

The Community Advocacy Depot

Expertise is not normally freely available to poor communities and without it they are unable to propose new solutions for the problems of their environment or even to criticise solutions that are offered to them by outside agents. The purpose of the Community Advocacy Depot (C.A.D.) is, in very broad terms, to fill the need for professional and technical expertise. In Champaign-Urbana the greatest source for technical knowledge is quite clearly the University of Illinois and it is this resource that the C.A.D. involves in the solution of the poor community's problems. There are three approaches that are central to the role of the C.A.D. It is an initiative that has come from the poor community itself and, since these are the people who will be most affected by any solutions to urban problems, control of C.A.D. remains with the urban poor and minority groups. This ensures that those who best know the problems have a significant hand in molding the total environment to their particular needs and as an expression of their own life styles and aesthetics.

Secondly, to further ensure the appropriateness of technical solutions, those who supply such help work within the C.A.D. in close collaboration and interaction with members of the poor community. This work is carried on within the community. The first depot funded by C.A.D. is at 118 North First Street, Champaign. By being actively involved with these problems the professional and technical experts become more aware of the relationship of their expertise to human needs.

Thirdly, because the members of the poor community become involved in the processes of redesigning and rebuilding their own environment they become aware of the relevance of various technical skills. It is the intention of the C.A.D. to perform an educational function to help members of the poor community both to understand their environmental problems and the solutions and also to encourage interest in the courses available at State Universities.

Students in architecture from the fourth and fifth year design levels are eligible to choose C.A.D. as a design course option. They work with students and professionals of other disciplines at the storefront. Professor Fred Moyer is advisor and liaison person for the Department of Architecture.