

DHEW Regional Office is also a state of mind, an attitude, a situs of intellectual exchange and a forum for expression of serious concern about our social welfare problems. A Regional Office is, or can be, a place where the action is, where men and women of differing education and experience can test their convictions, and seek the counsel and help of respected professionals in other fields; an office where respect for different viewpoints can, and most often does, *exceed the recognition of distinctions in program responsibilities*; where staff can and I think do, in most cases, set an example to State and local agencies and other Federal agencies of willingness to adjust operations to the realities of problems and to interpret what programs *mean*, as well as how they operate and what their limits are.

I suppose that sounds a bit fanciful and idealistic, but if this were not my opinion, I could not survive as a Regional Director. Faith in the capacity of professional people to share information, to communicate convictions, and to tolerate differences—to try to make a “mesh of things”—this is what makes a Regional Director's life tolerable.

I have been strengthened in my convictions of late by the more recent examples set by the War on Poverty programs which, despite some criticisms, I believe have given DHEW and other programs new opportunities, if not imperatives, for better coordination at the local level where programs and people meet.

This point of view I think can best be expressed by the statement that the most accurate measure of success in the administration of DHEW programs is the effectiveness with which services are delivered to people who need them at the community level. Not in terms of State agency plans or commitments, Washington policy statements, referral agreements, etc., but in terms of the family or individual who needs help or service at a given time and place. Without agency coordination across program and disciplinary lines, we cannot serve people well. Too often we have comforted ourselves by referring to certain groups or individuals as “hard to reach.” It seems to me the time is long overdue for us to turn the telescope around and to determine whether it is *our* services which are “hard to reach”; whether we have offered information regarding our services in a manner which is meaningful and acceptable to the disadvantaged, the ill and the illiterate; whether we have been guilty of devising services for those with middle class values who have a capacity for gratitude, rather than for those who have lost hope, who are embittered, antagonistic and poverty-logged. I believe current emphasis on the problems of inner-city residents, minority groups and the chronically disadvantaged now gives us even more reason for seeking better means of coordination, for ridding ourselves of the fear of criticism of self-aggrandizement and by reaching out to those who have not themselves reached out to us. I believe we can do this better by decentralizing as much program responsibility as possible to Regional Offices. Most of the operating agencies have already done so to a considerable extent, and others are in the process. And I am glad to report that the Office of Education is moving strongly in this direction.

I have agreed to list a few examples of coordinating activities and to give some special emphasis to relationship with OE programs. This puts me on the horns of a dilemma; one, I could list a number of examples in order to include mention as of many programs as possible, which would take too much time; or two, I could limit my examples to two or three and give more detail and thus run the risk of over-emphasizing those activities at the expense of many others. I don't believe I have solved this dilemma; but I have tried to steer a middle course. You will be the judge of whether I have done so successfully.

The following examples are not of equal importance; are not subject to neat quantification as to results; and should not be regarded as the best or the most significant. They are examples of the kinds of Regional Office activity which contribute to coordination through the process of communication and cooperation among agencies and among professional staff of DHEW and other Federal, State and local agencies:

1. Top Regional staff of the Welfare Administration and the Office of Education, accompanied by the Economic Opportunity Coordinator, have made joint visits to State capitols to meet jointly with their State agency opposite numbers, to discuss problems and progress in bringing education, health and social services to children, particularly those in low-income families. Without a formal agenda and with maximum opportunity for free exchange of views, these joint confer-