ABSTRACT
                The conference report examined the implications of
research findings on the earlier WIN Program for WIN 2, providing
opportunity for operational level personnel, administrators, and
officials to engage in dialogue about the problems of starting a new
program, one intended to make a difference for a significant number
of welfare recipients. The first section of the report describes why
the conference was needed, the process of preconference planning, the
structure and process of the conference itself, and how the
conference had both successes and failures. The second section
focuses on selected operational issues identified by conference
participants: the top-down nature of administrative communication;
the misuse of paperwork; the frequent lack of flexibility; problems
in research development, dissemination, and utilization; interagency
relationships; staff training and supervision; job development;
client selection and processing; and measurement criteria. The final
section outlines the need for a new approach to research, suggesting:
approaches to peer level information exchanges; a two-way
communications process, up and down the line; and need for increasing
local initiative and innovation. Future directions for staff
development and training are recommended. (Author/SC)

report of a conference

WIN II:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE

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WIN II: MAKING A DIFFERENCE
REPORT OF A CONFERENCE

The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
September 19-21, 1972

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A difference that makes no difference is no difference

Josiah Royce

This is a report of a conference and a process that was different and made a difference.

Sponsored by the Department of Labor Manpower Administration's Office of Research and Development, and conducted in Ann Arbor, Michigan in September of 1972, the conference examined the implications of research findings on the earlier WIN Program for WIN II. It also provided an opportunity for operational level personnel, administrators, state officials, and Federal and regional office staff to engage in dialogue about the problems of starting up a new program; a program intended to make a difference for a significant number of welfare recipients.

The first section of this report describes why the conference was needed and how it was conceived. It discusses the unusual process that went into pre-conference planning, and the rather unorthodox structure and process of the conference itself. It criticizes the process where it failed and examines the implications of its successes.

Section 3 focuses on selected operational issues identified by conference participants. These include everday administrative problems such as the top-down nature of administrative communication, the misuse of paperwork, the frequent lack of innovation and flexibility. It further discusses a number of problems in research development, dissemination, and utilization. It examines these problems from the point of view of the researcher, the administrator, and the line workers. Section 3 also explores a number of evident problems inherent in interagency relationships, and identifies the glaring gaps in staff training and supervision. It further lays out some of WIN's early shortcomings in the area of job development, and its problems of client selection and client processing. It concludes with a subsection on the establishment of criteria for the measurement of success and failure.

The final section of this report outlines the need for a new approach to research. It introduces the need for creation of a new facilitator role to accomplish the mission of research utilization. It suggests approaches to peer level information exchanges, and a two-way communications process, up and down the line. It discusses the need for increasing local initiative and innovation and recommends future directions for staff development and training. Although this report is issued more than one year after the conference was held, it includes data collected in the ensuing 14 months. Feedback from conference participants has reinforced and corroborated earlier findings.

Why the Conference Was Needed

The conference was conceived shortly after a meeting between researchers and Federal manpower officials conducted by the Brookings Institution at Williamsburg in November, 1971. As one Labor Department official put it: "Now that we've brought the policy people and the researchers together to look at the policy implications of WIN research, we ought to bring them together with administrators and line personnel to look at the operational implications."

BRINGING RESEARCHERS AND OPERATIONAL PERSONNEL TOGETHER

There had been for some time a number of requests made by administrators in the WIN Program who had "been researched" to examine the implications of that research for their practice. Officials in the Manpower Administration's Office of Research and Development of the Department of Labor saw a further need: to develop and to test out a pattern through which research findings could be disseminated. The Michigan conference, then, was conceived around the notion of finding better approaches to research dissemination and utilization.

It will be recalled that this was a period in which the future of WIN was uncertain and Congressional intent was not yet clear. Some speculated that the WIN Program might be phased out. A research dissemination conference, aimed at bringing practitioners, researchers and policy makers together might, it was felt, serve as a vehicle to explore the implications of previous research on new manpower programs yet to be developed. These might be in the form of a revitalized WIN, modifications of other existing programs, or development of some entirely new program.

The Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations and the School of Social Work Continuing Education Program at the University of Michigan, which had collaborated on a number of previous occasions, submitted a proposal to conduct such a conference. The conference was to be held in April of 1972. Initially, the conference's objectives were to promote a dialogue between researchers, policy level Federal officials, and operational level personnel about the implications of recently conducted research for future WIN and related manpower programs. It was assumed that researchers, operational level personnel, and policy makers would each contribute to the dialogue. A secondary objective was to test out a particular model as a vehicle for future dissemination conferences. These objectives were radically modified by the course of events.

A NEW SET OF OBJECTIVES   With the passage of the Talmadge Amendments and the ex-
pansion of the program designated as WIN II, the objectives
were re-examined and expanded. At the request of a number of WIN administrators
in Region V, the conference was postponed. It was decided to conduct the
conference in September, giving the central office sufficient time to pass the
regulations through the regions and to the states. The delay permitted
University of Michigan conference staff to familiarize themselves with WIN II,
and to attend an April meeting in Washington and a May meeting in Philadelphia.
It became apparent at these meetings that a new set of objectives were required
for the conference. These objectives, the staff reasoned, should be selected
and developed by the participants themselves.

A second decision was to focus the conference exclusively on the concerns
in Federal Region V. It was felt that the problems faced by states in this
region were sufficiently similar to each other to permit focus on critical
operational concerns. A successful conference in Region V might be followed
up by similar conferences in other Federal regions. It was further decided that
the conference should include participants from HEW agencies as well as from
Labor. This would permit a more appropriate exchange by all personnel concerned
with the success of WIN II.

The Process of Pre-Conference Planning

FIELD VISITS   The planning process began with a series of field visits
to state agencies concerned with the WIN program and
large city WIN agencies, in Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio and Minnesota.
These were interspersed with visits to Washington and to the Chicago Region V
offices of HEW and DOL concerned with the WIN program. It quickly became ap-
parent that Federal, state and local officials were concerned with gearing up
for operations, and initiating a program that might have greater impact than the
older WIN program. As one regional office Federal official put it, "The Tal-
madge Amendments are this year's substitutes for HR 1. If you guys are planning
a conference, it better be on how to make this thing work." This sentiment was
echoed by most of those interviewed.

DIFFERENCES OF OPINION   Beyond general agreement with this sentiment, there was
little consensus on any other issue. Federal and local
officials differed on the manner in which the new program should be implemented.
Strong differences of opinion emerged between states' departments of social ser-
vices and employment security. These differences were often exacerbated on the
local level. Conditions varied from state to state. Perceptions on what was

actually happening, and opinions on what should be happening varied even more widely.

Throughout their field visits, telephone calls and written correspondence, project staff attempted to veer to a neutral course. Generally they sought information, at other times they transmitted it from one locale to another. Much of the time they sought to interpret the purposes of the conference as it was shaping up. In retrospect, this may not have been the appropriate course to follow.

"People are so anxious about starting up a new program," reported one of the staff at a July meeting, "that they're not listening to what we're saying. Everyone seems to expect something else from this conference, and research utilization, our first concern, may be low on the totem pole." In order to help frame the purposes of the conference more concretely and to elicit more systematic input of conferees into the planning process, a modified Delphi procedure was instituted.

DELPHI   Delphi is a structured multi-phased questionnaire. It permits respondents to specify preferences, to assess the importance of certain items, and to predict the probability of certain events. Based on the tabulated re-sults of the Delphi questionnaires, staff were able to identify seminar, work-shop, and skill area topics of greatest interest to the anticipated participants.

INVITATION   These findings were not only helpful in development of the content
SENT TO   of the conference. They also enabled the staff to identify the
RESEARCHERS   most relevant pieces of research that had been conducted on the
earlier WIN program. A number of researchers were then contacted and invited to participate. They were asked to present abstracts on their research, to serve as resource people responsible for interpreting the implications of their research for utilization at the operational level.

The final round of mailings describing the conference program was conducted during mid-summer. Staff made a number of additional visits to states and to the Region V Chicago offices to gain more detailed feedback from operating and policy staff: (1) to assess their interests in specific topics; (2) to help state and regional staff identify the most appropriate personnel to attend the conference; and (3) to locate conferees who might serve as group leaders and resource people.

Although conference staff had hoped that all participants could be selected in advance, so that they might be equally well prepared through the mailing out of packets of resource materials, this was not to be. Last minute exigencies

resulted in the substitution of previously designated personnel. Most states decided who and how many they would send, with little use of consultation by conference staff.

In anticipation of the wide differences in levels of preparation, sophistication, and interest of conference participants, the staff made several last minute modifications in the conference programs. These were necessary in order to accomodate to this diversity.

Content, Structure and Process of the Conference

STRUCTURE   The conference was structured to achieve a maximum of participant involvement. Most of the researchers and group leaders met for an orientation session on the afternoon preceding the two and a half day program. The conference schedule included the following activities: (1) mini lectures and panel presentations; (2) research dissemination seminars; (3) skill-research workshops; and (4) state level meetings dealing with operational concerns. Through pre-conference registration forms and on-the-spot registration procedures, participants were guided in the selection of a "program within the program" to meet their individual needs and interests.

CONTENT   Mini-lectures and panel presentations were open to all conference participants. Issues dealt with in these seminars included: (1) the policy implementation process; (2) perspectives on WIN from panelists on various levels in their agencies; (3) critiques of WIN II and other manpower programs taken from an historical perspective; and (4) the implications of research on the uses of voucher systems in manpower programs.

Research dissemination seminars were organized around presentations made by individual researchers. These were small group sessions, in which researchers shared the findings of their empirical research and their theoretical perspectives with on-the-line operational personnel. Six small groups were organized, each around a different topic. These included: (1) client motivation; (2) client selection; (3) program goals; (4) program success criteria; (5) working mothers; and (6) job success. Conference participants could choose two of these topics. Each small seminar included resource people from academia, research, and operations. These seminars focused on the policy implications of research.

The skill research workshops, on the other hand, focused on the utilization of research findings for the development of practice skills. Researchers, academics and operational personnel led workshops dealing with: (1) job development; (2) client flow and tracking; (3) coordination of DOL and HEW agencies; (4) monitoring and reporting; (5) project management; and (6) establishing and managing rural programs.

State level meetings afforded opportunities for participants from different agencies, and at different levels within those agencies to grapple with other issues they felt impinge on the success or failure of WIN II. Issues identified by participants were then discussed and responded to by a panel of regional and national level staff from HEW and DOL.

PROCESS   The mixture of mini-lectures at which content was presented by speakers or panelists, seminars in which resource people helped participants grapple with policy issues, workshops in which participants focussed on work related problems, and issue sessions disallowed passivity. The mixture of HEW and Labor Department personnel, of staff at various levels in each organization (case-workers, counselors, trainers and developers, supervisors, managers and administrators, policy makers and researchers) permitted an exchange of views and perspectives rarely possible.

Many different issues were being discussed in different groups. Recorders summarized the main issues discussed in each session. These summaries were then grouped into clusters by the conference staff, duplicated and disseminated to participants. Unfortunately, the process did not work to everyone's satisfaction.

Was the Conference a Success or a Failure?

ASSUMPTIONS
UNDERLYING THE
CONFERENCE
PROCESS

Although 73% of the participants thought they had gained a great deal from the conference, the conference was far from an unqualified success. Throughout the planning process, the staff had made a number of assumptions which had proved at least partially inappropriate. It was assumed, for example, that research done on WIN I was relevant to people working on a day-to-day and week-to-week basis in the operating of programs in WIN II. It was further assumed that researchers are by dint of their expertise about the subject matter of their research, able to communicate effectively and directly with people at the operational level. It was further assumed that personnel at the operational level would be able to make the necessary connections between the findings of research and the problems they faced in practice.

The conference experience suggested these assumptions were inappropriate. Much of the research had been conducted with policy, and not operations in mind. Many researchers were no more accustomed to thinking in operational terms than operational personnel were accustomed to thinking in research or policy terms.

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While small conference sessions with highly selected participants interested
in both research and operations might prove successful, this conference was
both too large and too diverse in its population to fully test out the model
described above. While many of the research oriented sessions were rated by
participants as very worthwhile, this was not universally the case. Many
line workers, supervisors, and administrators were terribly concerned with
the immediate problems of cranking up for WIN II. For them, findings on WIN I
did not seem terribly relevant.

In part, the problem was in the timing of the conference. Operational
people tended to be more interested in talking with other operational people,
and in some cases directly to policy makers, than they were in sharing or
learning from researchers. Further, some practitioners were strongly critical
of researchers, who they felt were able to provide only negative, "defeatist"
information. "They're telling us that the older WIN program failed," complained
one participant. "What we need is to get fired up to make the current program
succeed." Researchers were frequently faulted for not being more enthusiastic,
and encouraging. Researchers were not prepared for this response. Nor were
most ready to assume such a posture.

Conference staff had also made several other assumptions. They had antici-
pated that conference participants would be relatively sophisticated and exper-
ienced in manpower programs. They further assumed that it was possible to
determine in advance who would attend the conference, to prepare participants
through pre-mailed packets of resource materials, and that through their field
visits and Delphi questionnaires they could adequately assess the needs and the
interests of the participants. All three assumptions proved to be false.

Last minute substitutions were made in almost all state delegations. In
one state , a sudden decision was made to send a group of 30 participants
(about 1/5 of the total) who had little or no prior experience with manpower
programs. "They told us this would be a staff development program," explained
one person from this delegation. The infusion of so large a group of inexperienced
participants and of many other who were equally unprepared, made it very
difficult to accomplish the conference's major objectives. Many participants
were not ready to learn through sharing in small group face-to-face encounters.
Some wanted less "sharing" and more direction, more training, more "lectures
from the people who really know."

Those who felt they "knew" wanted to share what they knew with others

also in the know. This mixture of sophistication levels was frustrating to many. A further complication arose from the extent to which each of the states assigned different priority to the conference. "My director told me to come, learn what I can, and share what I can. There's no question that this conference is important," reported one state official. "My supervisor told me to come and I came. I'm not sure what I'm here for," admitted another.

Certainly, the heterogeneity of the participants inhibited communication. Conferees each came with different expectations, different missions, and different degrees of openness. Although the conference planners had welded together a series of integrated goals, permitting each conference participant to maximize his own objectives through a series of choices, these goals were never fully explicated. There were perhaps too many goals; some of them complementary, many of them contradictory. Nevertheless, the conference took place at an opportune time; within months of the start-up of a new program and within weeks of the dissemination of federal regulations.

It was a time in which people at the operational level had many questions of their supervisors and other federal sponsors. It was a time in which Department of Social Service personnel needed to talk to employment service workers, and vice versa. It was a time in which staff in one state needed an opportunity to exchange ideas and program approaches with a staff from another state. It was, unfortunately, not the most opportune moment to examine implications of research done on a previous program (the original intent of the conference and the reason for which it was funded). It was a moment of great confusion at both the policy and operational levels of the WIN Program. This confusion invaded, and subsequently pervaded the conference.

SOME NOTABLE   Despite these difficulties, there were many identifiable successes.
SUCCESSES   "This was like a microcosm of the whole WIN program," commented
one local level employment service supervisor in his written evaluation of the conference. "Sitting off in my own agency and dealing with my own everyday start-up problems, I really couldn't see the whole picture. A lot of anger I was feeling about people at the state level, and the other WIN people employed by the Department of Social Services has been dispelled. As a matter of fact, it's been turned to sympathy and a certain amount of understanding and empathy.

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The conference came at just the right time, before misunderstandings had a chance to gel into irrevocable disputes." Many conferees expressed similar sentiments.

"At first, I was angry with the feds," reports a man from Chicago, "then I began to realize the constraints and the pressures that they're under." A woman from Minneapolis remarked that "I always thought researchers were outside intruders who didn't care one whit about what we're doing. I'm not so sure that their researchers are all that helpful, but I do have a newborn respect for the way in which they look at problems and the questions they ask." A researcher commented that "I've been nagged by the feeling that I've been answering the wrong questions. Maybe the problem is that most of the questions have been asked by the Feds, and our research has endeavored to answer their concerns. I've got the feeling that it might be more fruitful to sit together with practitioners and administrators, generate a bunch of questions together, then do research around their concerns." Several federal officials agreed.

"Perhaps the most important notion that came out of this conference," a DOL official indicated, "is the idea of creating a new role for a research disseminator, a sort of facilitating person who bridges the gap between researchers and operational personnel. You can't expect researchers to be tuned into the language and value system of practitioners any more than you can expect practitioners to be tuned into the language and ideology of research. We need to develop a new staff role to link researchers with operators."

The conference itself, whatever its limitations, was seen as one of a number of models that might be used by such facilitating or linking personnel. Other models were discussed informally by participants and by the conference staff and Labor Department officials in subsequent meetings.

Many conference participants reported that interstate exchanges on a variety of administrative program practices and program approaches were for them the most fruitful conference product. This exchange seemed to work best at peer levels. It was difficult, someone observed, to attempt peer level exchange while simultaneously providing opportunity for policy feedback up and down the administrative hierarchy. Most conferees agreed that there was great value to exchanges up and down administrative lines, across agency boundaries and on a peer level across state or community boundaries. Many felt that a single conference should not attempt to provide participants with opportunities

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to cross all these boundaries at one time.

Despite these difficulties, the richness of the discussion in many of the sessions was extraordinary, replete with new insights and ideas. Problems of service delivery, program development, coordination, administration and supervision were discussed openly and candidly. The worth of these ideas is reflected only partially in the summaries found in Section III of this report. Participant involvement in many of these discussion sessions has already borne fruit. Insights have been shared across levels and across communities. Several participants have reported to project staff how knowledge gained at the conference has had an effect on their practice. Relationships established at the conference have resulted in numerous instances of new and ongoing communications.

The Conference represented a microcosm of the WIN Program in operation. The participants represented a mix of central office and regional federal personnel, state officials, and local administrators and on line staff. Many represented Labor Department interests, others were employed by a number of HEW agencies -- Department of Social Welfare, Department of Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc. A number represented researchers, others represented the concerns of academia.

While there were agreements on many issues, there were just as many sharp disagreements about the nature of the WIN program, its prognosis for success; and the directions it should take. Many conferees griped about the constraints they were **under**; others suggested alternatives to current modes of operating, or remedies for the problems they saw. What follows is a summary of the issues discussed by participants at the conference and their implications. A number of these issues had been discussed by conferees and the conference planning staff prior to the two and a half days in Ann Arbor. They led to the selection of content for the conference. Others were expanded on in contacts between the authors and a number of conferees in the months that followed the conference.

Everyday Problems in Administering WIN II

Conferees expressed a great deal of negative sentiment about the way the WIN Program is administered in their states and locales. While recognizing that many administrative problems reflected the newness of the program, others feared that unless changes were to be instituted quickly, the problems might be endemic throughout the life of WIN II. The major problems identified were: (1) the top down nature of communication; (2) the excessive amount of paper work required; (3) the limits on staff autonomy; and (4) the apparent inflexibility of regulations, which limited opportunities for experimentation and innovation.

CRITICISM NO. 1   Many line workers in employment security commissions, in
TOO MUCH TOP DOWN
COMMUNICATION   WIN offices, and in social service departments made

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remarkably similar complaints. There was a prevailing feeling that given the exigencies faced by clients and line personnel, agency directives were unrealistic. The most common criticisms include the following: (a) administrators do not explain or even seem knowledgeable in the specifics of the Talmadge Amendments; (b) specific procedures for client registration are never spelled out, and although regulations had been promised, preliminary copies of these seemed more confusing than clarifying; (c) directives from the Washington and Chicago Federal offices are too broad to be spelled out or translated into action programs; and (d) administrators seem to emphasize monitoring the behavior of staff workers rather than sharing and solving problems with them.

"Nobody cares what I think," or "what I know" were commonly heard complaints. "I was really enthusiastic about WIN II and even asked to be assigned to it," explained one participant and went on to describe his disillusionment and sense of futility by virtue of not "getting through to the top dogs." Many of the on line workers in the WIN program felt that they possessed knowledge that could be useful to agency administrators or to the "Feds." "I'm glad I've had an opportunity to come to this conference and tell the Feds how I feel," explained one woman from Wisconsin, "but I'm not sure they're listening." In service training sessions in their own agencies were described as "brain-washing experiences" without any true sense of dialogue between supervisory staff and on line workers.

Implications. Procedures for "bottom-up" communication should be instituted. Line staff normally institute their own priorities based on their work loads and work experiences. These should be communicated upwards, serving to modify state and federal guidelines making them more realistic and operable. In service training sessions should be re-designed as staff development programs, in which supervisory and line personnel jointly engage in problem solving and skill development workshops. This may require specialized training in supervision and staff development for key people in each agency. It may also require the use of regional and state officials as consultants to the program rather than overseers of it.

CRITICISM NO. 2
WORK AND PAPER
WORK

"I want my staff to work with people, not paper," said one administrator from Illinois. Like many other conferees he expressed the fear that over-concern with procedures and forms detracted from staff concern with the goals. While no one expected

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paper work to be eliminated, many of the participants felt that three kinds
of paper work were excessive. Most line staff complained, for example, that
all welfare recipients have to be registered, even those who were apparently
employed; this meant that clients who were unlikely to qualify for WIN had to
be processed with as much care as those who were more likely candidates.

Secondly, both line staff and supervisors felt that the appraisal pro-
cess was too lengthy and overly complicated. "If we could cut the time we
spend on filling out these forms on all clients," explained an experienced
WIN hand, "we could put more time into processing and evaluating the most
promising group of clients, the WIN volunteers." Other conferees complained
that the appraisal process was ambiguous and in some cases contradictory.
Few supervisory or line workers really understood it.

Finally, so much paper work time was spent on justifying process and
procedure to sponsors, that there was less time to process the information
needed for day-to-day activities. "If you spend all your time worrying about
your accountability to sponsors," complained one worker, "you'll never have
enough time to worry about your clients or you accountability towards them.
Sometimes I get the feeling this is what the paper work is all about."

Several employment security commission administrators recalled that in
WIN I, the topics of reporting to the sponsors covered three categories, but
pointed out that in WIN II, the number had increased to thirteen. Many ad-
ministrators felt that they were driven to collect certain kinds of data in
anticipation that this information would be called for from above.

"I don't know why I feel this way," explained one, "but I'm sure that
if I don't have these data on hand, I'll be called on it later. I've been
in this business too long not to protect myself."

*Implications. While less paper work is not necessarily called for, more
immediately useful paper work, applicable to operational problems, is called
for. This may require a deemphasis on quantitative "accountability informa-
tion," and a greater emphasis on the kinds of information that may serve as
guides to front-line activities. It may, for example, include case illustra-
tions of successes and failures of different approaches. It would require
an atmosphere which permits workers to describe failures rather than to cover
them up. It requires an information system that everyone feels is useful.
"It's easy to sabotage forms," someone remarked in one of the discussion ses-
sions, "and unless I find the forms of use to me, I'll learn how to sabotage*

them soon enough."

Perhaps consultation on the development of a useful and usable infor-
mation system is required.

CRITICISM NO. 3
THE ACCOUNTABILITY/
AUTONOMY DILEMMA

A persistent theme throughout many of the conference sessions was the inevitable clash between line workers' desires for more autonomy and the administrators' desires to institute more effective systems of monitoring workers and their insistence on establishing accountability mechanisms for line workers' performance. In some instances, due perhaps to their insecurity in instituting a new program with rather what many characterized as obtuse and sometimes confusing guide-lines, administrators showed an inordinate interest in monitoring staff per-formance. Staff workers on the other hand, insisted on the need for more autonomy and flexibility in the performance of their tasks.

They argued that formalized procedures and "red tape" actually reduced their effectiveness. They needed more time to bargain over job slots with employers, to establish job slots and to counsel WIN trainees after they've been placed on the job. Administrators and supervisors, on the other hand, contended that they were responsible for continuously accounting for and justifying the program to the Administration, to the Congress, and to the general public. This, they argued, requires detailed reporting about staff activities. The accountability issue was even more confused by the need to report on the coordination of efforts among several agency staffs. "It's not just monitoring my own staff that I'm worried about," explained one supervisor, I've got to be just as much concerned with monitoring relationships with staffs of other agencies. And everybody uses a different kind of monitoring procedure."

Implications. The issue of accountability seems to be clouded by admini-
strative fears about the future of the program. While little can be done
about this, much can be done about the top-down nature of the accountability
procedures. In Michigan, several conferees reported, there's been some dis-
cussion of instituting management by objectives procedures. MBO would permit
the development of performance objectives by line staff and the communication
of these objectives up the line to top level management. Training in MBO or
some other performance by objectives system may be warranted. This would per-
mit comparison of objectives by each of the agencies involved in WIN II, and
examination in the discrepancies as well as in the complementarity of objec-

tives up and down the line.

CRITICISM NO. 4 Many staff workers felt they were saddled with a set of
LACK OF FLEXIBILITY
AND INNOVATION procedures that had been developed in a vacuum. "If we
deviate," as one worker summed up the feelings of his
colleagues, "we have to lie to cover up what we're doing. And yet the rules
don't take into account the real needs of our clients or the problems they
face. If we stick to the straight and narrow rules, we just run our clients
through a maze that'll leave them out at the point where they started. Frankly,
there are times when I just want to quit."

Others expressed an interest in "benching the rules," recognizing that
this entails considerable risk. Supervisors responded by saying that there
was little they could do to change the rules which had been transmitted from
above, or sympathized with their workers indicating that "you'll just have to
bend the rules as best you can."

The bulk of conferees felt that there are many "tried ways" in dealing
with their clients, but that the rigid regulations imposed on the program dis-
couraged innovation and experimentation. Many felt that administrative re-
quirements compromised their commitments to "professional practices."

*Implications. An overemphasis on procedures, characteristic of the
first few months of WIN II has already resulted in deterioration of staff
morale and may well lead to goal displacement. Institutionalization of some
system of performance by objectives may serve as a corrective. Overemphasis
on a system like MBO, however, may serve as a further impediment to change
and innovation. What may be required is a six to twelve month period in
which a variety of approaches are used, only later to be evaluated. In some
cases this may further require suspension of the regulations or of the required
reporting forms. In other cases it may require establishment of "experimental"
or "demonstration" teams that explore alternative approaches to client services.
Such demonstrations might themselves be monitored in comparative fashion by
state or regional staff.*

CRITICISM NO. 5 Almost everyone at the conference felt that relationships
FEDERAL, STATE AND
LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS between the various levels of government concerned with
WIN II had never been successfully worked out. Even the
more serious attempts at establishing relationships between regional, state
and local agencies, or across HEW and Labor sponsored agencies were at best

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chaotic. Again, a frequent complaint was that these relationships were of a "top-down" nature. Few state officials, and almost no local WIN staff people had made any inputs into the formulation of the regulations. None had been involved in formulating the legislation. They felt relegated to the role of implementors rather than partners. While this is perhaps inevitable, one of the state officials complained that "The Feds just don't understand how we're feeling about all this." One Federal official confided that "we're in the same bind that they are. If they're worried about deviating from official policy, so are we. We'd like to be more responsive to the state people, but we're accountable to people higher up in the administration, too. And we've got to worry about Congress' reactions. There just isn't time to take everybody's views into consideration. The bureaucracy's never been noted for its democratic orientation."

Perhaps a major problem is the lack of start-up time for the program. Contacts between Washington and local offices were frequently confined to "crash orientation" sessions in which state people were instructed rather than involved in discussions of the program. Finally, WIN II, conceived in haste, made almost no provisions for local adaptation. "WIN II is a 'canned program' with few flexibilities," observed a state official.

Implications. While little can be done about the first few hectic months of the program, increasing attention should be paid to both checking out the bugs in the program and opening up new options as WIN II becomes an established fact. This may require more periodic conferences between regional, state and local officials; conferences in which local people present material and share their concerns up and down the line. What is required is an atmosphere of dialogue, one which permits mutual exploration in problem solving. This may further result in new guidelines which are regionally or locally oriented. Just as the composition of welfare clientele varies from region to region, and employment opportunities, so must the nature of the services provided through WIN II.

Issues in Research Utilization

The conference provided an opportunity for researchers, administrators and line staff to communicate with each other as equals. None was expert in relation to the other. Thus put some of the researchers in an unaccustomed role. A number of them found themselves defending methodology or findings.

While no one questioned the general utility of research, many people questioned the specific utility of the research conducted on WIN I. A major question which was asked over and over focussed on the purpose of research. For whom was it intended, and how were research findings to be used?

ISSUE NO. 1
ORIENTATION OF
THE RESEARCHER

Almost all the research on WIN I was commissioned by the Federal Government. For this reason, researchers on WIN I tended to structure their work towards the concerns of policy makers rather than line staff. Research reports were generally written for the sponsor, not for operational personnel whose programs were researched.

More important, the formulation of research problems and research objectives generally was carried out independently of the concerns of operational staff. Contact between researchers and operational staff were almost non-existent except at those points where operational personnel facilitated the work of researchers or were observed and questioned by them.

While most researchers express an interest in utilization of their findings, few expressed any real knowledge about how such utilization might take place, or in the facilitation of such implementation. The prevailing mode seemed to be to "drop the report on the desk and run." There was on the part of most researchers at the WIN conference a clear expectation that someone other than the information gatherers, processers, and analyzers should undertake the task of translating findings into operational guidelines, and should concern themselves with issues of utilization.

ISSUE NO. 2
OPERATIONAL CONCERNS
OF AGENCY STAFF

Most operational personnel at the state and local level viewed research findings as "outside information." Since research questions generally are not formulated with their interest in mind, nor do they understand the purposes of research while it is being carried out, the resultant information was frequently suspect and alien in nature. "You researchers come around," accused one WIN trainer, "run your schedules on us, come up with some esoteric findings, and expect us to understand them or change the ways in which we operate." Too often, research findings seem to elaborate the obvious because what may seem extraordinary to the researcher is banal to line staff.

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Frequently, researchers do expect that operational personnel will change some belief or practice. Yet their research findings are not written up with line personnel in mind. They are frequently written in academic and technical language. Research reports are often abstract in nature, couched in terminology or jargon that is not readily or easily understood by laymen. Agency staff may easily be turned off by the failure or inability of the researcher to explain the operational significance of a finding or how it might be used.

Moreover, research findings from WIN I are even less relevant to the needs or interests of agency clientele. Research findings, however, significant, are rarely utilized by agency staff, and even more rarely digested and transmitted to agency clients.

Implications for Issue Nos. 1 and 2. As long as research is conducted apart from the concerns and expertise of line staff, there is little likelihood that research findings will be utilized by them. One conference participant suggested that research projects ought to be commissioned by operating agency staffs rather than Federal officials. "That way, not only would we care about the results, but the researcher would care enough to make sure we can benefit from his findings." At the very least, provision ought to be made for the participation of operating staff in the definition of research problems, in interpreting the findings, and in planning for the utilization of the research or the translation of findings into operational principles and procedures.

Neither researchers nor operational personnel may be capable of dealing with the problems inherent in research utilization without some outside help. It may be necessary to establish an intermediary role, a "facilitator role" as a Labor Department official suggested. This facilitator might be responsible for linking the researchers' concerns with those of policy makers and operational personnel. He might also be responsible for translating research reports into non-technical language, for providing necessary technical assistance to operational personnel, and for coordinating or stimulating staff training and staff development activities to insure the utilization of research findings. This facilitator might also be responsible for "re-training" the researcher, alerting him to the concerns of operational personnel, and "re-training" managers and line personnel, enabling them to better understand the utility of research findings.

Since many research studies result in contradictory findings, these must

be codified and rationalized before being passed on to the user. This may require an additional role for an information specialist who can both codify information and make it intelligible to the user. In many cases research findings may elaborate the obvious. The user may not be surprised or stimulated by research findings. For this reason, information must be shaped and refined in such a way as to make the implications of certain findings obvious to the user. This may require refining for specific agencies. Since each agency has its own history of unique practices, its staff may interpret research findings in response to its own uniqueness.

Finally, there is an additional problem of turn-around time between the time a research project is commissioned, its findings made public, and translated into usable reports, manuals, monographs, etc. Empirically based research on WIN I, for example, was out-of-date by the time WIN II was gearing up for operation. Modern social research is frequently characterized by a long process of information gathering, data processing, analysis, and interpretation. What may be called for are short issue-specific research projects, in which operational staff are involved at every stage, learning at the same time as the researcher himself is uncovering new information and developing hunches about its utility. "What we need now," insisted one of the conference planners, "are mini-research projects that cover only the areas that require coverage and that are enticing enough to increase the potential user's curiosity and desire for more information."

Problems Inherent in Interagency Relations

Conferees agreed that without interagency cooperation at the local level WIN II cannot succeed. Interagency relations, however, were a source of a number of problems that seemed to some participants to be almost insurmountable. Criticisms were frequently made by employment service personnel of social service (welfare agency) personnel, while welfare workers criticized trainers, job counselors and other employment service staff. Some of these criticisms and their implications for changes in policy and procedure are outlined below.

CRITICISM NO. 1
CREAMING AND
DUMPING

Employment service staff complain that welfare workers try to get rid of their worse cases, whether employable or not by referring them to WIN. "The trouble with you welfare people," explained a job counselor, "is that you have no understanding

of what employers require, so you refer any client as an employable."
"The trouble with you employment people," countered a case-worker from a
county social services department in Minnesota, "is that all you do is
cream the best of our clients -- people who would find jobs anyway, given
any sort of opportunity. All you want are successes. We want to help those
who are in greatest need."

CRITICISM NO. 2   Some welfare workers were accused of being concerned
PERSPECTIVE ON   with the client as a member of his family, and watering
THE CLIENT
                         down the WIN perspective which focusses on employability
in favor of family casework. Employment staff, on the other hand, were accused
of over-concern with relating the individual to the world of work, oblivious
to the fact that the individual's problems may be rooted in his family's situ-
ation, family obligations, and family relationships.

CRITICISM NO. 3   WIN staff workers, employed by one or the other agency
INTERAGENCY   have only limited knowledge of how the department of
KNOWLEDGE
                         social services or the employment service operates.
Generally they are unaware of what resources each agency has to offer WIN
clients, of agency procedures, and of constraints on agency staff.

   *Implications of Criticism Nos. 1, 2 and 3.   Initially, at least, more
opportunities must be provided for staffs of employment services and social
services departments to interact. A number of possibilities exist. They
include periodic "information exchange" meetings, inter-agency visits, case
conferences, staff exchanges on a "loner" basis, the establishment of inter-
agency teams, etc. In a number of cases it would be useful to conduct joint
supervision or joint staff development programs. Better briefings are needed,
as are exchanges of interorganizational administrative memos that relate to
the operation of WIN II.*

CRITICISM NO. 4   Too often the WIN enrollee is subject to two distinct
THE WIN ENROLLEE AS   systems of processing. Marked discontinuity exists
MAN-IN-THE-MIDDLE
                         between both agencies, requirements for information
about the client, procedures of orientation, and criteria for success and
failure.

Implications. In addition to the suggestions made above, both agencies must develop a common information system to assure that clients are neither over-processed nor over-counseled. Clients must be given a consistent picture of what is expected of them, and of what expectations they can have from WIN counselling, training and job placements.

Staff Training and Supervision

CRITICISM:
POOR TRAINING

Although almost all agencies represented at the conference had some form of start-up staff training, most participants felt it was inadequate and also unhelpful. The content of most of these training sessions, focused on regulations rather than the needs of clients or the alternative strategies available to line personnel for problem solving. Little emphasis had been placed on including on-line workers in the creation of staff development programs. There had been little opportunity for them to increase their skills in handling agency-client relations. Almost no attempt had been made to use past field experiences as a basis for training.

Implications. Staff development programs should be problem focussed, so that participants can increase their problem solving ability and develop new skills. The focus should be on professional development, with a view in mind of providing better services to clients. To the extent possible, staff experiences should be included in the content of training programs. While outside expertise should be included, outsiders should not be depended on for curriculum development and problem identification. Unless this comes from staff themselves, training sessions may seem contrived and artificial.

Job Development as a Major Problem

Most conference participants felt that the training programs in which they participated were almost useless in helping them do a better job in job placement and development. The WIN job developer, they pointed out, must work with companies and other employers in a variety of ways. In addition to locating job openings, they must help the employer prepare for the WIN client, and must also provide on the job supportive services to those clients. A number of criticisms were made of the WIN job development function as it is presently performed.

CRITICISM NO. 1
CONCENTRATION ON
LARGE COMPANIES

"All we've been doing," remarked one job developer, "is concentrate our efforts on large companies. We've been trying to get as many job slots as we can in a single work place. It might be easier and faster not to muck around with a lot of smaller companies, but it sure puts our clients in a risky situation." Moreover, he explained, many of the jobs found in larger companies have rigid boundaries, offering little flexibility for placing people with limited credentials, and affording little room for movement and advancement.

The corollary to this criticism is the fact that little has been done to find work outside of fixed job categories with fixed hours and routines. Many WIN enrollees must turn down job opportunities, thereby risking removal from the welfare roles, because of inflexible job hours. "I've got lots of clients with special problems," complained a job placement worker. "They've got to be home to administer medication to an aged parent at certain times, give kids lunch on school days because their kids get into difficulties when left on their own, or must give their kids some tutorial work or special help after school. A 9 to 5 day is out for them."

Implications. WIN guidelines should place more emphasis on finding jobs in small companies where job boundaries are less rigid, and leeway exists in defining both the job and its content. Employment setting should be selected on the basis of its potential for advancement and development. More effort should be expended in finding jobs in repair and maintenance industries where WIN enrollees may be employed on a flexible hourly schedule.

CRITICISM NO. 2
NO SUPPORTIVE
RESOURCES

In general, government regulations do not permit the purchase of special tools or supplies which clients may need to find and hold a job. Nor are their provisions for the purchase of a car, when clients are located geographically far from work sites and when public transportation is unavailable or inaccessible.

Implications. Unless Federal regulations can be changed, WIN agencies must develop new sources of funding to cover such contingencies. It may be appropriate to assign some WIN staff to locating interested citizens, citizen groups, and merchants, who might be persuaded to help by providing access to funds, transportation, long term loans, etc.

CRITICISM NO. 3
THE NUMBERS GAME

Conferees complained of a "numbers game" in which they felt pressured by Federal and regional directors who

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seemed to emphasize placing a client "anywhere" rather than in a job that optimizes his skills, his talents, and his aspirations. "If there's a job opening, we've got to place the client no matter what," complains a WIN supervisor. "It puts our staff members in serious binds. The role conflict seems irresolvable. On the one hand, they've got legal requirements for employability planning and to insure career development for clients. And on the other hand, all the pressure that comes down on them, including the pressure that comes from me and from administrative memos urging them to consider numbers. As usual, we seem to be serving industry, instead of our clients." "That's unfair," countered a regional staff person who went on to explain that state and local anxieties often resulted in inappropriate interpretation of guidelines.

Implications. The job matching process must be altered to take into account both the availability of jobs, and the clients' interests and needs. The clients should be involved in the job matching process. He should be permitted to select from a number of alternatives, even if this means deferring job placement in favor of training. New forms and new and flexible regulations are required.

CRITICISM NO. 4
MOTIVATING THE
CLIENT OR SUP-
PORTING HIM

Many experienced job counselors felt that too much emphasis was placed on "motivating the client", and not enough time on backing up the clients with specialized resources and services on the job. "WIN is a biased term for the program. There's nothing wrong with my clients' work incentives. Most clients want to work; we seem to assume they don't. That's not fair. What they need are jobs and skills and backing to stay on those jobs." In general follow-up activities after placement overemphasize collection of information on enrollees rather than the provision of services to them.

Implications. Clients should be made to feel that the agency is an instrument of service to him before placement, during placement, and after placement. Success on the job is less related to motivation than it is to the kinds of services and resources available through counseling and on-the-job training once placed. After placement, clients should be made to feel that they can bring their job problems to the agency, and that agency staff have a continuing interest in the client. Low retention rates in WIN suggest that the clients as job holders need special help and aid.

CRITICISM NO. 5
SUCCESS PERIODS

The six month follow-up period after placement is too short a period in which to classify a WIN recipient as

a "success". Many WIN personnel report a "sleeper effect" in WIN placements. Successful outcomes as measured by high self-confidence, good earnings, increases in skill, become apparent only after several years. There's almost no consideration of other variables that may affect success or failure of WIN enrollees.

Implications. A follow-up period longer than six months is desirable. There is too much dependence on "instant success". The traps inherent in the belief in instant success should be spelled out through evaluative studies. These studies should be translated in a way in which they will have policy implications for state and Federal agencies.

CRITICISM NO. 6
EMPLOYER RELATION-
SHIPS

Almost no effort is made to interpret the WIN program and its advantages for employers. Employers have little information, for example, about tax relief for hiring WIN clients. By the same token, agencies have little information about company manpower needs in working out placement programs. WIN job offers rarely challenge company job orders or company perspectives on the capabilities of WIN clients. Job developers often are relegated to the task of filling orders, even when credentials are inflated, and rarely question existing company barriers to employment.

Implications. While conference participants did not go far enough in this regard, a number of new types of relationships between companies and WIN agencies were discussed. One suggestion was that WIN agency officials attend more business association luncheons and conventions, then establish informal associations for potential employers in order to better interpret the WIN program and to give it increased exposure. Moreover, someone suggested that "the WIN job developer's image should be built up". He should be introduced as an expert in corporate manpower planning, someone who is more than "a pleader for jobs". This may require restructuring the job development role, and increasing the job developer's technical skills as well as his Armamentarium of strategies. He should be viewed as someone taking the initiative in job development and placement, rather than a reactor to employer dictates.

Client Selection and Client Processing

Because of its timing, in the early months in WIN II, much of the discussion at the conference centered around issues of procedures, communication, jurisdiction, and authority. Underlying these issues was a genuine concern for the WIN client. While it is likely that the problems of the client would have

been more dominant in the discussions and workshops had the conference been held a year later, in all probability the nature of the discussion about clients would have been rather similar. The two issues that participants were most concerned about related to creaming and orientation.

ISSUE NO. 1
MORE ABOUT
CREAMING

Although WIN was designed to benefit the "hard-to-employ," almost everyone agreed that only those applicants who were "sure bets" were accepted into the program, no matter who was referred by the welfare department. Line staff complained of the conflict between their perceptions of who should be helped and administrative pressures to recruit applicants that could easily be placed. "It's how you measure success," explained a delegate from Ohio. "When you're playing a numbers game, creaming is inevitable. "There's little that justifies the numbers game," agreed an administrator, "but we've got to play it anyway. It's the only way we can sell the program and keep it alive." Nevertheless there was a general feeling that numbers should be subordinated to quality placements of hard-to-place clients. The latter, it was felt, was much more relevant to the basic content of WIN.

Implications. Criteria for success or failure of the program need to be more clearly spelled out. A national effort should be mounted to interpret the program on its own merits, rather than as a way of simply reducing welfare rolls. "People have a right to services," argued a state employment service official, "an out-of-work aerospace engineer wouldn't accept the first dish-washing job that came along. Why should a welfare recipient? Everyone should be treated equally and with dignity regardless of their current or former ability to pay. Otherwise there's no justification for Federal support of the program. That's the message we've got to get across, and that's the message Washington has to help us sell."

ISSUE NO. 2
CLIENT ORIENTATION
PROGRAMS

A number of conference participants criticized current approaches to client orientation. Generally, such orientation programs tend to focus on motivating the client to want to work, and give him an overview of the kinds of work available. "Most clients already want to work, others are discouraged by their experiences, many have a damned realistic point of view," explained a supervisor from Detroit. "What's needed is an orientation program that helps the client develop the kind

of survival or adaptive skills that are useful in a work situation. Many
of our clients don't know how to behave when they get on the job. It's not
lack of motivation, it's just plain lack of know-how. Others can't keep the
pace up from day to day and from week to week. They need to develop basic
skills and the simple tricks that we all take for granted."

*Implications. Client orientation should include problem solving and
simulation sessions in which clients and staff members engage in experiential
problem-solving situations. "You can't learn how to drive a car listening to
an orientation lecture," explained an educator from Wisconsin. "You either
have to get into that car and drive, or use a training simulator. We've got
to develop better simulation training models, and then provide some on the
job training before we let our trainees solo." A number of these sessions
ought to focus on removing obstacles to the job holder. Such obstacles in-
clude: making child care arrangements, arranging car pools or other trans-
portation, and making such simple purchases as alarm clocks and the necessary
clothing or tools.*

Measuring Success or Failure: What Criteria?

One of the most recurrent themes in the conference was the frustration over
selection of criteria for the measurement of success or failure in the WIN
Program. Most participants felt the programs had multiple goals, many of
them contradictory. Others were stated in such loose terms as to be inoperable.

ISSUE NO. 1   A major issue seemed to center around whose goals the
WHOSE GOALS? WIN program was intended to meet. Success or failure
tended to be measured differently by different constituents. The Congres-
sional intent, for example, was apparently to use WIN as a way to reduce the
size of the welfare rolls. Administration officials, on the other hand, em-
phasized the program's potential utility in substituting "workfare" for welfare.
Many administrators of WIN agencies were less concerned with the ideological
implications of welfare/workfare than with the possibility of opening up career
lines for welfare recipients, launching them on the first step of career lad-
ders.

Potential employers were more interested in an inexpensive source of
labor (with tax advantages), and tended to measure the program's success in
terms of their ability to recruit stable well-motivated and productive workers.

Clients, of course, were more concerned with stable, secure and rewarding employment at decent wages. "We're caught in the middle," complained one conference participant, "On what basis do we measure success or failure? Whose goals do we accept; whose criteria?"

ISSUE NO. 2
THE NUMBERS
GAME

Wherever one plugged into the conference, the discussion seemed to focus over and over again on "the numbers game." As noted earlier conferees felt that the criteria of numbers placed was overemphasized, with the result that clients who needed services most were bypassed in favor of these who could easily be placed.

ISSUE NO. 3
WELFARE VS. LABOR
PERSPECTIVE

Although welfare workers and employment service line staff agreed on the inappropriateness of the numbers game, they did not agree on how to evaluate a case as successful or not. Social service staffs tended to concentrate on raising clients' motivation for work, and on dealing with the clients' home and environmental situation. Employment Service workers, on the other hand, emphasized training and development of work skills. Often, they simply assumed motivation or took the clients' home and environmental situations as givens requiring little thought or intervention. Frequently they judged a client as successful if he developed the necessary skills. Thus, the client might be judged successful by one of the two agencies involved in WIN but considered a failure by the other.

ISSUE NO. 4
ADMINISTRATORS AND
LINE WORKERS

Perhaps the greatest gap of all existed between administrators and line workers regardless of the agency. Many administrators were apt to judge any case as a success if the client obtained employment -- any employment -- even in the lowest wage sector. Line staff, however, were apt to judge success by the quality of the job obtained, by the client's feelings about that job, and by the less time the job was held. In effect they measured success on the basis of congruence between the "employability plan" with the client and what actually happened to him once he hit the labor market. In the pressure of the numbers game, the administrators modified and frequently scrapped the employability plan.

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Implications of Issues No. 1, 2, 3 and 4. These contradictions will not be easily be resolved. They do need to be faced. Unfortunately, most social programs in this country tend to be oversold. Oversold to the Congress. Oversold to and by the Administration. Oversold to clients (whether these be considered welfare recipients or potential employers). Oversold to staff. What may be needed are locality based criteria for success which are negotiated with state offices. The result may be a compromise or multiple criteria. These in turn will have to be negotiated with Federal officials.

Criteria of success or failure may be the result of a compromise between multiple objectives, available technology and available fiscal or manpower resources. It is probably necessary to develop such "optimizing" criteria which permit a variety of alternatives which are each tailored to local conditions. These criteria cannot be developed at the national level and sent down the line to the local community. Nor can local agencies be entirely independent in their establishment of evaluative criteria. Communication must be from both directions. It will require a mechanism which is not currently in existence.

WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED?

The Conference pointed up many needs. A careful reading of the "implications" paragraphs in Section 3 may suggest a number of modifications required for the successful operation of the WIN Program at the local level. Although this report appears 6 months after the Conference, it is quite apparent that many of the problems identified in September of 1972 are still evident in April of 1973. Unless they are resolved WIN II may not make any "difference." Unfortunately, many of these operational problems are likely to remain unresolved for some time to come. They could not be resolved at the Conference, nor can they be resolved in this report.

Nevertheless, as one participant observed, the Conference reflected a "microcosm" of WIN II. For that reason, it is possible to make a number of suggestions to the Department of Labor, and to state and local WIN agencies. These suggestions will refer to: (1) the conception and utilization of research; (2) the establishment of peer-level information exchanges; (3) changes in the direction of communications; (4) encouragement of local initiative; and (5) design of staff development and training programs.

Conception and Utilization of Research

WHO INITIATES RESEARCH   The level at which research is initiated has direct implications for the kinds of questions that researchers ask, the reports they write, and the people to whom those reports are submitted. A significant proportion of the research on WIN I was initiated by the Department of Labor. Very little was initiated by states and almost none by operating agencies. If research fundings are to have any meaning for the staffs of operating agencies, it is necessary that they be involved in the initiating and framing of research problems. This is not to suggest a down-grading of the role that Federal agencies play in identifying researchable issues. It is to suggest the need to up-grade the involvement of local and state agencies. Together with Federal officials at the Central and Regional office level, they should be involved in framing sets of new questions and seeking answers that would have utility at multiple levels. Such questions as:

- What difference does it make if one follows this procedure or that?
- Under what circumstances does a certain approach work?

- Who makes it work?
- Who benefits?
- When are the benefits accrued; when are they identifiable?
- What are the costs; to the agency, to the community, to the state, to the Federal Government?

DOUBLE
FEEDBACK
These questions suggest the need for heavier emphasis on the use of the techniques of evaluative research. They also suggest the need to evaluate evaluation. The implications of research findings should be evaluated not only by those in policy or central administrative positions, but also by those who are involved at the day-to-day operational level of the program. This means that researchers must feedback their findings to policy makers, administrators, and line staff. It also means that they should get feedback from personnel at each of those levels on the utility and the applicability of their findings. A double feedback system of this sort might result in a considerably altered set of relationships between researchers and the consumers of their research. It should also result in more realistic expectations for that research and more intelligent utilization of it.

FACILITATOR
ROLE
Double feedback may not be possible without the creation of a new facilitator role; one that links the researcher to the consumer of research findings. Few highly competent researchers are skilled in dissemination of their findings. Few are able to communicate them to multiple audiences. Few operational level personnel are able to understand the technical aspects of research or to translate research findings into guidelines and practice principles. The communication of research findings and the translation of those findings into operational guidelines require special skill and new technical expertise.

"Dropping the report on the desk and running" is no longer possible. It was never desirable. Traditionally accepted research reports, professional papers, and monographs may be things of the past. New media such as two-way TV, cassette tapes, programmed instructional manuals and simulations may be more appropriate and effective ways of transmitting information. The creation of conferences, dialogues, seminars and workshops are other approaches. None of these have been adequately explored to date.

Peer Level Information Exchanges

ACROSS AGENCY
LINES

Knowledge relevant to operations need not be dependent on the findings of research alone. Operational level personnel have considerable expertise which may never appear in the literature, and which is rarely shared across agency lines. Exchanges of information on procedures, processes, successes and failures are essential. WIN staffs employed by social service agencies or by employment security commissions should have regular opportunities to communicate. At the minimal level what may be needed are uniform reporting and recording forms, the exchange of memos, field visits from one agency to another, periodic rap sessions. What may also be needed are regularized case conferences in which staffs of both agencies engage in problem solving activities around a particular client or in relationship to a particular employer. A few WIN agencies report successful "loaner" staff arrangements, in which one or more persons from the Department of Social Service perform their tasks on the site of the Employment Office, and vice versa. Several agencies have reported success with joint project teams, in which staff from two or more agencies work across organizational boundaries on specified tasks or on the needs of actual and prospective WIN enrollees.

ACROSS
COMMUNITY AND
STATE LINES

Successes or failures should further be communicated across community and state lines. Problems resolved in Lansing may suggest similar approaches for Flint. More than one conference participant concluded that the most useful aspects of the Ann Arbor meeting was the opportunity to talk with peers facing similar problems in other communities. Although conditions differ from state to state, and from community to community, there are sufficient similarities to warrant a more regularized exchange mechanism. "Your supervisor can keep telling you how and what to do," admitted one counselor, "but when you hear it from another counselor who knows he's got a workable approach, it means a lot more."

Communicating Up and Down the Line

A TWO-WAY
STREET

The pressure of start-up time in the first few months of WIN II almost required a process of top-down communication. The implications of the legislation had to be spelled out in the form of regulations and guidelines. Procedural and policy directives had to be established at the central office level between HEW and DOL, transmitted to

the regions and modified at that level, and subsequently transmitted to
state and local agencies. Reports from the states in Region 5 indicate that
this one-way flow has been largely corrected for. Communication is now much
more appropriately directed up and down the line. People at the bottom,
however, are still unsure that they are being heard, that their suggestions,
recommendations, disagreements and complaints are having any effects. One
conferee writes, "For a while I thought they were hearing us, but there's no
way of collectively getting through. It still doesn't feel like a two-way
street."

NEGOTIATIONS AS COMMUNICATION   What may be required is a system whereby staff at each
level can communicate program objectives, difficulties
and outcomes with other staff up and down the line. A performance by ob-
jectives system would permit workers and administrators at all levels to
negotiate around procedures, outcomes and objectives. While negotiated
agreements might differ from state to state and within each state, nego-
tiated agreements might have a better chance of being adhered to. "Staff
can circumvent or sabotage any administrative directive," admitted an old
hand at manpower programs. "No matter what we say they should do, they
develop their own criteria for success or failure. And they can blame their
own slowdowns on any number of variables over which we have no control."

Encouraging Local Initiative

PLANNED VARIATION   Instituting a performance by objective approach would
result in considerable variation in measurable outcomes
and in processes and procedures used in various locales. Yet the outcomes
would be specified and would be measured. This is undoubtedly as it should
be. It is in consonance with the Administration's approach to new Federalism
and local initiative. It permits local variation in relationship to local
circumstances, and it may reduce what one conference participant called "the
illegal way in which we operate." The regulations always embellish on the
intent of the law. And the local adaptations always ignore those elements
of the regulations which are inconvenient or impossible to put into practice.
What you've got at the local level are a bunch of illegal programs operating
under the guise of Federal mandate. Why not recognize what you've got, and
make it legal?"

Why not indeed, and why not capitalize on local initiative, resource-
fulness and intelligence?

Training and Staff Development

PROBLEM FOCUSSED These suggestions imply a further need for ongoing **prob-**
CONTINUING
EDUCATION **lem** focussed continuing education of staff at many levels.

Learning what others do, learning how to do things better,
and developing practice-oriented skills are all educational concerns. "What
our staff needs is know-how," remarked an administrator from Wisconsin.
"If your staff doesn't know <u>how</u> to do something, they won't even know <u>what</u>
to do."

Unfortunately, too many training sessions are abstracted from reality.
As many conference participants complained, many training sessions during the
first few months of WIN II were procedure oriented rather than problem oriented.
Practitioners and administrators at all levels should be involved in the iden-
tification of problems amenable to correction through education and the devel-
opment of new skills. They should participate not only in the definition of
educational concerns, but should participate actively in the educational
experience itself.

ACTIVE   if the WIN Conference pointed out little else, it made
PARTICIPATION
clear the need for active learner involvement in the learn-
ing process. An effective learner-oriented staff development or continuing
education program would build on the current skills of the learner, would
permit experimentation, and would encourage self-directed learning. No con-
tinuing education program can be successful unless it is based on the life
and professional experiences of its adult participants.

Lessons From the Conference

Among the major lessons learned from the conference   were the needs for
new approaches to: research conceptualization and utilization; information
exchanges; communication; the encouragement of local initiative; and training
and staff development. A further lesson is that no single conference should
have been expected to accomplish all these functions. In many ways, too much
was expected and too little gained.

In other ways, much was gained. The Conference may very well have made a difference. Despite its shortcomings, it provided an opportunity for policy makers, for researchers, for state and local administrators, for operational level people, and for academicians to meet in dialogue. It led to the process of exchange and communication across community, state, and administrative lines that did not previously exist. It provided a much needed opportunity for operational staff to get away from their day-to-day problems, to evaluate their situations against those of others and to get a more realistic fix on the possible as well as the desirable. Whatever the frustrations of their work, most conference participants returned home knowing that

> The day is short, and the work is great. It is not your duty to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it

> from the Talmud, Pirke Avot

OTHER CONTINUING EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

The University of Michigan School of Social Work Continuing Education Program
and the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations conduct periodic confer-
ences and training programs for personnel in manpower and human service
agencies.   Recently conducted programs have dealt with: The Separation of
Services from Income Maintenance in Public Welfare; Grantsmanship and Pro-
posal Writing; Management by Objectives; Interagency Techniques; Strategies
in Job Development; Building a Resource Base at the Community Level; Strategies
for Community Organization; Crisis Intervention; Short Term Therapies; Alter-
natives in Work With Alcoholics and Drug Abusers, etc.

    Both credit and non-credit offerings are possible.   Consultation is
available in staff development and problems of agency management and inter-
organizational cooperation on a contract basis.

    For further information, contact:

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            Ann Arbor, Michigan   48104
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