

ORGANIZATION FOR TOTAL COMMUNITY SERVICE

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ASTRIVING for concern for the total community is evident on every hand in Jewish community life today. The re-evaluation of functional services, the expansion of fund-raising programs for local and world Jewish needs, the enlargement of Jewish organizational memberships, and the impetus to coordination and centralization in Jewish organizational life nationally and locally are but a few of the signs which point to this trend. It is clear that in Jewish community life we are moving toward a new level of democratization. In recent decades, economic and social changes in America and developments the world over have provided a groundwork for this development. The so-called "under-privileged" group in the Jewish community has greatly diminished, and the centrifugal forces in Jewish life have increased manifold. With this trend has come a greater sense of equality and a greater demand for wide-scale participation in Jewish community affairs. The striking increase in the number of contributors to Jewish Welfare Funds reflects the growing participation of a wider Jewish community in Jewish communal life.

In such an atmosphere, it is important that Jewish community services re-examine themselves and thoroughly relate to these major developments in

Jewish life. Narrow "agency-mindedness" has no place in this setting and must give way to a healthy re-evaluation of the extent to which functional services are adequately relating themselves to the broadening horizons of the community.

From the point of view of the speaker, this is a question which strikes close to home. One of the early Jewish community services to enjoy wide participation was the group work agency. Many Jewish Centers have for long achieved a sound democratic character in their constituency and in their auspices. The question of broadening Jewish community horizons, therefore, assumes reality and importance to many workers in the Center field.

Today, we are in an era when every functional agency is examining its responsibilities for extending services into sections of the Jewish community hitherto unreached. The search for opportunities to render wider service at this time is rooted in several causes. In the first place, the basic concepts of social work concerning techniques for enabling individuals to effect a happier personal adjustment have validity alike for all human beings. While economic deprivation increases the incidence of need for personal help, the benefits of service which the social worker can offer are in no wise limited to particular eco-

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omic groups. Case work help to unadjusted individuals, group work experience designed to effect more satisfying social and community relationships, and the use of the knowledge of vocational guidance for intelligent career selection are seen now to have equal validity for all members of the Jewish community, without regard to where they live or how much money they have in the bank.

A second factor which has encouraged agencies to move toward total community service is the impact of the democratization referred to above. This has created a new interest on the part of large groups in the community in the services which Jewish functional agencies can extend to them. It has also stimulated the sense of responsibility of the agencies themselves for considering their role with respect to unserved groups.

A third consideration concerns especially the case work and child care fields, in which a release of energies and resources in the entire private agency field has been made possible by the general economic improvement of the community and by widening public services in the fields of their operation.

Combinations of these factors, therefore, have resulted in a new perspective on the part of functional agencies as to groups in the community to whom their services should be directed, and to the content of service. It is hardly necessary at this time to document field by field the evidence that this broadening of scope is now occurring. In the family field, the opening of branch offices in neighborhoods of middle class residence and the development of fee services bear unmistakable evidence of this new interest. In the vocational field, we have seen a spread of services in recent years and a use of these services by broad cross-sections of the community. In the field of service to chronically ill and aged

people, there is increasing interest in providing foster home, institutional and other forms of service which would be equally available to varying parts of the community.

Jewish education has traditionally striven to reach an ever-widening and more representative group of students, and its present efforts to broaden its scope have likewise received impetus. The development of Bureaus of Jewish Education, with representative boards, substantiates this trend. In the field of group work, there are innumerable evidences of this concern for extending service to the total Jewish community. Throughout the nation, there have been developments in this area. Community studies, the organization of extension programs, and the opening of branches in new sections of Jewish residence illustrate this. Where group work services have in the past had a philanthropic emphasis on service to deprived groups, there is currently an effort to shift from this point of view. New definitions of agency role, more representative agency boards, and new agency names have become the order of the day in the group work field. It is interesting to note that this latter development—a breaking with the "service to the less fortunate" psychology—through redefinition of purpose, change of name, and the like, has been true in other functional fields as well.

The trends that we have described here are now sufficiently established, that it is important to identify some of their characteristics and to define their implications. It is necessary that each functional agency recognize, in the first place, that this concern for service to the total Jewish community is one which it shares in common with other agencies and is, in fact, an expression of the growing democratization of Jewish life. This

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perspective must find its way into the consciousness of Jewish agencies. In the second place, there must be a greater recognition on the part of all functional agencies that this is a problem which can and must be attacked in a concerted way. In the third place, this development calls for recognition that the central Jewish community organization is and must be the pivot around which the broadening community base can emerge, and is the key to the achievement of the new horizons to which functional agencies aspire. Finally, for functional agencies there is the clear implication that they must orient themselves to this situation in realistic terms.

At the outset, the planning or replanning of services must flow from a broad community point of view on the part of agencies, rather than from a narrow, defensive and self-interested outlook. Agencies must approach their past and present programs and the planning of future service with an element of self-analysis and honest self-criticism. They must be concerned with their relationship to the central community organizations and must determine that these relationships shall be as sound as possible. Finally, the lay and professional leadership of the functional agencies must do their share to assure the fact that central Jewish community bodies shall be democratic in their composition and progressive in their understanding and execution of their social planning responsibilities.

Jewish agencies striving to relate their services to the total community must have a sound understanding of their relationship as agencies to the central Jewish community planning body. This relationship must operate not only at the level of planning for new services, but also at the point of year-to-year operation of programs. This relationship is

essential when one examines the vital role which the central body plays in the achievement by the agencies of total community effectiveness. There are a number of important ways in which a sound relationship between the central coordinating federation and an agency can implement the wider service concerns of functional agencies. Some of these are as follows:

1. Through the central body, representation of the total community can be involved in the process of planning and operating community services.

2. Where an analysis of community needs is required, the Jewish community organization can apply a total perspective to the problem which will enhance the significance of the functional agency's planning.

3. Responsibility for study and analysis is that of the central organization, and it is to this resource that the functional agency should turn in planning for wider community service.

4. The dependence of functional agencies upon central bodies for financial support is self-evident and reinforces the necessity for healthy relationships.

5. The central community organization is in position to involve in the planning process agencies which are *related* to the concern of a particular functional service. Through this channel, participation in the planning process by all agencies which are concerned with the problem area can be best assured.

6. Because of its centrality, the Jewish community organization is in position to evaluate the community's acceptance of the agency. Such insight can greatly benefit the functional program around which planning is being carried on.

7. The central body is in a key position to interpret the service of functional agencies, and especially to develop com-

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munity understanding of any proposed broadening of agency functions.

It is apparent that functional agencies with an interest in serving the total community will most effectively achieve this goal through the best use of the resources of the central community body.

From the point of view of the functional agency, orientation to a total community outlook and sound community relations involves disciplines and understandings which the agency imposes upon itself. This may be considered the responsibilities which the agency assumes as part of a larger community setting. Let us examine some of these considerations:

1. Agencies do well to recognize that clearcut definition and differentiation of agency function is required in a well-planned community. The area of competence of each functional agency ought to be well established, and the scope of its functions delimited. Each agency should do that part of the community's work for which it is best suited and equipped. The program of each agency ought to consist of that part of the community services which fall within its field of special skill. This places upon each agency the responsibility to state its function clearly, and from time to time to re-evaluate and redefine this role in the light of new conditions. As new community tasks emerge or new functions crystallize, responsibility for services must sometimes be shifted to other hands.

This may be illustrated by recent developments in the field. During the last decade, vocational guidance services were developed within the framework of Jewish family services, group work services, and children's services. The eventual identification of this service as an area of specialized knowledge and skill led to the creation of Jewish vocational

service agencies. It thus became necessary, in many communities, for functional agencies to shift this responsibility to new agencies created for this particular function. Another illustration may be found in the new awareness of the specialized problems of chronically ill aged people, for whom institutions for the aged have usually provided service in the past. A differentiation of function in the fields of care of the aged and care of the chronically ill is currently evolving. Existing Jewish functional agencies will be required to redefine their function in light of such new trends. The general principle here is that as part of a total community pattern of services, each functional agency assumes the responsibility for definition of its role in relation to its particular area of competence, as well as the structure of service in the entire Jewish community.

2. Agencies need to discipline themselves to the use of the central machinery of the Jewish community for dealing with problems which may arise in the course of their work, but upon which central community concern is required. This involves a routing of problems through the central machinery of the community where necessary. For example, when, in the day to day operation of a group work agency, problems arise which fall within the civic protective field, the central community body functioning in this area should be called in.

When an agency encounters a problem on which joint thinking with other agencies and central planning are required, it should feel responsible for referring this problem to the central agency which is conducting social planning within the Jewish community. For instance, during the war, day care services for children of working mothers

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developed within Jewish communities. The responsibility for this work was often assumed by the agency offering group work services. The problem of planning permanent postwar services in this area is one around which the leisure-time agency has the responsibility of seeking joint planning through the central social planning body, since it is apparent that there are family service and child care implications to a permanent program in this field. Another illustration may be found in the relationships of Jewish education and Jewish group work. Both are concerned with the development of new services in sections of Jewish residence at present unserved. Instead of each agency moving into an area independently of the other and, perhaps, seeking capital funds for the construction of separate facilities, the functional agencies have a responsibility through the central planning body to undertake joint planning to meet this common community need.

3. There will be many services around which several areas of social work competence will be required, and Jewish community agencies with a total community point of view have a responsibility to enter into interagency relationships for the planning and conduct of such services. The use of case work services in the group work setting and of educational services in the child care setting are illustrative of this kind of relationship.

4. Functional agencies in a total community picture have an obligation to recognize that the central community organization must have a several-fold scope to its work. It must be interested in the social planning aspects of Jewish community life but must also be concerned with the participation of the community in larger local, national and

world Jewish affairs. For example, the Jewish federation or community council will probably assume responsibility for the welfare fund campaign, as well as for social agency planning, budgeting, etc. The functional agencies must not only be sympathetic with but must accept the broadened scope of responsibility which Jewish federations must assume in the world of today. It is important to note, however, that as central community agencies move into these wider fields, they must provide reasonable assurance that their original social planning assignments are adequately provided for.

The concern of functional agencies for a total community scope in their work imposes upon the agencies responsibilities for internal reorientations where these are necessary. Without such changes, functional agencies cannot assume the community role to which they aspire. We should like here to mention three such internal reorientations about which functional agencies need to be aware:

1. The auspices of the agency should be as representative as possible. Its board of directors ought to represent the total community in that all sections of the community which are concerned with the function of the agency should find their place on the board. This should include representatives of families or groups in the community which participate in the services of the agency.

2. Agencies ought forthrightly to eliminate patronizing, charity approaches to their work where such attitudes and practices persist. The new democratization of the Jewish community requires that agencies make their services as acceptable as possible, especially to middle class sections of the community.

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3. The agency must undertake a sound program for the interpretation of its services to the whole community, so that there may be understanding of the contribution which it can make.

There is an aspect of this total community approach which has particular implications for *workers* in functional agencies. This relates to the worker's position as a member of the Jewish community. This question has three facets. First, a member of the staff of a functional Jewish service can see himself as a technician, or expert resource within the Jewish community. In this sense, he ought to be prepared to make his skills available at many points for enriching the quality of community life. This is a contribution which he makes quite beyond the usual definition of his job in the agency. The group worker, for example, can make his skills available to the Jewish Community Council in planning special functions, developing services to affiliated organizations, etc. The Jewish educator can offer his assistance to the Community Council at various points.

In the second place, the professional worker should recognize that as he carries on his job and has contact with the wider non-Jewish community, he is in a sense a representative of the Jewish community and a part of its general community relationships. He must, then, govern the manner in which these relationships are carried on with a sense of their wider significance.

The third responsibility which the staff member assumes is the recognition of his role as part of the leadership of the Jewish community. The Jewish social worker should accept responsibility for participation in broad Jewish affairs, extending beyond the scope of his immediate professional interest.

Before bringing this discussion to a close, we should like to make reference to several questions which it must necessarily suggest to you. We recognize that these remarks appear to have greater relevance to large communities than to small. This is especially true when the latter have functional federations. We can only suggest that for small communities, as well as large, there are many *principles* in this statement which have direct application. We urge that these *concepts* be identified for their relatedness in each situation.

This paper will undoubtedly raise doubts in the minds of many whose reaction will be: He is talking of a much more perfect central planning body than exists in our community. They will then proceed to document the weaknesses of their federation and to conclude that it is not possible for them to apply the relationship principles we have enunciated. Such a conclusion would be most erroneous. No human institution is perfect. Our federations, as well as our agencies, are dynamic entities which are constantly moving to higher levels of effectiveness. I should like to emphasize the conviction that imperfections in the central planning body do not negate the meaning of the principles here stated. Equally important is the fact that inadequacies in a federation do not justify the suspension of the obligation of every functional agency to strive for the relationship we have outlined. It goes without saying that the way and extent of implementation must vary with the realities of each community situation. But it is essential that functional agencies, through their lay and professional leadership, with integrity and skill, undertake to live by these principles. Moreover, such leadership must accept its share of the responsibility for improv-

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ing and strengthening the character of federations, where this is called for.

Jewish community life in America is moving to new levels of esprit de corps, communal unity, and democratization. In this process, all Jewish institutions must be re-evaluated in relation to new

criteria which emerge as these trends crystallize. It is of great importance to the field of Jewish social work that its practitioners recognize and act effectively on the implications of these trends for themselves as professional workers as well as for their agencies.

ORGANIZATION FOR TOTAL COMMUNITY SERVICE: IN SMALLER COMMUNITIES

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A. INTRODUCTION

RECENTLY Dallas had the good fortune to play host to the distinguished historian Dr. Salo Baron. During the evening's discussion, Dr. Baron in touching on the subject of religion, developed the point of view that America has not yet produced its own religious culture. He demonstrated his viewpoint by illustrating how indebted the orthodox and reformed sects are to European religious cultures. He also pointed out that our generation is the first where the majority of the Jews in America are native born; and that it will probably take several more generations before an indigenous American Jewish religion will mature.

It is not necessary to go into all the ramifications of this theory. For the purpose of this paper, I want to accept this historical approach, and merely describe "what exists" on the community organization scene of the smaller Jewish Community (25,000 or less Jewish population), with the realization that a good indigenous American pattern of Jewish communal services is also still in the making. That we are just on the threshold of developing new traditions, can be illustrated by one example—the growing recognition of "government re-

sponsibility" as contrasted with the concept that "We Jews take care of our own." This latter concept which was a necessity for an oppressed minority in ghettoized Europe is hardly a desirable virtue in a democratic America.

In line with this approach, it is my estimation that the earliest and clearest development of the unfolding pattern of communal services is already beginning to appear in the smaller communities, particularly those farther away from New York City and other Jewish centers, where Russian, Polish and Germanic group values have had greatest influence. Whether for good or bad, as far as Jewish life is concerned, it is a common observation of communal workers that in cities like Charleston, West Virginia; Louisville, Kentucky; Portland, Oregon, or Dallas, Texas, that the Jewish group seems much more integrated into the general community—participate more fully in all communal affairs. If these observations are valid then examination of the functioning of Community Services in the Smaller Cities takes on a special significance.

B. PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION

Generally speaking there are two patterns of central organization to be found. One is what I shall call the *Coordinating*