

sur la Méditerranée

**The More Things Change,
The More They Stay The Same:**
The Evolution and Devolution of Youth
Employment Programs



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Federal, state, local and community-based job training programs have been evolving and devolving for more than 30 years. The Manpower Development and Training Act, passed in 1962, marked the beginning of a continuously evolving national employment and training policy labeled successively Manpower and Manpower Development in 1962, Employment and Training in 1973, Job Training in 1983 and Workforce Investment in 1998. The changes in labels reflect changes in both the awareness of their connotations (Manpower was sexist; it excluded women) and the focus of national policy.

Since 1964, these policies have been charged with preparing at-risk or disconnected young people and poor adults for work. The results have been disappointing and the level of funding has been reduced. With the passage of a new Workforce Investment Act, the federal government promises to fund states and localities to give young people the opportunity to prepare themselves for the workforce. We had better get it right this time.

The unemployment rate for youth has been more than double the adult unemployment rate for the past 35 years, and minority youth unemployment has been more than double that figure again. Today, when unemployment is at its lowest in decades, the unemployment rate for young black males is more than 30 percent nationally and more than 50 percent in urban ghettos. Yet, what are we doing about it? Instead of launching a targeted initiative to mobilize resources, Congress in 1995 slashed funding for out-of-school youth (Title II-C of JTPA) from \$610 million to \$127 million. In 1998, the House of Representatives' Appropriations Committee proposed the elimination of all funding (\$871 million) for the Summer Youth Employment Program. They did agree to \$250 million for a targeted Youth Opportunity Grant focused on very poor communities.

Youth, especially out-of-school, unemployed minority youth, are not a high national priority. There has been little sustained training and job finding effort of a magnitude anywhere equal to the need. Yet it is obvious to those who have been struggling to make policies and programs effective that we need a larger investment in youth employment policies. These policies need to support comprehensive and sustained programs that provide quality services, and they need practitioners who are competent and effective. We need to build a system that does the right things for young people and does them well.

A growing body of evidence and experience strongly suggests that the incorporation of youth development principles and practices into workforce development programs causes greater positive effects on young people: they develop basic and workforce competencies, get jobs, remain in the workforce and often continue their education and training. But, until recently, youth development principles were applied most often to 8- to 14-year-olds.

In the last five years, practitioners, researchers and policymakers have become increasingly aware that a developmental approach to the preparation of 16- to 24-year-olds for work is critical to success. Those practitioners who incorporate youth development into workforce development programs are more effective because they:

1. Employ activities that are age and stage appropriate,
2. Create an environment that engages the interest of youth,
3. Individualize services to youth,
4. Assure that youth benefit from ongoing support and relationships with caring adults,
5. Incorporate opportunities for youth to interact with peers,
6. Include active and self-directed learning, and
7. Provide access to long-term support and developmental activities.

Such a paradigm is in sharp contrast to the employment and training programs of the past 30 years, in which youth have been an after-thought. Youth employment programs were seen as necessary only to stop riots, civil unrest or crime. At the same time, the development of youth employment programs and policies has been responsive to evidence, perceptions and feelings about whether policy and programs have worked. For more than 30 years, the federal government has proposed varying job preparation and job creation policies and programs as a part of efforts to eliminate poverty, reduce the school dropout rate, minimize the human cost of job loss and build a competitive workforce. Only portions of these efforts have focused on youth. Unfortunately, there is a general perception that youth employment efforts do not work.

Only in the late 1970s, when the Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) amended the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, was there an attempt to develop a national youth employment policy. For most of that 36 years, preparation of youth for work has been part of the larger, adult-focused system. Job Corps and Summer Youth Employment Programs have been sustained since 1964, but only during the YEDPA era and the period when Vice President Mondale's Task Force on Youth Employment was active, have policymakers tried to fashion a national policy and build a national youth employment system.

To understand the evolution of current policy and the significance of youth-focused programs in national employment and training policy and practice, this paper examines the recent history of employment and training. After 36 years of experiment, the public and many elected officials believe that these programs have failed and that practitioners are frustrated by the diminishing support for their valiant efforts. As a result, investments in youth have been sporadic, not long-term. Few

communities have invested the resources to build and sustain institutional and staff capacity, and in periods of increased funding, we must start by building competent organizations and programs.

The Formative Years

The first post-World War II manpower training program was the Area Redevelopment Act of 1961, which focused on the problems of depressed areas—urban and rural, Appalachia, Mississippi and Harlem. The main thrust was to attract new businesses that would bring more jobs. A short-term (16-week limit) skills training program for residents of depressed areas “prepared” them for entry-level jobs in the new businesses.

In 1962, Congress passed the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA) in response to predictions that automation was going to replace many workers who would need to be retrained. MDTA was primarily an adult training program, but it did authorize a youth training allowance of \$20 per week—less than the adult training allowance that was equal to the unemployment insurance benefit in the state. MDTA also required that youth be out of school for six months before they could be enrolled in the program to prevent young people from dropping out of school to enroll.

The mainstream MDTA programs were very basic. The State Employment Service recruited and certified that applicants were unemployed. Applicants were referred to local vocational schools or to approved MDTA courses, which took place mostly in the afternoons and evenings. Youth and adults had to meet admission requirements, which often included a high school diploma. Upon completion, the State Employment Service placed the trainees in jobs. There was no distinction between youth and adults. All training was occupation-specific and generally offered the same course of study as did vocational schools.

In the early 1960s, the Division of Experimental and Demonstration projects had a few million dollars and a mandate to find and fund new and different approaches to preparing people to work, especially people from poor neighborhoods or with special barriers to employment. The focus was influenced by the times. The civil rights movement pushed the Department of Labor to fund programs that addressed equity, and training was seen as compensation for discrimination. The Ford Foundation had been funding “gray area” projects, and President Kennedy’s Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime was funding comprehensive social planning and programs to combat the “social dynamite” (juvenile delinquency) in our major urban areas.

The view of The Ford Foundation and the President's committee was that young people were products of their environment and that the community had to change to create opportunities for its young people. Kenneth Clark in *Youth in the Ghetto*, which evolved from a report he had produced for Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU), one of the early prototype poverty programs, described the pathologies that confronted the community, which included lack of economic opportunity. Its thesis was that these pathologies had to be cured to build a healthy community in which young people could develop. The plan for the revitalization of central Harlem included a major jobs program predicated on teaching young people skills so that they could get a job.

On Manhattan's Lower East Side, Richard Cloward put his "opportunity theory" into practice at Mobilization for Youth, another community-based effort funded by The Ford Foundation and the President's committee. The opportunity theory assumed that young people's behavior was rational and, if they were offered real opportunities to make a living and live productive lives, they would be motivated to prepare themselves to move into the economic and social mainstream.

Both Mobilization for Youth and HARYOU received MDTA funding as experimental and demonstration (E&D) projects. Other E&D youth projects also included CPI in New Haven and the JOBS project run by the YMCA in Chicago. These early experiments resulted in the development of more comprehensive approaches to preparing young people for work. They included:

1. Adaptation of the diagnostic and vocational rehabilitation model that was used to train physically and mentally disabled persons.

E&D projects adapted the diagnostic techniques of vocational rehabilitation to the needs of "disadvantaged young people" in manpower programs. For example, an early E&D project run by the Jewish Vocational Service in Philadelphia adapted the diagnostic techniques of sheltered workshops to the needs of high school dropouts with low levels of literacy. The early comprehensive models began with extensive testing to identify deficiencies of "clients" and then prescribed a broad range of needed services to correct those deficiencies, including basic education, GED preparation, health services and legal services. The job developer was invented during this period, and group counseling became the norm for many E&D projects.

2. Paid work experience. CPI in New Haven created "work crews" to give young people a real work experience in the program. Crew chiefs supervised groups of young people who were working on community projects. The crews learned basic work skills—taking direction, punching time clocks, working in teams while they were building playgrounds, cleaning vacant lots and painting public facilities. The work crew assignments also served as temporary jobs while young people waited for placement in jobs in the private sector. The work

crews later were the model for the Neighborhood Youth Corps and its Summer Youth Employment Program—part of the later “poverty program.”

- 3. On-the-job training and increased employer involvement administered by intermediaries.** The National Urban League and Mobilization for Youth ran the first experiments with on-the-job training (OJT) for young people. Many job-related skills were not offered in vocational schools and it was difficult to simulate work skill training in a school setting. OJT enabled intermediaries to work with employers to design training at the workplace. Employers’ wages were offset by payments to compensate them for lower productivity. Upon completion of training, young people were hired at the prevailing wage. In addition to placing young people in jobs, OJT proved itself a valuable mechanism for involving employers in the design and delivery of training for young people.
- 4. Focus on the special needs of poor urban youth.** The E&D programs working with the President’s Committee on Juvenile Delinquency programs and civil rights organizations focused on the special needs of poor and urban young people in ways that evolved into the poverty program. MDTA had not focused on the needs of these young people because they often did not meet the education or experience requirements of vocational schools. The JOBS program in Chicago recruited young people from the street gangs and used its resources—including a YMCA-operated community college, funds provided by the E&D program and its extensive network of employers—which prescribed a comprehensive set of services to prepare its clients for jobs. JOBS and other urban programs exposed the broad range of deficits of many urban youth. Many young people had serious health problems. Legal problems made them difficult to employ. Transportation was a major problem. It was becoming clear that a special long-term comprehensive effort was needed to have an impact on these youth.
- 5. Community-based services.** Evidence was growing that it was vital that services be offered in the neighborhoods where young people lived; the early Ford Foundation projects were among the first community-based organizations (CBOs). They mobilized community leaders and employers to correct the social and economic injustices that were a part of life in urban ghettos. The growth and visibility of the civil rights movement was also a force for the development of neighborhood and community-based services. E&D projects were funded in public housing agencies, youth-serving agencies, civil rights organizations and neighborhood organizations. One of the more controversial agencies was The Woodlawn Organization (TWO), a neighborhood agency organized around the confrontational style of Saul Alinsky. TWO picketed the suburban homes of slum landlords to inform their neighbors of housing violations. Stores that discriminated in hiring were boycotted.

6. Confronting discrimination in the workplace. Organizations like the Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OICs) in Philadelphia (a response to a successful consumer boycott of employers that discriminated against African Americans) were created to attack discrimination in the workplace and to prepare minority youth and adults for jobs when employers changed their hiring practices. OICs were committed to serving the “whole person” and developed a comprehensive model of service. Community-based organizations, like OIC, were established in many localities, replicated by community leadership in other cities and funded by the federal government to combat discrimination by employers and agencies that too often excluded people on the basis of their race or ethnicity.

7. Comprehensive programs to prepare youth with diverse needs for jobs. The design of the JOBS program of the Chicago YMCA was unique. It recruited more than 1,000 youth through gang workers, who worked with youth in the streets. They made a commitment to help each young person get a job or return to school. JOBS’ definition of a comprehensive program was one that helped youth surmount all barriers. They assigned each young person a “coach” (a combination group counselor and case manager) to oversee each individual’s development. The system worked well because JOBS had access to a very broad range of services, including legal, health, housing and a community college. This was unusual at the time, and its success demonstrated the need for a broad range of education, social services, and guidance and support services if youth were to become prepared for work and life.

Youth development was not part of the practice or the rhetoric of these programs, and youth were not thought of as resources. However, these early E&D programs, based mostly on overcoming barriers and reducing deficits, did show that long-term treatment was needed and that preparation for employment had to involve the community and address the educational, health, housing, family and other needs of young people. The connection of work and basic education was evident, and GED preparation was introduced as a part of the youth employment program.

There was already some evidence that developmental approaches produced better results. One developmental approach was OIC’s commitment to developing the whole person. OIC created a feeder concept that prepared youth and adults for vocational training and jobs. Reverend Leon H. Sullivan, OIC’s founder, said, “We screen people *into* programs.” OIC tested trainees once they were enrolled and used test results to help trainees focus on what they needed to learn in order to get a job. Motivation of trainees was key at OIC, which taught minority history to all trainees in order to instill pride and raise awareness of the significant accomplishments of minorities, especially African Americans. What is commonplace today was a new approach then, especially for manpower programs.

Although these were major changes in manpower development practice, they were based on a diagnostic treatment model. Change was beginning, but young people were enrolled in adult programs and treated as recipients of services: the professionals “knew” what was best for young people and other clients. Counseling, especially group counseling, was another innovation in manpower programs that focused on youth, like JOBS in Chicago. Groups of young people shared experiences with an adult and each other. Peer support and guidance was intentional. Counselors focused on helping youth to overcome barriers and develop skills and attitudes that would lead to jobs.

The decade of the 1960s was a time of rapid and profound change. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson launched the “War on Poverty,” and the Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA). The concept of the Community Action Agency was based on the experience of The Ford Foundation and the President’s Committee on Juvenile Delinquency. An equally important, though less controversial part of the legislation was the authorization and funding of major Manpower programs focused on the special needs of youth. The Job Corps was created by the EOA as was the Neighborhood Youth Corps, the first Summer Youth Employment Program which created summer jobs for poor teenagers. In addition, manpower became a significant part of the plans that community action agencies developed to combat poverty, especially in urban areas.

The first Job Corps Center was opened at a closed military base (Camp Kilmer) in New Jersey. The design of Job Corps was based on a number of critical assumptions. The first was that there were some young people who would benefit from education and training programs offered in a residential setting outside their community. It was felt that some communities were so destructive that these young people should be moved away from home, trained in a military setting and then placed in jobs. The second major assumption was that big business could and would be the best resource for administering this training. Job Corps has been offering residential, and some nonresidential, job training for more than 30 years. With an average stay of more than seven months, Job Corps offers comprehensive services that include basic education and vocational training. The residential setting enables Job Corps to provide developmental opportunities that include leadership through youth government, advisory committees, alumni and clubs. The initial Job Corps model was deficit-based, but in recent years, *youth development* has been added to Job Corps. Evaluations have consistently shown that Job Corps works. It has a significant positive impact on graduates, and the return on the investment pays off for young people and taxpayers.

In response to urban unrest and civil disturbance, a major summer jobs program was created in the summer of 1965. While it was characterized by the media as “anti-riot insurance,” it was promoted in communities as work experience. It was a chance for poor young people, both in and

out of school, to get a job (often their first job), do useful work in the community and learn how to work. In addition, it increased the income of low-income youth and their families. Initially, work experience was community-based and included elements that would be called community service today. Young people were the muscle to build vest-pocket parks and mini-playgrounds. They assisted teachers in Head Start programs and were the arms and legs in poverty program offices. They learned good work habits and crew chiefs-supervisors helped them respond to the expectations of the workplace.

The Coordination and Control Period

The community action agencies were responsible for planning and community involvement under the Economic Opportunity Act. The federal government funded local communities to bypass state governments that were perceived to discriminate against cities or rural areas with large minority populations. They received formula grants, set priorities for services and selected service providers, which were most often community-based organizations. Jobs were always high on the list of priority services, but effective Manpower programs required sophisticated designs; coordination among many, often competing, agencies; and time, in order to increase the education and vocational skills of youth (and adults). Too often, community-based Manpower programs developed sophisticated plans, but lacked the resources and competence to implement those plans. The result was frustration for service providers, employers and trainees. This was compounded by the inability of community-based organizations to coordinate services with better-funded state and local public agencies, especially the employment service and vocational education.

The inevitable conflicts and competition of the mid-1960s led to the age of coordination that preoccupied Manpower policies from the late 1960s through the 1970s. Debate and conflict about who should develop plans, which agencies should provide services, and accountability for outcomes continued to characterize the national policy debate of the 1980s and 1990s.

In 1966, the President's Commission on Manpower (PCOM) created tripartite teams representing the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), Department of Labor (DOL) and Office of Education (OE) to conduct a field study of Manpower programs in 19 cities. Its mission was to study and catalog all the programs and plans in each city, with a special focus on identifying instances of overlap and duplication. The commission was also charged with recommending ways to improve coordination of Manpower services.

The thesis was that coordination would lead to efficiency and better programs. Commission teams engaged in a systematic analysis of federal programs in major urban areas. It was illuminating and frustrating. In

examining intergovernmental relationships and planning, we found very little communication, programs that were run by one agency with no regard for cooperation or joint planning and operations, competition among agencies, some suspicion and even hostility. In short, there were no systems. In some cases, the PCOM study brought local agencies together for the first time.

The work of the tripartite teams of the commission evolved into the “Concentrated Employment Program” (CEP), an attempt to coordinate and plan a focused approach to local Manpower planning in the 19 cities that had been studied. Soon after CEP was initiated, two rural CEPs were created in eastern Kentucky and northern Minnesota, recognizing the needs of rural areas and the power of Carl Perkins (D-Kentucky), Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, and Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey.

The assumption of CEP was that prescribing services would respond to the needs of individuals. Coordination and joint planning were the goals. The objective was to prepare youth and adults for jobs, and programs were measured by the number of jobs they got for unemployed people. Coordination was accomplished by negotiating treaties among competing agencies; but comprehensive services were rare and there was no focus on developing youth as resources. Elimination of duplication of services was minimized, but that did not mean that individuals received all the services they needed or that they received them when or where they were needed

The competition among agencies at the national level—OEO, DOL and vocational education—increased. There was considerable debate about which federal agency should take the lead. At the local level, there was competition between the public agencies and community-based organizations. Funding mechanisms and state and local plans received more attention than did the types of services offered, the quality of those services, and the competence of the agencies and people that provided services. There was always concern about the problems of “disadvantaged” youth, but contracts with youth-serving agencies that focused on the special needs of youth with multiple barriers to employment were the exception, not the rule. There were only a few exceptional youth-serving agencies that were strong advocates for youth and had the capacity to provide the comprehensive services needed to prepare young people for employment.

The first phase of the consolidation era ended with the passage of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973. At the time, CETA was enacted as the first “block grant” that gave states and local “prime sponsors” funds by formula that they could decide, within federal guidelines, how to allocate. Decisions about whom to serve, how to serve them and who should deliver the services were made at the state and local level. State and local planning bodies were established with broad representation to oversee the planning process.

Governors and local elected officials appointed the planning bodies and staffed the prime sponsors. The U.S. Department of Labor approved all plans and was responsible for oversight. CETA also marked the end of the usage “Manpower Programs,” which was replaced by “Employment and Training Programs.”

With few exceptions, programs for youth remained the same. The status quo was preserved by institutional inertia, resistance to change. Youth services were mostly work experience for in-school youth in the summer, and more comprehensive out-of-school youth programs that included employability development, individual referral to vocational training, OJT and public service employment (PSE). The recession of the early 1970s and high levels of unemployment prompted a major new initiative to create jobs providing public services, and some young people were hired for these jobs.

CETA focused on getting youth and adults prepared to work. Both in-school and out-of-school youth were encouraged to stay in school or to go back to school, but these initiatives were fairly short term and focused on work experience and development of entry-level skills. There were three premises for work experience: (1) work is a valuable learning opportunity; (2) economically disadvantaged youth need to earn wages; and (3) work keeps young people busy and out of trouble. Some exceptional programs developed jobs as places to learn, and some training programs were coupled with basic education, English as a second language and GED preparation. But most of the services were short term. Developmental opportunities were limited to work-related skills.

In work experience programs, follow-up, supportive services or developmental opportunities were rare. For most youth, the opportunity to earn some money, buy clothes and help their families were the most important benefits. For poor families, this income was very important. The Neighborhood Youth Corps’ first priority was the same: the regulations required that 70 percent of all funds be expended on wages and 15 percent on administration, leaving only 15 percent for education, counseling, transportation and supportive services. No extensive evaluations of work experience were conducted, and there were many news stories about “make work” or other poor practices.

Work experience programs have always been faced with the difficult choice between improving the quality of services and increasing the number of people served. Do you hire fewer people and provide more extensive services or serve more people and give less service? Nowhere is this choice more evident than in out-of-school programs. Dropouts are always less educated, often from poorer families and in need of more intensive services for a longer period of time. Work experience, or a job without education and other services, is not enough for a dropout who reads below the eighth-grade level, has an unstable home and is confronted with choices between a job and drugs, violence or other self-destructive behaviors. It is no surprise that the gains were modest.

CETA also made a significant investment in training for young people using institutional skills training, OJT and the Job Corps. Skills training and OJT trained both youth and adults, while the Job Corps was and still is a youth-focused training program. Skills training has a positive impact on youth: those who complete the training get jobs with modest earnings gains. Entrance requirements vary with the occupation, so, unless training is coupled with remediation, disadvantaged youth with multiple barriers are often excluded. From 1964 to 1974, fewer than 40 percent of skills training participants in MDTA and CETA were under age 22, and approximately one-third of the OJT participants were under age 22. OJT has good post-program placement numbers.

CET, a community-based comprehensive job training program located in San Jose, California, has shown extraordinary placement and earnings gains for disadvantaged youth and adults. The focus is on skills training in classrooms that resemble work sites. All learning is focused on job- and work-related skills and competencies. CET also offers extensive remediation and English as a second language, which are related to the occupation and combined with counseling, job placement and long-term follow-up. CET created a comprehensive developmental model with a counselor, a job developer and an educational instructor qualified to teach bilingual education assigned to each skill area. Vocational instructors are recruited from industry. The impact on youth and adults in San Jose is remarkable: wages are much higher than the norm. Employers have supported CET for more than 25 years by donating equipment and hiring its graduates.

Job Corps has also been offering comprehensive training, basic education and a range of supportive services. It is run by the Office of Job Corps, U.S. Department of Labor, and continues to contract mostly with for-profit training corporations to run Job Corps Centers. Job Corps serves young people exclusively, most of whom have not completed high school. Job Corps evaluations have documented its ability to place young people in jobs and to significantly increase earnings. The cost of Job Corps is high, more than \$15,000 per trainee, which reflects the comprehensive nature of its services and the higher cost of residential training. Residential programs like Job Corps are able to take poor youth out of their communities and help them learn the vocational and people skills needed to succeed on the job.

Youth development was not an intentional part of the program design in the CETA days. Training and work experience were the predominant forms of preparation for work. Some examples of informal youth development practices are found in comprehensive training programs like Job Corps, CET and OIC. A relationship with an adult is one part of long-term skills training, either institutional or on-the-job training. Supervisors, counselors and instructors often become guides (caring adults) who help young people learn about work and life. Many of the more comprehensive programs develop long-term relationships with graduates. Job developers and counselors maintain contacts after place-

ment and often respond to phone calls and visits when young people lose jobs and need to talk about next steps. These developmental approaches are informal, based on personal relationships. They are not planned services available to all trainees; they simply happen and are responsible for the success of effective training programs.

The Youth Demonstration Era

In 1977, Congress enacted an amendment to CETA, the Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA), that made youth employment a major focus of the act. It created federal youth employment initiatives that were designed and controlled by the U.S. Department of Labor and were more categorical. It also added three new acronyms to the alphabet soup of job training, YACC (Young Adult Conservation Corps), YCCIP (Youth Community Conservation Improvement Program) and YIEPP (Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects). These three programs underscored the belief of policymakers that job creation was the answer: each demonstration experimented with creating jobs in different sectors. YIEPP was the most expensive; it tested the hypothesis that guaranteeing a job to disadvantaged high school students would be an incentive to keep them in school. YACC provided up to 12 months of employment in useful conservation work for 16- to 23-year-olds, administered by the Departments of Agriculture and Interior. YCCIP provided out-of-school youth with supervised jobs on community projects.

CETA continued to provide training through formula grants to the prime sponsors, but most of the job-creation efforts were relatively short term and not tied to education, training or other developmental activities. With the exception of Job Corps, none of the major youth employment policies promoted comprehensive practices. Training was generally short term, and although it led to a job, it was one-dimensional and only developed job skills. Work experience provided young people with work and some “employability” skills.

In 1979, the federal government invested almost \$6 billion in work experience and training of youth. (For comparison, in 1997, the federal appropriation for youth employment programs under JTPA was \$2 billion, including Job Corps.) Significant amounts of money were spent on research to find out what worked. Robert Taggart, the former administrator of the Department of Labor’s Youth Office, summed up the experience in *A Fisherman’s Guide*. To paraphrase his conclusions:

1. Work and work experience do not alone improve labor market success.
2. Training must be long enough in duration so that participants can achieve measurable and certifiable competencies.

3. An employability plan must provide opportunities for individuals to develop at their own pace depending on their motivation, interests and abilities.
4. There must be an opportunity for all youth to participate, but resources will never be adequate and should be invested in those who put forth the effort to benefit.
5. The impact of programs must be measured for long-term gains rather than immediate job placement or minimal increases in earnings.
6. There must be an increase in long-term training outcomes.
7. The economy must create more jobs and the “leftovers” must be trained to compete for those jobs.

In spite of the significant investment in training young people under CETA and YEDPA, the effects were marginal. Most of the programs were based on a diagnostic and treatment model, but the large financial investment created pressures for short-term outcomes and pushed CETA and YEDPA into large-scale interventions that batch-fed youth into systems.

The primary focus of CETA, including YEDPA, was to create jobs and provide work experience. Training was a smaller part of the investment, and youth development was not planned or intentional in either the policies or programs, though some providers incorporated youth development principles in their practice. Counselors helped young people identify their strengths and build on them; instructors developed personal relationships with a few of their trainees and sometimes maintained long-term contact, functioning as the “caring adults” now recognized as important; supervisors and older coworkers filled this role in OJT and work experience, and at Job Corps Centers, some resident advisers, teachers and counselors developed personal relationships with youth that were sustained when young people needed advice; vocational exploration was a part of some summer and year-round youth programs; open entry-open exit training programs enabled youth to proceed at their own pace and tailor their skill development to their personal interests; and self-paced instructional programs like the Comprehensive Competencies Program offered individualized basic skill development that empowered young people to guide their own development.

Unfortunately, most of the evidence concerning effective practices is based on the writings and memories of practitioners, funders and researchers. There was a considerable investment in intermediaries like Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation and YouthWork. They conducted and researched major demonstrations. But the formal long-term evaluations focused on outcomes and did not examine methods, techniques, materials or youth employment practices. The impact of programs was measured as a whole and did not attempt to determine if some methods had a greater

effect on young people with certain characteristics. The quality of programs was not examined in enough detail to determine if the impact or lack thereof was the result of the program design or the quality of the staff, facilities or materials. The distinction is very important if the goal is to improve the quality of training and other initiatives.

The 1980s: Less Money, Less Time, Less Impact

The election of President Reagan and a Republican-controlled Senate in 1980 resulted in severe cuts for federal job training programs. CETA was labeled “a four-letter word” and targeted for extinction. In 1981, funding for public service employment was terminated. The expiration of CETA in 1982 led to its replacement by the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). The total federal job training budget was slashed from almost \$10 billion in 1980 to \$3.6 billion in 1982—the first JTPA appropriation.

A more astonishing fact was that these cuts were made at a time when unemployment hovered around 9 percent. For 20 years, job training funding had increased during periods of high unemployment. Clearly, there was dissatisfaction with the job training system.

Job creation was the main target of the budget cutters and its funding was eliminated in 1981. The Department of Labor’s new leadership, Secretary of Labor Raymond Donovan and Assistant Secretary Albert Angrisani, had little use for the job training programs of CETA and were determined to change them radically. Budget cuts were politically popular and social programs were in disrepute. CETA was a major target for budget cutters.

JTPA emerged as a bipartisan bill that incorporated many compromises. It was a second-generation block grant scheme and states were given much of the authority that had been vested in the federal government under CETA. Businesses were given greatly increased authority at the local level, with a requirement that the majority of members of the local JTPA planning and oversight councils, the Private Industry Council (PIC), be business representatives. The other major change was the incorporation of performance standards with national targets. These standards for placement rates, participant earnings and training costs were written into law and would drive JTPA services.

JTPA prohibited funds for public service employment, but continued training programs for adults and youth, including training for older persons. It also continued federal responsibilities for Job Corps, migrants, Native Americans and veterans. Job Corps and the Summer Youth Employment Program were both targeted for elimination or major budget reductions, but were saved by a massive campaign that generated letters and phone calls from state and local elected officials, employers and business representatives, former participants

and current trainees. Both the Summer Youth Employment Program and Job Corps were continued as a result of this demonstration of public support.

JTPA administrators acted as though the previous 20-year experience had been a failure. They did not look to the experience of CETA and its preceding legislation for guidance. JTPA was based on the belief that state and local decision-making were better than federal decision-making and that business knew best what priorities and programs would be most effective.

In retrospect, the results were not surprising. There was a great deal of evidence that local authorities were “creaming,” that is, selecting trainees who were most likely to succeed. Creaming was rationalized by sound management principles: limited funds should be expended in the most efficient manner; more people can be served if training is shorter, less comprehensive and cheaper. The consequences of creaming are that JTPA did not serve “those most in need” in spite of a legislative requirement. JTPA applicants tended to have high school diplomas and some work experience.

Service providers were offered performance contracts that paid them based on outcomes rather than on the cost of services. Again there was evidence that service providers also creamed. They recruited and accepted trainees they could train within budget and place in jobs at the required wage rate. If they exceeded standards they made money and, if they fell short, they could put their organization into bankruptcy. Creaming was good business for some service providers, and they learned that they could generate more income by recruiting people who were easily trained and placed in jobs.

A symptom of the emphasis on quick and inexpensive training was the rapid expansion of “job search assistance.” One-third of JTPA services were for job search, an inexpensive way of getting placements that required participants to have skills that meet employer requirements. According to Sar Levitan’s calculations in his book *A Second Chance*, JTPA relied less on community-based organizations like OIC and SER-Jobs for Progress than did CETA. There was also an increase in the use of for-profit training schools. JTPA was less appealing to CBOs that were committed to serving “hard-to-serve youth and adults” since performance contracting forced them to enroll more job-ready people for less money with fewer services.

A 1994 long-term study of JTPA done by Abt Associates found discouraging results. There were no significant positive effects for out-of-school youth from classroom training, OJT, job search or other services. This evaluation did not describe services in detail and had no data to assess the design of programs or the quality of services. Its documentation of poor performance was disputed by service providers and

the JTPA system. Responding to this study, Congress cut the federal appropriation for Out-of-School Youth Programs (Title II-C) of JTPA by 80 percent.

Another significant study is Public/Private Ventures' research on its Summer Training and Education Program (STEP), *Anatomy of a Demonstration*, which had shown significant short-term academic gains from a summer employment program with intensive academic components. But these gains did not lead to improved school performance, higher grades or higher graduation rates. The conclusion is that enriched summer programs alone do not have a significant long-range impact. To state the obvious, short-term programs cannot undo a lifetime of underachievement and discouragement, but they can be important tools in a long-term development plan for young people.

However, youth development outcomes are not being tracked by the JTPA system because they are not valued, understood or included in the program mix of youth-serving agencies. As evidence, the U.S. Department of Labor's JTPA statistics from program year 1996 show that services were provided to 76,700 JTPA Title III-C youth in five categories of service: basic skills training, occupational skills training (non-OJT), OJT, work experience internships and other skills training. The data does not report any services that might be called youth development; indeed, it is impossible to tell from any reported data what the nature of the services was.

The Confluence of Youth Development and Youth Employment Policies and Programs

It is not surprising that youth development is missing from out-of-school youth programs. The employment and training system has only included youth development in exceptional experiments or programs operated by organizations that were primarily youth-serving agencies for whom youth development was included in all services to young people. It is not surprising that youth development is not a priority because employment and training is generally a short-term intervention and has focused almost exclusively on basic education and vocational training, with jobs and returning to school considered acceptable outcomes.

The roots of manpower programs were in the employment service and vocational education, not in youth development. Given this narrow view of the needs of youth, it is understandable that the focus of "objective" assessment is on education, skills and welfare dependence. In contrast, effective youth programs develop the resources of youth and understand the principles of youth development. The challenge is to make these long-term services and relationships intentional planned components of youth employment programs.

In January 1995, the chief economist of the U.S. Department of Labor published “What’s Working (and What’s Not): A Summary of Research on the Economic Impacts of Employment and Training Programs.” The report summarized existing research and reiterated the findings of the Abt study that the JTPA youth program outcomes were discouraging. The unfortunate outcome of this was an 80 percent cut in appropriations for the JTPA Out-of-School Youth Program. Young people, especially those most in need, were being punished because they were getting inadequate services.

The National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC), in response to the report, convened a working group of its members and other experts in youth employment and youth development and prepared a set of recommendations. One of the report’s conclusions characterized youth employment programs as “islands of excellence in a sea of mediocrity.”

Not satisfied with a set of recommendations, NYEC set out to develop criteria for effective youth employment-development programs by establishing a working group of youth employment and youth development practitioners, researchers, policymakers, advocates and employer representatives. It is called PEPNet, the Promising and Effective Practices Network. From that initial meeting and subsequent conference calls and small meetings, criteria emerged in four broad areas: workforce development, youth development, quality management and evidence of success. Effective programs are those that meet each of these criteria. They can do it in different ways, but they must show how what they do meets those criteria.

PEPNet demands outcomes and requires that initiatives document the impact they have on young people. Workforce development outcomes must include the development of skills, knowledge and competencies that lead to jobs and careers. Youth development competencies are based on a well-conceived and well-implemented approach to youth development, including high expectations, caring relationships with adults, holistic service strategies that build responsibility and identity and view youth as resources. Quality management is exemplified by engaged, qualified leadership and staff who collect and use information and data to continuously improve the program. Evidence of success requires that credible information be collected, documented and presented.

These criteria have been incorporated into a self-assessment instrument designed to assist youth employment initiatives in looking at their services to youth objectively. Initiatives that believe they meet the criteria of PEPNet are encouraged to fill out an application and apply for recognition. Applications are reviewed by peer panels to select those that meet the criteria.

In four years, there have been 170 applications, 51 of which have been selected as PEPNet award recipients. These initiatives form a network of effective programs. In *Lessons Learned*, published by the National

Youth Employment Coalition, these effective programs have been indexed so that interested programs can learn about the more than 1,000 practices, methods and techniques employed by effective programs to make a difference in the lives of young people. PEPNet goes beyond the development of models, by identifying specific practices that can be adapted by other programs to improve their services to young people. Each of the 51 initiatives has met a set of rigorous criteria and has documented the impact of their methods. We intend to expand the examples and build on the experience of youth development programs that work with youngsters under 14 and have not considered employment as a developmental activity.

Where Are We Headed?

Congress has just passed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to replace JTPA. WIA gives more authority to the states and continues the role of business in planning workforce programs at the local level. One WIA title gives localities the authority for planning and separates the youth employment plan from the adult plan. Summer youth employment no longer has a separate authorization and localities will decide whether to invest in summer or year-round programs. There is also authorization for youth opportunity grants (YOGs), which will mean a new national investment of \$250 million in a youth program focused on small urban neighborhoods and rural areas.

The new workforce investment system seems an excellent opportunity to bring new ideas and new approaches to policy and practice. The fact that most of our old approaches have had minimal benefit for young people, especially out-of-school youth, is reason enough to try a new approach. The legislation is an opportunity to make youth employment a higher priority. This may also be the last chance for a major federal investment in youth employment.

Incorporating youth development principles into youth employment policy, programs and practice will not be simple. There is limited experience and expertise and little collaboration among agencies and professionals working in youth development, education and employment. Most youth development agencies work with younger children (14 and below) and begin to lose contact with young people over the age of 14. Youth development does not have much experience with preparation of youth for jobs. The education community, with the exception of vocational education, cooperative education and school-to-work, views work with suspicion. Both educators and youth development professionals point to studies that conclude that work interferes with education and can lead to destructive behavior, including drug and alcohol abuse. The youth employment field has its own provincialism. Only a relatively small number of exceptional programs recognize that a young

person's stage of development is critical and that young people must be engaged in preparing for their future with the support of caring competent adults.

The youth development principles explicit in NYEC's PEPNet criteria are consistent with the principles that Gary Walker described in the Sar Levitan Institute's *A Generation of Challenge*:

1. Each young person needs to feel that at least one adult has a strong stake in their labor market success.
2. Programs must be connected to employers; placement with one of these employers is possible and initial placement is one step in a continuing long-term relationship with a program that will advance the young person's employment and earnings.
3. Each young person must feel at each step the need to improve education and credentials.
4. Program support will be there for a long time.
5. Effective connections are maintained between the programs and providers of support services.
6. The program emphasizes civic involvement and service.
7. Motivational techniques—including financial incentives, peer support and leadership opportunities—are used.

Such approaches to connecting workforce development and youth development vary, but support for the concepts is growing. However, most workforce professionals are not aware of their value. Most are unexposed, and those who have heard of youth development are not prepared to incorporate the concepts or principles in either policy or practice. Including youth development in workforce investment programs will require a massive national technical assistance and training effort.

The challenge for those who understand the importance of youth development principles for workforce development is to mount a major education and awareness campaign for an audience that does not know the value of this information. The scope of the education campaign is vast because the devolution in the new Workforce Investment Act requires that we reach out to the 50 states, the territories and 500 to 600 localities. Awareness, training and technical assistance must reach beyond state and local policymakers and planners. Success requires that we build new and improved deliverers of service that will need competent staff, skilled managers and knowledgeable governing boards.

Service providers, especially traditional providers like vocational schools and community colleges must learn that young people need more than education. They need environments where young people plan for their own development and believe that adults—teachers,

counselors, supervisors and employers—are there to support them, help them solve problems and prepare them for jobs that can lead to rewarding lives. That means continuing support as young people develop, make mistakes, try again and again.

If we are serious about development of our young people, we must invest in the institutions that serve them by assuring that the facilities and equipment meet the standards of employers, that teachers and staff are trained to do their difficult jobs and know that if they do well they will have a career. Outreach workers, counselors, coaches, teachers, job developers and youth workers are skilled and very important to the effectiveness of programs. They need to be valued and rewarded and encouraged to make a career of youth employment development.

At the same time, we must demonstrate the value of youth development principles to skeptical policymakers and practitioners. Policymakers must be shown that youth development prepares all young people, especially out-of-school youth, more effectively for the workforce, and they must understand that long-term programs that cost more are more cost-effective because they produce better outcomes for young people and employers. Policies must support, encourage and reward effective practice. Do we really want to entrust the education of our young people to the lowest bidder?

In conclusion, I want to make a plea for the importance of improving the methods, materials and practices used in youth employment programs. NYEC members and supporters have been working for almost four years to identify, select, recognize and catalog the practices of effective youth employment-development initiatives. The exemplary programs are all over the country and take many different approaches to prepare youth for the workforce. We know that these programs are effective because they can document their impact on the lives of young people. Do they have studies to document their impact? Some do. Others have management reports, counselor reports and other evidence that are the products of quality management.

They have something more valuable to practitioners and policymakers than does the most rigorous study. They have experience. They have developed methods and materials in the real world, working with youth every day. This is the information that service providers need to improve the way they serve youth, that planners need when they make decisions about funding a service provider, and that policymakers must pay attention to when they write policies or create the rules and regulations that will govern the workforce investment system. If those policies do not encourage the best practices, they are inadequate.

For 35 years, young people have been trying to change their lives with inadequate resources, little support and no respect. Quick fixes do not work. Now is the time to test new approaches that show promise. Youth employment must take a long-term (multi-year) developmental

approach to the preparation of young people for employment and for life. Youth employment policy and practice must support sound positive youth development principles. All youth must be viewed as resources that have potential to contribute to our society, not as a set of problems that need to be fixed. Education, training and other services should recognize and build on each individual's age and stage of development. Young people should be engaged in their own development and the development of programs and policies that are designed to help them. Services and support must continue after youth are placed on a job.

Finally, young people must have access to programs of the highest possible quality. If basic education is part of the program, young people should learn to read, write and compute better. If workplace skills are being taught, they must achieve high levels of competence. If the object of the program is to place young people in jobs, they should get a job, and if they lose that job, they should receive help finding the next job.

The new Workforce Investment Act (WIA) includes language that encourages a more long-term approach to developing young people as a resource. The success of WIA requires a commitment to develop service providers of the highest quality; to do this will require the development of well-trained staff and well-run organizations.

An action-research agenda is needed to improve the capacity of youth employment policies and programs. This agenda should include:

1. Development of systems and capacity to recognize and use work as a developmental tool. There must be an intentional link between work and education and other developmental activities. These approaches assist young people as they gain work-related competencies, basic and advanced education, problem-solving skills, skills working in groups and other skills that will prepare them for life.
2. Development of youth employment-development approaches that recognize and respond to the needs of youth who are at different stages of development.
3. Experimentation with sound asset-based approaches that build on the experience of working with youth under 16 to older youth (16 to 24) who are preparing for work and family.
4. Adaptation of leadership skills learned in youth clubs to help older youth lead in the workplace, a labor union or in their community.
5. Incorporation by education of developmental approaches, by linking school and work, engaging youth as active learners and demonstrating the practical implications of knowledge.

The primary lesson of the past 30 years is that young people benefit most from programs that integrate the principles of youth development into a workforce development framework. Jobs and work should be viewed as developmental and should be integrated with education. Youth development techniques must be adapted to meet the needs of older adolescents. Work and community service must be organized as developmental activities.

Youth development agencies and workforce development agencies are separated by institutional, philosophical and methodological differences. Young people benefit when these differences are bridged and services are integrated and focused on the needs of each youth. Getting a job is a stage of development, and young people must be taught to use work to develop their skills and competencies. Youth development agencies must view work in positive developmental terms. The goal is a broad range of integrated age- and stage-appropriate activities.

Clearly, we need an educational campaign that underscores the importance of youth development and demonstrates the impact that derives from the incorporation of youth development principles. The principal purpose of this campaign is to raise the awareness of workforce investment boards, governors and elected officials so that they will set realistic developmental outcomes for youth development/youth employment programs.

Note

This paper is drawn from my personal experience working with the federal, state, local and community-based employment and training programs since 1962. The observations are based on my experience with youth employment policies and practices for more than 37 years. I also read a number of valuable source materials by researchers, policy analysts and social scientists.

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