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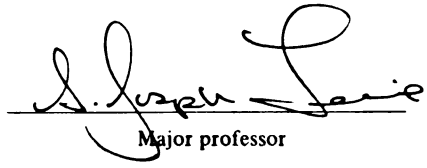

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SYSTEMATIC PROGRAM PLANNING IN FAITH-BASED DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS: PERSPECTIVES OF PROGRAM DIRECTORS

By

Kari Lynn Parks

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

SYSTEMATIC PROGRAM PLANNING IN FAITH-BASED DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS: PERSPECTIVES OF PROGRAM DIRECTORS

By

Kari Lynn Parks

There is a growing demand for scientific efficiency of faith-based development programs, resulting in the need for well-defined program goals. This study explored the presence of a systematic program planning process, based on the Lifelong Education Program Planning (LEPP) Model by Peter Cookson, which can help faith-based organizations formulate program goals. The influence of organizational structure on the systematic program planning process was also explored. Qualitative telephone interviews were used to interview representatives from six faith-based development organizations.

Results from this study indicate that systematic program planning does occur in faith-based development organizations. The LEPP Model effectively models the program planning process, but not all quadrants are used at all times. Furthermore, the organizational structure greatly influences the program planning process. Recommendations were made to develop a common terminology for the program planning process to increase effective communication.

DEDICATION

To my parents, John and Diane Parks

I thank you for all you have been to me up to this point in my life, and for all you promise to be in the future. Were it not for your unwavering support of all my decisions and your constant encouragement through life's struggles, I would not be where I am today. You have taught me the value of a hard day's work, and of doing the right thing, no matter how hard it may seem. You have taught me to laugh when things are well, to survive when things are bad, and to pray no matter what. Know that everything I accomplish in my life will be due to your unconditional love and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I thank God for allowing me to have all the opportunities I have had so far in my life, and for His never ending love and grace.

Over the years of my life, I have come in contact with so many wonderful and unique people, each of whom has left an indelible impression on me. I would like to extend the deepest thanks to these people: my family, extended church family and my close friends who have been an immense source of support to me during this time. Were it not for your supporting shoulders and listening ears, I would have been many times more frustrated through the whole process, and my life would truly be incomplete.

I would like to express my deepest thanks to my advisor, and friend, Dr. Joe Levine. Joe, you have been a tremendous source of guidance for me during my Master's program. You have given me the opportunities to grow both personally and professionally. Because of this, I will leave Michigan State University a very different, and more confident, person than I was just two short years ago.

A special note of gratitude goes out to the entire faculty and staff at Michigan State University, Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Education and Communication Systems. Thank you all for your support and assistance.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Religious-related organizations make up the largest sector, 67 percent of the nonprofit world. According to a two-year study by Independent Sector, a nonprofit coalition of over 800 corporate, foundation and voluntary organizations that studies philanthropy, 91.7 percent of religious congregations said they provided human services and welfare, and 73.9 percent cited international and foreign affairs involvements. This study also found that nearly a third of religious congregations were founded before 1900 ("Religious organizations", 1994). Cormode (1994) also notes that active involvement in religious organizations leads to active involvement in other charitable activities. Together, these findings indicate that religion-oriented organizations make up the largest sector of the nonprofit world, and have been involved in charitable activities for quite some time. So, what does this mean to those involved with international development and philanthropy today? Religious organizations, referred to as faith-based organizations for the purposes of this paper, are already providing development services to many populations, and can be a powerful force to work with in achieving development in the future.

Faith-based organizations have been a presence in society, in one form or another, for centuries. John Winthrop, governor of the Massachusetts colony, told the colonists as early as the 1600's, that the only way they could prosper

was to "...labor and suffer together: always having before [their] eyes [their] commission and community" (Jeavons, 1994). The movement that started with people just belonging to a church congregation grew into membership in related charitable societies. This, in turn, has burgeoned into a vast network of unique organizations dedicated to helping the underprivileged of the world (Cormode, 1994). People joined by a common faith are undertaking more and more philanthropic projects to better their communities.

This tie between faith and philanthropy is important to understanding the impact of faith-based organizations. According to Jeavons (1994), the centrality of religion and religious organizations to the activities of philanthropy and non-profit organizations is indisputable. This link has enabled faith-based organizations to become powerful agents of change in local as well as international communities, becoming, in effect, faith-based development organizations. As a matter of fact, federal and state governments are turning to religious nonprofit organizations to deliver social services and lead community development into the new millennium (Farnsley, 2001).

With new emphasis being placed on these faith-based organizations, there is a need for their programs to become more business like in operation. Federal and state governments require more quanititative evidence of project impact than just the anecdote that people's hearts were changed. Therefore, project planners and implementers will need to develop goals and guidelines for their projects.

This study will examine to what extent that happens, and also how the process proceeds in today's faith-based organizations.

Statement of Problem

Faith-based organizations are involved in a variety of development activities, both nationally and internationally. However, with the growing demand for scientific efficiency of programs there is a need for well-defined program goals. Systematic program planning allows for the formulation of program goals and objectives, but is not always a priority in all faith-based organizations.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent systematic program planning occurs in faith-based development organizations involved in development projects in the developing world. Examining the program planning processes and perceptions of program directors can provide insight to the level of program planning that occurs, and what priority systematic program planning may receive within the organization. Results of this study can help to build a framework for assessing systematic program planning in faith-based organizations and to provide the basis for more systematic program planning in the future.

Research Themes

1. Do faith-based development organizations engage in systematic program planning?
2. Is the systematic program planning that occurs in faith-based development organizations more a result of the organizational structure or the program planner's personal perspective?
3. Which area of the Lifelong Education Programming Planning Model is strongest in most faith-based development organizations?

Overview of Study

This study was concerned with specific aspects of systematic program planning and how those aspects are accomplished in faith-based development organizations.

A telephone interview was used to collect data in the study. Interview subjects were asked to reflect on specific situations and express their thoughts on those situations. One interview, lasting approximately thirty minutes, was conducted with each interviewee.

Definition of Terms

Faith-Based Development Organization- An organization with religious origins and motivations that is attempting to affect a measure of social change.

Philanthropy- Voluntary private giving for public purposes. This includes donations of time, labor and money. (Jeavons, 1994)

Systematic Program- A set of organized learning activities that are systematically designed to achieve planned learning outcomes in a specified period of time. (Cookson, 1996)

Systematic Program Planning- A comprehensive process that seeks to craft effective learning experiences before action is taken to achieve desired results. (Cookson, 1996)

Systematic Program Planner- An individual who is responsible for preparing and implementing planned learning experiences, establishing and achieving learning outcomes, and evaluating the success of the planned learning experiences according to the established outcomes. (Cookson, 1996)

Assumptions

This study focuses on program planning in various sizes and types of faith-based development organizations. Two assumptions are made. First, that program directors were truthful in their responses to the researcher. Second, that the interviewees were able to coherently assess and describe the character of the program planning process within their specific organization.

Limitations

A convenience sample was used in this study. Therefore, the respondents were not necessarily representative of a targeted population, and care must be taken when trying to apply these findings in other situations. Also, because this sample was chosen from a listing of Internet search engine results, those organizations that do not have a website were not included in the study.

This chapter has set the stage for the study. Chapter two discusses the literature available on the topic of faith-based development organizations, educational program planning, and the methodology used for this study. Chapter three provides the methodology used in the study. Chapter four presents the results of this study. Chapter five discusses the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the results.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores the current literature available on the recent history of faith-based organizations and what impact they currently have on the area of international development. The chapter includes description of the literature about faith-based organizations, educational program planning, and also a review of methodology.

Faith-Based Organizations

An examination of the history of faith-based organizations is helpful in realizing how they have become the organizations most people are familiar with today. Faith-based organizations have been involved in philanthropy, in one form or another, for centuries. Philanthropy has been defined as activities of voluntary giving and serving to others beyond one's family (Feierman, 1998). This includes the giving of time, labor and money. In the medieval ages, Saint Augustine proposed that all human relationships be founded on charity (Breidenthal, 1998). A Catholic organization known as the Ursuline Sisters began establishing orphanages and street homes in New Orleans as early as 1727 (Anderson, 1997). The practice of "reciprocity", or looking after those in one's own caste, kin, family or tribe, is very similar to philanthropy, and dates back to pre-literate tribes in Africa and North America (Feierman, 1998). According to this concept, community members helped those who had medical, physical or emotional

needs by giving help and receiving something in return. For example, in mid-nineteenth-century South Africa, people driven from their homes by many kinds of disorders would seek refuge with local leaders and offered their labor in return for their protection (Feierman, 1998). The move away from the practices of reciprocity made it necessary for specialized groups to form with the sole purpose of helping those in need.

The growth of faith-based organizations in the United States began with the first New England colonies. John Winthrop, governor of the Massachusetts colony, told the colonists as early as the 1600's, that the only way they could prosper was to "...labor and suffer together: always having before [their] eyes [their] commission and community" (Jeavons, 1994). What he was describing was the need for people to act voluntarily for the public good, which matches the definition of philanthropy quite well. Of course, the motivation and reward for this behavior was rooted in the community's strong religious beliefs (Jeavons, 1994).

Thiemann et al. (2000) notes that in early colonial society, informal networks of friends and family were the primary means of caring for the poor and destitute. For example, in Anglican Virginia, church officials provided care for children, the sick, and the elderly. Also, in Pennsylvania, religious institutions receiving both government and private funds housed the colony's poor population (Thiemann et al., 2000). This approach was practical for most colony communities because people were mostly agrarian, towns were relatively small, and initially there was a

very strong tie between the civic structure and the church. However, over the next two hundred years, towns became cities with larger populations, with a smaller percentage of the population being involved in agriculture (Jeavons, 1994). Similar to the pre-literate tribes of Africa, the move away from each community caring for their own needy led to the formation of specialized groups to take over that charge in these new cities.

Although instances of religious groups being organized specifically to assist the poor were common in the colonies, these institutions did not emerge in significant numbers until the mid-nineteenth century (Thiemann et al., 2000). During this time, the United States began to industrialize, which quickly increased the size of the cities, and resulted in the immigration of large numbers of people, both from rural areas and from other countries, to work in the new industries (Jeavons, 1994). Many types of organizations were formed during this time, including the Young Men's Club of America and the Salvation Army (Thiemann et al., 2000). However, until this point, many states lacked the legal authority to create corporations and enforce "trusts". This meant that organizations formed before the late nineteenth century were not recognized as the nonprofit corporations that exist today (Jeavons, 1994).

It was at this time, during the last third of the nineteenth century, when Andrew Carnegie described the modern concept of "scientific philanthropy". Carnegie, a very wealthy businessman, shaped his view of society based on quantitative

concepts such as efficiency and productivity, which had resulted in great success in his businesses (Hall, 1990). His ideas were to calculate the value of philanthropic investments in terms of their measurable effectiveness. Carnegie's ideas were generally well received by society at large, but Hall (1990) mentions how ministers rejected "scientific philanthropy" because they felt that Christian charity involved far more than just the economic provision of services. They considered the formation of community bonds to be equally as important. This tension is still evident today in the world of charity, as evidenced by the occasional mention of "long buried differences between 'scientific' and religious philanthropy" (Hall, 1990).

Following World War II, there was a gradual assumption of social welfare responsibilities by the government, but there was little or no partnering between the government and nonprofit organizations as contracting agencies (Thiemann et al., 2000). It was not until the passage of the Amendments to the Social Security Act in 1967 that there was a proliferation of contracts with nonprofit organizations. This law "specifically encouraged states to enter into purchase-of-service agreements with private agencies" which, Thiemann et al. (2000) notes changed the relationship between the federal government and nonprofit social service organizations, including faith-based organizations. According to Hall (1990), this joint work between the government and nonprofit organizations increased the demand for greater efficiency and effectiveness and the elimination

of duplication, waste and overlap. This is an example of the "scientific philanthropy" first mentioned by Andrew Carnegie resurfacing in a later era.

The 1980's brought an increase in homelessness, hunger and poverty in the United States. In response, mainline churches rose to the challenge in a "quiet and unceremonious way" by feeding the hungry, housing the homeless and providing various kinds of assistance (Thiemann et al., 2000). However, simultaneous budget cuts throughout the decade forced aid-giving organizations to do more with less money, and to justify their programs and procedures to many different funding sources (Hall, 1990). Again, the "scientific philanthropy" principle surfaced in the need for strategic planning, evaluation of programs and accounting systems.

The 1990's and the first two years of the 21st century have seen continued expansion of faith-based organizations. There is quite a large range of organizations, from the congregation-based programs to nation wide service networks, in existence today (Thiemann et al., 2000). During the last two presidential elections, there was another resurgence of interest in faith-based organizations (Wallis, 1999). This includes the charitable choice provision in the 1996 welfare bill, which forbids states from discriminating against religious groups when funding social service programs ("Faith-based Programs", 2001). Federal and state governments are turning more often to religious nonprofit organizations to deliver social services and lead community development into the

new millennium (Farnsley, 2001). "Scientific philanthropy" has surfaced again in that there is a need for those organizations' programs to become more business like in operation. Federal and state governmental funding regulations require more quantitative evidence of project impact than just anecdotal evidence that people's hearts were changed (Hacala, 2001). Only time will tell if this will prove to be problematic for denominationally tied organizations where commitment to services is traditionally considered more important than budgetary concerns and the like (Hall, 1990).

Program Planning

Program planning can encompass many different strategies, each with its own emphasis area and ideas of how to most effectively carry out planning. According to Axinn (1997 p.125), "To plan means to study the past and the present in order to forecast the future and in the light of that forecast, to determine the goals to be achieved, what needs to be done to achieve them, why those things need to be done, who shall do them, and how and when and where they shall be done". This is a basic framework for program planning, and there have been many suggested ways to go about completing each aspect of that framework. As Rivera (1987 p. 169) notes, planning for the education of adults is not universal in idea, or in terms of approach.

Cervero and Wilson (1994) describe three distinct categories of theoretical models that occur in the field of adult education program planning: classical

models, naturalistic models, and critical models. The classical viewpoint, basically a standard set of principles and procedures to be applied to any planning situation, began with Ralph Tyler's work in 1949. Tyler prescribed four questions that should be asked to guide the planning process: What purposes should be attained? What experiences can be provided that are likely to attain those purposes? How can the educational experience be organized? How can we assess whether the purposes are being attained? (Cervero & Wilson, 1994) This framework is widely considered to be the classical viewpoint in program planning. However, Cervero and Wilson (1994) point out that real-life planners say this is not an accurate picture of what they actually do. The classical viewpoint does not account for shifting organizational goals, limited resources, power relationships, etc. that take place in every organization.

The naturalistic viewpoint places more emphasis on the planner's ability to make judgments within a specific context than to abide by a standard set of procedures (Cervero & Wilson, 1994). The best example of this viewpoint is Cyril Houle's two-part system of program design. This system describes 11 types of educational situations that fall within four categories: individual, group, institutional and mass. Because Houle believed that planners' judgments are influenced by the context in which they are made, the planner must determine which situation a proposed activity belongs (Fellenz, 1998). Although this viewpoint focuses importance on the context of decision making in the planning

process, planners still need to address the questions asked by Tyler at some point.

The critical viewpoint focuses on the political and ethical nature of the program planning process. It shows how existing organizational power relationships shape planners' judgments (Cervero & Wilson, 1994). Paulo Freire's work is a well-known example of the critical viewpoint. Freire came to realize that the ignorance and lethargy of the oppressed people in Brazil were a direct result of the economic, social and political domination of which they were victims (Freire, 1970). He proposed a program planning process that liberated people by helping them find their voice against the political factors oppressing them. This viewpoint falls short though in that it does not explore the ways to incorporate the insights gained into planners' everyday judgments. It is especially hard to imagine how this viewpoint might be practiced in organizations that have other views on political and ethical agendas (Cervero & Wilson, 1994).

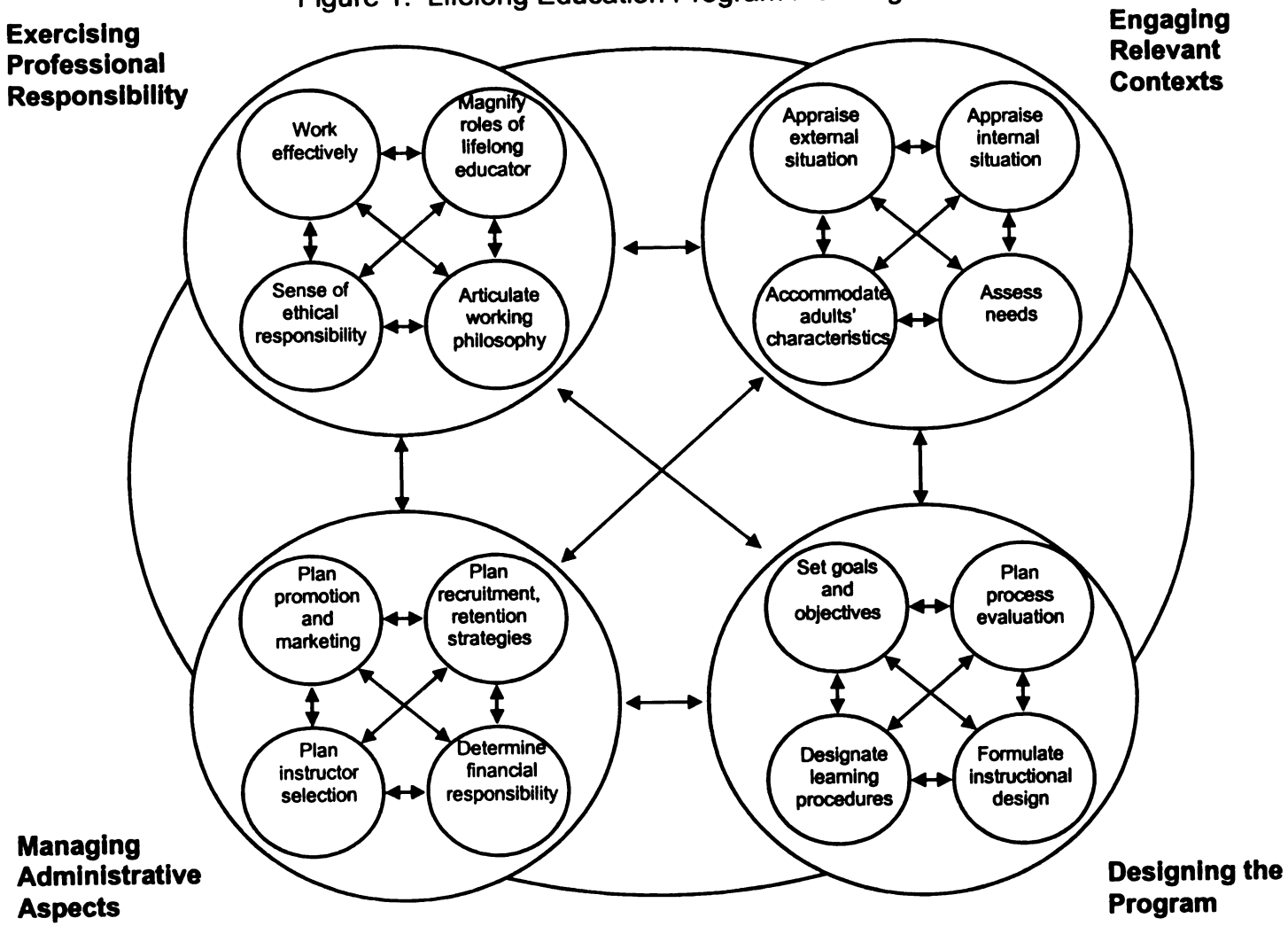
Each of these three viewpoints focuses on one aspect of program planning without integrating them into a cohesive picture. The classical viewpoint assumes that programs emerge from a set of prescribed planning steps, the naturalistic viewpoint compensates for this by stating that planner's actions are bounded by the constraints of the situation, and the critical viewpoint proposes that programs are determined by political and social forces (Cervero & Wilson, 1994). Planning, however, is not a theoretical activity, and requires and

integration of human decision making within constraints that fundamentally structure a program (Cervero & Wilson, 1994).

The Lifelong Education Program Planning (LEPP) Model, developed by Peter Cookson, takes the practical, contextual and political application factors into consideration. Similar to Houle's system, this model can function as a descriptive tool, one that analyzes how things are at present. But, this model can also function as a prescriptive tool, one that lays a framework for what should be accomplished in the future, by answering the four planning questions posed by Tyler. The LEPP Model provides for the analysis of political and social forces as well, incorporating the critical viewpoint into its form.

The LEPP Model, which is divided into four separate components, will be used as a theoretical framework for this study. None of the components is numbered; therefore, no single entry point exists in the model, allowing program planners to begin and end wherever they wish, as circumstances require (Rothwell & Cookson, 1997). The four quadrants of the LEPP Model are shown in Figure 1. These quadrants are Exercising Professional Responsibility, Engaging Relevant Contexts, Designing the Program, and Managing Administrative Aspects. Each of these components has four sub-components (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Lifelong Education Program Planning Model



The first quadrant to be discussed, Exercising Professional Responsibility, is the only quadrant that relies solely on the program planner. Successful program planners exercise professional responsibility by examining their work in light of the four sub-components.

Exercising Professional Responsibility Quadrant

Work effectively - To work effectively, program planners utilize time management skills and perform multiple tasks pertaining to the program. They demonstrate these skills not in a vacuum, but while satisfying the demands of stakeholders involved with the program.

Magnify roles - To magnify their roles, program planners go above and beyond the call of duty. They may do more than their job requires and/or be very pro-active in making sure that the program benefits those involved.

Articulate a Working Philosophy - To have a working philosophy, a program planner must be able to describe what they believe, and why they believe it. This allows the planner to hold steady ground when being pulled in different directions by organizations, learners, and stakeholders.

Enact a Sense of Ethical Responsibility - Program planners must recognize that there is a moral dimension to their job. Acting under an ethical responsibility allows program planners to balance the organizational demands of productivity with fairness for all involved in the program.

The second component to be discussed is referred to as Engaging Relevant Contexts. Program planners do not act in a vacuum; there are many conditions that affect their work, both inside and outside of the organization. This component details four areas that need to be considered when preparing to deal with those conditions.

Engaging Relevant Contexts Quadrant

Appraise the situation external to the organization - Program planners need to be sensitive to the fact that there is a world surrounding the organization. This can include other businesses acting in the same context as the organization, groups of people that may affect the outcome of a program, and the community in general. Assessment of these external forces is key in developing an adequate program.

Appraise the situation internal to the organization - This sub-component deals with the political process of program planning that was referred to by Cervero and Wilson (1994). Effective program planners take notice of the conditions within their organizations, such as the formal and informal structures. These structures determine what is and what is not appropriate for the program being planned.

Assess needs and stakeholders' interests - Program planners must know the performance problems or learning needs that should be met with a program. Once those needs are identified, the program planner can then conduct further analysis to determine how those needs should be met. Stakeholders' interests must also be taken into account during this

process due to their interest in the program. Program planners will find it extremely difficult to meet the needs of the learners if the stakeholders are unwilling to take part in the program.

Accommodate characteristics of adults - Program planners need to realize that all adults are different and that those different characteristics determine how people learn. Differences in cultural, ethnic, or geographical factors should be taken into account to make the program more applicable for the participants.

The third quadrant Cookson mentions is that related to Designing the Program. This is the quadrant that comes first to most program planners' minds because it involves actually defining the parameters and goals of the program. The tangible program comes into being in this quadrant by investigating four sub-components, each a part of the overall program.

Designing The Program Quadrant

Set goals and objectives - In this step, program planners further clarify the desired results of the program. Overall goals specify those general desired results, which are further outlined by objectives. Goals do not usually lend themselves to measurement, whereas objectives allow for a basis of measurement. Objectives that ask direct questions about what the learner can do or achieve after the program versus what they could do or achieve before the program can place an actual value on the program results.

Plan process and outcome evaluation - Evaluation should be conducted by the program planners to address not only the outcomes of the program, but also the methods used to achieve those outcomes. This is a critical step in the LEPP Model because evaluation allows the program planner to take a critical perspective to examine the entire program planning process.

Formulate instructional design - The instructional design is useful to program planners in developing an overall plan for the program. In formulating the instructional design, program planners select materials to be used, set up sessions within the program to be conducted, and may even select experiences to be stressed in order to bring all the learners to the same page.

Designate learning procedures - This step is closely related to developing the instructional design. When that design has been set, the program planner can then select the appropriate ways to deliver information within that context. The delivery methods that are chosen, such as discussion groups, large group conversations, or small group activities, constitute the learning procedures.

The fourth quadrant, called Managing Administrative Aspects, deals with the logistical issues of program planning. Program planners need to demonstrate the competency in each of the four sub-components: ability to recruit participants, promote programs, budget programs, and train program instructors.

Managing Administrative Aspects Quadrant

Promote and market programs - To project a positive image of their program, program planners need to do promotional work. Promotion and marketing communicates to potential learners how their needs will be met by the program. This also serves to help the stakeholders and others in the organization see how the program contributes to overall organizational goals and productivity.

Recruit and retain participants - Program planners often need to find ways to get learners to participate. Many programs are voluntary, so recruiting is an important skill if the program is to go on. Also, it is rarely mandatory for participants to have sustained participation in the program; therefore it is important to devise ways to retain those participants. Attracting learners to a program, then keeping them interested is a key to the success of the program.

Determine financial responsibility - Program planners must work within the existing financial resource constraints. This involves working with funding and sponsoring agencies either inside or outside the organization, contracts with businesses, and/or governmental and nonprofit groups. A comprehensive understanding of the program being planned is necessary to ensure that all financial aspects are included.

Plan instructor selection, supervision and training - Program planners should be able to find people who can deliver the instruction and planned learning experiences involved in the program. This may involve varying

degrees of selection and training, especially if the program planner will be doing the instruction.

The LEPP Model deals with the many activities and responsibilities that program planners face in carrying out their objectives. It must be applied, however, to the particular situations in which a program planner is operating. Program planners can, and should, apply the model differently to allow them to act directively, collaboratively, or non-directively (Rothwell & Cookson, 1997). For example, program planners acting directively will oversee each step of the planning process; they are heavily involved in the process. In comparison, a program planner acting non-directively would become more of a resource agent for the learners who are bearing the burden for planning their own learning experience.

Methodology Review

Qualitative interviewing, also referred to as in-depth interviewing, is flexible and dynamic. It involves nondirective, unstructured, non-standardized, and open-ended interviewing. This form of interviewing uses face-to-face encounters in a nondirective, unstructured and open-ended environment to acquire and understand an interviewee's perspectives on situations or experiences (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). This method is one of the most powerful tools in qualitative research (Goodman, 2001).

Taylor and Bogdan (1998) discuss four situations in which in-depth interviewing is especially well suited.

- Research interests are relatively clear and well defined.
- Settings or people are not otherwise accessible.
- The researcher has time constraints.
- The researcher is interested in understanding a broad range of settings or people.

However, Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1996) argue that telephone interviews compare favorably with face-to-face interviews in the above situations, and have become more popular in recent years.

There are limitations to the interview technique. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) note that a researcher cannot assume that what a person says or does in an interview is necessarily the same thing they would say or do in other situations. The control of the interview and the structure of a questionnaire can lead to unreal responses. Goodman (2001) mentions another limitation: there is variability in interviews and also interaction effects between the interviewer and the interviewee. Therefore, in-depth interviews are less standardized than other data collection methods.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology that was used to explore the extent and process of program planning in faith-based development organizations. The chapter includes a description of the design of the study, population and sample, instrumentation, and procedures that was used to collect and analyze the data.

Design of Study

This study follows a survey research design, and is qualitative in nature. Interviews were conducted and analyzed thematically with respect to the research themes. Due to the wide geographic separation of the population and time constraints, data were collected through a telephone interview and were then qualitatively analyzed.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study included faith-based development organizations within the United States that have at least one formal, ongoing development activity in a developing country. A listing of humanitarian Christian organizations was obtained from the Open Directory Project, a comprehensive and searchable directory of the World Wide Web. This listing was compiled by searching with a combination of the following terms: humanitarian, religious, Christian and organizations.

A sample of six faith-based development organizations was selected by convenience sampling methods. Initially, a general email was sent to thirty-two of the organizations on the Open Directory Project list. This email gave a brief description of the research study and requested that the email be forwarded to the appropriate Program Unit of each organization. Email addresses for each organization were obtained by visiting that organization's website, as listed on the Open Directory Project website. Organizations were asked to reply to the email with the mailing address of a representative to whom more information about the study could be sent, including a postcard to select possible times for the telephone interview. The organization was asked that the selected representative be familiar with the formal structure of the organization, have some measure of administrative control over program planning, and be directly involved with the organization's development activities in the Third World.

Of the thirty-two general emails sent, sixteen replied with the requested contact information. An invitation to participate, describing the study in detail and outlining their time commitment, was then sent to all respondents. An organization's agreement to participate was indicated by the return of the enclosed postcard. Three organizations returned postcards and were scheduled for telephone interviews.

Upon completion of each interview, the interviewees were asked to recommend other faith-based organizations for the researcher to contact. These suggested organizations were also contacted by email to request participation in the study. The same information letter was sent, along with the postcard, and interviews were subsequently scheduled. This method resulted in three additional interviews.

Data Collection

The data collection method used was a telephone interview conducted by the researcher. The researcher scheduled interviews according to the availability of the interviewee as indicated on the returned postcard. Interview duration ranged from thirty minutes to forty-five minutes. All interviews were recorded using a small telephone-recording device that attached to the telephone receiver and plugged into a micro-cassette recorder. All interviewees were informed at the beginning of the interview that the interviews were being recorded.

Upon completion of the interview, the recorded tapes were transcribed into a word processing document by the researcher. The documents were then used to thematically analyze the collected data.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation used to gather information regarding the extent of program planning in faith-based organizations was a telephone interview conducted by the researcher. The interview ranged from thirty minutes to forty-five minutes in duration. The questions asked during the interview were developed after a review of the Lifelong Education Program Planning (LEPP) Model. Questions were asked, both directly and indirectly, about activities in each of the four quadrants of the LEPP Model.

Interviewees were first asked to describe a development project they had implemented that could be used for the basis of discussion. They were then asked to reflect on the project and to describe the first step taken in planning that project. Follow-up questions asked included the following: How did you decide to take that step? Describe influences besides your own that may have impacted your decision to take that step? How did you carry out that step? What would you do differently if you were to repeat that step? This protocol was followed for as many subsequent steps as necessary within the development process described by the interviewee. When the interviewee finished describing all steps that were taken, the interviewee was asked to make any other comments related to program planning and his/her involvement in it that had not been mentioned. Finally, the interviewee was asked how he/she would characterize their approach to program planning. Interviewees were given a list of twelve words and asked to choose all that they considered to be descriptive of their program planning style. The list of words, in alphabetical order were: casual, conventional, evaluative,

fundamental, intentional, linear, organized, participatory, practical, standardized, systematic, and unintentional.

Analysis of Data

Data obtained for this study were qualitatively analyzed. After each telephone interview was conducted, the interview was transcribed by the researcher into a word processing document. When all the interviews were completed, text lines in each interview were numbered and each document was printed in preparation for analysis.

Analysis of data was conducted in three phases. First, the researcher coded the names of interviewees to protect interviewee confidentiality. Second, the researcher read each interview to identify possible themes for discussion. Once a theme was identified, the researcher coded that theme with a specific color. Each interviewee comment relating to an identified theme was highlighted with the coded color. This process was repeated three times, identifying three themes. Third, all comments pertaining to each theme were then compiled on a separate sheet. Comments for each theme were examined for similarities and differences and possible groupings.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes the results from the telephone interviews that were conducted. It includes three sections. The first section contains descriptions of the interviewees who participated in the study. The second section describes the different themes related to program planning found throughout the interviews. The third section then examines those themes in relation to the Lifelong Education Program Planning (LEPP) Model.

Interviewee Descriptions

Following is a brief description of each interviewee who participated in the research study. Interviewee names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees and their organizations.

Adam

Adam coordinates programs for his organization in Central America and the Andean Region. He is responsible for program planning, monitoring, evaluation, budgeting, monitoring of expenditures, and linking work between those regions and other parts of the world. He also has various responsibilities within the organization in terms of management of organization-wide projects. He has previously worked in Honduras for five years. Adam has been with his current organization for four years, and is 41 years of age.

Ben

Ben works in a consulting capacity for several faith-based development organizations, as well as heading his own organization. He is involved in training practitioners, pastors, church leaders, Christian political leaders and Christian businessmen in development principles and practices. This involves program planning, monitoring and evaluation. He travels and works extensively overseas in many different countries. Ben has been with his current organization for eleven years, and is 51 years of age.

Chad

Chad is the Executive Director for his organization. He oversees programs worldwide and sets the program direction for the organization. He also serves as representation to donors and government agencies worldwide. He worked in the Republic of Georgia for two years with his current organization and for five years, mainly in the former Soviet Union, with other agencies. Chad has been with his current organization for three and a half years and is 34 years of age.

David

David currently serves as the Executive Director of an organization that partners with national government and non-governmental organizations to contract development workers in national host organizations. He has worked in Korea for five years, Chad for 21 years, and has also worked in India, Nepal, Pakistan and

Cameroon. David has been with his current organization for 36 years, and is 61 years of age.

Frank

Frank works in the areas of evaluation of programs, research for best practices to share knowledge from within and without the organization, review of planning objectives of all programs, and coordination with organizational partners. He has worked in Belize for ten years, Honduras, Mexico, and Kenya for three years each, and Costa Rica for one year. Frank has been with his current organization for a total of 25 years, and is 51 years of age.

Greg

Greg serves as the Director of Human Resource Development for his current organization. He works with projects in the field of education as well. Greg has been with his current organization for eight years.

Discussion of Themes

Three major themes emerged from the analysis of the interviews: vision, participatory planning, and planning process structure. This section describes, then discusses, each theme and consequent sub-themes.

Vision

Vision plays a very important role in the program planning process according to all the interviewees. Two sub-themes emerged: organizational-centered vision referring to the organization's vision when planning a project, and learner-centered vision, referring to the community's vision. These two sub-themes are both concerned with vision, but are very unique from each other. There were several different terms used to describe this concept of vision including mission, value system, ethics, and principles. However, for the purposes of this paper, vision will be used consistently throughout.

Vision was frequently cited in reference to the faith-based development organization as a whole, and how the organization progressed with program planning. Four interviewees mentioned, in similar fashion, that the mission statement and the vision of their organization guided the program planning process from start to finish. One interviewee, when asked what influenced the program planning process within their organization, replied, "I think the organization has a mission statement, we have our values and our vision, and we are up to six program areas...we tend to stay just focused on those" (Chad). Another interviewee described how he helps villagers and local leaders plan within their communities by saying, "In that process, number one, I usually start with their mission...mission statement is a starting point because that's why they exist. Then we talk about, given your mission statement, what's your vision?" (Ben). One interviewee mentioned using the organization's vision to work toward

a plan for a potential project. He said, "...in the way that I describe working backward from the...vision, working backward thinking through what you have to do to achieve that" (Frank). These interviewees made it clear that without a concrete, agreed upon, vision any program that was planned would be without focus and less productive than it should be. This was stated explicitly by one interviewee when he said, "...if you don't put principles and values at the center [of the program], no matter how successful your program is in the short run, in the long run it's going to really be a failure in terms of bringing about any social change" (Adam).

The other sub-theme referred to vision with respect to the learner. This is usually derived from the organizational vision, but applies specifically to a particular project with a defined set of learners. It could include the goal of the project, how long each segment of the project should last, even what different steps are being planned in the project. One interviewee described this as, "We basically laid out a vision of the project, what we were doing, what their responsibility would be, and then asked them if they would be wiling to volunteer their service to do the role we had explained to them" (David). Other interviewees described having multiple, and often heated, dialogue sessions with the people in the communities where the project was to be implemented. One interviewee describes this process as "vision casting" (Ben), the purpose of which was to help the local community understand the total picture of the project. Another mentions that,

"...we had a lot of debates about vision and values with the Director of the [local] organization" (Frank).

Vision was also mentioned as being an important factor in maintaining relationships with others involved in a specific project. Two interviewees mentioned the necessity of having a shared vision between all parties involved in order to maintain an equal partnership and to avoid one organization's vision being imposed on the other. One interviewee stated that, "I still believe that is one of the essential things that has to happen right up front or behind the scenes if you're going to be doing an authentic partnership...you have to work a lot on finding out what each other believes" (Frank). Another discussed putting the principles of "solidarity, transparency, and honesty" (Adam) at the center of any relationships with people and projects in order to get the best results, and most sustainable results. However, it was stated that the vision developed or discussed in such situations can also come into conflict with other aspects of the project. For example, one interviewee mentioned, "If you want to be really rigorous on quality control and really pursue that idea of getting beyond good intentions...that's a high value that conflicts sometimes with your high value on mutually respectful [relationships]" (Frank).

Participatory Planning

Participatory planning also emerged as a theme in all the interviews. All the interviewees described participatory planning techniques that were used in their

respective projects. Also, when asked to choose from a list of words any terms that would describe their approach to program planning, every interviewee chose the term participatory. However, these techniques varied between organizations. Three different sub-themes of participatory planning techniques emerged: the gradual transfer of power technique, the abrupt shift of power technique and the complete immersion technique.

The gradual transfer of power technique was described as the process of slowly turning over control of a development project to the community where it was to be implemented. Two interviewees described this process as one where an organization determines that a need exists in a specific community, usually through a needs assessment. The organization then implements the development project, being assisted by the local community members. As time, and the project, progress, more and more control of the project is put into the hands of community members. Eventually, the project is controlled almost completely by the people whom it was designed to serve.

One interviewee described how his organization arrived at the idea for this transfer of power idea. He notes, "We saw that everything that we had done during the 1970's depended on our own management of it. We had done a lot of work in several states...that depended on our expatriate staff being there, managing, infusing money into it. So we were looking for [an organization] that, in particular, had a Christian mission and was interested in doing grass roots

community development" (Frank). One example of how they worked to turn power over to the local people was by hiring community members into the project. In this project, "We hired to us another young veterinarian to work with [us], so we had an intermediate nationalization of [our] work...we started to take on a little bit more of [their] face. That's one thing that happened in this transitioning from having [our] image to having a more...partnership image" (Frank). The other interviewee that described participatory planning techniques of this type said, "It was always a self-evolving process...as a matter of fact, [the local organization] is a completely independent organization now, which is the way that we work. We go in, become part of the process, then bit-by-bit it becomes independent and they are on their own" (Adam). This organization used similar techniques to achieve this transfer. He mentions, "...we hired people and we tried to hire [locals]. As a matter of fact, one of the programs we have is what you might call an apprentice program where if we hired [non-local] professionals we had a [local] assigned to them so they could pick up the skills and eventually take over that person's job" (Adam).

The abrupt shift of power technique was similar to the gradual transfer of power technique, except the faith-based organization remained involved to a certain point at which time power was turned over to the local community and the organization remained available for consultation. Two interviewees described this process as one where an organization determines that a need exists in a specific community. The organization then usually identifies a number of people

from the community to function as board members or action people and to design the actual project. According to the interviewees, the organization stays available for assistance and consultation, but the project design itself is in the hands of the community people.

One interviewee described the steps that his organization takes in this point of transfer technique. He states, "So we would go in and do a PRA, and...a whole list of things comes out like identifying needs, strengths and resources within the community...At the end of that, three or four people are elected from the community and those people are the board...we then work with them directly to identify their agricultural needs. So they would design the project themselves; they would write the proposal, they would do the budgeting" (Chad). However, his organization was still available for consultation. He notes, "...we helped them in the technical assistance side and the planning side" (Chad).

Another interviewee mentioned a similar process for his organization. He described the planning process up to the point where discussions are held with the local community leaders on a selected committee or board. In these talks, an outline of a project is assembled and talked about. Then, the community members plan the actual materials, training sessions, etc. The interviewee mentioned specifically, though, that his organization did not, as a rule, help the community plan the actual design, that was in their hands. He states, "...if you go [into a project] with that kind of thing, you've already destroyed the creativity

at the local level...you don't force [the community] to think differently about their problems" (Ben). He does mention being available on a consultation basis though when he says that he is able to, "...show them how to go through that process", if the need arises (Ben).

The third type of participatory planning technique that emerged was the complete immersion technique. This technique is similar to the other two techniques in that the development organization still determines that a need exists in a specific community and still works with the local community members to arrive at a plan for a development project. However, in this technique, the organization works collaboratively with the community members in the planning of the project throughout the entire process.

One interviewee described this spirit of collaboration as, "...I was starting with something from a people that wanted something, but they didn't know what they wanted it to look like. So we could sit down and work on it together" (David). He then goes on to describe the formation of an advisory council, another term for a community board, and working with the council to determine where the project would go. The interviewee then mentioned that this particular project included a three-day seminar, which he helped plan and implement. He notes, "*We* did start a seminar, a workshop, where *we* divided up the whole area into districts and *we* asked the church to name a leading farmer who had a working knowledge of French..." [italics added] (David).

Another interviewee described a situation in his project that necessitated the involvement of his organization throughout the entire project. This particular project involved the development of a graduate level curriculum for community members taking part in the project's training, part of which was developed by a University. The interviewee notes that, "Since we had collaboration between two entities, a University and an NGO, a lot of details and diplomatic and administrative negotiations had to take place" (Greg). The interviewee indicated that the actual design of the programs: the instructional design, information to be covered at the trainings, etc. were actually meshed into these negotiations with outside parties. The involvement of the development organization throughout this time was essential to keeping the project focused on the local community, and ensuring that the end goals for the project were met.

Planning Process Structure

The structure of the organizations' program planning processes was a rather ambiguous topic to discuss. Interviewees had both direct and indirect comments related to the planning process structure. Two distinct sub-themes emerged – programs that seemed to evolve as they went through the planning process, and planning processes that governed the way a program developed. All interviewees mentioned having a "flexible framework" where any structure that existed was susceptible to fine tuning when necessary.

Interviewees that described their programs as "evolving" all used similar terminology when discussing their planning processes. Each was able to identify a starting point for the project they reflected on during the interview, but these starting points were abstract. For example, "When I arrived, [the project] was an idea...They didn't know what they wanted, but they wanted to help" (David). Another interviewee described the same idea when he said, "Generally, especially when we're getting into new areas we actually don't go in with a plan...we slowly build up processes, which may or may not be projects" (Adam). These interviewees described the projects as growing from the ground up; starting small and developing into a full scale project. One interviewee state that, "I like building from something small, develop it, go into it big..." (David). One project started simply as, "...kind of a University Bible study and then getting to know them through a missionary that they deeply respected" (Frank). Interestingly, one interviewee described situations within his organization where projects were successful without a defined structure for the planning process. He mentions, "I think that in program planning...things like that it's not necessarily been a strong point or [ours], but I think we've been able to have a lot of success in part because our methods have been very sound...So the need for program planning, for evaluation has not been as great in an agency such as ours where we have enough funds that we can spend time sending people down to explore and then accompany processes" (Adam).

The interviewees who discussed a more formal structure for their organizations' planning process used a different set of terms than the first group. Instead of words like idea, develop, etc., they more frequently used terms such as log frame, timeline and management. One interviewee mentioned that his organization has, "...a whole department that does planning...we have five people who are engaged full time" (Greg). Two interviewees discussed log frame and timeline information that was developed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and used by their organizations during the planning process. One interviewee said that his organization was even looking at developing that information for itself. He noted, "We're looking at that process; it's a very expensive and time consuming process, but it's something we have on our list of things to work on as an organization" (Chad). These two interviewees also noted that the projects they described were typical of other projects implemented by their organizations. One notes that, "We have found that to be appropriate across the board" (Greg), and the other states that, "It's just very identical to how most of our programs are" (Chad). Chad also mentions that the planning process is one that has been modeled elsewhere; one that his organization takes to other places for project implementation.

Despite differences in the structure of the actual planning process, all interviewees mentioned that no planning process was set in stone. They each described how their projects, whether evolving or planned according to a structure, had to have some limits but not enough to make them rigid.

Interviewees referred to this concept as having a "flexible framework" for program planning. For example one interviewee, who described his organization's planning process as evolutionary, said, "We didn't have something that was done because it was defined as a standard...but standardized in the sense that we had limits and barriers" (David). Another interviewee, who described his organization's planning process as structured said, "While there was really structure attached to what I was doing, many things happened casually and unintentionally...we had to have structure to go forward, but that structure had to allow you to capitalize on unintentional tings that were good" (Greg).

Other Relevant Ideas

There were other relevant ideas that emerged from the data analysis in this study, but were not considered strong enough to be themes or sub-themes. These ideas were mentioned by one or two interviewees and were not discussed in depth during the interview, but contributed to the program planning process in some way.

Two interviewees described the process of working through problems that arose during the implementation of a project. In most planning activities, unforeseen problems or circumstances arise frequently. Those types of problems are often seen as setting a project back, or having a negative impact on the final outcome. The two interviewees, however, felt differently. They both felt that the occurrence of unexpected problems actually had a positive effect on their projects. One

interviewee referred to the unforeseen problems he faced as "serendipity" and mentioned that a lot of the goodness associated with a program was a result of that "serendipity" (Greg). The other interviewee noted that, "...a lot of what has made the organization strong is actually going through some of the rough spots" (Adam).

Two interviewees also mentioned a change in direction taking place within the project. A needs assessment is typically completed to determine what needs the community has. After the needs assessment, a project is planned with goals and objectives in certain areas, and actions are taken to achieve those goals. These interviewees mentioned beginning a course of action, then realizing that it was not the appropriate course of action. This resulted in a shift in direction. One interviewee noted that the community wanted to pool their money and buy a community-owned tractor. He said, "I thought yes, here's a need, but I talked with them and said first of all, who would take care of it? None of them were mechanics, they had no idea how they would pay for their costs....There were just a lot of problems, and even though it was something they would have liked to have, it really wasn't practical " (David). The original project was not feasible, so the project went in another direction that could provide positive results for the community. Another interviewee mentioned the same phenomena taking place within his project. He noted, "I don't think that original project has flowered....This is interesting because sometimes the things you are most

optimistic about in the beginning just don't relate as well to the people in the long term " (Frank).

A third idea mentioned by some interviewees was the nature of development projects – they are long-term projects working toward long-term goals, but are required to show short-term results as soon as possible. That idea may seem paradoxical, but the necessity for short-term results is rooted in economics and the long-term goals are developed for social change. Economically speaking, interviewees stated that the communities they worked with needed to reap some immediate benefits from the projects, or there would be a loss of both money and interest in the project. One interviewee noted, "...it's got to be quick and it's got to be with a profit. These people are very marginal and they can't wait for a whole year to get any kind of return" (David). This interviewee also said though, "The whole total project...was long-term oriented, but the projects within...were quite short-term" (David). Another interviewee described the same dichotomy when he noted that, "In terms of our work, we're very interested in what will make people's lives better immediately but we're also very much interested in the change that can occur to allow civil society to participate in decision-making processes" (Adam).

Themes in Relation to Lifelong Education Program Planning Model

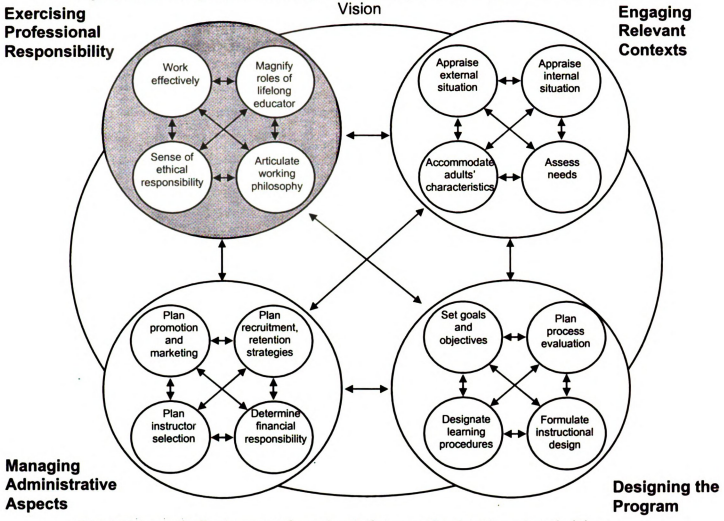
Vision, participatory planning, and the planning process structure can all be examined with respect to the Lifelong Education Program Planning (LEPP) Model. Each of these themes corresponds with either a sub-component of the LEPP Model, or an entire quadrant. This section will examine each theme separately in relation to the LEPP Model.

Vision

The concept of vision was divided into two sub-themes that emphasize two different sections of the LEPP Model, as illustrated in Figure 2. Interviewees who spoke from an organizational vision viewpoint described activities that corresponded to the "Exercising Professional Responsibility" quadrant. Interviewees who spoke of the learners' vision described activities that corresponded to the "Designing the Program" quadrant.

There are four sub-components that comprise the quadrant "Exercising Professional Responsibility" – to work effectively, to enact a sense of ethical responsibility, to magnify roles of lifelong educator and to articulate a working philosophy. The development of an organization's vision for a project involves each sub-component in the professional responsibility quadrant (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Lifelong Education Program Planning Model: Organizational Centered Vision



Shaded areas indicate area of emphasis for organizational centered vision.

Exercising Professional Responsibility quadrant

Work effectively - The LEPP Model states that to work effectively, program planners perform many different tasks pertaining to the program while satisfying demands of stakeholders. All interviewees referred to this concept stating that they worked with many groups, including major funding agencies, which were involved with the program. One stated that they, "...had a small core of about 12 organizations, a lot of them actually led by efforts of the Catholic Church" that the planner had to work with (Adam).

Enact a sense of ethical responsibility - To enact a sense of ethical responsibility, the LEPP Model states that program planners need to recognize the moral dimension to their job. This allows them to be productive in planning a program while retaining a level of fairness for all those involved in the program. This was evidenced by one interviewee's description of his project. He noted that he, as the program planner, was required to collaborate with two entities to develop an administrative framework for the program (Greg). A sense of ethical responsibility or knowledge of the impact this program could have, allowed the planner to strive for fairness for all involved. Negotiations with the two entities were entered into with the assumption that the best solution would be sought to benefit the most people.

Magnify roles of lifelong educator – To magnify the roles of a lifelong educator program planners must become role models. They typically do more than their job requires and become pro-active in making sure the programs benefits those involved. One interviewee described actions he took in implementing a project that were considered beyond the call of duty. For example, small farmers could not get useful pesticides and insecticides for their farms because they were only sold in the larger cities. The interviewee mentioned becoming involved in buying large volumes of the chemicals and distributing them over a 40-mile service area. He also worked with his project team to involve representatives from several districts in the country in a correspondence course. This was part of the educational component of the project (David).

Articulate a working philosophy - The LEPP Model states that to have a working philosophy, a program planner must be able to describe what they believe, and why they believe it. Mission statement and vision are the tools for describing what an organization believes. Interviewees mentioned that the mission statement and the vision of their organizations guided the program planning process. One interviewee noted that, "the mission of the organization...is why [they] exist, what [they] want to do in that community" (Ben). Also, interviewees described having debates over how the program would succeed. They noted that determining what all parties believed to be important was the key to moving forward with the program.

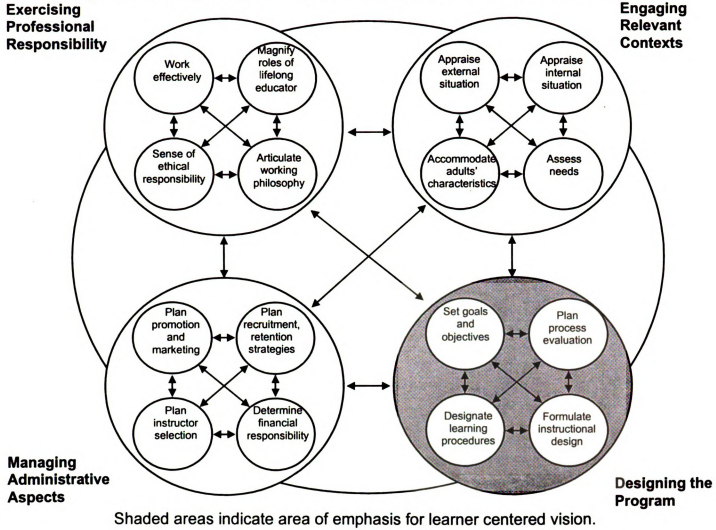
There are four sub-components that comprise the quadrant "Designing the Program" – to set goals and objectives, to plan the process and outcome evaluation, to formulate an instructional design and to designate learning procedures. The development of a vision with respect to the learners for a project involves each sub-component in the program design quadrant (see Figure 3).

Designing the Program quadrant

Set Goals and Objectives – In this sub-component, program planners further clarify the desired results of the program. This clarification takes place either in conjunction with or shortly after the development of a vision for the project. Discussion between the organization and the community serve to lay the groundwork for goals to be set based on the shared vision. One interviewee mentioned this process when describing conversations that he had with a community. The discussions revolved around, "...what it would take to do this [what they had envisioned together]....The major focus [was] the vision casting, helping them to understand the total picture" (Ben).

Plan process and outcome evaluation – The LEPP Model states that evaluation should be conducted by program planners to address both the methods used in the project and the outcomes achieved. An assessment

Figure 3. Lifelong Education Program Planning Model: Learner Centered Vision



Shaded areas indicate area of emphasis for learner centered vision.

of these two areas allows the program planner to critically examine the project and the way in which it was implemented. One interviewee, in discussing the evaluation of methods, noted that, "...I think we've been able to have a lot of success in part because our methods have been very sound" (Adam). Another interviewee focused on the evaluation of outcomes within his organization. When asked about what tools the organization used to evaluate outcomes he noted that it adapted industry standard models, but also mentioned, "We would like to have our own, and we need it as part of a monitoring and evaluation unit within our organization" (Chad).

Formulate instructional design – To formulate the instructional design, program planners develop an overall plan for the program. This could include selecting materials to be used, setting up sessions within the program to be conducted, and/or selecting experiences to be stressed to bring all the learners to the same page. There are many choices to be made within this sub-component; for example, the materials used could be chosen from a vast selection within the topic area, or could be developed by the program planners. Furthermore, there are many types of sessions to choose from varying from lecture style to group discussion to a learner-led session. Such a wide range of choices can make work in this sub-component time consuming. One interviewee who mentioned this step placed it immediately before the implementation of the project he

discussed. He noted that just prior to implementation the "...curriculum was being developed and planned...[and] the location was being secured" (Greg).

Designate Learning Procedures – The LEPP Model states that this sub-component is closely linked to formulating an instructional design. Once the design has been set, the program planner can choose appropriate ways to deliver information within that context. This sub-component can be time consuming as well, due to the large number of delivery methods that can be used. Small and large group discussions, group activities, conversation groups and even combinations of all of them can constitute the learning procedures. One interviewee noted activities in this sub-component when planning three-day educational seminars, linked quite closely to the church, for the local community. He stated, "A pastor would come in and I would have a meditation, praise and so forth for a half an hour. Then we'd have the [educational] program " (David).

Participatory Planning

Participatory planning was divided into three sub-themes: the gradual transfer of power, the abrupt shift of power, and complete immersion. Each technique involved a differing number of quadrants in the LEPP Model – from the complete immersion technique involving all four quadrants to the abrupt shift technique involving two quadrants. It should be noted that some activities used in

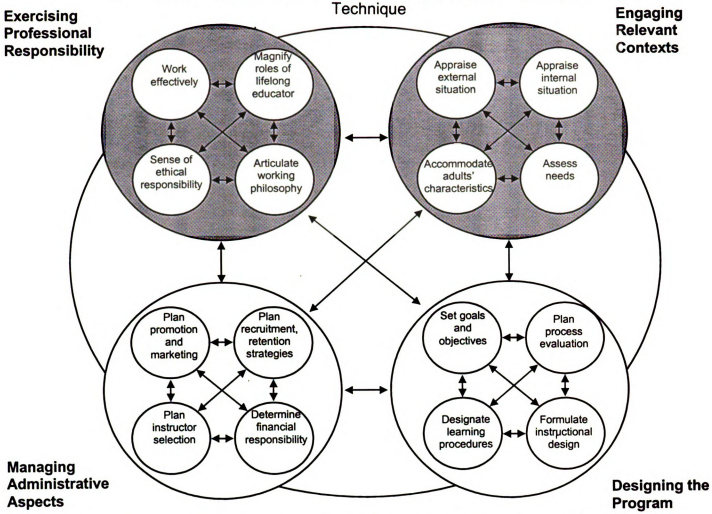
quadrants with respect to participatory planning are the same as those used with respect to vision. This is due to the non-mutually exclusive nature of the themes involved in the program planning process. The process of forming a vision can have direct consequences on the participatory planning techniques used, and choosing one participatory planning technique over another can often help determine a vision for the project.

The abrupt shift of power technique encompasses both the "Exercising Professional Responsibility" and "Engaging Relevant Contexts" quadrants, as illustrated in Figure 4. The four sub-components that comprise the quadrant "Exercising Professional Responsibility" are to work effectively, to enact a sense of ethical responsibility, to magnify roles of a lifelong educator and to articulate a working philosophy. The four sub-components that comprise the quadrant "Engaging Relevant Contexts" are to appraise the situation external to the organization, to appraise the situation internal to the organization, to assess needs and stakeholders' interests, and to accommodate characteristics of adults. Following is a description of each sub-component in these two quadrants, and how activities used for this technique constitute those quadrants.

Exercising Professional Responsibility quadrant

Work effectively - The LEPP Model states that to work effectively, program planners perform many different tasks pertaining to the program while satisfying demands of stakeholders. Interviewees referred to this

Figure 4. Lifelong Education Program Planning Model: Abrupt Shift of Power Technique



Shaded areas indicate area of emphasis for abrupt shift of power technique.

concept stating that they worked with many groups, including major funding agencies, which were involved with the program. One interviewee, in describing his work with the project noted, "...I wrote the proposal with another expatriate....as the country director I was overseeing everything" (Chad).

Enact a sense of ethical responsibility - To enact a sense of ethical responsibility, the LEPP Model states that program planners need to recognize the moral dimension of their job. This allows them to be productive in planning a program while retaining a level of fairness for all those involved in the program. This was evidenced by one interviewee as he referred to questions that have to be asked of any program. He asks, "Why do we need to be concerned about this generation, and what is an effective way of going about it?" (Ben).

Magnify roles of lifelong educator – To magnify the roles of a lifelong educator program planners must become role models. They typically do more than their job requires and become pro-active in making sure the programs benefits those involved. One interviewee described actions he took in implementing a project that were considered beyond the call of duty. For example, small farmers could not get useful pesticides and insecticides for their farms because they were only sold in the larger cities. The interviewee mentioned becoming involved in buying large volumes of

the chemicals and distributing them over a 40-mile service area. He also worked with his project team to involve representatives from several districts in the country in a correspondence course. This was part of the educational component of the project (David).

Articulate a working philosophy - The LEPP Model states that to have a working philosophy, a program planner must be able to describe what they believe, and why they believe it. Mission statement and vision are the tools for describing what an organization believes. Interviewees mentioned that the mission statement and the vision of their organizations guided the program planning process. One interviewee noted that, "the mission of the organization...is why [they] exist, what [they] want to do in that community" (Ben). Also, interviewees described having debates over how the program would succeed. They noted that determining what all parties believed to be important was the key to moving forward with the program.

Engaging Relevant Contexts quadrant

Appraise the situation external to the organization – The LEPP Model states that program planners must be aware that there is a world surrounding their organization. Assessment of these external forces is important in planning and implementing an adequate program. One interviewee noted that his organization, in order to assess the external

situation, would conduct a Participatory Rural Appraisal to identify the needs, strengths and resources in a community (Chad).

Appraise the situation internal to the organization – This sub-component deals with the internal process of program planning. Program planners must take note of the conditions within their organizations to determine what is and what is not appropriate for the program being planned. One interviewee mentioned this type of appraisal when he noted that, "[The planners] wanted to go to the local level, but they wanted to create a committee that...[could] think through the process, people who [could] give us feedback" (Ben).

Assess needs and stakeholders' interests – The LEPP Model states that program planners must know the needs to be met with a program, in order to plan a truly effective program. This assessment can take a variety of forms including surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc. One interviewee described the way his organization conducted a needs assessment by noting, "We had been there for almost eight years already, so the agency already had a feel for what's going on...there was an internal assessment with our own team...looking at the most vulnerable communities that we can work with" (Chad).

Accommodate characteristics of adults – In the LEPP Model, program planners need to realize that all learners are different. Differences in cultural, ethnic or geographical factors should be taken into account to make the program as applicable as possible. One interviewee acknowledged one of those differences when he described a conversation with the local people. He noted that they "...brought together a core group of people to talk with us and share with us what could be done better by Mexicans instead of by missionaries" (Frank).

The gradual transfer of power technique is similar to the abrupt shift of power technique. Program planners using this technique operated in the "Exercising Professional Responsibility" quadrant in the same capacity as those using the abrupt shift of power technique. The difference between these two techniques lies in how many sub-components are completed in the "Engaging Relevant Contexts" quadrant.

In this technique power is transferred gradually resulting in activities in varying sub-components of the "Engaging Relevant Contexts" quadrant. The transfer of power could occur between the two quadrants, or between any sub-components within the "Engaging Relevant Contexts" quadrant. For example, one interviewee mentioned a community "...developing their own network of organizations to relate to for expertise" (Frank). The network of organizations he mentioned enabled the community itself to act in all sub-components in the

"Engaging Relevant Contexts" quadrant. The community members appraised the external and internal situations, accommodated the characteristics of adults and conducted a needs assessment. The transfer of power in that case happened somewhere between the "Exercising Professional Responsibility" and "Engaging Relevant Context" quadrants.

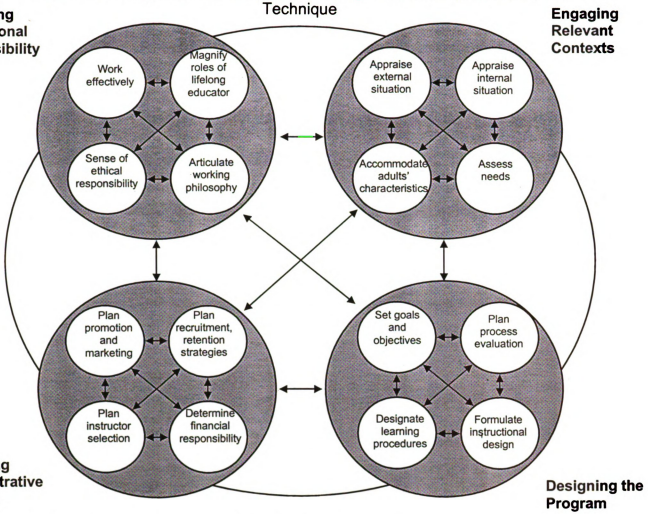
Another interviewee discussed a joint effort between his organization and the community to work in the "Engaging Relevant Contexts" quadrant. He stated, "[we] spoke at length with the peasant organization...because of the particular type of situation at that time, the particular pressure on small farmers, things like that" (Adam). This can be classified as an appraisal of the situation external to the organization. He also noted that, "As these conversations took place, they took place in lots of different groups" (Adam). This act helped the organization to accommodate the characteristics of adults coming from several groups. In this case, the organization functioned in only certain sub-components of the "Engaging Relevant Context" quadrant. The community members took control and acted in the remaining sub-components without the direct intervention of the organization. Therefore, the transfer of power occurred somewhere within the "Engaging Relevant Contexts" quadrant. Similar to the abrupt shift of power technique, interviewees using the gradual transfer of power technique noted that their organizations facilitated, but did not participate directly in, activities that occurred after the transfer of power had taken place.

The complete immersion technique in participatory planning involves all four quadrants of the LEPP Model, as illustrated in Figure 5. Organizations using this technique acted in the "Exercising Professional Responsibility" quadrant by working effectively, magnifying the role of a lifelong educator, enacting a sense of ethical responsibility and articulating a working philosophy. They also acted in the "Engaging Relevant Contexts" appraising the situation external to the organization, appraising the situation internal to the organization, accommodating characteristics of adults and conducting a needs assessment. One interviewee even noted that, for the project he described, his organization conducted a "worldwide needs assessment" (Greg). Organizations using this technique were also involved in the "Designing the Program" quadrant by setting goals and objectives, planning the process and outcome evaluation, formulating a learning design, and designating learning procedures. This technique, however, also involves working within the "Managing Administrative Aspects" quadrant. The four sub-components in this quadrant are to plan promotion and marketing, to plan recruitment strategies, to determine financial responsibility and to plan instructor selection. Following is a description of each sub-component in that quadrant, and how activities used for this technique constitute those sub-components.

Managing Administrative Aspects quadrant

Promote and market programs – To communicate the positive image of the program, program planners need to promote the program. Promotion

Figure 5. Lifelong Education Program Planning Model: Complete Immersion Technique



Shaded areas indicate area of emphasis for complete immersion technique.

and marketing helps potential learners to see how their needs can be met by the program. One interviewee stated the he used focus groups as one method of promotion. He noted, "...I went out with this information and confirmed it at the field level and face to face groups....[with] people who were eligible for the kind of activity we were going to do" (Greg).

Recruit and retain participants – Many programs are voluntary, so recruiting participants is important if the program is to be implemented. Also, it is rarely mandatory for participants to have sustained participation, so it is important to retain those participants. Attracting learners and keeping them interested contributes to the success of a program. One interviewee described this process as it occurred in a side project. Participants were recruited word of mouth, and they were assured that the program would meet a need that had surfaced. The interviewee noted that, "We had no jurisdiction over it except that we still called them together at least once or twice a year to share that they were doing and learning in each of their villages" (David). Retention was achieved by holding subsequent gatherings.

Determine financial responsibility – The LEPP Model states that program planners must work within existing financial resource constraints. This can involve working with funding and sponsoring agencies, contracts with businesses and/or governmental and nonprofit groups. One

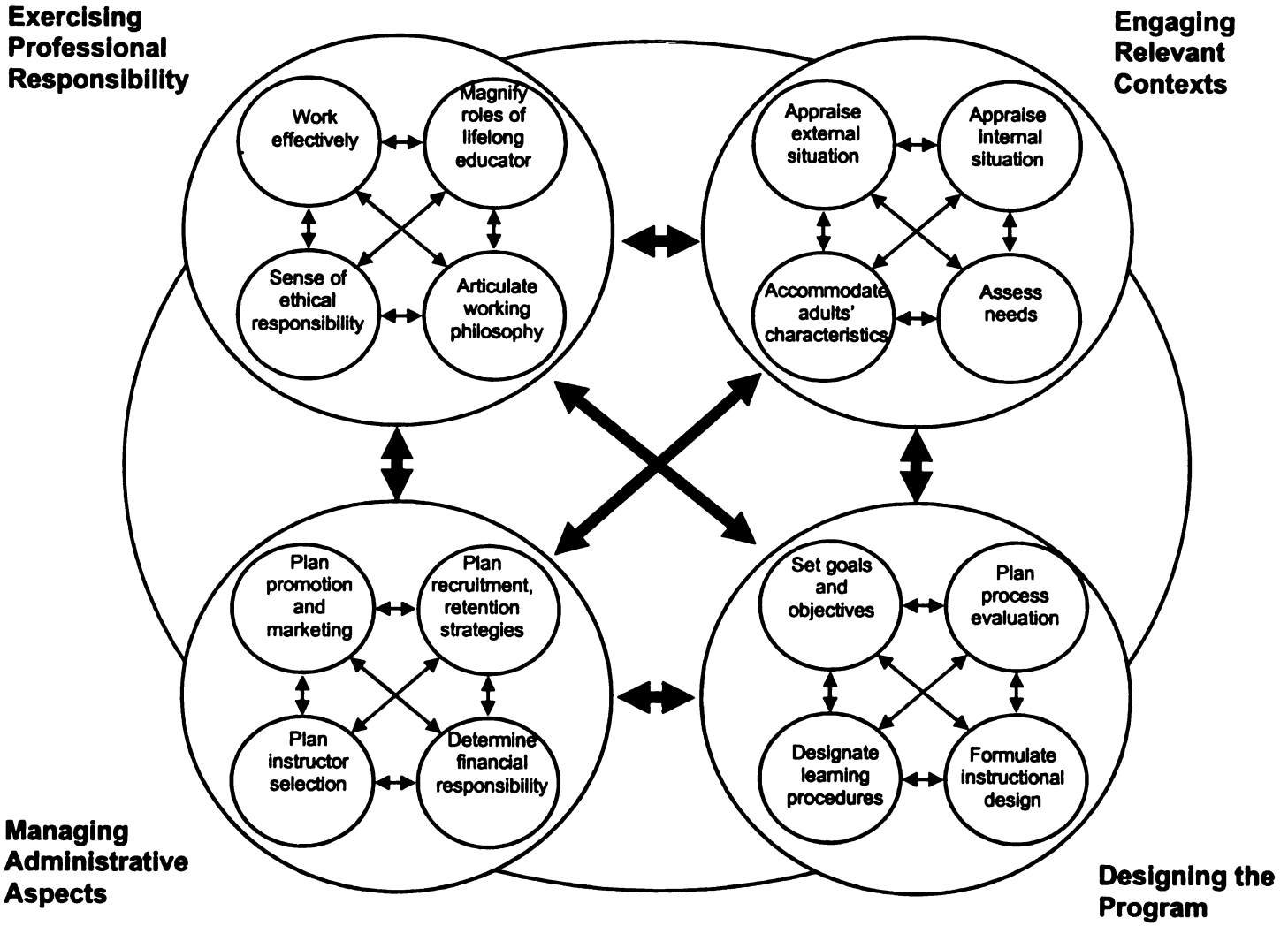
interviewee explicitly discussed work in this quadrant by saying, "A memorandum of understanding, a schedule of responsibilities, the kind of fee sharing structure that would be in place, the kind of staff utilization that would occur, proprietary rights and materials that would be developed...A lot of detailed negotiations" (Greg).

Plan instructor selection – Program planners need to be able to find people who can deliver the instruction and learning activities involved in the program. One interviewee described a project in which there were two instructors for the program. He noted that, "Every class had two primary collaborators. One from our agency, another from the University, so there were two people on every class" (Greg).

Planning Process Structure

The concept that all interviewees mentioned of having a "flexible framework" for the program planning processes corresponds with the interchangeable nature of the entire LEPP Model. The LEPP Model consists of four quadrants with each quadrant having four sub-components. Each quadrant has bi-directional arrows leading to and from it to the other three quadrants. And each sub-component has bi-directional areas leading to and from it to the other sub-components in a quadrant. This makes the LEPP Model very flexible in its design. None of the quadrants or sub-components is numbered; therefore no single entry point exists, allowing planners to begin and end wherever they wish, as circumstances

Figure 6. Lifelong Education Program Planning Model as a Flexible Framework



Arrows emphasize flexibility between all quadrants.

require. One interviewee described the need for a structure that allows for unintentional moments in program planning. The LEPP Model provides for that because it does not prescribe any particular order or structure for the planning process. It is set up as a "flexible framework" that corresponds with what the interviewees described as necessary in their organization's projects.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a large number of faith-based organizations in existence today, ranging from congregation-based programs to nation wide service networks (Thiemann et al., 2000). As a matter of fact, faith-based organizations make up the largest sector, 67 percent, of the nonprofit world ("Religious organizations", 1994). Federal and state governments are turning more often to religious nonprofit organizations to deliver social services and lead community development (Farnsley, 2001).

With the growing demands placed on faith-based programs there is a need for well-defined program goals. This study evaluated the presence of a systematic program planning process that can help faith-based organizations formulate program goals. The influence of organizational structure on the systematic program planning process was also evaluated.

Conclusions

Those involved in the program planning process do perceive that systematic program planning takes place within faith-based development organizations.

All faith-based development organizations interviewed for this study were involved in systematic program planning; however, each interviewee used different words and terms to describe the planning process within their specific organization. Each interviewee was able to coherently describe the program planning process, but they described it specifically in terms of their specific organization. For example, those from organizations with an evolving program structure described a process based approach and those from organizations with a formal program structure described an outcomes based approach. Both approaches, though, serve as evidence that program planning does in fact occur.

The systematic program planning that occurred in the organizations participating in the study was influenced greatly by the organizational structure.

Interviewees all described the program planning process in terms of their organization and its goals, not their personal preferences. Some interviewees did mention a great deal of flexibility in the planning process, especially in terms of the actual implementation at the grass-roots level. However, even though the planners had the opportunity to use personal discretion, decisions still consistently were made with the broad umbrella of the organization-wide goals for the project in mind.

Faith-based development organizations use different quadrants of the LEPP Model at different times in the program planning process.

The quadrants used most often depend on the particular participatory planning technique being used by the faith-based development organization. The LEPP Model effectively models the program planning process, but all four quadrants are not always used by all faith-based development organizations. The number of quadrants used in the planning process varies primarily according to the participatory planning techniques chosen for a particular program. These organizations lie along a continuum according to their participatory planning techniques.

The complete immersion technique works directly in all four quadrants of the LEPP Model. Next, along the continuum, the abrupt shift of power technique that works directly in the "Exercising Professional Responsibility" and "Engaging Relevant Contexts" quadrants. The gradual transfer of power technique uses those same two quadrants but may or may not work in all of the sub-components of the "Engaging Relevant Contexts" quadrant, according to the particular project. Some organizations may make the transfer of power before completing all sub-components in this quadrant. Obviously, the division of participatory planning techniques along this continuum is not a rigid delineation; it functions as a general framework. For example, an organization using the abrupt shift of power technique may still perform one or two activities within other quadrants in the model if necessitated by the project.

A defined set of common terminology is necessary for effective communication between faith-based development organizations.

The terminology used to describe the program planning process varied greatly by organization. Each interviewee used his/her own set of terms to describe the process, which made comparisons between the organizations difficult. Two interviewees often mentioned the same circumstances or actions using different terms.

The lack of a general set of terms for program planning also had an effect on the sampling procedure for this study. There was a less than one percent response rate to from those organizations that received an invitation to participate in the study. This could be, in part, due to the misunderstanding of terms used in the invitation to participate. Many organizations may not categorize their program planning activities as "program planning", and may have excluded themselves from the study based on that fact alone.

Recommendations

Promote the use of common terminology between different faith-based development organizations and within different departments of those organizations.

A vocabulary of common terminology that describes the planning process will allow program planners to more effectively communicate within their own organizations, and also with planners from different organizations. This was, in fact, one of the motives behind the development of the Lifelong Education Program Planning (LEPP) Model. Cookson (1996) noted that the range of backgrounds of program planners varies from little or no experience to much experience, from little or no knowledge to extensive knowledge. Much of the knowledge in the field of program planning is empirical. Also, many organizations assign program-planning responsibilities without providing the resources or tools necessary to accomplish the assignment. (Cookson, 1996)

A common vocabulary can function as one of those tools to accomplish program planning. It need not be exhaustive with respect to all the steps involved in program planning, but should be extensive enough to allow discussion of common principles across organizations. This will also allow those who participate in program planning to become aware of their activities. Then, they will be able to share ideas with others doing similar activities and increase the knowledge base.

Enhance program planners' understanding of the different participatory planning techniques and the impact those techniques have on the entire planning process.

A program planner who is familiar with the different activities involved in the various participatory planning techniques could use the continuum to choose which participatory planning technique is appropriate for a particular project. This could give the program planner a framework for starting the planning process. He/she would be able to refer to the corresponding quadrants of the LEPP Model to find an appropriate starting point for the planning process.

Determine the levels of systematic program planning that occur in different types of faith-based development organizations.

Interviewees for this study represented both denominational and non-governmental faith-based development organizations. Future political action on the subject of faith-based organizations could have an impact on the operation and program planning of all types of faith-based organizations. However, it is not known if the impact will be the same on all different types. An assessment of the current program planning activities may help to determine what kind of effect may take place in the future.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

General Email Request

Would you please direct this email to the appropriate Program Unit of World Vision - Thank you.

I am a Master's student at Michigan State University completing my degree in Extension Education/International Development. I am about to begin a research project that examines key ideas and practices of faith-based organizations in the area of educational program planning. I would like to include World Vision as one of the organizations in my research.

Rather than blindly sending information about my research to World Vision, I thought it best to first send this inquiry. If you would be willing to consider participating in the research, would you please respond to this email with contact information to which I could send, via US mail, further information.

(Your response to this email certainly does not indicate a willingness to participate in the research - only a willingness to read about the study and to consider participating.)

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Kari Parks

APPENDIX B

Invitation to Participate Letter

October 25, 2001

Dear Program Director:

My name is Kari Parks and I am a Master's of Science candidate at Michigan State University pursuing my degree in Extension Education with a specialization in International Development. To complete my Master's Program, I will be conducting research on the concept of Educational Program Planning in Faith-based Development Organizations throughout the United States. You have been suggested to represent your organization in this study, which will explore the concept of educational program planning and how it is perceived and carried out by program directors within active organizations. Your commitment would be limited to a telephone interview lasting approximately thirty minutes.

Interviews will be conducted between January 7 and January 31, 2002. If you would be willing to participate, please fill out and return the enclosed postcard with three dates and times that would be most convenient for you to conduct the interview. I will contact you by telephone to set an appointment for the interview at least one week prior to the interview, and all attempts will be made to accommodate your schedule. Interviews will be approximately thirty minutes in duration, and you will only be interviewed one time for this study. Interviews will be tape-recorded, however, all responses and identities will be kept confidential and reports of research findings will not permit association with specific responses or findings. Once the data has been examined, all tape recordings will be destroyed.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all, may refuse to participate in certain procedures or answer certain questions or may discontinue the interview at any time without penalty. You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by returning the enclosed postcard.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding human subject issues, please contact Dr. David Wright, Chair for the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subject (UCRIHS) at Michigan State University, 246 Administration Building, East Lansing, MI 48824 (phone: (517) 355-2180).

Thank you in advance for your participation in this study. All participants will receive a copy of the study results upon its completion. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at (517)410-0566.

Sincerely,

Kari Parks
Graduate Student
Michigan State University

For your convenience, these are the dates and times you listed as convenient to conduct the interview:

1_____

2_____

3_____

APPENDIX C

Return Postcard to Schedule Interviews

Contact Information

Your
Name_____Organization_____
Street
Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip Code_____

Telephone Number_____ Email Address_____

Possible dates/times for a telephone interview that would be convenient for you (between January 7, 2002 and January 31, 2002):

1) January _____, 2002 at_____am/pm (your local time)

2) January _____, 2002 at_____am/pm (your local time)

3) January _____, 2002 at_____am/pm (your local time)

Returning this postcard indicates your voluntary agreement to participate.

APPENDIX D

Interview Protocol

I. Tell me about a development project you have implemented that we can use for the basis of our discussion.

II. As you reflect on the development project, what was the first step you took in planning that project?

a. How did you decide to take that step?

b. Describe influences besides your own that may have impacted your decision to take that step.

c. How did you carry out that step?

d. What would you do differently if you were to repeat that step?

(NOTE: Step II, above, will be followed for as many subsequent steps as necessary within the development process described by the interviewee. When the interviewee has finished describing all steps that were taken, the following questions will be asked of all interviewees.)

III. Are there any other comments related to program planning and your involvement in it that we have not yet mentioned?

IV. How would you characterize your approach to program planning? Choose as many of the following words (listed in alphabetical order) as you would like:

Casual
Conventional
Evaluative
Fundamental
Intentional
Linear
Organized
Participatory
Practical
Standardized
Systematic
Unintentional

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