

E I N D - R A P P O R T

van

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onderwerp

RURAL SOCIAL WORK

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FINAL REPORT ON OBSERVATION PROGRAM OF U.N. FELLOW

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- I. GENERAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS: about my own observation program and the Fellowship program in general I only have a lot of appreciation for the nice and clever way in which everything was arranged. Especially the planning and discussing of the program in Washington, where I found a complete understanding for my wishes, which were not so easily to fulfil, was very satisfying. Travelling around it sometimes was hard to penetrate to the local level, but here too I found very nice people helping me to carry out the program.
- II. EVALUATION OF STUDY PROGRAM; My program as a whole gave me some very good opportunities for very interesting observations. Most of the time I saw, what I wanted to see, if nevertheless after all observations I had "Community Organization in rural area's in U.S." is not as clear and definite a picture to me, as I wanted it to be, this is, I suppose not due to the program but to the reality of community life in rural America.
- III. SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF MY OBSERVATIONS, that perhaps may be useful to me in my country:
- a. the idea of community organization as a special field in social work (As I got it on the Institute in the School of Social Work in Pittsburgh).
 - b. the idea of planning, coordinating and stimulating in social welfare on a big scale as I saw in Tennessee Valley Authority.
 - c. 4H. Clubwork as a method of organizing rural youth in an educational and recreational program, emphasizing the values of rural life (4H is part of Agricultural Extension Service).
 - d. Some aspects of the Farmers Home Administration program, their solution of rural poverty problems. (Farmers Home Administration working under U.S. Department of Agriculture provides loans to low income farmers, in return these farmers have to work on farm improvement programs as advised by Agricultural Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service and so on.)
 - e. Some aspects of the Homemaking and teaching Home Economics programs as I observed in Michigan (Preparation for home and family life for boys and girls, some kind of community organization in this field).
 - f. Some aspects of the "Councils of Social Agencies", their committee work, their divisions, their social service exchange.
 - g. some aspects out of local or countywide community improvement program.
- IV. STATEMENT OF THE ASPECTS OF THE FIELD OF INTEREST IN WHICH I HAVE BEEN WORKING DURING THE PERIOD OF OBSERVATION.

My special field of interest was "Community Organization in rural area's". From the beginning it was quite clear, that this field would not be easily to locate, nor easily to work. The term "Community Organization" is so broad and indefinite, activities especially in rural area's are mostly not centralized in national or federal agencies, but are to be looked for on the local or county level.

By planning my program with Miss Anna Schneider, trainings-specialist (international) of the Federal Security Agency, Washington D.C. we decided to work in the following way:

A. Basic Information on social work in U.S. in general: Before starting observations in my special field, it seemed to be useful to get some basic information, therefore I got:

One week "Basic Information" with other U.N. Fellows in the Federal Security Agency in Washington D.C.

10 Days general observations in Baltimore (Maryland) to see how an average city in this country provides services (public and private) to meet welfare needs. All these services were coordinated by a Council of Social Agencies. This Council in itself was a good example of community organization, though not operating in a rural area!

One week: National Conference of Social Work in Cleveland (Ohio). This big conference too was useful to give me a more general idea of social work and social workers in U.S.

B. Orientation on Community-organization. To get some more scientific orientation on Community Organization as a special field of social work I attended an Institute of a week on this subject in the Pittsburgh School of Social Work. Here I learned to see "Community Organization" as a special field, where special skills, special methods are required. Here I learned that like "Casework" and "Groupwork" did before "Community Organization" or "Intergroupwork" now is starting to develop into a special kind of social work, with its own problems.

C. Observations in my special field. All with all I spent about half of my observation time on this kind of general and orientating observations, which I do not regret at all! After this we decided, that time had come for me to go out into different rural area's in the States. For planning this part of the program I returned to Washington for about 10 days. This part of the planning was not so easy. The more usual starting points for social work observations out in the States as Public Assistance Offices, or Offices of Social Welfare could not help us out, because as a rule, they did not carry out any special programs on community organization, nor did they have any special methods in rural social work. Therefore we had to start with more agricultural and educational agencies. The last fitted me well because my background has more out of the educational field and in my homecountry rural social work programs mostly include educational work.

So we decided to start with:

1. Agricultural Extension Service

2. Farmers Home Administration

3. Vocational Education in rural area's.

This program was completed by two special wishes I had:

4. Tennessee Valley Authority

5. Council of Social Agencies operating in a rural area

Out of the combination of these fields and 3 States I got a very attractive program:

2 weeks Tennessee: Observing T.V.A. and Agricultural Extension Service

2 weeks Ohio: Farmers Home Administration and Agricultural Extension Service.

2 weeks Michigan: Council of Social Agencies (Rural)
Vocational Education (Rural)

Before I arrived in these States all these agencies were informed by Miss Schneider, I was interested in their activities, but my special field of interest was "Community Organization in rural Area's", so if there might be anything outside their activities, I would be very glad to have that in my program too.

About all three of these placements I should like to make some comments:

TENNESSEE:

I stayed here all the time at Knoxville and spent the first days with T.V.A. I knew already by reading T.V.A. was famous for dambuilding, regional planning, electric power enterprise and soil conservation, but not before visiting and observing, I realized how well it worked for "the benefit of the people" I saw farm-and home improvement programs as a result of cheap electricity and learned a lot about water control on the land (soil conservation). It was fascinating to see, how many different values in human life are connected with this river plan and how natural resources as water power and soil, well used may be a benefit for the people. It is only a pity, that Oak Ridge, with its atom-bomb plants spoils the picture.

The agricultural educational part of the T.V.A. program, carried out by the Extension Service was very interesting too. Educating people to make a good use of the soil, by the example of a demonstration farm, which is not a special model farm, but just one farm out of a community, the farmer being selected for this job by the other farmers. All activities around these demonstration farms certainly were some kind of rural community-organization.

Operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture the Extension Service all over the States is working on an educational program, bringing the results of agricultural science to the farmers. The Extension Service is always connected with a Land Grant college or an University. Its workers are graduated men or women from these colleges. They are in a certain way the fieldworkers, teaching and advising rural people in ways of farming, homemaking, recreational things, and community organization. In Tennessee I had the opportunity to see this Service working on the State-, County- and local level. I visited a 4 H clubcamp, several Home demonstration Club meetings, went out with the County Agent, the Home Demonstration Agent, visiting farms. Speaking in terms of the Pittsburgh Institute on Community Organization, one could say: the Extension Service did "Groupwork" in 4 H club and Home Demonstration Clubwork and Intergroup work "in its Community Improvement program.

Community Organization Extension service and T.V.A.-people introduced me to two different programs in the field of Community Organization in Eastern Tennessee:

1. Sponsored by the Methodist Church (Dr. Rapkins from Hiwassee College)
2. Sponsored by Knoxville Civic Organizations.

With the Extension Service program they had in common, they all were community improvement activities, trying to make a special local community to a better place of living. The Methodist Church with a religious background, the Extension Service with an agricultural purpose, the Knoxville Civic Organizations with a commercial background. (Each year a contest with prizes in Community Improvement). As far as I know in none of these programs a social worker participated, so in most of them "social work" aspects were neglected. Nearly everything in those communities was checked up and planned to be improved but the very good changes for social work by local communities for their own people in need were mostly overlooked. Still I found a lot of new things in these programs, methods and skills quite unknown in our country and it gave me a lot of pleasure to think about some of these ideas worked out for our country, where conditions of rural life are so completely different. So starting with T.V.A. and Agricultural Extension Service I really found something of value in my special field of interest: Community Organization in rural Areas.

OHIO.

Here I started with the Farmers Home Administration. This agency, operated by U.S. Department of Agriculture provides loans to low income farmers for farmimprovement, farm ownership, machinery etc. In return the farmer has to agree with working his farm in a planned scientific way, as advised by Soil Conservation and Extension service agents. So the idea is: helping low income farmers to improve their poor farm to a sound farm. This agency has not only a money providing function, but an educational too (carried out by Extension Service). It gave a very good solution for rural poverty and quite a number of farmers, who were on relief, are helped by this agency to help themselves in improving their way of farming. Interesting to me too was, that in this program, the supervisors are assisted by advisory committee's, most farmers who discuss the problems of the farm in need, help planning and working with the farmfamily. F.H.A. people not only offered me a very nice program in their own field but introduced me to:

1. The Grange: a big organization of Farmerfamilies, very important in rural community life in Ohio (and other States)
2. With Reverend Hoy from Coshocton County, famous for all he did in his community to make the Church (Methodist) serve as a community center.

The Extension Service in Ohio enabled me to complete my observations from Tennessee by showing me 4 H. activities, a Home Demonstration Camp, a County Fair and several farms. The Ohio Extension Service had quite a program too in Farmers Institutes, which was interesting to me, because these Institutes in some way did a good job in community Organization. So in Ohio State too I found, though quite different from what I had seen in Tennessee some programs in Community Organization in rural areas. In Tennessee they emphasized more improvement in living standards; in Ohio State (much better farms) they emphasized more social entertainment, recreational and education.

MICHIGAN.

Vocational Education: Here I got a general idea about teaching Home Economics and Agriculture in rural high school programs. Teaching H.E. in this State meant not merely teaching skills, but in the first place preparation for Home and Family life for both boys and girls. Interesting to me too was, that in some places through high school programs some kind of community organization in Home and Family life came into action, working with parents and students, integrating the whole community from nursery school to college with the idea of better Home and Family life. Interesting too was the important place F.F.A. (Future Farmers of America) and F.H.A. (Future Homemakers of America) took in the educational school program. Through these organizations (worked out partly during school-ours leadership and living in a democracy were learned and exercised. Another interesting aspect of this vocational program was the activity of teachers during the 3 month's summervacation. Boys and girls had farm and home projects to work on during that time. Teachers visited all their students during these month's, supervising their projects, but at the same time they got a lot of valuable facts out of these homevisits.

THE KALAMAZOO COUNCIL OF SOCIAL AGENCIES.

This council served town and county. So part of its activities took place in a rural area. I saw here the same set-up as I had seen before in Baltimore, only on a smaller scale. I found no special methods or activities on the rural part of the work-field though some specific rural agencies were members of the council here, that had not been in the Baltimore Council. I got the idea citywork predominated, because most of the agencies were located in the city and rural people had to come in, when they needed them.

THE GETTEL FARM: (Pigeon, Michigan).

To get a more complete picture of farmlife and rural family-life I asked for a placement of a few days on a farm. In Michigan State I got this opportunity and in the days, I spent there I really learned a lot of things I did not know before. I visited neighbors, went to church with the family on Sunday and to the nearest rural town on Saturday night, to a big familyreunion in a parkpicnicplace, all very nice and interesting experiences.

CONCLUSION.

As a whole I had a very interesting program, showing me the things I wanted to see. If asked, whether my observations have been satisfying, in giving me a clear, all round picture of "Community organization" in rural area's in U.S., I could answer "Yes" and "Not entirely" at the same time.

"Yes" because in all three States I visited, I really saw, what was going on in this field.

"Not entirely" because the picture I got could not be very clear one in some way, because reality is not to clear. All activities I observed in this field started from different backgrounds (religious, agricultural, commercial, educational). All agencies working represented different corporations (Churches, schools, colleges, private and publicagencies). So I gathered a lot of facts, I picked up several separated pieces, but they are too different to make a nice clear picture out of them. The reality

shows a lot of activities (and I am sure there are a lot more than I was able to observe) all concerned about organizing rural communities in some way.

The Pittsburgh School of Social Work interpretes the term "Community Organization" as "Intergroupwork", which means working with a group of groups. Things would be easier, if I limited the observations to this more definite field, but a lot of interesting activities going on in rural communities would not be in the picture. Most of the people organizing in rural communities are no social workers and don't realize any difference between groupwork and intergroupwork. So always life is richer than school can be, therefore I tried to observe what real life presented and I interpreted "Community Organization" for my observations as "all activities organizing a community in some aspect of social welfare".

One of the things, that impressed me during my whole observation period, was the fact that "living in a Democracy" was so often referred to in the conferences I attended, the discussions I had and the activities I observed. In my home country we too live in a democracy, but we don't talk so much about it. We more take it for granted, although we lost our freedom and democratic rights during 5 years of German occupation, our people seem to be less aware of its value, than they might be. The way, in which in each school program, in each youth organization, in all kind of groupwork and intergroupwork, I observed, always certain things go back to "living in a democracy" was very interesting to me .

Now, at the time of my departure I have the feeling, that at home I will start studying "Community Organization" by reading. Thanks to the U.N. allowance for buying books, I was able to bring some literature home. I hope this will complete the picture I got through my observation program. In the Social Work Yearbook 1949 I found the term "Community Organization" is not only confusing to me, but stating the fact that one could speak about: "a Community organization practicing community organization in order to achieve community organization" (page 129) it seems that to American people too sometimes the picture is not too clear.

V. ASPECTS OF THE OBSERVATION THAT MAY BE OF PARTICULAR USE TO ME IN MY WORK IN MY HOMECOUNTRY.

1. TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY.

The idea of planning, coordinating and stimulating on a big scale as I saw in T.V.A. might give some inspiration to regional social welfare planning activities in our country.

2. 4 H. CLUBWORK.

Most of the activities I found done here by the Agricultural Extension Service are in our country very well developed by similar agencies. The only thing our country misses, is a 4 H. club program for rural youth. Some information on this very attractive and very rural program might inspire our rural people to start a similar kind of youth organization, adjusted of course to our conditions and possibilities.

3. FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION.

Though it is rather hard to point out special aspects out of this program, that might be helpful in our country, I have the feeling that in some way we might be able to learn something out of this program. The way in which this program meets causes of rural poverty, helping low income farmers to help themselves certainly has some aspects we could use. Causes of rural poverty however in our country are quite different from what they are here.

4. HOMEMAKING EDUCATION.

In our country we have quite a problem in teaching "Homemaking" to girls, working in factories. Part of our girls are starting to work at the age of 14, after leaving elementary school. As a rule our elementary school program has no homemaking teaching in it. So if these girls marry, at the age of 18 or 19, they mostly did not get any education in this field. The result is often: very poor family life, problem families, and social workers are needed to repair, what never was build up in a right way. Here is a problem in our country, where social work agencies and educational agencies both are concerned. For this program I got some very important ideas out of the Michigan Homemaking program.

5. COUNCILS OF SOCIAL AGENCIES.

The idea of these councils is not quite new to our country. Some of our cities have similar organizations and most of our provinces just started for their rural area's agencies, in some way comparable with Councils of Social Agencies here. Still there are some differences. We don't have Community Chests, in U.S. so closely related to most of the Councils. It will be interesting to study, why we don't have them, whether we could have them or whether our situation in social welfare is so different, that we better could not have them.

6. COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT.

Some aspects out of the community improvement programs I observed could be useful. Especially the different score lists to evaluate community life are interesting materials to bring home. Some villages and smaller towns might be interested in.

7. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AS A PROCES OF INTERGROUPWORK, as I learned to interpret in the Pittsburgh school of social work will be new to most of our social workers. Of course we have been practicing community organization in this way, but not made special studies of the problems, the special skills required to do a good job in this field. One week's attendance of an Institute of course is not sufficient to be well informed, but I will try to study in this field at home. For our country this field is very important, we have quite a number of different groups, all working on social work programs of their own. So some intergroupwork to coordinate is necessary. Perhaps the students in the school of social work at Groningen, where I am teaching a few hours a week may gain some profits out of this, as may the agency, I am working in, because most of its work is intergroupwork.

VI. BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS, THAT HAVE BEEN USEFUL:

Rural welfare Services, by Benson Y Landis,
Columbia University Press New York, 1949

Social Work Yearbook 1949
Russell Sage Foundation, New York.

Democracy on the March
David Lilienthal

The Tennessee Valley Authority, by C. Herman Pritchett
University of North Carolina Press.

Lake Success, L.I.
August 24, 1949

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