The NTL Handbook of Organization Development and Change

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2nd Edition

WILEY
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In the first edition of this book, we were writing this foreword from Bethel, Maine, the original site of the NTL Institute. Today, we are writing from our home in the San Francisco Bay Area community of Emeryville. Our use of Gould Academy and the Founders House in Bethel is now part of our history and NTL’s. And our history as part of the Adult Education Division of the National Education Association has drifted into history as NTL’s focus has expanded from small group and community development to organization development.

National is the word that seems to represent the tentative or conservative nature of the original group and a reluctance to assert that the methods and practices might somehow reach around the globe. There had always been broad interest in the work of international colleagues, even though the membership and programs focused in the main on domestic audiences. Training, by contrast, was a strong word that came from the work of Ronald Lippitt in his counterinsurgency training in Indochina during World War II. It was descriptive of the positive outcome of the process of learning by doing through skill exercises that involved feedback and reflection. Laboratory captured the essence of the work of Kurt Lewin, Lee Bradford, Ron Lippitt, and Ken Benne, the four founders of NTL, who articulated the need for action research through experiential learning.