

(A list of the delegates of this section is available in the Press Room)

CONFERENCE ON AGING
August 13-15, 1950
The Shoreham Hotel
Washington, D. C.
Russell, EX. 6300, Ext. 4625

Digest of Proceedings
Section IX
Community Organization
Morning session, Aug. 15

Approved by Dr. Herschel W. Nisonger, Chairman

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

During the first half of the morning the members of the Section met in the four sub-groups to wind up their deliberations on what community organization for the aging should be and how it should function. Then the Section met as a unit to hear the four group leaders present the recommendations of their respective groups, for the consideration of the whole Section.

Dr. Herschel Ward Nisonger, Chairman of the Section, told the members he thought the Section was not prepared to make any specific recommendations as to the structure of community organization but only as to the broad functions. There was general agreement to this view.

The recommendations presented to and accepted by the members included:

1. The essence of community organization for the aging is the process of problem solving, and the process starts where the needs are. The process of community organization is continuous, and the continual study and redefining of the problem is essential.
2. Planning for the aging should be part of total community planning, utilizing all existing agencies concerned with the problem and encouraging wide participation of many people. The single project approach is not enough. Communities could profit by studying what certain national groups are doing for their aged. Older people will naturally want to take part in any community planning for the aging.
3. While each local community should assume as much responsibility as possible and "not pass the buck," many cannot solve the problem alone. Thus planning for the aging should be on a State-wide basis, with many communities working together.
4. Much more needs to be done to develop ways of conditioning general attitudes toward the aging. It is necessary to develop a more favorable community climate about the aged in the community, as a valuable resource with rich experience. Wherever possible existing agencies should re-orient their thinking in order to do more in behalf of the aged. National foundations should concern themselves about the aging problem with a view toward setting in motion experimental, comprehensive programs for the aging as demonstrations.
5. In setting standards and establishing criteria it is essential to utilize the skills and experiences of all public and private agencies concerned with the aging problem.

6. The long-range approach should be adopted in order to plan as much preventive work as possible, with a view toward minimizing the problems of the aging in the future, or at least to help prevent them from becoming worse.

7. Since the general recognition of the aging problem is still so new, the approach to it must be flexible, otherwise there is the danger of stereotyping programs in this field.

8. There should be local, state, and national clearinghouses to exchange information and experiences, with wide participation of public and private agencies. A fluid, two-way flow of ideas from the local to the national should be encouraged. The national clearinghouse might also spearhead planning and action programs for the aging, and either engage in research or stimulate it.

There was enthusiastic response by the members of the Section to the proposal that this Conference on Aging should be the first of many national forums on the subject.

Before the meeting adjourned Dr. Nisonger read a prepared resolution asking that a unit be established in the Federal Security Agency to be concerned with the aging problem. There was extended discussion on the proposal, both pro and con. Some thought there should be more thinking on the problem, and it was finally agreed that this Conference was not called to pass resolutions but rather to agree on broad principles. The resolution was tabled.

In adjourning the meeting, Dr. Nisonger thanked the delegates for their valuable contributions, and said they had a rare opportunity to take back to their own communities the ideas and experiences they got at this Conference.

The discussion leaders of the four sub-groups are: Mrs. Jean Carter Ogden, Miss Beryl J. Roberts, Professor Jesse S. Ogden, and Dr. Milton Terris.