

# COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

TRADITIONAL PRINCIPLES

AND

MODERN APPLICATIONS

## EDITORS

*Robert D. Patton, M.A., M.P.H., Ed.D.*  
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

AND

*William B. Cissell, M.S.P.H., Ph.D.*  
TEXAS WOMAN'S COLLEGE



**COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION:  
Traditional Principles and Modern Applications**

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**Latchpins Press  
708 Hollyhill Road  
Johnson City, TN 37604**

ISBN 0-9625490-1-0

## **DEDICATION**

*This book is dedicated to those pioneers in health education who took theory and knowledge from the classroom and stimulated change by supporting and encouraging involvement of the community in resolving locally defined health problems. Those early pioneers drew from their experiences to incorporate application of theories about community action into their writings and classroom instruction.*

*This book is also dedicated to our families who are our first loves and who continue to inspire our professional labors. They stimulate humility when we have vision of grandeur and lift our spirits when we despair.*

## FOREWORD

This volume, ***Community Organization: Traditional Principles and Modern Practices***, is a highly valuable tool for the academic world, both students and professors, as well as for practitioners. It is pertinent whether the practitioner is in the general community or in a specialized segment of the community, such as the school, the university, or the workplace.

The articles from the well-known scholars and authors move across the spectrum from basic community theory to its application. The editors have selected prominent health educators who are professionals of special note and have worked in the specialty of their choice. Each contribution indicates that knowledge in depth.

While this collection is intended as a textbook, it reads, at times, like a novel that shares vignettes and scenes from several countries and communities. Each chapter is based on sound public-health education theory, often providing insights into the theory itself.

The editors are highly qualified health professionals who are committed to the education of young persons in the health education and health promotion fields. The book should appeal to those who are learning about the complex health world of today, as well as to those already in the field—locally, nationally, and internationally.

Read — Learn — Enjoy

Ruth F. Richards, M.A., M.P.H.  
Los Angeles, California

## PREFACE

The purpose of this book of readings on community organization is to consider both the practical and philosophical aspects of community-based, social-action theories, models, constructs, and perceptions. The authors of the articles were selected because of their knowledge in specific areas of community work. The articles represent a range of ideas and content, designed to stimulate thinking about how change can be effected in a community. While no effort was made to present an opposing view for each issue discussed, the editors acknowledge the fact that contrasting viewpoints may have been previously published.

In a survey conducted by the editors it was found there is disagreement and/or confusion about various terms related to community-based social action. Definitions for community organization, community development, and community participation were offered for review and reaction. Reaction ranged from endorsement of the definitions presented to recommendations for substituting distinctly different definitions for those presented. Some responders used previously published, theoretical works to support their positions, while others cited only personal experiences as the bases for their views. The editors report the variety in attitudes as a point of discussion and believe differences will continue to exist due to the range of disciplines that contribute to community-based, social action theories, models, constructs and perceptions. The editors, while interested in definitions and issues in our profession, did not design this book as a review of theories. Rather, they chose to focus most heavily on the practical applications for accomplishing community-based social action. Authors were chosen primarily on the basis of their experience in applying theories, models, constructs or organized perceptions about community action.

The editors can easily point to successes reported by those involved in a variety of

community-based, social-action projects and programs. Success stories, or at least the belief that community organization theories work, range from the international arena to the local level. The American Heart Association had the headline "Community Organization is the Heart of Tomorrow" in its Winter, 1987 issue of **American Heart News**. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has long been recognized as a model for regional development. Visitors continue to travel from around the world to consult with community development specialists in TVA. Vincent, Clearie and Schluchter reported in a 1987 issue of **JAMA** on a successful project for reducing adolescent pregnancy through school and community-based education. Forty years earlier, Elizabeth Lovell reported similar information in an 1947 issue of **High School Journal** in an article titled: "Programs Begin with People." Community-based social action programs have been reported in every corner of our planet for many decades. Yet there are those, including highly educated professionals, who see their community-based social-action successes as innovative and original.

Finally, the editors believe there has been a lack of health related textbooks focusing on community-based social action published in recent years. We have attempted to fill this void. There may be disagreement with the views expressed by various authors and perhaps with the editors, but our desire is that both the positive and negative comments this book evokes will lead to a better understanding of community-based social action related to human health needs and issues. Certainly the problems of poverty, race relations, changing family patterns, teenage pregnancy, life threatening sexually transmitted diseases, widespread drug abuse, and others are of sufficient social, physical and emotional importance to warrant our best thinking and community-based approaches to find solutions.

This book is organized into five major chapters. The *Introduction* of Chapter I explores some of the past successes using community organization methods and how change is being effected today using a variety of constructs. It is followed by the *Chapter One* which contains articles on concepts, theories and perspectives. *Chapter Two* contains articles which illustrate broad patterns of application. More focused patterns of applications are presented in *Chapter Three*. Some of these articles give very practical measures for accomplishing change. *Chapter Four* contains part of the Tennessee Valley story. TVA is a regional development unlike anything else which has occurred in the world. Volumes could be written about the changes brought about by TVA. *Chapter Five* discusses teaching and training methods and

resources for community organization. Newer applications using microcomputers are included. This final chapter gives information for community needs assessment.

The editors are deeply indebted to the authors who have contributed to this book. We thank our publisher and text editor Dr. Jay Robert Reese for his many helpful suggestions and long months of editorial work and revising of the articles. A special thanks goes to Ms. Rosie King, graduate student during the compilation of the first draft, for her many hours of proof reading. Finally, this work would have been impossible without the competent work performed by Ms. Janet Decker and Ms. Martha Sams. Their many hours of typing and patient tolerance of requests by the editors is gratefully appreciated.

Robert D. Patton  
Johnson City, Tennessee  
William B. Cissell  
Denton, Texas

## CONTRIBUTORS

William C. Ahrens, M.S.N., R.N., is a Commander in the U. S. Navy Nurse Corps. He is Director of the Health Promotion Division at the Headquarters, U. S. Naval Medical Command in Washington, D. C. His M.S.N. degree is in cardiovascular nursing from the University of Alabama Medical Center in Birmingham. He serves as adjunct faculty in Advanced Cardiac Life Support Instructor training at the University of Virginia Medical Center, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Jay L. Allen, M.P.H., Ed.D., C.H.E.S., is Professor of Health Education in the Department of Health Education, School of Public and Allied Health, East Tennessee State University. His publications have appeared in **The Journal of the American School Health Association**, **Health Educators at Work** and **Journal of Humanics**. Titles of chapters in books include "Exploring Alternatives for Health Care of the Aging," and "Health Care Needs for the Aged." Dr. Allen has received numerous honors, including the "Distinguished Faculty Award" at East Tennessee State University, the Health Systems Agency's "Distinguished Service" award, and was featured in **Southern Living**. He has served on numerous Boards of Directors.

Judd Allen, Ph.D., is President of the Human Resources Institute, Clinical Instructor at the Cornell University Medical College, and Executive Director of the Institute of Cultural Analysis and Change. His publications have appeared in the **Journal of Primary Prevention**, **Health Values**, **The American Journal of Health Promotion** and others. He is editor of **The American Journal of Health Promotion** and is International Eminent Poet, International Poets Academy. Dr. Judd is a noted public lecturer and consultant to a broad range of business and community organizations.

Robert F. Allen, Ph.D., (Deceased) was former President and Founder of The Human Resources Institute and Professor Emeritus, Kean College of New Jersey. He was author of more than 200 books and articles. His books include **The Organizational Unconscious**, **The Quiet Revolution**, **Collegefields: From Delinquency to Freedom**, **Beat the System: A Culture Based Approach to Health**, and **Beat the System: A Way to Create More Human Environments**. He was a former editor of **The American Journal of Health Promotion** and is recognized as a founder of the Wellness Health Promotion movement.

Ray Preston Biggerstaff, Jr., M.P.H., Ed.D., is Professor in the Department of Health and Safety, Western Kentucky University. His publications have appeared in the **Kentucky Public Health Journal**, **Veterans of Foreign Wars Kentucky Magazine**, **Jaycees Kentucky Colonel** and the **Western Kentucky University Alumni Journal**. He has received awards for "Outstanding Service in Public Health" and "Distinguished Service in Community Health." His practical work experience is varied and includes the Department of Community Medicine, University of Kentucky Medical Center, Lake Cumberland District Health Department, Kentucky State Health Department and the U. S. Public Health Service, USPHS in Lexington, Kentucky. Dr. Biggerstaff has served as President of the Kentucky Public Health Association.

Donald J. Breckon, M.P.H., Ph.D., is President of Park College. He has published numerous articles which have appeared in **Eta Sigma Gamma**, **Michigan State Medical Society** and others. His books include **Hospital Health Education: A Guide to Program Development**, **Community Health Education: Setting, Roles, and Skills** (co-authored), and **Ethical Aspects of Life and Death**. Dr. Breckon's honors include "Distinguished Service Award," "Postdoctoral Fellow, American Council on Education," and "Certificate of Commendation" from Michigan Governor Milliken, for work in substance abuse. He has written two dozen successful grant applications and was elected and served as Mayor of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

William C. Byrd, M.Ed., M.P.H., is Professor Emeritus, Department of Community Health, School of Allied Health, East Carolina University. His publications have appeared in professional journals and in books and includes topics such as "Alcohol Abuse," "Fostering Mental Health: Some Factors Affecting Behavior." He has received many honors for his community work. Accomplishments include a leading role in the creation of East Carolina's Department of Environmental Health and Community Health. While serving as Associate Dean at East Carolina he was also heavily involved in development of rural medical centers. He received the Distinguished Service Award of the North Carolina Public Health Association and the Outstanding Award of the North Carolina Primary Health Care Association. He is a member of Phi Kappa Phi and Kappa Delta Pi honor societies.

Anne Callan Cunningham, M.P.H., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, is a former Research Associate at UNC Chapel Hill and Coordinator of the Black Church Project directed by Dr. John Hatch. She is raising her children in Michigan at present.

William B. Cissell, M.S.P.H., Ph.D., C.H.E.S., is has been Associate Professor in the Department of Health Education, School of Public and Allied Health, East Tennessee State University and is now chairman of the Department of Health Studies



at Texas Woman's University. His publications have appeared in **Health Education, The Communicator, Journal of School Health, Journal of Alcohol Education, and Asian Journal of Physical Education**. Titles for chapters in books include "Sexuality and the Aged: An Advocacy Issue Among Seniors," "Sexuality in the Golden Years," and "Childlessness: Boone or Bane?" Honors Dr. Cissell has received include "Outstanding Achievement Award," Tennessee Society for Public Health Education, "High Flyer Award," American Heart Association—Tennessee affiliate, Phi Kappa Phi membership, and numerous certificates of appreciation and recognition for community services. He is active in professional associations, has a special interest in International Health, and has lived and worked in many international settings. Dr. Cissell serves as a consultant to Johnson and Johnson Health Management, Inc.

Joseph DiPaolo, M.S.W., is a Lieutenant Commander in the U. S. Navy Medical Services Corps. He serves as Head, Family Advocacy Branch and Social Work Specialty Advisor, at the Headquarters, of the U. S. Naval Medical Command, Washington, D. C. He is currently a doctoral student at the National Catholic School of Social Services, Catholic University.

Joe Everette, M.A., M.P.H., is Supervisor of the Tennessee Valley Authority Wellness Program (Live-Well). The Live Well program received an award from the Office of Personnel in Washington, D. C. in 1987 for the "Best Program" of its type in the Federal Government System. Recognition awards have also been received from the Tennessee Valley Authority for the Live-Well Program.

Florence B. Fiori, M.A., Dr. P.H., is Associate Administrator for Extramural Affairs, Health Resources and Services Administration, U. S. Public Health Service. Her publications have appeared in the **Journal of American Public Health Association, Society for Public Health Education Monographs, International Journal of Health Education, Public Health Reports, and Trustee Magazine**. Honors for Dr. Fiori include "Secretary's Award for Exceptional Achievement," U. S. Department of Health and Human Services; Past President, Society for Public Health Education; and Member, Congressional Oversight, Blue Ribbon Panel to Review Health and Medical Care Resources, U. S. Department of Defense. She was former Director, Bureau of Health Facilities, and Director, Office of Health Planning, U. S. Public Health Service.

Josephine Gaines, M.S., Ed.D., is a retired Professor of Health Education, School of Public and Allied Health, East Tennessee State University. Previous positions were at the University of Maryland, New York University, S.I.C.C. (CUNY) and Brooklyn College. She has served on the Editorial Board of **Health Education** and on the review panel of several other journals. Publications of Dr. Gaines have appeared in **Health Values, Health Education, Journal of School Health, RHO Journal, Nursing Outlook, The Journal of the American College Health Association, Washing AAHPER, From Theory to Practice: A Journal for Educational Management, and Research Council Scientific Forum**. She has contributed to several books. Dr. Gaines was a Cum Laude graduate of U.C.L.A., has made many professional presentations, and is active in several professional organizations.

Elaine P. Gordon, B.A., is Area Director, American Cancer Society-Kentucky Division. She received her degree in communications from East Tennessee State University. Her publication of "A View of Divorce: Looking Back" appears in the book **The American Family: Life and Health**. She is active in community work and has been named a "Kentucky Colonel."

Randy Gordon, M. Div., M. Thm., is Minister of Discipleship, Northeast Christian Church, Louisville, Kentucky. He is a part-time Professor, College of the Scriptures, Louisville. His graduate degrees were received from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has published in the **Pulpit Digest** and appears in the publication **Outstanding Young Men of America**.

Lawrence H. Green, M.P.H., Dr.P.H., is Vice-President and Director, Health Promotional Program, The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. He has been Director of the Center for Health Promotion, Research, and Development; Co-Director, Southwest Center for Prevention Research; Associate Director of the Institute for Health Policy Education and Research; Professor of Family Practice and Community Medicine, the University of Texas Medical School, and Professor of Behavioral Sciences, the University of Texas School of Public Health. He has served as President and Editor of the Society for Public Health Education and on the editorial board of 15 professional and scientific journals. He has authored or co-authored 129 articles, 47 chapters in book, 18 books and monographs, and 75 other professional publications.

John W. Hatch, M.S.W., Dr.P.H., is Professor in the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, School of Public Health, University of North Carolina. His publications have appeared in journals including **Health Education Monographs** and **Contact**. Contributions to book chapters includes titles such as, "Consumer Involvement in the Delivery of Health Services," "Health Worker Role in Community Primary Care," and "Community Participation and Control." Honors include Milbank Memorial Fund Faculty Associate, "Hildrus A. Poindexter Award", and "Annual Award for



Outstanding Service" Mississippi Association for Community Health. Dr. Hatch has been elected to service as a commissioner on the Medical Commission of the World Council of Churches in Geneva and has been awarded a million and a half dollars in foundation support for health promotion in several black church conferences and associations.

Rita B. Hunter, M.Ed., is currently Program Director for the Learn and Live Health Museum, Salisbury, North Carolina. She received her Masters Degree in Adult Education from North Carolina State University and has served as an Instructor in the Department of Health Education, East Tennessee State University. Her background includes extensive experience in community health education, staff development, non-traditional training, and consulting.

Rosemary A. King, M.P.H., is an administrative assistant with the Rural Health Consortium, Rogersville, Tennessee. Her responsibilities include directing the health promotion and disease prevention plan and the migrant health project. She received the M.P.H. from the Department of Health Education at East Tennessee State University. Ms. King was a graduate assistant while in the master's program and helped the editors compile this book.

Beth Knox, M.A., Ed.D., LNHA is an Associate Professor in the Departments of Allied Health Sciences and Health Administration at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. She received the M.A. in Business and Economics and the Ed.D. in Health Education from the Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. Dr. Knox is also a licensed nursing home administrator. For several years, she was the Director of the Education and Training Department at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas, Texas. Dr. Knox is currently involved in curriculum development, teaching, and research in the areas of long-term health care and health administration.

Virginia C. Li, Ph.D., is Chairman, Division of Behavior Sciences and Health, School of Public Health, University of California Los Angeles; Professor Behavioral Medicine, the Department of Internal Medicine, Charles R. Drew Medical School; an Honorary Professor, Nanjing College for Family Planning Administration. Dr. Li is extensively involved in program planning and evaluation in various countries and in training community health workers and physicians in primary health care in the United States and internationally. She is serving as a consultant to the World Health Organization in the WHO-Shanghai Collaborating Center for Health Education and Behavior Research in the WHO-Global Programme on AIDS. She has authored and co-authored 57 articles and book chapters, numerous reports, and two books. Her current research includes smoking cessation interventions for chronic obstructive lung disease in Los Angeles, and paragonimiasis control and family planning in China.

Mona B. N. Lo is an administrator with the Kwun Tong Community Health Project, part of the United Christian Medical Service of Kowloon. She has an active interest in community health and community organization in the public housing estates. She has made presentations concerning her work at international meetings.

Kate R. Lorig, RN, Dr. P.H., is currently a Senior Research Associate in the Department of Medicine at the Stanford University School of Medicine. She serves as Director of Education for the Stanford Arthritis Center. She has worked as a community organizer in Latin-America and for the University of California Santa Cruz extension. For several years she has taught community organization at San Jose State University. She has presented numerous papers at scientific meetings.

Beth J. McBee, M.P.H., is a former Instructor in the Department of Health Education, School of Public and Allied Health, East Tennessee State University. She was previously Corporate Quality Control Auditor with various apparel industries and was the Safety Director for a product manufacturer. She is currently the Safety/Environmental Engineer, Texas Instruments, Inc., Johnson City, Tennessee.

Mary L. Michal, M.D., is Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics and Director of the School Health Team, James H. Quillen College of Medicine, East Tennessee State University. Her publications have appeared in journals such as the **Journal of School Health**, **Journal of American Medical Women's Association** and **Health Values**. Book chapters include topics such as "Pregnancy and Prenatal Care: An Opportunity" and "Labor and Delivery: The Realization of Opportunity." Dr. Michal has received the National Institute of Mental Health Pediatric Fellowship in Psychiatry, "Outstanding Service Award" American School Health Association, and is a Fellow of the American School Health Association. She is former Director Maternal and Child Health, Tennessee Department of Health and Environment.

Joseph T. Miller, M.A.T., Ed.D., C.H.E.S., is Assistant Professor of Health Education, School of Public and Allied Health, East Tennessee State University. His publications have appeared in **Health Values**, **Safety Forum**, **KAHPER Journal**, **Tennessee Journal of Health**, **Physical Education and Recreation**, **Journal of Environmental Health**, and **Health Education**. Dr. Miller has served in numerous professional leadership positions on the local, state and national levels. He holds licenses as an Emergency Medical Technician and Nursing Home Administrator, and has been a consultant for Care

Inn Management, Jersey Minere Zinc Corporation, and University of Nebraska School of Medicine for Curriculum needs in long-term care administration.

Shirley L. Morgan, M.S., M.P.H., Ed.D., C.H.E.S., is Assistant Professor of Health Education, School of Public and Allied Health, East Tennessee State University. Her journal publications have appeared in **Southern Health Update**, **Journal of Environmental Health**, **Tennessee Public Health Association** and **Professional Safety**. A chapter "Safety in the Home...Learning From Experience" appears in **The American Family: Life and Health**. She is an active speaker in the community and has a special interest in cooperative education within industrial settings. Her research interests include the health of native Americans and health and safety in industry.

Robert D. Patton, M.A., M.P.H., Ed.D., C.H.E.S., is Professor, and former Chair, Department of Health Education, School of Public and Allied Health, East Tennessee State University. His publications have appeared in **Health Values**, **Journal of American Medical Women's Association**, **Health Education Quarterly**, **The Tennessee Teacher**, **Journal of Sex Education and Therapy**, and **Journal of Humanics**. He is editor of the textbook **The American Family: Life and Health**. Honors include listings in ten publications such as **Outstanding Young Men of America**, certificates and medals from the American Red Cross, membership in Phi Kappa Phi, and was named "Distinguished Faculty Member" by his East Tennessee State University colleagues. Dr. Patton has received recognition for many community activities, is an elected government official at the local level, has traveled widely, and is consultant to numerous groups including Johnson and Johnson Health Management, Inc.

Marilyn Rice, M.P.H., is Regional Director in Health Education and Community Development, Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization. She has written many technical health manuals, articles and documents published for national and international distribution, published family health and health education newsletter for local, regional and international field staff, and published guides for use by health personnel in training programs. In addition she has provided political and technical leadership in the development of health promotion and education for the 38 countries of the Americas, designed international health education projects, secured and maintained inter-agency cooperation to facilitate the development and monitoring of international primary health care, and designed grant proposals and dispersed contract funds for health and development contracts throughout the Americas.

Richard D. Stacy, M.P.H., Ed.D., is the Head of Health Education at the University of Nebraska, Omaha. He is a senior enlisted petty officer in the United States Naval Reserve and a veteran of active duty with the United States Air Force. He has served in a temporary active duty status with the Naval Medical Command in Washington, D. C. His Ed.D. is from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

Gerald A. Strand, Ph.D., is the President of Strand-Next Century Management in Charlottesville, Virginia. He consults in administration and management, corporate health promotion, and film production/script writing. He was formerly Director of Graduate Health Education and Hospital Administration at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. He is a Lieutenant in the Medical Service Corps of the U. S. Naval Reserves and has served the Naval Medical Command in Washington, D. C., on temporary active duty, and as an independent consultant. He served as a staff consultant to the Commission on Personal Excellence.

Peter Stoddard, M.S.W., Ph.D., is Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Austin Peay State University. He also serves as Research Director, Center for Social Research, Council of Community Services, Nashville, Tennessee and is a consultant to several organizations. Dr. Stoddard has published in the **Journal of Applied Social Sciences** and has been the principal investigator for numerous grants. His research interests include social work, social policy, community mental health and community development and organization.

Marian Upchurch, M.P.H., Dr.P.H., C.H.E.S., is an Associate Professor in the Departments of Allied Health Sciences and Health Administration at Southwest Texas State University. She also serves as project director for a primary health care demonstration project serving a four county area. Dr. Upchurch has over 20 years experience in public health, primarily in the area of community health and has served as consultant to several agencies and groups in the area of community needs assessment.

Hiawatha B. Walker, M.A., M.P.H., Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus, Department of Health Education, School of Public and Allied Health, East Tennessee State University. His publications includes topics such as "To Educate we must Communicate," "Criteria for Field Training of Health Education Students," "A University's Focus on Indian Health," and "Professional Preparation and Practice of Community Health Educators at the Baccalaureate Level." He was former editor of **Health Educators at Work**. His chapter "Community Health: Prerequisite to Family Health" appears in the book

**The American Family: Life and Health.** Dr. Walker has served in leadership positions in the Health Education Section, American Public Health Association, Tennessee Society for Public Health Education and is a member of Delta Omega.

Sanford Weinstein, M.S.W., Ed.D., is currently Professor of Health Education at New York University and is a social worker. His publications have appeared in the **Journal of Sex Research**, **Contemporary Education**, **International Quarterly of Community Health Education**, **Journal of School Health**, and **Journal of Safety Research**. Dr. Weinstein has a special interest in group intervention and community support for the family. His published research includes topics on family stress, bereavement, and personnel matters in community agencies and organizations.

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## INTRODUCTION I

*Some confusion about the commonalities and distinctions among the terms **community organization, community development, community reform, and community participation** continues to be evident among professional health educators. The fact that past confusion existed as regards distinctions between **community organization and community development** was made evident in a community development seminar held at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, in 1963. Howard M. Fitts, Jr., in a presentation titled "Definitions of Community Development: A Problem of Semantics," noted that there were two basic points of confusion. The first was the fact that some persons and groups of persons used community organization to describe a process that others would label community development. The second point of confusion was the fact that persons and groups, all with credentials in social change fields, derived different meanings or interpretations from the same words.*

*The editors of this book surveyed fifty instructors of courses on social change, which were being offered in institutions of higher education, to determine whether or not those instructors agreed with particular definitions of the terms community organization, community development, and community participation. Those surveyed were also asked whether or not these were merely alternate terms for the same process. A slight majority of the respondents, fifty-five percent, agreed with the definitions presented in the questionnaire and expressed the viewpoint that each of the three terms was discrete. However, forty-five percent of the respondents indicated preference for alternate definitions or stated that the three terms were actually alternate terms for the same process. Among the alternate definitions offered, each was slightly different from the others. Perhaps we should take the advice of Edward G. McGavran (1963) who proclaimed, "Let us not get confused with terminology and semantics; let us stay with basic concepts and philosophy. Public health is a distinctive profession with distinctive skills, a distinctive body of knowledge and competence."*

*Of primary importance is the need to recognize that social change processes have evolved through the experiences of educators, social workers, social scientists, charity organizers, and similar professionals while helping people find ways to resolve their problems as a community. When people within*

*a community have clarified their needs, organized themselves and amassed adequate resources, they have been highly successful in resolving a variety of problems including those related to health and health care services.*

*In the first article in Chapter I the Allens identify elements of a culture which correlate positively with program development. They use a retrospective study of culture change to identify three characteristics which they label **enabling factors**. Those factors—a sense of community, a positive culture, and a shared vision—appear to make desired and sustained behavior change both possible and likely to occur. Therefore, they advance the proposition that culture change efforts should include the development of the core enabling factors.*

*Edward G. McGavran (1963) postulated the proposition that public health is the art and science of community diagnosis and treatment—viewing the community as the patient. William Byrd, author of the second article, draws upon McGavran's postulate and explores it at length. He concludes that a social change professional cannot stimulate desired community organization and development when the patient is not adequately diagnosed. Byrd draws upon many years of community work to provide insight into the application of the philosophy he shares with many who were influenced by McGavran.*

*Some concepts of community are explored by Florence Fiori, the third author in Chapter I. Health planning is used to look at the role of government in the delivery of health services. Several acts or programs are used to illustrate federally supported efforts to encourage community organization.*

*Lawrence Green, author of the fourth article, explores community participation in national and international health policies. The author contends that “of all the concepts, models, paradigms, and frameworks that might compete for the status of a theory in health education and health promotion, none would likely muster more consensus than the principle of participation.” Although the principle has not been systematized it serves to explain a wide range of behavioral change phenomena in health. Participation has been linked to health education from the beginnings of the World Health Organization. This qualitative analysis of the theory of participation found its expression in national and international health policies which follow a pattern over time within countries and in World Health Organization policy. The author maintains that a bias exists for putting the theory of participation in more formal terms. It is concluded that the theoretical formulation of the principle of participation lends itself to more formal experimental testing.*

*William Cissell, Rosemary King, and Robert Patton examine in the fifth article the concept of community reform as a social change process. Substandard housing, poor water quality, inadequate waste disposal systems, environmental pollution problems, limited access, or lack of it, to health care facilities and services, excessive exposure to safety hazards, and high disease rates are inequities that stimulate community reform. Determinants of change are identified and discussed. Needs assessment is examined with emphasis on the community survey. The organizer uses findings from the needs assessment to help the community set priorities among various problems and concerns. Leadership has to be cultivated by matching roles in the community reformation activities with the areas in which individuals have strong interests. Guides exist to assist with the selection of community organization leaders. Self-help groups, communication, networking and evaluation are also important aspects of community reform movements, as well.*

*Ray Biggerstaff in the sixth article presents a discussion of leadership. The characteristics of effective leadership and the styles of leadership are presented. The author contends that a leader must have*