

CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

This report has explored CETA goals. Proceeding from a review of labor market and manpower theory, we have discussed whom to serve, how to serve them, and what constitutes successful service. We have made a series of recommendations which we believe will help BOS CETA to more effectively do what it wants to do.

The report itself reflects our firm conviction that the role and responsibility of outside evaluators is to provide perspective to practitioners. This perspective involves some rethinking, re-formulation, and reconstitution of the issues, concerns, and problems of practitioners, and results, most fruitfully, in raising basic questions about what is done and why it is done.

Given this orientation, we consider the discussion of labor market and manpower theory, and the discussion of CETA goals in Chapter II to be the heart of this report. As a conclusion of that discussion, we argued that the most essential goal of CETA is to serve those "stuck at the bottom" of a stratified labor market and to, as effectively as

possible, unstick them. The rest of the report is an application of that conclusion—an exploration of BOS CETA's effectiveness in meeting this goal and a set of positive suggestions about how to become more effective.

Two themes have pervaded this exploration and these suggestions: first, that manpower measures, developed to operationalize the concept "stuck at the bottom," are effective in predicting, and useful in defining, "success;" and, second, that preconceptions about participants, based on non-manpower characteristics, are a major problem and concern confronting BOS CETA.

We have developed a set of manpower measures in order to summarize and examine the manpower/employment status or situation of participants prior to CETA and the changes brought about by CETA participation. Given data collected for a somewhat different purpose and the enormity of the task at hand, these measures are somewhat crude and suggestive rather than definitive. Nonetheless, we have consistently found that these measures are very effective. For instance, the pre-CETA measures are significantly predictive of type of termination and of other outcomes, and the post-

CETA measures are effective in differentiating outcomes of different target groups, types of termination, and types of program.

Based on our theoretical discussion and these findings as the first major theme of the report, we have consistently recommended the further development and use of manpower measures in participant selection, program selection, and future evaluation.

The second theme of the report is closely related to the first. Theoretically, we have argued that neither personal nor demographic characteristics of participants nor "welfare characteristics" of participant need are effective ways of choosing participants. Empirically, we have found that these characteristics are generally not effective in predicting the manpower situation of participants, participant outcomes, or, in short, the effectiveness of CETA. At the same time, however, we have found that these characteristics are extensively employed by CETA in making decisions.

These decisions are based on preconceptions about both the situation and the potential of participants, which, we suspect, are shared by CETA staff, employers, and participants. We have argued that these preconceptions are ineffective and even counter-effective, inasmuch as they can lead to self-ratifying or self-fulfilling expectations. The effect of these preconceptions can be to perpetuate, rather than to change, inequities and to ratify discrimination.

This second theme in the report, then, has led us to consistently suggest that a major role of BOS CETA should, and must, be to break down these preconceptions and raise the consciousness of both employers and participants. As most extensively discussed in Chapter V, this task is especially important for women participants who, as a group, are particularly disadvantaged. For this group, the effects of discrimination may be compounded by women participants' own reluctance to enter "men's jobs." However, a variety of reports, including the 1980 Employment and Training Report of the President (163ff.), suggest that women in "nontraditional" jobs not only experience economic gains but also increased job satisfaction, and thus we would consider it especially appropriate that BOS CETA work to raise the consciousness of these participants.

As a whole, this report is the beginning of a process, not the end of one. In the jargon of the trade, this is a formative evaluation, insofar as it is aimed at furthering

exploration, growth and development. We hope that it is a process which will be fruitful for Maine CETA and for the people of the State of Maine.

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