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#### AESTRACT

ERIC

AT A TIME WHEN NATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT IS INCREASING, EXPANCED EMPLOYMENT OF DISADVANTAGED UNSKILLED PEFSONS, ESPECIALLY IN THE ROLE OF NONPROFESSIONALS, BY HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS COULD PROVILE OVER FIVE MILLION NEW JOBS. DESPITE PRCSPECTS FOR CPPORTUNITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND FOR ADVANCEMENT IN CAREER DETERMINATION, SEVERAL PROBLEMS ARISE: (1) NCNPROFESSIONALS MAY NOT BE CAPABLE OF UPWARD MOBILITY, (2) IF CAPABLE, THEY MAY CEASE TO BE A COMMUNICATION LINK EETWEEN THE CLASSES, (3) THEY MIGHT HAVE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHER POOR PERSONS, AND (4) THOSE SELECTED (THROUGH THE ELIMINATION OF THE LESS COMPETENT) AS NONPROFESSIONALS MIGHT ACTUALLY BE THOSE LESS IN NEED OF JOBS. ALTHOUGH FURTHER RESEARCH IS NEEDED TO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS. THE KINDS OF CPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED FOR NONPROFESSIONALS BY THESE PROGRAMS WILL MCTIVATE THEM TOWARD GREATER CAREER MOBILITY. ALSO, SCME OF THE PROBLEMS MAY BE AVOIDED IF THE NONPROFESSIONAL TASKS ARE ON SEVERAL LEVELS OF COMPETENCE, EACH INVOLVING DIFFERENT CAREER ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS. A LCNG GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY ON THE NONPROFESSIONAL AND RELATED ECONOMIC ISSUES IS INCLUDED. AVAILABLE IN HARD COPY DUE TO MARGINAL LEGIBILITY OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENT. (RJ)

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# IRCD BULLETIN

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PROJECT BEACON
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# Job and Career Development for the Poor ... The Human Services

Though it would seem obvious that poverty is one of the major problems of the poor, our War on Poverty has endowed the One-Fifth chiefly with a wealth of services. Its programs have not succeeded in eliminating need, but they have managed to underscore the seemingly obvious—that the poor, first and foremost, need more money or the chance to earn it.

Posing the question in terms of how to get more money into the pockets of the poor has stimulated a useful debate. On the one hand there are the proponents of some form of income redistribution like the guaranteed annual income; on the other, there are those who advocate increasing employment opportunities by such devices as developing new careers for the poor.

Underlying the former position is the conviction of such observers as Robert Theobald that it is neither feasible nor necessarily desirable to approach the alleviation of poverty through the strategy of job development. While maintaining that "it is already impossible to achieve appropriate employment of all human resources through the job route," he does not consider widespread loss of work a frightening prospect: "It is not full employment that promises the achievement of America's potential, but rather full unemployment with each individual striving to develop himself and his society." What such a position overlooks is the fact that those least prepared to use their leisure resourcefully and usefully—the undereducated—are the first to face layoffs. Forced "freedom from work" is difficult to view as a blessing.

While "full unemployment" is an extreme position, clearly there are some for whom employment is not a solution. Mothers caring for young children, the aged, the disabled, and especially the youngsters in homes headed by such persons require not jobs, but income-transfer programs to guarantee them more money. But for the poor who are available for work, the unemployed, the underemployed, those who cease to be counted because they no longer look for jobs, and particularly for the young people in any of these categories, holding a job is a solution more likely to add to their self-esteem and their sense of participation in society.(1)

Desirability aside, however, if the assumption were correct that employment for all is already impossible, we would need to throw all our weight toward the guaranteed income solution while simultaneously attempting to induce attitudinal changes among and toward the unemployed. For though we do not know whether it is their lack of money or their lack of work which most jaundices society's attitudes toward the unemployed poor, it is clear that society currently tends to define lack of gainful employment as privilege

or idleness depending on whether it is the chosen condition of the ingroup or the unhappy lot of the outgroup. The position that unemployment is inevitable is based on long-range projections rather than short-range goals. As Marcia Freedman has observed:

Those of our friends who envision the disappearance of the need for work may have an important insight for the future, but they have skipped over some of the present, particularly in terms of services to people, of expansion of cultural activities, and of a general enhancing of the quality of goods and services. The enormous growth of automation for some time at least, should not obviate the possibility of new work roles.

If one takes into account the several variables of population growth, present available manpower, and future demands for greater quality and quantity of services, it becomes difficult if not foolhardy to attempt to estimate the number of workers needed in the fields of health, education and welfare—the human services. But though inadequately documented, the demand for new workers exists. The National Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress estimated, for example, that expanded public-service employment in six categories "where social needs are now inadequately met if indeed they are met at all" could create 5.3 million new jobs for people "with relatively low skills." It is generally agreed that a greatly increased supply of manpower in the human services must be developed if dangerous personnel shortages are to be avoided. One of the most promising proposals for attacking personnel shortages and unemployment simultaneously has been popularized under the catch phrase, New Careers for the Poor, the title of a recent book by Frank Riessman and Arthur Pearl.

Interest in new careers has grown out of a number of recent experiments in which meaningful service roles have been found in health, education, and welfare organizations for persons lacking the formal requisites for professional status. Commonly designated "nonprofessionals," a term nearly as unfortunate as the epithet non-white, such persons are known as indigenous nonprofessionals when they are drawn from the low-income client group or from the disadvantaged neighborhood served by the organization in which they work.

Among early experiments utilizing nonprofessionals were those in the field of corrections where corrections officers were trained to provide group therapy; in education where teacher aides and school-community coordinators were employed in slum schools; and in the multi-service social agencies that pre-dated the War on Poverty where non-professionals filled a variety of roles in community organization, in school-community liaison work, in program

(1) The relatively low overall unemployment rates during 1966 should not obscure the high rates of joblessness that persist for young workers and for nonwhites in all age categories. In July, for example, the overall unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) was 3.9% However for non-whites the rate was more than doubled, 7.9%, and for the 14-19 age group it was more than trebled, 12.2%.

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## Education as a Model for New Careers\*

"What is needed is redefinition of the teaching role. The teacher encompasses too many activities, and it is proposed...that five different functions can be abstracted from the one omnifarious duty now performed:"

Roles	<u>Functions</u>	Requisites
Teacher aide	"From supervision of recess and lunch time activities to operating audio-visual equipment." Assisting children with homework, assuming the teacher's clerical functions, maintaining supplies and special equipment, exercising control over a class while teacher gives instruction to a particular child, etc.	"Open to all regardless of schooling attained (or delinquency record) and would require only that a short training experience be successfully completed."
Teacher assistant	Preparation of material used in teaching and demonstrations, correction of homework, assisting children at home in subjects requiring special knowledge and competence; on the basis of his education, assisting in teaching subjects to the class.	A.A. Degree which can be attained through a system of credit for onthe-job activity and college courses. (Achievement of high school diploma or certificate for those who have not completed secondary education.)
Teacher associate	Similar to that of classroom teacher but subject to direction of supervising teacher.	B.A. Degree which can be obtained through two additional years of work and academic training, subsequent to the A.A. Degree.
Certified teacher	Performance of more exclusively professional functions such as utilization of assistants, in addition to the more complicated teaching functions.	Two more years of combined teaching and course work, including training administration.
Supervising teacher	Supervision, counselling, and training of twenty teacher nonprofessionals.	Outstanding history as teacher plus special instruction in supervision.
* Condensed from Arthur Pearl, and Frank Riessman, New Careers for the Poor, Chapter 4, "Education as a Model for New Careers."		

planning, and in the teaching of home-management skills. Whether they were employed primarily to make programs more compatible with disadvantaged clientele, to professionalize existing services as in the corrections field, or for the purpose of effecting their own rehabilitation, the non-professionals employed in these and other programs appeared to make a positive, in some cases unique, contribution to human services.

Based on experiences with, and observations of, some of these experimental programs, Arthur Pearl, Frank Riessman, Robert Reiff, J. Douglas Grant, and others, began to think in terms of developing large numbers of careers for nonprofessionals in the human services as a means of meeting several social problems: unemployment; the shortage of skilled manpower in these fields; and the inadequacies of many professional services stemming from lack of participation of the low-income persons. Moreover, it was anticipated on the basis of earlier experiences that those who offered help to others would profit from their efforts, sometimes to a greater extent than the beneficiaries of their services—what Riessman has called "the helper therapy principle." In their book New Careers for the Poor, Pearl and Riessman emphasized the following planning considerations:

1. the creation of jobs normally allotted to highlytrained professionals which could be performed by the unskilled, inexperienced, and relatively un-trained workers; or the development of activities not currently performed by anyone for which there is an acknowledged need;

- 2. the development not merely of jobs, but of permanent positions "incorporated into the matrix of the industry or agency";
- 3. latitude for limited advancement without the requirement of extensive additional training;
- 4. opportunities for truly substantial advancement in job station; and
- 5. establishment of a continuum ranging from non-skilled entry positions, exten ing through intermediate subprofessional functions, and terminating in full professional status—thereby providing an alternate avenue for upward mobility to the present requirement, virtually inaccessible to the poor, of prior completion of from five to eight years of higher education.

The promise of the new-careers concept is that it would provide easier initial access to a job for the poor, together with built-in opportunities for advancement to a career. In practice the entry gates have been opened, but the broad avenues leading upward have not. There are a number of jobs for nonprofessionals, but few new careers. It is one thing to employ the poor in service roles when "the maximum feasible participation of the poor" has become a platitude and the presence of some nonmilitant indigenous staff may be prerequisite to the arrival of federal funds. It is quite another matter to set out seriously to devise an alternate means of access to several professions. The aducational implications of the new-careers proposal are broad, and the task is made especially difficult by the insecurity of some of the disciplines in their recently acquired status

as professions. It is also difficult to evaluate the success of such programs as do exist, not because there is any shortage of programs employing nonprofessionals (one observer estimates that 24,000 nonprofessionals have been employed as a result of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964), but rather that there is a dearth of carefully planned and coordinated action and research that would offer a

means of evaluating the new-careers concept.

There is some evidence, largely impressionistic, concerning the capacity of the poor to assume new jobs in the human services, but as the nature of current experimentation would suggest, there is little knowledge available about their ability to attain new careers. Two interrelated questions remain unanswered. The first is whether the adult poor have the capacity to master the knowledge required to achieve upward mobility. The second is whether in so doing they will lose their unique value. In gaining the requisite education for a career, those very workers most capable of upward mobility may become even more removed from the clientele and thus, unable to serve as bridges to disadvantaged target groups, fail to bring about the hopedfor enhancement of services.

Those who answer the first question in the negative, find the poor too limited to assume new roles in the human services and stress the deleterious effects of poverty. The negative position has been stated by Sherman Barr:

It is extremely difficult to vitiate the effects of the many years of poverty, brutalization, and discrimination endured by many poor indigenous persons. Expected limitations remain pervasive in spite of training efforts.

It is Barr's corollary view that those indigenous persons who have been less disadvantaged are more valuable. "Those who were most successful had in the main experienced less poverty, were better educated and had managed their lives with a reasonable degree of success and productivity." The use of nonprofessionals, Barr warns, may be just one more instance of offering lower-quality services to the poor.

On the other hand those with confidence in the educability and trainability of the poor as a group put emphasis either on their special strengths or on that common capacity which experimental evidence suggests they share with most other human beings, that is, to perform at a higher level than they currently do. Some of our experience does suggest that the skills of the poor can be upgraded by the manipulation of such motivating variables as meaningful employment, jobrelated instruction and opportunities for higher education; and there is evidence from current training experiments in industry that with some extension of training time, a very high proportion of persons with limited intellectual performance can be prepared for positions requiring semitechnical skills. However, despite the development by some groups of systemmatic training that combines formal instruction with on-the-job training, most institutions employing nonprofessionals have failed to make adequate provision for training.

It is also true, of course, that those who have been impressed by the special knowledge and style of the nonprofessionals are less likely to use professional criteria to evaluate their performance; they are also more likely to insist that those who appear to be poor risks in terms of delinquency and lack of formal education, perform as well as persons who appear more promising in terms of conventional personnel standards. And while critics may find the poor lacking in verbal skill, advocates point to the fact that though few are well spoken, many are articulate.

Many slum residents, including some of the very poor and those dependent upon public assistance, know their neighborhoods and slum life intimately and are often quite canny in managing well in difficult circumstances. Barr appropriately

warns that we must guard against glorifying a plucky approach to deprivation and a concomitant acceptance of the status quo. But with that caveat in mind the knowledge, know-how and understanding of the indigenous nonprofessional may be a valuable asset in human service programs. Nonprofessionals can help familiarize professionals with the problems and expectations of the clientele, and having endured poverty themselves may offer a perspective on behavior which can enhance professional understanding. Their tendency to find external rather than intra-psychic explanations of behavior, to react strongly to material deprivations such as lack of food, clothing and heat, though it may sometimes reflect merely their lack of training, often appropriately tempers the professional's penchant to psychologize. The nonprofessional can also be useful in providing direct service, particularly to newcomers, incorporating some of the traditional self-help patterns of the poor into the professional service.

There are some, however, who argue that neither the knowledge nor the know-how of the indigenous worker is so special that it cannot be learned by good professionals. (In practice, however, professional training does not emphasize such understanding.) While such an argument deals with that part of the rationale for indigenous staff which is based on their proximity to the clientele, it overlooks the manpower issue where the question is not whether or not overworked professionals can become more skilled, but whether they can be relieved of some of their tasks by trained nonprofessionals.

Aside from their service capability the employment of nonprofessionals poses some very real difficulties to the professionals who train and supervise them. Since they do not belong to the professional culture, they are often likely to question its basic assumptions and, in a setting which encourages their independence, to openly express a resentment of professionals. Such hostility often arises from differences in social class and racial or ethnic identity, and while much of it may be a projection of past bitter experiences, the indigenous worker may also be reacting to the present prejudices of many professionals toward lower class groups and to the status structures of many organizations which institutionalize these prejudices.

The professional who can learn to face these various assaults and to deal differentially with biases according to whether they are his own, the nonprofessional's or the institution's, is likely to become a much more competent worker, particularly with clientele resembling the nonprofessional. It is, however, the unusually confident and competent professional who can respond rationally to such challenges, particularly those involving his own biases. If such competence is to become commonplace, it will need to be deliberately developed in the course of professional study and in-service training.

A more telling argument against the nonprofessionals is that they themselves may also have negative attitudes toward the poor. Although it is sometimes assumed that proximity to slum life will automatically provide neighborhood workers with empathy and understanding for their clients, many persons who have lived in poverty share the prevailing middle-class attitudes toward the poor. They tend to look down on deprived persons and to be contemptuous of those who manageless well in what they consider comparable circumstances. The lower classes are, as studies have shown, less liberal as a group than the upper classes. Those who have themselves been the victims of social inequities may nonetheless feel that any individual is responsible for his own circumstances and that those who receive "charity" have no right to demand services for which they do not pay.

Fortunately such attitudes are less damaging to workerclient relationships than might be expected, possibly because their roles permit many indigenous workers to provide direct and meaningful help to clients-assisting with child care, shopping, and serving as translators and escorts on client visits to schools, clinics and other institutions. It is also true that the styles of behavior of nonprofessionals may be more naturally attuned to those of the client population, and that the relationship tends to be one of reciprocity, rather than that of donor-donee.

Riessman and Reiff have suggested an expediter role for some nonprofessionals, utilizing their ability to communicate across class lines in order to put clients in touch with community resources and to influence such institutions in the direction of greater responsiveness to low-income clientele. However the problems which many lower-income persons have in dealing with authority and their experience in jobs that discourage and even punish initiative, may inhibit their ability to affect institutional policy.

There are some observers who believe that what we have been experiencing in the human services to date is the phenomenon of "creaming", in which we have been skimming off only the most competent members of the lower-income groups, those less in need of new jobs. Is there, they ask, a saturation point very close at hand beyond which most of the poor have qualifications too thin to warrant hiring? This is a particularly salient question when one thinks in terms of employing large numbers of the poor, a requisite for affecting employment problems and manpower shortages.

When career mobility is a factor, "creaming" becomes even more important. Perhaps even the low-risk candidates have been "creamed" with respect to attributes important for jobs in the human services. That is, they may be superior to most other poor people in their capacity for warm and positive social relationships. That we are "creaming" in terms of hiring the most middle-class and therefore least disadvantaged slum residents is suggested by the findings of Charles Grosser. Analyzing the results of a survey at Mobilization for Youth, he discovered that despite efforts to hire workers representative of the community, the non-professionals had an outlook more like that of the middle-class staff than that of the community sample.

In the final analysis, many of the questions about the true capacity of the poor can be dealt with more systematically if we recognize that nonprofessional jobs require various levels of competence, and that there is a wide range of capability and trainability among the poor. Perry Levinson and Jeffry Schiller have recently suggested a typology for social work that may be useful in delineating the roles of professional and nonprofessional personnel in the other human services as well. They propose three levels of workers-preprofessionals, semiprofessionals and subprofessionals-each with different kinds of tasks, training and career expectations. The preprofessionals would be geared toward professional status, while the other two groups would have mobility through nonprofessional channels such as supervision, training of other nonprofessionals or through regular significant increments.(2) Such a classification speaks to the capability issue by allowing for a differential use of workers in terms of their present performance and their receptivity to further training. Moreover it defines differentially the workers' problems in maintaining rapport with the client group in the face of changing status.

As he gained professional knowledge and training, the preprofessional's proximity to the clientele would by definition be decreased by acquisition of middle-class status. But as Emmanuel Hallowitz has observed, one need not be identified with the poor to have a commitment to them. Such a commitment is possessed by many professionals and would likely be retained by former preprofessionals if their training were geared to maintenance of these attributes. For the subprofessional who would be engaged in routine tasks now

(2) It should be noted that a job is not necessarily a means of averting poverty unless the salary is above poverty level. At best, yearly incomes for nonprofessionals tend to be about \$4,000, an amount not significantly above the poverty level for a four-person family according to Social Security Administration calculations. performed by professionals and who might not have client contact or even an office in the slum community, the problem of losing identification with the poor would not be relevant to adequate performance. For the semiprofessional, who would be upwardly mobile as a result of his new career, but whose job would require continued closeness to the community, role discrepancy would be high, but discomfort might be compensated if agency rewards were no longer, as at present, solely associated with professional status. A typology such as Levinson's and Schiller's can thus help to eliminate the ambiguities in the present status of nonprofessionals who now exist in an undefined limbo somewhere between client and professional. Such a reduction of ambiguity would also hopefully reduce the tendency of some nonprofessionals to be jealous of and competitive with professionals.

The appeal of the new-careers plan, that it is a single strategy for coping concurrently with three social problems, may contribute to a confusion of the issues involved; and since some of those most interested in developing new careers are also concerned with professional services for the poor, the issues are all the more likely to be obfuscated. There is a great deal to be said for creating new jobs regardless of their utility, something we have been accustomed to do under the guise of national security, but eagerness to employ the poor and to alleviate manpower shortages should not lead us to embark on a widescale new-careers program before we have honestly evaluated the service potential of the new nonprofessionals. By making premature claims for their potential, we betray not only the clients they are meant to serve, but the new workers as well, for we are likely in the end to let them down by laying them off, thus providing additional "proof" to them and to society that they are incompetent.

There is another complicating issue. We are urged to consider the service professions as sources of employment because they are relatively resistant to automation. However, other types of government programs, which provide lesser employment opportunities, may be more valuable to the poor as clients. If a choice must be made, new housing is more beneficial to the poor than a homemaking service to help someone cope better in her one-room hovel.

If the new-careers proposal is to have a fair trial, there are a number of issues which will require careful and objective investigation. Wherever it is in the fields of health, education or public welfare, that new roles for the poor are to be developed, there must be careful demonstration programs concentrating on training and evaluation and not necessarily having direct service as an immediate goal. We need to know what kinds of service roles can be performed by persons with less than professional training and who among the poor can be recruited for these new jobs. We need to explore further the capacity of the poor and the kinds of training the; will need to assume service roles at various levels. Further, we need to study the manner and auspices of such training, as well as the preparation of trainers and supervisors. In view of the commitment of time and money involved in training nonprofessionals, it may be that their in-service training should not be the responsibility of the hiring agencies but should instead be integrated into the educational-vocational system or carried out by independent training institutes, several of which are already in existence. Such independent centers can develop new workers who are less dependent upon a given employing organization and can provide training which is less tied to a particular work situation and thus more conducive to upward mobility. It is worth noting that employing agencies now offer professionals numerous opportunities for further training and education at agency expense, a privilege which should be extended to the nonprofessional if we are concerned about his career development. Moreover, attention will need to be given to retraining both those who will train and those who will work with indigenous workers, especially if the latter are to be introduced in any large numbers into the human services. We also need further investigation into ways of removing the barriers to the employment of the poor which have nothing to do with their capabilities and training potentials, but everything to do with the nature of institutions. How can such legal and quaisi-legal barriers to the employment of nonprofessionals as licensing regulations and civil-service job descriptions be torn down; and how can we best allay the fears of loss of status which may lead the present staffs of many agencies to oppose the hiring of those who are less well educated for meaningful roles.

Finally, how is the employment of the careerists to be financed—through increased government spending; through diverting into the human services monies now spent elsewhere, on national defense, for example(3); or through the reallocation of existing budgets. The utilization of existing budgets for the hiring of nonprofessionals would amount to

a reduction in funds available for hiring professionals, and consequently, there are those who object to hiring non-professionals in the absence of additional funds. In the past the alternative to restructuring in response to manpower shortages has characteristically been to do nothing, usually at the client's expense.

It is one of the virtues of the new-careers plan that it seems so simple. But we need to recognize that the simplicity of the plan may obscure the complexity of the issues it evokes. Approached simplistically, it could be a strategy for failing simultaneously to cope with three social problems.

G. S. Goldberg

3) Such reconversion seemed possible a few years ago but now seems remote in the face of the Vietnam debacle. Indeed, one wonders what factors other than foreign policy and military exigency are involved in the escalation of the war in Asia. Perhaps military means of averting structural unemployment seem more expedient than the uncertain course of redefining tasks in the human services and increasing demands for such civilian programs.

#### FINANCING NEW CAREERS

In one proposal based on the reallocation of existing budgets, Arthur Pearl envisions the creation of half a million new jobs for nonprofessionals through modifying the employment structure in the educational field. He proposes that of the projected budgets for new teachers through 1970, seventy percent be spent on hiring nonprofessionals to perform the technical but less complicated aspects of classroom work. Professional teachers would thus be freed to do more teaching and other fully professional tasks, including training and supervision of the nonprofessionals. As yet unanswered, is the question of whether such a policy would enhance instruction and learning.

# The Nonprofessional in the Human Services A Selected Bibliography\*

\*Although our bulletin article deals specifically with job and career development for the poor in the human services, the bibliography includes citations which do not directly pertain to the indigenous nonprofessional. Rather, materials are cited which deal with a wide variety of staff who lack professional study, including many individuals who are neither poor nor residents of socially disadvantaged communities. These materials are relevant to the important problem of determining which tasks assigned to professionals can be performed by staff with less than professional training and to some of the implications of employing such persons in the human services.

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  - 3. Special bibliographies on specific topics are compiled and provided upon request.
  - 4. Copies of available abstracts relating to specific topics are provided upon request.
- 5. Other requests for information are fulfilled insofar as resources permit, especially requests which define specifically the types of information sought.
- 6. Each issue of the IRCD BULLETIN includes, among other things, a selected bibliography on some aspect of the field. (The BULLETIN is published five times during the year.)

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