p. 16.
³Ibid., p. 18.
documenting the facts and taking action.¹

The Poplar Area Community Council

The Poplar Area Community Council served the area previously defined as the Poplar Area.² The Community Council was formed in 1953 with the help of the staff of the Friends Neighborhood Guild.³ The reasons for the forming of this council was obviously due to focusing the citizens' concern upon such problems as juvenile delinquency, poor living conditions, the blighted conditions of the area, the poor health conditions, the rodent infestation, and a multiplicity of other problems in the Poplar Area. Therefore, one of the motivating factors which stimulated and brought about the organization of the Poplar Area Community Council was the fact that a social agency (Friends Neighborhood Guild) pointed out the need for citizen action in solving community problems.

After the council was formed, one of its first endeavors was to assess the community's needs and attempt to reach and inform the community and its residents of the organization, goals, etc., of the newly formed council. Fliers, letters, and several other media were used in doing this.

The membership of the Poplar Area Community Council was composed of representatives of agencies and organizations. These representatives included professional people, such as clergymen, school teachers, social workers, etc., and other residents of the area. As stated in the

¹Ibid., p. 22.
constitution of the Council, Article IV, section 2:

Application for membership is open to the following:

a. Designated representatives of all organizations situated in this area.

b. Designated representatives of all organizations with a predominate number of members in this area.

c. Designated representatives of organizations with a major interest in the area.

d. Individual residents of the area.¹

Also according to the By-Laws, the purposes and objectives of the Council are as follows:

1. To improve the total community through the cooperative development of community organizations and facilities to make this an attractive place for families to live and raise their children.

2. To create within young people a healthy, normal environment for their recreational and educational life.

3. To serve as a means through which people can voice their needs and work for a solution of their problems.

4. To cooperate with the churches, schools and other community groups in working for good relations among the different racial and nationality groups.²

During the interim from the organization of the Council to 1957, when Operation Poplar was initiated, the Council pursued its purposes by dealing with various social welfare problems. However, intensive work was stimulated in the Spring of 1957. A community worker, while walking through the area, almost fell into the basement of an apartment. The basement door, being eroded, lay open level with the sidewalk. The community

¹Poplar Area Community Council, op. cit.
²Ibid.
worker called in a complaint to the Department of Licenses and Inspections. During the remaining months of 1957, community block meetings were held concerning the conditions in West Poplar. The obscene scenes residents witnessed in the vacant houses, the rodent problem, need for recreation, and other problems concerning the welfare of the residents were discussed.

During 1958 a continuous interpretative effort was made to activate citizens' interest throughout the area. Newspaper articles through the Mid-Town Crier, a community newspaper, the monthly council report, and fliers distributed through the Friends Neighborhood Guild were media used to keep the Poplar Community informed about the meetings and programs of the Poplar Area Community Council and the associated neighborhood councils. The Girard Community Improvement Council, is an affiliated Council, of the Poplar Area Community Council, it had initiated a neighborhood improvement campaign in 1958. This improvement campaign was stimulated by the neighborhood council members' concern over eliminating deplorable conditions. Property owners who had violated the Housing Code regulations were sent letters by the Chairman of the Council stating:

... your neighbors, members of the Girard Improvement Council are interested in improving their own homes and are concerned about the cluttered conditions of your lot ... according to the Philadelphia Housing Code, it is the duty of the landlord or homemaker to keep the building and all departments in the building in good condition. The city holds the landlord responsible for all repairs required by law, regardless of any apartment or lease between the tenant or landlord.¹

The Girard Neighborhood Improvement Council also attempted to promote neighborhood organization to the surrounding blocks. The media used were personal contacts, fliers, and the local community newspaper. In the area which included the Melon Block, an attempt at block reorganization was made.

The Wallace Neighborhood Council had been active for several years. At one time it was engaged with a Vector Control Program but after the Police Sanitation Squad and the Department of Licenses and Inspections, which initiated this program, moved out the Council began to become inactive. The Wallace Street Council disintegrated when its President died in 1958.

So far Operation Poplar has been unable to reactivate it although many contacts have been made and considerable time has been spent on the reorganization of this council.1

Similarly other areas were encouraged to take a more active part.

...The Girard Community Improvement Council in N.W. section of West Poplar had to struggle from the beginning with membership like the Wallace Street Council Area. Here, too, houses are in dire need of repair and there are few residents or homeowners. It is highly transient and leadership practically non-existent. Political diversion between committeemen in the block, too, makes it difficult to bring people together. People with initiative and financial improvement will move out as soon as possible.2

According to social workers in the area, it was practically impossible to arouse people's interest in block organizations and self-help. Block captains complained about the disinterest of their neighbors and where a few blocks were organized, the responsibility was primarily on the block captains.

1 Operation Poplar Community Organization Progress Report, op. cit., p. 3.

2 Elfriede Friese, op. cit., p. 9.
The reasons given by residents for their disinterest were:

1. **No time.** Women work, men hardly ever participate in block organizations.

2. **Being a Stranger in the Neighborhood.** The area being highly transient.

3. **Not coming to Evening Meetings.** Women are afraid to leave home after dark, a great factor in the inability to organize blocks.

4. **Apathy.** What can we do? Look at our neighborhood.¹

In 1959, at the time of this study neither the Girard Neighborhood Improvement Council nor the Wallace Neighborhood Council were active. Therefore, another attempt to bring some structure to these depressed neighborhoods was being conducted.

Recognition by the Poplar Area Community Council had developed concerning the need for a cooperative relation with public and governmental organizations. Consequently, steps were taken to gain help from resources beyond its area boundaries.

In June, 1958, the Poplar Area Community Council conducted a Poplar Area Town Meeting. This meeting was held at an elementary school, north of Melon Street. The Town Meeting was arranged by Poplar Area Community Council in conjunction with the Citizen's Council of City Planning and the Businessmen's Associations in the area. The purpose of this meeting was to give the city officials an opportunity to see a portion of the most dilapidated area. Attending this meeting were such public officials as the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, President of the City Council, The Executive Director of the City Planning

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¹Elfriede Friese, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
Commission, Commissioner of the Department of Recreation, and Philadelphia’s Chief Coordinator. Some of the questions discussed at this meeting were as follows:

1. What are the redevelopment plans for the area outside the North Marshall Redevelopment, particularly the areas east and west and southwest? What about the abandoned hotel on Girard between Marshall and 6th, back to Thompson?

2. When will the plans for the recreation area in the block north of the 9th and Parrish playground be put into effect?

3. Can the Board of Education acquire the block north of Cormran School - Melon, 12th, Fairmont and 11th - for a playground?

This shows that, in keeping with the frame of reference, that the Poplar Area Community Council was aware of the fact that it could not solve all community problems at the neighborhood level, but must deal with its problems through cooperative action with city, county, and other officials.

From this Town Meeting two major concerns were crystalized. One was to have certain areas cleared of unsanitary conditions, and the second concern was to gain a location for a playground, and secure necessary financing for the playground.

These concerns activated considerable negotiation on the part of the community organization practitioner with various departments of the city


2 Ibid.
government including the courts. Also, the community worker began to approach various foundations. These activities were largely performed by the community organization practitioners. However, interpretative activities under the auspices of the Poplar Area Community Council continued.

One and one-half months elapsed without any confirmation of activities coming to the residents concerning any efforts to eliminate the deplorable conditions in the Melon Block area. Residents' interest in neighborhood improvement was being vocalized near the middle of July, 1958. Consequently, the agency (Friends Neighborhood Guild and the staff of Operation Poplar) was called upon to make direct contact with city authorities.
CHAPTER IV

FACTORS AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

During the fall of 1959, the community worker, in seeking to gain as active citizen participation as possible, in the development of a playground in the Poplar Area, made contacts with residents in the area through house-to-house visitations. These residents were interviewed with the use of a prepared schedule.¹ The purposes of the interviews were to ascertain the desire for a playground on Melon Street, and to determine the extent of cooperativeness in working together, and in accepting responsibilities that were exhibited by the residents. In addition, the community worker was attempting to establish some relationship with the residents.

The interview schedule consisted of ten questions which were designed to find what feelings the residents of the area had toward building and maintaining a playground. The response to the schedule questions varied from person to person. An analysis of the responses showed that the residents were generally in favor of having a playground in the Melon Area.

The questions were grouped under headings for analysis, the first group comprising questions designed to determine whether or not the residents would cooperate with each other; the second group comprising questions designed to determine if the residents would accept responsibility in working for a playground; and the third group included those questions which had to be interpreted to the respondents before they could be answered.

¹A Copy of the Interview Schedule has been reproduced in the Appendix.
In the analysis which follows, the questions are arranged in the three categories as indicated above. Answers for each question will be given in order to give some indication as to the feelings of the residents around certain issues regarding their participation in obtaining a playground.

Questions to Determine Cooperation

1. Do you think the people in this area would want a playground on Melon Street?

Responses:

Yes, they would, and so would I. I think it should be so we can see our children at play.

I would and I think others would, with so many children in an area as this.

Quite definitely, and I am sure they will help.

Yes, because we really do need it.

Yes, I would like very much to see something like that. I know others would too.

I think it would be a good idea. I think the other people would want one.

I do, and I think the others want one too.

The children need some place to play, so I am all for having one.

Yes, I think that the children would like that very much.

Yes. Especially the people with lots of children.

2. Why do you feel some of the people would not be cooperative?

They all say before actual building begins that a playground is ideal. It is difficult to get them to do any work.
I think that the people will cooperate.

I don't think you will have any trouble getting people to cooperate for something like this.

I don't feel that they would not cooperate. Everyone wants the kids to have a playground.

There is little contact among neighbors. I don't know how cooperative they will be.

People keep coming and going. You don't really get a chance to know some people before they have moved out.

Those people who have children will probably cooperate.

I think that everybody will help to get something that we need like a playground.

I hope everybody will see that the kids need a place to play and help. I certainly will.

I think that the people will cooperate.

3. What is the reaction of the people living in this area to working with each other?

Responses:

It is hard because of different work patterns.

People are nosey. They just want to find out somebody else's business. They don't want to work.

I have no idea. I don't see the other people too much.

People are always working at their regular jobs. It will be hard to find a time when they can get together.

I don't know but one other family that lives here, and I don't know how the others get along.

I think that it would be good to get the people to work together for something. We don't even know all of our neighbors now.

I just don't know. I think the people with children would work together. I certainly would.
I think the people will work together without any trouble.

The people would work together all right. Everyone wants something good like a playground.

I don't know, but I think the people will work together.

4. Now that some positive steps have been made for developing a playground on Melon Street, do you think this would make community participation any better?

Responses were all affirmative with two persons only slightly being uncertain.

Definitely yes.
I think so.
Yes, it would.
I think it would.
Yes.
I don't know, but I think it will.
Yes. When the people see something started they feel more like helping.
I guess it would.
Yes, it would.
Yes.

5. What other persons might be interested?

Names of neighbors were required for this answer. The giving of names of friends was generous in several instances.

Questions on Accepting Responsibility

1. To what degree should children in this area be involved in planning, self-help, and other responsibilities as street controls, monitors, leaders?
Responses:

The older children should be able to do something to help.

Yes, the children should help. After all, the playground is for them.

If the children help do some of the work, they would appreciate the playground more.

Those who can help should help.

Most of the work will have to be done by grown-ups, but the big children can help.

I don't know if the children should help. They seem to tear up things more than anything else now-a-days.

If the children can help, that will be good. They can help keep the playground clean.

The children should help if you plan to keep them from tearing it down as soon as its finished.

There are a lot of things that the children can do, such as keeping the lot clean, watching the smaller children, and taking care of the equipment.

The children can do a lot to help in the playground. They should take a part.

2. How would we get people involved in working toward a playground on Melon Street?

Responses:

By telling them. I think they would be interested.

Have a meeting. They would come, especially those with children.

Give a big dance for teenagers and tell people then.

By telling them. Go from house to house, they would be interested.

Have a meeting some place and let everybody know about it.

Make an announcement in the churches.
Just keep knocking on doors. I am sure they are willing to help.

The best way to tell everybody is to keep going to their houses.

Have a meeting in the School or one of the churches.

Have some kind of a meeting where everybody who wants to can come.

3. What suggestions would you give around the playground?

Responses:

It should have the usual playground equipment.

It should have swings, slides, see-saws, climbing bars and a large, sandbox with white sand.

It should not have places for playing cards or other games that the larger boys can play.

Other answers included the names of various pieces of playground equipment.

Questions Requiring Interpretation

1. Do you feel we could gain community involvement on a self-help basis?

Responses:

Yes, I am willing to give time.

Perhaps on a small scale, but not even a half of the neighborhood will help.

Yes, they will get together and help out.

Yes, I am willing to give some time out, maybe, I could buy a tot swimming pool. I will help in seeing after the area.

I think that the people would help.

I think that some of the people would help.

I don't know about the rest, but I am willing.
I think so.

It seems to me like they would help. I know that I will.

I suppose the people will help. I don't see why not.

2. How should the matter of supervision of the playground be approached? Upkeep? Discipline? If needed, volunteer leadership?

Responses:

I think people should sign up.

Definitely some adult should be on the playground at all times. Perhaps one parent a week should sign up.

People can take turns watching over the playground. There should be a meeting to talk over all of these things.

People should sign up to do what and when.

Everybody should get together and decide who will do what.

I think that the churches should take some responsibility in doing this.

The children should be organized under the leadership of adults to keep the ground clean.

The teenagers could do this part of the work.

It should be organized in such a way so that the playground will not have to be supervised. None of the others I have seen are supervised.

A group of mothers who don't work could look after such things.

From the responses to the questions, all of the residents interviewed were in favor of having a playground on the Melon Block. Even though there was a strong indication that those interviewed were willing to cooperate with their neighbors, there were several conditions which served to interfere with their cooperation. Some of these were: (a) the residents of the
area did not know their neighbors and showed little desire to become acquainted; (b) some of the residents were very suspicious of their neighbors; (c) the area was highly transient and many residents did not have time to get acquainted; (d) the work pattern of the residents was of such a nature as to allow very little interaction among neighbors; (e) the residents had little knowledge of what was involved in working together due to their inexperience in cooperating with others.

In addition to gaining information through the interviews, the agency community organization practitioner was also trying to establish relationships with the respondents. This was done so that the respondents could become aware of the efforts being made to obtain a playground. It was hoped that these relationships could offer the residents of the area a means to help handle their hostility, especially that shown toward their neighbors. It was also hoped that the community worker, in this way, could interpret to the residents the concept of self-help and help them organize for obtaining, maintaining, and supervising a playground.

Prior to and concurrent with the interviewing of the residents, public and private agencies were cooperating and combinding efforts to acquire the properties to be used for the playground. These were primarily concerned with the legal aspects of acquiring a playground, but they recognized the importance of citizen participation in developing and maintaining this playground property once it was acquired. For example, in a letter to the Mayor of Philadelphia from the Development Coordinator explaining the importance of having an ordinance whereby the city could acquire land for such purposes, the following statement was made regarding the role of the citizens:
We will work with neighborhood citizen group and community councils in helping to determine the proper use of properties acquired through this process.1

Forming a Playground Council

The fact that the legal and intra-governmental negotiations had to be performed prior to getting land available for the playground may have curtailed some of the enthusiasm the residents had for the development of a playground in the area. However, as of January 1960, when demolition began, new interest was aroused.

In January, 1960, letters were sent to school principals and pastors of churches in the area informing them of the need for a playground council. The text of the letter regarding this point was as follows:

Friends Neighborhood Guild and Operation Poplar have been working with various city departments in gaining land bound by Fairmont Avenue and Melon Streets, and Marvine and Twelfth Streets, for a playground. It is our hope that this area will assume responsibility for the continued operation of this playground.

We would like to have you refer to us at least two persons, who live in the general vicinity of the above area. Through these residents we hope to form a Community Playground Council. The purpose is to have this Council help determine the most suitable type of play equipment and to outline responsibility for supervision and maintenance of this playground.2

The ministers and school principals promptly replied to this letter, and each referred at least two persons whom they had found willing to work on the Community Playground Council.

The efforts of the public and private agencies to acquire land for

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1 Copy of this letter is found in the Appendix.

the playground was successful. In January 1960, demolition started on Melon Block clearing the land for the playground. Several churches, two schools, and several residents in the area had indicated interest in participating in the development of the playground and in taking some responsibility for providing leadership to their own group, which would make use of it at certain times.

The Presbyterian Community Center, a Methodist Church, two Baptist Churches, and Friends Neighborhood Guild would be responsible for the overall maintenance and supervision by organizing neighborhood committees.
CHAPTER V

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PRINCIPLES UTILIZED IN GAINING A PLAYGROUND

The principles and activities of community organization which may be observed in this study could not be related to any one community organization approach. The writer, in attempting to assess the procedures found materials of various authors had some pertinence but no one author gave a conclusive methodology into which this project might fit. This is frequently true in the practice of community organization due to a comparative lack of consistent conceptualization in community organization.¹

Too, the writer was aware that the demands for a large amount of work with public agencies necessitated considerable expertism. Therefore, the community organization practitioner role was probably more of the expert type rather than the enabler.

From an analysis of the activities of the Poplar Area Community Council and the responses to the interviews the writer observed principles of community organization as discussed in this chapter.

Initiating and Stimulating Organization

Social need is the basis for organization. The determining factor in initiating, continuing, modifying, or terminating an organization is social need. An organization should come into existence to meet a felt need, and

should be continued only if it adjusts to changing needs.¹

The organization of the council in the area was the result of recognition of problems in the area. The cooperative efforts of agencies and citizens were sought through this body. Efforts to stimulate the reactivation of other groups were undertaken on the same basis of need.

Assessing and Ranking Needs

Community organization is a process by which a community identifies its needs or objectives, orders (or ranks) these needs or objectives, develops the confidence and will to work at these needs or objectives, takes action in respect to them, and in so doing extends and develops cooperative and collaborative attitudes and practices in the community.²

The area council focused upon the identifying of specific problems which were ranked, so that each would be attacked in an organized method.

In the Poplar Area, the problems of juvenile delinquency and its causes were identified and it was decided that the lack of recreation activities was one of the main factors which contributed to juvenile delinquency. Therefore, one of the objectives involved in the solution was the establishment of a playground in the Melon Street.

Educating Public Officials and Citizens

Wayne McMillen has defined activities which are designed for educational purposes, these he classifies largely as methods. The writer


found these sustained as principles of communication were operative in the case of the Poplar Area Town Meeting.

The Poplar Area Town Meeting served as a means to acquaint public officials with the conditions that existed in the Poplar Area and the desires of the community to alleviate these conditions. Through the Poplar Area Town Meeting the residents were kept informed of the progress which was being made to improve the conditions.

Methods concerned with education, interpretation, and public relations—including use of newspaper publicity, annual reports, other printed literature, public speaking, radio, exhibits,—are used in the community organization process.¹

Fliers were distributed, informing the residents of council meetings and major agenda items. The Poplar Area Community Council used periodic reports. The community newspaper, The Mid-Town Crier, was also used as a means of educating and informing the public of the conditions and progress which were being made in the Poplar Area.

Integration and Coordination Through Conferences

Promotion of voluntary agreements through conferences.²

The public agencies worked cooperatively with the private agencies in obtaining the objectives. The public agencies included those city departments who had given direct service to the area and other departments, which were concerned around improving the conditions. These

²Ibid., p. 43.
departments had agreed to perform certain activities to help obtain the major objective.

Focusing Discontent

Discontent must be focused and channeled into organization, planning and action in respect to specific problems.

The community worker conducted house to house interviews. The purpose was that of focusing discontent around the need for a playground so that the residents would participate in the organization, thereby contributing to the planning and giving active participation to the project of establishing a playground in the area.

Participation in the planning phase new knowledge, shared experience, interaction, new feelings and attitudes are important in the planning phase.¹

The interviews done by the community worker allowed an opportunity for the residents to express their feelings and give their attitudes on the project of establishing a playground. New knowledge was obtained through the residents suggesting what type of equipment to the use and how supervision and maintenance could be done. Self-expression by the residents also enhanced the interaction among residents. For example, they gave names of persons whom they thought would be interested in the project. The worker also motivated a sense of responsibility as noted in their response to utilize participation in working toward a playground on Melon Street.

¹Murray G. Ross, op. cit., p. 162.
Utilizing a Problem-Centered Group

The significance of the Problem-Centered Group is manifold. It creates integration by encouraging participation, which has important psychological consequences for the participating individuals.¹

The development of a playground council was designed so that the members would be allowed a chance for equal participation for a selected concern, namely, supervision and operation of the playground. In this manner the ideas and opinions of different members could be shared, and the method of procedure which appeared most suitable to the entire group selected and used.

In the writer's analysis of the activities some principles were operative and showed some positive results. Limits of contact with the project curtailed a more detailed presentation and reflected less active citizen participation than desirable.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study on community organization principles in obtaining citizen participation for a playground in a deteriorated area was an attempt to find what principles were operative in the efforts of citizens located in Philadelphia to secure a playground in a deteriorated area.

The methods used included the study of progress and agency records written by community workers regarding the Poplar Area and the Melon Block prior to March 1960. The court proceedings affecting the legal procedures for obtaining land for the Melon Playground were used. Various negotiations, such as letters, records of telephone calls, and notes involving public and private agencies' efforts at curbing juvenile delinquency and arresting blighted conditions were used. The books and materials on community organization principles, articles and proceedings of juvenile delinquency were read. Personal interviews by a schedule were employed.

The study was descriptive and there was no attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the community organization principles used in working with public and private agencies. This study was confined to the use of the materials listed above. It was concerned only with those community organization principles that were related to the eliciting and use of citizen participation in community programs.

The office of Operation Poplar was located in Friends Neighborhood Guild, a social settlement whose purpose and philosophy are based on the
religious viewpoints of the society of Friends.

From the study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Citizen participation is concerned with any action of the people to secure benefits for themselves and/or the community as a whole. In general, citizen participation requires some effective organizational structure.

2. In the control of juvenile delinquency and community blight a great deal of citizen activity has been enlisted on national levels and local levels. However, many weaknesses in planning still persist.

3. Friends Neighborhood Guild, a settlement in Philadelphia through its Operation Poplar Program, has engaged in the organization of citizens into neighborhood council and block organization, as a means of involving citizens in the renewal, rehabilitation, or conservation of the Poplar Area.

4. Poplar Area, located in Northeast Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, had a mixed population group of approximately 36,400 people. The area was characterized by many factors of deterioration including Skid Row, many bars, and rodents. Despite the dilapidation of the area there was evidence of the residents' having a positive feeling for their "home community."
5. Community councils of various types have been organized throughout the country. These councils are generally composed of representatives of agencies, clubs, churches, schools and individual citizens who attempt in an organized method to deal with problems of delinquency, poor living conditions, and any other problem affecting community welfare. They may be organized on a block basis or some other form of area basis.

6. The Poplar Area Council served the general district of Philadelphia known as Poplar. Its concern was initially upon the problems of juvenile delinquency and the blighted conditions of the general area's physical condition. It was able to focus its efforts during 1958 and 1959 upon the stimulant of citizens groups toward securing a playground in the general Poplar Area.

7. The efforts of the Council reflecting citizen participation gave meaning to some principles noted in community organization.

Those identified by the writer were:

- Initiating and stimulating organization;
- Assessing and Ranking Needs;
- Educating Public Officials and Citizens;
- Integration and Coordination through Conferences;
- Focusing discontent;
- Participation in the Planning Phase;
- Utilizing a Problem-Centered Group.
APPENDIXES
APPENDIX A

STREET MAP OF WEST POPLAR
APPENDIX B

POPLAR AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - Name

The name of this organization is the Poplar Area Community Council.

ARTICLE II - Purposes

The purposes of the Poplar Area Community Council are:

1. to improve the total community through the cooperative development of community organizations and facilities to make this an attractive place for families to live and raise their children.
2. to create with young people a healthy, normal environment for their recreational and educational life.
3. to serve as a means through which people can voice their needs and work for a solution to their problems.
4. to cooperate with the churches, schools and other community groups in working for good relations among the different racial and nationality groups.

ARTICLE III - Area of Operation

The area in which the Council operates is that bounded on the west by Broad Street, on the north by Girard Avenue, on the east by Delaware River, and on the south by Noble Street.

ARTICLE IV - Membership

Section 1. Groups and individuals that subscribe to the above stated purposes of the Poplar Area Community Council are eligible for membership in the Council.

Section 2. Application for membership is open to the following:

a. Designated representatives of all organizations situated in this area.
b. Designated representatives of all organizations with a predominate number of its members in this area.
c. Designated representatives of organizations with a major interest in this area.
d. Individual residents of the area.

**Section 3.** Membership applications must be approved by the Executive Committee of the Council.

**Section 4.** Membership may be terminated by the Council only by two-thirds vote of those present at any (or any) stated meeting of the Council, providing all constituents members have been notified in writing of the proposed action at least two weeks in advance of such meeting.

**ARTICLE V - Responsibility, Representation and Voting**

**Section 1.** Member organizations through their designated representatives from the responsible basis for the Council.

**Section 2.** Each member organization designates one representative and may send one alternate to the Council.

**Section 3.** Each organization representative or his alternate has one vote.

**Section 4.** Organizations formed on the basis of residence within a specified neighborhood or section including fifty or more dwelling units may become member organizations of this Council provided that:

a. Open and duly publicized meetings are held at least four (4) times a year.
b. Officers are elected at such meetings in accordance with proper democratic procedures, and
c. Written and/or oral reports of all meetings of such organizations are made available to the Executive Committee of the Poplar Area Community Council.

**Section 5.** Individual membership in a member organization or neighborhood council in good standing shall be considered as participating membership in the Poplar Area Community Council, permitting participation in meetings, serving on the committees of the Council and holding office.

However, only those participating, serving on a committee, holding office or those who qualify as general members (individual applications approved by the Executive Committee) may vote.

* * *

The remainder of the articles are concerned with information that is not pertinent to this study. Therefore, they were excluded from this presentation.
APPENDIX C

OFFICE OF THE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

COPY August 12, 1959

The Honorable Richardson Dilworth,
Mayor, City of Philadelphia

Subject: AN ORDINANCE to amend Chapter 16-100 of the Philadelphia Code, by authorizing the City to acquire real estate at Sheriff Sales, under certain terms and conditions.

DEAR MAYOR DILWORTH:

This is to respectfully request your introduction of the above titled ordinance to City Council.

Enactment of this ordinance will add another tool to the City Administration's program for neighborhood improvement. It will enable the City to obtain properties which have not been tax producing and which have been eyesores and nuisances in many neighborhoods. The ordinance will permit the purchases of such tax delinquent properties without any direct outlay of City funds by permitting the City to bid at Sheriff's sales an amount equal to the delinquent taxes.

Although most of the properties involved will be vacant lots, they can be put into use which will be helpful to the area. These uses would include leasing of such lots to responsible civic organizations for recreation areas, providing off-street parking, and for planting and gardens by nearby residents. Where the land is located in an industrial area, it may be possible to use it in connection with the City's industrial land program.

The program includes the provision for eliminating sub-standard buildings. In those cases where tax delinquent properties include buildings in sound condition, they will be considered for possible use by government agencies. We will work with neighborhood citizen groups and community councils in helping to determine the proper use of properties acquired through this process.

If the ordinance is adopted, we will undertake a small pilot project to measure its effectiveness and to guide the administrative arrangements. This program has been worked out in cooperation with the Department of Collections, Law Department, City Planning Commission, and the Managing Director's Office, particularly with the Department of Licenses and Inspections and Department of Public Development. The Department of Commerce and the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation have also been consulted.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM L. RAFSKY,
William L. Rafsky,
Development Coordinator
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

NAME: ________________________________________________________________

ADDRESS: ____________________________________________________________

1. Do you think the people in this area would want a playground on Melon Street?

2. Why do you feel some of the people would not be cooperative?

3. What is the reaction of the people in this area to working with each other?
   City Officials?

4. Now that the following positive steps have been made for developing a playground on Melon Street, do you think this would make community participation any better?

5. Do you feel we could gain community involvement on a self-help basis?

6. How would the matter of supervision of the playground be approached?

7. To what degree should children in this area be involved in planning, self-help, and other responsibilities as street controls, monitors, leaders?

8. How would we get people involved in working toward a playground on Melon Street?

9. What other persons might be interested?

10. What suggestions would you give around the playground?
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles and Reports


Department of Licenses and Inspections. "Inspection and Statistical Report for the Year 1959." Philadelphia: Department of Licenses and Inspections, 1959. ( Mimeographed.)


Urban Research Center, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, *Delinquency in Poplar.* Philadelphia: Temple University, 1959.

Unpublished Materials


Miscellaneous Material