

6. Understanding the Issues: Policy Analysis

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POLICY ISSUES AND INTERORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONS

GENERAL

1. Which are the major groups, organizations, institutions, etc., concerned and involved with the problem or issue (political, public, private, community, etc.)?
 - a. Map the structural arrangements between these groups.
 - b. How have these arrangements been negotiated? Identify special obligations or allegiances that have been formed.
 - c. What is the nature of the interaction between these groups (exchanges, communications, etc.)?
 - d. What are the forces, if any, impelling these groups toward or preventing them from working together?
2. How do the various groups define the problem or policy issue?
 - a. Identify historical, ideological, and value orientation of these groups.
 - b. What role do these orientations play in the groups' perception, reaction, and response to the problem or issue?
3. What parties have been identified as the major actors involved in the problem or issue?
 - a. Which persons or groups have been identified as:
 1. being most affected by the problem or issue?
 2. providing support?
 3. causing opposition?
 - b. What effect have such groups had on the problem?
4. What general approaches have been used toward resolving the problem or issue?
 - a. What seem to be the varying priorities established by different groups?
 - b. What program strategies have been developed around the problem or issue?

POWER DISTRIBUTION

Identify major power groups, both formal and informal, that are involved with the problem or issue.

1. Which groups seem to have more influence?
2. How is the influence of these groups exercised?
3. How accessible are those in power to other persons or groups working with the problem or issue?
4. What effect do these groups have on the direction and action taken regarding the problem or issue?
5. What groups seem to have the least amount of influence?
What major role do these groups play?

Source: Unpublished, Yehekel Hasenfeld, "A Problem or Policy Issue and Interorganizational Relationships," March 1976.

6. How have the various groups approached building constituencies to support their position?
7. What evidence, if any, is there of attempts to redistribute the power base?

RESOURCES

1. When are the major sources of material and nonmaterial resources directly related to the problem or issue?
 - a. What special pre-conditions and criteria, if any, exist regarding the use of these resources?
 - b. How, if at all, are resources monitored?
2. What resources are currently being utilized for the problem or issue?
 - a. How effectively are the resources being utilized?
 - b. What are the gaps in resources? What additional resources are needed?
 - c. What potential resources can be mobilized?

7. Interorganizational Cooperation: Using Representative Committees

Jack Rothman

HOW TO ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

In presenting guidelines to community action it should be clear that this is not a

Source: Unpublished, Jack Rothman, "How You Can Help Fight Drug Abuse: The Next Step: What to Do To Serve Your Community."

This report was prepared for the Governor's Office of Drug Abuse by Dr. Jack Rothman, Professor of Community Organization, School of Social Work, University of Michigan.

- d. What plans and strategies have been or are being developed to secure and maintain resources?

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY OR PROGRAM

1. Which groups working with the problem or issue have developed specific policies and programs toward resolution of the problem?
 - a. How have these groups tried to operationalize their goals?
 - b. What major problems have they encountered?
 - c. Identify evidence of conflict and competition between groups working on the problem or issue.
 - d. What environmental demands have been made on these groups regarding their policies or programs?
2. What alternative solutions have been developed or could be developed? Which alternatives appear to be more acceptable? Why?

master plan to be adopted routinely by all communities.

Every community is different and its peculiarities have to be weighed in designing an appropriate action program. The way the problem of drug abuse presents itself will vary in different locales. In some communities marijuana may be used freely while heroin is absent. In other communi-

ties the reverse may be true. Still other communities may have frequent usage of both.

Use of drugs by middle class teenagers in the suburbs for kicks presents a different problem than usage by adults in the inner city to escape the harshness of life.

There may be different degrees of involvement of organized crime in the drug picture from area to area. And the existence of an institutionalized drug culture differs from neighborhood to neighborhood based on the length of time drug abuse has persisted, the numbers of individuals involved, and the function served by drug abuse for the takers.

In addition, different communities may to varying degrees have already existing treatment-rehabilitation services or enforcement procedures. Resources available to apply to the problem by way of funds and professional expertise are uneven among communities. And citizens will desire to give their own emphasis to ameliorative programs, reflecting the particular value position of their community.

AN OPEN MIND

In embarking on a drug abuse program it would be well for a community to recognize that it is entering a highly complex and uncertain area of endeavor. It should be prepared to study the problem objectively and respond with frankness to facts about drug abuse as they become available locally and nationally.

The importance of truth and honesty in confronting drug abuse cannot be stressed enough.

Here is how the Kiwanis' "Operation Drug Abuse" plan explains it:

The whole field of drug abuse education is fraught with misinformation, superficial conclusions, emotionalism, and conjecture. A program cannot rest its case on

obviously specious reasoning—for example, that marijuana must have chemical properties or produce pharmacological effects comparable to those of heroin, morphine, and opium because its use is regulated under the same state or federal statutes . . . or that if most heroin addicts admit to having used marijuana before they used heroin, it must follow from this reason alone that marijuana use leads to the use of heroin . . . or that if the percentage of drug addicts who have criminal records is higher than the percentage of non-addicts with criminal records, this must be proof of a drug-crime relationship.

Any respected authority who has reached any of these conclusions has not done so for these reasons alone, yet these are common place observations we hear in lay conversations. If a program is based on this level of reasoning, it will most certainly be exposed as a superficial one by even a young audience. The valid and factual information against drug abuse is so abundant that the well-informed participant will have no need to resort to the crutch of unsubstantiated dogmatism and authoritarianism. This is the reason for self-education. . . .

Also if from the information available, we select only the horrifying, the tragic, the bizarre examples of drug abuse and present these as the total and true picture of contact with the drugs with which we are primarily concerned, we will lose the respect of those who know or will later find out that we have deliberately avoided the whole truth.

We will be dishonest with youth, furthermore, if we give the impression that today's drug abuse problem is just another youth problem, symptomatic of a generation gap or youth rebellion. It is our adult generation which has produced an estimated six and a half million alcoholics.