

The neighborhood as a whole had done nothing for itself—just received hand-outs. OEO got them aroused about such problems as housing. The Neighborhood Council developed a plan for moving people into new housing before tearing down their old houses for urban renewal. This seems obvious but it hadn't been proposed before. Now the neighborhood people proudly give advice to others on how to get things done."

A social worker said that, "These neighborhood organizations mean that you can no longer control the neighborhoods—as they were previously controlled by the Community Chest, which in turn is controlled by the power structure."

A civil rights leader said that the programs had "given many people in the poverty areas an opportunity to project themselves through such activities as serving as block workers. They are stimulated to get more education. At the same time the programs have brought a lot of money into Cincinnati and raised the economic level of Negroes in the city." A labor leader declared that the CAC programs "meant that Cincinnati, unlike some other cities, did not have poverty riots last summer."

A newspaper reporter qualified her praise:

"Overall progress has been made—I frequently see examples of people who have gotten jobs as a result of the program—although the Welfare Director denies that OEO has reduced welfare costs, attributing a slight decline in relief payments to the high level of employment."

"Many helped by OEO might have moved ahead anyway—those active in the Community Action Programs were already local leaders before the antipoverty programs started. However, the programs have certainly developed more leaders."

"I am disturbed because the only Negroes I see getting ahead are women. Progress among men is vitally important to the success of the antipoverty program."

Several respondents saw the programs as educating the public. "They have made the community aware of the existence of poverty in Cincinnati," a businessman declared. A housing official said "CAC has made a marriage between the average citizen and the underprivileged."

A lawyer felt that the effect of CAC was generally good "although the programs were not too well thought out at the beginning. They grew like Topsy." They are important "in the sense that it would be pretty bad if the programs were abandoned." According to a businessman, staffing the agency was a problem at the outset when CAC was trying to get off to a fast start. He declared emphatically that "CAC has done a lot—but now it could do a lot more because its people are becoming better trained after 18 months of operation."

While believing that "some spots could stand some brushing up," this respondent felt that the programs had worked out well. "The programs had been given a black eye with some people who object to government—but actually OEO gives self-help programs, not doles or handouts."

"There should be better administration and a more realistic approach," a newspaper reporter declared. "Give the social workers less say—they don't know how to do things in a business-like way. CAC should have a Board of Education type of administrator—a professional administrator with a background in social work." This respondent added "CAC is always bragging about how much Federal money it obtains. You wonder if they are getting their money's worth."

On the other hand a prominent attorney said flatly that "I am confident of the ability and integrity of the local CAC administration." A businessman declared: "I am not critical of CAC operations. They do well. There is very little political influence in the operations." A social worker said that "The politicians have been shown that the antipoverty campaign cannot be politically controlled." And a civil rights leader felt that "The programs are pretty well handled now, within the budgets available to work with."

A civil rights leader said that CAC should demand a more creative use of OEO funds by the Board of Education, "including teacher training in the culture of poverty." One respondent urges more use of nonprofessional workers—but with more training for them. Another declared that both the professional and nonprofessional needed better training.

Several respondents urge enlargement of the programs. A labor leader declared that OEO should "ask for more money—the programs are underfunded all around."

Many suggestions concern specific programs. An official wanted expansion of job training, on a housing project basis, to develop skills and creativity. More programs in housing, urban renewal, and housing rehabilitation were