

ACTION UPDATE

May 1, 1979

National Youth Service Concept Sparks Debate

With the armed services unable to meet recruitment goals, there is talk of reinstating the draft. The controversy over compulsory military service has spawned a variety of alternative plans from legislators and private groups, most of whom agree that some form of national service for youth could be an answer.

Interested government agencies will take a hard look at various proposals for a national youth service, examining the cost expenditures and the general philosophy of each model. One of the key issues will be whether to make such a service voluntary or compulsory.

Speaking at a United Way regional conference in San Diego in February, ACTION Director Sam Brown said that if there is a national service program, it should be voluntary. "Instead of reinstating the draft," said Brown, "we should expand the notion of service, so that

young people can choose military service or community service."

Brown said he would like to see a program that would provide youth "with the opportunity to serve and help make our society a just society."

He said that any national service program should respond to the critical problems of youth and unemployment. "For I am persuaded," he said, "that the future of this nation depends upon finding imaginative ways to expand the alternatives available to young Americans."

One example of a national youth service model is ACTION's Youth Community Service program (YCS) in Syracuse, N.Y., begun in March, 1978, as a model to test the concept of a voluntary community-based youth service program on a nationwide scale. "This is a way," said



Brown, "of meeting community needs through the involvement of young people in volunteer service."

Over 1,000 volunteers are helping to meet basic human, social and environmental needs in the community through YCS, which was designed to provide service opportunities for unemployed youth. Through YCS, volunteers are getting work-world experience while providing needed services to the community.

Part of ACTION's current budget request is funding for research and development on a possible national youth service. The request is one portion of the agency's proposed FY 79 supplemental funding pending before Congress. One of the purposes of the research is to test the viability of a national youth service.

Brown explained that any agency initiative on

national youth service "will be consistent with the American values of voluntarism, community service and maximum freedom of choice for all young people. "In principle, it seems to me," he said, "service is freely given. If it is compulsory, it becomes servitude."

A major report issued recently by the Committee for the Study of National Service urges every young American to give at least one year of service, either military or civilian, to the nation.

The Committee is headed by Theodore Hesburgh, President of the University of Notre Dame, and by Willard Wirtz, former Secretary of Labor. The project was sponsored by the Potomac Institute under a grant from the Ford Foundation and calls for a federal volunteer program and more study of compulsory service.

AFSCME Re-elected by 4 to 1 Margin



By a near 4-to-1 ratio, ACTION employees have re-elected the American Federation of State, Local and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) as their exclusive bargaining agent.

On March 15, headquarters and field employees voted 434 to 111 to retain AFSCME which has represented them for more than five years.

The election was to be a run-off between AFSCME and the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), but NTEU withdrew leaving AFSCME to run unopposed.

Last year the two unions were on the ACTION employee election ballot. AFSCME won 299 to 281, but 19 votes for "no union" left it short of a majority.

The statement was to be settled by another run-off election. However, it was delayed a year while the Department of Labor (DOL) investigated the last election results.

AFSCME had appealed that four illegible ballots not be counted, arguing that the identities of the voters were not clear. DOL investigators eventually were satisfied with the identities and ordered the ballots counted.

The four ballots yielded one vote for AFSCME, one for NTEU, and two for no union--still no majority for AFSCME.

At the same time, NTEU made several charges that ACTION had shown favoritism toward AFSCME. After six months of investigation, DOL dismissed the charges.

President Supports Peace Corps As Part of ACTION

Since the introduction of the Humphrey Bill in the Senate last year the Administration has been deeply involved in the planning of a new International Development Cooperation Administration (IDCA). The proposal for an IDCA included the Peace Corps with the Agency for International Development, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and a new Institute for Scientific and Technological Cooperation.

In announcing his general plans for IDCA this January, the President decided not to move the Peace Corps to the IDCA, subject to an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) review of several organizational options for ACTION. Earlier this month the President decided to retain ACTION as an independent agency but with increased autonomy for Peace Corps and strengthened management arrangements.

On April 10, 1979 the House of Representatives approved a bill called the International Development Cooperation Act of 1979 which would include Peace Corps in the new IDCA. Under this plan, Peace Corps would function as a semi-autonomous agency within IDCA, governed by a Board of Directors (whose Chairman would be the IDCA Administrator) and a Director. The bill also provides that if IDCA is not established, the Peace Corps would become an independent agency.

On April 13, 1979, the President transmitted to the Congress a reorganization plan to create an IDCA. The President's plan for IDCA does not include Peace Corps, Deputy Director of OMB, John P. White explained in a letter to Senator Alan Cranston (D.Calif.). "The President has decided that ACTION should be retained as the principal agency for administering volunteer service programs," White said, "and that effec-

tiveness of the Peace Corps will be enhanced by upgrading the organizational status within ACTION." White continued, "We also believe that the decision to upgrade and strengthen the status of the Peace Corps can be accomplished more quickly and effectively within ACTION." White also made clear that "the Administration is opposed to transferring volunteer service programs from ACTION to other federal programs."

Shortly after the President's decision, ACTION Director Sam Brown said, "We now have a clear affirmation of the President's personal support for the revitalization of ACTION and of a much more autonomous and visible Peace Corps within ACTION."

The House also voted to authorize the Peace Corps for FY 1980 at the Administration's requested funding level of \$105.4 million.

Celeste favors "a strong Peace Corps as a joint venture in a strong ACTION."

Brown commented that, "many of the votes in the House for the transfer of Peace Corps to IDCA may have been prompted by a sense of uncertainty about the Administration's position on whether or not Peace Corps should be included." Brown concluded "The President's decision should lay to rest any further questions on the position of the Carter Administration."

The House bill now goes to the Senate, where it will be referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations for further consideration, and possibly to the Committee on Government Operations, which has jurisdiction over reorganizations of the Executive Branch.

"The President's decision is a firm signal to the staff of the ACTION agency that the President believes in what they are doing," according to ACTION Deputy Director Mary King. "His decision will give the Peace Corps Director the authority to run the Peace Corps, while maintaining ACTION and directing it to help strengthen the Administration's commitment to voluntary service," King noted.

An Executive Order is being considered as the most effective means of implementing the President's decision.

"IDCA is a sound and timely notion" said Peace Corps Director Dick Celeste, "but the Peace Corps' distinctive mission can best be fulfilled with the other voluntary programs of the government." Celeste said he favors "a strong ACTION."

The President's decision which was communicated to Capitol Hill last week, is seen as a positive opportunity by John Lewis, Associate Director for Domestic and Anti-Poverty Operations. "The President's decision reflects his determination to boost ACTION as a vital umbrella agency for federal volunteer programs," according to Lewis.

NSVP Forum: Find Out What Is, Not What Ought To Be

Get away from the textbooks and get into the communities. Let the body, not just the mind, experience what is going on. Then find out what is, not merely what ought to be.

These were the ideas discussed at a national forum which explored ways high school and college students could learn while serving their communities.

The forum was conducted by ACTION's National Student Volunteer Program (NSVP), March 8-11, in Washington, D.C., and attended by about 200 educators, students and other interested parties.

On the domestic side, the Senate Committee on Labor and Education voted unanimously on April 11 to report favorably to the Senate a bill to extend VISTA, Special Volunteer Programs, the National Student Volunteer Program and University Year for ACTION until September 30, 1981. Administrative expenses for the agency would be authorized through September 30, 1980. Last year, Congress extended the Older American Volunteer Programs through September 30, 1981.

The Senate committee defeated an attempt to send the Peace Corps to the State Department, VISTA to the Community Service Administration, and OAVP to the Administration on Aging.

However, the Committee also voted to request the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee to provide a report on appropriate placement of ACTION's volunteer programs within the Executive Branch by June 4, and agreed not to bring the bill extending the authorizations to the floor of the Senate until the report has been received.

NSVP provides technical assistance and training for about 2,600 service-learning programs.

"The complexities of today's society force us into the awareness that we're not just encapsulated bags of skin dragging around dreary little egos," said Dr. Jean Houston, the president of the Association for Humanistic Psychology and the director of the Foundation for Mind Research.

"There are multiple ways of knowing things," she continued. "We have a potential for thinking with the whole body, for thinking in images, not just in words. And developing the whole person



Margery Tabankin, Julian Bond and John Lewis

leads to personal empowerment and the capacity to empower others. One of the few places where we find it really works is out of the challenge and resonance that occurs in service-learning.”

“Man does not think by head alone,” stressed Alec Dickson, founder of Great Britain’s counterpart to the Peace Corps and VISTA. “Universities probably operate at five percent of the human potential. Students spend their time taking in, taking in, without any opportunity to give back. The result is intellectual constipation.”

Dickson maintains that educational institutions have more than one role to fill. As important as the rendering of knowledge is the “humane application of knowledge to enable young people by the thousands to find that their lives have got a meaning – that they are serving something greater than themselves.”

Georgia State Senator Julian Bond credits an

early experience in service-learning with greatly influencing the way his life developed. As a high school student, he was encouraged to volunteer weekends to help inner-city residents of Philadelphia rehabilitate their homes.

Bond remembered painting and cleaning run-down houses. “I learned a great deal about how people lived in a big city. It was a unique experience that stayed with me from then to now,” he said.

ACTION Director Sam Brown said it was important to bring community concerns into the university. “Students should be encouraged to know and discuss social injustice as it exists, not in the abstract with no relationship to the community,” he said.

“Instead of providing an academic overlay on the community, the resources of the university should serve the people in the community. If we lose sight of that, we lose sight of the whole concept of service-learning.”

Third World Energy Program Planned

Peace Corps is involved in an innovative and far reaching program with the Third World rural poor to help meet their energy needs more efficiently.

Beginning this summer, Peace Corps volunteers and host country counterparts will survey energy uses, needs and resources in Third World rural villages. The survey results will help identify areas most in need of basic energy projects. The next step is to design projects that help the poor utilize their own energy resources more effectively.

The energy program will also develop skill training models for Peace Corps volunteers later assigned to full-time energy projects. These same systems can also be used by host country volunteer agencies.

The three year program evolved at Peace Corps initiative with the Overseas Development Council (ODC), a Washington, D.C. based group that studies Third World problems, to gather new information on Third World energy uses and needs.

The program is being coordinated in the Peace Corps' Office of Program and Training Coordination (OPTC) under ODC energy specialist Paul Jankura. The Agency for International Development has provided OPTC with a \$1.5 million supplemental grant for energy programming and training.

ACTION's Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation will assist host country volunteer agencies to use the skill training models developed by the program.

With the approval and support of the host country, Peace Corps volunteers will team up with host country counterparts to collect data on current energy uses and needs in Third World

villages and on economic, social and cultural practices associated with these needs. Surveyors will also assess the potential of renewable energy sources in the village area.

At the beginning of each survey, a one-week, in-service workshop will orient participants to the study.

"This is the first systematic assessment of energy consumption patterns and needs in rural villages of less developed countries," Jankura says. "Up to this time, little has been known about village level energy consumption in developing countries. The information collected is critical, not only to the identification of specific projects, but also to the development of meaningful, long range plans and policies.

"The majority of the Third World poor live in areas not reached by conventional energy strategies such as generation of electricity," he continues. Small scale renewable technologies — wind, water and sun — appear to meet these energy needs. In addition they may be affordable and understandable at the local level, given proper instruction and development."

While putting actual technologies in place, the energy projects developed will produce valuable information about the application of the technologies. This information will help decide where and how to replicate the projects. Over the three-year period, volunteers and host country participant counterparts are expected to implement projects in approximately 100 villages in 15-20 countries.

The skill training systems for future Peace Corps volunteers, which the program will help develop, include the following areas: construction, operation and maintenance for a specific technology, approaches for community development and cross-cultural awareness, and facility in local language.

ACTION Honors the Nation's Oldest VISTA Volunteer



Governor George Nigh of Oklahoma autographs the book, "Our Country," which was presented to Lewis Leach as a gift from ACTION. Looking on (l. to r.) are Charles Peak, Oklahoma State Program Director; Nancy Hales, former chief of the Governor's Office on Volunteerism; Zeke Rodriguez, ACTION Deputy Director in Region VI; Lola Ford, Leach's VISTA Supervisor, Leach, Mary King and Betsy Irvin, Oklahoma State Program Officer.

"There's one thing that can lead to a long, healthy life," says Lewis Leach of Gibson, Okla. "And that is a hard day's work."

At 83, Leach is the country's oldest VISTA volunteer.

He was honored for his three years of VISTA service in February at the state capitol in Oklahoma City by ACTION Deputy Director Mary King and Gov. George Nigh. King was visiting the southwest during VISTA/Peace Corps month to salute VISTA and Peace Corps volunteers and to recruit new volunteers.

"Lewis Leach is one of our country's resources," King said. "Like the more than a quarter of a million older Americans who volunteer through ACTION programs, he's learned much in his years of living, and he is now sharing his knowledge."

Leach was also on hand to greet President Carter in Elk City, Okla., during the President's arrival in that city in March to address a town meeting. Carter invited Leach and others to ride in the Presidential motorcade through Elk City.

A former constable, town marshall and city judge in Gibson, Leach says he joined VISTA because, "I just wanted to help my fellow man. VISTA is a great program because it benefits many elderly in our state."

As a volunteer with the Eastern Oklahoma Human Development Corp., he says he helped bridge the generation gap by working with children and teaching them about agriculture.

"I enjoy teaching younger kids," he says. "We're in bad need of agricultural teaching. The younger generation doesn't know anything about it. We're going to need young farmers and need them bad."

Regional Staff Welcomes PWIP Meetings

"I feel better about coming to work every day, and I think everyone else around here does, too," says Samuel Velez, training officer in Region IX, San Francisco.

Velez attributes the new employee attitude in that regional office to implementation of the Participatory Work Improvement Program (PWIP), designed to create a more rewarding work environment. (See September 21 issue of ACTION Update)

Like other staff members in that region, Velez feels that regional director Loni Hancock's enthusiastic support for PWIP has a lot to do with the program's success.

The PWIP meetings, held once a month, are attended by the entire staff. So far, three meetings have been held.

Pat Twohig, program operations officer, emphasizes that the PWIP meetings are different from regular staff meetings. He says everyone is equal - there are no supervisors or subordinates-

during PWIP meetings. This atmosphere, he says, is carrying over into working relationships.

"Even the tables are arranged so that no one dominates the sessions," Twohig says. "This assures a climate where all employees are willing to become involved in dealing with regional issues."

"I really like the fact that important information about the agency is being shared by all levels of staff," says Delores Priem, a former secretary in Region IX who recently became a state program officer trainee in that region. "The range of subjects we cover - from doing something about the room temperature to taking on headquarters over evaluations - makes the meetings interesting."

In order to further familiarize themselves with the PWIP concept, staff members have viewed a Foster Grandparent and a VISTA training film. In addition, administrative staff is planning site visits to domestic programs in the San Francisco Bay Area.

ACTION JOB APPOINTMENTS

Beginning with this issue, ACTION Update will periodically list recent appointments to previously announced job vacancies at ACTION. Below are appointments filed in February and March 1979.

Ernest H. Daniel, Administrative Officer, GS-11, VA DO8-66, Office of Recruitment and Communications, Chicago, IL.

Patricia A. Taylor, Secretary (Typing), GS-9, VA AF8-54, Office of Administration and Finance, Office of the Assistant Director

Wanda Pleasant, Clerk (Typing), GS-301-5, VA SU9-3, Office of Policy and Planning, Budget Division

Louis Panarale, Supervisory Editor, GS-1082-12, VA SU8-10, Office of Recruitment and Communications, Communications Division, Public Affairs Branch

Marie I. Rodriguez, Executive Secretary (Spanish & Stenography), FS-318-6, VA 109-4, International Operations, Latin America Re-

gional Office

Lizzie A. Irving, Payroll Clerk Trainee, GS-544-6, VA UPMO-78-8, Office of Administration and Finance, Staff Training

James Daniels, Jr. Computer Specialist, GS-334-12, VA AF-9-2, Office of Administration and Finance, Computer Services

Sharon D. Jenkins, Secretary (Typing), GS-318-5, VA AF-9-3, Office of Administration and Finance, Computer Services

Joanne Morton, Secretary (Typing), GS-318-5, VA SU8-30, Office of Recruitment and Communications, Management Division

Roberta J. Sutherland, Planning System Officer, GS-301-14, VA SU8-24, Office of Policy and Planning, Planning Division

RSVP Still Going Strong, and Looking to Improve

RSVP has come a long way since it began in 1971 with about 1,000 volunteers in 11 projects across the nation. During April, ACTION paid tribute to RSVP and to the volunteers who made it all happen.

Some of the first volunteers are still active. Clara Abrams of Philadelphia is still volunteering at 95, and Jessie Hemphill of Wichita has been putting in a steady 18 to 20 hours a week for RSVP as a bookkeeper.

Of the original RSVP directors, Margaret Stouffer of Eugene is still serving. Earl Tuers joined RSVP in Tulsa only 10 months after the project began there, and he is still its director.



Some other directors who have been with RSVP since the start recently described what they thought were some of the best qualities of RSVP volunteers. They cited the volunteers' willingness to take on more responsibility and to make RSVP better known to the community.

And what about the future? The directors say they have high hopes of getting more males, handicapped persons, shut-ins and professionals onto the RSVP volunteer rosters.

"In the beginning," said director Stouffer of RSVP in Eugene, "we were concerned with having enough volunteer bodies. Now we are involving the minds of the volunteers and they are responding with enthusiasm."

Staff Spotlight: Bruce Cohen

Peripatetic may best describe Bruce J. Cohen, the recently named regional service center director in Chicago.

Webster's definition of that fancy word is almost whimsical. "Movements hither and thither" is how the dictionary describes it.

And if you have to direct a staff of more than 50 recruitment and communications personnel throughout a 10-state midwest area, as Cohen does, you have to be on the move.

Cohen, 33, is one of a growing number of ex-volunteers who serve in administrative positions with ACTION.

In appointing Cohen, Larry Brown, ACTION assistant director for the Office of Recruitment and Communications, remarked that "Bruce clearly embodies the twin commitments we need: strong identification with our antipoverty and development programs, and hard-headed management abilities which reflect commitment to the programs."

As Chicago Service Center Director, Cohen says he welcomes the challenge to improve Peace Corps and VISTA recruitment techniques. The midwest region currently recruits and places more than 25 percent of all Peace Corps and VISTA volunteers.

"It's simply a matter of fine-tuning some of our operations," he says. "Things like more training of personnel and better communications between the units. I want to make sure that everybody is as well-trained and informed of what's happening as possible, that the good employees are properly recognized."

Cohen also says he approaches his job as a government administrator mindful of today's

common theme of "trying to do more with less, which is what we're all facing."

As one who has worked himself up the ranks – from volunteer to recruiter to area manager to service center director – Cohen sees increasing the participation of more minority volunteers as one of his highest priorities.

"There is not enough minority involvement in Peace Corps and VISTA," he says, "These are

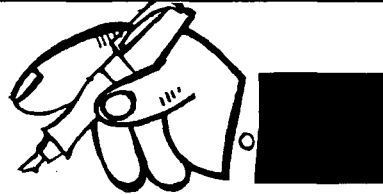


federal programs that are using the taxpayer's money, and the minorities need to know what they are about, what the programs are achieving, and how they can participate."

As a Peace Corps volunteer, Cohen taught English to high school students in Gafsa, Tunisia. Upon completion of his two-year service in 1969, he travelled extensively in the Middle East visiting Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Lebanon. He also toured England, France and Germany.

Civil Service Reform

Merit Pay Increases for Managers and Supervisors



Under the Civil Service Reform Act, managers and supervisors in grades GS-13 through GS-15 will no longer receive automatic within-grade increases. They will be eligible, instead, for merit pay increases directly linked to performance quality.

Managers and supervisors will receive a minimum of one-half of the annual cost-of-living pay increases for federal workers, but this minimum can be increased by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

The funds for merit raises will come from a combination of the remainder of the annual cost-of-living increases and from funds formerly used for step increases and quality step increases

for these employees.

Factors taken into account in awarding merit pay increases include cost efficiency, timeliness of performance, and improvements in efficiency, productivity, and quality of work or service.

All managers and supervisors affected by the new regulations will be brought into the merit pay system by October 1, 1981. The Personnel Management Division, with the assistance of OPM, is currently considering all aspects of the new system in order to develop a policy and thereby implement an agency system before that date.

For additional information call Gwen Hoover at ext. 45806.

(cont. from pg. 10)

Cohen returned to the United States for graduate studies at Illinois State University in Normal, Ill. Next stop was California where he briefly taught French and social studies in the Los Angeles high school system.

In 1973 Cohen joined ACTION as a recruiter in the Indianapolis office of the Chicago Service Center. Later he served as acting area manager in Miami, and in 1976 was promoted to area manager in Atlanta.

In addition to his work with ACTION, Cohen has been active with the Big Brothers Association in Indiana and Florida and with a number of college placement associations in the south.

Cohen says his basic objective as recruitment director is to bring as many people as possible from the midwest into Peace Corps and VISTA programs while increasing public awareness of all ACTION's programs.

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ASSISTANT FOR MINORITY RECRUITMENT

Ophelia Speight, a former VISTA volunteer, has been appointed special assistant to the director of ORC for minority recruitment. She will coordinate and implement minority recruitment goals and activities in headquarters and in the field.

Before coming to ACTION, Speight was a public information officer for Joint Action in Community Service in Washington, D.C., a national volunteer organization providing career, legal and educational counseling to recent male Job Corps graduates.

Earlier she was a University Year in ACTION intern at the National Graduate University in Washington, D.C. where she was studying management. In 1974-5 she was a VISTA volunteer in Missouri.

Speight holds a B.A. in international politics from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

EVALUATION SPECIALIST IN OPP

Charles "Chuck" Crawford, the new evaluation specialist in the Office of Policy and Planning, will study and make recommendations about various aspects of ACTION's domestic programs.

Crawford has been with the agency since its inception in 1971 and served on the VISTA staff for six years prior to its incorporation into ACTION. At that time, and also during his first year on the ACTION staff, he managed regional volunteer support activities.

Before assuming his new position, Crawford handled data management activities in the Office of Administration and Finance. Earlier he super-

vised payroll functions for the domestic volunteers.

Crawford also served on the director's reorganization task force, on which he helped set up the Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation and establish the Office of Recruitment and Communications.

Crawford is Secretary of AFSCME Local 2027 at ACTION and is a member of the Participatory Work Improvement Program and the Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee.

PLANNING SYSTEMS OFFICER

Robin Sutherland is the new planning systems officer in the Office of Policy and Planning, Planning Division. She will coordinate a variety of operations including the zero-based budgeting process, management information systems in the Office of Administration and Finance, and current year operational planning systems.

She is also the planning liaison with the Offices of Administration and Finance, Compliance, Legislative and Governmental Affairs, General Counsel and the Director.

Sutherland, who has been with ACTION since 1971, has a varied planning and management background.

She was an auditor/inspector in the Office of Compliance, North Carolina state program director, program specialist in the Office of Domestic and Anti-Poverty Operations, special assistant to the Director of VISTA, and researcher/writer in the Office of the Director.

Before joining ACTION Sutherland taught at the American University in Beirut, Lebanon, University of Virginia in Charlottesville, and Catholic University in Washington, D.C.