

neither he nor a member of his family can be employed in the poverty program. The reasoning behind this regulation is understandable. It avoids conflict of interest situations. However, it also creates some problems, the most prominent of which is the way it undermines effective participation of the poor in directing the poverty effort. The difficulty is simply this: those members of the poor who possess qualities making for effective action on governing boards are also the ones who can be used effectively on the center staffs. Since there is no monetary compensation for holding a board position, the economic exigencies force these "poverty stars" to give up their board positions so that they can hold remunerative positions in the poverty program. This, of course, simply exacerbates the problem discussed earlier of ineffectual participation by the poor in policy and program decisions.

After all, "boardsmanship" is not something that comes naturally to people. The poor are particularly handicapped here, for most of them have had little experience in formal group gatherings outside of the church or school settings and possibly police courts. In view of this, it is not very realistic to ask untrained poverty area residents to assume positions and operate confidently in a war-on-poverty effort that at times seems to be organized like the League of Women Voters.

The remarks above have focused on the problem of adequate training for poverty area residents who are linked to the war-on-poverty program as employees or board members. There is, however, another aspect of the education or training picture. This relates to the professionals who are working in or out of the neighborhood centers. Our field workers report that there is little, if any, effort expended on training or guiding these people to perform effectively in their new settings. It is apparently assumed that professional welfare workers, health personnel, or employment counselors just naturally know how to function in a neighborhood center. There is reason to believe that this is occasionally, and perhaps frequently, not the case. It appears that there are a good number of professionals who could use some advice on how to relate to non-professional colleagues. More than a little "static" seem to be generated by abrasive relationships between professionals and non-professionals in the centers.

#### ORGANIZATION FOR OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION

The previous sections of this chapter have focused on rather specific features of the outreach effort. However, one aspect of this effort has not been directly addressed—namely, how the center functions as an organizational mechanism for promoting outreach. In this regard several observations can be made.

First, the very existence of the center as a visible, material feature of the local neighborhood environment makes for at least potential contact with the poor. This point should not be casually acknowledged as obvious but of minor importance. Numerous studies have revealed that the horizons of life for the poor are severely restricted. This can mean quite literally that for large numbers of the poor the outer limits for 90 percent or more of their daily activity lie just three or four blocks away. Effective contact with such people must be made within the neighborhood area.

Second, the use of neighborhood residents as paid staff members who go out into the local area to make contacts is a direct and potentially effective way of linking people to the center. The potency of direct, face-to-face contact between people has been well documented. This is particularly evident among those who know one another.

Third, the casual, informal atmosphere of small neighborhood centers can be disarming and hence appealing to poor people who are uncomfortable in formally organized settings. This is why large, bureaucratically organized centers tend to be self-defeating in terms of outreach. The forbidding appearance of such centers makes them little different from the central offices of traditional service agencies.

Fourth, although, as noted earlier, the establishment of advisory councils for neighborhood centers militates against effective participation by the poor, this organizational feature can influence outreach in a positive way. The reference here is to the fact that most councils of this kind have in their membership representatives of local organizations like churches, branches of YMCAs, schools, civil rights groups, fraternal organizations, special interest clubs, labor unions, etc. Each of these groups has its own membership among the neighborhood poor. Contact with these area residents can be established by the center through the intervening influence of the local organization's representatives on the center advisory council.