

upon field reports submitted by our field research associates. Thus, this project has the benefit of utilizing persons having considerable insights into the communities where the research was being conducted. On the other hand, the personnel biases of the researchers inescapably influenced the reports they prepared. The central staff has made every effort to sift out these biases but it would not be charge of this project visited centers in four different communities to obtain some point of view.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Before preparing a detailed research design the central staff members in charge of this project visited centers in four different communities to obtain some insights into the basic operations and problems likely to be encountered. Using these visits as background, preliminary research designs were prepared and were tested at four centers. The field tests of the design revealed the need for modification of the initial instruments. The initial approaches were subsequently modified and utilized throughout the project including the four test areas. Appendix I is a copy of the instructions and questionnaires utilized in the project. It is to be noted that different questionnaires were developed for each of the major categories of respondents and in addition the field research associate was responsible for completing a report containing factual materials as well as his judgments based on the research he had conducted.

During the course of this project interviews were conducted with forty-six CAA board of directors members, forty-two CAA staff people, thirty-three center board members, twenty-one center directors, over one hundred other center staff members, eighty staff members and officials of other agencies relating to the center program and almost two hundred clients of the centers. In total, more than five hundred interviews were conducted with persons having some direct relationship with the center program. A definite pattern was provided for the interviews but it was not rigid. It was designed to provide respondents with the opportunity to express themselves fully on certain subjects rather than to have them choose their answers from alternatives offered to them. Thus, while the interviews were designed to obtain responses that could be analyzed on comparative bases, individual expression was not precluded. All persons interviewed were encouraged to respond freely and they were assured that no statements made would be identified with them. It is for this reason that the names of none of the communities, centers or individuals are mentioned in this report.

An average of over eighty hours was devoted to the field work for each center. Within this period the field research associates familiarized themselves with the project and pertinent background materials, arranged for interviews, traveled to various offices to conduct interviews, observed center activities and interviewed appropriate persons and wrote necessary reports. In view of the range of activities to be accomplished within a relatively brief period, it must be understood that all areas of inquiry were not pursued with equal intensity. Effort was concentrated on those areas which were judged to be most significant to the philosophy, operations, problems and achievements of the centers.

As previously indicated, almost two hundred persons regarded as clients of centers were interviewed. These two hundred persons tended to be those with knowledge of the center and already having some relationship to it. They do not represent a sample of the total market for services in the neighborhood. Thus, when interpreting the results of these interviews it is important to recognize the bias inherent in the sample. In addition to these interviews, there were less-structured meetings with neighborhood people selected at random. These informal interviews took place to obtain at least some idea of the views of neighborhood residents who might have no relationship to the center.

In addition to utilizing interviews as a means of obtaining information, opinions and attitudes, the field research associates spent time attending meetings as well as collecting and analyzing written reports. The central staff has also reviewed and analyzed all these data. These data have been coded, manipulated statistically and analyzed also on an impressionistic basis. Thus, it is felt that this final report represents a very careful review of the information made available to us and an honest attempt to present it completely, usefully and accurately.

THE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

It was mentioned previously that this research project takes place at an early date in the history of neighborhood service centers. It was not surprising to find, therefore, that there were extensive and fundamental changes taking place while