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Recommended Citation

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Organization development (OD) consultation technologies have been increasingly used by social workers in a variety of practice settings. Organization development is typically used in formal organizations, and there have been few reported applications in community development. This paper discusses the value of such applications and describes examples in a case study. Similarities between community development and organization development are presented. Technologies used are reviewed, followed by cautions and recommendations for further research.

Over the last several years, organization development (OD) consultation technologies have been increasingly advocated and used by social workers in a variety of practice settings (Gould, Knoepler, and Smith, 1988; Morton, 1981). The purpose of this paper is to lend support to this trend as seen in the literature and in practice by showing applications of OD in a community setting. The following issues are addressed: What OD technologies can be usefully applied in a community context? Under what conditions? If, in fact, these technologies are appropriate and useful, community development (CD) workers who become skillful in their application should be able to offer more expertise and guidance to community clients, leading to improvements in community life. Many community members and groups deal with organizations which may have used such techniques, For example, many cities use OD for their managers and employees (Packard and Reid, 1990), and enhanced organizational skills on the part of community development workers may make them more effective in dealing with such large bureaucracies and policy makers.

The historical background of OD and its relevance to social work is discussed. A conceptual model is presented to demonstrate the parallels of OD and various social work methods.

A case discussion of an application of OD in a community planning and development project is presented, followed by an elaboration of specific OD technologies used. Finally, recommendations for further development of this trend are presented, along with some cautions regarding appropriate uses of this new (to social work) method.

Organization development is a type of consulting traditionally practiced with formal organizations as clients. In its early years OD consultants focused on organizational processes such as interpersonal communications and group dynamics, and current usage typically includes an emphasis on core organizational processes such as planning and organization design. French and Bell (1990, p. 17) define OD as follows:

> ...organization development is a top-management supported, long-range effort to improve an organization's problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative diagnosis and management of organization culture—with special emphasis on formal work team, temporary team, and intergroup culture—with the assistance of a consultant-facilitator and the use of the theory and technology of applied behavioral science, including action research.

Essentially, OD involves a consultant helping an organizational client identify and solve problems related to the organizations' effectiveness and quality of working life. The consultant does not typically develop expert recommendations but rather plays the role of a process consultant (Schein, 1988) which allows responsibility for decisions and action to remain with the client.

OD AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The OD profession is rooted in the behavioral sciences, particularly psychology and sociology. One of the profession's conceptual foundations, action research, developed from two independent sources also concerned with community development: Kurt Lewin and his colleagues, who worked in areas of group dynamics including community and minority group relations, and John Collier, commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs from 1933 to 1945, who studied ethnic relations

(French & Bell, 1990, p. 105). In discussing the foundations of OD, French, Bell, and Zawacki (1989, p. 80) acknowledged the "numerous insights about intervening in organizations" provided by social work and other helping professions. While OD quickly began to focus on formal organizations, there have been some community development applications. Herbert Shepard, a founder of OD, practiced community development in China Lake, CA and Middletown, CT (French & Bell, 1990, pp. 37–38). Schindler-Rainman (1975) presented two applications of OD in community settings.

Ramirez (1990) suggested parallels between adult education principles, common in OD, and community development. Benne (1985), discussing planned change at the community level, asserted that collaborative change methods such as OD may assist in the representation of the interests of the poor and other minorities in community change. Brown and Covey (1989) listed some of the particular considerations regarding OD with social change organizations: the need for external as well as internal diagnosis, attention to multiple constituencies and realities, ideological negotiation and strategic analysis. In a related vein, Bryson (1988, p. 8) asserted that strategic planning, a common OD technology, can be a valuable technique in community planning. With rare exceptions, however, OD practice has focused almost entirely on formal organizations, usually for-profit (and occasionally government and not-for-profit) bureaucracies.

Schindler-Rainman (1975) listed several similarities between OD and CD: both use action research and a change agent, both emphasize client participation in decision making, and both are planned change efforts to increase effectiveness. On the other hand, she listed several differences: in a community, processes are always intergroup, loyalties and commitments are more varied, both professionals and volunteers are typically involved, there are multiple agendas, efforts are voluntary (superiors cannot order actions), and a number of different sectors are typically included. In recent years, these differences have become less pronounced. For example, OD intergroup interventions are now quite common; and organization members are understood to have varying loyalties, to boss, work group, family, union,

etc. While volunteers are not common clients in OD, different sectors of employees (departments or divisions) are typically involved.

A Conceptual Model

Change technologies from social work and organizational change perspectives are presented to clarify the relationships between OD and CD. For the purposes here, social work technologies are described according to the traditional (although not currently emphasized) methods of casework, group work, and community organization. Community organization methods will be delineated by Rothman's (Rothman with Tropman, 1987) typology, which includes locality development, social planning, and social action. Table 1 outlines social work methods and organizational change technologies with reference to key assumptions or foci. For OD and community development, key techniques used by change agents are listed.

Table 1

Parallels in Organizational Change and Social Work Methods and Techniques used in Organization Development and Community Development

Focus or Basic Assumptions	Organizations	Social Work
Individual change	Employee assistance	Casework
Group dynamics	Group problem solving Quality circles	Groupwork
Power tactics	Labor-management negotiations, legislation	Social action
Expert assistance	Audits & Analysis/ recommendations	Social planning
Collaboration	Organization development	Locality development
	-action research	-issue identification
	-process consultation	
	-team building	-leader development
	-strategic planning	
	-management by objectives	-facilitation

Historically, casework has involved work with individuals and families, and group work has focused on nonrelated individuals in a group setting. In community organizing, social action assumes conflicting interests and suggests the use of power strategies to create change; social planning involves experts gathering and analyzing data and making expert recommendations; and locality development focuses on consensus, collaboration, and self-help strategies. Organizational change strategies parallel these social work methods. Employee assistance programs, which focus on problem solving with individual employees, represent a casework approach. Group problem solving activities such as quality circles have many of the characteristics of social group work. Power-oriented strategies such as labor-management negotiations, employee ownership arrangements, and legislation regarding workplace issues share similar values and assumptions to social action. So-called expert consulting such as that associated with McKinsey and Company and the "big eight" accounting firms, where outsiders conduct audits, analyze and recommend, corresponds to social planning. Finally, OD, with its values of client participation and collaboration, shares many principles with community development. These parallels suggest that it need not be difficult for social workers to cross over into these new (for them) consulting fields.

Case Study

Background

The case reported here involved an OD consultant hired on a contract with a city of approximately 120,000 people in a Sunbelt metropolitan area with a population of 2 million. The city had recently completed an assessment of human services needs, done on contract with involvement from local service providers and client advocates. The report suggested funding priorities and recommended that the city form an advisory board, hire a human services coordinator, and revise the Community Development Block Grant funding process.

The city council approved the formation of a Human Services Task Force of eleven members to provide a forum for

information sharing, coordination, needs identification, advo-
cacy, and funding research and development. Public agency
representatives were from county social and health services,
the high school and elementary school districts, Social Secu-
rity, and state employment. Private sector representatives came
from a local agency directors council, the ecumenical council, a
private welfare council, United Way, and senior citizen advo-
cates. The city's human services coordinator, mainly responsible
for senior citizen programs, attended meetings as an ex officio
liaison with the city.

   Rather than create a new staff position, the city council ap-
proved the hiring of a consultant to assist the task force in devel-
oping its structure and agenda, recruiting a larger support net-
work, and identifying other resources to support its programs.
Both the focus of the contract and the consultant's background
and values as an OD consultant and community organizer sug-
gested a collaborative, client-oriented approach to achieve the
project goals. Both process and task goals would be addressed:
the task force needed to be developed as a committed, organized
team and a plan needed to be developed and implemented.

Process

   At its first meeting in month one, the background and man-
date for the group and the consultant's plan were reviewed,
amended, and approved. The consultant almost always made
recommendations for consideration rather than directing the
group, in order for them to develop themselves as leaders and
go in the directions they thought appropriate. Later in month
one, there were two half-day sessions which were basically team
building and strategic planning workshops.

   The group developed its ground rules and shared personal
values and visions. The strategic planning process was based
on the model of Bryson (1988) and included an environmen-
tal and stakeholder analysis, identification of strategic issues,
and the development of a mission statement and draft goals
and objectives. The chair, vice chair, and city representative de-
cided to meet before each full task force meeting to fine tune the
agenda and focus issues for discussion. The consultant used this
as a mechanism to begin to develop these members as leaders

who could get the group moving and keep it going after the six-month consulting contract ended.

At meetings in month two, the group clarified its relationship to the original plan, refined the objectives, and made decisions regarding the involvement of other community groups. Subcommittees were formed to develop specific objectives and action plans for each goal. These groups met between meetings, with consultant help available but not usually requested.

During month three, the chair and consultant met with the local director's council to brief them on the task force's activities and plans. This group was seen as a key stakeholder, representing virtually all the not-for-profit service providers in the area. The council offered support and expressed interest in receiving periodic updates. At task force meetings during months three and four, drafts of objectives and action plans for all goals were reviewed. Action plans were put on a timeline to note overlaps of activities using a PERT chart format (Lauffer, 1984).

At the task force meeting in month five, timelines for all objectives and action plans were approved. At its next meeting, in month six, the specific action plans and priority issues for action were approved. Members who were on task forces working on particular goals became action teams to implement the plans they had developed.

Major areas for action were in these goal areas: (a) development of profiles of clients seen by local agencies, with particular attention to unmet service needs (major action: semiannual surveys of clients in all community agencies); (b) coordination and communication among service providers (major actions: develop a community resource directory, hold semiannual community providers meetings, survey churches regarding their service activities, institute a human service providers newsletter); (c) improved access to services (major action: research service delivery options such as multiservice centers); (d) increased community awareness and support for human services (major actions: publicity to businesses and civic groups and the media); and (e) advocacy for needed funding, services, and resources (major actions: research government and foundation funding possibilities, lobby regarding relevant legislation). At this meeting the group also decided to change its name to

the Human Services Council to reflect their view of the group as permanent rather than temporary (in the city, the title "council" was used for permanent advisory groups).

During month seven, the chair and vice chair traded roles because the chair's work demands became too great for her to fulfill her duties to the council. The group also decided on the issue for its first community-wide providers meeting: the topic of fundraising would be addressed by representatives from governmental and foundation funding sources. The consultant was able to continue to work with the group based on a contract extension because, since the group had not met as frequently as planned, there were still funds available.

The council meeting in month eight was mainly devoted to the planning for the providers meeting to be held the following month. During month nine, client and church surveys were finalized, and the first providers meeting was held. Over 80 agencies were represented; in addition to the funders mentioned above, the mayor and local member of the county board of supervisors spoke. The newly completed agency resource directory was handed out.

Official consultant involvement ended at that time, but council actions continued. A proposal writing workshop was held for agency administrators, the newsletter was published regularly, the providers meetings continued on a regular basis, a cooperative after school latchkey prevention program was implemented, and funding was secured from a foundation for further program development. Twenty months after consultant involvement ended the council continues to meet regularly and has become a key element in the community's human services network.

OD Technologies Used

Several OD technologies were used by the consultant on this project, notably, action research, process consultation, team building, strategic planning, and management by objectives. Action research, considered a sine qua non of effective OD, is a process of systematically gathering data, feeding them back to clients, implementing actions and evaluating the results. The process was employed by the consultant through data collection

regarding key actors and their expectations, the history of the human services planning process, and current needs from the points of view of the city and the service providers. Based on the results of these initial interviews, the consultant shared major themes with the task force to guide their initial planning. Action research also occurred when the group began its strategic planning process with environmental and stakeholder analyses.

Process consultation, another key technology in which the consultant plays a facilitator role with clients, was used by the consultant in full meetings and smaller meetings with the chair, vice chair, and city representative. The focus was on assisting the clients in the identification of issues, considering options and their possible consequences, and making decisions. As in locality development, the consultant did not offer expert advice beyond sharing information about procedures (e.g., strategic planning) that could assist the group in reaching its goals.

Team building, a process of gathering information from a team regarding its problems and functioning and using a workshop setting to assist the group in problem solving and group development, is often used early in an OD intervention. On this project, team building occurred in the context of the original half-day workshops, particularly when members shared their values and visions as a prelude to the strategic planning process. Strategic planning, a process in which a team or organization assesses itself and its environment in order to make fundamental decisions about its directions, is not uniquely an OD technique, but has been used extensively in OD over the past ten years (Pfeiffer, Goodstein, & Nolan, 1985). This was a major intervention on the current project, forming the foundation for all subsequent activities. Management by objectives (MBO) (Raia, 1974), another technique not the exclusive province of OD, was used by the committees as they developed detailed plans, which were detailed on PERT charts (Lauffer, 1984).

Throughout the process, the consultant responded to the needs and goals of the group, but did not hesitate to suggest a specific technique where appropriate. Because of the consultant's background and willingness to use these organizationally-oriented technologies, the council was able to learn new methods for accomplishing their goals.

Benefits of OD in Community Development

OD technologies may be able to enhance traditional community development in several ways.

(a) These activities are structured and proven methods to facilitate goal accomplishment. Use of a technique such as strategic planning can enable a group to address a planning process in a more comprehensive way than may otherwise occur. For example, attention to stakeholders can alert a group early to potential forces of resistance which will need to be addressed. While a community power analysis (Meenaghan, Washington, & Ryan, 1892, Ch. 7) may provide some of the same data, a full strategic planning process provides significant insights into the interactions between the clients and the environment.

(b) Team building often occurs in an informal sense when community groups are being developed. A trained consultant using a specific set of techniques can expedite the process of building a team and help it begin to attain its goals. In a related vein, community organizers using locality development currently employ principles of process consultation. A more conscious and informed use of this skill may enable the group to better respond to the complexity of the community and organizational dynamics they will face (Schein, 1988, p. 192).

(c) Analytical techniques such as MBO and PERT charting may be refinements of planning processes commonly used in community development. To the extent that these techniques are more powerful (and, therefore, more useful) that more informal planning activities, the client may be more efficient in using its energy.

(d) Many successful community development efforts lead to the establishment of a formal community organization. The organizational and management skills available to a qualified OD consultant should be of use to the community organization as it formalizes and develops. Most citizens do not have well-developed skills in areas such as planning, running meetings, organizing tasks, etc.; and OD consultants can train community members in such areas, enhancing their effectiveness when they assume roles in their new formal organization.

(e) On a process level, the use of these techniques with a community group can have two other benefits. First, the group

will develop knowledge and insights as to how larger institutions (including, perhaps, targets of their change effort) sometimes operate. This type of empathy may enable the group to make more thoughtful plans as to dealing with such institutions. It may also give the group members, some of whom may not have professional or managerial training, increased confidence in being able to deal with bureaucracies on their own terms. Second, a community group which has shown that it is organized enough to be using such organizational effectiveness techniques may have added credibility in the eyes of institutional decision makers it may be trying to influence.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Social workers and other community organizers should not enter this arena without carefully considering possible risks and unintended consequences. Akabas and Kurzman (1982, pp. 220–221) have suggested that "consultation can be sufficiently intoxicating to risk cooptation by the organizational leadership, who may look to the social work staff to sanction or legitimate policies solely in the profit (or survival) needs of the organization and its leaders —rather than in the interest of its workforce and the community." This warning applies in a community as well as organizational context. OD and CD have both at times been accused of ignoring power dynamics and unwittingly supporting the status quo.

In the 1960's, according to Gilbert and Specht (1987, p. 607), "human relations personnel ["intergroup relations workers, social workers, and psychologists"] were often brought into planning to find ways to 'sell' the program to the opposition." Both fields have become increasingly sophisticated in this regard, but practitioners need to be alert to such factors in order to help ensure that change is meaningful and driven by the needs of clients.

Care and sensitivity must be used in the initial assessment with a given community to be sure that such techniques are appropriate. Some community groups may be resistant to or intimidated by such structured and organizationally-oriented techniques. Most of the council members in the case discussed above were professionals who worked in large or medium-sized

organizations, and readily responded to these methods. Other groups may see it as a form of manipulation or an attempt to get the group to conform to standards and rules of other institutions.

Community development workers wanting to apply OD need to ensure that they are properly trained to use such techniques. Akabas and Kurzman (1982, p. 220) asserted that "social workers must be clear about the nature and boundaries of their expertise." Gould, Knoepler, and Smith (1988) have outlined roles and qualities of competent OD consultants, and any social worker wanting to use OD should receive formal training to give them skills in such areas. University Associates in San Diego and the NTL Institute in Arlington, Virginia offer extensive workshops. Columbia, the University of Michigan, and other universities offer OD programs as well.

In spite of the limitations of uses of this technology in community settings, the potentials for using OD to improve community life and empower community members seem significant and promising. Community development workers currently use techniques similar to those of OD, and the values of the two fields seem essentially compatible. Reports of further applications should offer further refinements, leading to more deliberate and effective use of this method in community development.

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