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MICHIGAN EXTENSION PROGRAM IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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Last year at this conference a Michigan panel reported on the results of a pilot extension education program in Developing Human Resources, and on the proposed program for the entire state in 1964-65. This is a report of progress and results of that effort.¹

First let me discuss some statistics from a questionnaire we mailed to Michigan's 79 county extension offices. One county failed to return the questionnaire, and 13 other counties failed to get under way last year. In exactly half of the counties the agents followed quite closely the suggestions in the guidebook prepared by the state staff guidance committee. The others made major adaptations to local situations.

No negative responses were received, but 30 did not reply to a question to get a general reaction of the extension staff to the program. The others all included the word "good." Twenty-two said it was "good in every respect," and four more said it provided new leadership contacts. Then there were the usual "good, but"—"but material too difficult," "but came at wrong time," "but needed more time," etc.

Fifty-six used a county "guidance committee." They averaged 16 people and met twice. With the exception of four county staffs, the reaction to using a guidance committee was favorable.

For the most part, members of the guidance committee also participated in the leaders' training. The number of leader training meetings averaged three and a half with about 25 participating in each. Replies indicated a good cross-section of the community represented.

Many of the leaders, in turn, conducted group discussions, some of which undoubtedly were not reported to the extension staff. Those reported included 28 specially organized neighborhood groups, 44 home economics extension, 34 Farm Bureau, 34 service clubs, 28

¹For details of the program, see *Increasing Understanding of Public Problems and Policies, 1964*, p. 135.

school, and 12 others. A total of about 1,300 group discussion meetings were held with an average of 24 people in attendance. Perhaps this is the weakest link in the chain. It may indicate that the county staff believed its job was done when the leaders' meetings were ended.

Pay-off is always difficult to determine in an educational program; but the consensus was that the accomplishment was tremendous in creating awareness and intelligent discussion of the problem of future job needs, and the education and training necessary to match people with those needs. It stimulated increased interest in all levels and types of education. In 35 cases the respondent to the survey said leaders had definitely expressed a desire to continue a program in human resource development. In 22 cases the responder was negative, and 7 did not reply to this question.

This was not an action program, but it was intended that action would result. Let me document a few results reported: "Had an impact on the high school curriculum and the bond issue for extra millage." "150 sets of leaflets used by the community college promotion committee." "Guidance counselor used slides and other materials in high school." "Director of Bureau of Social Aid used slides to show Aid-for-Dependent-Children mothers to show them the impact of school dropouts."

It stirred interest and activity toward a community college in three counties and caused another county to join with a neighboring county rather than promote one which would be available five to ten years in the future, if at all. A woman reported that her son, after reading the leaflets, decided to quit his job and go to college. Several extension agents indicated that this program made it easy to organize a committee under the Economic Opportunity Act and promote "Head Start" and other programs. Several agents pointed out that the Human Resource Development program was basic to all community development programs and should have been conducted two or three years earlier.

The survey results definitely indicated that, while many county staffs were reluctant to yield to administrative pressure to conduct the program, the enthusiasm of the people was so great, the development of new clientele so worth while, and the results so gratifying, they were glad they had made the effort.

In order to get some indication of the reaction of those participating as "leaders," a questionnaire was sent to leaders in six counties (one in each extension district). Thirty of the 104 replying said they would like to continue a Human Resource Development program,

if they are provided additional information or a follow-up program.

Further analyses will be made of both sets of questionnaires in the hope that they will furnish a guide to more effective future programs.