

government has been a widely accepted assumption that state-local resources were not adequate to provide the necessary revenues. Two highly respected research organizations have recently published studies which conclude that such a premise is not sustainable. Both Tax Foundation and the Committee for Economic Development indicate that for the foreseeable future the revenue systems of the states will provide funds adequate to carry on their current program commitments. Barring a substantial economic downturn or a sharp expansion of the scope of present services, proponents of expanded national government support of state-local government cannot claim widespread need. We may have a period of several years in which to reflect thoughtfully on the components and structuring of preventive and creative care of the poor.

Another factor which has fed the assumption that the state-local governments were inadequate to the need and that national government could best shape solutions to poverty, has been the magnet of job status and pay in federal employment. Employees of the national government in intergovernmental programs have mainly advisory, planning, supervisory, technical and professional roles. It is not unlikely that such an employee might be sent back to his own home community in line of duty, but he is then an "expert" or "consultant," showing the badge of Washington. There is more of a distinction than a difference in the duties discharged in behalf of community action under the auspices of national rather than state-local government or a voluntary organization.

What new approach or altered relationships among governments and between the public and private sectors might help solve the problem of poverty and the corollary problem of structuring the optimum discharge of responsible action?

One criterion for proper action is relevance. What action is most relevant to the natural capabilities of different segments of the public and private sectors? Can we find a clearer pattern of responsible social and economic action, so that each level of government, private enterprise, and the voluntary or independent sector can apply the special capacities it has to the problems most appropriate for it to solve? It is the nature of government to establish the rules by which we live and to keep order. It is the nature of business to create gain, material progress and systems of operation—the stuff of our standard of living, the wherewithal for the prevention and alleviation of poverty. It is the nature of the voluntary sector, the independent agencies and institutions, to provide family and individual service, cultural privileges, spiritual and psychological comfort, the intangible touch of one man aiding another, an adult opening some door for a child—in short, an environment of available human support. Can these characteristic functions guide us to more logical and effective organization and application of the country's resources to its social and economic problems?

HYPOTHETICAL REORGANIZATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

An answer in the form of an allocation outline does, in fact, suggest itself, although NAM does not necessarily endorse all the elements involved.

In contrast to both the tradition of a vertical division of labor among the levels of government and the crisscross organization of the multifaceted approach, the pattern which shapes itself here is a horizontal separation of responsibility.

The chart is merely suggestive and includes only the major programs being utilized in the war on poverty. Other programs in the whole Great Society package could be similarly appraised and allocated. The facilities and mechanics for putting the charted pattern to work all exist; adaptation, reassignments, rather than new vehicles would be needed. A shift of trained and experienced manpower from national service to state-local or private employment would be both a requirement and a result of carrying out such an allocation of responsibility.

As an example of the potential allocation, there follows here the most recent data available on the financing of public assistance.