

they administer directly. Thus, center activities, as previously indicated, are largely a function of administrative decisions made at another level.

At the neighborhood level there exist advisory councils composed of local people with an interest in anti-poverty work. These councils play a number of roles. First, they usually elect some of their members to represent the poor of the neighborhood on the CAA board and this "inter-locking" of directorates provides a certain measure of communication and coordination between the two levels. Second, the councils are supposed to represent the views of the neighborhood people to those managing the centers so that the programs coincide with the desires of the local people. *Third, the councils often represent the center to the people.* In some cases, the neighborhood councils actually control center policies, programs, budgets and personnel selection. More commonly, the councils are merely advisory, and control of center activities is largely lodged with the CAA.

In certain rural areas there are no centers as physical entities but field workers from the CAA perform center functions of reaching the poor and assisting them. More typical to the urban setting is a center with a physical presence in a neighborhood. These centers generally have a director, some professional staff and some non-professional workers from the local neighborhood. Large centers with many employees—and some have as many as 200—are usually organized along functional lines traditional to established social agencies. Thus, there may be departments dealing with employment, welfare, health, education, children, etc. In smaller centers, the organization tends to be less formal and compartmentalized.

The organizational innovation represented by the centers is the fact that they tend to decentralize services into neighborhoods where they are needed and they emphasize reaching out to the poor people of the area. Centers vary in their relationships with other organizations, the particular role they may emphasize, the degree of participation of the poor and other significant matters. A constant factor, however, is the focus on reaching the poor of the neighborhood. In achieving this goal, most centers employ people from the neighborhood known variously as community workers, organizers or representatives. The job of these people is to reach the poor, to advise them of the center's programs, to interest them in participating in center activities and to provide them with or direct them to the services and assistance they need and want.

The neighborhood centers are also important organizational features of the "community action" (as distinguished from service) role of the CAP. Community action is considered in a subsequent section of this report which indicates the variety of activities considered to fall within this rubric. At this time it is sufficient to indicate that there is a concern with involving the poor people more actively with the institutions that shape their environment. The neighborhood centers are the focal point for the organizational efforts that result in the participation of the poor.

The paragraph above are not to provide conceptual and organizational details since these are to follow in subsequent sections. Here, an effort has been made to sketch broadly the fundamental concepts and organizational arrangements within which all center activities take place. It is to be remembered that neighborhood centers are a significant feature common to almost every CAP. Thus, although the observations in this report are based on research at only twenty centers, to the extent that these twenty represent the entire "universe" of centers, the findings are believed to have a wide relevance to the conduct of the community action program. More detail on specific center operations is provided in the descriptive materials included in Attachment number 1.

#### IV. THE ROLE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

##### INTRODUCTION

It has been said that all generalizations are but partial truths. This discussion of the role of neighborhood centers is no exception. The diversity in setting, form, and function exhibited by these local centers is spectacular. In part this can be attributed to the extremely general legislative mandate authorizing the community action program phase of the war on poverty. The guidelines set forth in this Washington legislation are provocative but notably vague and unspecific. Areal resources are to be mobilized in ways that will permit a variety of different attacks on poverty, including the development of employment opportunities, pro-