

system to the programs and the people who need it. But none of these problems has weakened my commitment to the philosophy underlying the 1964 legislation, nor for any and all efforts to widen the range of innovation and creativity that give it meaning and strength.

Here in New York and in communities across the nation we have found the means embodied in the 1964 legislation to offer indispensable resources for our efforts to halt and reverse the process of decay. These resources include not only money but new and imaginative approaches to problems which do not yield to old and traditional patterns of service.

It is all too easy for an administration to be so enmeshed in the tasks of daily management that it is unaware of the rigidity or irrelevance of its services to its constituents. Innovation comes painfully to a bureaucracy. The war on poverty is a combination of catalyst, goad, and educator, moving inertia-bound bureaucracies to change their established ways of doing business. As Mayor of this city, responsible for an operating budget of over \$5 billion and for a payroll of 300,000 employees, I welcome the innovative force applied to the New York City governmental machinery by the anti-poverty program.

Among the most significant effects of community action programs have been the changes that they have sparked in many established institutions—in and outside government—changes that have given new meaning to the work of these agencies. Such changes have created new job titles, provided areas with services formerly unavailable, and altered the manner in which traditional services have been provided.

For example, community pressure has led to the creation of new career lines for para-professionals both in the health services, and as teacher assistants and guidance assistant in the educational system.

A community group, after surveying the health needs of the Lower East Side, found no adequate services within a wide area and convinced the City's Health Services Administration, the New York University school of medicine, and the Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare to jointly develop and sponsor a neighborhood health center for the community.

Certain community action programs across the City, working with the Vera Foundation and the Courts have had prisoners on bail released directly to them.

In each of these instances the pressure of communities organized in the war against poverty led to the improvement in the services provided by municipal agencies. Such change in our way of doing things is vital, and the community action program must retain its vitality as a source of encouragement and support for innovation—the forward edge of a national drive to make our institutions conform to our aspirations.

Such institutional change can only develop if maximum flexibility in the development of programs is preserved. The early planners recognized that there was little certainty about the kind of change that was needed. They responded by writing into the federal legislation a minimum of program restrictions, leaving it to the localities to experiment with the money available and to develop the responses most suitable to their particular needs. Present attempts to restrict the flexibility of the program by curtailing local option and substituting mandated top-down planning are, in our judgment, misdirected.

It is unlikely that the experience of 26 months under one of the most ambitious pieces of domestic legislation ever enacted can provide sufficient evidence to determine which segments of that legislation are most effective. We are learning much about the causes and effects of urban poverty, but we do not know enough to determine the ideal "mix" of different community action programs. It would be premature to assign specific priorities to programs within the community action framework.

Moreover, there is a growing awareness in the nation of the wisdom of developing greater decision-making to the localities as a means of developing new procedures. From city to city problems differ. The community action program stimulates each city in the nation to analyze the problems of its poverty population, to mobilize and choose among available resources and to mold the separate components into a comprehensive program suited to local needs and conditions. The fundamental responsibility for decision-making is local.

Here in New York City, we are embarked on a wide-ranging program of decentralizing the decision-making process and widening the range of participation. We are doing it in the areas of public health, recreation and education. In the anti-poverty program, we are building community corporations in each of New