

commitment to programs of this kind. The community action program has proved that the concept of the participation of the people to be served is not only feasible, but a *must* for effective government performance.

The OEO has served as an unparalleled catalyst for the development of leadership among those who have been traditionally excluded from local decision-making. Because of the participation of the poor, hidden issues have been given high national visibility. The Administration, the Congress and the general public have yet to grasp the full potential of local community action.

If we allow these programs to pass from the scene we shall have to invent something else to take their place. The current program is based upon local administration and initiative, certainly conservative ideas today. If we allow this kind of "localism" to fail, what system will take its place?

The OEO has been equally important in stimulating national discussion about more and more effective ways to combat poverty. It is only since the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 that there has been serious, widespread discussion of such concepts as the negative income tax, the guaranteed annual wage and other plans of income maintenance as well as "community corporations" for low income areas.

Much has been written, and still more has been said, about alleged administrative failures in the OEO, and yet a careful examination of the record demonstrates a remarkable record of administrative success, obtained, moreover, in the face of unusual social and political pressures. Few pieces of legislation have involved such complicated administrative features.

In no other program, Federal, State or local, has there ever been so much involvement of different public and private interests and resources at all levels. It could even be said that the manner in which the OEO has brought the diverse resources and interests of a multitude of communities into focus upon the problems of poverty represents a high water mark in public administration.

Few, if any, other programs in the field of public administration have received the volunteer and material contributions that have flowed so freely to the war on poverty. The administrative problem has been to find ways to effectively utilize this unprecedented wealth of volunteerism. As a partial accounting, 95,000 Americans have contributed volunteer services to Head Start, before long VISTA will have enlisted 30,000 Americans as part-time volunteers in their communities; tutorial programs have involved more than 30,000 volunteers, and volunteer membership on Community Action boards and councils numbers over 90,000.

Local community action agencies have tended to have a consolidating effect on the hodgepodge of local jurisdictions. Statistics show that there are something over 91,000 separate units of government in the United States today; whereas the 1100 community action agencies generally include not one but a group of local jurisdictions which produces a consolidating effect. From the perspective of the local level, the community action approach has made possible coordination of dozens of Federal programs where coordination counts the most.

To mobilize the factual data necessary to fight the war on poverty, the OEO has collected and printed on a county-by-county basis the information available on the economic and social characteristics of each of the more than 3000 counties in the Nation.

Again, it has done all this at an administrative cost of no more than 3 percent and with a minimum of staff.

In certain respects at least, administration of the OEO could be said to represent an interesting study in the modern-day use of both old and new concepts in public administration. The record shows relatively few instances of mismanagement or impropriety. Where such difficulties have arisen, Sargent Shriver, himself, has read the incidents into the public record with a candor few bureaucrats can be said to have matched.

This is not to say that the OEO is beyond all criticism for it is not, but, by and large, its failures have been the result of the need to initiate program on too broad a scale in, perhaps, too much of a hurry. They are the faults of working with extremely limited resources in view of the problems the OEO is mandated to solve and of laboring under the necessity to mobilize a major effort in an exceedingly short period of time.

The Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1967 are designed to tighten program control in a variety of ways to meet legitimate criticism without changing the fundamental character of existing program. These amendments