

WOBURN LAWN, JAMAICA

Woburn Lawn, Jamaica, is located in the Blue Mountains about two hours drive from the capital city of Kingston on the southern side of the island of Jamaica (Figure 51). Many fruits and vegetables grow in the mountains -- mangoes, papaya, bananas, breadfruit, carrots and coffee (Figure 52). Marijuana also grows well. Carrots and fruit are important crops today. In the past there were coffee plantations in this area. Most of the people are the descendants of slaves brought to Jamaica to work on the coffee plantations. The flowers, such as hibiscus, are spectacular.

Most of the people in this village live in wooden shacks with corrugated metal roofs (Figure 53). The more sturdy houses are stucco and are painted (Figure 54). Some of the consultants were housed in a former coffee plantation house (Figure 55). There was running water but no hot water, so the showers in the morning were quite cold. There was wiring for electricity in the house in anticipation of the future electrification of the area, but it was not yet working. We used flashlights and candles instead.

The church served as the meeting hall for the planning conference (Figure 56). This area is so hilly, level ground is greatly prized (Figure 57). One advantage of the terrain is that there is always a nice view. Our meals were prepared in an outdoor kitchen (Figure 58).

The families are large. Ten to twelve children in a family is not uncommon. Often the older children go to London looking for work. Jamaica is still a part of the British Commonwealth. The Rastafarians, who use marijuana in their religious practices, are numerous in Jamaica.

The sequence of topics discussed were the same as in the other Human Development Projects – vision, obstacles, strategies, tactics, and actions. Each morning after breakfast the groups would report what they had learned the previous day (Figure 59). The ideas were written on note cards and then clustered on display boards (Figure 60). This exercise showed that people in different groups were generating very similar ideas. Consequently, the people learned that they were not alone in what they wanted for their community. Clustering the ideas also showed which ideas came up most often (Figure 61). Frequency of mention was one indicator of importance.



Figure 51. A view of the Blue Mountains in Jamaica



Figure 52. Mango and banana trees in Woburn Lawn, Jamaica



Figure 53. A wooden house

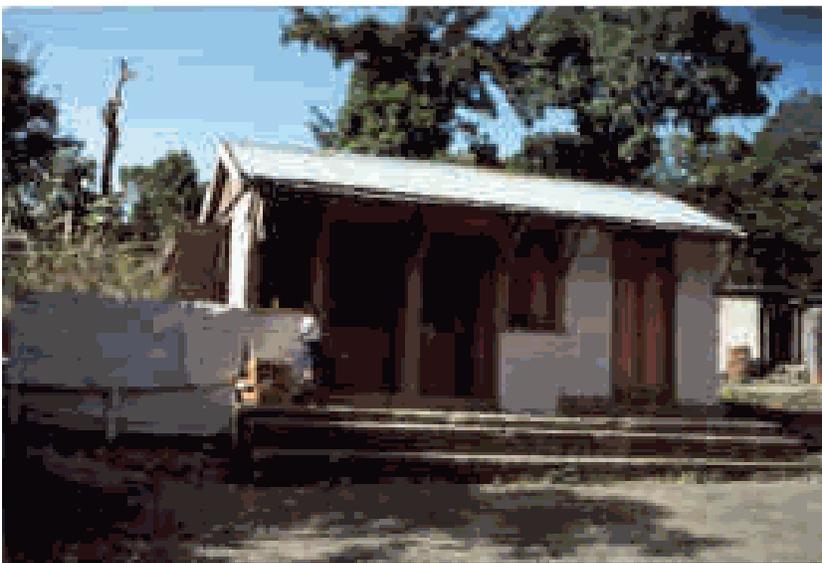


Figure 54. A newly painted store



Figure 55. An old plantation house



Figure 56. The church where meals were eaten and meetings held



Figure 57. The church from above



Figure 58. The kitchen where food was prepared



Figure 59. Groups reporting findings



Figure 60. Combining the findings of the various groups

A Procedure for Generating Consensus

The method of clustering the items is as follows. People are seated according to their groups -- business, agriculture, education, services, and celebrations. Each group is asked to select five of its most important items. Then, speaking to the whole group, each specialized group states an item. The second group states an item. The third group states an item and so on. The process is repeated until each group has reported all five items. By the end of this process the most important clusters are identified. From time to time items need to be explained, and occasionally the clusters are rearranged. Items can be discussed or clarified, but not rejected. Everything that anyone says is accepted. There is no

debating and there are no winners or losers. The items reflect the thoughts of the people in the community.

After an hour or two in the mornings clustering and discussing the ideas that were generated the day before, we went on field trips. The farmland is very hilly. Farmers often have to walk 40 minutes or an hour and a half from their homes to their fields (Figure 62). The school in this village was unusually good. The teacher was very dedicated. The children attended school regularly and all wore uniforms (Figure 63).

After lunch we discussed the topic of the day -- vision, obstacles, strategies, tactics, or actions. In the afternoon there was another field trip and then at night we wrote down what we had learned during the day (Figure 64). The evening work attracted a great deal of attention (Figure 65). Perhaps the children had not seen people doing so much paperwork before (Figure 66).

The field trips outside the community are very important to give the local people new ideas about business and job opportunities (Figure 67). The idea is to expand their conception of what is possible. My group went to a canning factory, where fruit is cooked and canned for export, and to a furniture factory.

The people of Woburn Lawn had a very visible experience with what could be achieved by listening to consultants and working together. There was a granite outcropping on the cricket field (Figure 68). The sports enthusiasts had been playing around this outcropping for many years. They wanted to get rid of the rock. I looked at it and decided that dynamite was the only way. But one of the consultants had worked on building roads in Nigeria. He thought that by alternately building a fire on the rock and then throwing water on it, it would be possible to crack the rock and eventually break it into pieces.

They started by banging on the rock with a sledgehammer and chisel (Figure 69). They built a fire on the rock (Figure 70) and then threw water on it (Figure 71). They repeated these operations several times a day (Figure 72) and within three or four days had reduced the size of the rock considerably (Figure 73). After the planning conference was over, I was told that they reduced the height of the rock to below ground level and then covered over the spot. The unobstructed cricket field became a symbol of what could be accomplished by working together. On the last day of the conference a preschool was organized (Figure 74).



Figure 61. Discussing the clusters of ideas



Figure 62. A local mode of transportation



Figure 63. School children in their uniforms

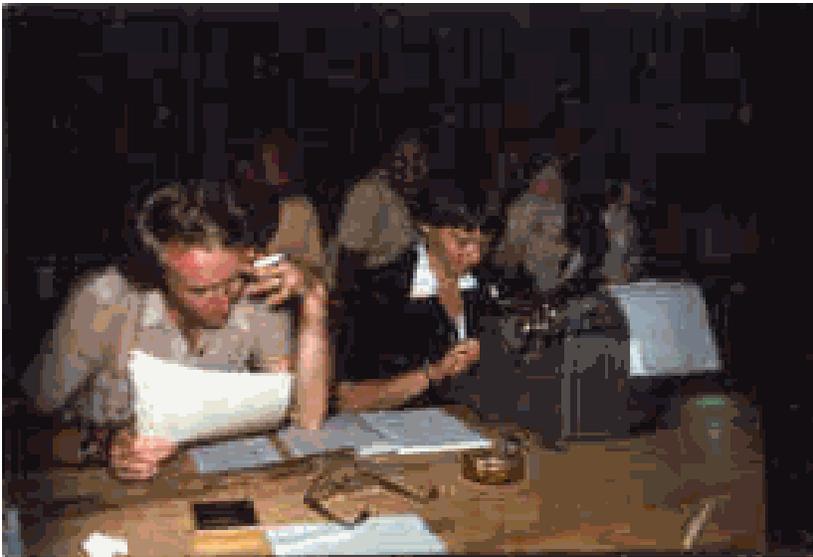


Figure 64. Writing up results at night



Figure 65. Evening work observed by children



Figure 66. Children observing the report writing



Figure 67. Buses used for field trips



Figure 68. The rock in the cricket field



Figure 69. Chipping at the rock



Figure 70. Heating the rock with fire



Figure 71. Dousing the rock with water



Figure 72. Chipping at the rock



Figure 73. The rock after a few days



Figure 74. Starting a preschool