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ABSTRACT

This report presents a case study of programs that provide either formal or informal training for economically disadvantaged youth from fourteen to twenty-one years of age at six community action agencies in the state of Ohio. The following programs involving the six agencies were examined: inschool public sector programs funded by the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA); out-of-school public and private sector programs funded by CETA; out-of-school public and private sector programs funded by the Community Services Administration; and the Department of Labor's Job Corps program. Data collected through two sets of on-site interviews with agency administrators, job counselors, job supervisors, and program participants is summarized and presented in table and narrative form in terms of strengths and weaknesses inherent in the agencies and programs. Focus is on four facets of agency and program operation: context, identification, intervention, and evaluation. Recommendations grouped according to the four facets are presented and include improving communication between agencies and strengthening the counseling functions in agency programs. Appendixes include description of methodological factors that were considered prior to implementing the study, and complete sets of interview schedules. A companion volume of innovative program ideas culled from the study is available separately. (BL)

Youth Training Programs in Ohio's Community Action Agencies

A Case Study

Prepared for the Ohio Department of Economic and Community Development

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FOREWORD

We are pleased to present this paper to the Ohio Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). It is a result of a cooperative working relationship between The Center for Vocational Education (CVE) and the DECD. It presents a carefully prepared assessment of the "state of the art" with regard to youth training programs administered by six representative community action agencies in the State of Ohio. A companion report to this one--"A Sampler of Innovative Program Ideas for Ohio's Community Action Agencies"--has also been prepared and is available from the Ohio Department of Economic and Community Development.

The Center is indebted to Dr. Ray Lawton of the DECD for his support and enthusiasm for this endeavor. Appreciation is extended to Dr. James W. Altschuld (CVE) and Ms. Terese Terry (DECD) who prepared this paper and to Ms. Janice Lave who reviewed the draft. Appreciation is also extended to the six community action agencies and their staffs and program enrollees for participating in this study.

Finally, a special note of thanks is extended to Ms. Marlene Linton who typed the manuscript and Dr. Jerry Walker, Associate Director for Evaluation, whose division was responsible for conducting this activity.

Robert E. Taylor

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I. INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Study

In the state of Ohio, numerous local and county community action agencies function to provide important, needed services to disadvantaged populations in both urban and rural locations. Although many of these agencies operate through churches and other institutions, the major comprehensive programs are found in 48 agencies funded by the Community Services Administration of the Federal Government with technical assistance from the Ohio Department of Economic and Community Development--Office of Human Services. These agencies offer programs in 25 areas such as health, day care, legal services, education, youth services opportunities, etc. The majority of funds for these programs come from federal sources with some additional support from state sources.

The focus of this report is on a case study of programs that provide either formal or informal training for youth from 14-21 years of age at six (6) selected agencies. Generally, these programs encompass facets of education/work experience, on the job training, counseling, vocational training and the upgrading of basic skills. The selected agency sites were each visited twice during the project with on-site interviews occurring each time. Additionally, existing local documentation was examined and analyzed to the extent that time permitted.

The intent of this case study was to describe the state of the art in youth oriented training programs based upon inputs from six agencies. Strengths and weaknesses in existing programs were identified and used as the basis for determining improvements that could be effected in the future. Support service needs of the agencies were also identified. Because this is a case study, the conclusions should be viewed as preliminary and tentative in nature. The conclusions should be probably thought of as working suggestions or ideas rather than being hard and fast findings.

A Special Note About Organization of the Report

As indicated in the Table of Contents, the report is organized into six major sections and Appendices. Appendix 1 is designed to acquaint the reader with methodological considerations and issues pertaining to the specific methodology employed in this study. The reader is encouraged to peruse it after completing the major text of the report.

II. BACKGROUND FACTORS

Why Was the Study Initiated?

An initial question that could be raised in conducting this study is, "What factors or forces have led to the need for the study and actually helped to make it a reality?" The best answer to this question is that the study is the result of a combination of factors. First, the amount of funds expended for youth training programs that come under the jurisdiction of community action agencies is extensive. Many community action agencies in Ohio administer Comprehensive Employment Training Act funds. Under several titles (I and III) of the Act, community action agencies operate programs which are targeted primarily for youth in the general age range of 14-21. In the past year, as examples, approximately three quarters of a million dollars of CETA funds were administered by the Eric Huron Community Action Commission and approximately $2,000,000 by the Community Action Organization of Scioto County. While not all community action agencies administer CETA programs, many do and the above examples if multiplied across many agencies serve to illustrate the magnitude of funds allocated in this area. Additional work experience programs funded by other sources are also operated by the agencies.

The expenditure of large amounts of public monies is almost always now accompanied by a need to be accountable in the broadest sense of the term. That is, the accountability of programs must include measures and indications of success/impact as well as statements of how monies and resources were spent and used. This has been reflected in national legislation regarding education (ESEA, 1965) and in various allowable budget categories for community action agencies as specified by the Office of Economic Opportunity. One might say that "program accountability is a sign of our times."

Secondly, this study is partly attributable to a genuine desire to improve existing programs; to develop new/innovative programs; and to improve the overall operation of community action agencies. The above concerns are representative of the perceptions of the Ohio Department of Economic and Community Development as well as a sizeable number of the agencies that participated in this study.

Thirdly, the study reflects an understanding on the part of the Ohio Department and the participating agencies that there are various alternatives for studying existing programs. For example, the Ohio Department or a committee from the agencies could have examined existing programs and program operations. While this strategy is quite possible, it does have a noticeable deficiency. Individuals comprising the study group may be "too close" to the problems and issues and be less objective than those who are divorced or separated from the agencies. The need to conduct the study by an external party thus becomes apparent. By contract this external party was the Evaluation Division of The Center for Vocational Education at The Ohio State University and specifically one of its resident evaluators who was designated to carry out the study. To facilitate the study, the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) assigned one of its field representatives to help coordinate activities and to work closely with The Center for Vocational Education. Both of the above individuals shared in the authorship of this report.

Initial Planning Efforts

The actual decision to implement the study was the result of several meetings held in the spring and summer of 1976. These meetings were as follows:

- Initial discussion meetings involving DECD staff and staff from CVE
- Contacts, meetings, discussions between DECD staff and potential participant agencies; and
- A major planning meeting in July that included DECD staff, CVE staff and participating agencies.

The last meeting was especially important inasmuch as it provided an opportunity for all involved parties to discuss the nature of the study. Potential areas of misunderstanding were clarified and resolved. The interactions among all parties were explained and the cooperation necessary for carrying out the study was explained.

The six agencies that were invited to and did actually participate in the study were selected on the basis of numerous criteria. The criteria were: type of area being served by the agency (i.e., metropolitan, urban, and rural with two agencies per each type of area); innovativeness of program as initially judged by the professional staff of the Ohio Department of Economic and Community Development; and agency willingness to participate. Table 1 contains a listing of the agencies that participated and the type of area they represent.

It should be noted that the metropolitan, urban and rural distinctions shown in Table 1 are not absolute ones. Rather, they represent some fine gray lines between the agencies based upon professional judgment. Hopefully, the agencies selected are

Table 1

Community Action Agencies that Participated in the Study by Type of Area Represented

Type of Area	Agency Title	City
Metropolitan	Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland (CEOGC)	Cleveland
	Columbus Metropolitan Area Community Action Organization	Columbus
Urban	Erie-Huron Counties Community Action Commission	Sandusky
	Community Action Organization of Scioto County, Inc.	Portsmouth
Rural	Adams-Brown Community Action Program	Decatur
	Hancock, Hardin, Wyandot and Putnam Community Action Commission	Findlay

representative of a cross section of community action agencies based upon type of area served. At the end of September, the contract between the Ohio Department of Economic and Community Development and The Center for Vocational Education (The Ohio State University) was formally signed and the project was started at the beginning of October.

Objectives of the Study

Listed below are the objectives of this study:

1. To describe youth oriented training programs operated by community action agencies in the state of Ohio. The description will include the context in which the agencies/programs operate; the manner in which participants are identified; the nature of the specific programs (or interventions); and program evaluation.

2. To identify unique, innovative programs, i.e., promising programs that hopefully could be generalized to other settings.

3. To obtain recommendations for improvement from the six (6) participating sites.

4. To generate, based upon information collected for objectives one through three, two reports.

   - The first report (of which this writing is a part) is a summary of the study and its results.

   - The second report will highlight innovative programs that could be generalized across agencies. It will basically be in the format of a brief "sampler" of innovative programs and suggestions for improving agency and program operation. The agencies will have the opportunity to choose/select any of the ideas in this report for their specific situation if they see fit to do so.

The procedures for conducting the study are described in the next section of this report.

III. PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING THE STUDY

Two-Wave Interview Approach

To study the youth oriented training programs in the community action agencies, each agency was visited twice. During the initial visit, only key administrative personnel were interviewed. Usually these interviews included the executive director of the agency and the manpower director. The interview was intensive in nature and required between 2-3 hours to complete.

Based upon the findings from the initial interviews conducted at the six sites the scope of interviewing during the second visit was broadened to include in separate interviews, counselors; work experience supervisors; and program participants. The latter two sets of individuals were interviewed directly on the job site. All of the interviews except for the one described below were brief and generally required one hour or less of time. In addition, a second short interview was again conducted with the key agency administrative personnel. This interview generally required one hour to complete.

The plan for interviewing and the time required are summarized in Table 2. One fact that can be inferred from Table 2 is that access the sites a minimum total of 42 hours (6 sites times 7 hours) of interviews was planned for. The initial interview was conducted jointly by the two authors of this report. All subsequent interviews were conducted by the authors but on an individual basis. This was seen as the most feasible approach to accomplishing the interviewing within a reasonable period of time in a work day.

Table 2

The Interview Plan for Initial and Second Site Visits to a Single Site

	Administrators	Counselors	Supervisors	Participants	Total Time
Initial Visit	Executive Director and/or Agency Manpower Director (2-3 hrs.)	---	---	---	2-3 hours
Second Visit	Executive Director and/or Agency Manpower Director (1 hr.)	2 (1/2 hr. per counselor)	2 (1/2 hr. or less per supervisor)	4 (1/2 hr. or less per participant)	4 hours

Where possible, the plan called for interviewing at least two counselors from different programs, two supervisors from the different programs and two participants per program. In several instances, the agency was only operating one main youth oriented training program and hence the plan was modified accordingly. The actual types and numbers of individuals interviewed are found in the results section.

Interview Schedules/Forms

The interview forms are appended to this report in Appendices II-VI. The form for the initial site visit (Appendix II) was developed according to the following concepts:

- Context refers to those variables and factors which define the milieu in which the community action agency exists. These would include: type of population served; general types of programs operated by the agency; economic factors affecting the community served; etc.
- Identification refers to the procedures and techniques by which potential participants are defined, screened, etc. and eventually admitted to a youth training program.
- Intervention refers to the techniques and methods by which programs are operated and managed. Programs can be characterized by their duration, purpose, actual activities and so forth.
- Evaluation refers to the processes and methods by which a program staff obtains and utilizes information regarding the effectiveness of programs.

The initial interview contained 15 questions across the above four areas. In addition, three general overall questions relating to program strengths, program weaknesses and suggestions for further program study were included in the interview. The initial interview was only utilized with key agency administrators.

The second interview (Appendix III) with key administrative staff was somewhat shorter in length and focused on concerns quite different from the first one. The eight questions of this interview primarily dealt with issues or concerns identified during the first interview as being common across the six sites. One question, however, was site specific and related to innovative types of programs operated by the site.

The interviews with counselors, supervisors and participants were very brief in length and focused on the following types of variables: problems encountered with the program; program strengths; satisfaction with program activities; suggested program modification; and so forth. (See Appendices IV-VI). All interviews were conducted with the stated assurances of CVE and DECD that all information was confidential and would only be used in "grouped data analyses."

Other Data Sources

In addition to the interviews printed sources of data were collected at each site. These sources included reports, pamphlets, evaluation forms and other similar materials. To the extent possible, these sources were reviewed and the facts they provided have been incorporated into the study.

Data Analysis

The basic mode of analysis was the collation of interview data and other data across the six sites. Where appropriate, frequency counts and tables were prepared which summarize the findings of the study. Interpretations of the data and conclusions are included with the data summary. (For more detail and background factors regarding the interpretation of case study results, see Appendix I).

IV. RESULTS

Sampling Summary for the Initial and Second Visits to the Six Sites

In Table 3, the actual sample used in studying the youth oriented training programs of agencies included in this study is presented. The table contains the sample from both the first and second site visits.

Simple addition indicates that 62 separate interviews were conducted by the authors of this report. It would have been desirable to have interviewed more counselors and participants, but due to the press of time, distance, and local schedules this was not possible.

The table further indicates that in many instances only out-of-school programs were observed. Although this is partly an incidental result of scheduling difficulties it does reflect an emerging problem for community action agencies since some of the agencies have been forced to curtail their youth training programs due to loss of funds. (This particular point will be discussed in greater detail in the next section of this report.) Lastly, although not specifically described in the table, it should be noted that the on-site visits took place from early October up to the beginning of February.

Context - Results and Discussion

In Table 4, a summary of the agency contextual factors is presented. This summary was generated from two sources--first and second interviews with key agency administrators and a brief review of materials that they provided to the interviewers. Analysis of the table tends to reveal some interesting facts about the nature of the agencies. These facts are listed below.

Table 3

Actual Sample Interviewed During the Initial and Second Visits to the Sites

Strata/Agency	Initial Visit Sample	Second Visit Sample	Training/ Work Experience Programs
Metropolitan			
Agency 1	Program Director Program Coordinator	Program Coordinator 1 counselor 2 supervisors 2 participants	Out-of-school program
Agency 2	Deputy Executive Director	Deputy Exec. Dir. Program Director Counselor Superv. 1 counselor 3 supervisors 3 participants	Out-of-school program
Urban			
Agency 1	Program Director	Program Director 2 counselors 1 supervisor 1 participant	Out-of-school program
Agency 2	Executive Director Program Director	Executive Director Program Director 2 counselors 3 supervisors 4 participants	In-school Out-of-school
Rural			
Agency 1	Executive Director Program Director	Executive Director 3 counselors 2 supervisors 5 participants	In-school Out-of-school
Agency 2	Executive Director Program Director	Executive Director Program Director 2 counselors 3 supervisors 2 participants	In-school Out-of-school
TOTALS	4 Executive Dir.'s 5 Program Directors 1 Program Coord.'s	4 Executive Dir.'s 4 Program Directors 1 Program Coordinator 1 Counselor Supervisor 11 Counselors 14 Supervisors 17 Participants	----

Table 4

Agency Context Summary as Derived from First and Second Interviews with Agency Administrators

Type/Agency	CSA Funds*	Total Agency Funds	CETA Programs**	Population/Type	Other Comments/ Descriptors
Metropolitan					
Agency 1	$1,000,000***	$4,326,882	Out of School (CETA Intake)	Large metropolitan area with the target population being primarily inner city blacks and appalachian white.	- Multi-faceted agency which handles funds from HEW, CSA, DOL, etc. - Several not for profit companies (car wash, print shop) - 7 neighborhood service centers (Outreach)
Agency 2	$1,969,000	$16,276,741	---	Large metropolitan area with the target population being inner city blacks, whites, and Puerto Ricans.	- 6 neighborhood centers - Agency is a pass through or co-ordinating mechanism for various groups, e.g., Seniors of Ohio, Inc., legal services society, etc.

* CSA = Community Services Administration.
** CETA = Comprehensive Employment Training Act
*** Many figures are approximate and should only be viewed as a guide for understanding the context of the agencies.

Table 4, continued

Type/Agency	CSA Funds	Total Agency Funds	CETA Programs	Population/Type	Other Comments/ Descriptors
Urban					
Agency 1	$152,000	$1,150,000	In-school Out-of-school SPEDY	80,000 in one county which is mostly urban-suburban (12-13% black). 50,000 in the other which has as a target population poor rural whites, migrant families are 1-1 1/2% of the population.	- 3 neighborhood centers are operated in the 2 counties - Multifaceted programs
Agency 2	$340,000	$3,000,000	In-school Out-of-school SPEDY	80,000 with the biggest city being about 25,000,000. Mostly the area is rural, appalachian and poor. About 25-30% is considered at the poverty level.	- One of the higher incidences of poverty in the state of Ohio - Multifaceted programs - Transportation problems

Table 4, continued

Type/Agency	CSA Funds*	Total Agency Funds	CETA Programs**	Population/Type	Other Comments/ Descriptors
Rural					
Agency 1	$150,000	$1,300,000	In school Out of school SPEDY	49,000 totally rural, largest city is 2,900. The area is appalachian and poor. 15% or more - ADC.	- Multifaceted programs - Outreach aides in local communities/areas - High incidence of high school dropouts - Transportation problems
Agency 2	$96,000	$1,800,000	In school Out of school SPEDY	150,000 rural except in one county. Poor population is primarily appalachian whites (WWII + after) and migrant/settled out migrants	- The agency operates many multi-faceted programs. - There are seasonal problems due to migrant families arriving in the area from April to October (also discrimination toward migrants is apparent) - Bilingual staff are needed - Many appalachian whites - 2nd-3rd generation welfare families - Transportation problems

1. Complexity of Operation. All the agencies run numerous programs in diverse areas such as alcoholism, legal services, youth training, elderly assistance, and so on. The agencies are, in effect, partial coordinators of local social services to communities.

2. Level of Funding. The complexity of operation is underscored when the level of funding is examined. Even the smallest agency administers well over a million dollars in funding with the largest operating budget being greater than 16 million dollars. Since these funds come from diverse sources, the agencies are having to be fairly active in seeking funds.

3. Population Served. The agencies do indeed vary in terms of the populations served. Five different groups were identified in this study: rural poor; inner city blacks, appalachian whites; Puerto Ricans; and migrant farm workers. The unique features of these populations make it difficult to define programs that will work equally well in all settings.

4. CETA Funding. The table may indicate that the pattern of funding is changing across the agencies. The metropolitan agencies have over the past several years seen their control/involvement in Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) programs decrease and/or cease to exist at all. The locus of control of CETA has undergone a shift from community action to city government in the metropolitan areas. Undoubtedly, there is a number of reasons for this change including political ones. These factors are discussed in greater detail later in this report.

The strengths and problems within the context that the agencies operate in all summarized in Table 5. This information was derived partly from an analysis of the contextual information as shown in Table 4 and from other information collected during interviews with the agency administrators. As shown in the table community relations is judged to be a strong point of agency operation. All the agencies are truly part of the community in which they exist. They are all in effect decentralized and operate community or outreach centers. While the information supporting this strength was derived from interviews and not directly observed, it does appear to be a strength of the agencies.

Table 5

Summary of Main Contextual Strengths and Problems Observed

Strengths	Problems
- Community relations - Coordination of programs	- Inter-agency linkages/coordination - Transportation problems (especially in rural areas) - CETA funding loss

Coordination of programs* is also judged to be a strength by virtue of the fact that all agencies are striving to interrelate programs. Youthful workers, for example, may run summer playground/ recreation programs or they may be on work teams assisting the elderly. Winterization programs, i.e., improving the insulation of low income dwellings, are frequently accomplished by using youthful workers. To the extent possible, the community action agencies also employ workers directly on their premises.

On the negative side a problem occurs in the area of inter agency (social welfare, community action, municipal, government) cooperation and coordination. The coordination of services across agencies within a number of communities is not particularly good. Where this problem is taking place several community action agencies have now joined in membership with other community agencies in coordinating-types of area committees. These groups are trying to reduce excessive, unnecessary agency overlap, increase efficiency and provide a better set of services to low income and disadvantaged groups.

* One other strength in terms of context was observed in two agencies which are part of COAD--an appalachian region cooperative. This cooperative seeks funding, writes joint proposals, shares problems and ideas, etc. This type of cooperative based upon mutual needs and problems may have value for other areas of the state.

Over time, these committees could produce tremendous benefits for disadvantaged individuals. They could aid in preventing such things as: confusion over who to go to for help; back and forth and forth and back referrals with no results and probable disenchantment with the system; unclear agency functions and boundaries; similar program names; the welfare/community action maze, lack of communication between agencies; and so forth. A beginning has been made in this area--more needs to be done.

Harsh transportation problems were observed in all the rural community action agencies that participated in this study. Associated with transportation are factors such as physical isolation, lack of role models and lack of job/work site opportunities. Some token suggestions for improvement in this regard will be offered in subsequent sections of the report but the difficulty is considered to be pervasive and not easily overcome.

The last problem, CETA funding loss, is perhaps the most critical one. In metropolitan areas the community action agencies are, for the most part, no longer receiving CETA funds. In rural areas, this has not occurred but it may take place in the future. This shift is control of CETA is noticeable and as a result, the CETA program may be more politicized than it formally was. An important aspect of this shift is that the agencies now in charge of CETA funds have a primary function that supercedes the training function. That is, their goal is to run the city and provide its citizens with services necessary for their survival, safety, etc. CETA may provide funds for workers who do assist in the provision of such services. This is well and good but it is not the primary purpose of CETA funding. CETA funding is primarily designed for the purpose of Training with service as a logical extension of the purpose but a secondary one at best. If the use of CETA funds basically provides service rather than a meaningful training experience for an individual it is not meeting the goal of the programs. In addition, CETA funds are not intended to either supplement or supplant locally funded government services.

(Reasons other than political ones could be postulated for the shift in control of funds. These might include: poor fiscal management by the community action agencies; lack of innovative training opportunities; inefficient programs; etc. It is however, beyond the scope of this study to examine such potential causal factors.)

Identification - Results and Discussion

Identification really refers to two separate types of activities: informing ("getting the word out") potential participants of the various opportunities available to them; and the actual process of selecting individuals for programs. Across the six agencies a common set of both informational and identification procedures was observed. These in conjunction with strengths and problems are summarized in Table 6.

The procedures described in the table seem to work fairly well inasmuch as most agencies report a surplus of applicants for available programs. According to agency reports, almost all of the applicants are from below the poverty guidelines and do generally come from targeted disadvantaged groups. The agencies do report turning away applicants who, although needy, fall into a classification slightly above the poverty guidelines.

Table 6

Summary of Participant Identification Procedures,* Strengths and Problems as Derived from Interviews with Agency Administrators

Procedures	Strengths	Problems
Informational		
- Word of mouth - Posters in schools - Radio/TV - Flyers - Referrals - School contacts - Newspapers - Outreach	- All agencies seem to employ multi-faceted procedures - Many inter/intra agency referrals	- More applicants identified than can be serviced
Selection		
- First come/ first served - Those with greatest need - Interviews/ home visits - Department of labor criteria	- Generally all agencies adhere to DOL target population guidelines	

* Most agencies use a combination of procedures and the order of presentation of procedures in the table does not reflect an emphasis on any one procedure. All are used commonly.

One set of issues/considerations not described in the table relates to the procedures for identifying/selecting program work sites. A problem encountered at several agencies was a concern over the degree to which specific work sites really provided participants with meaningful training and the degree to which participant problems were understood. Partly, this is a problem of continuous orientation and dialogue between the agency and the work site. Partly, however, it is a problem of initial site selection. At present, this is usually accomplished by job coordinators, program directors or supervisors contacting sites or learning about sites via their work in the field. The professional judgments of these individuals have generally been good.

In the same instance, it is possible that excellent training sites are overlooked. This could be a reflection of publicity campaigns directed toward prospective participants rather than prospective employers both in the public (and private) sector.*

Intervention - Results and Discussion

In studying the actual training/work experiences operated by the agencies, a variety of individuals and groups was interviewed. As described, this was done to obtain a comprehensive view of youth oriented training programs. The results of these interviews are found in the following tables:

* One agency is currently pursuing this course of action.

Table 7: General Program Summary

Table 8: Counselor Perceptions of Programs

Table 9: Supervisor Perceptions of Programs

Table 10: Participant Perceptions of Programs

Table 11: Innovative Programs/Ideas

Table 12: Summary of Program Strengths and Problems

Following the tables is a short discussion of the results. Table 11 will not be discussed in any detail in this report inasmuch as it will be the substance of another product prepared for the Department of Economic and Community Development.

First, in reviewing Tables 7 through 12, the reader should be aware of the procedures used in constructing them. The tables are a condensation of information collected from partially open-ended interviews. To collate data for tabular display required that the essential idea stated by the interviewee be summarized. Interviewee comments are thus not inasmuch detail as originally given. Interviewer judgment was also used in selecting the most pertinent comments for listing in the tables. Lastly since the sample size per table was small, no attempt was made to separate out the different types of programs.

Table 7 indicates that six basic types of programs are in operation at the six sites. The six programs are: CETA in-school program; CETA out-of-school program; CETA summer program (SPEDY); the Department of Labor Job Corps program; CSA out-of-school (private and public sectors) programs; and CETA out-of-school (private sector) programs.

Table 7

General Youth Training Program Summary as Derived from Agency Interviews*

Funding Source	Type of Program	Average Duration	Objective(s)	Instructional Strategy	Evaluation Procedures
CETA	In-school	1 academic year	To keep students in school by providing positive part-time work experience	Almost all training is obtained by work supervisors teaching students the job	- Supervisor evaluation (4 out of 5 agencies) - Self ratings (1 agency) - Counselor evaluations (4 agencies) - Conferences (3 agencies) - Various records (all agencies)
CETA	Out-of-school	Up to 1 calendar year	- To provide positive work experiences for out of school youths/young adults - To develop job survival and/or other skills	See above	See above
CETA	Summer Program	1 summer	- An extension of the in-school program except that students can work more than a few hours part-time - To "keep" students off the streets	See above	See above

Table 7, continued

Funding Source	Type of Program	Average Duration	Objective(s)	Instructional Strategy	Evaluation Procedures
Department of Labor	Job Corps**	Dependent on type of training. (6 months - 2 years)	To provide skill training in a residential camp setting	Vocational school type of training	Not available (but assumed to be skill providiency)
CSA (Public and private sectors)	Out-of-school	Up to 1 calendar year	- To provide positive work experiences for out-of-school youths/young adults - To develop job survival and/or other skills	Almost all training is obtained by work supervisors teaching students the jobs.	- Supervisor ratings (1 agency) - Counselor ratings (1 agency) - Conferences (1 agency)
CETA (Private employment training)	Out-of-school	Up to 1 calendar year	To provide skill training	Dependent upon individual employer contract	---

* As noted earlier, not all programs are operant in each of the agencies that participated in this study.

** Agencies do not directly handle the training aspects of the program.

As is noted in the table, no one agency operates all six programs. Four of the agencies operate CETA in school, out-of-school, and summer programs as matter of course. In addition, one of these four agencies operates the CETA private sector, out-of-school program. One agency operates only the CETA out-of-school program (and CETA intake functions) and is heavily involved in recruiting for the Job Corps program. The last agency does not receive CETA funds and thus utilizes CSA funding for its programs. The Job Corps, CETA private sector, out-of-school, and the CSA programs receive minimal funds in comparison to the other CETA programs.

Within the context of these six programmatic areas, minor and major variations of program theme occur. The major variations of theme, that is, those programs that are different and innovative are summarized in Table 11. Further detail regarding these variations is given in the product entitled "A Sampler of Innovative Program Ideas for Ohio's Community Action Agencies" which accompanies this report.*

Other aspects of the programs which are important are that: most program objectives are focused on the provision of positive work experiences and the development of coping/job survival skills; almost all training is dependent upon the specific job situation and supervisor; and a variety of evaluation techniques are used.

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* Altschuld, James W. and Terry. T. "A Sampler of Innovative Program Ideas for Ohio's Community Action Agencies," The Center for Vocational Education, 1977.

The amount of training varies greatly. In some situations, a supervisor will assist a participant in the learning of basic and advanced skills. Even with the small sample interviewed in this study a few instances of highly specialized training were taking place. On the other hand, some participants receive only minimal training even when they are capable of learning fairly complex technical skills. This could be a result of numerous factors such as: participant attitudes; supervisor attitudes and deficient participant educational backgrounds.

The format of the training while somewhat variable often follows a common pattern. In a one to one fashion, the supervisor orients the participant to job duties, skills, learning situation, etc. and monitors the progress of the participants during their tenure on the job. The agency counselor visits the site periodically for discussions with the supervisor and program participant. Interestingly, the participant is not an employee of the job site but rather is paid minimum wages ($2.30 per hour) by the agency. Also, by regulation CETA employment funds (except in special circumstances) can only be allocated for use in governmental and not for profit agencies. Hence, there are limitations on the sites that can actually be involved in the training and work experience programs.

Table 8 represents a summary of counselor perceptions of the youth training programs. One major finding from this table is that the counselors are either well trained (college degrees in sociology, education, and related fields) or have considerable amount of practical experience. Generally, the counselors felt that their case loads were not too heavy and they reported using a variety of techniques for orienting supervisors and participants to the programs. Counselors saw the participants as being satisfied with the programs and as learning good work habits from their participation in the program. However, a sizeable number of counselors did not feel that specific specialized job skills were being enhanced by the program. Numerous program strengths were cited by counselors with a particular emphasis on learning good work habits and learning while earning. Key problems noted were insufficient monies, isolation from the job market, declining numbers of jobs, too few job sites, and finding participants jobs after they completed training. These results take on greater meaning when analyzed in the context of supervisor and participant comments. (Especially note the discussion of Table 12: Summary of Program Strengths and Problems.)

In Table 9, the perceptions of work experience supervisors are summarized. The supervisors were involved in the three most commonly observed CETA programs and the CSA funded programs. By and large, the supervisors had extensive pertinent background experience for working in the programs. Most of them had been oriented by the counselors to the programs and considered the orientation to be adequate for their needs. They emphasized that participants were: gaining an understanding of work ethics; learning coping/or survival skills; and in many instances, getting specific skill training.

Table 8

Summary of Counselor Perceptions of Youth Training Programs as Derived from the Counselor Interviews
Numbers in ( ) Indicate the Counselors who Responded in a Specific Way Out of a Total of 12 Counselors*

Counselor Experience	Counseling Caseload Perceptions	Supervisor Orientation	Participant Orientation**	Participant Satisfaction**	Problems with Forms**	Skill Enhancement**	Strengths	Problems
College training (8)	Can do a good job (11)	Site visits with participants (3)	Intake interviews (3)	Generally satisfied (9)	Time consuming (4)	Skills are being enhanced (4)	Benefits to the community (1)	Monies (3)
Practical experience 2 years or more (3)	Spread too thin (1)	Discussions with supervisors about jobs, participants and programs (8)	Orientation to job responsibilities, requirements, and pay (1)	Some complaints about pay (2)	Confusing (2)	Skills not being enhanced (7)	Learning good work habits (3)	Isolated from labor market (3)
Practical experience 1 year or less (1)		Orientation booklets/ materials (1)	Site visit with participants (1)	Some complaints about referral run arounds (1)	Overlapping to a certain degree (4)	Learning good work habits (6)	Learning while earning (6)	Declining jobs (3)
			Orientation booklet (1)	Not satisfied due to lack of permanent placement and goal not being met (1)	CETA forms are difficult to complete (2)		Supportive services (1)	Helping participants to get jobs before leaving high school or after program (3)
			Orientation to job, responsibilities, dress, behavior, etc. (7)	Some problems with supportive services (1)	No real problems (5)		Professional level of staff (1)	Need more job sites (2)
			Group counseling sessions during orientation (2)		Too many forms (3)		Better self image on part of participants (1)	No problems (1)
			Done on-the-job by supervisors (1)					Changing employer attitudes (free labor) and participant attitudes, free welfare, money) (1)
								More time especially for teenager in the program (1)
								Orientation of supervisors (1)
								Too much time on paperwork and too little time on counseling (1)

* One of the interviews included in this set is that of a counselor supervisor.

** Several counselors mentioned more than one answer.

Table 9

Summary of Supervisor Perceptions of Youth Training Programs as Derived from Supervisor Interviews
Numbers in ( ) Indicate the Supervisors Who Responded Out of a Total of 14 Supervisors

Past Program Experience	Orientation to the Program	Adequacy of Orientation	Skill Enhancement	Strengths	Problems	Suggestions
2 years or more (9)	No orientation for supervisor (1)	It was adequate (10)	Understanding of work ethics/coping skills (13)	Income (3)	Training not meaningful (1)	Worksites should pick up enrollees (2)
Less than 2 years (5)	Prior/similar types of programs (3)	Not adequate (3)	Skill training (9)	The training/leading to a job (4)	No job slots (1)	Improve evaluation procedures - more feedback to participants and supervisors (2)
	Counselor/agency orientation (10)	Adequate but others will need more (1)		Getting "kids" off the streets (1)	No problems (2)	More counseling, testing, and participant information (4)
				Counselor/participant rapport (1)	Financial problems (1)	More training (2)
				Professional support of CAA (4)	Participants/supervisors need more information or counseling (3)	More money (3)
				Low cost labor in exchange for training (1)	Participants are not free labor (1)	More job sites (1)
					Poor participants motivation (6)	Expand programs (2)
					Programs are too loose (2)	Provide a way for youthful offenders to get a work record (1)
					Some students/kids don't like this particular work (1)	
					Parents take away earnings (1)	

Training, income, and the professional support of the agency were the most frequently mentioned strengths of the programs. Poor participant motivation, the need for more information and counseling, and the lack of program structure were the most common problems cited. Six different suggestions for program improvement were recommended by at least two or more supervisors. These are incorporated into the summary of program strengths and problems (Table 12).

In Table 10, the perceptions of the program participants are described. Close to one half of the participants were in the program for six months or more at the time of the interview with the rest of the participants in the program for a shorter period of time. Most of the participants had been provided an orientation to the program and to their specific job duties by an agency counselor. All participants were satisfied with their jobs and the general nature of the learning experience. In a similar vein, they indicated the aspects of the program they liked most were the learning experiences and the pay. Eleven of the 17 participants felt that there were no real problems with the program. Others, although in the minority, mentioned transportation, pay, and more hours as difficulties. At least five major suggestions were expressed by a number of participants. These suggestions relate to more money, more hours, more program structure, poorly motivated participants, and the obtaining of jobs upon completion of the program (see Table 12).

In Table 11, a number of unique in school and out-of-school programs as well as other innovative ideas is summarized. The table entries are based upon the on-site interviews with agency administration and the perceptions of the interviewers.

Table 10

Summary of Participant Perceptions of Programs as Derived from Participant Interviews
Numbers in ( ) Indicate Participants who Responded in a Specific Way Out of a Total of 17 Participants

Length of Time in Program	Orientation to the Program	Satisfaction*	Like Most*	Like Least (Problems)*	Suggestions*
Less than 1/2 year (9) More than 1/2 year (4) More than 1 year (4)	Counselor explained pay, responsibilities, dress, etc. (12) Somewhat but primarily dependent upon job supervisor (1) Somewhat but not in detail (2) Via agency group orientation (2)	Satisfied with job, learning, etc. (17) CAA helps whole family (1) See the counselor often (1) Do not see the counselor often (1)	Not far from home (2) The experience and the people (12) Like the pay (4) Openness of job situation (2)	No problem (11) Transportation difficulties (2) More hours needed (2) More pay (2) Too busy to really get trained on the job (1) At some sites, large groups of CETA workers caused problems (1) Personalities on the job (2)	More money (6) No suggestions (4) More hours (6) More opportunity for more individuals to be involved (1) More structure to program (3) Enrollees should get job upon completion of training (2) Expand it into more fields of study (1) Some enrollees not too well motivated (2)

* Some participants gave more than one response to a question.

Table 11

Innovative Programs* and Ideas as Derived from Agency Interviews

In-School Programs	Out-of-School Programs	Other Ideas
Police Cadets	Agency Run Small Businesses	Periodic Group Orientation and Meetings for Supervisors
Summer Work Camp	Experimental Private Enterprise Programs	Designated Program Coordinators in Schools
Weekend Work Camp	Specialized Youth Offender Programs	Initial Group Orientation to Programs for Participants
New Careers		
Recreational (Semi-Educational) Programs		
Job Corps		

* Generally innovative programs were being carried out on a small scale.

Table 12 represents a summary of program strengths and problems as determined across counselors, supervisors, and participants. The strengths as outlined in the table are a rather clear indication that in many areas the agencies have developed positive programs that are having an impact on participants and work-site supervisors. Of particular note are the facts that: participants seem satisfied with the program; it is desirable to learn while earning; skills and positive work habits are being enhanced; and that there is some experimentation with new programs.

On the negative or problem side, however, a number of major difficulties are cited. Some such as more pay, more hours, transportation problems, and a decline in the number of jobs reflect a set of circumstances beyond the control of the Community Action Agencies; but others are not. For example, the fact that the forms are paperwork are time consuming, overlapping, etc. is a difficulty that can be overcome by a small investment of time and money. (Even if standard state forms are involved certainly changes can be suggested to appropriate state officials.)

Five very serious program problems are identified in the table. The need for more job sites and more training are important areas for improvement. Getting participants jobs after they complete the program would seem to indicate the lack of adequate placement and follow-through services. Poor participant motivation must be carefully examined inasmuch as this type of factor can greatly affect the success or failure of programs. The next problem is one that gets at the very core of agency purposes. There is an apparent need to strengthen agency counseling endeavors, information dispersal and evaluation activities.

Table 12

Summary of Program Strengths and Problems as Derived From Tables 7-10
Source(s) for Summary Are Listed in Parentheses

Strengths	Problems
Some experimentation with new programs (Agency Administrators)	Limited experimentation with new programs (Agency Administrators)
Counselors are college trained or have extensive experience (Counselors)	Forms are time consuming, overlapping, confusing, and so forth (Counselors)
A variety of supervisor/participant orientation methods were used by counselors (Counselors, Participants)	Skills not being enhanced (Counselors)
Participants generally were satisfied with the program (Counselors and Participants)	Monies are insufficient (Counselors, Supervisors, Participants)
Skills and positive work habits are being enhanced (Counselors, Supervisors, Participants)	More hours (Participants)
Learning while earning (Counselors, Supervisors, Participants)	Isolated from job market (Counselors)
Supervisors have extensive experience with the program (Almost 2/3 of the Supervisors)	Decline in number of jobs (Counselors)
Adequacy of agency supervisor orientation (Supervisors)	Need more job sites (Counselors, Supervisors)
Professional support of CAA (Supervisors)	Getting participants jobs after they complete the program (Counselors, Supervisors, Participants)
	Poor participant motivation (Supervisors, Participants)
	Participants and supervisors need more information, counseling and/or better evaluation techniques (Supervisors)
	More training (Supervisors)
	Transportation difficulties (Participants)
	More program structure (Participants)

(This need is derived from supervisors comments regarding the need for more counseling, the programs being too loose and the supervisors need for more information as well as similar comments from participants themselves. Overall, 16 comments were noted in this area from 17 participants and 14 supervisors.) Lastly, experimentation has been noted as both a strength and a weakness. It is a weakness in the sense that although all agencies are experimenting with new programs, they are only doing so on a limited and infrequent basis. With regard to experimentation, the agencies note that federal rules and regulations are too confining and preclude the desirable tryout of innovative/new programs. Suggestions regarding ways of overcoming these limitations will be offered in the last chapter of this report.

Evaluation - Results and Discussion

The four major areas for study in this project were: context, identification, intervention and evaluation. The evaluation results are summarized in Table 13. The data that were utilized in constructing the table came from interviews with agency administrators. As obvious from the table, a variety of evaluation techniques is being employed by the six agencies. And, aside from the on-site evaluations of work-sites and the keeping of records, there is no clear cut agreement across the agencies with regard to evaluation procedures. A number of agencies indicated that they were just in the process of starting their follow-up studies and did not presently have data from those procedures. (Note: one agency did have an external evaluator review its out-of-school program and prepare an evaluation report for its use.)

Table 13

Program Evaluation Summary as Derived from Agency Interviews
Numbers in ( ) Indicate the Agencies that
Responded Out of a Total of Six Agencies

Evaluation Techniques*	Program Success*
On site evaluations of worksites (4)	Evaluation still in process (1)
Random follow-up studies up to 1 year (2)	Program seems successful (but it provides mostly pay and little training) (1)
Word of mouth feedback (2)	Program seems successful (5)
Follow-up studies up to 90 days (2)	Difficult to define positive criteria of success and to deal with turnover rates** (3)
Input measures (such as demographic information) (3)	
State field representatives or monthly reports (3)	
Student self evaluations (1)	
Records, positive termination rates (5)	
Limited or no follow-up (2)	

* Some agencies gave more than one response.

** This was the response given by three sites in answer to the question about program success.

In terms of program success, most of the agencies felt that they were successful. Not much data as indicated above were available, however, to support the perceptions of the agencies. One problem noted by three of the agencies was the difficulty of establishing criteria for determining program success. They cited such factors as high turnover rates, program completers leaving the area, the cost of evaluation, and so forth. In one case, an agency suggested that it was especially difficult to establish criteria for in-school programs which have an implicit goal of "keeping kids off the streets." In this case, for example, is a slight reduction in the dropout rate an indication of program success?

The strengths and problems with regard to evaluation are very simply described and almost self apparent. The agencies almost uniformly expressed a need to improve in the area of evaluation, data collection, and so forth. They were acutely aware of short-comings in this area. Their awareness is considered to be a strength. The problems lie in the lack of actual data collected and in the need for systematic data collection procedures. One other problem observed by the interviewers is that the programs are often thought of only in terms of positive placement of participants. If sub-goals in the areas of attitude change, skill development, coping behaviors, etc. were assessed a different picture of results might emerge.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this chapter are based upon observations noted earlier in the report and on the professional judgments of the two interviewers. They represent suggestions that hopefully, if even partially implemented, will lead to improved agency and program operation. They are made in the spirit that many aspects of agency operation are well thought out and implemented but that others will need improvement. The recommendations are organized in accord with the following areas: context, identification, intervention and evaluation. It should also be noted that the recommendations are based on a case study approach which involved a small sample of agencies and a relatively small number of site visits and interviews. Large scale sampling may have revealed a different set of findings and potentially different recommendations.

Context Recommendations

1. Inter-agency linkages, i.e., communication channels, should be improved. This problem was most noticeable in two of the six community action agencies cited. Better coordination of programs hopefully will, in turn, lead to better programs for potential participants. The communication recommendation really has two parts. On the local level, area-wide committees of local social service agencies should be formed or, if already formed, should be maintained and strengthened. On the state level, the DECD should make every effort to improve the coordination between its agencies and agencies like the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES). Although not expressly noted before several local agencies identified this as a linkage problem. State coordination would probably help to alleviate the local problem.

2. The DECD and local agencies should carefully monitor the dispersion/allocation of CETA monies. There is a likelihood that CETA funds may be shifting to local units of government. This trend, if it indeed is one, is not necessarily negative. What is important here is not so much that one agency or institution has the funding in place of another but rather whether the agency that can do the best job of training is actually receiving the monies. This is a most serious concern on both the local and state level.

3. Recommendations in the area of transportation will be found under the Intervention heading.

Identification Recommendations

As noted earlier in the report, the communication and identification procedures of the agencies seem to be operating fairly well. These recommendations therefore are offered for the purpose of improving already proficient techniques.

1. Target some publicity efforts toward a wide range of prospective employers especially in the metropolitan/urban areas. Handbills, procedures, fliers, pamphlets are typical devices that might be utilized. A wider spread of training sites might thus be obtained.

2. Focus greater attention on specialized sub-groups within the disadvantaged target populations. Recent federal program emphases have been in the areas of: women, handicapped, rural, youth, bilingual, etc. (See Employment and Training Administration programs). Some of these groups have specialized types of problems (e.g., the isolation of rural women, day care needs of young mothers) that require a unique or different type of program. There is a strong possibility that focused/targeted programs will become more prominent in the near future.

Intervention (Program) Recommendations

1. Experimentation with new programs should be expanded. New training settings both public and private should be explored. Alternatives to existing counseling, follow-through and rating procedures could be tried. Different modes of supervisor-counselor interaction could be examined.

Better techniques for monitoring participant behavior could be developed. Alternative methods for funding programs and/or paying participants might be studied. (In one agency, for example, some counselors spend up to two days a week just delivering pay checks).

Regulations and rules may be a deterrent to trying out new and different programs. Frequently, however, the federal rules can be relaxed to allow for experimentation with promising new ideas. All concerned agencies are encouraged to see if their ideas can be implemented with full governmental approval.

Forms, especially CETA forms could be improved. Several of the agencies reported difficulty in completing CETA forms or in getting certain CETA forms completed by potential participants or their parents. These difficulties are treated at the state and federal level where the forms originate and corrective action can easily be taken. (One option might be to hire a consultant at a nominal cost to revise and consolidate the forms).

Locally made instruments could also be improved by the use of better scaling techniques that are based on observable behaviors. (Also see evaluation recommendations.)

3. Identify more varied job sites with better training possibilities and possible long term job openings. This recommendation has already been covered by recommendation 1 above and by the first recommendation in the identification section of the report.

4. Participant motivation, to the extent possible, has to be improved. As stated now, this is an impossible recommendation to implement. Yet at the same, it is at the very heart of the training/work experience programs. If participants are not motivated they may in turn "sour" or "turn off" supervisors to further infolvement in the program. The next recommendation deals with perhaps a partial solution to the dilemma.

5. Strengthen the counseling functions in agency programs. The counselors at most agencies are either well educated and/or have experiential background which qualify them for their positions. However, this seems only to be an adequate set of initial skills. Counselors could benefit from additional training in: reinforcement techniques; group/individual counseling techniques; motivational strategies; techniques for evaluating performance and uses of evaluation data; etc. Counselor training programs would seem to have value and should be explored. The goal here is not necessarily to get uniform counseling procedures but to get better informed, better trained counselors.

6. Define or specify in more detail the role of the supervisor and participant. This recommendation is partly an outgrowth of the need for a stronger counseling function. Some supervisors and participants seem to need clarification of their roles and responsibilities. Contracting through work agreements and the utilization of specialized program-orientation sessions might help to alleviate this problem.

7. Devise alternative programs in rural areas that might help to reduce transportation problems. This might be accomplished by setting up special weekend work programs for in-school participants and then seeking community volunteers who would be willing to provide transportation for small groups. The programs could be in the form of community beautification, home winterization, and camp site development projects. The provision of transportation could be viewed as a charitable (tax deductable) gift to a non-profit institution.

8. Develop programs for the in-school CETA program that do not operate in schools. Recommendation seven is an example of this type of program. This recommendation, which is based partly upon the intuition of the interviewers, stems from the observation that many CETA enrollees may be marginal in terms of school involvement and may have negative perceptions of the school. By maintaining literally "in school" programs these perceptions may be reinforced.

Evaluation Recommendations

1. With state assistance, a set of procedures and guidelines for local evaluation of programs should be developed. Agency evaluation techniques are in disarray. Forms are not consistent across agencies and often are not of high enough quality to provide useful information. Evaluation is not a high priority for local agencies. Supervisors, in some instances, do not see the value of carefully evaluating participant performance.

Thus, the suggestion that trained evaluators at the state level develop with local input a set of forms and procedures. The forms/procedures should be strandardized and generalizable, but at the same time should provide for the use of local options and variations. This would require that program objectives be defined and potentially that programs could be evaluated against a wide set of criteria in addition to solely the criterion of placement. Statewide evaluation technique workshops should also be held. (Consultant help and/or the creation of a statewide evaluation position should be considered.)

2. <u>With state assistance, a set of procedures for conducting regional follow-up studies on a sampling basis should be developed and implemented.</u> There is no clearcut evidence of program effectiveness. It is doubtful that continued long term funding can be expected without such evidence (see local variations above).

APPENDIX I

Methodological Considerations for the Evaluation of Youth Training Programs in Community Action Agencies

Introduction

The purpose of this appendix is to briefly discuss some of the background factors related to the methodology used for the study described earlier in this report. The treatment of these factors is not intended to be exhaustive but rather to provide the reader with a surface understanding of some of the considerations that preceded the selection of a specific methodology. Many issues (pros and cons) related to various methodological approaches are also included in this appendix.

General Background Factors

In an age of accountability, concern about the evaluation of community action programs has been very evident. For example, Anderson and Whitten in a recent (August 12, 1976) newspaper article noted that " . . . apparently no one in Washington knows whether the government's anti-poverty programs are doing any good." They further state that approximately $1.5 billion is spent in anti-poverty programs by state and local funds. They conclude by reporting that a recent, confidential GAO study indicated that less than half of the required progress reports from local programs were reaching Washington and that many of those reports were inadequate. (Anderson and Whitten, 1976)

The government as well as individuals who work in the anti-poverty field clearly recognize the need to be accountable and to definitively evaluate programs. This need is prompted by two major underlying causes: (1) where large sums of money are expended, the public and the legislative bodies will over time demand that the recipient agencies be accountable for the effective programmatic use of funds; and (2) the collection and use of evaluative data are major ways of refining, improving and further developing programs. This is reflected in the description of the CAA planning process, which includes steps for monitoring progress and evaluating effectiveness, and in the budgeting categories of the Office of Economic Opportunity. The latter contain specific and separate budget categories for CAA evaluation; Manpower Program Intake, Assessment and Program Placement; Headstart Evaluation, and so on.

While the need for evaluation is clear--how to evaluate is not. One suspects that the GAO observations are not only accurate but that they are so for two disparate reasons. First, the recognition that evaluation is necessary and useful is probably more firmly held by the higher administrative levels of the system than by the lower levels. And secondly, evaluation of complex processes and outcomes in realistic life settings is methodologically and practically difficult.

In a recent study in the related field of juvenile delinquency, conducted by The Center for Vocational Education, the following kinds of observations were made:

1. Systematic program evaluations were almost never conducted;
2. Mortality, i.e., drop off in sample size as a treatment or program is in process, was rarely taken into account;
3. Feedback on individuals who had been referred to other agencies and services was generally not obtained;
4. Inter and intra agency communication was often lacking or was simply minimal and loose knit; and
5. "Many project staff beg the evaluation question by claiming that one cannot adequately measure subjective behavior, attitudes, etc. and that there is not the expertise available to execute adequate evaluation." (Cardarelli, 1976).

(It should be noted that the report also does cite examples of reasonable or adequate evaluation studies in this area.) These observations tend to support the two assumptions made above and to an extent probably are generalizable to that of youth oriented training programs in Ohio's community action agencies.

Several important distinctions, however, must be pointed out. Frequently, the parameters of educational types of programs though not fully defined are better defined than those of juvenile delinquency prevention projects. Objectives in clear terms may be available or inferable, average duration of the treatment will be specified and so forth. Secondly, indicants of success, especially in performance areas, are or can be developed for use in assessing program effectiveness. These indicants would obtain a higher degree of acceptance by staffs of the community action agencies than would analogous indicants in the juvenile delinquency field. Lastly, one of the major outcomes of this particular evaluation of community action agencies for the state of Ohio is the identification of program strengths and weaknesses accompanied by a strategy or procedure for assisting local agencies to improve their level of performance. This assistance should tend to cast the evaluation in "a different light" a positive light--rather than having an investigatory connotation.

The Methodological Approach--A Closer Look

The question still remains, however, "how should youth oriented training programs in community action agencies be evaluated." Useful insights into this question are found in Evaluating Action Programs: Readings in Social Action and Education (Weiss, 1972) In the first chapter, "A Treeful of Owls," Weiss presents an extensive discussion of the evaluation of social action/education programs. She notes that many evaluations consist of an individual or a team going to an agency and asking questions. This "impressionistic inquiry" relies heavily on what people are willing to tell you and probably is not as objective as one would like. She continues by stating that often questionnaires are used as an evaluation technique because they seem to be more objective or scientific. But this approach while having some advantages, e.g., lack of involvement of an interviewer with the interviewer's associated biases, yielding of clues regarding program strengths and weaknesses, does have major disadvantages. They are: respondents only tell you what they want you to know; generally the number of questions is limited; the depth of questions is limited, and so on.

Weiss concludes by stating that eventually evaluation comes to the basic question of how well is the program accomplishing what it sets out to accomplish. For evaluation purposes, this requires that the goals of a program are carefully defined and that they can be translated into measurable indicators of achievement. And further that the extent of goal achievement can be assessed by use of experimental and control (or equivalent) groups. Weiss, though an advocate of evaluation against goal criteria, is not naive about the difficulties of implementing this approach in the real world situations. For example: goals are often neither simple nor clear cut; control/equivalent groups may be difficult to obtain; evaluation is a secondary activity as compared to the primary purposes of agencies and/or programs; program staff may not be too willing to cooperate with evaluators; programs, themselves, are not always sharply defined entities but rather may be more amorphous in form; the process of determining if a program has achieved its goals can only be accomplished after the program is completed and hence the immediate utility of the results is reduced, and in general, evaluation has not had that much impact on the decisions/decision making process.

Cohen in "Politics and Research: Evaluation of Social Action Programs in Education" notes that in the mid 1960's we witnessed the establishment of wide scale educational improvement programs funded by federal and state sources. (Cohen, 1970) These programs were in reality, social action programs aimed at broadly improving education for disadvantaged students. The programs are characterized as being politically conceived, operating in multiple varied settings; and being difficult to define in terms of goals, treatment(s), and criteria for success. This, in turn, has resulted in poor or inadequate program evaluations.

As an example, Cohen questions the use of achievement test scores as a criterion for assessing Title I (ESEA) program aims--are they a comprehensive and representative summary measure for adequately assessing program success? He further postulates that the "Title I program is (not) sufficiently coherent and unified to warrant the application of any summary criterion of success, be it achievement or something else."

Cohen concludes by suggesting that:

- One purpose of program evaluation should be the identification/ delineation of program goals (rather than having the evaluator simply lament the lack of clarity of program intent); and

- Evaluating social action programs requires comparatively broad systems of social measurement including possibly a census type system of social indicators.

Cohen's thinking and analysis are generalizable to the evaluation of youth training programs in community action agencies. Basically, he is saying that the evaluation must recognize and focus on understanding the complex set of political social variables that underlie programs. Programs are generally political entities with diverse, wide ranging goals. Program treatments will not (and perhaps should not) be constant or static. They will vary within the general parameters of the legislative/governmental mandate by site and according to the constituencies being served. Program evaluation must take into account these primary conditions and must be viewed from a broad, not narrow, perspective.

Another viewpoint that might be utilized in evaluating manpower programs is that of the economic effectiveness of programs. However, "when programs have objectives that go beyond simply maximizing the return on public investments . . . a simple benefit--cost ratio is an insufficient indicator of program outcome." (Glennan, 1969) According to Glennan, an alternative would be to develop a system of weights which reflect societal values and which could be used in determining benefit-cost ratios. The difficulty with this approach is that it is difficult to measure or assess societal values. And even if this could be done the question still remains as to how various societal values could be combined into a meaningful index of benefits. (Referring back to the earlier discussion of Cohen's writings the variables are a complex set which in turn exists in a complex milieu of political and social factors.) Glennan also indicates that the data collected for benefit-cost analysis are frequently misleading and/or unreliable and often lead to confusing benefit-cost ratios. He concludes his consideration of this type of analysis by noting that although one suitable method for evaluating manpower programs is by the use of the non-equivalent control group method, it too is fraught with methodological problems.

Some recapitulation is necessary at this point. The question raised initially in this section was "How are these manpower programs to be evaluated? Three different approaches were discussed:

- An experimental assessment of program against well established goals and objectives (Weiss)
- A broad based assessment of the complex milieu in which programs operate followed by comprehensive assessment perhaps using census types of social indicators (Cohen); and
- Benefit-cost analysis which may employ experimental types of techniques (Glennan).

All of these have, as was indicated, serious deficiencies. In addition, the magnitude of using these approaches in this specific instance is beyond the available time and dollar resources. So the initial question still remains.

Peter Rossi in an intriguing article entitled "Boobytraps and Pitfalls in the Evaluation of Social Action Programs" has provided a partial conceptual answer to the question. (Rossi, 1966) There are major obstacles in evaluating social action programs including: programs which work well on a small scale but cannot be generalized due to a lack of commitment on the part of staff and/or style and type of leadership in a different site; and the vested interest of program administrators in maintaining a program. He further suggests that evaluation be viewed as a two phased process.

> A reconnaissance Phase in which soft correlational designs are used to screen out those programs it is worthwhile to investigate further; and an Experimental Phase in which powerful controlled experimental designs are used to evaluate the differential effectiveness of a variety of programs which showed up as having sizeable effects in the first phase.

Clearly, Rossi's position would be in support of a reconnaissance type of study for evaluating youth training programs in Ohio's community action agencies.

Additional support for this position can be found in the work of Weiss (R. S.) and Rein (1969). They contend that viable alternatives to experimental methods for studying social action programs are: process oriented qualitative research; historical research; and case study or comparative research. According to Weiss and Rein, there are simply too many deficiencies in other methodologies.

Methodology--A Final Note

Obviously, this methodological discussion could be considerably more extensive than it presently is. But even this short discussion should help the reader to understand the difficulties inherent in studying community action programs.

Based upon this brief review of the literature, a decision was made to utilize a Phase One Approach such as that suggested by Rossi. In this study, the specific methodology is case study in nature and consists of two sets of interviews. The first interviews involved agency administrators and the second included a wider range of individuals involved in programs (e.g., counselors, supervisors, program participants). The decision was based on the following considerations:

1. The study was a first outside or external look at the programs of six diverse agencies;

2. Data sources (e.g., evaluation reports, records, etc.) would vary extensively from site to site.

3. Programs, themselves, are not uniform and will vary across sites; and

4. A series of interviews per site would reveal or tend to reveal those subtle factors which affect program success or failure.

It was recognized that this approach could lead to conclusions based upon the subjective judgment of practitioners in the field. Yet, at the same time, all attempts were made in the study to look for trends across the six sites visited. It is highly unlikely that one would make a faulty or spurious conclusion if the entire set of sites provided similar information in response to specific questions.

Thus, while the methodology employed in this endeavor is not without deficiency or error, it is a suitable method given the state of the art in evaluation and the nature of the programs being studied. The reader of the report should carefully examine conclusions in light of the above methodological discussion.

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APPENDIX II

Administrative Interview for the Initial Site Visit

Agency Overview

1. Please give a brief capsule description of your agency.

2. Brochures/Publications

Context

1. Please describe the youth oriented training programs run by or under the jurisdiction of your agency.

2. Where are these programs located/housed?

3. Do you have any brochures/publications that describe these programs?

Identification

1. How do potential clientele learn of youth training programs?

2. How do you select people to be involved in the training process?

3. Are some individuals excluded/not involved in the programs?

Intervention

1. What is the content of the training program?

2. How long do the specific programs last?

3. Who teaches the students?

4. What types of instructional materials are used?

5. How is student progress evaluated? (Emphasize the concept of student progress.)

Evaluation

1. How do you/what techniques are you using to evaluate your programs?

2. How successful have your programs been?

Overall Questions

1. Across everything we've talked about, please tell me what you consider to be the strengths of the program and why.

2. Please tell me what you feel are the problems or weaknesses in the program. Why?

3. If you had to do this in depth evaluation, what area would you focus on?

APPENDIX III

Administrative Interview Form for the Second Site Visit

I. Introduction/Purposes

A. Basic Study Strategy

2 phases of Site Interviews:

Initial Phase: Overview and Exploration

In-depth Phase: Closer more detailed look at youth training programs

B. Beyond an Administrative Look

- Go to individuals involved such as counselors, enrollees/participants, supervisors

C. Purposes

1. To examine in greater depth specific/innovative programs identified on the visit.
2. To examine in greater depth some key areas related to youth training programs as identified across the six sites
3. To obtain an understanding (at least a partial one) of how program participants perceive the program
4. To continue exploring.

D. Possible Outcomes from the Study

1. Difficulty in devising a solution that is workable across six sites.
2. The Sampler Idea

Innovative programs (8-12)
Suggestions for improving operations - evaluation
- orientation
- information

II. Agenda (Suggested and Ideal

A. Agency Wide Areas - 1-1 1/2 hours

1. Initial Site Visit Report

Was the report accurate? Was it adequate in terms of your perception?

2. Orientation Process

What ways or techniques are you using to orient the following individuals to the program? Supervisors: materials, meetings, (employment of minors), group exchange of ideas? Enrollèes: pre-job orientation, meetings, materials, dress, behavior?

3. In terms of your work with the schools, how do you and the school interrelate/coordinate your efforts? OWE? OWA? Career education? Joint planning?

4. In terms of information flow, please describe how you and your enrollees, counselors, etc. obtain job/educational information? OBES? Other agencies? Do you have any problems obtaining information? Do you systematically collect/use job information?

5. In terms of selecting job sites, please describe the following. How do employers learn of/keep updated with regard to your program? How do you evaluate/drop sites from further inclusion? How do you select sites to be included in the program? (What criteria?)

6. In terms of evaluation, could you please discuss the following: (a) proliferation of forms (state and local, (b) utility of forms, and (c) collective/longitudinal data: increase in enrollee punctuality, attitudes, attendance, any long term placement data. Please describe role of regional manpower board.

7. Are there areas where you feel that you are duplicating services or where your services are being duplicated? Schools? OBES? Welfare? State services? If so, how could this duplication be eliminated so that you could increase effectiveness/efficiency?

Thank you.

APPENDIX IV

Counselor Interview Form

Counselor Name ______________________

Interviewer ______________________

Counselor Interview - 30 Minutes

1. What specific program(s) do you work with? What is your background for this type of job?

2. What is your average weekly/monthly caseload? Question the adequacy of counseling offered.

3. What techniques/ways do you use of orienting? Supervisors to: student/enrollee needs, enrollee characteristics/problems, ways to reinforce/support enrollees. Enrollees to: job requirements, what to expect, dress, behavior.

4. How do you evaluate whether a site (supervisor) is really providing a meaningful work experience for enrollees? If not, what do you do?

5. To what extent do you feel that the enrollees are satisfied with: (a) the adequacy of counseling, (b) the quality of supportive services (transportation, psychological, referrals), (c) the adequacy of pay, etc.

6. Do you have any problems with completing forms especially evaluation forms? Time consuming? Overlapping? Clarity?

7. To what extent do you feel that the job skills of the program enrollees are really being enhanced? Please explain your answer.

8. Could you describe to me what you consider to be the best feature of the program? Probe.

9. What one area of the program do you think most needs to be improved?

Thanks

APPENDIX V

Supervisor Interview Form

Supervisor ______________________

Interviewer ______________________

Supervisor Interview - 20 Minutes

1. Which program(s) do you work with and how many enrollees do you supervise?

2. How much experience do you have in working with these programs?

3. How did the community action agency orient you to the program? Counselor visits? Visits from agency administrators?

4. Would you consider this orientation adequate in terms of your understanding of enrollees, enrollee needs, ways of helping/reinforcing enrollees.

5. What types of job, training and/or job related skills do you feel that enrollees are gaining from working here. Please be specific and describe how they gain these skills.

6. Would you describe the major problem(s) you see with the program? Please be frank.

7. What do you consider to be the most positive aspects of the program?

8. What suggestions do you have for improving the program?

Thanks.

APPENDIX VI

Participant Interview Form

Enrollee Interview (15 Minutes per Enrollee)

Question

1. How long have you been in this program?

2. Before you started working here, did the CAA explain to you:

   What would be expected of you?
   - your responsibilities

   Your punctuality?
   - dress?
   - pay?

3. Are you satisfied with
   - your job duties
   - your pay
   - what you're learning from the job
   - the help of the CAA

   PROBE

4. What do you like most about your job?

5. What do you like least? Have you had any problems on the job?

6. If we could improve the program, what would you recommend that we do?