T. Joseph Scanlon and Brian Taylor, with Jack Graham; "The Development of a Standby Research Team at Carleton University". Ottawa, Canada: Emergency Planning Canada, 1975. 25 pp.

One of the reasons given by the authors for writing this brief mimeographed report was to show that not only is it feasible to organize a standby disaster research team, but that they have already accomplished this important task. This report, then, deals with how they developed such a team beginning in 1973 at Carleton University to conduct research on how information on crises reaches residents in selected Canadian cities. In covering the history of the seventeen-member research team, which is comprised of faculty members in journalism and unpaid student volunteers, the authors discuss such topics as how team members were selected, how the team is mobilized, how the questionnaire that is used was developed, how the research sites were selected, the aims of their research, the problems they have encountered, and some of their findings to date. At the time that the report was written, the research team had been involved in one partial alert and only two actual field trips, none of which involved a serious disaster. Nevertheless, the authors indicate that these experiences, while pointing to some problems that will have to be solved in the future, convinced them of the basic soundness of their approach, including their use of volunteers, pre-crisis contacts with officials in the selected communities, their method of getting the team in the field, and the adequacy of their questionnaire. Additionally, the authors feel that their experience proves that crisis research by a standby team can be done with a very modest budget.

Those who are familiar with the work being done by the Disaster Research Center (DRC) will be surprised that no reference is made to the activities of that organization, which proved many years before the Carleton effort was initiated that standby field teams to study disasters could be organized. DRC was established in 1963 and since then has sent field teams to most of the major disasters in the United States and to many other countries, including Canada. Many of the problems the Carleton team has had to face also had to be met by DRC during its organizing phase. It would have been instructive if the authors of the report had compared some of their experiences with those of DRC.

The report could have benefited from closer editorial scrutiny. For example, topics are presented in a freewheeling, rather than organized, fashion. Also, there are numerous distracting typographical errors in the report.

Experienced disaster researchers will find little that is new to them in the report. However, since it does provide an interesting case history of one group's attempt to solve dilemmas inherent in field work on disasters and other crises, the report should be of value to persons who want to organize standby disaster research teams but who are hampered by too little background knowledge in this area. Also, officials with emergency responsibilities who come in contact with disaster research teams could learn by reading the report to appreciate some of the problems such teams face.

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