

have not included certain short-lived youth sports organizations, or other student associations having programs in which only a small number of youths participate, since the immense majority do not belong to such organizations.

Youth organizations

Youth organizations in Latin America have continually encountered these good and bad factors to which we have referred, and if we weigh them properly perhaps they will give a negative result, which their leaders should study, at the same time establishing suitable working methods and instruments for overcoming the present situation.

Youth movements have developed only recently in Latin America. Young people have organized in national or local groups, which develop sports, cultural, political, student, civic-social, religious, rural, labor, recreational, and other activities. It is not possible of course, to classify existing youth organizations according to the fields of action listed, since many of them develop more than one specific activity.

The most popular youth organizations are those devoted to sports, which in some places are quite large, although they are not always truly national in character. Such institutions nearly always receive popular and even governmental support.

Student groups follow these in chronological order, university groups being the most influential. Movements for the unification of youth associations in secondary education, technological schools, and the like are still in the initial stage in many countries. The work of student organizations is generally hindered by a lack of continuity, rapid turnover in their leaders, the lack of adequate financial resources, and sometimes by being diverted from their cultural aims by the national and international political currents of the moment.

The labor and rural movements still newer, did not develop spontaneously, but were established under the influence of government institutions, of political organizations or ideologies, and also of churches.

Special mention should be made of technical rural youth movements, which in many countries are under the auspices of the ministries of agriculture and private enterprise.

We should also include the mixed organizations engaged in social welfare work among young people of various sectors and of different social and economic levels, and in some cases even religious. These are usually affiliated with international organizations, such as the Catholic Youth Movement, Evangelical Youth, Y.M.C.A., Boy Scouts, Junior Red Cross, and the like, which had their origin in European countries.

The coordination of youth organizations at the national level is even more recent, and it has not taken place in all countries.

In order for youth groups to succeed and to be able to assist a world in development in a historic process that becomes faster by the moment, they cannot remain isolated as if they were watertight compartments. They must make contact with the local community in order to appreciate the realities of the society in which they live, and at the same time they need to communicate with the community and obtain its recognition through the services they render.

Youth is not a final stage. It is a period of training, during which a young person is preparing to serve his community even better when he reaches the adult stage.

Mr. Pierre François, of the Division of Adult Education and Youth Activities of UNESCO, in an excellent paper that he presented to the seminar on study and information for leaders of youth movements in Latin America and the Caribbean Region (1954) said that: "It is the duty of youth organizations, because of their very nature, to impart not theoretic and abstract knowledge, but information that will lead young people to establish contact with reality, to observe objectively all that is going on around them, and to draw from this reality and these surroundings, impartial criteria and above all motives for action. The habit of service acquired by young people during the years they spend in youth organizations, will prevent them from becoming mature men given to futile talk and boredom with everything".

b. Lack of programs

We cannot deny that all our organizations have excellent programs, but it is not always possible to carry them out. There are two basic reasons why such organizations should devote the utmost attention to the planning and execution of a selected, suggestive, interesting, and dynamic program:

1. It ensures the permanency of its members, owing to the interest it arouses, and encourages new contingents of youths to join.
2. It influences members, by improving their aims and ability, forming their character, and encouraging them to comply with the objectives of the organization, whether these be of a civic, cultural, religious, physical, recreational, labor, or other character.

With respect to the program itself, there should be a balance between the doctrinal and the recreational aspect, that is, between the aims and ideals of the organization and the means by which it achieves these for its members.

The doctrinal aspect,--that is, the ideals, principles and objectives of the organization-- is generally dealt with thoroughly and on a large scale from the technical point of view, by means of suitable publications; but it is not always possible, in practice, to balance these ideals in a program that contemplates contacts with the community and social and recreational activities that will maintain the interest of youth in the ideals and objectives of the organization.

We do not believe that, even though self-denial and even stoicism have been developed to a high degree in an organization, the introduction of a social and recreational aspect will be harmful; on the contrary, it will further encourage youth in the pursuit of their ideals. We are not convinced that a youth organization devoted exclusively to study, without any parallel activities of a recreational and practical nature, can maintain the interest of young people over a long period of time.

We believe that the two following ideas will contribute considerably to improving the programs of our organizations:

The first is to permit members to participate in preparing and developing programs both those of the local groups and those of the national organizations, and second, to review the recreational programs at the national level periodically; these should be introduced into the meetings or activities of the local groups, along with the characteristic doctrinal part of the organization. Plays, singing, outdoor games and activities, including hiking and camping, in accordance with each particular case, should be developed as much as possible by youth associations; for that reason it will be necessary to introduce such activities in a practical manner, and to translate into Spanish the numerous publications on the subject that are printed in other languages.

We wish to add, and this was mentioned before in referring to the lack of information, that programs for participating in community life constitute a real incentive to action and greatly stimulate the interest of young people.

In planning these programs a dual current of activity should be considered that can be initiated by "bringing the community to the group", and this can be achieved by supplying its library not only with specialized publications on the organization but also with books of various kinds that will broaden the outlook of youth. Lectures from time to time by persons from the organization itself or outside, and concerts, theatricals, exhibits of pictures or sculptures, and the like at the headquarters of the group, and a permanent exhibit in the groups bulletin board of photographs, clippings, news or topics relating to the life of the community, are means to ensure that the local group will not be isolated, but that it will be in contact with its community, which it should know in order to serve it well.

There is no doubt that life at the headquarters of the group is very useful and lends itself to study and meditation. But it is also necessary and sound to be in contact with reality, and there are three means whereby youth organizations can come into contact with their communities:

First, surveys on the community. This is a method that is used more every day by youth associations, and it goes farther than mere inquiry into the needs and problems of the community. Conclusions are reached, a plan of action is prepared, and this plan is carried out by teams of young people from the organization.

The second means is the participation of youth in community life. Young people, particularly at the age when they are in contact with their youth organizations, and when their minds are sufficiently flexible to receive outside influence, need to forge a well-balanced personality. This is why it is so necessary for them, at that stage, not to remain isolated, receiving guiding influences by only one method and from only one organization, but rather to have an opportunity, in contact with the community, to participate in as many kinds of experience as possible, whether through civic, cultural, recreational, or social activities.

The third means is through service to the community. This third way for youth to project itself within the community has become very popular, especially since the last war. Almost all the European organizations have participated, to a greater or lesser extent, in community service projects. It is appropriate to cite here the extraordinary work done by the International Voluntary Workcamps, to whom we owe the rebuilding of many roads, bridges, and buildings destroyed during World War II. The fact is that service, as an expression of Christian charity, benefits as much the one who gives as the one who receives. We ourselves have seen how organizations that had a good program but did not manage to keep the interest of their members, who would quit the group after a period of time, were revitalized when they introduced community service programs, and not only kept the members they had but added a great many new ones. This is a very broad field of action that can extend the horizons of any youth organization.

c. Lack of leaders

We have a good starting point from which to proceed, and that is that we believe there is not a single youth organization that has more leaders than it needs, and therefore this is a common problem that we must all try to solve.

We shall discuss the solution to this problem using these weapons: recruitment, selection, training, service, and recognition of leaders.

Recruitment. We agree that leaders must be obtained mainly from within the organization, but we should leave the door open to the possibility of recruiting leaders from outside the association, if its principles and regulations permit this. The organizations that have shown the most rapid growth in the whole world, as recorded in statistics, have been those that have recruited leaders both from within and from outside their own ranks.

To cite just two examples, I should like to mention the Young Men's Christian Association and the Boy Scouts. The latter, which has ten million members in some one hundred and fifty different countries and territories, is growing by more than half a million members a year. Recruiting leaders from outside the organization or from among the graduates of their ranks is an important technique of these two associations.

The second step in every recruitment campaign is to inform the future leader, exactly and in detail, of each and all of his powers, responsibilities, rights, and duties; his role in the organization, with specifications as to his relations with his superiors and subordinates; the type of help he can receive from the central organization; and finally, but also quite important, the approximate amount of time he should devote to his work.

itself a certain air of discipline, whereby a member may not at will modify the regulations and provisions that, precisely in accordance with the majority of the members of that organization, govern the destinies of the organization.

In saying that our movements are voluntary, a similar explanation is necessary. They are voluntary because one may join or resign as he wishes. But the term voluntary does not imply that while one is inside he may be exempt from the commitments, the provisions, the orders, and the regulations that, as a human institution, every organization needs.

But that very choice of leaders must be based upon the recruitment of men and/or women who have the capacity and the natural ability to direct their companions in movements that, while democratic, have to be disciplined, and that, while voluntary, do not allow each person to do what he may wish. We need modern humanists as leaders: young people capable of understanding the problems of their fellows, of working intensely for the objectives of the organization, of giving themselves eagerly for the welfare of the members of the group and of giving to them the proper training that will enable them, once they are adults, to occupy their proper place, the place in which society requires of them.

Training. We arrive at the third phase of this problem, that of the training or formation of leaders.

Here again we believe that there is not a single youth organization in Latin America that could not benefit through the intensification of courses or programs for the formation of their leaders. Although we have done a great deal in this respect, we do not believe that any of us is satisfied; and the more that is done the more effective will be the programs of our organizations and the larger the number of members we can attract to our ranks. Every potential leader, or leader already selected, should go through a formal training program in addition to what may be offered through visits to other groups, visual education, or reading. It is therefore necessary that each organization have its handbooks for use of authorized national leaders, in order to give courses that will prepare future leaders in the many-phase activities that they must undertake.

Assuming that the future leader has the qualifications for the job, the necessary natural ability, the personality required, sufficient personal magnetism to lead others, we suggest that every leadership training program include at least the following points that were considered at the Youth Leadership Seminar in Tokyo, organized by UNESCO:

- 1) Present status of youth; present problems, possible solutions, additional opportunities, etc.
- 2) Psychology of youth; its characteristics, trends, environment, etc.
- 3) History, principles, and objectives of the particular youth organization; its purposes, structure, operation, place in the community, etc.

who with a salary generally much lower than that paid for jobs of equal responsibility in business or industry, help to develop the program of the organization. According to these studies, a professional or full-time executive is necessary for every 1,000 or 2,000 organized young people to be served, although these figures vary according to the organization.

Organizations wishing to begin this system are advised to do so gradually and on an experimental basis, until the desired success is achieved.

One interesting practice that should be mentioned here is that of using an organizer or field executive for each office executive. This system has brought extraordinary results, avoiding the danger of bureaucracy.

We shall not try to recommend specific duties for these professional executives, but shall only suggest the following:

Generally, two kinds of full-time executives are used, those for maintenance and those for expansion of activities. The maintenance executive is generally known as the executive secretary; the one for expansion is called the "organizer" or "field" executive.

In our opinion, the organizer or field executive is the one most important for development of our youth organizations in Latin America. His duties may be summarized as follows:

- 1) To travel to all places where there are youth groups or affiliates of the organization in order to help them with their problems, especially in matters of principles, programming, financing, public relations, recruitment and organization.
- 2) To visit all those areas where the group has no members, in order to create groups or affiliates.
- 3) To organize joint activities for purposes of inspiration, training, friendship, and/or publicity.

In all cases, the full-time traveling or field executive must be subordinate to the volunteer bodies or leaders of the organization, under whose orders he will carry out these projects. The volunteer workers are the ones who agree upon the plans, and the full-time executive the one who, because he gives all his time, will carry out the plans agreed upon.

The field executive must make his plans in advance and submit them to the pertinent organizations for approval. Preferably, he would go to places where his assistance was particularly requested, and it would be understood that while there, his expenses would be paid by the affiliate or local group that had asked for his services.

At the beginning of this work we stated that the movement to coordinate youth organizations at the national level began only very recently in the Americas. Two factors have been chiefly responsible for halting its development: the lack of "minimum common denominators" toward which youth organizations with different projections can coordinate their efforts; and the desire of certain political or religious youth movements to control national coordinating agencies, causing many other groups--sometimes majority groups--to refrain from participation.

To be successful, coordination must begin with the organizations themselves and gradually extend to coordination between organizations at the national and international level.

Without loss of their executive effectiveness, it is necessary that our organizations give democratic and suitable representation to groups of the entire country. Democracy will only prevail when it is an integral part of everyday life and is not imposed as a rule of conduct. Young people cannot be convinced of the efficacy of democratic methods through lessons. What is essential is that democracy become a natural and spontaneous practice in the family, in the school, and most especially in the youth organizations. This is the practical way of exposing young people to democratic principles, until at last they become second nature. It is indispensable that all groups or affiliates take an active part, not in the details of execution, but in plans for developing their organization. We also recommend that to encourage this coordination discussions for national planning be held from time to time in cities in the interior of the country, so that a greater number of members can take part.

Various meetings, seminars, and volunteer workcamps have also helped to bring together, regionally or nationally, young people who belong to the most dissimilar youth movements. Already in the Americas many countries have organized branches of the World Assembly of Youth (WAY) and of other international organizations.

This is tangible evidence of the coordination that may be achieved in specific projects of common interest.

Of course, we must continue our efforts so that this cooperation, which in many cases has come to exist at the national level, may also be achieved locally for certain activities of common interest--such as community surveys, volunteer work encampments, help in emergencies and disasters, etc. But certain misapprehensions and taboos must still be eradicated.

"Consequently, I suggest that in planning a youth project, all existing groups, whatever their characteristics, be utilized. Where youth groups do not exist, we must instill in the persons planning the new organizations the idea that such plan must embrace and utilize all groups and not try to erase differences but to use them in the most positive way possible and for the benefit of everyone. Finally, our objective is not to mold men who will think and act uniformly, men with the same level of education and culture. Rather, our task consists in

de un grupo a otro
intercambio
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All our recommendations for organization and administration will always be based on these premises:

- 1) Using democratic systems to the maximum;
- 2) Giving the greatest possible opportunity to the greatest number of members for directing the administrative, technical, and recreational activities of the organization;
- 3) Decentralizing the leadership of the association as much as possible;
- 4) Following to the maximum the sound practices of organization called for in the initials ODS: ORGANIZE, DELEGATE, and SUPERVISE.

It is difficult to speak about administration to youth movements that are based more on ideals, on volunteer work, and on division of responsibilities than on their material achievements or financial resources. But in any event the movements need at least a minimum of organization to guarantee their operation and expansion.

When many of our movements were founded, the pace of the world was not as fast as it is today, when time absorbs people and prevents them from devoting sufficient effort and time to the civic activities of the community. In Europe it is still possible to find men who, upon retiring from the practice of their professions, devote a great deal of their time to helping and supporting youth organizations and other activities of benefit to the community. Latin America is not so fortunate in this respect. The United States also has this problem, but it has solved it by organizing very efficient offices and naming full-time "professionals" to direct the activities of these organizations of volunteers.

It is sad that, so many years after our youth organizations were founded, the membership is still so small. We must apply new methods that will guarantee us a larger number.

There are three factors that form a vicious circle of uninterrupted activities. With good administration we will have money and the means for conducting good public relations; with money we will also be able to have proper organization and the necessary publicity; finally, public relations create the appropriate atmosphere for obtaining the money and organization that are needed. To be successful, it is necessary to act simultaneously in relation to all three of these factors.

Any youth organization that operates in various parts of a country by means of affiliates or local groups needs the services of a central office or secretariat that can guide and channel this youth activity throughout the country.

The central office should direct its work toward attaining two clearly defined objectives:

- 1) Giving attention to and improving the existing affiliates and groups; and
- 2) Establishing and developing new units, especially in places where there are none.

To achieve these aims it is necessary that the central office furnish services of real value not only to the groups that carry on their activities in the national capital but also to all the units in the rest of the country.

Among these services, we could point out the following:

Liaison: Maintaining international relations. Maintaining contacts with other youth organizations. Maintaining constant communication with its affiliates and groups, transmitting information, answering inquiries, giving guidance and advice, and so on. This work can be done through personal visits or by correspondence.

Publicity: The national office can carry out a very broad range of work with respect to internal and foreign publicity. The central office should maintain an adequate supply of pamphlets, films, photographs, slides, posters, and the like. At suitable intervals it should send information bulletins to the press and radio stations. It should also take care of the work of publishing the magazine or bulletin of the organization.

Training of leaders: The central office should give direct aid to the volunteers in charge of training leaders, in the following ways:

- 1) Announcing through circular letters and bulletins the dates of/and information on training programs that are about to be held.
- 2) Preparing class rooms and helping with the preparations and physical facilities for the course.
- 3) Printing or mimeographing the texts, handbooks, or lectures that supplement that formal training.

Administration: The central office is the "clearing house" of the directing bodies of the youth association in question. The national councils, administrative councils, and executive boards are the agencies that decide upon and establish standards and policy. The central office is the executive arm that brings to the level of creative reality the agreements, resolutions, and plans, which, without this office, would run the risk of not being put into practice.