Federal Resources and Environmental Programs

Americans in a crisis situation have traditionally turned to public schools and their colleges and universities—to education—to help solve large social problems.

Environmental education has been described as a local answer to environmental problems. Community schools, meaning education at all levels is expected to influence or guide most local environmental programs. Strong student concern for the decline of environmental quality has assisted in placing environmental education and reform at the forefront of school and college priorities. Also “environmental concerns offer an attractive neutral ground for an alliance between generations, the young and the old.”

Education as a means for ending the degradation of the environment as it affects individual quality of life has reached into the libraries throughout the nation. A week seldom passes that I do not receive a call from a public or college librarian requesting information about potential sources of funds for resource development in the environmental sciences.

Most frequently, the caller has not really developed an idea for a project responsive to an identified community environmental need. Environment is “in” (as any capable grantsman knows), therefore success potential, even for a poorly developed idea, will, callers believe, get attention. Too many of these requests are simply pipedreams for acquiring funds for purchase of resources. If there really is a specific local need, the regular selection policy of the institution should already be responding to the need through the local budget.

Therefore, if you do wish to practice grantsmanship in the race for federal program funds, here are two things not to do:
1. Do not request funds for resources unless you are relating the resources acquired to a special delivery system for disseminating environmental information to a target group.
2. Do not manufacture a need.
Two things to do are:

1. Do learn of needs and problems in the community as these relate to environmental resources.

2. Do assess other programs, planned or operational, and identify ways that the services and resources of the library may assist these either directly or through development of coordinated auxiliary programs.

The U.S. educational system, of which libraries are a part (as is the school or college classroom, has a key role in causing environmental reform. “It is vital that the society develop a new understanding and awareness of man’s relation to his environment. Understanding rests on a foundation of knowledge gained from comprehension of information.” Very few teachers and professors are creating knowledge; more generally they are interpreting information. The library can be, and is, a frequent and regular source of this information.

President Nixon recently emphasized that “we need new knowledge, new perceptions, new attitudes,” in American education. Relative to environmental education, libraries have obvious opportunity and responsibility to establish convenient knowledge banks of environmental information. Equally important is for libraries to recognize existing needs for insuring that the knowledge bank is used, and used for causing new perceptions and new attitudes.

Environmental education is directed at modifying man’s attitudes toward his world—both the world of nature from which he derives and inherits his responses and the world which he is creating.

As attitudes are reflected in the democratic process, both at the polling booth and in the market place, man must recognize that whatever happens or is not permitted to happen to his world can be substantially influenced by a majority vote.

Herein rests responsibility for the library—a democratic institution housing and delivering information which will cause an informed individual to rationally exercise his democratic right to cause compatible, continuing existence within the limitations of his environment.

The library, as it has been in many other areas of social concern in the past, is a catalyst for triggering man’s reasoning. “Environmental awareness comes before environmental protection,” states Freddy Schader in A Bibliography on Environmental Education published in 1972 by the Arkansas Library Commission. Responsibility for environmental education thrust in order to cause responsible environmental awareness is not a job only of federal and state governments, nor can the school system offer a panacea. Responsibility is shared by the church, professional associations, civic organizations, voluntary agencies and the family. It is these latter groups which provide the greatest opportunity for libraries. The library has long held potential for providing opportunity for a forum whereby knowledge about
issues is gained, rationales developed, and strategies formulated. Too frequently libraries have stopped short of this opportunity. Libraries of all types and at all levels have been enraptured with the acquisition and organization of informational materials about issues. They have long recognized that print and nonprint media are a major means for communications and have expected their general or specific publics to "come and get it!" Rarely have they developed programs which could make the library a true communications center where users could not only acquire knowledge from inanimate objects, but also communicate among themselves.

The library on mainstreet or the campus has an obligation to go beyond the resource center concept. If it is to have a direct effect on causing public awareness and a role in rational attitude formulation, it must create opportunity for its constituents not only to gain knowledge, but also to exchange knowledge, formulate solutions and organize strategies for utilizing the solutions. If a library is to enjoy successful grantsmanship in pursuit of the federal or state dollar or private funds, it should consider:

1. Its own resources or resources available for its utilization for assessment of the environmental needs of its constituency.
2. If resources for the assessment process are not available, the library may strive to acquire these through:
   a. recruitment of the needed personnel;
   b. contract with a qualified organization; or
   c. soliciting volunteer services of interested individuals or groups.
3. If the resources for the assessment process cannot be acquired, the library should strive to affiliate with an agency, organization or department having the necessary capability.
4. Subsequent to achievement of a reliable assessment of community environmental needs, the library is ready to initiate the interpretive process for:
   a. ranking these as to priority; and
   b. recognizing constraints and selecting the priority need for which the library may create programs for causing solutions. (All steps are important—but none more so—if an effective program is to be developed and delivered.)
5. Following selection of the target priority, the library engages in program planning. Are the priorities of a scope or nature requiring research prior to creation of the program strategies, or for creating public awareness and subsequent attitude change; or does the priority lend itself to direct attack strategies?

I doubt that many libraries will directly supervise clearance of debris
from a stream, wilderness area, or ghetto street, although they could organize such activities. It seems more appropriate that they should provide the information and forum for causing these activities—again, the catalyst, not the purgative.

6. After completion of program planning the library must:
   a. assess its resources, human and material, for delivery of the program;
   b. attempt to market the program to another agency or group having the capability;
   c. allocate funds or acquire funds for development; or
   d. a combination of these.

   Too often this last step is inadequately considered and the agency jumps directly to trying to acquire funds from outside sources, usually federal, state and foundation—and generally in that order. If the need is truly one that is or should be a community (meaning campus, city, etc.) priority, is it unreasonable to expect that the priority should also have priority for allocation of some funds within the institution’s own budget?

   Grant proposals which have undergone the preceding processes leap out at those who determine awards. An aura of the genuine is present; the need and the proposed strategies for achievement of solution or objectives ring with credibility.

   It should be pointed out that the Environmental Education Act does not prescribe a massive federal education program which state and local communities will follow. The act merely charges the Office of Education to “encourage and support” environmental education.

   When searching for federal funds for support of environmental projects and following the assessment-planning processes, the appropriate official may contact the nearest regional office of the U.S. Office of Education’s environmental liaison officer and/or library services program officer. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance should be carefully studied to identify appropriate federal programs which may hold funding potential. A proposal may cross several federal programs, particularly if a group of institutions, schools, and organizations are to be its sponsors. Such conditions mandate true grantsmanship and have possible potential under the Integrated Grants Administration Program and the proposed Allied Services Act.

   The environmental education program in the USOE is a response to the growing concern over the crises which threaten our survival. Overpopulation, mismanagement of natural resources, and pollution of air and the water are a few. With 70% of our people occupying 2% of our land, we have created what I call the cluster environmental crisis situation.

   The Environmental Education Act of 1970 is attempting to respond to
these and other environmental challenges. The Act calls environmental education...the educational process dealing with man's relationship with his natural and manmade surroundings, and including the relation of population, pollution, resource allocation and depletion, conservation, transportation, technology, and urban and rural planning to the total human environment.

In 1971, nearly 2,000 proposals were submitted to the U.S. Office of Education under the Environmental Education Act. Seventy-four grants in thirty-one states were awarded. The initial grants assisted educational programs which support community problem-solving, environmental improvement and protection, and ecology centers, museums, and libraries. These efforts were intended to initiate a synergistic approach to environmental education by redirecting funds available under other legislative authority. Thirty-seven projects were funded under the ESEA, others under the EPDA, and others under the Higher Education Act and the Cooperative Research Act.

Traditionally known library programs holding potential are LSCA, HEA Title IIA and IIB, and, of course, ESEA Title II, depending on plans and priorities of state departments of education.

A real opportunity exists under LSCA which recently required the preparation of state long-range programs for library development for all types of libraries with the requirements that these programs include plans for the coordination and development of resources of academic, school and public libraries. Of the fifteen long-range plans I have read, several mention library programs directed toward environmental resources or education. None include a comprehensive plan for libraries in environmental education. It is suggested that these documents, now undergoing revision in many states, should be carefully examined and initiatives taken for development and inclusion of a comprehensive plan for libraries in environmental education. These should be "action" plans and not limited to passive support of programs of other agencies.

Title III of the LSCA calls for networks (including all types of libraries) to coordinate development of resources and for the sharing of resources. This title holds the key for development of such a plan. The required plan, or long-range program as it is officially known, must include the development of services to meet people's needs and the delivery of such services through all types of libraries. Therefore, there is the opportunity boldly to utilize planning strategies included in such prominent social concerns as environmental education. Interlibrary cooperation has its greatest potential in those areas which meet needs of clients of libraries (public, academic, school and special) which are of common concern and needed by all. Environmental education is certainly one of these needs. It is also something most libraries previously have not included as a priority operation; and something that had not been given much prior attention. The greatest potential for cooperation rests in such areas.
The concept should be extended beyond cooperation with our neighboring libraries and be inclusive of other appropriate agencies and organizations. Other federal programs, a few of which have been mentioned elsewhere in this volume, offer opportunity for training and resources to support cooperative initiatives.

Since the nation's environmental concerns extend beyond education and include health, industry and transportation, to name a few, libraries should examine new federal program opportunities. Important among these opportunities are the relatively new Integrated Grants Administrations Program, and proposed Allied Services Act and the very new State and Local Assistance Act, better known as "revenue sharing." Although the "education revenue sharing" legislation is pending, the SLAA does now provide potential opportunity for city, county and state agencies.

The proposed Allied Services Act would give state and local government greater legal freedom and planning tools needed for the long overdue job of modernizing and consolidating the delivery of social services and programs. It would permit knowledgeable state and local people to break through rigid, categorical walls to open up bureaucratic compartments, to consolidate and coordinate related programs and a comprehensive approach to related social aid problems designed to match widely varying state and local needs. Under the proposed legislation the federal government would make funds available for the costs of developing consolidated plans and would also be prepared to underwrite the administrative startup costs when the comprehensive services programs went into effect. The stated purpose of the legislation is "to encourage and assist states and localities to coordinate their various programs and resources available, to provide human services in order to facilitate the improved provisions and utilization of those services and increase their effectiveness in achieving the objectives of personal independence, economic self-sufficiency, and the maximum enjoyment of life with dignity, and for other purposes."

The Integrated Grants Administration, according to Secretary Elliot L. Richardson, will do the following:

Cut away red tape, grant packaging, and grant consolidation, make federal support less hampering and more useful . . . Its aim is to make it easier for federal, state and local governments to work together to deliver services to people in a coordinated and effective way. It will help to build the capacity of service providers for joint plans and operations across program lines to alleviate conditions of dependency. It will also widen the flexibility of federal support for state and localities through provisions for transfer of federal funds between programs, waivers of inconsistent federal program requirements, and limited funding for planning and administrative cost. In turn, state and localities will organize themselves to provide services to their citizens in a more comprehensive and cohesive manner.

The Title III of the LSCA, coupled with these new or proposed
opportunities and building upon older opportunities such as HEA IIA, LSCA Title I and ESEA Title II under a comprehensive planning approach, offers libraries realities for development of service initiatives to deal with environmental concerns, education and otherwise. The library community which is not holding a plan in hand or does not have one in forward stages of development in readiness for funding opportunities, cannot be expected to fare well. Federal assistance, although the competition is great, is always good for the library which has genuinely assessed the needs of its constituency, established its priorities and examined the community’s resources for meeting the need.