

we find too low incomes, too large families, cold water flats, unconcerned landlords, high interest loans, high consumer prices, and crime and violence; these are a part of life within Harlem, the Southside of Chicago, Watts, and all too many other areas throughout the United States.

These circumstances adversely influence the people living within them, and inhibit those in poverty from improving themselves. Poor people lack, as stated in the Economic Opportunity Act, "the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."

In an overall plan to conquer poverty, therefore, individual and community betterment is necessary to enable the poor to participate fully in the job market, and jobs are equally necessary to those whose capacities have been improved. Because the extent and nature of these problems vary from locality to locality, we must focus upon antipoverty action at the community level to organize and execute programs. By mobilizing the local initiative and local capabilities of the poor and the nonpoor alike, many of the pressures that have kept the poor in the so-called culture of poverty can be reversed.

There are two principles underlying this community action. The first of these is concerting. This concept is based on the idea that the whole of various program components is greater than the sum of its parts; that the road out of poverty is more effectively constructed when various component programs such as health, education, training, and jobs operate together.

The concerting principle can be made operational on two levels, that of programs and that of individuals. On the program level, it implies that activities should be organized in a way that catalyzes all antipoverty activities in the community, emphasizing action in the city slums and in the rural depressed areas where the poor live in generalized conditions of poverty. This can be achieved by changing the various old and new activities attacking poverty from a collection of meliorative measures to coordinated efforts attacking each of the fundamental conditions that perpetuate poverty.

On the individual level, concerting means that the poor person should have a readily available place to go where he can receive help, or where he can be counseled as to how assistance can be obtained.

The second principle is one which has been widely discussed. This is the participation of the poor, or as stated in the Economic Opportunity Act, "maximum feasible participation of residents of the area and members of the groups served." This is simply a statement of the principles that we assume in a democracy—that people should have some say in what happens to them. It is a principle much older than the poverty program. If it sometimes results in stress, it is stress that is necessary to democracy.

What we call community action, however, is not merely a set of principles. It is a set of operating programs, sponsored by OEO and other agencies, with important substantive components affecting the causes of poverty. In addition to the major group of components already discussed under the heading of jobs, those major problem areas which demand this assistance include education, health, housing, community related services, and independent economic opportunity.

A. Education

No causal relationship is clearer than the relationship between poor education and poverty. Poor communities have inadequate