

Participation of the poor is also encouraged through the Council meetings with membership open to all residents of the area. Thus, the broad-based membership would consist of about 33,000 people. At the meeting which our observers attended, 75 residents could be counted. The subject of the meeting was considered one of great interest and the observer was told that most Council meetings were not so well attended. There has been some conflict among the residents who do attend and participate in Council meetings. Some persons referred to the fact that poor people did not like the fact that middle class residents of the neighborhood assumed active roles in the meetings. The result was that many middle class persons who could make a contribution to the Council decided to lessen their active participation. This is given as one reason for the relative ineffectiveness of the present Council. Some support is given this position from the manner in which the Council handled its by-laws. The document was poorly prepared because persons capable of making a contribution did not participate. The charge is made by the middle class residents that the poor are disorderly at meetings and their behavior prohibits orderly procedure.

It appears that the poor are vying with the middle class residents for control of the Center and this conflict is of itself an indication of progress and involvement of the poor. However, when they have control it appears that they are not yet effective in managing a complex operation.

CENTER "F"

1. History

Upon learning of the formation of the OEO in Washington a private service club in this small community realized that through these channels is a method existed for the improvement and rejuvenation of the town. The local club worked to procure funding for a local CAA organization and in fact became the CAA. The Neighborhood Service Center under examination here is the only one that has become operational under the auspices of the CAA in this community.

2. Relationships With Other Organizations

The center is located in a small community which has been left devastated by a number of situations far beyond its control. It suffers from problems so acute that any attempts to solve them are accepted with gratitude by its citizens. The few private organizations which still exist here look upon the NSC programs as the only hope in salvaging the town. Churches in the community have donated their facilities for Head Start and Day Care programs for children and encouraged their memberships to participate as volunteers. Fraternal organizations have donated meeting space for various activities under Center direction.

Traditional government agencies which have served the community are on cordial terms with the Center. They view the Center as a method of increasing their services to those who need them and as a means of being more effective in solving the drastic problems of the area. Most of the public agencies interact well the Center. County Health Department personnel have been most cooperative with the Center's attempts to combat sanitation and health problems. County Child Welfare officials have indicated a respect for Center programs and mentioned a cooperative relationship between the two groups in serving clients. The State Employment Service works with an employment counselor at the Center. No conflicts were evident in this relationship; their aims are identical—to find employment for as many as possible.

The only public agency which does not work closely with the Center is the County Welfare Department which is located in another town in the county. It does not appear that an open conflict exists between the agency and the Center, but they do not work together and there have been isolated instances of Center intervention in Welfare activities that have produced a bad relationship. One case was cited where a young expectant mother was greatly in need of medical care and the Welfare Department refused to send her to the doctor at the Public Health Service until they could provide funds for her medical care. The patient could not provide the necessary papers; they had either become lost or she had never had them. A member of the Center staff was able to help at this point. He took the client to the Public Health Department to see a doctor who said that he would treat her whether her paperwork was in order or not.

Relationships with the schools are excellent. School administration officials were active in setting up the Center and procuring funds for its operation. School policy provides for free use of school buildings and libraries by the