

APPLICATIONS OF  
METHODS OF EVALUATION

Four Studies of the  
*Encampment for Citizenship*



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## PREFACE

IN A DISCUSSION of action research, Kurt Lewin once commented that "research that produces nothing but books will not suffice." Yet, here we are about to present a book on action research. It is not because we reject the good advice. Lewin's remark was in the context of urging research that would serve the goals of rational social action, and he stressed the need to accompany planning and action with evaluation of their effectiveness. The evaluation is the objective measure of success or failure, the source of new knowledge, and the guide to improved action. This is what research should do, not merely produce books. To encourage the alliance, to join the two—evaluation and action—is not easy. But it is equally difficult to develop the principles, methods, and procedures of evaluation research. It is research that must be done under difficult conditions, and upon concepts that are generally obscure, confused, or complex. Any book that would serve to clarify the problems in such research and develop the method certainly works in the service of larger action goals, and it is in this spirit that we present it.

Our book is a case study of research conducted in the years 1955–1959 to evaluate a particular social action program, the Encampment for Citizenship. The many ventures in character education of youth may well profit from the example to be presented. Beyond this, the method of evaluation will have formal similarities, no matter what type of program is involved. We were fortunate in having extended opportunity over these years to elaborate instruments and procedures, to see whether they stood the test of time and repeated application, to compare different designs and solutions for particular problems. The presentation of all this in great detail may be of value in furthering the ideal of evaluation of planned programs of social action, and in improving the quality of evaluations in practice.

Our appreciation is expressed to the Encampment for Citizenship and its staff for their invitation to conduct the research. We must note our admiration for their courage in trusting a venture that was so dear to their hearts to appraisal by so cold and heartless a method, and we thank them for unstinting aid without interference. The special coöperation of Algernon D. Black, education director; William G. Shannon, former executive director; and Saal D. Lesser, the present executive director, is noted with thanks.

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All the authors were members of the Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University. In 1956 Professor Wright joined the faculty of the University of California at Los Angeles, but he continued his participation as one of the codirectors of the research. The research facilities of the Bureau, technical advice by its staff, administrative help, and support in preparation of the manuscript contributed much to our work.

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