

ers, and it is anticipated that most of these families will be served by one of the Centers in the near future.

7. Target Area

The four Centers under study are located in a county that is predominantly rural in nature; only about 25 percent of the people live in communities of 2,500 or greater population. The population of the entire county is 40,200, or 10,100 families. The county has 5,096 in the labor force, with some 4,625 payrolls being taxable. About half those in the labor force are employed in the mining of coal. Employment in the mining industry has dropped significantly during the last fifteen years due to decreased demand for the product, mechanization in the coal industry, and keen competition in the coal markets. Many of the miners are employed only part-time. Mining runs for generations in families and those miners who become unemployed or underemployed have poor job skills for other work.

Poor health caused by inadequate diet and hazards of the mining industry are acute problems in the area. The incidence of tuberculosis, silicosis, and emphysema are high. For instance, a TB test recently given to about 200 people at one of the Centers revealed fifty positive reactions. The poor health conditions also may be attributed to poor housing conditions and overcrowding.

Lack of education is another factor contributing to poverty; it was revealed that a serious dropout problem exists. Of the students who enter the eighth grade, 40 percent drop out before the completion of high school.

There does exist some amount of optimism on the part of leading county citizens over the future of the area. We were informed of plans for the building of a major highway through the area and it is expected that this will serve to attract a greater tourist and vacation trade. The prospects are bright for locating one or two garment manufacturing plants in the area. The directors of the homemaking centers feel that the many women enrolled in the Homemaking classes will constitute a potential backlog or labor pool from which the garment plants might employ workers.

The county is deficient in adequate medical services and facilities. There are only 30 doctors and nurses in the area to serve a population of over 10,000. One community of 2,500 until recently had no medical facility whatsoever. There has been improvement here due to citizen effort in the community, however. A new medical hospital and clinic has recently been completed and the services of a doctor and nurse have been obtained.

It is anticipated that new opportunities for employment will be available with the imminent opening of additional mines in the southern portion of the county.

8. Services

Three of the Homemaking Centers are located in abandoned Negro school buildings which became available when the schools were integrated and consolidated. The fourth Center is located in a building that was formerly a restaurant. The facilities appeared to our researcher to be adequate and all had been renovated to suit the purposes for which they are now used.

The Center programs are oriented toward service and the uplift of individuals through the learning and using of greater skills. Services are offered primarily through classes where the women of the poor community are taught the elements of nutrition, home management, money management, child care, sanitation, decorating, and sewing. In addition to the classes, individual service in the form of counseling and referrals to other agencies is provided to residents.

Center staff members informed us that indirect services are experienced by clients as a result of their participation in the classes. The staff members view a day-by-day improvement in the outlook and social sophistication of clients. We are informed that during initial visits to the Centers, many of the clients were withdrawn, depressed and showed little facial expression. After a few days the women became outgoing, participating in conversation and discussion with the other students and instructors. It appears that the isolation has been broken down and mental outlook of many clients has been improved by the social aspects of the program. Many families have developed some motivation and aspiration to better their situation in life. Clients informed us that intra-family relationships were greatly improved, as well as the conditions of their homes. Homemaking instructors can see marked improvement in the cleanliness and dress of participating mothers and their children; also, their children appear to be better fed and in better health.