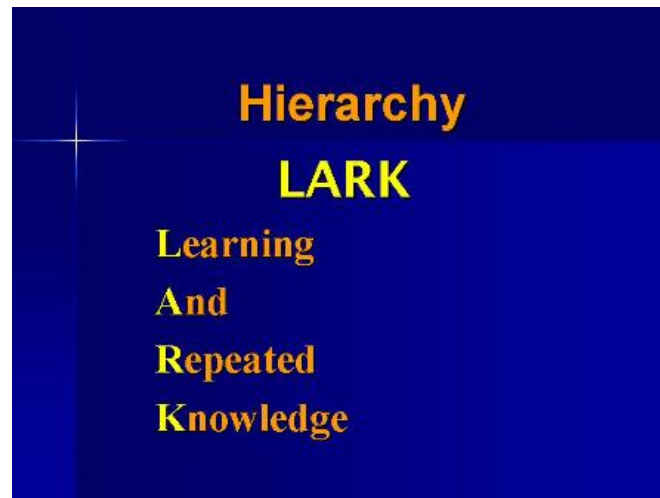## CHAPTER 5: The Self-Help Approach to Community Development
Gary Paul Green

BEHAVIOR OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter and completing the online learning activities, students should be able to

1. Define the self-help approach to community development.

2. Describe how self-help differs from other community development approaches.

3. Identify the community settings in which self-help might work best.

4. Identify the contexts in which the self-help approach would be less effective.

5. Define asset-based development. Illustrate how it differs from needs assessments.

6. Explain the general process of mapping community assets.

7. Define social capital and give three examples of how community development practitioners can promote social capital.

8. Compare and contrast bonding and bridging social capital.

9. Discuss some of the obstacles and issues that community developers face in promoting self-help in communities.

10. Identify three key responsibilities of facilitators in implementing self-help projects.

LARK Activity 5.1

Select the best answer for each of the following questions:

1. Self-help is most critical of which approach to community development?

       *a. technical assistance

       b. conflict

       c. interactional

Robinson and Green
Introduction to Community Development
Online Learning Modules

2. Asset-based development usually begins by mapping the resources in each of the following *except*:

     a. individual experiences and training

     *b. wealth and income

     c. formal and informal organizations

     d. institutions

3. Robert Putnam argues that the most critical sources of social capital in communities are:

     a. informal networks and associations

     b. unions

     *c. voluntary organizations

     d. schools

4. An example of bridging social capital is:

      a. neighbors that you know well.

      b. co-workers

      *c. friends of friends (acquaintances)

      d. family

5. Self-help appears to work best in which type of neighborhood or community?

      *a. middle-class

      b. concentrated poverty neighborhoods

      c. neighborhoods/communities with strong voluntary organizations

      d. neighborhoods/communities with a large number of informal associations

6. When implementing self-help projects, the responsibilities of facilitators include all of the following *except*:

     a. promoting participation by all stakeholders

     b. encouraging the free flow of ideas

     *c. providing participants with the technical answers when they need it

     d. developing community ownership in the project

7. The self-help approach assumes that:

     a. it is easier to organize communities around needs rather than their strengths or resources

     *b. the key role of the practitioner is to facilitate

     c. local knowledge is limited in its capacity to address complex problems

     d. it is better to initiative the process and let communities be responsible for follow-up activities

8. Research on social capital suggests that:

a. social relationships is more important than financial capital

b. social capital can be created easily, but it is more difficult to lose it

c. the structure of social networks may influence the capacity of communities to pursue collective interests

d. there are no class or racial differences in social capital

SOAR Activity 5.1

Asset Mapping Exercise

This exercise is designed to help students grasp the basic idea of asset-based development by participating in a process to identify underutilized resources (e.g., facilities, equipment, personnel, relationships, etc.) in community institutions. It is a much more difficult task to build an asset map of individual gifts or organizational resources. Typically, this process focuses on a single neighborhood or community. Each group identifies potential resources in the institutions and reports to the entire group.

Community Institutions:

1. Break up into small groups of 7-8 individuals.
2. Each group selects a local institution to examineBsuch as libraries, schools, community colleges, police, hospitals, parks, etc.
3. Make a thorough inventory of the resources of the local institution.
4. Examine ways these resources can be used to build beneficial relationships in the community.
5. Identify how these resources can be enhanced through relationships outside the community.

SOAR Activity 5.2

A Community Visioning Exercise

As part of a strategic planning process, many communities develop a vision statement. The vision statement reflects the values and goals of local residents. This exercise helps students learn the basics of developing a vision statement. Students will be given a description of a typical bedroom community (IDOL). After reading the description, students should be divided into small groups (no more than five students per group). Each group is asked to develop a purpose and value statement for IDOL. Individuals are asked to write on a piece of paper their answers to the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of IDOL?
2. What are the critical values that residents share in common in this community?
3. Each individual reads their statements and the group discusses as a whole the common elements to these statements.
4. The group then drafts a statement of purpose and values.
5. Next, individuals in each small group will write a vision statement. It is preferable to develop a vision statement for IDOL for at least 20 to 25 years in the future. The purpose of this short vision statement should be to describe what IDOL will look like in the future if it is successful in its community development efforts.
6. Each individual shares their vision statement and the group identifies common themes among these statements.
7. The group then works to develop a common vision statement that reflects these themes.
8. Each group reports on their vision statement to the other groups and discusses some of the issues identified in this process.

### A Brief Description of the City of Idol

The city of Idol was founded in the mid-1800s and slowly grew for the next 150 years to 1,882 people in 2010. Idol encompasses an area of roughly two square miles in southwest Marshy County. It is situated in a scenic valley surrounded by tree-covered bluffs and bisected by the pristine, trout-filled Winter Creek, which runs through Idol Marsh (home to abundant wildlife). Idol is located about 10 miles from a city of about 10,000 and about 30 miles from a metropolitan area of about 250,000 people. Idol rapidly grew during the past decade with a growth rate of about 30%. Over 98% of the population is white

Idol has a balanced mix of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Manufacturing and retail are the primary industries. The community faces many development issues as a result of the region's steady growth. The downtown Post Office is considering relocating to the business park on the edge of town and there is no longer a full service grocery store in the city.

Main Street remains the heart of the city, with this downtown district defining Idol. The citizens of Idol are concerned that rural communities are losing their identity. They are concerned that they will become a bedroom community and new residents will not identify with Idol and participate in community life. Residents are proud of their library, parks and other services available to them. A small creek runs through the middle of town, but historically the city has turned its back to the water.

Idol's residential areas show strong efforts at historic preservation. However, there are indications of problems within housing. Many older, single family homes are too large and becoming too expensive for the average household. The population is aging and senior housing needs are on the horizon. In addition, some residents are worried about the Atrailer park@ on the north side of town. The city is surrounded by farmland. There has been limited cooperation with the surrounding towns on municipal services and development.
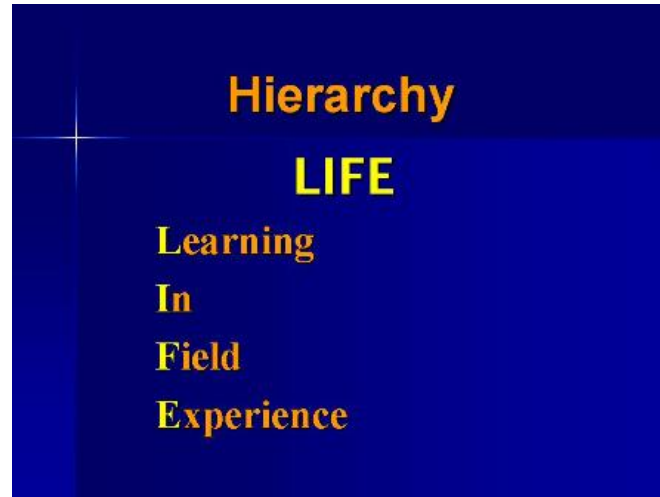
LIFE Activity 5.1

LOOKING AT YOUR NETWORK OF CONTACTS

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK

In answering the following questions, you may list people from ANY context. It is not necessary to limit yourself to fellow college students or co-workers from previous jobs. People with whom you have more than one kind of relationship can be listed more than once. In the blanks that follow each question, please list their names or initials. You may list as few as you wish or leave a question blank if no one comes to mind.

1. **Academic Matters.** If you look back over the last year, who are the people with whom you have discussed important academic matters? This may have been for advice on your major or classes, suggestions for internships or any other academic matters of importance to you.

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

2. **Job Search**. What people have been most helpful and useful in helping you find your last job? Consider people who provided leads, made introductions, or offered advice in your decision-making.

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

3**. Friends**. List your closest friends. Consider those with whom you most like to spend your free time or with whom you would be most likely to discuss a personal issue.

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

4**. Social and Emotional Support**. Other than people in your family, identify the people you could count on if you faced a personal crisis.

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

STEP 2: CONSOLIDATE YOUR LIST

Consolidate the names generated in step 1 onto the grid or the worksheet, which follows. No person should be listed twice.

Robinson and Green
Introduction to Community Development
Online Learning Modules

STEP 3: COMPUTE THE DENSITY OF YOUR NETWORK

Density refers to the extent to which the people in your network know each other. Using the grid on the worksheet, indicate who in your network know each other by placing a checkmark in the cells corresponding to each acquainted pair. Leave a cell blank if the pair do not know each other or if you do not know if they know each other.
Once you have finished check marking who knows who, compute the density of your network through the following steps:

a. Total number of people in your network.   N= _____

b. Maximum density [N*(N-1)]/2=M   M= _____

c. Total number of checkmarks on your grid.   C= _____

d. Calculate the density of your network.

   C/M=D   D= _____
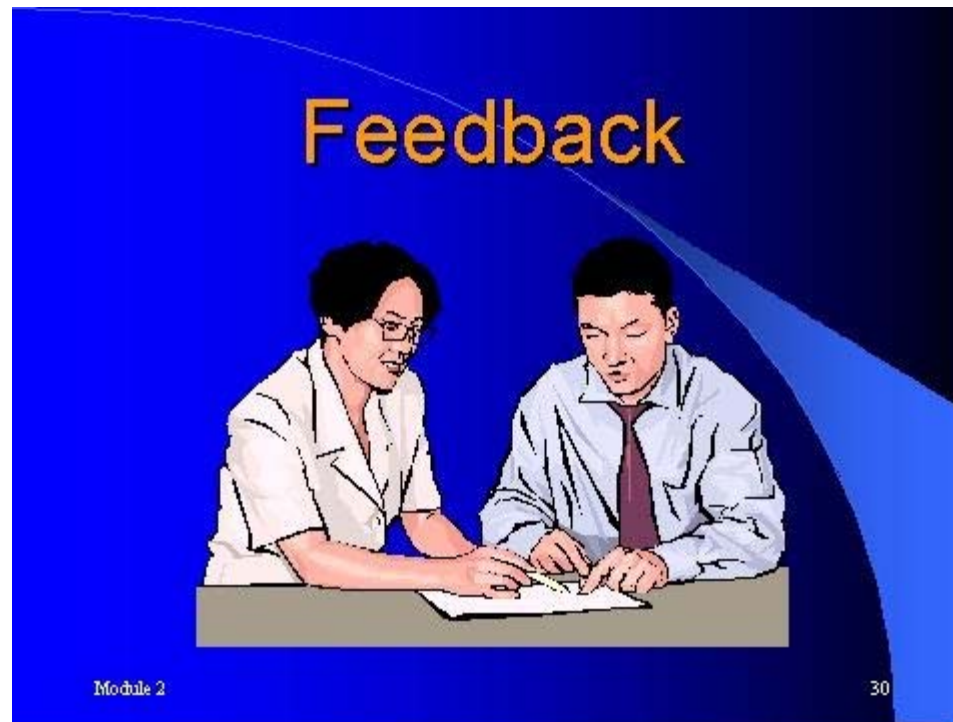
STEP 4: LOOK AT THE CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUR NETWORK GRID

Look over your network and determine the number of people who are:

a. The same gender as you_____

b. The same racial or ethnic group as you _____

c. The same nationality as you _____

d. The same age as you _____

Robinson and Green
Introduction to Community Development
Online Learning Modules

My Network Grid

Name	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	■																		
		■																	
			■																
				■															
					■														
						■													
							■												
								■											
									■										
										■									
											■								
												■							
													■						
														■					
															■				
																■			
																	■		
																		■	
																			■