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RESOURCE EXCHANGE: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a resource exchange program between two human service organizations: a public school board and a university. This case study illustrates the utility of the concept of resource exchange as a response to pressures for the effective management of limited human resources. With an emphasis on mutual goals, needs, and strengths, the resource exchange program expanded resources available to both organizations. For the public school board, new services in the form of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention programs were developed. For the university, research and training opportunities were created. Finally, the fragmentation between and within the organizations was reduced in correspondence with their increased mutual interdependence.

In recent years a number of simultaneous changes in the economic, educational, and social environments in Canada and the United States converged and brought forth unprecedented attention to the importance of human resources and their management. In the public school and university these forces included a recession, rapid technical and social change, and a decline in student enrolment.

As a result of these changes, there have been new pressures and demands by providers and consumers of mental health and educational services, among others, for new status and new roles. For example, witness the proliferation of citizen advocacy and action groups, the expansion of volunteer helping opportunities for students, older citizens, and individuals with special needs, the development of self-help and para-

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professional groups, and the increased vocalization of teacher unions and professional associations.

This paper uses the social invention of "resource exchange" as a response to the simultaneous pressures in two human service organizations, a school board and a university, to manage the use of human resources more effectively and meaningfully. While many programs have involved some degree of resource exchange between a university and a school board, our program differs in that "resource exchange" is its central guiding concept. Thus, although the practice of resource exchange is not new, we feel that our application of the concept is an important and novel strategy for mutual help.

The resource exchange involved personnel from a university psychology department and a school board. The resource exchange was viewed as an effort to both reallocate and redefine the use of resources. The expected values of the exchange were increased resources, an increase in the potentialities, interests, and awareness of the individuals affected by the exchange, and an expansion of the network of mutual help over time, such that new people would become involved in the exchange.

Resource exchange, as we define it, is any form of exchange based on the mutual definition of needs, goals, and actions of two or more self-interest groups. Resource exchange builds on a self-help concept, which can be defined as a tactic for dealing with individual needs and isolation through the formation of a self-interest group for mutual assistance and benefit. Thus, while self-help groups can be viewed as a solution to problems of alienation (i.e., experienced helplessness, hopelessness, and isolation of individuals); resource exchange can be a solution to the problem of lack of mutual interdependence between social groups. As a tactic for bringing together individual interest groups for the realization of mutual goals and needs, resource exchange is strategic to reducing the fragmentation in a

community and increasing its psychological sense of community, viewed by Sarason (1974) as the overarching mission of psychologists.

A central aspect of resource exchange is to decrease the myopic and limiting view of potential human resources through an emphasis on what individuals and self-interest groups can do for themselves and each other. Other defining characteristics of a resource exchange worthy of attention are noted by Sarason and Lorentz (1979):

- (i) an effective leader or form of leadership, either an individual or core group to initiate and sustain action;
- (ii) no rules or constraints on how or when the exchange takes place (an exchange will not work if it is on a time schedule) but rather is rooted in agreement on values and processes;
- (iii) while the locus of responsibility is in each person, the exchange must satisfy the need for a psychological sense of community;
- (iv) the grounds for the exchange are compassionate rather than monetary, with the emphasis on human development;
- (v) a meaningful exchange is typically associated with the need to increase resources through resource definition;
- (vi) there tends to be significant collaboration and integration with other groups or organizations (i.e., resource exchange very often becomes a resource exchange network).

THE CREATION OF A RESOURCE EXCHANGE: A CASE STUDY:

Backdrop

The resource exchange to be examined in this paper originated between the Social-Community faculty of the Department of Psychology of Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) and the Psychology Department of the Waterloo County Board of Education (WCBE). The initiation of the formal exchange was steeped in over eight years of history of trust and informal work relationships between the Chief Psychologist of WCBE and a Social-Community Psychol-

ogy faculty member at WLU. The various work relationships included the placement of over 200 student volunteers in WCBE classrooms; consultation and research relationships between WLU and WCBE; and the appointment of the Chief Psychologist of WCBE as an adjunct faculty member at WLU to supervise Social-Community field work and research and instruct in the graduate program. This foundation, combined with WLU's need to further expand and improve the quality of student field placement and research activities, and WCBE's desire to increase its resource capabilities were critical under-pinnings for the creation of the formal exchange. The ability to be flexible about task and role boundaries within and between the organizations was also critical to the development and survival of the exchange and the richness of the activities which evolved from it.

Development of the Concept and Process

Early in 1979, the two initiators met to explore the idea of resource exchange between WLU and WCBE. In January a proposal was submitted to their respective next-in-line authority where initial approval was secured. Their proposal noted the following shared benefits of the resource exchange:

- (i) cost-effective use of resources for both organizations;
- (ii) a research base for university and school board interests, such as program evaluation;
- (iii) the development of prevention focused in-services training experiences for students and school personnel;
- (iv) easy access and opportunity for field placement of Social-Community Psychology undergraduate and graduate students;
- (v) systematic, directed field supervision in a community setting;
- (vi) direct service benefit to public school children and teachers;
- (vii) the development of graduate training and research experiences for school personnel in line with a recent propos-

al for legislative and policy change issued by the Ontario Minister of Education.

The initial process was to gain acceptance and sanction at various administrative levels in both organizations. This resulted in a meeting in February involving personnel from both organizations which included senior administrators, middle management, and relevant line personnel of both organizations. This exploratory meeting resulted in a tentative approval with agreement to proceed in drafting the details of the proposed exchange of personnel.

Search for Personnel and Definition of Tasks

While all of the relationship details were being negotiated, two other very important processes were taking place:

- (i) A search for two junior faculty to fulfill the Social-Community teaching requirements of the WLU Psychology Department and to participate in the exchange was conducted. There was an explicit statement in the job advertisement that specified the dual responsibility of the new positions. As well, a multi-disciplinary emphasis was being espoused which resulted in employing a clinical-community psychologist and an educational-sociologist. The Chief Psychologist was involved in the selection process.
- (ii) Two schools were selected and prepared for the possibility of an impending personnel exchange.

The school environment selected was an area called Lang's Farm Village which encompassed an elementary school (grades K-5) and a middle-level school (grades 6-8). The elementary school drew its student population from the Lang's Farm Village area, while the middle-level school received pupils from several elementary schools in the area.

The Lang's Farm area was selected because the WCBE Chief Psychologist normally provided psychological services to these schools. Also Lang's Farm, identified

as a community with multiple problems, had been the object of a previous community development proposal which did not receive funding. The early identified problems and assets in the Lang's Farm area were as follows:

A. Problems

- (i) lack of identity as a community;
- (ii) a pocket of high density multiple dwelling units, characterized by a high degree of personal isolation and community fragmentation;
- (iii) increasing vandalism;
- (iv) a corner general store, the scene of teenage loitering, littering, etc.;
- (v) high mobility in low cost housing.

B. Assets

- (i) a stable community of single family dwellings;
- (ii) many resources in a relatively confined area, including: schools, churches, nursery schools and senior citizen's homes;
- (iii) school personnel interested in developing a community orientation;
- (iv) spring meetings to review curriculum and plan to mesh resources.

The preparatory phase concluded with the delineation of tasks and responsibilities for personnel of both organizations during two planning meetings in early and late summer. The formal entry into their respective organizations began in September with the start of the school year. The final contract specified that the Chief Psychologist of WCBE would work one-half time at WLU, while the two university personnel would, in exchange, each work 1½ days per week with WCBE.

Entry Phase

Phasing the Chief Psychologist of WCBE into WLU occurred rather easily because of his history in the setting. His teaching responsibilities were shared with his long-standing WLU colleague and they were therefore easily able to trade responsibilities as necessary. His other duties were an expansion of his field-related activities, including supervising and facilitating undergraduate and graduate student research and

practice in the schools. His integration was further facilitated and assured through his regular participation in the meetings of the Social-Community program group, to which he was directly accountable for his day-to-day activities.

In the public school system, the two university personnel participated throughout the year on a regular basis (once a week) as members of a multi-disciplinary team providing consultative services to all schools in one part of the county. This participation facilitated their entry into and sense of identification with the special services of WCBE. Throughout the year, team meetings served as a forum for individual case review, information sharing, community liaison, articulation of team philosophy and policy, and the planning of services.

Once oriented to the schools, these two individuals began to evolve work roles with school personnel. The only given condition was that the usual case-consultation which the schools were accustomed to receiving would be provided. Otherwise the nature of the activities at each school could develop in accordance with the mutual definition of interests, needs and goals of those involved.

Work Phase — Year One

The work activities that developed during the first year of the exchange program encompassed several areas including: education for university students, service to and collaboration with the schools and the community, and field research and program evaluation. On the university side of the exchange, WCBE's Chief Psychologist taught both an undergraduate and a graduate course in group processes; presented a section on consultation to a graduate field methods course; team taught an undergraduate psychology of exceptional individuals course; and supervised graduate students' practica and thesis research along with other Social-Community Psychology faculty.

He was also instrumental in arranging field placements for undergraduate students and in bringing to his courses guest lecturers from the community with expertise in sev-

eral areas of specialization in human services. This liaison role that the WCBE exchange person served was also critical for the facilitation of several field research and intervention projects for both faculty and students, which are described in detail in the following pages.

On the school and community side of the exchange, there was a focus on multiple levels of analysis and intervention (Rappaport, 1977) that reflected the different backgrounds and unique strengths of those involved in the exchange. Initially, the university personnel became familiar with the schools, local human services, and the community through the traditional role of case consultation and assessment. There was considerable exchange and cooperation between the university personnel and other front-line workers on a regular basis (once a week), which contributed to their visibility and sense of identification as fellow team members, rather than as outside "experts" from the university.

A second level of analysis and intervention was that of the small group level. The clinical-community psychologist from WLU developed a social skills program for maladapting boys in grades one to three at the elementary school. This program emphasized a secondary prevention through competence building for "high risk" children. Boys with deficiencies in various social skills were identified by their teachers through classroom behaviour ratings. The program was modeled after the work of Durlak (1977, 1980) with small groups of boys meeting one hour per week with undergraduate students who served as group leaders.

A second example of a small group level of intervention were programs for parents developed by the clinical-community psychologist and the guidance counselor at the middle-level school. These two jointly developed a program for parents focusing on communication and behaviour management skills in dealing with children. Given the different strengths of these two individuals,

the program focused on both reflective and behavioural approaches to parent-child communication and interaction (Sadler, 1976). As an offshoot of this program, an undergraduate student did a single-case study of parent effectiveness training with a mother and child for her B.A. honors thesis.

The third level focused on organizational analysis and intervention. The educational sociologist from WLU conducted an exploratory study of experiences and problems encountered by the staff of the middle-level school. Using a qualitative approach to assessment and evaluation, he individually interviewed each staff member regarding their perceived strengths and weaknesses of the school. At the same time, a graduate student conducted a study on the relationship between classroom atmosphere, student satisfaction and self-concept, and teacher satisfaction in the same school for her M.A. thesis. The results of these studies were presented to the staff and provided some initial definition of these problem areas and prompted steps toward preventive resolutions at both the formal and informal level of organization.

The final level of analysis and intervention was a community-wide approach. The educational sociologist worked with a local community group to obtain a grant that provided employment for four students as summer community workers. This followed initial efforts by both graduate and undergraduate students who interviewed various people in the community (women on welfare, senior citizens in two retirement homes, local clergymen, human services providers, etc.) to assess their perceived needs and quality of life. The summer program was developed to first obtain information about the types of services desired by persons in the high density, high transient neighbourhood in the community. As this information was developed, an effort to obtain community interest and participation in the design and implementation of corrective programs received equal emphasis, with a variety of social and recreational programs

being created for both youths and adults. Two graduate students who had been involved in previously described aspects of the exchange program were employed by this community group, one as project manager. A core group of five people from the Mennonite Church and the community served as the executive of the Lang's Farm Village Project, with additional members having input through an advisory council.

Evaluation — Year One

An important aspect of the formal contract was its specifications that the exchange program be periodically evaluated. At mid-year and at the end of the year, the exchange personnel met separately with the multi-disciplinary team of consultants and the contact people for each school to review activities in light of the goals of the exchange program and to cooperatively plan for the future. The consensus of these meetings was that the goals of the program were being met. The university was benefitting from the teaching, research, and practicum supervision provided by the Chief Psychologist of WCBE. Faculty research projects, one B.A. thesis, two M.A. theses, and practicum placements for graduate and undergraduate students had evolved to meet the university's needs of research and training. At the same time, the schools and community were benefitting from greatly expanded services.

Throughout the year, there was uncertainty as to whether the position of the educational sociologist would be renewed. Since he was a major part of the exchange program, the continuance of the program was also uncertain. At the end of the year, he accepted a position at another university. Also, the principal of the elementary school and the guidance counsellor of the middle-level school both changed positions at the year's end. In spite of the loss of these key individuals, it was decided that the program should be continued for another year.

Work Phase — Year Two

During its second year, the formal con-

tract specified that 1½ days per week be exchanged between the organizations. In terms of actual activities, the arrangement involved the Chief Psychologist of WCBE teaching and supervising less at WLU while phasing back into consultation at the two schools. The clinical community psychologist from WLU maintained his commitment of the previous year. In spite of the 50% reduction of personnel time, activities continued to thrive and multiply.

On the university side of the exchange, the Chief Psychologist of WCBE team-taught the course on exceptional individuals; presented lectures on consultation and special education services to graduate and undergraduate community psychology students; supervised a graduate student's practicum; supervised the field placement of a group of undergraduate community psychology students; and continued to participate as a member of several M.A. thesis committees. Also, in the second year, another psychologist from WCBE, taught the graduate group processes course and participated in graduate thesis supervision.

On the school and community side of the exchange, activities at the individual and small group levels flourished. The undergraduate community psychology students were involved in several school-related field placements and were supervised by graduate students. In turn, the graduate students were supervised by the course instructors, following Seidman and Rappaport's (1974) educational pyramid model. The field placements in which the students participated were the social skills development program, which was expanded to three new schools, work with school attendance counselors, and an early school leaving program. Parent education programs were also offered again the second year.

At the organizational level of analysis, individual feedback was provided to the teachers of the middle-level school on the profiles of their classroom atmosphere from the results of the study of the previous year. A second study at this school was conducted

which involved a longitudinal analysis of the effects of different aspects of both family and classroom atmosphere on various aspects of self-concept, satisfaction, and achievement of students.

At the community level, a new development was the initiation of a resource exchange between the two schools and a Mennonite Senior Citizens Home, adjacent to the two schools. Historically, there existed an antagonistic relationship between the senior citizens and the school children, with the seniors reporting being verbally abused, pelted with snowballs in the winter, and having their home vandalized by the local youth. To improve the relations between the senior citizens and the school children, the guidance counselor at the middle-level school and the social director of the seniors' home developed a program in which students were matched up on a one-to-one basis with some of the senior citizens for weekly visits. The nature of the relationships varied, ranging from students reading to, writing letters for, or helping disabled seniors to walk; seniors teaching students crafts; to mutual enjoyment of games and conversation. The results of a consumer evaluation of the exchange using questionnaires for the students and interviews for the seniors were very positive from the viewpoints of both the seniors and students.

The second part of this exchange was a project created by an undergraduate student for his B.A. honors thesis. He recruited senior citizens from the home to work as teachers' helpers with students experiencing learning problems in a special class at the elementary school and evaluated the effects of the project on the health and life satisfaction of the seniors.

The final community level intervention to be reported is the growth of the Lang's Farm Village Project. Following the summer program, a WLU graduate student continued as project manager and developed an action research M.A. thesis on citizen participation in the project. A local development corporation saw the merit of the pro-

ject and provided it with a rent free ground floor apartment for their store-front headquarters. The major program that developed in the winter months was a women's group. WLU personnel regularly participated on the advisory council throughout the year.

A second grant for summer programs was submitted and funded, resulting in the hiring of four students, two of whom were WLU community psychology students. The number of children and adults registered in the various programs increased to nearly 300 compared with approximately 50 during the previous summer. Role and task responsibilities became much more clearly defined and complex, with citizens, rather than agency or university personnel, providing the leadership. Evidence of the community support include: the donation of an apartment unit for a second year, two substantial community donations of \$3,000 to employ a part-time project manager, and expanded and active grass roots citizen participation and management.

Evaluation — Year Two

Once again, both mid-year and year end evaluations of the exchange were conducted. The general tenor was that all persons involved believed the exchange should continue since it had been of mutual benefit to both organizations. Furthermore, input from the school principals, the senior citizens, the police, and community residents indicated that youth vandalism in the area was noticeably less after the first year of the exchange. While these data are admittedly impressionistic, they were certainly encouraging.

DISCUSSION

After the first two years of operation of the exchange program, we believe that the concept of resource exchange addresses many of the central concerns raised by those interested in preventive, community-oriented approaches to human services. One of the key aspects of resource exchange is its emphasis on what people have to offer one

another. In our program, little attention was paid to professional titles and degrees or lack thereof. Rather, the focus was on determining the unique strengths and interests of individuals and matching them up with appropriate areas of need. The general nature of the exchange contract provided the flexibility for this type of reciprocal "giving and receiving" (Arthur and Dudeck, 1976) to occur.

In our program, we identified and used novel sources of educational and mental health manpower (e.g., college student volunteers, indigenous community people), thus dealing with the constraint of scarce professional resources (Albee, 1968). In emphasizing collaboration between professionals and the community, we attempted to foster clients' self-reliance and to discourage their overreliance and dependence on us to solve their problems. Finally, in focusing on strengths and sharing decision-making power, we attempted to avoid any potential harmful consequences of labelling the negative aspects of client concerns (Scheff, 1974) and to build competencies and a sense of community (Iscoe, 1974; Sarason, 1974).

Another important feature of a resource exchange is that it demands team work, cooperation, and mutual support. Since the exchange personnel participated as members of both organizations, conflicts of interests were diminished. Requiring accountability to those with whom you work provides an antidote to professional arrogance (Kelly, 1970), rivalry, and a competition for resources. Gottlieb and Schroter (1978) argue that a spirit of cooperation and respect is essential for collaboration between professional and natural support systems. Our experiences support their assertion.

We also found that the resource exchange program created support to combat the isolation of individuals. The formal agreement between the two organizations allowed for the development of informal networks that expanded over the years. This informal network encouraged collaboration between

disciplines, agencies, and professionals and non-professionals. The exchange offered fresh ideas for the human service providers and challenging, real-life problems for the academics and students. The informal network also served the important function of providing social and emotional support to its members in times of stress, a key factor in the prevention of "burnout" in human service workers (Cherniss, 1980). In fact, the informal relations between people were the backbone of the formal agreement that kept the program alive and growing when other external factors (e.g., personnel changes and instability) jeopardized its existence.

The expanded resources and different viewpoints of those involved in the exchange also facilitated a multi-disciplinary outlook on school and community problems. Hampered by a lack of resources, organizational resistances, and insufficient training, human service providers usually deal with treatment and crisis problems, seldom venturing into the less certain domain of preventive interventions. In our resource exchange program, there was ample manpower and expertise to assess and intervene at several different levels. Our program offers examples of primary (e.g., the community development and school staff development programs), secondary (e.g., the parenting and social skills programs), and tertiary (e.g., case consultation) levels of preventive intervention (Caplan, 1964). Moreover we were able to implement these projects solely through the redefinition and redistribution of human resources.

One final benefit of the exchange program worth noting is the integration of service, training, and research. Some writers have argued that these areas are too often divorced in graduate psychology training programs (e.g., Albee, 1970). In our case, the responsibilities of the university personnel encouraged them to develop relevant applied research projects to improve the delivery of services. From the perspective of the schools and community, the introduction of

supervised university trainees and faculty was an additional resource for providing services. In other words, the resource exchange represents the effective matching of the training and research needs of the university with the service and program development needs of the schools and community. Furthermore, consistent with the notion of resource exchange, we believe that fellow students, seasoned professionals, and members of the community, including the target population, all have the potential of being both "teachers" and "learners" in the research and program development process.

In summary, we believe that our program is an example of how the concept of resource exchange addresses key concern in the human services field. In spite of personnel changes and other modifications, the program is well into its third year. Many of the efforts of the first two years are continuing, some are being expanded to other schools, and new programs are developing. This growth further attests to the robustness of the concept and its viability for preventive approaches in human services.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article décrit un programme d'échange de ressources entre deux organismes de services: une commission scolaire publique et une université. L'étude de ce cas illustre l'utilité du concept d'échange de ressources en tant que réponse aux pressions en vue d'une gestion efficace de ressources humaines limitées. En insistant sur les objectifs, les besoins et les forces mutuels, le programme d'échange de ressources augmente les ressources disponibles pour les deux organismes. Pour l'école publique, on développe de nouveaux services sous forme de programmes de prévention primaire, secondaire et tertiaire. Pour l'université, on crée des possibilités de recherche et de formation. Finalement la fragmentation entre les organisations et au sein de chacune fut réduite d'une façon qui correspond à l'accroissement de leur mutuelle interdépendance.

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