

'The Hustle'

putting together a successful and effective
community organization development framework

Ben Young

The traditional community organization – community development (CO-CD) approaches have primarily social-work, sociology, and under-developed-county economic development rootages. Consequently, most of the principles and approaches developed to date are described and applied primarily phenomenologically rather than from a psychological contextualization perspective.

In a recent training session with the Office of Education, Training of the Trainers (OETTT) through the Division of Community Services, University of California Extension, Santa Cruz, I was involved in a skills session on the principles of CO-CD. In making preparation for the sessions I became acutely aware of the wide

variety of definitions, principles and approaches that have been developed and the confusion that is thereby generated in attempting to present something personally useful to a diverse group of individuals.

"Buying In"

I took a "step back" from the materials before me and asked the question: What are the handles by which a participant in the skills session will be able to "buy in" and "own" the principles to be presented?

I then became aware of three factors: handles for "buying in," both intellectually and emotionally, were missing; the mechanistic and impersonal nature of the formulations in the literature; and

the need for a reformulation (organic and personal in nature) that would allow immediate identification (correlation) to everyday experiences (an HP-OD approach).

The next step was to think of what was the most basic aspect of CO-CD (couched in HP-OD terms). In asking myself from my own experience what did I call what I did when involved in CO-CD work (when looking at it in its most basic terms from the "step back" position), the word "hustle" popped into my mind with a rush of feeling, rooted in my experiences in 1965-67 in the Hunter's Point District of San Francisco.

At the time I was a consultant to BAND (Bay Area Neighbor-

hood Development), a three-year OEO demonstration grant project in consumer education, counseling and organization. We soon learned at BAND that one of the best natural organizers in the community was the "street hustler" and rather than teaching we could do some learning.

My mind really exploded with emotional reinforcement at this point and I realized that I was flooded with experiences that allowed me to really "buy in" and "own" the term "hustle."

Grass Roots Credentials

Because I had always been considered an "outsider" without the necessary credentials as far as "grass roots" CO-CD has been concerned (since I had no actual "inside" organizing experience over any period of time), all of a sudden literally 10 or 20 experiences where I had been successful in one type of "hustle" or another came to mind.

As a free lance consultant I had to "hustle" contracts to survive. I assisted many a client in strategies and tactics to get themselves together to get a number of different difficult jobs done. In volunteer community work I had "hustled" (influenced) others to join me in my way of thinking and doing. I concluded that all of these activities were at the genesis of what it took to be a community organizer - community developer and I did have the basic ingredients necessary.

From that point on I began to list quickly all the aspects of "the hustle" in CO-CD terms I could think of from HP-OD perspective. I found that I thought in tandem terms which gave a continuum-spectrum type of parameter. By using the continuum-spectrum parameter, individuals can determine, without good or bad judgment, where their experiences

have led them to be on the continuum and can "buy in" on this conceptualization and position perspective.

The first thing that came to my mind was "hot-cold." From my experience, a "hot hustle" was an "Alinsky type" based on a "for-or-against," "win-lose," "I'm O.K. - You're not O.K." approach. A "cold (cool) hustle" was a "Biddle type" based on a "non-competitive," "win-win," "I'm O.K. - You're O.K." approach. In analyzing my experiences, depending on what "the hustle" was that I was involved in, I realized that I have moved from one end of the continuum to the other end in my approach.

Parameter Aspects

The following is a listing of some of the other continuum-spectrum type of parameter aspects that were developed, on which participants' opinions would be obtained to determine the "CO-CD style" that they recommended using:

- climate -- timing
- persons -- principles
- results -- issues
- know what you know -- don't know what you don't know
- motivation -- participation
- resources -- influence (leverage)
- strategies and tactics -- trade-offs and pay-offs
- action plan (goal and objectives) -- consequences (to persons, things and institutions)
- evaluation and recycling -- participant and observer

By using these, or other continuum-spectrum type of parameter aspects that "make sense" to the participants, "common ground handles" for understanding similarities and differences in approach can be developed. The HP-OD approach calls for putting persons and what happens to

them, climate, timing and operational environmental conditions high on the list of values that influence projects. In project conceptualization, approach, planning, goals, objectives, strategies and tactics, the continuum-spectrum device for probing where individuals are coming from, acts as a check list for data and attitude collection on which to base the HP-OD approach.

In the several times that I have used this conceptualization at the OETTT session and since, I have found it enthusiastically received. The key to the presentation each time has been to enable the participants to relate their own experiences, both intellectually and emotionally owned, to the various paired continuums, and to develop other continuum formulations that make sense to them.

Every day each one of us is "hustling" or trying to influence someone or obtain something in "ways" we usually take for granted.

When you try to set up an appointment, get a job, buy something, get permission to do something, etc., to some degree your "hustle" is at work.

By becoming aware of our own "hustle" operation and style, we can accomplish more of what we want personally and be aware of the consequential ramifications on others. In addition, by being aware of an individual's "natural style of hustle," any type of CO-CD effort can be enhanced by consciously putting together team members of known tendencies and potential.

Other than finding that "the hustle," as described here in formal continuum terms, to be what I have done informally without knowing it as such during most of my career, I have only applied this formulation in classroom settings and partially in

limited applications. Up to now I haven't found anyone in CO-CD work, who is actively engaged in projects, who isn't pretty well satisfied with doing his own thing. Most are uninterested in testing a different conceptualization or approach. It has only been from those who have learned by failure or teach CO-CD that I have received a sympathetic ear.

To me, the "hustle" conceptualization approach allows a person of any educational or cultural background to "start where he is" in terms of his own experiences and to identify his own "hustle style." Either individually or as an organization then, potential trade-offs and pay-offs that are inherent in each style, or

chosen style role in different settings, can be looked at in both short and long run terms.

In my opinion, by using "the hustle" conceptualization as a common ground perspective, individuals involved in CO-CD will be in a better position to put together a personally satisfying and effective (winning) CO-CD effort.

SECRET

Benjamin I. Young Jr. has been a self-employed management, community, economic and organization devel-

opment consultant since 1965. The prior 15 years were spent in industry in systems and procedures, office management, personnel and training. From 1965 to 1970 he specialized in low-income and minority community and economic development, and primarily acted as a "trouble shooter" for national firms in OEO and model cities programs. Since 1970 he has specialized in innovative and tailor made interventions and workshops for industry, government and non-profit organizations. The MBA degree (organization and management) was received from the University of California at Berkeley. Societal affiliations include: American Society for Training and Development, National Council for Small Business Development, National Association for Community Development, NTL OD Network and the National Education Association.

Government Trainers Explore Division Formation

The Federal Trainers and State and Local Government Special Interest Groups (SIGs), in their meetings during ASTD's 30th Annual Conference, will consider formation of a government trainer network which could have, as its outcome, establishment of a new division within the Society.

Those persons chairing the interested SIGs - Frederick E. Fisher for the State and Local Government session and Reginold M. Jones, Jr. for the Federal Trainers - are planning to devote time during the SIG meetings for government trainer division discussion. They solicit expressions of interest, exploration of mutual concerns, expected consequences, expected costs and other related organizational concerns. They welcome suggestions prior to the Conference as well as participation at the San Francisco sessions.

Federal Trainers Mary M. Fuller and Leise G. Robbins are coordi-

nating the government trainer division effort. One of the ways in which interaction between government trainers at different levels occurs is through the provisions of the Intergovernmental Personnel Program (IPP) Act. Through this act, the U.S. Civil Service Commission is empowered to train state and local government personnel.

Opportunities for exchange by persons interested in government training will be at the Special Interest Group meetings in San Francisco April 2; after the April 2 Expo Beer Party; and during the April 3 lunch at the Exposition, 12:30 - 1 p.m.

Interested persons can contact any of the following persons for more information:

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