THE ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION MAKING PROCESS

- THE UNITED WAY OF WINNIPEG

REPORT OF A PRACTICUM

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For their perseverance and support much thanks to Grant Reid, Joe Cels, Bob Van der Krabben and Cal Shell. Thanks also to my friends for seeing me through.

INTRODUCTION

The setting for this practicum was the United Way of Winnipeg, and was undertaken as a junior staff member of the Agency Relations Department. The time period of work was from September 1976 to June 1977. The writer became involved in this setting out of a wish to learn about the various forces that affect decision making in groups such as committees. It was felt that the best way to learn about decision making was to be involved in the process. Out of being involved in the process would come both the knowledge and skills needed to intervene in a decision-making group and affect the outcome.

Effective intervention requires that the practitioner be goal directed and that these goals reflect to some extent those of the organization. One guideline accepted by the United Way in allocating funds is an attempt at rational funding and planning of social services in Winnipeg a guideline which in fact may or may not be operationalized by the present United Way allocation process. In order that United Way decisions take this guideline into account, decisions must be based on accurate information about the issues involved, the alternatives available, and the potential consequences. Theory and observation would suggest, however, that many decisions are based on inadequate information, an incomplete understanding of issues involved, the alternatives available, and the potential consequences.

Out of these issues a feasible goal for this practicum was developed-the provision of more comprehensive information to one of the United Way's decision making committees through the role and function of a junior staff member. The question of committee functioning was to be addressed by the practitioner: how knowledgeable was the committee, how well was it run, how well was it able to use information available to it. This was to be examined as the committee dealt with such issues as agency accountability - knowledgeability of agency programs, use of United Way money in the agency, the offering of needed services, etc. Through the performance of activities designed to facilitate the work of a committee, it was expected that the writer would develop an analytic framework based on both a broad overview of the structure and decision making process of the United Way and a more in-depth study of the workings of one sub-committee. It was expected, as well, that there would be some development of interventive skills to affect the decision-making process as it moved one sub-committee through the decision making structure of the organization.

CHAPTER I THE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

A. The United Way Allocation Process

During the course of the practicum the writer worked closely with one sub-committee and followed it through the process of goal setting for 1977. The committee was Health Panel, sub-committee B. The description of the allocation process and a diagram will illustrate how sub-committee B of the Health Panel fits into the overall structure of the organization.

1. Objectives

Allocation of funds is a major function of the United Way. The objectives of this process are: to make decisions regarding continuing funding for existing programs, to make decisions regarding the funding of new programs, to involve representatives of the community through participation on committees making funding decisions (these representatives will be referred to as volunteers), to allow agencies a forum in which to make a case for continued funding, to fulfill a community PR function. (For a more formal description of the Agency Relations Committee responsibilities, see The United Way Handbook)

2. Composition

The Agency Relations Committee consists of "at least forty-eight persons to be appointed by the Presidents, eight of whom must be new each year." (United Way Handbook, p. 13) Committee members are not to serve for more than six consecutive years or hold any single office for more than two years. Appropriate staff input is available to this committee.

3. Structure and Process

The Agency Relations Committee (ARC) is divided into four sub-committees (panels) which report to an ARC executive consisting of panel chairpersons, vice-chairpersons, and an agency relations chairperson and chairperson-elect. The four sub-committees (panels) represent approximate areas of service - community services panel, family services panel, health services panel, and youth and recreation services panel.

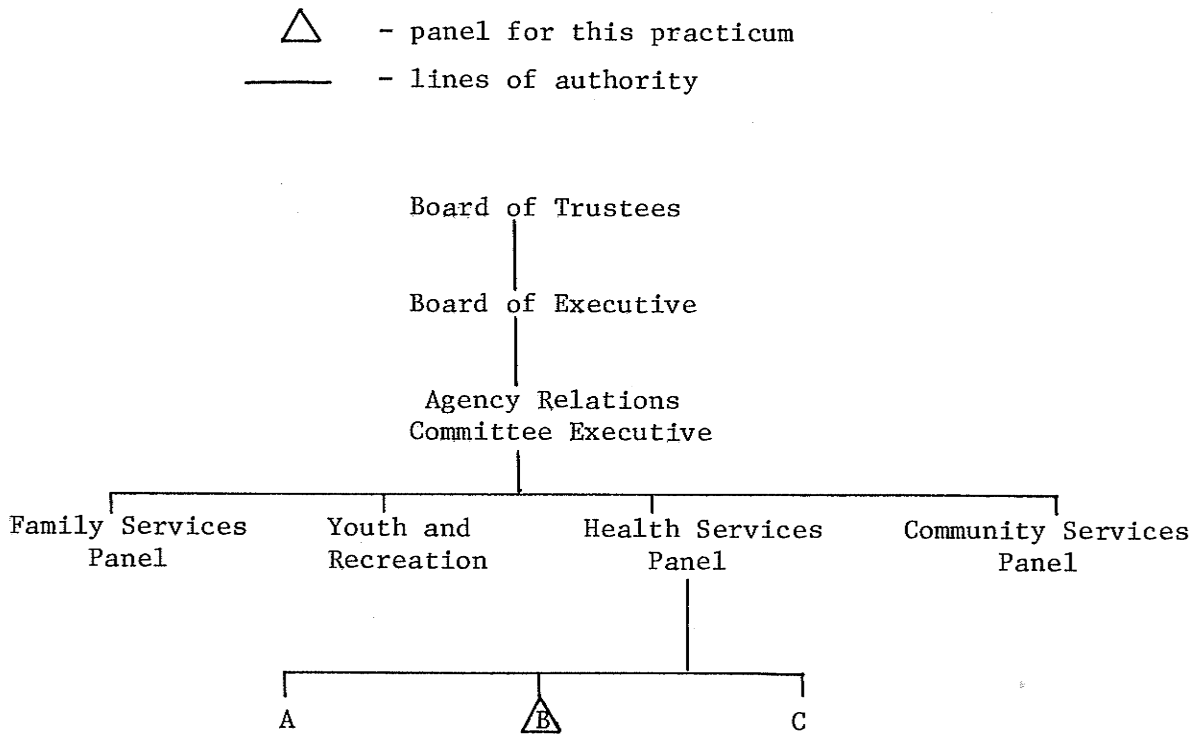
The review of agencies are carried out by individual panels. This consists of reviews of written submissions, plus meeting with agency representatives. Recommendations arrived at by the panel are then considered by the ARC executive and forwarded to the board (see diagram). Final decisions as to the funding of agencies are made by the Board of Trustees based upon these recommendations. Staff input provides continuity in this process.

4. Health Panel

In 1975 the Health Panel began a review of its structure. A structure was wanted to facilitate a greater, in-depth understanding of the agencies being reviewed. This led to the division of the Health Panel into three sub-committees. The agencies within the Health services umbrella were divided among the three sub-committees. Each committee has its own vice-chairperson and the panel as a whole has a chairperson, who serves on each of the sub-committees. The panel chairperson and each of the vice-chairpersons are represented on the Agency Relations Committee Executive.

The agencies which fall into Health Panel B and with which this practicum is concerned are: Society for Crippled Children and Adults, Canadian Mental Health Association, Multiple Sclerosis Society, and the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded. Health Panel B was the primary committee with which the writer worked.

DIAGRAM OF ORGANIZATION AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS



B. Practicum activities

The writer, as a student at the United Way, funtioned as a junior staff person assigned to Health Panel B for the goal setting process for 1977. As well, the writer was involved in the priority setting workshop of the United Way, which started in the fall of 1976 and which continued beyond this particular practicum.

1. Panel Process

Yearly each agency goes through the review process, the point of which is to evaluate the agency's functioning and on the basis of this to recommend a tentative allocation for the following year. The campaign goal is then determined through consideration of all tentative allocations plus operating costs for the United Way. For this reason the panel review process starts sometime at the end of January. Agencies are requested to submit a functionalized budget and fairly detailed program information. This information, when it is received, is reviewed by staff and distributed to volunteers sitting on the panel to which that agency is assigned.

Upon submission of this information, the agency begins the review process. For an agency who has not posed any particular problems for the United Way, this essentially consists of a panel visit to the agency and a more formal meeting at the United Way offices between agency board members and the panel. The purpose of the visit to the agency is to see the setting in which services are delivered and to more informally discuss program delivery. The panel meeting at the United Way is more formal and includes a budget review. Usually the panel meets prior to the agency representatives' arrival, to raise issues for discussion, and clarify concerns as well as afterwards to arrive at a recommendation. The first step for the worker in this process was, upon receipt of necessary information, to arrange an agency visit and a panel meeting. This completed, the budget was sent to the United Way comptroller for a review and written comments. The staff person would then review both the budget and program information and information from previous years. A report on the basis of this information plus any concerns was then written up and distributed to panel volunteers. Prior to the meeting the chairperson meets with staff, where concerns can be briefly raised and strategy discussed. It is the responsibility of the staff person to get information necessary for this process and to verify it. This may require contact with the agency, government officials etc.

The following is a list of specific activities undertaken as a staff person involved with the panel process for goal setting; All agencies are those in the Health Panel B.

- ensure that appropriate budget and program information is submitted by the agency
- set up meetings
    - call agency
    - call chairman
    - clear internal schedules
    - send confirmation letters to all volunteers
    - see that necessary material is available
- review agencies with reference to their program and presentation
- evaluate program material sent with requests from agency
- prepare information reports for volunteers prior to meetings
- attend meetings at agency with appropriate volunteers
- pre-meeting strategy with staff and chairman
- participate in meeting when appropriate
- help with minutes

- arrange and participate in ad hoc committee meetings re: selected agencies
- prepare panel report for Agency Relations Committee Executive
- participate at meetings when appropriate
- prepare reports to the Board re: Health Panel B
- observe Board meetings

2. Priority setting workshop

The question of setting priorities to aid volunteers making decisions about the allocation of funds has been raised over and over again throughout the history of the United Way. Guidelines for agency reviews have existed from 1966 and have included considerations of effectiveness of agency administration, program effectiveness, budgeting and financing concerns. While these criteria provide some parameters for funding recommendations, volunteers have continued to ask questions which reflect confusion and concern about the priorities the organization has set in determining which agencies receive funding and which do not.

A workshop concerning priorities was first conducted in 1975 - out of this certain issues were raised and acted upon. However, by mid 1976 concerns about priority setting again surfaced. A period of government restraint, increased funding requests and a minimally increased campaign forced the organization to begin to again examine the basis for allocation of funds.

The result was a two hour Board-Agency Relations workshop October 12, 1976. The workshop had been prompted by difficulties volunteers were having in turning down funding requests and the necessity that this occur. Questions raised at the October workshop included: the emphasis to be placed on established versus new and innovative programs, the emphasis to be placed on crisis vs. preventative services and the per centage of funds to be given to new agencies.

This meeting was followed by a meeting of the ad hoc committee on funding guidelines. The committee was composed of several well established volunteers who had been chosen by staff as a result of interest expressed. Two issues started to become clear during the course of these two meetings. Volunteers were looking for ways to deal with specific problems such as what to look for when reviewing an agency, how to make cutbacks in funding due to restraint without causing resentment, how to deal with new requests for funding. At the same time, this issue had become a bigger question dealing with overall priority setting. Concern was also expressed about the difficulties involved in maintaining flexibility while setting priorities.

Another meeting was held December 9 at which the distinction between short term needs for the current goal setting process and long term concerns was clarified. It was agreed that some outlining of past practises that implicitly stated priorities was needed as a working paper. January 22 was set as the date for the workshop.

The writer was active in helping to prepare the document which essentially made a statement as to then current funding practises. It was finalized by the Executive Director and a staff member. The document was quite thorough; however it was very complex and made it difficult to conceptualize the process. It, as well as an article on funding constraints, was distributed to the Board and Agency Relations.

The workshop itself took place January 29, 1977. The format was essentially small groups working to bring back reports to larger plenary sessions. After much discussion that raised many issues and some confusion about the work that was to be done, the question of priority setting itself received a negative response. However, despite this response issues about current funding practises were raised and discussed.

A follow-up committee was established following the workshop composed of the same members on the previous ad hoc committee. The writer drew up a report delineating issues that need to be dealt with, requiring decisions about a time frame and allocation of responsibility. This had started to be dealt with at the meeting following the workshop. At that point work for the practicum at the United Way was finished.

The following is a list of specific activities engaged in around the issue of priority setting.

- document research
- participation in planning meetings
- participation at workshops
- writing follow-up reports
- workshop evaluation
- follow-up report
- follow-up meetings
- follow through on process

Other activities that the writer was engaged in throughout the duration of the practicum include:

- help with recruitment process for volunteers for agency relations
- responsible for working knowledge of overall department
- help with campaign when required.

C. Evaluation of practicum

The main purpose of this practicum was the accomplishment of a number of different activities as already outlined, as well as the development of an analysis of a particular organization - the United Way. Evaluation of the practicum was accomplished in several ways:

1. An activity log was kept (to be reviewed in ongoing tutorial sessions) as well as at least one process recording of a committee meeting. Current situations were assessed, goals were set and interventions planned. As time progressed, the outcome of process and interventive activities were evaluated and goals and interventions reassessed.

2. On completion of assigned tasks eg. minutes, work flow, reports etc. feedback and evaluation was received from United Way staff and volunteers as to their satisfactoriness.

3. A practicum report to include a literature review and an analysis of the decision making structure of the United Way.

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL REVIEW

It is individuals who make the final decisions within the United Way, who cast the final votes on which agencies are to get what money. The individual in the process of arriving at his/her decision, is subject to a great many influences. Working with ten or more persons in a task group, he/she is subject to the forces created by groups that have strong potential to influence the individual. The task group with the particular assignment to arrive at any give decision works within an organizational structure. The structure at least in part determines communication patterns, the amount and type of information the individual receives, and along with the other forces, help to shape an individual's perspective and outlook on the decisions to be made. The organization as a whole (meaning of course the individuals working within the organization) is also influenced by the setting in which it exists and prevailing thought about its purpose and functions. In this case, current views of the delivery of social welfare services, their importance and the needs they fulfill, will have an impact on those individuals and the philosophy of the organization as a whole, for it is out of this philosophy that the organization will derive its mandate. The value system developed by the voluntary sector will also have some importance in the operation of an organization as strongly rooted in this tradition as the United Way. The organization's defence of itself in response to current cirticism relies heavily on the role of the private sector in funding volunteer agencies and the value of doing this.

As well, each individual brings to the decision making process his/her own values, ideology and perspective. The individuals who compose the decision-making groups, their backgrounds and professions, will have a strong impact on decisions.

The following sections will attempt to deal with some of the theoretical aspects of the issues that have been raised. The influences that shape the decision-making process - individual ideology and perception, historical setting, values base, as well as organizational structure - will comprise the theoretical base for this report.

A. The shaping of individual perception

Strategies and actions chosen by individuals to solve problems are based on that individual's perception of the problem. Ideology, or a person's belief system, "influences the range of facts to be observed, the importance attached to them and by inference, what ought to be done." (Kramer, 1965, p. 107)

Etzioni, in his book The Active Society, (Etzioni, 1968) addresses this area in his discussion of "contextuating orientations". According to Etzioni, society has a hierarchical structure which provides an overall framework into which fits information, or "bits" of knowledge. Through this contextuating orientation or framework the individual makes some sort of order out of the pieces of knowledge which he receives. It is this framework which influences perception of facts and thus decisions about courses of action. Etzioni writes that this has several implications: people tend to be able to replace pieces of information with relative ease,but that this has few actions consequences because support for a course of action tends to be based on the context and not the bits; people tend to hold on to their contextuating orientations and that the more information or bits of knowledge added that call into question the framework, the higher the costs of changing the information. Information is filtered through this contextuating orientation and adapted to fit the framework. When this is not possible, the framework is changed only at great cost.

Courses of action are decided upon by the examination of information and the fitting of it into a particular framework. The framework out of which people view the need for social services and the manner of their delivery is shaped in part by historical and current views of social welfare. Social welfare institutions are the organization out of which the majority of social work services operate and it is in this context that present day services are funded and delivered.

The services covered by the term social welfare depends on the definition being used. One writer sees it this way:

> "Current views of social welfare services range from a narrow conception according to which these services aim to ameliorate needs and problems of individuals and groups which result from transitional shortcoming of a ...self-regulating free-enterprise economy, to a comprehensive conception according to which these services comprise a broad array of societal provisions including education, manpower training, health care, housing, income, maintenance, personal social services, treatment of delinquents, recreation, etc." (Gil, 1973, p. 9)

Historically it was held that the individual had prime responsibility for his own good fortune or downfall. Success was measured in economic terms,as is illustrated by Robert Bremmer in his discussion on poverty in the nineteenth century:

"Poverty is unnecessary (for americans) but the varying ability and virtue of men makes its Presence inevitable; this is a desireable state of affairs, since without the fear of want the masses would not work and there would be no incentive for the able to demonstate their superiority; where it exists poverty is usually a temporary problem and, both in its cause and cure, it is always an individual matter." (Bremmer, 1969)

Rapid industrialization created great numbers of people no longer able to meet their needs through the accepted channels of the family and the market economy - poverty was no longer a "temporary problem". (Wilensky and Lebeaux, 1965) The development of social welfare services was society's response to this increasing problem.

Wilensky and Lebeaux describe two conceptions of social welfare - the residual and the institutional. (Wilensky and Lebeaux, 1965) The residual conception was the original response to rising problems and sees the family and market economy as the two preferred structures of supply. When something exceptional happens to prevent the proper function of these two structures, the social welfare structure is brought into play. In this way it is conceived of as a residual agency. The more recent institutional formulation sees social welfare as a proper and legitimate function of society and not a strategy of last resort.

The view of social welfare as charity dates back to the 16th and 17th century where the worthy poor were looked after by the local community. Social welfare institutions are seen as fulfilling a function for society by taking care of society's charitable needs.

This view of the function of social welfare tends to be incorporated into the framework of many individuals. Lack of economic success is by and large equated with inability to function personally and socially. This affects how the function of social welfare services is seen - it is seen as focussed on assistance to individuals and families where there is aproblem of adjustment and functioning or some deprivation to be remedied.

There are other ways of viewing poverty and its relief. For example Piven and Cloward, in their book about the American public welfare system, see relief, or charity as further functioning to maintain social and economic inequalities. (Piven and Cloward, 1971)

> "...relief goes far toward defining and enforcing the terms on which different classes of men are made to do different kinds of work; relief arrangements, in other words, have a great deal to do with maintaining social and economic inequalities." (Piven and Cloward, p. vxii)

The function of relief is to avoid potential crises in times of high unemployment and in more stable times to reinforce work norms, especially low wage work.

Those who see the social welfare system as functioning in this manner see a more appropriate role for social welfare services as that of a change agent in the basic social, economic and political systems in an effort to deal with the root causes of poverty, unemployment, etc.

Roland Warren, in an article called "The Sociology of Knowledge and the Problems of the Inner City" (Warren, 1977) addresses these two separate views or framework and the courses of action that they imply in his examination of the problems of poverty in the inner city. Warren adopts Thomas Kuhn's concept of the paradigm, which like Etzioni, deals with the "ordering" of experience into a conceptual framework - this time however, related to the social position of the observer. The diagnostic paradigm, writes Warren, carries an explanation of the problem as to why the poor are disadvantaged, what strategies will be used, what technologies required, etc. The paradigm "...presumes a conceptual framework that steers attention to different variables, poses problems of a different order than another might, and suggests different methods of approach to solve these problems." (Warren, 1977, p.485).

According to Warren, there are two alternative paradigms available - an individual deficiency approach which sees proverty and attendant problems as the inability of the individual to function - and dysfunctional social structure approach which sees poverty as an output as aspects of the social system. The first paradigm indicates the need for a change in the individual, the second indicates a need for change in the social structure. Warren goes on to say that "...it is plausible to consider poverty as an integral property of the social structure while recognizing at the same time that individual people may experience serious social handicaps because of their poverty, and may need individual help to overcome these deficiencies..." (Warren, 1977, p.485) However, he says, for many reasons professionals who have made the choice to deliver services lock themselves into acting out the interventions suggested by Paradigm I. Problems tend to be viewed as something that is wrong with the structure of service delivery systems and progress lies in their improvement. The emphasis on the delivery of service, the struggle to improve the technology, the fact of the existence of a number of well established service agencies - to be considered "sunk investments" - all lend themselves to maintaining the view of individual deficiency and mitigate against, if not the adoption of another frame of reference, the implementation of strategies suggested by an alternative frame of reference.

The majority of individuals who sit on the Boards of voluntary agencies and make decisions about the use of funds operate out of the paradigm which views poverty as a problem of individual deficiency. An article written by Bryan Knight (1968) indicates that 2/3 of the Board members in his study ascribe the origins of social problems to moral, social or psychological deficiencies of individuals. According to Kramer (1965) the voluntary agency's need for legitimation has resulted in the selective recruitment of board members "who come from the economic dominants in the community and who bring with them the characteristic values of their group." (Kramer, p. 109) This is substantiated by McCready (1972) and Seeley et al. (1957)

Social workers and other professionals who are the staff of voluntary agencies and organizations were found to hold different views of the problems and what needed to be done. Both Kramer and Knight found that professionals differed from lay personnel in their views. While professionals may hold views different than the lay members of their Board, there are a number of constraints that make it unlikely that social workers would act radically different. Some of these constraints and forces according to Joe Ryant (1969) are: the funding of social work agencies whereby the principle source of funding is the corporate community, the conservative restraining effects of bureaucratically-structured organizations and the professionalization and therefore deradicalization of social workers.

Organizations such as the United Way often recognize criticisms of inbalance in representation and respond to this by appointing to various panels or boards individuals who are neither members of the business world or professionals but rather are individuals who are members of traditionally non represented groups. Regardless of the contextuating orientation which they initially bring to the organization they eventually come to adopt the framework or ideology of the organization. This process of cooptation has been defined as "...the process of absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence." (Selznick, 1966, p. 13) This gives members of various groups some power and responsibility in the organization. In return the organization gains those individuals awareness and understanding of the problems it faces.

B. Voluntary sector funding of social services

Private charitable organizations have been the historical supporters and deliverers of social services. Since World War II, however, government has increasingly taken over the funding of many services previously regarded as private sector responsibilities. The proportion of funding provided by the private sector to an agency varies - in Winnipeg from approximately 2% of Children's Aid Society to more than 90% for other agencies.* While the amount of money raised by the United Way increases in absolute terms, percentages of funding declines. The amount of money raised annually by federated fund raising organizations is miniscule when compared to government funding of social services. (Carter, 1974, p. 3) This

* See the Annual Report of the United Way of Winnipeg. In 1975 the Children's Aid Society was given an allocation of $146,000 into an overall combined budget of 8,393,000. This is less than 2%. On the other hand, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg receives most of its monies from the United Way.

fact raises a number of questions as to the validity of and reason for private funding.

As well, other questions are raised about United Appeals. One of the traditional goals has been to unite all fund raising campaigns into one appeal. This however, has been only partially accomplished. The Salvation Army, for example, has not come under the United Appeal umbrella and runs its own yearly appeal. Other agencies have made the decision to opt out after a number of years, as did the Heart Foundation in Winnipeg.

A third criticism levelled at United Appeals is that they are a form of regressive taxation. Robert MacRae reports in an article called "Changing Patterns of Financial Support" (MacRae, 1973) that in the Chicago area, corporate gifts have only increased two times in the 1954 - 70 period while employee and executive gifts increased 5 1/2 times. In the San Francisco area, according to one article, 64% of the $17 million raised came from employees, while only 27% represents corporate gifts. (Hartman, 1974)

The above issues have given rise to what MacRae calls a crisis of confidence. Essentially the question raised by MacRae and others as well is: with increasing government support of social services, what is the purpose of private sector funding?

Seeley (Seeley, et al, 1957) and Carter (Carter, 1974) see a differentiation in the roles of the government, and the private sector. Seeley suggests that while taxes are paid to help the less fortunate, the Chest (United Way now) is for the provision of a better life for all. Carter sees the role of government as the redistribution of incomes and the role of the United Way as the provision of personal social services.

Coughlin (Coughlin, 1966) goes further and outlines the following roles of voluntary welfare: direct service, social policy formulation and social action, social welfare planning, lobbying for adequate services, and holder of a public trust. Other writers see the role of the voluntary sector as similar to these. This role is rooted in a set of values that have changed little in the past thirty years. These values are important in that they are regarded very seriously by members of the voluntary sector, and are used to affirm the ongoing existence of voluntary sector funding. It is out of these values that voluntary sector members claim to find their purpose and their role.

This set of values has been laid out in the following form by The Canadian Welfare Council in a report entitled "Guidelines for the Purchase of Service" (Canadian Welfare Council, Social Development Canada, February 1970) and reflect the thought of many writers on the issue. The values out of which the voluntary sector operates are:

1. volunteer involvement in both the raising and disbursement of funds. It is felt that volunteers help to personalize this process, an important element missing in the public sector.
2. Advocacy: The role of the private sector as a critic of government policies is stressed. The voluntary sector provides a balance to government.
3. Pluralism, variety and choice: These values are fundamental to Western society. It is felt that upholding the values of democratic pluralism and the free market are important tasks for the private sector.
4. Specialization and the development of special expertise:

The report felt that the nongovernmental agency can appropriately identify and serve a small group with special needs, e.g. day care services for children.

5. Freedom to innovate: "When the needs arise, the nongovernmental agency can more readily demonstrate, experiment and conduct limited pilot projects. If adequate resources of money and staff were provided for experimental programs and severe effort put into improving their worth, a subsequent decision to close them out or discard them would less likely result in a public outcry then if such experiments had been carried out by a public agency.

This basic framework of values and function is accepted as sound by the voluntary sector and its implementation is reflected in the following Canadian Council on Social Development reaffirmation of the basic division of responsibilities between government and voluntary funding: "... voluntary funds should be directed to agencies whose programs provide social services at levels beyond basic standards established and supported by the province, with the proviso that funds should not be withdrawn from such agencies until government support is available to cover their basic operation." (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1971)

Whether or not funding decisions are actually made in this way, understanding the framework of beliefs and values in which the United Way have very strong roots is important; these values are used very often as rationale for funding decisions. Volunteers and staff alike speak of the great importance of volunteers, the role of the private sector as advocate to government, the provision for special needs, the importance of and pride in funding pilot projects.

C. Organizations and the process of goal formation

Formal organizations are established in order to achieve a purpose - they give primacy to goal attainment. (Anderson, 1974) It is this goal orientedness that distinguishes organizational systems from other systems such as families, communities, etc. Classical theory viewed organizations as a group of individuals behaving rationally towards the attainment of a stated goal. It is now accepted, however, that what actually happens is more complex. An organization, once firmly established, tends to assume an identity of its own which makes it independent of the people who have founded it or of those who constitute its membership. (Blau and Scott, 1962) Selznick calls this the "creation of a condition independent of individual consciousness." (Selznick, 1966) From this point of view then, the organizational system has basic needs related to self-maintenance and resources are used for the maintenance of the organization as well as for goal attainment. Warren (Warren, 1965) sees this as the precondition for the survival of all organizations. Organizations must find some optimum balance between task accomplishment needs and organizational maintenance needs. Finding this balance is a process which produces an ongoing tension within the organization as it struggles to allocate resources in such as way as to do both. As organizations become more firmly established, decisions are often made that allocate resources to be used in the ongoing maintenance of the organization and tasks may be created for the organization which will allow for its ongiong existence. Decisions are made within the organization that divert resources away from task accomplishment and to organization maintenance.

Organizations have as well, both manifest and latent goals. Perrow (1967) call these two major categories of goals official and operative goals. Official goals are the general purposes of the organization as put forth in charters, official pronouncements, etc. Operative goals designate the ends reached through the actual operating policies of the organization: they tell us what the organization is doing, regardless of what the official goals say the aims are. (Perrow, 1967) These two sets of goals are the result of the process involved as the organization attempts to reach its goals. Accomplishing goals entails a series of decisions about courses of action to be followed. Simon, in an article called "On the Concept of Organizational Goal" (Simon, 1967) says it is doubtful whether decisions are generally directed towards achieving a goal but rather decisions are concerned with discovering courses of action that satisfy a whole set of constraints.

The nature of these constraints lies in several concepts common to all organizations. The first of these is the need of the organization for what Warren (1965) calls financers. All organizations need financers - someone to develop an idea, define the venture's goals, gain support for it and gather together the capital, labour, etc. Both Parsons (1969) and Perrow (1967) see the procurement of resources for the organization as a major task. Financers also provide legitimization for the activities of the organization. From this stems the value system which "defines the basic orientation of the system (in this case the organization) to the situation in which it operates hence it guides the activities of participant individuals." (Parsons, 1969, p. 35). The value system's main feature is the legitimation of the place or "role" of the organization and of the functional significance of the attainment of the goal for the larger system.

According to Perrow "if we know something about the major tasks of an organization and the characteristics of its controlling elite" (Perrow,1967, p. 132) its goals can be predicted in general terms. "The operative goals will be shaped by the dominant group, reflecting the imperatives of the particular task area that is more critical, their own background characteristics...and the unofficial uses to which they put the organization for their own ends." (Perrow, 1967, p. 132)

According to Parsons, Perrow and Zald,(1974) policy decisions, because they commit the organizations as a whole to carrying out their implications, are thus closely connected to the value system and legitimization needs. They are placed mainly in the hands of some kind of board. Initially, at least, this board of trustees, "...are likely to provide a character-defining function which emphasizes community goals and goals filtered through their own social position." (Perrow, 1967, p. 139)

The second thing common to all organizations is the need for acceptors - that is, clients, customers, recipients, etc. The third feature common to all organizations is that, in order to accomplish its goals, the organization must enter into certain exchange transactions. Exchange transactions are entered into with acceptors, where goods and services are offered in exchange for dues, fees or other things, and with other organizations where a long list of things may be exchanged including services, money, prestige, access to financers, acceptors, political power, etc.

Cyert and March (1967) see the goal setting process of an organization as a series of exchanges among coalitions of individuals, and that payoffs are often made in the form of policy commitments. Harold Weissman (1970) uses the concept of exchange to view voluntary organizations as mechanisms in which individuals, organizations, and groups invest resources in the hope of securing a variety of rewards. Aileen Ross's study of philanthropy in Canada shows that philanthropic activity boosts both careers and public relations programs of modern corporations. (Ross, 1965)

Once policy decisions - decisions about the goals and functions of the organization - are made, a whole series of other decisions are necessary; what Parsons calls the allocative decisions and decisions maintaining the integration of the organization.

Cyert and March (1967) suggest that there is agreement on only highly ambiguous goals of an organization that the existence of unresolved conflict is a conspicuous feature. That is, each subsystem of the larger organizational system will have its own sets of goals, functions, decisions, etc. Consensus on goals, then, is only obtainable on a board level and organizations are capable of surviving with a large set of unrationalized and often conflicting goals for anumber of reasons. One way of doing this is by paying sequential attention to goals; there is no strong pressure therefore to resolve apparent internal inconsistencies. Another reason for this is the need for an organization to decentralize its decision-making. "...the goals of a business firm are a series of more or less independent constraints imposed on the organization through a process of bargaining among potential coalition members and elaborated over time in response to short-run pressures. Goals arise in such a form because the firm is in part a coalition of participants with disparate demands, changing foci of attention, and limited ability to attend to all organizational problems simultaneously." (Cyert and March, 1967, p. 113)

Anthony Down's (1967) in On Bureaucracy, suggests that only minimal levels of consensus on goals is required and that techniques of deepening goal consensus include selective recruitment and indoctrination around stable goals and restricting more intensive indoctrination to those members likely to stay around.

Organizational goals therefore, as they are stated originally do not always determine what the organization actually does. Rather, decisions to reach the goals are made to satisfy a whole range of constraints that include maintaining the organization, and satisfying the demands of financers, legitimators and acceptors. These constraints in turn work toward the redefinition of the organizational goals. Organizations such as United Appeals that could be defined as confederations - that is organizations whose members are also organizations - are especially vulnerable to some of these constraints. The salient features of confederations, according to Wenocur (1975, p. 223-28) are: a high degree of conflict that needs to be kept from surfacing and breaking the bonds of the confederation, an unstructured authority that gives powerful members the option of going it alone and means that cooperation cannot easily be imposed; the autonomous nature of member agencies which makes program accountability as well as fiscal accountability difficult; and finally the permanence of the organization and its funding patterns in the eyes of the member agencies. According to Wenocur, these forces act as a basic conservatizing force which tends to maintain funding patterns as they exist as well as making innovative funding difficult.

D. Organizational structure as a constraint on decision making

Organizations are set up when accomplishment of an objective requires collective effect and the activities of those involved must be coordinated. Coordination requires some structure and all organizations have some formal structure. Organizational structure involves the systems of communication, systems of authority and systems of work flow. Formal structure is a pattern of relationships that exist among various positions that has been generated through a conscious planning process. (Gibson, et al, 1976) Structure must incorporate four components: job definition and the degree of specialization, departmentalization and whether this will be homogeneous or heterogeneous, the span of control which determines to some extent the "shape" of the organization and finally the delegation of authority and how centralized or decentralized this is (Gibson, et al, 1976) Organizational structure is usually put on a continuum from bureaucratic structure to organic structure. Bureaucratic organizations are characterized by highly specialized job definitions, homegeneous or functional departmentalization, small span of control and highly centralized authority. Structures considered to be organic have low specialization, heterogeneous departmentalization, larger number in the span of control and decentralized authority.

Lawrence and Lorsch have done research which demonstrates that there is a relationship between an organization's structure and its environment. Bureaucratically structured organizations tend to be linked with a stable environment, while organically structured organizations tend to be linked with changing conditions.

Morley Segal (1974) has used this research to develop a typology of organizations explaining the relationship between the internal aspects of organizations, such as the basis for decision-making and the manner in which the organization responds to its environment. According to Segal, organizations use an organizational form of selective perception as a way of reducing uncertainty in the environment. "...the typology is based upon the manner in which organizational units are linked,one to the other, and the impact of this linkage upon the way th organization first perceives and then responds to its environment." (Segal, 1974) Organizations are chain or bureaucratically structured, mediatively structured, or adaptively structured.

According to this typology, bureaucratically structured organizations tend to have one point of entry for information about the environment and it us upon the basis of this information that decisions are made. Information enters at one point only and is altered as it flows up the system. Information comes from that part of the total environment which is stable and predictable. Thus management doesn't need to distinguish between short-run tactics and long-run strategy. Decisions in this type of organization tend to be based on computation and the basis of assessment is efficiency. The best example of this type of structure is the assembly line factory.

The mediatively structured organization, which is the second in Segal's typology, is less structured than the first and tend to categorize its environment in order to deal with it. This means that although the organization is open to more information from other than the stable parts of the environment, this information, no matter how dissimilar, must be channeled into uniform organizational categories. As well, the mediatively structured organization responds to its environment in terms of fixed roles and sets of behaviors. Change is also dealt with in the same way - it is seen in terms of fixed categories which respond to the existing structure.

Segal uses the welfare department as an example of this. A vast number of human problems must be categorized by the social worker as laid out by the organization. As well, the social worker has only a set of number of responses with which he can meet these problems. Judgement is called for, but is judgement within a finite set of responses.

Segal's third type of organization is the adaptively structured one. This organization, according to Segal, is flexible enough so that it is able to adapt and readapt as the environment changes. It is not structured to screen out differences and heterogeneity, but is fully responsive to its environment. The organization is willing to rearrange its structure and roles in order to adapt to a new situation. Assessments and decisions are made on the basis of individual perceptions and mutual agreement. Segal uses a milieu treatment ward in a mental hospital as an example - structure and roles can be rearranged to adapt to new situations and units and roles are arranged "...so that the very definition of normality is a product of interaction between staff and patients." (Segal, 1974)

Segal's typology deals with the formal structure of organizations and how this affects the organizational decision making process. As well as being formally structured, organizations develop an informal structure that is not included in the organizational design but has an important impact on the decision making process. People in groups develop a social structure in which there are observable regularities in behavior. This regularity includes the frequency and duration of contact between people, the tendency to initiate these contacts, the degree of influence between persons, the degree of cooperation, etc. (Blau and Scott, 1962) Each member of a group occupies a position which evaluated in terms of its prestige, status and importance to the group. Status is ascribed to a position because of its position in the formal hierarchy as well as the characteristics brought to it by the individual. Status differences exert a powerful influence upon the pattern and content of communications in a group. Information tends to flow toward high status members, for example.

Each position in the group structure has an associated role (Gibson, et al, 1976) This role consists of expected behaviors agreed upon by members of the formal hierarchy. However, individuals filling positions have beliefs about what behaviors a certain position entails and this is called the perceived roles. As well, the enacted role is what the person carries out. When these three roles correspond, things move smoothly. However, conflict arises when there is a difference between expected roles, perceived roles and enacted roles, or any two of these. This then has an impact on the decisions made by this group.

All groups develop a set of norms (Gibson, et al, 1976) Norms develop out of the shared beliefs and orientations of the group and serve as standards of behavior. Performance and productivity are apt to be regulated by unofficial norms. Not everybody in a group follows all norms absolutely - for instance while some norms are accepted by everyone, others are only partially accepted and only by some members. However, norms always evolve in a group and strongly influence its decisions and behavior.

The decision-making process of an organization is influenced by both its formal and informal structure. The manner in which information enters the organization and the way it is processed upward, as well as the organizations response to its environment are significant for the kinds of decisions that are made. As well, the informal structure and the roles, status and norms that evolve from it are important in the functioning of the organization.

CHAPTER III ANALYSIS OF A DECISION MAKING PROCESS - THE UNITED WAY OF WINNIPEG

A. Introduction

The idea of federated fund raising dates back to 1917 in Canada and much earlier in the United States. (Carter, 1974) The first attempt at federated fund raising in Winnipeg was made in 1950 with the incorporation of the Community Chest. By 1962 there was a growing feeling of discontent among some groups. "Problems" cited: A multiplicity of appeals, gaps between goals and receipts, use of reserves and problems in volunteer recruitment. (United Way Book of Clippings)

In Winnipeg, two groups - the District Labour Council and The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce - initiated attempts to establish a united appeal. This resulted in 1965 in the dissolution of the Community Chest and the incorporation of the United Way of Winnipeg.

There are various groups involved with the formation and operation of the United Way. They include corporate, managerial, professional, organized labour, workers, social service workers, service recipients. These donors recognize a responsibility on the part of the community to give some support to those in need. This responsibility is recognized within a set of conventional standards and beliefs.

The funding decisions of the United Way of Winnipeg are largely influenced by its organizational goals (both manifest and latent) and structure, existing within a specific social and historical context. It is the contention of this paper that the organizational system is essentially a conservative one, and with its external and internal constraints creates a bias towards subjective non-rational decision-making that works to maintain the status quo. This tends to concentrate funding on already established agencies and works against innovative funding.

The process by which decisions are made by individuals working within organizations and the set of constraints which affect decisions is the focus of the rest of this paper. It is the intention of the writer to explore what some of these constraints are through the development of an analysis of a specific organization - the United Way of Winnipeg.

B. The goal structure

Financers and legitimators are needed by all organizations newly formed. Through them is provided financial support, labour, ideas and the support that legitimizes a new enterprise. This initial effort provides the basic framework out of which the new organizations will operate.

The majority of funds received by the United Way are raised from the coporate sector or through its support of the campaign, and it is this sector that has provided the financers and legitimators for the organization. Although a portion of the money raised comes from individual donors, these do not have the same kind of influence that representative of the corporate sector do. The list of provisional trustees in the act of incorporation of the United Way shows thirty-three names; of these two are union representatives, four are professionals (physician,actuary, barrister and engineer), two are connected with social welfare agencies, with the rest being listed as connected to businesses in some way. The names on the list reads like a Winnipeg Who's Who.

This group as important and influential donors, saw the major purpose of the United Way as channeling the charitable impulses of the community through rationalized fund raising and a reduction in the multiplicity of appeals. This is stated clearly in the preamble of the incorporation Act of the United Way: "...united community action should be taken to create a non-profit corporation to eliminate so far as possible separate fund raising campaigns...and to provide financing for...non-profit, charitable...health and welfare organizations in a more adequate manner than the present method involving many independent appeals for funds." (United Way Handbook, p. 7). United fund raising is emphasized as the main rationale for the creation of the organization called the United Way of Wi-nipeg.

As the United Way was in the process of being developed, various health and welfare agencies were invited to participate in this new effort at united fund raising. Eventually, all but the Salvation Army and the Cancer Society opted into the United Way. These agencies that did opt in then became legitimators of the new organization as well, for their participation was needed to ensure a united fund raising campaign.

Thus, the importance of a united campaign resulted in very early decisions about allocation of funds. A few powerful agencies capable of launching their own successful fund raising campaign came into the United Way in return for a guaranteed per centage of the yearly campaign. The United Way was locked into funding agreements with the Red Cross and the Heart Foundation, as well as with the Y's. Since then, funding agreements with the Y's have been renegotiated, while the Heart Foundation has opted out to run its own campaign. Other agencies, such as the

Society for Crippled Children and Adults (SCCA) do not have such agreements, but expect and receive substantial allocations. This is inpart due to their ability to run successful fund raising campaigns. An agency such as the Society for Crippled Children and Adults has great emotional appeal and is able to raise a great deal of money on its own.

The agencies that became participating members of the United Way were invited in by the founding group primarily because of their legitimizing power for the organization. However, these were also the agencies that in the eyes of those individuals involved, best met the health and welfare needs of the community. These needs were best met in their opinion, through traditional social welfare agencies with the approach to problems implied.

Thus the newly formed organization was established. The financers had set the goals, provided the labour, entered into exchange transactions with a number of agencies, and arrived at a method of united fund raising.

As the United Way has grown and developed, the fund raising function of the United Way has been increasingly accompanied by the growth of the allocation process as an important function. More attention is now being paid to the process whereby decisions get made as to who gets what money. In some ways, this smaller section of the larger structure has begun to develop its own set of goals which are not necessarily congruent with the overall functions of the organization. It has adopted the values of the wider structure, which views the campaign as of primary importance, but has as well begun to assume roles which potentially create tensions between the two separate components. The growth of this section has partly come about as a result of the increasing political nature of the United Way. The United Way is political because it allocated funds in a time of increasingly scarce resources, and it distributes these resources among organizations representing sometimes very diverse interests and all believing they are equally deserving.

The incorporation of the act of the United Way includes in its purposes and objectives the development of "...acceptable financial and financing policies for such agencies..." and the promotion of "...the orderly, efficient and economical development of public and private social services." (Incoporation Act, United Way of Winnipeg) These are the objectives of the agency relations committee - the committee charged with making decisions re the allocation of funds. With time these goals have been expanded within the United Way to include both a planning function and increasing demands for agency accountability - both financial and service delivery. This has been accompanied by a physical expansion of the Agency Relations Section.

This expansion and shift in goals, which was partly the result of the increasingly political nature of the allocation process, is best expressed by more recent United Way documents. According to these documents, the United Way funds service programs which will best serve the interests of the community. In order to better make this judgement, "...agency programs and plans are evaluated on behalf of the community by the agency relations committee." (United Way Handbook) This is done, according to United Way literature, to ensure coordination of programs and plans by other agencies, the unmet needs of the community and the attitudes of the contributing public. The United

Way organization sees in its changing role the growth of a planning function, which is expressed initially as the need to set priorities for its funding. This arises partly out of the values of the voluntary sector to which the organization ascribes. It is not unusual that an organization which sees itself as a watchdog of government, an advocate, an innovator and the holder of special expertise, as well as the community representative through volunteer representation and the upholder of cherished values wanting to be an important part of the planning process.

The expansion of the Agency Relations Committee has meant that more resources of the organization go towards maintaining this department. As well, its demands on agencies are given more importance and it is powerful in the sense that allocation decisions are made by it. However decisions are still strongly influenced by the importance of the campaign and the power of some agencies to influence this.

With the increasing growth of the agency relations committee comes an increasing possibility that the goals of this department will conflict with the goals of the campaign section. At some point planning considerations and requests for agency accountability will call into question either the functioning of a major agency or the needs for its services and this has in fact begun to happen. Because of the potential for the goals of the two departments to conflict, their functions are usually treated separately and viewed sequentially. The campaign is given first priority and major allocative decisions are left until after the campaign. During the fall pèriod, when the campaign takes place, agency relations department is at least partially inactive and resources are involved in the campaign or ready to be involved. All staff regard the campaign activities as their first priority. It is not until late

December, early January that the allocation process starts up.

Another way that the potential for conflict is dealt with is that the issue of priority setting is dealt with circumspectly and is given a low priority in the overall functioning of the organization. This is in fact true of other functions performed by the agency relations committee.

C. Organizational structure

The United Way, as an organization whose members are other organizations, can be defined as a confederation. According to Wenocur, (1975) a confederation can be subdivided into three structural subsystems - administrative, legislative and organizational - and two functional subsystems - fund-raising and fund-allocating. These subsystems exist in the United Way, which conforms to Wenocur's definition. The effect of the two functional subsystems on the decision making process has been dealt with in the section that discussed the goal structure of the organization. Decisions are made primarily with the needs of the fund raising subsystem in mind, while concerns of the other section are often dealt with circumspectly.

The administrative subsystem, which includes all United Way employees, and the legislative subsystem, which consists of the community representatives on decision-making committees, are organized hierarchically. This in part satisfies the financers' need for accountability. Both information and responsibility for decision making are passed upward. While the committee structure and the use of information will be discussed later, a short discussion on the issue of accountability will follow.

Organizations are structured hieratchically in business as a means of ensuring its financers of accountability and therefore it is not unusual that the United Way originally conceived of by primarily businessmen, would have this emphasis. The operating ethic here is that if one invests money in an operation, one has the right to see to its spending. Thus, built right into the structure of the organization are the values of efficiency and getting one's money's worth. The hierarchy ensures that at each level there is an ascending accountability.

This emphasis on the need for accountability that is both built into the structure of the organization and is part of the framework held by its members has resulted increasingly in more demands for the demonstration of efficiency and effectiveness on the part of social agencies. While demands for efficiency and effectiveness are necessary, there are problems involved in using these as part of the review process. While quality of service and efficiency are certainly not mutually exclusive, cost/benefit (efficiency) considerations are often more tangible than issues such as quality of service, and are easier for an agency to demonstrate. Volunteer panel members more easily understand concerns about whether the agency is being efficiently managed, and begin to put more emphasis on questions of high intake and number of people being served. Questions regarding quality and necessity of service tend to be more difficult to deal with and less tangible and are more often than not put to the side. To be fair, some of the responsibility for this lies with the agencies, who play some part in not having developed a way to present these issues to the committees in a manner that is informative and understandable.

As well as structuring itself in a manner that is hierarchical, organizations funded by the United Way must be structured in a similar way. This reinforces in agencies an emphasis on accountability rather than quality of service delivery.

As well as needing to deal with accountability issues, the organization needs to make its environment predictable. As in Segal's mediatively structured organization, which categorized its environment, the United Way segments its environment into four categories of services. Although information about these services is fed into the organization through more than one point, it is fed in through the panels to which the agency is assigned - that is in very clearly defined categories. This process makes a rather large job workable, but has several important effects.

The panel process uses volunteers and this means that any one individual has limited time to spend. Partly to accommodate this, as well as for the purpose of manageability already mentioned, each panel reviews a limited number of agencies. This allows panel members to review a few agencies in depth. Initially this plan worked well and panel members were able to make decisions on the basis of this in depth but limited review. However, resources have become increasingly scarce, the environment is changing and the need to make decisions based on some overall view of funding priorities becomes more important. The particular structure of the decision-making process of the United Way lends itself to a more limited view and does not provide panel members an overall awareness of the concerns and objectives of the organization or of the community they attempt to serve. Decisions, then, are often based on limited information.

Other factors reinforce this process. Categorization of services in this manner encourages attention to pragmatics and sequential attention to matters: agencies have to be reviewed and decisions made about their funding. Until this is done there is no time to look at other matters such as gaps in service, etc. Maintaining an overall view which might address other issues becomes a low priority. Volunteers express this as a frustration from time to time. They raise questions about funding crisis oriented services rather than services with a preventative orientation, etc. However, the process demands that the business at hand is dealt with and little is done to change things.

The above process is further reinforced by the way in which community needs are responded to. Needs in the community that have become so blatant that they can no longer be ignored are responded to first by an agency or group of individuals offering a service in an attempt to alleviate that particular need. Often, the United Way is then approached by this agency or group and is asked to allocate funds to maintain this service. Need must then be established through a study done by the Social Planning Council and a decision about funding is made. Sometimes the Agency or group receiving funding is asked to put itself under the direction of an already established agency. The new group must then contend with all the forces working to maintain the status quo and the energy of the new group is often lost. This manner of dealing with needs and changes in the community puts the United Way in an essentially reactive role. The organization reacts to situations as they are presented rather than as an initiator. Although this is not always true, the United Way tends because of the above process to have a piece meal rather than overall view of its environment. This is an essentially conservative force that tends to maintain things as they are, rather than promoting a true responsiveness to the community and its needs.

The review process itself is very time consuming. It is easy for panel members to lose sight of major issues and see the process itself as having the greatest priority. This,as well as growing requirements for accountability, has resulted in growing budgetary demands on member agencies - in earlier times community chests asked for a rough estimate of agencies' current budgeting needs whereas now very complicated budgers are required.

This process works against innovative funding of new services for a variety of reasons. Often large agencies can more easily afford the time and expertise and have the knowledge to meet these requirements that new agencies do not. Further, the complexity of bigger agencies make it more difficult to examine them carefully and they are therefore not given as close or careful a scrutiny as smaller, usually newer agencies with budgets and programs that are much less complicated.

Other forces make it difficult for new services to get funding and then to maintain it. The principle of base allocation, where except in extraordinary circumstances agencies are guaranteed at least the money they received in the preceding year means money available for other services is limited. As well older, well established agencies know the language and procedures involved in relating to volunteer boards and panels. They have usually establish a set of stable ties with the United Way personnel and know how to use the services of the United Way to get funding and influence decision making. New organizations require the development of new relationships and new roles, and have high costs in time, worry, conflict and temporary efficiency. This doesn't mean that innovative and new services won't be provided at all, but it does mean that constraints and costs for new services are high and more often than not aren't offered.

The structure of the agency has a negative influence on the decision making process of the United Way. However, this influence tends to be one that reinforces a process already directed by forces that include its historical mandate and the political nature of the process. As well, the competencies of panel members and the manner in which information is collected are important to consider and will be discussed in the following sections.

D. Communication structure

Communication in organizations is both formal and informal. Formal communications flow both vertically (up and down) and horizontally. The more hierarchically structured an organization, the more formal and structure the communications will be. Highly structured organizations rely heavily on written, non-verbal forms of communication. This is true of the United Way, where a great deal of written information is communicated.

The formal communication structure can be traced on an organizational chart. Briefly, a formal funding request, first received and reviewed by staf, is reviewed by assigned panel. A recommendation arrived at by the panel goes to the Agency Relations Board Executive. From there it goes to the Board Executive and then to the Board. At each of these points information must be communicated so that decisions can be made. This is formally communicated through written reports, descriptions, budgets, memos, etc. Several things happen to this information as it is processed in this way.

First, the information becomes more and more contracted as it proceeds upward in the system. This happens because each committee has more business to attend to than the one before, and secondly because they are essentially only reviewing recommendations made by other committees. Some information is left out as a result and it is hard to determine at what point it loses its meaning.

Second, information is filtered and changes as it passes up the system. Information is passed on by individuals and is therefore filtered through that individual or group of individuals' perceptions. Information is further changed by a committee's consideration of it. It becomes filtered through that group's perceptions of the matter and the next group receiving the information receives the previous groups biases as well.

Informal communication channels are much less structured and rely on position, status, role and influence of individuals and the patterns of behavior developed by that social system. Within Agency Relations there are a number of positions which have potential influence on recommendations made. These positions include: agency relations director, his/her staff, agency relations chairperson, chairperson elect, the panel chairperson, and committee members. Other key positions in the organization affecting the allocation process include the Executive Director, the President (and chair) of the Board members, the Board Executive, and Board members. According to Morris and Binstock, (1966) individual filling of these positions will switch the focus of decision-making. Because the volunteer position change yearly, influence changes. However, individual volunteers tend to remain connnected with the organization in various capacities and retain some influence due to personal prestige and power. Agency Relations Director has much potential influence which varies according to the individual and how he chooses to delegate work and how he works with volunteers. Panel members seem to have the least informal influence in this process - this does not negate the influence they can have during panel meetings. A strong chairperson can have a great deal of influence on the decision-making process.

Informal communications at the United Way are frequent and flow through these points both internally and from external points. These communications follow certain rules of etiquette: inter-agency communications flow from staff to staff, volunteer to volunteer, of corresponding status. Departures from this norm are not approved of.

Various other ties exist as well. There are cross memberships - individuals sitting on agency boards also sit on United Way panels and provide informal communication to various staff. Friendships between panel members and with staff facilitate the flow of communication.

There are times when agencies will not use approved channels of formal or informal communication in an effort to influence decision-making. One example of this is agencies, who, upon not receiving funding direct formal correspondence directly to the President and chairperson of Agency Relations. This is a way of going "over the head" of the process. This is met with disapproval by the organization. Another way to do this is to informally contact the Executive Director of the United Way and request an informal meeting. Where old ties exist and it is done directly, it works more effectively. Two forms of informal pressure seem to influence the decision-making process of the United Way. One is to informally and discreetly confer with individuals, especially those in key positions. A second way is to use full media and public pressure; this, however, can backfire and work against the agency.

Knowledge of the etiquette, informal ties, personal contacts, and the ability to influence individuals within the organization is most effectively used by the larger, more established agencies, who therefore have more power to influence the decision-making process than do newer and smaller agencies.

E. Committee structure

Volunteer committees are the formally designated bodies of the United Way's decision making process. The use of volunteers is cited as a prime distinction between the United Way and its government counterpart; volunteers, recruited from the community, are seen as both responsible to the community and reflective of community needs and desires. Recruitment of volunteers to sit on various committees begins in the fall, Names are gathered from a variety of sources - other committee members, United Way volunteers, interested individuals, the newspaper, and member agencies. A letter is then sent out inviting the individual to sit on a panel. One of the effects of this process of recruitment, which is selective, is that underrepresented groups remain underrepresented and that business and professional people make up the greatest percentage of volunteers serving on panels. Attempts that have been made to include representatives from service users, youth, native groups etc. have been minimally successful, it at all. This of course has an important impact on the decision making process.

Selective recruitment is one factor in the composition of panels. Those who are recruited from other groups or who might be would find the need for fairly sophisticated communication skills, plus the necessity of being able to use work time for meetings, as another prohibitive factor.

Membership of committees then is composed primarily of businessmen, businessmen's wives, professionals, their wives, and some representatives or organized labour. Agency need and community need is seen through the eyes of one component of the community with all its biases, and allocations are to a large extent determined by this group.

The committee hierarchy also influences the decision making process. An agency is initially reviewed by the panel to which it has been assigned and a recommendation regarding funding is then made. This recommendation if it is standard, is usually reviewed fairly briefly and approved by successive committees. When an issue is potentially contentious, however, it is usually re-reviewed by agency relations committee executive who either approve the contentious recommendation or send it back to the panel for reconsideration. Panel committees than have the ability to influence the decision making process in their initial recommendations. Decisions that are out of the normal course of events however, are handled by two key committees - first agency relations executive and th-n executive committee.

The Board of Trustees is the final decision making body of the United Way. Most decisions made in the regular course of events tend to be approved by the Board. Decisions regarding policy for the organization as a whole, however, receive much closer attention, as do decisions that threaten to bring unwanted publicity to the organization. However, most decisions brought to the Board have already been dealt with in Agency relations committee and executive committee.

Individuals who have proven themselves as panel members through their commitment of time and energy are often invited by staff to be chairperson or vice chairperson for a panel. Chairpersons and vice chairpersons of all the panels compose the Agency Relations Committee Executive, which in turn has its own chairperson and chairperson elect. These are people whose familiarity with and understanding of the issues is far greater than most panel members. They spend more time in consultation with staff, they often have memberships on other agency boards and other United Way committees and are indoctrinated more thoroughly into the behavior and value system of the organization. As with most organizations, decisions are made with the needs of the organization in mind and this requires individuals with some loyalty to the organization. However, doing this reflects itself in the decision making process.

Panel meeting are formally run by the chairperson. Panel members receive information about the agenda prior to the meeting and are supposed to be prepared. Meetings are run well or poorly depending on the experience and ability of the individual chairperson and this of course affects the way in which decisions get made. Since volunteers are not picked particularly for their skills in this area, and since the United Way provides little or no training, this can often affect the outcome of the meeting. Often the panel's ability to get the kinds of information it needs depends on the chairperson's ability to ensure that issues are raised and/or dealt with.

Various norms exist about behavior at meetings and the push for conformity is strong. People are expected to be polite and not show too much emotion about any issue. When agencies make presentations it is expected that Board Presidents will do most of the talking. Agencies are also expected to be reasonable by making reasonable requests and by realizing that it is better for everyone to get a piece of the pie than for any agencies to get cut out. Again more established agencies tend to be aware of these unspoken rules and are much more knowledgeable than newer organizations.

Volunteers' knowledge and understanding of issues will affect decision making. Bigger agencies with complex budgets will not get the close scrutiny that smaller, less complex agencies do. It is often easier for volunteers to recognize and understand the need for big agencies such as the Society for Crippled Children and Adults because of its emotional appeal than it is for them to understand the need for smaller, perhaps more innovative agencies. Volunteers often respond to emotional appeals and make decisions about funding on this basis. Individual members often have high influence either through seeming or real knowledge of an issue, prestige due to activities outside the United Way or within it, etc. They sometimes sway decision-making.

Within the United Way the need for consensus is high and conflict is often right around the corner. Contentious issues are often raised by the nature of matters being discussed and are most often just not dealt with. This is true of many committee meetings and often prevents a close examination and real discussion of issues. The results of this is that the real issues are often not discussed or laid on the table. This is true also of relationship and meetings with agencies. Agencies are often not aware of issues that are being examined or are unclear as to the expectations of the United Way. Often because the panel is unclear in itself, or wishing to avoid conflict, it is unclear with the agency. Added to this, at times, is a committee or chairperson who is unclear or unfocussed about issues and provides no continuity from meeting to meeting.

This leads to recommendations that are often non-conflictual and therefore maintain the status quo. It also leads to increasing conflict with agencies, especially smaller, newer ones, because expectations, rules of behavior, etc., are not laid out.

The same features appear to be true at a Board level. Clear policies or directions for the United Way are often not really decided upon. This lack of clearly defined direction and guidelines further dilutes the decision-making process.

F. Staff

There are three staff positions assigned to the Agency Relations Department of the United Way. One of these positions is the Agency Relations Director. He has two assistants. The Director has been and is male, his assistants are female. Staff for agency relations tend by and large to be social workers who are older and/or hold traditional views of social work and the role of social workers. Their training and beliefs are well grounded in the value system of the voluntary sector.

Staff see their role as aiding the volunteers and seeing that the process runs smoothly. They have, however, by virtue of their position, a great deal of influence on the decision-making process. At least one staff member is in attendance at all meetings. Staff set up meetings, set the agenda for the meetings, write the reports for the meeting, brief the chairperson, brief the committee and take the minutes of the meeting. All this means a great deal of influence on the part of staff. Because everyone filters information through their own perceptions, it is unavoidable that this happens in this kind of position. Influence is further increased by virtue of staff's full time involvement in the business of the organization. Because of their greater understanding and involvement in situations, it is tempting for volunteers to rely heavily on staff for their own information and directions as to what to do.

Staff have further influence in that they write most of the correspondence, although it is never sent without the authorization of the volunteer over whose signature it is sent. Staff help pick volunteers to serve as panel chairpersons and some volunteers are "groomed" to fill various positions in the committee structure.

The Agency Relations Director has influence to the extent to which he is able to efficiently delegate some business to his assistants. The Agency Relations Director deals with agency personnel. He attends Joint Staff Review Committee meetings which is the Coordinating Committee for funders. When issues are potentially problematic, the Director usually attends the meetings and is in charge of negotiations.

The Executive Director is used as a consultant to Agency Relations and has final say about all decisions made by that Department. Most important decisions are made only with his consent. However, this does not cover smaller, day to day details of the Department.

The result of all these various forces that have a bearing on the manner in which decisions get made at the United Way is that decisions tend to reinforce things as they are; it is essentially a conservative force. This means that services which are innovative in their approach to problems that exist despite numerous attempts to solve them or problems that haven't been addressed yet have a real struggle in getting funding. Often by the time they receive funding, if they do, much of the initial thrust is lost. At the same time, the process continues to increase the funding of large traditional agencies that deal with old problems in traditional and often unsuccessful ways.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION - AN OVERVIEW

The rôle of a student in an organization poses a number of difficulties for both the student and the organization. Some of these difficulties are administrative in nature. They include problems in finding space for the student to work, as well as learning to delegate responsibilities,provide supervision and fit the student into an already existing routine of work activities and staff relationships. Credibility issues also exist, especially where there has been previous unpleasant experiences with students. It was difficult at first for staff within the organization to deal with the above problems and they seemed to exacerbate already existing difficulties within the organization itself. Further, there is a real difficulty in integrating a newcomer who is half student, half staff and who is available only two or three days a week. The integration of the writer into the organization for the above reasons, took some time.

On the other hand, both staff and volunteers were very helpful, willing to talk and answer questions, and were free with written information and documents. This was greatly appreciated and certainly helped the writer's entry into the role of staff person.

Working in this setting with groups of businessmen and professionals was initially intimidating. The writer's first response was to passively accept the role of assistant and student, rather than an active participant in the process. Although this changed as time went on, it gave the writer some insight into a few of the difficulties social workers sometimes have in working within the system and making demands for change.

As it has been said elsewhere in this paper, decisions are made in part on the basis of information available, as well as an understanding of the information. The amount of information and written material in an organization such as the United Way is really immense. Staff in Agency Relations are responsible for the dissemination of information to volunteers and to make sure that volunteers have access to the information they need. As the information works its way up the system however, it becomes more and more contracted, as well as being filtered through the perceptions of the individuals in the process. This tends to affect the ways in which decisions get made.

Lack of clarity around issues and lack of information, despite all that was provided, appeared again and again at committee meetings. During the process of attempting to set priorities, it was clear that although volunteer were provided with a great deal of written information, many were confused about what the issues were, what their personal needs for information were, and what directions needed to be taken to resolve the different dilemmas. Firstly, discussion leaders at the workshop did not always seem to understand the issues being raised or their rôle as leaders in those discussions. Secondly, many volunteers were concerned with specific issues of termination, agency board management, relationship of agencies to United Way, but failed to fit these issues into an overall view.

This appeared to be the case at other meeting as well. Often, criteria for evaluating agencies seemed unclear to volunteers, confusion around agency programs and service delivery was often evident. This often made itself felt in directionless meetings and unimaginative questioning.

Initially recognizing the need for information, the writer adopted this as one of the areas in which there was potential for some impact. The writer learned several things from this. First, information that was clear, researched, reliable and that drew out the major points for volunteers often could be provided but wasn't. Secondly, several variables work to limit the ability of any one individual to significantly impact the decision making process. Any individual's actions are seriously constrained by the considerable forces operating within an organization to maintain things as they are. This is quite a force to be reckoned with and should never be minimized.

Thirdly, providing more information, especially written, doesn't seem to make any remarkable difference. Instead, time needs to be taken to educate volunteers - by talking with them, by presenting the information simply and verbally as well as written, by suggesting alternate ways of looking at the problem. Above all, assumptions that volunteers understnad issues and know how to act on them just because they are panel members should not be made.

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