

ACTION

September 8, 1980

update...

Task Force Examines Equal Opportunity/Career Development



Commitment of Managers Essential

"The basic responsibility for equal opportunity and career development rests with supervisors and managers," states Jim Lancaster, voicing the consensus of the ACTION/Peace Corps Task Force on Equal Opportunity and Career Development. That accountability, concluded the task force, should be emphasized by including it in the performance appraisals for managers and supervisors, and by providing them with the training and support necessary to meet those responsibilities.

Co-chaired by A&F head Lancaster and Raul Rodriguez, director of the Office of Compliance, the 40-member task force had been charged by Sam Brown and Richard Celeste to "move beyond planning" and to develop concrete recommendations and activities for implementation in fiscal years 81 and 82.

Made up of management, employees and union representatives, the task force met in mid-July to identify major concerns about equal opportunity and career development, by reviewing staffing patterns, position structures and policies.

"That effort," says co-chair Rodriguez, "broke itself down into three major areas; accountability for equal opportunity and career development, impediments to reaching equal opportunity goals, and a lack of a comprehensive career development program.

"This break-down served as our pattern for the task at hand," continues Rodriguez. "...once the issues of concern had been identified, a realistic plan of action for guiding equal opportunity and career development programs was developed, and 35 recommendations included in the final report."

The task force's report, presented on August 15, included not only the recommendations, but identified the offices responsible for implementing them, as well as specific implementation target dates.

Among the proposals to achieve improved career development opportunities are the following:

- Identification by the Peace Corps Office of Resource Management (PC/RM), Office of Compliance/Equal Opportunity Division (OC/EO), and the Office of Administration and Finance/Personnel Management Division (AF/PM) of those offices under-represented for equal opportunity purposes and those with position structures amenable to the establishment of formal career development positions.

- Periodic reviews of all field and headquarters offices and major divisions to advise management on position structuring that will enhance career development opportunities and the agency's ability to perform its mission.

- Preparation of quarterly reports assessing progress toward achieving equal opportunity and affirmative action goals in each major agency office and division.

- Inclusion of progress in achieving equal opportunity and career development objectives as a critical job element component in the position descriptions, as well as in performance appraisals of all agency managers and supervisors.

- Implementation of a review process for every action to fill a vacancy, with regard to that action's impact on achieving affirmative action plans.

- Development of an entry level means, such as bridge positions or developmental assignments, for qualified clerical and technical employees for movement to career occupational fields, GS-5 through GS-12/13 or equivalent.

- Establishing and filling a career counselor position in ACTION.

- Use of non-competitive eligibility of former volunteers as a tool for affirmative action recruitment of women and minorities.

- Maintenance of an up-to-date talent bank for handicapped and EEO programs.

The ACTION Employees Union, while praising the recommendations of the task force, also voices reservations about their implementation. In a prepared statement on behalf of the union, AEU President Elaine Smithson says:

"We feel that the recommendations of the task force are good ones aimed at addressing affirmative action problems, however, we are concerned with the issue of implementation in the face of leadership changes and reductions in budget and staff positions. It is our position that the relevant sections of the report should be in the negotiated agreement between employees and management."

Smithson says the union will work closely with those members of the task force who are dissatisfied with the implementation provisions, in preparation of a minority report voicing those dissatisfactions.

In addressing the question of implementation,

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PC Partnership Program

Community Self-Help, International-Style

What do the residents of Piedacuesta, Colombia and Benguet Province, The Philippines have in common? As recent beneficiaries of the Peace Corps Partnership Program, they have all accomplished positive and needed changes in their towns.

A small, but highly successful Peace Corps program, Partnership encourages people in host countries to identify and complete their own self-help projects by finding support among U.S. sponsors. It also promotes an exchange of cultural information through letters, cassettes, photos and artifacts.

The Partnership Program has been in existence for more than 16 years, and over 50 Third World countries can point to projects completed with Partnership funds.

In both Colombia and The Philippines, Peace Corps volunteers were instrumental in hooking up local communities with U.S. sponsors to meet urgent, basic needs.

In Piedacuesta, Colombia, PCV Craig Carrozzi, who serves as director of recreation in a correctional institution for boys, explains that many poor youngsters end up as street children, known

locally as "gamines." "A gamine will join a gang where he will learn to steal, beg, take drugs, inhale gasoline and sleep in the gutters with rags and cardboard as blankets," he says.

Although many of them are sent to the correctional facility where he works, Carrozzi says, "the youngsters learn from the veterans and, generally, when released, are accomplished hoods and completely corrupted."

When the community approached Carrozzi with the idea of building a center where gamines could come with their problems and receive shelter, counseling and caring, he recommended the Partnership Program.

Their request was answered by six U.S. sponsors: Blackhawk High school, Beaver Falls, Pa.; Warren and Virginia Stone and Indianola Middle School, Indianola, Io.; Montclair Kimberly Academy Montclair, N.J.; Princeton Day School, Princeton, N.J.; Sahuarita High School, Sahuarita, Ar.; and Ygnacio Valley High School, Concord, Ca.

(cont. page 4)



"Gamines" of Piedacuesta



KUDOS TO:

MERCEDESE MILLER, director of ACTION's Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation, who was appointed by Sam Brown to the President's Committee on Mental Retardation. The committee was established in 1965 to help formulate national policy affecting the mentally retarded. ACTION is one of five federal agencies represented on the committee which also includes citizen representatives, doctors and other experts in the field of mental retardation.

JUNE CARTER PERRY, Director of Public Affairs, who was selected by a joint faculty-alumnae committee of Mundelein College as one of 12 distinguished alumnae in the 50-year history of the college.

The committee made the selections to coincide with Mundelein's Golden Jubilee Celebration. Mundelein, the only liberal arts college in Chicago

today, was founded for women in 1930.

Perry received her bachelor's degree from Mundelein in 1965 and, as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, received her master's degree from the University of Chicago in 1967.

Among the recipients, Perry is one of the most recent graduates to receive the award. Film and stage actress, Mercedes McCambridge (Drama 1937) is the earliest graduate in the group.

ALBERTA STOWE of the Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation's Former Volunteer Services, who has been named by Washington, D.C. Mayor Marion S. Barry, Jr. as a member of the D.C. Advisory Committee on Consumer Protection. The committee advises the mayor, city council and the public on matters relating to consumer affairs and assists the director of the Office of Consumer Protection.

PC Partnership Program (from page 3)

The new center is now under construction and is, according to Carrozzi, a great source of pride in Piedacuesta. "This project has shown the community that with enough interest and effort, things can be done."

"Before I was even approached about the Rehabilitation Center for the Handicapped and Malnourished," says PCV Jennie A. Turner serving in the community of Sinakbat in Benguet Province, The Philippines, "residents had drawn up objectives for the center, chosen officers to pursue funding and to organize its construction and maintenance, and had composed a list of volunteer workers. They truly demonstrated a community need and support for the construction of this center." Their proposal was forwarded by Turner to the Partnership office in Washington.

Most U.S. Partners' first involvement with the program comes as a result of promotional literature and film and slide viewings provided by the Partnership Program, or personal conversations and

correspondence with Partnership staff, or with former Peace Corps volunteers living in communities throughout the country. Sponsors then review several proposals and decide which project they'd like to support.

All Partnership projects must be supported by either donations of land, labor, raw materials or cash from the community itself or the national governments. This brings the average request for sponsor-assistance down to between \$800 to \$2,000. A small amount, but crucial when it can bring about change.

As one PCV who saw a Partnership project become a reality in the community he served, put it, "This is the sort of foreign aid that actually touches people's lives directly on a personal basis."

For more information on the Peace Corps Partnership Program call FTS 254-5324, or write them at 806 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Rm. 907, Washington, D.C. 20525.

1981

White House Conference on Aging



Growing old in America—its difficulties, its rewards—the contribution older citizens can and should make in shaping the future of this country—will be discussed at the White House Conference on Aging, to be held in Washington, D.C. in November 1981.

Although over a year away, the Conference process is well along. Under the direction of Dr. Sadie Alexander of Philadelphia, a national advisory board has selected six major topics for discussion: economic security; physical and mental health; social well-being; older Americans as a growing national resource creating an integrated society; and research.

The Conference requested ACTION's expertise and long experience in working with the elderly, and subsequently three staffers were detailed to assist in setting up the forum. Al Larsen, head of RSVP and Doug Hill of SCP began their assignments in January of this year. More recently, George Wakiji, ACTION's press officer was recruited to work with the Conference's public affairs and publicity office.

The President will receive recommendations voted on by a total of 1,800 delegates from all over the country. These, in turn will be presented to Congress for its consideration.

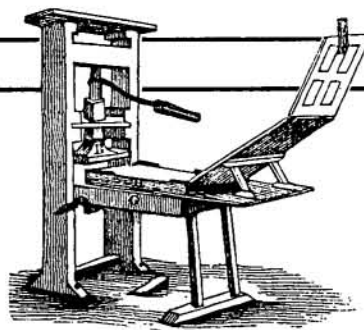
At the last White House Conference on Aging in 1971, the recommendations had far-reaching and

long-lasting effects. A House Select Committee on Aging determined that 193 of the 663 conference proposals were of major significance, and of these, 77 percent were either enacted into law or developed.

Resulting legislation created and funded the Senior Companion Program, and action was taken to increase RSVP and FGP funding. Other major developments include: Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI); the revision of Title III of the Older Americans Act, which led to the establishment of a national network on aging; a nutrition program for the elderly; the Community Service Employment Program, which provides jobs for older Americans; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; the establishment of the National Institute on Aging; improvements in the Social Security Act; the Housing and Community Development Act; the Nursing Home Ombudsman Program; increased legal services; the Equal Credit Opportunity Act; and the establishment of the Federal Council on Aging and the National Clearinghouse on Aging.

The significant results of the 1971 conference merely underscore the potential for practical and philosophical changes in attitudes and programs affecting the aging in America. The 1981 conference will address these issues.

What Others Say About Us



The following article, VISTA: 15 years of on-the-brink existence by Hank Klibanoff is reprinted by permission of The Boston Globe.



It was hardly the most refined weapon in the Nation's War on Poverty. And it suffers from the insecurities of any front-line soldier who keeps getting shunted from one commanding officer to another.

Nevertheless Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) is commemorating the 15th year of its life-on-the-brink existence.

Born in 1965 with the War on Poverty, VISTA began with only 30 to 40 employees loaned from other federal agencies. They worked out of old, stuffy hotel rooms where space was so tight that the agency's files were kept in the bathtubs.

Nine years later, VISTA began suffering fiscal malnutrition and at one point its condition appeared terminal. Today, VISTA has been reinfused with the kind of enthusiasm reflected in a poster taped to a wall at the Tenants Policy Council offices in Boston: "VISTA Lives!"

But whether it will continue — given the fact that it remains a yo-yo at the end of the political string — is a subject of concern among many of those who are part of it. Like that yo-yo, VISTA and its appropriation, which has not been increased in three years, seem to hesitate an uncomfortably long time at the end of the string.

VISTA's victories in the War on Poverty are not easily quantifiable. But the program has brought together a wide variety of Americans — from radicalized social workers to retired business executives — whose lives have been profoundly affected by the experience.

For Walter Cross of Boston, who was 64 when he joined VISTA 12 years ago, the experience offered a view of an America he never encountered as a business executive: "What I never did realize until VISTA — and it astounded me — was the way people in poverty areas were living. We found people who had never worked their entire lives, never had an opportunity. I mean, we had to go wake up people in the mornings because they had never lived through the routine of the average person that had worked for a living."

Partly because VISTA has moved offices so many times, partly because it did not heed the advice of its first associate director, Dr. Daniel Thurz, to employ an agency historian or archivist, many of the fascinating details about VISTA's myriad projects in the US have been lost.

But 15 years is not so long that its historical outlines have faded. VISTA's evolution, divided roughly into three periods, "reflects a full-circle, of sorts, with many detours," Steven J. Bennett of Cambridge wrote recently in the only in-depth study of VISTA's history.

VISTA's direction was altered considerably during those detours: from the initial Democratic period under Lyndon Johnson when there was an aggressive in-the-streets effort to organize poor people, to the Richard Nixon-Gerald Ford Republican period when VISTA was reorganized with an eye more to efficiency than to advocacy, and finally to a Democratic "restoration" program under Carter which, current administrators say, is a blend of both.

That VISTA's phases have coincided with changes in the political party holding the White House is not accidental — and therein lie the doubts about the future.

What began with only 13 volunteers and a \$3 million budget in 1965 now has 3900 volunteers (it once hit 5000) and a \$28 million budget — still less than \$1 for each known poor person in the US.

And although VISTA has funneled more than 50,000 people into communities across the nation, it never developed any broad name recognition. A 1978 survey showed only one in 10 Americans knew that VISTA was a volunteer program. Many thought it was a credit card.

Conceived in the Kennedy Administration as a National Service Corps and rechristened in the Johnson Administration as VISTA, the program was envisioned as a revival of the old American spirit of neighborly barn-raising.

"Everybody was in this together," recalled Velma Linford, 73 who was with VISTA even before President Johnson signed the OEO law into effect and who stayed with it for 13 years.

"In the beginning," she continued, "it was a mission impossible. There was an attitude among younger people and older people, but especially among younger people, who really felt they could

do something to change attitudes and change the world."

Community organizing was the keystone and quite a controversial one. The initial idea was that VISTAs should organize people to raise their own barns and teach their neighbors how to do it for themselves and others. It meant mobilizing poor people to demand that they be given the tools and know-how to build their own barns.

In the small, isolated community of Hanging Rock, Ky., for example, two VISTAs in the mid-60s organized residents to petition county officials for a road to nearby schools, markets and business opportunities.

In urban areas, VISTAs helped initiate bail bond programs, tenants unions, cooperatives and lawsuits against housing code violations. In Appalachia, they conducted field work needed to get legislation offering compensation to victims of black lung disease.

"Sometimes it took a young person whose hair was long and didn't always smell too good, but who had great ideas, great hopes and who never would have made a great contribution to this country if it hadn't been for this program," said Linford.

VISTA at that time attracted mostly white, young, middle class Americans, most of them male, some of them admittedly taking advantage of the draft deferment offered by VISTA. In 1969, 64 percent of the VISTAs was between the ages of 20 and 24 and 61 percent was male.

Inevitably, given the mandate and the national focus on social issues of the day, VISTA became synonymous with rabble-rousing.

In Massachusetts in the late '60s, VISTAs lent their greatest support to organizing protests on behalf of welfare recipients, recalls Thomas P. Glynn, a VISTA from 1968-70 who is now executive assistant to the under secretary of the US Department of Education.

"There was quite a large number of sit-ins and demonstrations because, at the beginning, there were no standards about what welfare recipients were entitled to. We were trying to get some standardization," said Glynn, "so in the summer of '68, there were sit-ins. Roxbury Crossing, South Boston and Worcester were three major places...There were a lot of other things going on in terms of social and economic movements so you felt you were part of something. What was done was done on adrenalin."

But there were problems. VISTA administrators recently recalled that volunteers were "parachuted" into communities with a lot of high ideals and energy, but often without much supervision.

"It was not a well-constructed, organized, methodical approach," recalled Malcolm Coles, who

joined VISTA in 1967 and is now training chief for ACTION, the parent agency, in New England.

Two years into the program, it became apparent that 20-year-old middle-class college grads, no matter how well-intentioned, did not speak the language as the poor black people living on the south side of Chicago - and were not being readily accepted by them.

Recruitment was refocused to attract fewer people from the campuses and more from community and church groups, but VISTA became no less activist - in fact, a 1971 government study showed VISTAs were being "radicalized" or attracted to the ideological left by their VISTA exposure. And their activism concerned the man who became President in 1969, Richard Nixon.

To many Republicans between 1969 and 1976 - when the Nixon Administration redirected VISTA and the Ford Administration tried to eliminate it - VISTA was, in the words of one GOP official, "just a federally financed \$36 million-a-year hate-Nixon post-graduate school."

Indeed, the Nixon Administration was not popular among VISTAs. When then HEW Secretary

"VISTA Lives!"

*Wall poster, Tenants' Policy Council,
VISTA project, Boston, Mass.*

Robert Finch spoke at a swanky Boston hotel for a Republican fundraiser during that time, VISTAs were among those who organized a welfare rights protest designed to embarrass and disrupt the ceremonies.

In time, the irony of VISTAs being paid by the federal government to organize poor people to demand more from the government was not lost on VISTAs - or on the Nixon Administration.

"I felt I was getting paid by Lyndon Johnson and that Richard Nixon hadn't found me yet," recalled Glynn. "The VISTA ethic at the time was more involved with beating the system. I was beating the system because I was getting paid by the government to help poor people."

That, however, began to change during Nixon's first term as President. New kinds of volunteers were recruited for new kinds of projects, changes that many VISTAs felt were intended to take the steam out of the program's activist punch.

Nixon in 1970, for example, eliminated the draft deferment for male VISTA volunteers. Then the acting director of VISTA, Chester Robert

Lane, issued a perfectly clear memorandum to "cut the noise level."

VISTA reshaped its projects from community organizing and advocacy to "direct services" such as tutoring, serving meals on wheels and acting as paralegals. To many who joined the program in the beginning, VISTA under Nixon was becoming simply a supplement to the civil service workforce.

"They weren't offering sexy assignments," recalls Don Wright, now ACTION's program director in Massachusetts. "They were offering (jobs at) the Montana Highway Department."

Some VISTAs were assigned to mayors' offices, governors' offices, libraries and — in a move hardly designed to endear the poor to VISTA volunteers — county prosecutors' offices. Those working in legal services found themselves preparing divorce cases rather than class action suits. The change in VISTA's perceived role was so great, Linford recalled that one governor assumed volunteers would help break a teachers' strike and a mayor wanted volunteers to become assistant police.

In Massachusetts, the greatest concentration of VISTAs during that time went to the Massachusetts Assn. for Older Americans (MAOA), now the largest state senior citizens program in the country. At one time, MAOA had 100 VISTA volunteers assigned to it.

"Community organizing or advocacy during that time became tolerable only when it applied to individuals who were not young and restless, who were not antiwar, bomb-throwing hotheads," recalled ACTION training chief Coles. "Community organizing was acceptable when those doing it were wearing coats and ties and were into negotiated settlements."

Walter Cross, who had devoted most of his life to "just trying to make a buck, profitmaking and competitive business," was 64 and planning to be an executive consultant-in-retirement in Indiana when instead he joined VISTA at the end of 1968.

Cross' sponsoring agency, the National Alliance of Businessmen, although not involved in radical political organizing, was nonetheless involved in radically affecting the lives of chronically jobless people in the Midwest.

While many felt the ultimate goal of the Nixon and Ford administrations was to eliminate VISTA, it never happened. Ford tried, but Congress supported the program.

Then came what is known at VISTA as "the restoration," the return of the Democrats to the White House and of efforts to reinfuse VISTA with its advocacy orientation of the mid-'60s.

"We had to recognize that you can't have all that great an impact if all you're doing is tutoring

one kid a year or processing 20 more legal service divorces," one of those 1960s leaders, VISTA national director Margery Tabankin, explained in a recent telephone interview.

"We had to ask the question," she added, "do you serve 17 senior citizens meals or do you organize them for a marketing program that allows them to buy their food much cheaper?"

"Then came what is known at VISTA as 'the restoration'..."

From the kinds of volunteers it recruited to the sponsors and projects it supported, VISTA in the Carter Administration again has placed its highest priority on community organizing while trying to retain some of the more successful elements of "direct service."

Thus, in Massachusetts and New England, there is today a blend. While the 350 VISTAs in New England are spread among numerous programs the agencies with the most VISTA volunteers are MAOA (44 volunteers) and Massachusetts Fair Share (30 volunteers), an advocacy group for low- and middle-income consumers.

The difference between VISTA in the '60s and VISTA today is that many of those working as VISTAs to help the poor are themselves poor. VISTA officials say that about 30 percent of their volunteers are low-income and 30 percent are minority, most of them black.

In Boston, the eight VISTAs assigned to Boston's public housing projects through the Tenants' Policy Council are themselves low-income tenants.

"They're our eyes and our ears in the projects," said Bernice L. Brown, job developer for the council. "A tenant will listen to another tenant. Our VISTAs have done more to enhance the TPC than anything we've done in the past."

But what of the future of VISTA? If, as its short history has shown, VISTA ebbs and flows with the political tides, does the possibility of a Republican White House concern today's VISTA loyalists?

The answer, uniformly it seems, is yes — especially among present VISTA officials encouraged by President Carter's pledge to seek funds for an additional 1000 volunteers. "Clearly, it does concern me," says Margery Tabankin, who, in more than three years as VISTA's national director, has held that post longer than any of her predecessors.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

Pete Johnson



"We're the luckiest Service Center in the country to have Pete Johnson as our placement manager," says Ralph Coleman, director of the San Francisco Service Center.

"First of all, Pete probably has more all-around knowledge and experience in placing Peace Corps and VISTA volunteers into the field than most people," adds Coleman, "and his expertise permits recruiters and area managers to cut through a lot of red tape."

"In addition, he has a very special personality, and his mere presence around the staff is good for morale," Coleman says. "He also happens to be one of our very best managers."

The focus of all this praise is 36-year old Pete Johnson, who has been the San Francisco Service Center's placement manager since July 1975, and currently supervises a staff of four evaluators and two placement clerks. Outside of a four-month stint as the first director of the Washington, D.C. Service Center, prior to its move to Atlanta, he worked in Peace Corps Placement at headquarters.

Johnson had several, wide-ranging responsibilities while at headquarters from 1970 to 1975. They included staff chief of the generalists—educa-

tion desk, chief of the professional services desk, special assistant to the director of placement, and placement officer.

Having worked in the delivery system of Peace Corps and VISTA volunteers, both at headquarters and in the field over the past 10 years, and having served on many recruitment task forces during the same period, Johnson's views on the subject are worth noting.

"Several delivery systems have been tried over the years," he says, "and almost all of them have had their good points. However, the success of any system depends on the quality and dedication of the people serving on the recruitment and placement staffs both at headquarters and in the field. There is a constant tendency to tinker with the recruitment system, but somehow the job still gets done. As a supervisor in San Francisco, I get a great deal of satisfaction out of developing a staff that works as a team," Johnson adds. "I am proud of the current staff, which is top quality and could get the job done without my interference." He is also pleased that several of his past employees have gone on to manage their own offices.

Johnson was a Peace Corps volunteer from September 1967 until December 1969 in Bihar, India, where he served in a family planning extension education program. After that, he worked under a programming contract in India, prior to joining the PC headquarters staff.

A native of Toledo, Ohio and raised in the Philadelphia suburb of Morrisville, Pa., Johnson majored in political science and earned his bachelor's degree from Susquehanna University in Selingsgrove, Pa. in 1966. The following year, just before becoming a PCV, he did graduate work in Latin American Studies at Syracuse University in New York.

"I had originally planned on continuing my graduate studies after PCV service and then becoming a teacher," Johnson says. "But being a volunteer changed all that. I realized that I wanted to be more directly involved in social service."

The single parent of an 11-year-old son, Mike, Johnson coaches boys and girls his son's age in soccer, basketball and baseball during his spare time. This all takes place in Walnut Creek, a suburb across the San Francisco Bay, where Pete and Mike Johnson reside. An enthusiastic sportsman, Johnson lists camping, hiking, jogging, tennis, raquetball and basketball as some of his current pursuits.

After all these years, Johnson still feels good about what he does... "I like the idea of sharing in the responsibility for sending to other places both in the U.S. and overseas, people who are making such a difference in the lives of others. And in this size agency people feel they're truly making an impact."

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PC DEPUTY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR PLANNING & EVALUATION.

Harriet Lancaster has been named deputy associate director for Planning and Evaluation for the Peace Corps. In this capacity, she will share with the associate director the overall responsibility for planning, managing and coordinating the functions of PC. Lancaster previously served as administrator of the Department of Citizen Services of Howard County, Maryland, and was responsible for all human services programs, including services to the aging, consumer affairs, community and youth development programs, human rights, manpower training and others.

Earlier, Lancaster was a consultant in developing model city demonstration grants, a planner with the D.C. government working to establish the District's Service Area System, and an H.E.W. project manager.

She received her bachelors' degree from the University of Pittsburgh and later obtained a masters' degree in social work from Columbia University.

BUDGET OFFICER, PC OFFICE OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Myrta (Chris) Sale has been appointed budget officer in the Office of Resource Management for the Peace Corps. Before assuming her new position, Sale was the acting budget officer at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and served as a program analyst in the Budget Division of OPM. Sale was also a member of the OPM Civil Service Reform Reorganization Task Force.

Sale received her BA in psychology from Boston University and and MBA from American University. She was raised in Puerto Rico and speaks fluent Spanish.

DIRECTOR, A&F ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Steven Smith is the new director of the Office of Administration and Finance's Administrative Services Division. He replaces Jack Nolan who retired from that position earlier this year.

Smith served with ACTION earlier, most recently as director of the Peace Corps' Latin America region from November 1976 to October 1978. For several months before that, he was deputy director of that region. Other positions with ACTION include country director for Honduras and assistant chief of programming and training for the Latin America region.

Before first joining ACTION in 1972, Smith was, for six years, a program manager for the International Development Foundation, working out of several Latin American countries. Prior to rejoining ACTION in his new position, he performed consulting in rural development and in management for private firms.

Smith has a BA in comparative literature from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, and took graduate courses in Latin American studies at the University of Texas in Austin.

CALIFORNIA STATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Charles Tooker has been named ACTION state program director for California. He will direct domestic program operations for all ACTION projects in that state.

Tooker has been with the agency since its inception in 1971, and has worked in volunteer programs for the past 14 years, serving most recently as executive officer of Domestic Operations, a position he held for six months prior to his new job.

From February 1975 to January 1980, Tooker was state program director for Southern California, and for two years before that, evaluator coordinator for the Service Corps of Retired Executives. Earlier he was program manager for Region IX, first under the Office of Economic Opportunity and later under ACTION. From 1966-68 he was Peace Corps regional director in Bogota, Colombia.

Tooker has a BA in U.S. history and foreign policy from Fordham University in New York and an MA in those subjects from the University of Salamanca in Spain.

MINORITIES IN ACTION

Grows; Expands Services

It began as an idea in the minds of only three or four people.. an idea of using common experiences and collective skills to effect positive change. Out of this concept came MIA-MINORITIES IN ACTION.

Now, only two years later, MIA has a national membership of over 500 former Peace Corps, VISTA and United Nations volunteers, who have as their stated goals:

To involve more minorities in ACTION programs at both volunteer and staff levels;

To establish a nationwide communications network for the exchange of information and ideas;

To investigate and facilitate avenues in which MIA might reinvest its combined talents for the betterment of the community.

MIA members recently elected a new slate of officers for a one-year term, who were sworn in at a reception on August 24, 1980.

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Assistant Secretary
Treasurer

Robert Taylor
Julio Jimenez
Lisbeth Thompson
Caron Gwynn
Gerald Williams

"I have thoroughly appreciated the support MIA has received both from within and from outside the agency," said immediate past-President Karen Gaskins in her farewell statement. "And I turn over the presidency of MIA to Bob Taylor with great confidence, knowing that he feels as I do that MIA as it grows and develops, has an almost unlimited potential."

"This last year, has been a good one for MIA. We've accomplished a lot in our fledgeling organization," said Taylor. "Through our talent bank, we've helped MIA members find employment, produced a quarterly newsletter, established a 'Local Chapters' committee to assist individuals in establishing local MIA chapters and helped them identify members in their areas, and perhaps most importantly, this year MIA was incorporated as a nonprofit organization, with its own by-laws.

"We are now exploring ways of generating monies nationwide," continued Taylor, "with the hope of expanding MIA's services in our effort to be more responsive to our communities."



Gerald Williams, Robert Taylor, Julio Jimenez, Lisbeth Thompson (not shown: Caron Gwynn)

Equal Opportunity/Career Development *(from page 2)*

Lancaster says "Some of these recommendations are already in progress in this agency, while others are scheduled to begin within the next nine months. However, the overriding issue that would guarantee total success is still the commitment on the part of supervisors and managers."

Rodriguez agrees. "Commitment is foremost,"

he says. "But it's also a question of money. Some of this can be done internally, of course, but in the long run, we'll need additional congressional funding."

Copies of the report can be obtained by contacting Ginger Roman or Mary Jo Johnson in the Office of Administration and Finance at FTS 254-3172.

Affirmative Action, Agency Priority

On August 19, in testimony before the House Subcommittee on Employment Opportunities, of the Committee on Education and Labor, Sam Brown said, "ACTION's commitment to affirmative action is reflected in all aspects of our work — personnel policies, programming and contracting." He then cited figures which reflect the agency's effort to broaden the spectrum of employees, including the number of women and minorities, both among agency staff and in volunteer programs.

"Taking affirmative action to place Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans and other members of minority groups into the ranks of our volunteers is more than just equalizing past omissions," Brown said. "It makes practical sense and gives both VISTA and Peace Corps greater legitimacy in the eyes of the people whom we are helping to help themselves."

Brown said that much of VISTA's efforts in the past three years has been to provide volunteer support to those self-help groups which have been organized by minorities or women. Such groups include the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, the Housing Assistance Council, the National Association of Farm Organizations, the Coalition of Indian

Controlled Schools and the National Council of La Raza.

But despite past successes, the agency encountered significant frustration in past moves toward affirmative action and equal opportunity, Brown said. Such examples include slow progress in placing people in mid-level positions — "due largely to the stiff competition for mid-level management jobs in today's economic environment," inadequate representation of Hispanic and Native Americans in ACTION's workforce, low minority representation in Peace Corps — although such representation in VISTA is good —, inadequate career development and training for VISTA volunteers due to congressional failure to provide funding, and delays in handling discrimination complaints, due to a lack of investigators in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Brown said those delays only discourage people from seeking legitimate redress through the EEO process. "It suggests that ending discrimination within the federal government where it should first be ended is not a matter of great importance," he concluded.

ACTION UPDATE

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