

# Care Across the Carolinas

*50 Years of Embodied Transformative Creativity  
(1969-2019)*

During the later years of the 1960's, teaching teams from the Ecumenical Institute (EI) in Chicago began offering seminars in North Carolina dedicated to the commitment that every human being has the capacity to responsibly shape their personal future and the destiny of the communities of which they are a part. The task of expanding on the diverse aspects of this commitment and of developing the practical ways to embody this possibility in everyday situations has been the work of countless individuals and numerous organizations for 50 years. Some of their stories are woven into the fabric of this narrative.

This document provides an overview of some of the interrelated people, organizations, and events that have fostered participatory, grassroots programs in the Carolinas during the 50-year period 1969-2019.

## Program Conducting Organizations

At various time, the following organizations have conducted programs in the Carolinas. While each organization had its own unique perspective, many common themes wound through the different events.

Ecumenical Institute (EI) – conducted programs across the US and around the globe from the mid-1960's onwards. EI flourished on a former seminary campus located on the west side of Chicago. Programs included:

*RS-I (Religious Studies I)*: Usually in a weekend 44-hour format for lay people  
*PLC (Parish Leadership Colloquy)*: A three-day advanced form of RS-I for clergy

Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) – beginning in the 1970's, the ICA became the public face of EI. Since 1972, ICA has had its main Chicago office in an 8-storey office building in Uptown Chicago. Programs included:

*Technology of Participation (ToP)*®: A suite of methods designed to foster participation in diverse groups.  
*ToP Facilitation Methods (TFM)*: A 2-day training in participatory conversation and workshop methods using ToP  
*Town Meeting 76 (TM)*: Conducted nationally as a part of the bi-centennial celebration, one Town Meeting was held in every county of the country  
*Human Development Projects (HDP)*: these long-term comprehensive demonstrations of grassroots revitalization were created around the globe. In this area, Gibson, North Carolina and Widen, West Virginia were part of this endeavor

ICA International (ICAI) – began in the 1970's to coordinate program operations among the various ICA's around the globe. The original international office was located in Brussels, Belgium but was moved to Canada in 2005. The group now functions as a peer to peer network of national organizations and associate members. The registered office is in Toronto, Canada.

Order Ecumenical (OE) – The covenanted staff of EI and ICA called themselves the “Order Ecumenical”. They shared a common economic model and a community living environment. These international structures were officially dissolved in 1988.

Atlanta Religious House – when the staff of the EI/ICA disbursed across the country and internationally, they operated in a covenanted, cooperative living and working environment. In 1968, the Atlanta Religious House was one of the first four to be formed in the US. Staff from the Atlanta Religious House conducted ICA and EI programs in North and South Carolina and Georgia.

Charlotte Religious House – in an expansion of the Order’s Religious House presence, a small Religious House was located, briefly, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

ICA@Greensboro – when Elaine and Nelson Stover moved to Greensboro, North Carolina in 1991, they made arrangements with ICA-USA to develop new programs using ICA’s methods and to conduct ToP courses in the mid-Atlantic area. Other similar program units in the eastern US were created in Troy, NY and Colquitt, GA. This arrangement was terminated in 2006, when the board of ICA-USA reorganized its program delivery structure. Programs included:

- Lifestyle Simplification Labs
- ToP Training Programs
- Grove St. Revitalization

greenschemes™ – Elaine Stover began greenschemes™ in 2006 as a vehicle for conducting ToP programs and creating specific applications for organizations that had experienced the viability of these methods. Since it was founded, greenschemes™ has coordinated ToP training programs and the application of ToP methods in the mid-Atlantic region, particularly in the arena of “Participatory Design.” Greenschemes is a for-profit company whose by-line is “Turning Green Dreams into Green Schemes”. Programs have included:

- Charlotte Hawkins Brown State Historic Site Strategic Planning*
- Participatory Design Modules (PDM) – 5 communities*
- Southwest Central Durham Quality of Life Project*

Emerging Ecology – Emerging Ecology was founded in 2013 by Lou Gordh, Tim Leisman, Marty Stover and Nelson Stover. This 501-c-3 non-profit organization *promotes a worldview for the next generations’ solutions*. Emerging Ecology combined the participatory methods and grassroots engagement strategies of ICA with ecological perspectives drawn, primarily, from Thomas Berry.

Journey Reflection – this blog site provides thought provoking insights, on a daily basis, grounded in the understandings which sustained many of the organizations and individuals discussed in this document.

Other organizations delivering ToP methods in the mid-Atlantic area have been started by people trained through ICA@Greensboro and greenschemes™. These include Vital Clarity, Marie Theresa Gaston at Duke Divinity School, Mayme Webb-Bledsoe in the Duke Univ. Department of Community Affairs and Monica Murphy in Atlanta.

## Programmatic Themes

Five major threads will be traced during the compilation of this long-term history:

- Pre-schools and the Second Generation
- India and the Global Context
- Neighborhoods and Primal Community
- Local Congregations and the Transposition of Historical Wisdom
- ToP Methods and Grassroots Decision-Making