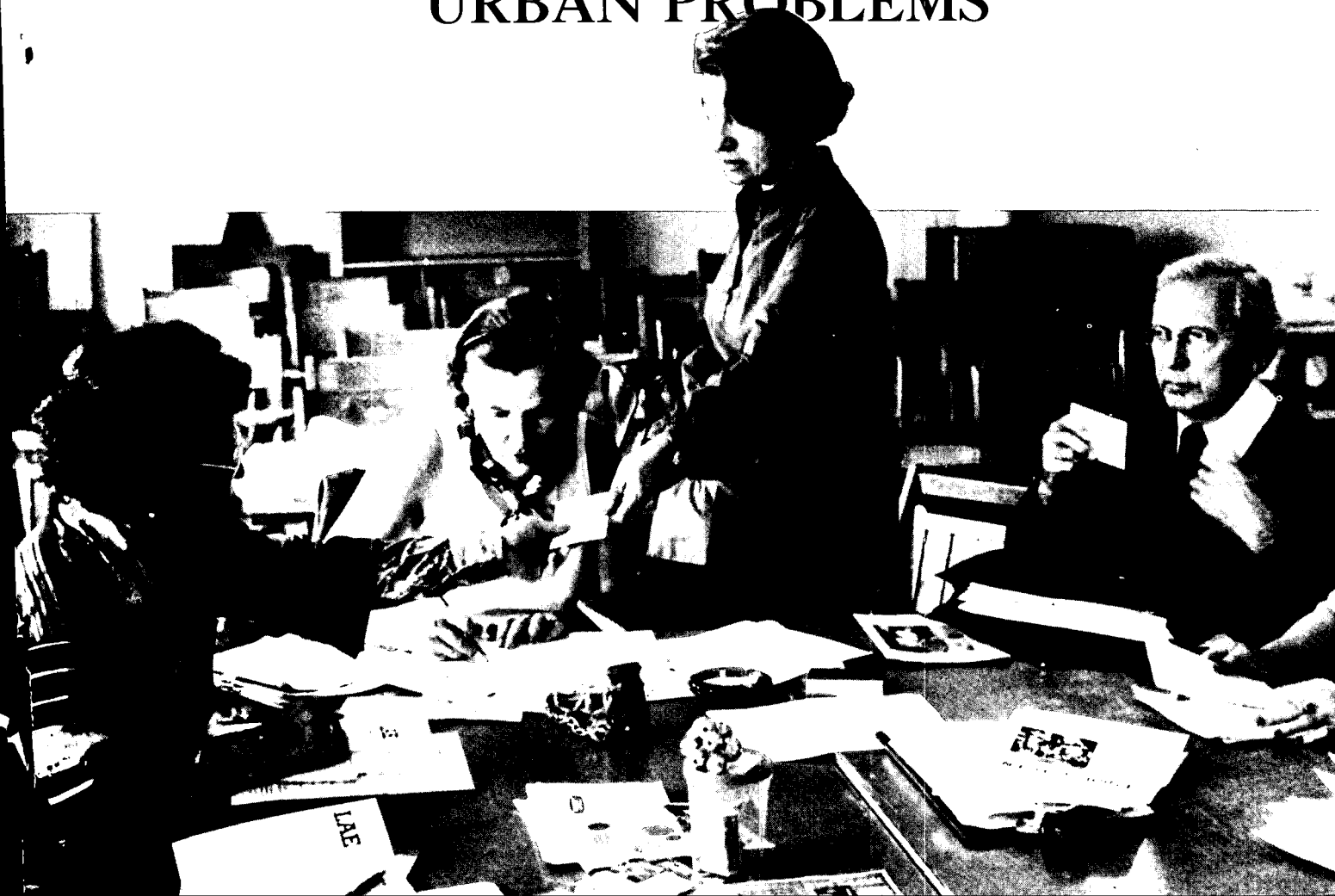


ACTION

March 21, 1980

update...

**LOCAL
PARTICIPATION--
KEY FACTOR
IN FIGHTING
URBAN PROBLEMS**



OPP Leads Efforts Against Urban Ills



In March 1978, President Carter declared a "war" on urban problems. He called for a coalition of all levels of government, the private sector, neighborhood and voluntary associations in an effort to strengthen the nation's cities and communities.

The poverty that exists in inner cities continues to exclude urban residents from plugging into the system. Poverty perpetuates itself, and the time has come to break the cycle.

For several years, ACTION has attacked these concerns through a series of innovative urban programs. The agency's Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) has led ACTION's effort to combat the oppression of urban ills.

According to OPP staff member, Don Smith, "Our urban initiatives have shown that with the proper tools and support, people in urban areas can work together to solve their own problems. We've come quite a distance in the past few years."

A major step was made in 1975 when OPP initiated a program to address the special needs of people living on low or fixed incomes. ACTION awarded a one-year \$18,000 grant that year to the Denver (Colo.) Commission on Community Relations for a Fixed Income Consumer Counseling (FICC) program.

Through workshops, personal counseling, lectures and written material, provided by community volunteers, fixed-and-low-income people learned basic survival techniques in matters of income assistance, budgeting, nutrition, energy conservation, housing and legal aid.

"FICC proved to have a major impact on those people it was designed to help," Smith says, "particularly the elderly. Over 20,000 people received

vitally needed assistance through FICC."

The Denver FICC was refunded for the next three years, and in addition, new FICC programs were launched in 1978 in Atlanta, Savannah and Athens, Ga. and in Santa Ana, Calif.

"Now we have incorporated the FICC demonstration under the Retired Senior Volunteer Program," Smith says, noting that over 70 percent of people living on fixed incomes are over 65 years old.

ACTION recently provided \$100,000 in agency reserve funds to 10 RSVP projects for a FICC program in each of ACTION's 10 regions (See January 11, 1980 issue of Update).

Another initiative took place in 1977, with the development of the Cincinatti, Ohio, Management Assistance Program (MAP). Sponsored by the Cincinatti United Way/Community Chest, and originally funded with an \$18,000 OPP grant, MAP enabled Cincinatti business executives from major companies to serve as part-time volunteer consultants, helping to teach badly needed managerial skills to leaders of such inner-city neighborhood and grass-roots community organizations as day care and community centers, programs for the elderly and handicapped, and housing coalitions.

Over the past two years alone, some 100 corporate volunteers have provided assistance to over 50 community organizations, according to Cincinatti MAP Director Mac Johnson.

The Cincinatti United Way has now assumed funding for that city's MAP; and United Way of America is encouraging its directors, nationwide, to develop local programs.

(cont. page 6)

Trini Garza Appointed Director of Region VI

Trini Garza, a Dallas businessman and engineer, has been named ACTION's director of Region VI.

At the swearing-in, Director Sam Brown congratulated Garza on his appointment and noted that "sharing of one's self takes on many forms, and although Trini was never formally a volunteer, he gives countless hours of his time to many local organizations in Dallas and throughout Texas. His dedication and service to the community suggest a spirit of caring and giving which is what we want and need in this agency. After all, this is what ACTION's all about..."

From his headquarters in Dallas, Garza, 47, will administer the service of more than 30,000 volunteers and 35 employees in a five-state region made up of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico and Oklahoma. Some 27,500 RSVPs, 2,400 FGPs, 400 VISTAs and 300 SCPs serve in the region.

Garza was born in Stockdale, Texas and grew up in Floresville. He attended San Antonio College and graduated with a degree in engineering from Texas A & M University in College Station. Garza worked at Kelley Air Force Base in San Antonio in the early 50s. He has been a resident of Dallas since 1961.

With his wife, the former Benilde Mendoza holding the bible, Garza was sworn in by the agency's Director of Personnel, Tom Hyland, at ACTION headquarters on February 11.

At the reception following the ceremony, Brown introduced Mrs. Garza and three of their four children to the guests. "I imagine," he said, "that the support and understanding of his family contributed enormously to Trini's success as a businessman and leader of the Hispanic community in Texas."

More than thirty people attended the gathering, including Congressman Martin Frost (D-Texas) from Garza's home district; Dr. Graciela Olivarez former director of the Community Services Administration; Ambassador Esteban Torrez, Special Assistant to the President for Hispanic Affairs; Ambassador Abelardo Valdez, Chief of Protocol and many representatives of the Hispanic community in Washington.

The first Mexican-American trustee elected to the Dallas school board in 1970, Garza is currently a member of the Dallas County Democratic Forum, Hispanic American Democrats, Mexican-American Democrats and chairman of the Dallas Southwest Voter Registration and Educational Project.

Garza is active in the Greater Dallas Community of Churches and several United Methodist-related organizations. He is also a member of the Dallas Assembly, director of the West Dallas Community Centers and president-elect of the Dallas Mexican Chamber of Commerce. A founding director of the Greater Dallas Community Relations Commission, Garza is also involved in the League of United Latin American Citizens and the American G.I Forum.

"Obviously, Trini has been a volunteer in so many capacities and for so many years... we are fortunate to have someone like him on our staff," said Karen Paget, acting director of Domestic Operations. "His extensive community experience reflects a deep commitment to the goals of ACTION."



Trini Garza is sworn in as director of Region VI.

Returned PC Volunteers Aid Bridge Rebuilding in Fiji

Most Peace Corps Volunteers return to the United States after their two or more years of service abroad, but their concern for the people with whom they have lived and worked generally continues. A small group of volunteers who served in Fiji are a good example of this Peace Corps commitment.

In the early 1970's, Peace Corps volunteers helped villagers on the Fijian island of Kadavu construct a suspension bridge over a river between the villages of Nalotu and Yawe. The bridge, which became known locally as the "Peace Corps Bridge," linked the southern end of the island with Richmond where the only school in the area was located. Its construction permitted children to get across the river to the school where other Peace Corps volunteers helped teach classes.

Last March, Cyclone Meli crashed through Fiji's southern islands, including Kadavu, killing more than 50 islanders, leaving about 15,000 homeless and demolishing all but the concrete supports of this bridge.

Shortly afterward, David Downes, one of the first Peace Corps volunteers to serve in Fiji, and now a staff member in the Office of Policy and Planning, initiated an article about the disaster in *Reconnection*, the newsletter for returned Peace Corps and VISTA volunteers.

In response to the article, 20 returned volunteers, most, but not all of whom had served in Fiji, sent in contributions totalling \$925.

At a ceremony, witnessed by Peace Corps Director Richard Celeste and a group of returned volunteers, Downes presented a check to cover the cost of rebuilding the bridge to Berenado Vunibobo, the Fiji ambassador to the United States and its permanent representative to the United Nations.

Calling on Vunibobo to accept the check on behalf of the people of Fiji, Downes said that "symbolically, the reconstruction of this bridge represents a reaffirmation of our commitment to the spirit of working together and of bridge-building between the people of the United States and the people of Fiji and other nations." He added his regret that because of the difficulty in contacting former volunteers, the check could not be larger.

Ambassador Vunibobo said he would bring the gift to the attention of his Prime Minister. He also noted that "the amount of the check doesn't matter much. The spirit in which it has been given counts more."

"I hope that there will be a continued presence of Peace Corps volunteers in Fiji for some time," Vunibobo added. "For us, the Peace Corps is the only significant assistance we receive from the United States."



David Downes, Ambassador Vunibobo, Richard Celeste.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT:
Bob Taylor



Getting more minorities into Peace Corps and VISTA, both as volunteers and staff, is Bob Taylor's major goal at ACTION. And most of his time and energy are devoted to this end.

Taylor, 37, is a member of Peace Corps staff and works for the Africa Region as a desk officer. He is currently on detail to the Office of Recruitment and Communications, where he is participating in a special effort involving the recruitment of minority volunteers into PC and VISTA.

However, Taylor's own entry into Peace Corps as a volunteer was something less than traditional. "I had an unfulfilling job with the state government of Illinois," says the 1964 graduate of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. "One day I was waiting for a friend in the lobby of a hotel in Chicago. I saw Sargent Shriver coming in, went up to him, introduced myself and told him I had applied and was anxious to join the Peace Corps. The next day I got a call from the Peace Corps placement office and was asked to serve in Guinea, West Africa.

"After three months of training at Southern University in Baton Rouge, La., I was on a plane headed for Guinea."

It was during this training period in early 1965, that Taylor first became aware of the disparity in the number of white and minority volunteers. Out of the 55 trainees, only five were black.

Initially, while serving in Guinea, he worked on an agricultural extension project. Several months

later, Taylor transferred to TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language.)

And ten years later in Washington, D.C. as PC desk officer for Niger, Chad, Upper Volta and Mali, Taylor found that the situation had not changed substantially. "There were more than 400 volunteers serving in those countries," he says. "And there were, at the most, only five blacks, two or three Orientals and no Hispanics.

"A change is long overdue. In December 1980, my five years with Peace Corps are up, but I'm still working as hard as I can to make the Peace Corps and VISTA more conscious of their responsibility to all minorities—black, Hispanic, Oriental, Native Americans. It's time to open the door."

Taylor feels that one of the most effective ways to recruit minorities is by using returned minority volunteers as recruitment and placement specialists and have them talk to potential volunteers. "It takes a minority to tell another minority what it's really like to be a volunteer...about the benefits of serving, the problems and advantages they will encounter as minority volunteers," he says.

"I would like to see more training contracts in minority institutions and communities. This will increase the number of minority volunteers. Also, cross-culturally, this type of training is excellent for whites as well. They learn a lot about getting along with people, no matter what their color. This is to their benefit if they are later assigned to a

predominantly black Third World country or community."

Taylor is careful to explain to blacks who are about to graduate, that their job and lifestyle expectations may be too high. "That degree is not automatically going to give them the Datsun 280-Z or the fancy apartment right away. Six months after they graduate, they may be disappointed.

"I explain the practical aspects of serving—that having PC and VISTA service on one's resume — the actual experience of doing a job and a proven ability to function — are excellent job references. Additionally, it serves as an invaluable preparation for life and career. On an emotional level I talk about the satisfaction of offering one's skills to people who need them," says Taylor. "After all, once you've been either a PC or VISTA volunteer, you'll never be the same. It does something to your psyche—something positive."

Born in Mobile, Ala., Taylor moved to Chicago with his parents at the age of four. "But, my sister and I went back to my grandparents' farm in Alabama every summer. It was always a wonderful experience. I have dual roots—rural southern and urban northern. It broadened my perspective and

gave me an understanding of both cultures," he explains. "I believe these exposures helped me in my service as a volunteer."

Minorities in ACTION (MIA), an organization made up of returned PC and VISTA minority volunteers, Taylor feels is the future of the agency if it ever plans to become representative of the nation. These volunteers are trying to raise the awareness of the minority public about the advantages of volunteering through Peace Corps and VISTA, as well as awareness within the agency of the need to increase the level of minority volunteers and staff.

"Many of the problems here are budgetary," says Taylor. "Larger federal agencies have entire staffs involved in the field of affirmative action. This is exactly why ACTION must work harder on a personal level to meet the needs of minorities, which in turn, benefit the agency itself.

"I think it's time we all looked to ourselves," he urges. "I appeal to all ACTION staff to take that extra time to talk to interested minorities. After all, in the best sense, we're all recruiters."

Urban Programs *(from page 2)*

Smith says, "Through MAP's help, the business community has come to realize that the poor have very real problems, and that these problems stem, not from laziness or ignorance, but from systematic exclusion from the rest of the community. The program has helped to pave the way for a real rapport among divergent segments of the community."

OPP funding has also enabled existing programs to continue or expand. A joint \$20,000 ACTION/National League of Cities grant, for example, was awarded in April, 1978 to the Community Board Program (CBP) in San Francisco to expand a neighborhood mediation service to handle disputes out of court.

"The grant enabled the project to expand into two additional neighborhoods," says CBP staff specialist Shirley Fogarino. "In the Bernal Heights district, the board mediated between the police and a group of youths who had defaced some pub-

lic property. Mediation hearings showed the vandalism to be a by-product of the youths' resentment of what they felt was continued police harassment and their anger over lack of recreational facilities in the area."

The hearings opened up a dialogue between the youths and the police, which ultimately resulted in a more harmonious relationship between both groups, and in the reopening of a city park.

"ACTION support has given added impetus to vitally needed programs," Smith says, "programs which have become self-sustaining."

Approximately \$2 million of the \$12 million appropriated for urban programs in FY 81 would help fund some 100 new FICC and 20 new technical management programs. The remainder would help fund the Helping Hand and Good Neighbor Fund programs.

Black History Month:

ACTION Honors Contributions of Black Americans

In 1926, Carter G. Woodson, founder of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life, originated the idea of celebrating the contribution of black Americans and their role in the establishment, development and progress of American life.

Woodson, a prominent black historian, initially asked for an annual, one-week observance during the month of February, highlighting the achievements of black Americans and blacks throughout the world. Since its inception 64 years ago, it has been expanded to include the entire month of February and is now known as Black History Month.

ACTION honored black America during a four-day program, February 19-22. An agency Black History Month Committee organized the event, and under the theme of "A Heritage for America," planned a series of educational activities for the staff on the legacy of blacks in politics, arts, music and culture.

In addition to a graphic display in the lobby of ACTION headquarters, several guest lecturers were invited to speak on their particular areas of expertise.

Dr. Broadus Butler, president of the Robert R. Moton Institute, presented his views on the contributions of blacks to international development. Yacub Addy from Ghana, talked about the traditional music of Ghana, Mali, Upper Volta and the Ivory Coast, and on its impact on jazz, blues and reggae. A master drummer, Addy interspersed his lecture with actual demonstrations on African drums.

Bill Johnson of the Department of Transportation provided a display of photo and prints of African architecture. B. Hooks Martin, president of Martin Enterprises, also presented a display. She lectured on black art and black artists, and in an open session with those attending, interpreted the meaning of the art, and the message the artists are giving through their work.

ACTION's activities during Black History Month were extremely well received by the staff, and both Bob Taylor of the Peace Corps, and Ophelia Speight of ORC, co-chairs of the committee, as well as June Carter Perry, director of Public Affairs hope to expand the agency program next year.

"We only skimmed the surface this year," says Perry. "There is much more to be told about the role of black Americans in the development of this country. People like Garrett Morgan, inventor of the traffic signal; Shakespearean actor, Ira Aldridge; and Dr. Charles Drew, developer of the blood bank need to be discussed during such a celebration. In a more global sense, the African origins of civilization as we know them—from the pyramids to the Olmec sculptures in Central America to the structure of 20th century music must be covered to give an accurate portrayal of the scope of black history. Next year, a concerted effort will be made to do just that."

Yacub Addy



KUDOS TO:

JEANNE CARNEY, deputy associate director, VISTA and ACTION Education Programs; and WILLARD HOING, deputy associate director, Older American Volunteer Programs; who were selected to participate in the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program for 1980-81.

AL LUNA, former special assistant to the director of ACTION for scheduling and itinerary, who was elected to a term in the Texas State Legislature in Austin.

EMMA RIVERA, ACTION photographer; and BEN FIGUERAS, senior program specialist for VISTA and ACTION Education Programs; whose photographs are among the 57 on display at the 17th Street branch of the Capital City Federal Savings and Loan Association in Washington, D.C. Their photographs include scenery of urban and rural life, still lifes and personal portraits, and views of New York City and of the bi-Centennial celebration.



Wanlund served in 1977-1979 as a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco.

PC PUBLIC INFORMATION SPECIALIST

Bill Wanlund, new public information specialist in the Peace Corps serves as editor of *Peace Corps Times* and monitors and coordinates Peace Corps-related news events. He also helps administer the flow of information to and from the field.

Wanlund, who has a broad journalism background, was formerly director of public relations for the National Society of Professional Engineers. Previously, he worked in Washington, D.C., as a health reporter and as the capital's correspondent for several radio and TV stations and newspapers. He has a BA in journalism from George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR REGION IV

Anne Johnson, former ACTION state director in Ohio, is the new deputy director in Region IV, Atlanta. She comes to this job with long experience in working with the aged, including positions as Region V's coordinator of the Older American Volunteer Programs and director of the Chicago Foster Grandparent Program in the Mayor's Office of Senior Citizens. Earlier, Johnson was a program specialist with the Administration on Aging at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and before that, she served as director of the Chicago Housing Authority's Senior Center.

Prior to her involvement in programs for the aged, Johnson, who has a BA in history from Notre Dame University in St. Louis, taught English and history at the secondary level.

ACTION UPDATE

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