DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 200 821 CE 028 777

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TITLE Building Partnerships: CBOs...CETA...Voc Ed. Research and Development Series No 209.
INSTITUTION Ohio State Univ., Columbus. National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, D.C.
BUREAU NO 498MH00014
PUB DATE 81
CONTRACT 300-78-0032
NOTE 33p.; For related documents see ED 177 435 and ED 187 925-927.
AVAILABLE FROM The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, National Center Publications, Box F, 1960 Kenny Rd., Columbus, OH 43210 (RD 209, $2.80 prepaid: discount of 5% for orders of $50.00-$100.00, 10% for $101.00-$200.00, 15% for $201.00-$300.00, 20% for $301.00-$400.00, 25% for $401.00 and above).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Community Cooperation; Community Involvement; *Community Organizations; *Educational Cooperation; *Employment Programs; Federal Programs; Postsecondary Education; *School Community Relationship; *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

Based upon interviews in a number of community-based organizations in several states, this report describes community-based organizations from several perspectives. The report begins with a discussion of the origins of community-based organizations. This historical perspective sets the background for a discussion of the nature of community-based organizations from the viewpoint of those professionals involved in them. Community-based organizations are then examined pursuant to the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act Manpower Policy. Barriers and facilitators to coordination both among community-based organizations and between community-based organizations and vocational education are identified and described. The last part of the report describes the unique capabilities of community-based organizations and of vocational education to serve people preparing for the world of work. Suggestions are then offered for improving the coordination between community-based organizations and vocational education. (LRA)

Research and Development Series No. 209

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

CBOs ... CETA ... VOC ED

by

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1981

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FUNDING INFORMATION

Project Title:	The National Center for Research in Vocational Education Applied R&D Function, Comprehensive Planning
Contract Number:	300780032
Project Number:	498MH00014
Educational Act Under Which the Funds Were Administered:	Education Amendments of 1976 P.L. 94-482
Source of Contract:	U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education Washington, D.C.
Contractor:	The National Center for Research in Vocational Education The Ohio State University Columbus, Ohio 43210
Executive Director:	Robert E. Taylor
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FOREWORD

Community-based organizations are an integral part of the employment and training service mix. Many people have talked about the coordination and cooperation of vocational education with community-based organizations, but it has been a rather sporadic proposition. No one has thoroughly or comprehensively analyzed and critiqued selected aspects of community-based organizations and related issues in vocational education. This publication is an attempt to treat these related issues in a precise and systematic manner. Our intent was to review major conceptual issues that have been raised about community-based organizations and vocational education, with a special emphasis on issues of coordination and cooperation.

Maintaining the anonymity and confidentiality that we assured our interviewees precludes mentioning their names; but we would like to thank those persons interviewed for so generously contributing their time, energy, and thoughts in the pursuit of a better understanding of the relationship between community-based organizations and vocational education.

Special appreciation is extended to Joyce Merryman, Program Coordinator, Youth Services, Columbus Metropolitan Area Community Action Organization, and to Stanley Cohen, former Director of Career Education Planning and Development, School District of Philadelphia, for their expert review of these materials.

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
National Center for Research
in Vocational Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program staff visited a number of community-based organizations (CBOs) in several states and conducted dialogue sessions with personnel from these organizations in an attempt to ascertain the nature of CBOs as well as the perceived nature and quality of the relationship between CBOs and vocational education.

This report describes community-based organizations from several perspectives. A discussion of the origins of community-based organizations is provided. This historical perspective sets the background for a discussion of the nature of community-based organizations from the viewpoint of those professionals involved in them. Community-based organizations are then examined pursuant to the CETA Manpower Policy. Barriers and facilitators to coordination both among CBOs and between CBOs and vocational education are identified and described.

The last part of this report describes the unique capabilities of community-based organizations and of vocational education to serve people preparing for the world of work. Suggestions are then offered for improving the coordination between community-based organizations and vocational education, so as to better serve the people for whom they share a common concern.

INTRODUCTION

With the advent of high unemployment, particularly in the ranks of disadvantaged ethnic minority youth, the country has looked to vocational educators to solve this problem. The causes of youth unemployment are economic ones. While educators are not generally thought of as taking an active role in policy formulation to influence the economy, vocational educators *are* expected to make a contribution to ameliorating the unemployment problem by serving the training needs of unemployed disadvantaged youth. Just what their contribution should be, however, has been subject to much debate. Policymakers have poured millions of dollars into short-term training programs sponsored by community-based organizations, the facilities of which are less well equipped, the staff of which are less extensively trained to teach the skill trades. At the same time, policymakers have chastised vocational educators for not coordinating and cooperating with community-based organizations to meet the needs of the unemployed.

In the following pages, we will look at the community-based organizations and vocational education to determine why, in many areas of the country, the two groups have not been able to work together to help alleviate the problems of youth and adult unemployment. We will learn something about community-based organizations: their origin, their philosophies, and the services they render. Perceived difficulties in coordinating and cooperating with local vocational educators will be examined. And finally, some suggestions will be made as to what is needed to promote coordination and cooperation, so that our efforts will be concerted and aimed at meeting the needs of unemployed disadvantaged youth and adults.

For a decade or more, many vocational educators have taken little opportunity to learn about and to work with the community-based organization. Two camps have been drawn; each side has hesitated, each has watched the other side mark off "turf," neither wanting to give in to the other party. This posture is reflected in the following statement that was made to one of the authors in a recent interview with a CBO administrator.

> It's competition, cut-throat, dog-eat-dog, to put it very bluntly. As far as the school system is concerned, they don't bother us and we don't bother them. They've got their own thing and we've got our own thing.

If educators are to serve people, the time has come for vocational educators and community-based organization staff to bury their personal feelings and to learn something about each other. One can respect and appreciate another only when one begins to recognize the other's worth. This publication is dedicated to that end. If each knows about the other, vocational educators and community-based organization personnel will at least realize the important roles each can play in training individuals for productive roles in the world of work.

Finding new areas of cooperation between community-based organizations and vocational education is important. Community-based organizations proudly point to their original philosophy of serving the needs of the structurally unemployed, the disadvantaged, the socially and politically abandoned, and the currently unemployable. While vocational educators emphasize the training and

preparation of secondary and postsecondary students for the job market, they also emphasize upgrading skills of people in the labor force. The objectives of the two groups are different. CBOs are committed to training the structurally unemployed, while the vocational educators are responsible for training for the labor market and assisting the cyclically unemployed. The question is, can these two agencies with such different goals, philosophies, and clientele support, coordinate, and cooperate with each other?

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Origin of Community-based Organizations

Community-based organizations came into being with the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1963 and the Economic Opportunity Act (EDA) of 1964. Prior to these acts, employment and training policies were not earmarked for low-income groups and the disadvantaged minorities. The groups that received monies for training were vocational/technical schools, unions, apprenticeship committees, employment services, and some private employers. The CBOs' very existence must be viewed against the backdrop of unequal opportunity and of an economy lacking jobs for disadvantaged minorities. Traditional policies have bypassed the poor and needy. The CBOs answered the call of their communities' constituents to assist those who were socially and politically forgotten by providing training, support services, and equal opportunity, in this way preparing the disadvantaged to take their places in satisfying and successful employment.

Consequently, the CBOs' answer to this call permitted them to span the gap and to reach minorities that could not be reached by a middle-class educational and economic system. The CBO quickly became known around the country because of the work experience programs especially designed for the disadvantaged minority. They developed jobs creation by talking to employers and selling the advantages of hiring minorities. Advocates of CBOs talked to unions and suggested that some of them develop plans for including disadvantaged and minorities into apprenticeship or training programs. As a result, the CBOs designed training programs such as Neighborhood Youth Corporation (NYC) and Job Corps to provide comprehensive services to disadvantaged teens in residential settings, and work experience and training programs to provide basic education and job skills. CBOs provided adult basic education (ABE) for disadvantaged minorities, in order that those without a secondary diploma might earn the general education diploma (GED). They developed a program called Operation Mainstream for low-income senior citizens, and new career programs that provided restructuring of jobs in private nonprofit organizations and public agencies. Both of these efforts concentrated on providing jobs for paraprofessionals. CBOs also had Job Opportunities in the Business Sector (JOBS), a program that provided training subsidies to private employers who hired the disadvantaged. All of these programs were creatively conceived in order to meet the needs of community constituents. In some areas, vocational educators assisted the CBOs in developing and implementing these programs.

In planning such programs, CBOs were cognizant of the support services that were necessary to keep the ethnic and economically disadvantaged in the middle-class work situation. CBOs became the first real challenge to the traditional employment training programs. The CBO and its personnel were always there when needed. As a CBO staff person stated,

> Knowing that they are the low-target group who have had problems, who still have problems—whether it's domestic, economical, or whatever it might be, we've got to deal with that and at the same time prepare them for the world of work. ... This is where we work with the individual and try to help them meet their own personal objectives and, at the same time, complement the objectives of our program.

Because there is great diversity in CBOs, one cannot generalize about them and the services they provide. Each has its own constituent group to which it responds.

Scattered throughout the country were many community-based agencies called Community Action Agencies (CAA), but three community-based agencies with national affiliation were notably strong:

- Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), which concentrates on motivation and skill training
- Urban League, noted for its work in providing on-the-job training
- Service Employment Redevelopment (SER)—Jobs for Progress, which emphasizes teaching English as a second language and skill training primarily for Hispanics

During the early years, these programs came under attack from all sides. Liberals said they were not bringing about fundamental institutional changes and that the old processes were still intact (meaning vocational education). Conservatives shook their heads and said that the programs were too costly and ineffective.

Under the Manpower Development and Training Act there was a loose confederation of principal deliverers of training services in each metropolitan area. This group was called the Comprehensive Area Manpower Training Services (CAMPS). By law, the membership was made up of representatives from community-based organizations, unions, industry, vocational education, Bureau of Employment Security, state manpower personnel from the labor department, state vocational education representatives from the state departments of education, and other agencies serving the disadvantaged minorities. The purpose of the group was to meet monthly to describe what was happening with their individual agencies and to discuss their individual needs. Services were offered by each group and an attempt at coordination was made. The most important roles CAMPS played were those of comprehensive planning, making each service group aware of ongoing activities, offering assistance, and cooperating and coordinating whenever and wherever possible.

CAMPS organizations were as strong as the personnel representing each agency. Turfism was apparent. Each service agency felt it offered the very best training for the constituents it served. Vocational educators felt that only they could train for the world of work. CBOs felt they alone could reach the disadvantaged minorities who were turned off by a middle-class system.

Another unique feature of MDTA was the role of the education departments at the federal and state levels. The U.S. Office of Education had a large manpower staff that offered technical assistance and monitored services. State departments of education had manpower units housed in the vocational education section. State vocational education personnel working with the Bureau of Employment Services were the key to training slots and services. The Bureau of Employment Security (BES) was the key to available jobs and positions, since it had responsibility for referral and placement of trainees.

Because of this system of "checks and balances" (Department of Education and Department of Labor), many CBOs and CAAs felt there was too much federal/state control and direction. The Nixon administration's key words were decentralization and decategorization, which were associated with important major changes in administering manpower training programs. Agencies began to discuss and to push for revenue sharing, a system that would supply large block grants to agencies. The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) became that system.

Some agencies wanted CBOs to take over the recruitment and intake processes being provided by Bureau of Employment Security (BES). The purpose of these changes was to have less direction from federal and state governments for planning and operating manpower programs, and more freedom to do what CBOs felt necessary to serve clientele. However, CETA never did become what comprehensive program lawmakers envisioned it would be. Work Incentive Programs (WIN), Apprenticeship Training Programs, Senior Community Services Employment Training, and Employment Security System were not covered by the act. There were always other ways and means of financing these operations. Nor was there ever complete decategorization as envisioned when Title III of CETA was written. This title was to provide continued funding of *special* programs to be administered through federal grants and contracts directly with some nationally affiliated CBOs. Special programs for migrants and seasonal workers, ex-offenders, Native Americans, Indians, older Americans, limited-English-speaking, minority apprentices provided protection to these individuals under Title III.

Thus, the Manpower Development Training Act era came to a close with the passage of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973. The new CETA, however, still established the federal Department of Labor as the authority over the scope and content of manpower policy, and CBOs found themselves with their role weakened and their autonomy turned to dependency upon prime-sponsor needs and desires rather than on the services they could provide special community clients. They no longer were the important link to serving *special groups.* They were required to serve *all constituencies.*

ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Who Do People Say They Are

Community-based organizations came into being during the 1960s when disadvantaged ethnic and racial groups began to demand equality. These community agencies, based within a geographic area of several city or community blocks, enlarged the power of the poor and disadvantaged to influence and to shape social policy by making the public aware of their plight. Banded together, they spoke for their clientele in places such as Congress, local government agencies, and union headquarters, where minority voices had seldom before been heard. In 1963, by legislative mandate of the Manpower Development and Training Act, and through EOA in 1964, they were granted monies to permit them to perform needed services in their communities. This established a different pattern of employment training and manpower service mix than had been known. Their primary commitment was to assist the structurally unemployed in preparing themselves for the labor market.

Lamond Godwin, administrator of the Office of National Programs, United States Department of Labor, identifies four categories of CBOs.[1]

- National Ethnic Advancement Organizations with primary missions to improve the status of the members of a particular disadvantaged racial or ethnic group. (National Urban League, SER, OIC, National Urban Indian Council, etc.)
- Other National Client Groups Oriented Organizations with narrowly focused programs on a particular disadvantaged client group defined on the basis of some characteristic other than race or ethnicity. (Council of Senior Citizens, the National Displaced Homemaker Alliance, the National Federation of the Blind, the National Association of Retarded Citizens)
- Local Multipurpose Community Action Agencies, Development Corporations, and Cooperatives that are antipoverty agencies administering comprehensive economic development and service delivery programs for low-income groups. (Fresno County Economic Opportunity Commission, the Central Coast Counties Development Corporation, the Delta Foundation, etc.)
- Other Local Private Community Organizations that include all local organizations who do not have affiliation with national organizations (Watts Labor Community Action Committee, The Woodlawn Organization, the Latin American Task Force, the Idaho Migrant Council, etc.)

Early in the planning stages, the leaders of CBOs advanced the theory that only a group akin to a close-knit community could respond to and service clientele with specially designed work experience, employability development, and training programs for minority groups and for disad-

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[1] Lamond Godwin, in *Adherent, A Journal of Comprehensive Employment Training and Human Resource Development* 7, no. 1 (May 1980): 29.

vantaged members of the labor force. The main strength of the CBOs lay in their ability to provide a missing link to reach minority groups who would not otherwise become involved with established institutions. The perceived inability of the vocational education system to respond to the needs of special populations is expressed strongly in the following statement by personnel in a CBO.

> The ability of an institution that large to be sensitive to the needs of the economically disadvantaged, minorities, women, etc., is to a great extent questionable. It's a question of an institution that large being able to create an atmosphere that will make the significant segments of the populations with whom we are involved feel comfortable, feel wanted, and feel able to go there and get the kind of assistance they need. Poor people in our community will identify with us. They will not identify with the vocational education system.

When the manpower legislation ended and the Comprehensive Employment Training Act was passed in 1973, community-based organizations were defined as private, nonprofit organizations that represent a community or a significant segment of a community. The principal purpose of CBOs was to provide employment and training services for the structurally unemployed, socially and politically abandoned, and the disadvantaged, and to offer support-service activities that assisted disadvantaged minorities in remaining on the job after they were employed. Examples of present-day, nationally affiliated, CBOs receiving money from Title III of CETA include the following:

- OIC
- National Urban League
- SER—Jobs for Progress
- United Way of America
- Mainstream
- National Puerto Rican Forum

The nationally affiliated CBOs are required to provide technical assistance to their local organizations from the Title III funds.

- Opportunities Industrialization Center has 125 affiliates. They perform outreach, counseling, skills training, and job placement.
- National Urban League has 109 affiliates and performs outreach, counseling, skills training, and job placement.
- SER has 14 affiliates that perform outreach, counseling, and job placement.
- Recruitment and Training program has 27 affiliates performing outreach, counseling, and job placement mainly with apprenticable trades.
- National Urban Coalition has 15 affiliates that perform outreach, counseling, and job placements.

Funds for employment and training service provided by local affiliates of national CBOs were negotiated with local prime sponsors under Title I of CETA. In many communities, one can find a wide variety of agencies, such as those that serve women, neighborhood groups and organizations, community action agencies, community development corporations, vocational rehabilitation organizations, and rehabilitation facilities, all serving a variety of clients. These, however, do not have affiliation at the national level. Local, independent CBOs such as Minister's Interfaith Alliance of N.Y.C. or the Negro Trade Union Leadership Council of Philadelphia receive operating funds from state and local prime sponsors to provide specific services for CETA persons. In urban areas, several independent CBOs serve as subcontractors to CETA prime sponsors. These selections of services are

determined by the prime contractor with advice and consent of the Area Manpower Council, and are based upon proven capability.

Who Do CBOs Say They Are?

How does a community-based organization define itself? Our survey of CBOs in several states reveals how these organizations define their role. Here are some of their own definitions. One of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers defined a community-based organization as follows:

> A community-based organization is basically an organization that is a result of a community need. It is composed of a broad section of the community in terms of its board of directors. It meets and identifies a community need. It is basically independent of any one particular interest group.

A representative from Urban League sees it this way:

> A lot of people have a hard time viewing the Urban League as community-based. Basically, in a lot of the community-based organizations, they have staked out their piece of turf, have well-defined boundaries and very well-defined constituents that they serve. Our boundaries are well-defined but they overlap everybody else's. We don't target our services to anyone else unless our money source, like Community Development, says to service people from one area north or south of the valley. We don't have any problem with that.

What it means to one staff member from the Council for Spanish-Speaking People is:

> An agency that was started by the community because there was a need for programs and services. In our case, a group of Spanish people and a group of clergy got together and decided that we needed to work together. It was the community with the help of the archdiocese. We started social services, just meeting those immediate needs in the community. Then it stemmed into the different programs.

Community-based organizations do see themselves as having real strength in the community. Their very existence came about because the community and its people believed that they needed them. Their presence is even more necessary now than it was in the 1960s because many people have confidence in CBOs' abilities to help them to help themselves. It gives the community a feeling of self-sufficiency and stability. Both the Department of Labor and industry representatives recognize that CBOs play an important role in the "employment and training service mix" that no other organization appears able to fill for the clientele which a particular CBO serves.

What Makes CBOs Unique?

In working with CBOs in several states, the question was asked: what is the major or unique reason for your existence? The replies were quick and to the point. A Community Action Group described its unique reason for existing as follows:

> The easiest way to explain what we do is we deal with the *causes* and *symptoms* of poverty. The causes, for example, can be very obscure while we deal with the symptoms.
>
> Relating it to vocational education, if you have a high school dropout, the

> symptom is the dropping out. So while we work with that child to either get them back in school or to get them supplemental education through the form of the GED program or referring them to OIC or whatever, we also look at the causes. Our focus is on the poor. We are the only agency in the area which focuses totally on the poor.

An OIC staff member described their major thrust in the following statement:

> Our philosophy is to get people to where they can help themselves. In order for them to do that, it means they have got to be economically independent. So that's our whole thrust in all our employment and training development activities. . . . To get people to the point where they can, in fact, succeed in the job market. There are a lot of steps in that process. That's basically what it's all about.

The major focus of Goodwill Industries

> . . . is to serve the handicapped, meaning the physically handicapped, emotionally handicapped, and the mentally retarded. It's a work-oriented atmosphere. And that's the main thing that's offered to the handicapped —the opportunity to work.

Another OIC representative believes that what is most unique about OIC is to be found in the organization's staff.

> In my opinion, what makes OIC unique is its personnel, its philosophy. When you see a staff member at OIC, they are different from the staff members you meet at public schools. You have to be dedicated. Who would give up the time, who would take the shoes off their feet and give them to a trainee to wear to an interview? I've done it many times. I've shared a blouse that a girl needed to wear to an interview. OIC is very oriented to peoples' needs. I'm not saying other agencies aren't, but OIC hammers the training first. If you go into a store as a customer you are "first." The staff is the difference. They have to want that trainee to be the best that he or she can be, and they have to push the trainees.

These quotes from various agencies illustrate the commitment of staff to the primacy of the person and that individual's particular needs in the community-based organizations. They believe in their stated philosophies, they exude confidence in their purposes, and they recognize the stability they bring to communities of disadvantaged minorities.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND THE CETA MANPOWER POLICY

The CBOs, under the new act, found themselves in a very dubious position. The purpose of the new act, as defined in section 675.1 of the Rules and Regulations, was to:

- provide training and employment opportunities to increase the earned income of economically disadvantaged unemployed or underemployed persons;
- establish a flexible, coordinated, and decentralized system of federal, state, and local programs so that services would lead to maximum employment opportunities and enhance self-sufficiency;
- provide for the coordination of programs under CETA with other social services, employment and training related programs, economic development, community development, and related activities such as vocational education, vocational rehabilitation, public assistance, self-employment training, and social service programs.

The new CETA gave state and local governments basic responsibility for the funds to be used for manpower planning and program implementation in their geographic area. Note that this was done through governors' or mayors' offices, not through the educational system.

An increase in CBO involvement occurred because one-third of the public service employment (PSE) projects must be subcontracted to nonprofit organizations. The local government, with its authority and with the responsibility for accounting to local constituents, became responsible to the secretary of Labor under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.

Under MDTA, suburban and rural communities received little assistance because organizations such as CBOs and CAA were predominantly urban agencies. The CETA formula, however, dictated that suburban communities and rural communities receive more training funds than under MDTA. The standards under CETA for developing comprehensive manpower plans and payment of training allowances focused on the low-income and disadvantaged population, found in large numbers in large urban areas. The administration of public service employment and utilization of CBOs was the key to an equal employment and training mix. With this CETA mandate, the CBOs were required to increase services to all disadvantaged in all segments of the community, not just special populations that had made up their community constituencies previously. As mandated, those CBOs reaching predominantly Spanish-speaking had to include blacks, Appalachian whites, Vietnamese, or whatever population needed to be served. The CBOs felt this watered down their real capability and affected their independence, identity, and ethnic character.

However, expanding the populations they served was not the only significant problem. Those CBOs with national organizations, such as OIC, SER, and the Urban League, received block grants for national and regional headquarters with the stipulation that technical services and assistance be offered to local centers whose primary funding must come through local prime sponsors. The

question arose, are these local centers still a part of a national organization, or are they integrated, separate programs of the CETA system with the prime sponsor being the important link?"

The CETA rules and regulations in section 676.23, Program Linkages and Selection of Deliverers, state that prime sponsors must compile and maintain an available inventory of potential service deliverers. They continue, "Community-based organizations shall be actively involved in the prime sponsor's planning process." To ensure even further communication between the prime sponsor and CBOs, CBOs must be notified of the availability of funds. All potential deliverers of employment and training services must be placed on the inventory. Where does this leave the national office of OIC, SER, and the Urban League?

Under the section on Programs of Demonstrated Effectiveness, the rules and regulations state that manpower programs conducted by community-based organizations that historically had provided manpower services to economically disadvantaged and had shown capability of fulfilling contractual goals at reasonable cost *must* be considered. Congress did intend for CBOs to be an important part of the training scene. Since the 1976 Amendments, several important things have happened.

- National CBOs funded under Title III have tripled in number.
- Three CBOs have been selected to be prime sponsors for the Senior Community Employment Program, funded under the Older American Act.
- CBOs involved in providing assistance to farmworkers have increased in number.
- Big Three national CBOs funds jumped from $5 million to $26 million (300 percent increase).
- Youth Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) and CETA Title IV added $81 million in new direct funding to CBOs for delivery services in a wide variety of special youth experimental and demonstration programs.

Changes in Manpower Service Mix Under CETA

Most of the CBOs have training models that include outreach, testing, counseling, training, placement, and follow-through. Under CETA, the prime sponsor has the prerogative to choose who will provide each part of that training model. In many instances, the prime sponsor will centralize intake activities so that they are able to control service to a wide spectrum of disadvantaged. The local CBO must be able to demonstrate that its process can provide more effective delivery at lower cost than any other agency. As a result, CBOs feel their programs are definitely impaired. Here is an opinion about the changes required in the manpower services mix under CETA as viewed by one of the CBOs' staff members interviewed.

> We used to be the primary implementor of Department of Labor Manpower Training Programs. With the advent of CETA, we lost that status . . . because the politicians understood what that meant and they exercised their option to take over the program. We do at this time operate operational training programs.

Not only is there a change in the service mix offered, but a deeply felt change in the very heart of the CBO, as expressed in the following statement:

> . . . the original philosophy has been basically destroyed by CETA because our philosophy is *"everybody* can be somebody" and "we can help ourselves."

> *Anybody* could come in and gain a skill. We take them off the welfare rolls and put them on the payrolls. When we were bulk funded we could serve *anybody;* now we can serve only CETA eligibles.

Jurisdictional Change Under CETA

Under MDTA, CBOs could reach out across the county and state lines to serve whoever needed their services. Under CETA, because prime sponsors are based on population size, many political subdivisions where CBOs are located, particularly in large metropolitan areas, qualify as prime sponsors but do not represent specific labor market areas. The local contiguous labor market areas band together to form consortia. This cuts the federal funds pie into many segments for city, county, state, and consortia prime sponsors. This fragmentation of funds and service areas sends some community-based organizations to more than one prime sponsor. Each of the prime sponsors, though close geographically, may have different manpower needs. Different attitudes toward the CBO and how efficiently and effectively it serves clients are held by different prime sponsors, who may not always understand the role of CBOs and the clientele they may serve. As a result, the choice of an agency to perform a service can become strongly influenced by political considerations.

However, the current administration and Congress view the CBOs as important program deliverers, and CBOs have been very successful in recruiting and serving minorities and disadvantaged groups. Because they were founded for these purposes, some CBOs have more experience and are more efficient than some vocational educators in working with disadvantaged minority groups. CBO staffs are usually drawn from the clientele groups they serve; therefore, they may be more sensitive to needs and support services available to their community.

Training Stipends: Cause and Effect

Under MDTA, all trainees receive stipends during their training period. Most of the CBOs have followed this procedure except OIC. A policy of self-help, reinforced by the refusal of OIC to provide participating trainees with stipends, sets apart this CBO from others. The philosophy of the motivated self-help trainee who is truly interested in self-improvement is decidedly hampered by the use of stipends. Under the CETA legislation, all trainees must receive stipends equivalent to the minimum wage ($3.20 as of this writing). It is true that the payment of this stipend, plus transportation cost, causes concern. As expressed by one staff member of an OIC organization:

> Before, training stipends were given to our trainees at [X dollars] an hour. We fought that. It's OIC's philosophy that if a person wants the training, they'll make a way to get it. CETA says, "You will be no different from any other program, you will pay [X dollars] an hour." ... So, we call it an allowance. Stipend you pay somebody to do something: allowance you help them out.

Another CBO staff member, putting it even more strongly, says that:

> Stipends tend to make a person almost like a junkie. You get hooked on training. Training seems to be more advantageous than working. Moneywise the training was going to be better because when you get a job they are going to take out taxes. What you get then is people who have been to this training and to that training and it's a cycle we have to work very hard to break.

Programs and Services Offered

As planned, CETA was especially designed to combat widespread unemployment through a mix of intake, training, placement, and transitional employment programs.

Title I

This title consolidated many of the MDTA categorical programs. With the block grant under CETA, prime sponsors were to include the development and creation of job opportunities and the training, education, and other services needed to enable individuals to secure and retain employment at their maximum capacity (see Section 101 CETA). The services were specifically geared to assist impoverished communities, limited-English-proficient, and other target groups.

Title II

Title II provided a limited number of public service jobs for those clients with structural employment difficulties. This service was to be of a transitional nature. Those clients who had the longest record of unemployment were to be trained first. The original intent was that the public service would be unsubsidized. But as the economy has faltered and jobs have become more scarce, public service jobs have been to combat unemployment. In economically troubled times, it is too easy to pass over the long-term structurally unemployed to serve those who can be placed more readily in jobs.

Title III

This legislation provided for nationally funded programs that responded to the needs of specific segments of needy persons. Under this title, CETA authorized the secretary of Labor to support manpower services for specific segments of the population, those with special needs, and to consider programs of demonstrated effectiveness. It is under this title that the national headquarters of OIC, Urban League, and SER qualify for funding. The money received is to be used to provide technical assistance to local affiliated centers. There has been no money for, nor did the national organizations have the responsibility or authority to fund local centers. Their primary role is to improve managerial capabilities and program effectiveness of locals. The national offices have attempted to gain financial support for locals through the private sector.

Clients Served

What does all this mean in terms of people served and programs and services provided by the CBOs?

Under MDTA, anyone who was jobless could be served. The responsibility for recruiting, evaluating, and counseling fell to the Bureau of Employment Security (BES). It was not required that all people and their families be at poverty level, as it was under EOA.

Most of the clientele the CBOs served under MDTA were unaware of the existence of BES. If they did know, they found it impossible to get to BES offices; or they were reticent about leaving their respective communities to enter unknown territory. In the words of one CBO director,

> Our target groups of people include ex-offenders, high school dropouts, heads of households, then the other "outs" . . . the drug-outs, those people looking for a second chance.

The CBOs under MDTA had "open door policy." Many people were invited in off of the street to participate. From their pulpits clergy encouraged people to apply at their neighborhood CBO for training and support services. With the advent of CETA, the open door posture tightened, as exemplified in the following statement:

> We used to have an open door policy. It was "whosoever will, let him come." We had very ambitious goals as far as serving people. We think that if we can expose an individual to what we have to offer, we have a better chance of that person becoming a better citizen. But you get into the old number game. Out of ten people you have to place six people on the job. You automatically begin to cream the crop and get the six who are most likely to succeed and serve them.

Under CETA, there is a definite trend away from the manpower comprehensive mix toward becoming organizations of specialized service—one kind of specialized service—with the broader scope being the entire CETA system, rather than the community-based agency that served all the needs of its community clients. Before CETA, CBOs delivered the wide range of manpower mix for their special constituent groups. Presently, for some, the role CBOs serve is that of delivering one specialized component part for whomever the prime sponsor dictates they will serve.

This system of component parts makes it difficult to hold anyone accountable for the services provided or even to evaluate them. When CBOs were responsible for the entire spectrum of service from intake through placement for their community clients they were evaluated on placement and how long those placements lasted. They were accountable for the number of persons placed in jobs. The new system of cutting up the pie also divides the responsibility. If, for instance, the CBO is responsible for intake, it may have no responsibility for counseling, training, or placement. So, if the client fails, it may not be the fault of the CBO that performs intake services because it may have little control over clients throughout the rest of the services system. The CBO certainly would not have control over the placement process. The agency responsible for placement may in turn blame failure on the "intake/recruiting" agency, or the training agency, or the counseling agency, because those agencies may not have performed their tasks well.

This system of specialization makes it difficult to prove effectiveness, especially for CBOs that are trying to compete in new parts of the delivery system for the first time. So, CBOs may find themselves separated from that special group of people who first gave reason for their very genesis and continued existence.

Clientele has drastically changed. A comparison of clients served by CETA with those formerly served by MDTA indicates that there are now fewer disadvantaged served and fewer Hispanics served. "Creaming" is taking place to skim off the most skilled, educated, easy-to-place-on-jobs persons. Efforts are oftentimes concentrated on twenty-two to twenty-four year olds who are easier to place, consequently ignoring both younger and older workers.

The question and the challenge, as asked by the CBO personnel, becomes:

> Where do the others go who still need the service—those who are academically and vocationally unprepared? They become the victim of a vicious cycle.

There is a deep-felt concern for serving those groups who are not employable. As expressed by CBO staff themselves:

> It's all well and good to talk about people finding jobs in the private sector, but the reality is that there is a group of people for whom you are never going to find jobs in the private sector unless someone hires them out of the goodness of their heart.

Basic Skills and GED

Why are basic skills important? In a society that is highly technical and productive, with an economic system that boasts of free enterprise, there is a challenge to workers to become a part of that system or be alienated and unemployed. Because of the longer life span, people work many more years than their grandparents did. Just any job does not satisfy the individual. We are a materialistic society. People are told on television, on radio, and in the newspaper that material things count. This is how one spells success, and everyone wants to be successful. The disadvantaged minority view the success of others and perceive that they are entitled to that same success. They are looking for more than a job; they are looking for a particular way of life. In order to reach these goals, the disadvantaged minority must have a foundation on which to build. One part of that foundation is learning basic skills and receiving a high school diploma. CBOs recognize that basic skills and an understanding of the whole job system is important. They know that the people they serve come to them with hope in their hearts and a great expectation of things to come.

Under MDTA, as well as CETA, those clients who have no high school diploma are enrolled in Adult Basic Education classes and then in classes to prepare for the General Education Diploma (GED). Without a high school diploma, skill training can only be preparation for entry-level jobs. Formerly, for those individuals who never learned to read, under the MDTA rubric, the Right to Read concept was important. Since the Right to Read program is no longer in operation, the illiterate are left with no opportunity to learn. One CBO administrator views the situation this way:

> As far as GED is concerned, I think you have to be at least sixth-grade reading level to get into the program. A lot of times we get people whose reading level is too low, then we were referring them to Right to Read and when their reading level was brought up, then they would go on the GED program. It's not here any longer. . . . I don't know if they will re-fund it later or not. It's hard to say. It was just a bad thing to do. We had a really good Right to Read program here. We had a lot of clients.

Occupational skill training is certainly crucial to the survival of people. However, as CBO personnel recognize, there are some more basic skills that need to be developed even prior to those geared toward employment and training.

> The population we are working with requires some of the attention that the program provided in terms of employment and training. But even before we can get to that point, for many individuals, we need to supply a basic education just to get them to that level where they can have occupational training. . . . We are talking about a population whose average grade level is 4.5.

This problem is widespread among CBO clientele. The severity of the situation is reflected in the following statements:

> We have many high school graduates who cannot write a simple sentence. And, we have sent employees who are in a position of responsibility to the university for what is called "bonehead English," just to try to strengthen those skills!

Neither the Right to Read, English as a Second Language, or Adult Basic Education were funded under MDTA or CETA. Those programs were federal programs sponsored under separate pieces of legislation. All of these programs worked together to help meet the need of the disadvantaged minority. CBOs then, because they knew the legislation and because they cared about their specific clientele, became the communication link between the disadvantaged minority and the middle-class economic system that appears to be the way to success.

COLLABORATION/COORDINATION

Community-based Organizations with Other Community-based Organizations

The CETA legislation states that prime sponsors should look to the best services offered in the most cost-effective manner by various agencies within their geographic locale. The act prohibits the singling out of specific organizations as special agents to perform training. You will recall that in an earlier section of this publication it was noted that prime sponsors are required to keep an inventory list of all services and activities performed by each agency within the defined geographic limits of the prime sponsor area. All of the CBO agencies are also invited to the planning councils, but unless they are members of the Area Manpower Council (AMPC), they have no voting rights. Those CBOs affiliated with national organizations (OIC, Urban League, SER) have a more strengthened relationship because of the clout of the national office.

The question becomes, how do collaboration and coordination take place? Collaboration, cooperation, and coordination are key words that prime sponsors must take seriously. It has been shown over and over that the strength, conscientious concern, and determination to make things work depend on the staff of the prime sponsor. Establishing linkages and cooperative working relationships requires of the prime sponsor's staff a thorough knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of training agencies that can offer services. Complete, comprehensive plans that spell out specific areas where cooperation and coordination must take place, backed up by prime sponsor/CBO agreements, are essential. The societal problems faced by all of us cannot be overcome alone. There are many people and agencies, each with their own strengths for performing unique kinds of services, to help meet and conquer the myriad problems that face society today.

Quality relationships between and among CBOs means forgetting "turf problems." CBOs act as intermediaries within their communities. They also point out to their constituents that maybe they can be better served by the activities and training offered by other CBOs. This cooperative posture is evidenced in the following statement.

> We believe in working cooperatively with other community-based agencies. In fact, we were instrumental in helping to set up and establish SER—Jobs for Progress. . . . We work cooperatively with them in their English as a second language program, rather than running one ourselves. The resources are not enough to meet all the needs. The major reason for cooperating is the availability of resources, and just plain recognizing that it is to everyone's advantage to cooperate rather than to compete.

In many instances the cooperative relationship between and among CBOs covers several joint activities as exemplified in this case.

> We use interagency contracting. We use memorandums of understanding where no money is involved but supervision is involved. We subcontract with one another formally. We share space and we share transportation. Sometimes we jointly develop programs.

Cooperation, rather than competition, seems to be the prevailing spirit among the CBO staffs interviewed. The commonly shared concern for the persons to be served seems to be the key to the cooperative relationships formed as evidenced in the following statement from a CBO director.

> Any agency that exists within the state that can be of assistance to the population we serve, we plug into them. We develop what are called letters of linkage. It's not just a letter of "I cooperate with you and I support you and you do the same for me." Rather, it's a letter of linkage that spells out what our organization can do. It's not a financial agreement. It's an agreement that says I will refer people to you, and you to me; these are the kind of things I can offer you.

Other kinds of suggested coordinated activities can be shared by CBOs so that the unique expertise of each is used.

- **Outreach:** Perhaps one agency has a unique technique for making people aware of services. It could be a grant for television or radio commercials that reaches thousands of homes and families. This permits that agency to be the funnel for all people who enter into programs.
- **Evaluating the Client:** Perhaps one agency has been able to define and to set up a program of evaluation and testing. The staff might have had special training, and perhaps costly equipment for hands-on experience has been purchased. Why not share in this windfall?
- **Basic Skills:** Perhaps one agency has a tremendously capable staff who are excellent at teaching basic skills. Perhaps they have methods and techniques far more elaborate and effective than another CBO can afford. Permit them to teach the basic skills and the GED preparation. After all, is not the goal to have clients prepare and receive the equivalent to the high school diploma?
- **Training:** To train for highly skilled jobs requires expensive equipment with high outlay of dollars for supplies. If the job market is in need of welders, computer programmers, or cement masons, and another agency is geared up and running, why not let them use their unique expertise?
- **Job Development:** Persons really qualified to talk with employers in order to sell skills of disadvantaged clients are a "special" group of people. Never sell them short. Not only do they work in structuring and restructuring jobs to fit clients' abilities, but they also work with the disadvantaged hardcore unemployed to help them to recognize that these are rules and regulations that must be followed if one is to be successful and hold down a job. Job development skills are not learned from a textbook. They are innate characteristics that, merged with a sincere, empathetic personality, make certain people "tops" in job development. Why not capitalize on the skills of successful job developers regardless of which CBO they represent?
- **Job Placement and Job Follow-Through:** Again, very special people with very special characteristics perform these important tasks. Why not use the most qualified individuals regardless of their agency affiliation?

CBOs do attempt to collaborate, to coordinate, and to cooperate in the use of the particular skills of personnel employed. Each CBO recognizes that the societal problems faced are bigger and more unique than one organization or agency can effectively confront single-handedly.

Community-based Organizations with Vocational Education

During the MDTA days, the hub of the training program was centered in vocational education under the educational system. Many training classes were held in vocational facilities after regular school was over. The name of the game was, as far as vocational teachers were concerned, "protect *my* turf." Vocational teachers resented MDTA teachers using *their* classrooms. On the other hand, they could not help but realize that the laboratories were better equipped and the machinery was of the very latest model because MDTA provided the funds. The MDTA teacher came on the job at 3:00 p.m. or later, depending on the close of regular school classes, often to discover all of the cupboards locked and equipment in use.

The biggest complaint of the vocational teachers, however, was the fact that MDTA teachers were not certified. In keeping with the philosophy of assisting structurally unemployed persons to get jobs, the MDTA classes were staffed with people from industry, not with vocational educators. Correctly or incorrectly, it was assumed that vocational teachers were white-collar, middle-class people who did not understand the problems and concerns of the disadvantaged minorities. It seemed to those staffing manpower classes that the worker who knew the job and its skill requirements was the better teacher. Many MDTA staff members did become excellent teachers because they could relate to disadvantaged minorities. They were concerned with teaching only the skill necessary to complete the job. Vocational teachers had work experience but, in order to be certified, also had to take college work. This, they felt, set them apart from the MDTA teachers. Many vocational teachers were more concerned with technical training, with science and math, as important components of the whole teaching process. MDTA teachers could and did teach only the skills necessary to perform the specific job. MDTA teachers resented the fact that they had to work the "middle shift" (classes 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.) while vocational teachers had prime-time classes. And so the battle raged.

Fortunately, there were enough vocational teachers and vocational administrators who felt a commitment to MDTA and its philosophy. They helped make manpower training programs work. Students were permitted to enter regular vocational classes, and by individualizing instruction, the regular vocational teachers began to realize that vocational education could be a vehicle for training disadvantaged minorities. No longer could vocational education serve only middle-class whites. Eventually the tide changed. Vocational teachers, working with teachers' aides, devoted time and attention to special needs of the MDTA trainees. School and guidance counselors learned to listen and to act as sounding boards for problems of transportation, of child care services, of medical/dental needs, and of legal and family problems. By 1972, many vocational programs had bridged that wide chasm that had been perpetrated by a middle-class value system and were geared to serve a new type of student, the hardcore unemployed trainees.

A quality relationship means sharing teachers, facilities, equipment, and supplies. And it means learning to work with people who have not had the same opportunity, the same advantages as middle-class whites. It means taking a slower pace, reviewing basic skills, devoting more time and individual attention to problems. It means praising the little successes and gently reviewing the big failures. It means showing that one really cares, empathizing, but not sympathizing. It means smiling a lot and frowning very little.

While some CBOs have not been encouraged by vocational education, other CBOs have managed to develop working relationships with vocational education institutions. The sense of a common goal and the belief in each others' ability to serve special populations, which characterize the cooperative efforts of CBOs among themselves, are not always present in CBOs' relations with the vocational education system.

Some of the lack of coordination stems from a basic lack of confidence in, or belief in, the vocational education system's ability to serve special populations. This perceived inability to serve, or unwillingness to serve, is reflected in the following statements of a CBO staff member.

> They are not working with the handicapped. When I think of handicapped, I think of this population here. At the school they are *screened out* more than they are *screened in.* I just get the feeling that they don't want to work with them. Probably a lot of it has to do with they don't know how to work with them [emphasis added].

Some CBO staff members believe that the very nature of the educational system prevents it from being responsive to the needs of the special populations.

> The very fact that there are significant numbers of poor people, minorities, women, etc., in the school district who are not being served tells a significant story. About eighty percent of our clients would not be ready to have any kind of successful experience with the [vocational school] because of the nature of the institution. Like most institutions, it's bureaucratic to the point of getting its priorities confused. ... The intent to serve special populations may be there, but the actuality is thin.

Some of the lack of cooperation is due simply to scarce resources.

> That's where the political stuff comes in. We have a direct conflict with them over resources in terms of who is ultimately going to win.

Perceived barriers to coordination between the CBOs and the vocational education system range in type from attitudinal barriers to institutional barriers. One CBO director believes that

> vocational education in general does have some elitist tendencies. ... It does not like to admit that there are some areas of the population they are not capable of reaching.

Another CBO staff member states that

> the major problem with coordination is that vocational education institutions would have to be open-entry, open-exit, and most are not.

In some cases, staff members of community-based organizations reported successful coordinated activities taking place between themselves and vocational education. Coordination, in some instances, took place through funding arrangements between vocational education and the CBOs. Thus, the relationship was primarily a financial one. In other cases, CBOs and vocational education institutions shared both human and material resources. For example, one CBO staff member reported that their counselor job developers work directly with the vocational teachers in assessing participants' needs. Another CBO staff member reported doing a joint study with the vocational school to determine what the trends were in job needs and employers' attitudes toward the handicapped. The provision of personnel characterizes the coordination in some instances.

> We approached [the vocational school] and told them that we wanted to have a typing class and asked if they would help us. They said, "we'll provide the teacher," and they did.

A rather unique situation was reported by several CBOs in one state, in which:

> Vocational education did assist greatly in developing a mechanism through which vocational education monies could be funneled to community-based

> organizations. . . . They feed the money to us and we, in turn, report in both a statistical and a financial sense to the district.

Many people ask, "Can vocational education really serve the hardcore unemployed disadvantaged minority?" The answer is, yes, if they and the CBOs can work closely together, capitalizing on the unique strengths that each has to serve people. That means making the student/client needs number one. Protecting turf and doing things "my" way have no place in such an effort. In the words of one CBO staff member,

> First of all there has to be a change of attitudes. . . . If people don't get too greedy and want the whole pie, I think it can be done out of a desire to see a community grow and serve its population. There has to be that old kindness and consideration and respect for everybody to work together.

Vocational educators must be that significant communication link between the system and all of the disadvantaged minorities outside of the system. A conscientious look at what vocational education can do for secondary and postsecondary/adult vocationally disadvantaged clientele includes the following:

- Mechanisms to accurately and adequately assess what can be done to train in occupational skills areas
- The latest equipment, qualified teachers, and ample supplies
- The respect of business, industry, labor, and community resources
- Well-organized programs with a career ladder approach
- A program that addresses not only skills training, but coping and transition skills for the world of work
- Training in basic skills, and employability skills
- Encouraging completion of secondary courses and entrance into postsecondary skill areas
- Providing students with experiences which enable them to transfer from one job to another

A conscientious look at what CBOs can do for disadvantaged clients includes the following:

- Outreach into communities to bridge the gap between clients and the middle-class economic system
- Dealing with social and economic problems of the disadvantaged minority
- Acting as a screening device for employers
- Assisting employers in filling affirmative action quotas
- Developing and broadening job opportunities for minorities and the disadvantaged
- Speaking for their clients to trade unions and apprenticeship programs where they never had a chance of being heard
- Enlarging the power of the poor and disadvantaged to influence the shape of social policy by making the public aware of the plight of the disadvantaged and minorities

Do the capabilities of CBOs and vocational educators seem worlds apart? Not really, since they both have great concern for the majority of people they reach and serve. This concern and desire to serve is the sine qua non of successful coordinated efforts. What else can be done to get together? A starter list of suggestions would include the following.

- CBO personnel and vocational education personnel learning to speak to one another and to share their knowledge about characteristics and needs of students
- Vocational education looking at curriculum and deciding what is relevant to teach in order to learn basic job skills
- CBOs assisting clients in developing basic skills so they can have a good foundation for beginning vocational classes
- Vocational educators recognizing that disadvantaged minorities may take longer to accomplish some skills and that the competence they reach may not be at the level of a student who has never dropped out of the educational system
- Vocational educators planning to change the length of courses and entrance requirements and having open-entrance/open-exit provisions

Together, CBOs and vocational educators must discover the secret to inspiring students to reach beyond themselves and to discover the thrill of accomplishment. If this goal cannot be reached, then all of the coordination, cooperation, training, and legislation will not be adequate to win the war against poverty, disadvantage, and unemployment.

These suggestions are only the beginning. Since each state, each local school district, each CBO is a unique situation, no one can outline a definite plan. The ideas presented here are to get things moving, and only that. CBOs are here to stay. Vocational education, by law, must serve disadvantaged minorities. Each group must agree to take a mutually beneficial role, so that services to the disadvantaged minorities will make a difference. United, vocational education and CBOs can make a difference in the societal problems this country faces in the eighties. The quality of American life must be acceptable not just to the disadvantaged minority who live surrounded by the affluent, but to all people who want to live in a civilized society. Brooks McCormick states, "... it has become fashionable to characterize the American system as a creator of affluence and to forget the equally potent force it has exerted as a diminisher of poverty."[2]

Together, CBOs and vocational education must strive to preserve the dignity of all people. That dignity is the basis upon which our land was founded.

Summary

Community-based organizations came into being during the early 1960s in order to provide services to answer the needs of communities with large populations of disadvantaged and minority people. Community Action Agencies and Community Development Corporations claim credit for much of the policy and legislation rooted in the 1960s Manpower Development and Training Act and

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[2] Brooks McCormick, in *Adherent, A Journal of Comprehensive Employment Training and Human Resource Development* 5, no. 2 (August 1978): 40.

Economic Opportunity Act. Three large community-based organizations that have national offices are Opportunities Industrialization Centers, the Urban League, and SER—Jobs for Progress. So powerful are these agencies that they were identified in the Comprehensive Employment Training Act legislation as examples of community-based organizations, both private, nonprofit, and were given monies under Title III. The purpose of these grants was to provide technical assistance to their local organizations.

As the CETA legislation became a reality, these community-based organizations found their role had changed from bridging the gap of their community and its needs, to serving a wide variety of people and needs that were not community-based. They now became purveyors of employment and training services for prime sponsors. The decision-making power was now taken from the community base and given to political and governmental agencies who selected prime sponsors, who in turn selected the services they want performed.

This system of component parts makes it difficult to hold anyone accountable for services rendered. So the CBO role of delivering services to specific groups of people that they represent is almost gone. In order to stay in the training business, they have had to give up their primary reason for existence, in order to get funds to run programs at all.

Establishing linkages and cooperative working relationships requires the prime sponsor's staff to have a thorough knowledge of CBOs and the services they can supply. Developing quality relationships between CBOs means forgetting "turfmanship." It is sometimes difficult to convince neighborhood constituents that perhaps someone else can better serve their needs. However, there are coordinated activities being shared that accomplish this.

Coordination, collaboration, and linkage with vocational educators is a little more difficult. History and tradition play a role in keeping the separating wedge in place. Vocational educators can be the significant communication link between the system and all of those outside the system, just as CBOs are the bridge between the disadvantaged minority and the middle-class economic system.

Together, vocational educators and community-based organizations must strive to assist people in achieving that great American dream of dignity, health, and happiness; a tall order for people who dare to care about what happens to their brothers and sisters. The quality of life is important. Every person has a right to expect that quality. Vocational education and community-based organizations can play an important role in making this possible.

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