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Data for Welfare Decision Making

Notes on a Workshop Held 2-3 July 1980

Edited by J Moller

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INTRODUCTION

This report cannot hope to cover all the issues discussed at the seminar on *Data for Welfare Decision Making* held at the Social Welfare Research Centre on 2-3 July, 1980. It attempts to cover issues which were highlighted in discussion. Many important points made by individuals may not be covered due to the need to limit the size of this report. The report may, nevertheless, jog the memories of those who attended and raise key questions for others who read it.

The format of the seminar varied slightly from the original agenda. This was mainly due to participants wanting to explore some of the philosophical issues before considering any framework for organising questions.

In general this report follows the amended agenda but participants will recognise that some points are reported out of their actual context when they fit more closely with the content of another session.

Jerry Moller,
Editor.

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

Three of the participating organizations responded to the request for a forward list of priority questions. (These are presented in *Appendix II*). Dr. Adam Graycar responded for the S.W.R.C. to the list of questions presented to the seminar, and Mr. Michael Cusack of N.Y.C.A commented on the context of data collection. General points raised in the discussion were:

(1)   Different organizations have different approaches to framing their priority questions. Differences in the role of the organization lead to a different agenda of priority issues.

(2)   The relative priority of questions within each organization changes over time in response to the changes in the policies of controlling or funding bodies, societal value systems, political pressures and the changing importance of other issues which affect resource allocation.

(3)   There is a marked difference in priorities within organizations. Priority questions of administrators vary considerably from the priority questions of clients. The listing of priority questions for an organization can only follow an internal process which deals with the priorities of various sectors within the organization.

(4)   Priority questions for agencies with a change focus are quite different from organizations which have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

Any attempt to develop a data set must take into account this wide range of competing priorities. It needs to reflect the fact that decisions are made in a situation of competing interests, where data is one component. Some data are needed to raise and clarify priority questions, but in most cases the nature of the priority questions tends to be set by the decision-making process needs to be considered.

DAY 1 SESSION II

Mr. J. Moller (S.W.R.C.) spoke on his pre-circulated background paper *Data Collection for Welfare Decision Making*. Please refer to Appendix I but note that an updated version is being prepared for publication at a later date.

Response to the paper concerned the following issues:

(1)   The need to recognise clearly that the relative priority of questions changes continuously and that data systems must also change in response to changingpriorities.

(2)   It is difficult to separate the role of policy making, planning and implementation. This makes the task of defining priority questions according to these roles difficult due to the amount of overlap between the roles.

The comments which A.C.O.S.S. presented appear in *Appendix III*.

Note: some difficulty arose with the concepts of 'programme' and 'policy'. Moynihan's specific, if unusual definitions are given in his chapter *Policy vs Program in the '70's* in 'Strategic Perspectives in Social Policy' edited by Tropman et al and published by Pergamon (N.Y) in 1976.

(9)   There is a need for agreed standard definitions to allow
        cross-matching of data collected at different points and
        to allow use with the widest possible range of value
        perspectives.

        These defining parameters should be renogotiable to
        maintain the usefulness of the data to all political and
        value groups. (The renogotiability feature may conflict
        with analysis of an issue over time).

(10)   An understanding of which questions are not being answered
        is just as important as knowing which questions are being
        answered.

(11)   The distribution of skills and resources for data analysis
        may affect the relative usefulness of a data system to some
        groups just as much as the structure of the collection.
        This raises the practical issue of the need for skills and
        resource at all levels to facilitate maximum use of the data.
        There is currently a gap between those with the skills and
        those without.

(12)   Data can only be useful in a decision-making structure that
        uses data.

(13)   There is a conflict between the expectations of the Senate
        Committee Report on *Evaluation in Australian Health and
        Welfare Services* and the resources provided. See
        Recommendation 30 in the Report and the Government's
        response in the Senate. (Senate Hansard 6.11.79: 1892-1899).

(14)   There is a need for a data system that can organise social
        and other indicators on the basis of interest as well as
        geographic areas.

(15)   Accessibility is a key issue. Accessibility can be assisted
        by (a) disaggregation

            (b) standard categories of collection

            (c) guaranteed sharing arrangements which accept that
                data flow must occur in both directions not just
                upwards

(16)   Data system structure should be developed on the principle
        of mutual accountability rather than upward accountability.
        This requires that data be shared to allow active involvement
        in policy and planning decisions.

DAY 1 SESSION III(b)

Due to the difficulty of obtaining a list of priority questions, a set of
questions of a specific interest to the youth sector was developed. This
approach was adopted to illustrate the difficulties which are met in
defining questions in a way useful to the definition of a data base.

The questions asked were:
    (1)   Do unemployed young people have extra health problems?

    (2)   What resources do young people have to procure services?

    (3)   What is the critical factor causing a health problem?

    (4)   What is the cause of youth employment?

    (5)   What can be done about this - locally and nationally?

On the basis of these disparate priority questions, a large number of data needs were identified. These were presented as follows:

Who is employed

What are their incomes?

What is the geographical distribution of variables?

What is the general health status of a population broken down by age, income and employment status?

What resources are needed to get services?

What are the costs of services and what are their eligibility criteria?

What transport facilities are used by unemployed people?

What are the budget patterns of unemployed people?

What is the distribution of health problems?

What is the history and duration of a health problem, broken down by unemployed/employed?

What is the relative stress level of employed and unemployed people?

What is the utilization of health services by various groups?

What is the support structure of the unemployed person? e.g. living conditions, family structure?

How does the situation of unemployed people compare with their situation in other countries?

What are the attitudes of employers towards young people and vice versa? - including change over time.

What are the community's attitudes towards unemployment?

What is the complete range of economic variables at local and
national level (needed to research the causes of employment)?

This is obviously a very rough list but the issues it raises are clear.
A group of questions relevant to one sector can make massive demands on
data collection resources. The task of planning, defining, collecting,
processing and analysing the data would moreover be formidable for any
organization primarily committed to an advocacy sole; yet reliance on
data is widespread, so much so that the absence or scarsity of data may
be used to delay or prevent answer being given to important questions.
The complexity of social science methodology can be the means for
avoiding issues.

The exercise on 'young people' at the seminar focussed clearly on the
need to determine priority questions that do in fact relate to social
science methodology, and the relative place of data collection and
analysis in the overall functions of organizations.

The attempt to obtain a list of priority questions also highlighted some
interesting issues. People are not used to specifying priority questions
in a form which facilitates easy translation to data needs. The priority
rating of a question is continually readjusted according to the course of
events. This transience of priorities will often mean that while data may
be useful to assist in decision making, the collection of data on a
regular basis would not be justified.

The form of the question is usually related to a political and
operational context. This form is a far cry from the degree of specificity
usually needed for data collection purposes. There is a major conceptual
difference between social science methodologies and decision-making
practice. Translation skills are rare, but without them the structuring
of a relevant data base is likely to be most difficult.

DAY 2 SESSION V

DECIDING PRIORITIES

Professor Theodore Marmor of Yale University briefly outlined some of the
U.S. experiences in this area. Noted here are some of the key points he
raised:

The U.S. experience is marked by a naive assumption that planning and
social science methodology can reduce conflict and result in more
efficient services. The move toward this process failed due to the
contradictory values and aspirations of the participating parties. In the
field of health for example, there was a sharp contradiction between the
resources available and the aspirations of the participants in the planning
process. The scope for change that was available was far below that needed
to produce the ends the planners envisaged. In general, the planning-social
science move in the U.S. failed because it failed to recognise
(1) when social science methodology is appropriate

(2) that data collection is defensive and strategic

(3) that collecting information which is related to changing a system is
    depressing and exhausting when there is no mandate for change.

Priorities can be:

    (a) The priorities that people seek or say they seek; or

    (b) the priorities that are expressed by the actual decisions and
         allocations made by the institutions.

In fact priorities lie somewhere between the two. Data collection
priorities for agencies must be a compromise between their own interests
and the interests of institutional society. The choice of priorities is
decided by the political strategy of the agency.

The Senate Committee Report (see above) fails to show an appreciation that the way one collects data can directly influence the interests of parties in the struggle. The Committee's condemnation of 'ignorance as sin' is correct but it's faith in virginal social data analysis fails to come to grips with the reality of the decision-making process.

Marmor suggests that there is a role for data collection if the following can be agreed upon:

1)   that social science is the relevant response to a situation of genuine uncertainty, or to a situation in which it is agreed that uncertainty should be created:

2)   that if the degree of uncertainty changes, different decision responses will be made.

There is also a contrast between data analysis for understanding the social order and that involved in changing the social order. The techniques for explaining most of the variance are contrasted with those that seek out variables which may have an effect on the outcome. The latter requires a specific mandate, and resources to move beyond the analysis stage.

The ultimate priority for questions depends on -
(1)   Who your constituency is, i.e. whose interest is being served; and
(2)   the political strategy which is most appropriate.

The priority within the constituency can be determined by - (a) asking people (b) telling people what they ought to be interested in (c) letting others decide (i.e. institutional structures).

DAY 2 SESSION VI

CONCLUSION

A.   The following suggestions were made to the Forum of National
Welfare Coordinating Bodies:

A.1   A Data Working Party should be formed with terms of reference
       based on items 2-9, iii and iv of the Forum paper presented on
       27 March *(see Appendix IV)*.

A.2   The Working Party should determine its relationship to WELSTAT and
       other groups with similar interests;

A.3   The Working Party should note the content of the response of the
       government to the Senate Committee's recommendation no.13 (Senate
       Hansard 6.11.79; 1897, para 9) and to the Forum paper of 27.3.80;

A.4   The Working Party should determine its relationship to the Social
       Welfare Policy Secretariat's plans in the light of resource
       provision;

A.5   The Working Party should consider the 'philosophical issues' raised
       in this seminar.

This Working Party will need to be adequately resourced to perform its
task.

B.   In respect of the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat, the participants
at the Seminar agreed to the following statement:

       We understand that the government intends to set up a coordinating
       mechanism to allow the Secretariat to respond to recommendations II
       27, 29 and 30 in the Senate Committee Report on *Evaluation in
       Australian Health and Wealfare Services*. We urge you to give your

attention to the following matters:

1. Adequate participation by the Forum of National Welfare Coordinating Bodies as a response to recommendation 29 requires adequate resource provision for the Forum's proposed Data Working Party.

2. The machinery for social welfare data should be maintained under the joint auspices of government and non-government groups.

3. Any resultant report to government should reflect the diverse views of participating bodies.

C. The following notes were also made: the Social Welfare Research Centre was thanked for conducting the seminar and was invited to maintain its interest and involvement. The Centre was asked to consider favourably any requests by the Data Working Party for resources and expertise in the welfare data area. Participants also asked the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat for copies of the report compiled in response to recommendation 27 of the Senate Committee Report.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR TO PARTICIPANTS.

As a means of providing a stimulus to further thinking I have attempted to draw together some of the issues raised into a list of suggestions for the non-government sector.

The N.G.S. will need to:

(a) define what data are necessary to clarify the issues by highlighting the state of affairs in the community;

(b) decide what are the pressing issues;

(c) decide what data are necessary to facilitate an impact on the state of affairs; and

(d) develop a situation where it can use data effectively.

In order to do this N.G.S. will need to:

(a) move to ensure that decisions which can be informed by data are informed by that data;

(b) make claims on resources and skills to deal with the data - this will first entail the N.G.S. knowing what skills and resources it has and what is needed;

(c) ensure the legitimacy of the N.G.S. to act outside the value context of the government sector in order to promote questioning of that value context. This will entail making a claim on the government to support a data system which is potentially critical of government policy;

(d) ensure that it has access to data. This will entail pressing a claim for access to data being the right of the provider and the provided for, and of any other legitimate user;

(e) support the rights of all participants in the policy-delivery system (including recipients of services and benefits) to express data needs and a reasonable consideration of their needs as priorities; and

(f) maintain a *recognition* of the cost of data collection to claimants of benefits and services.

SOME DIRECT CLAIMS FOR ACTION

(1) Immediate education and development of skills for all levels of staff to promote effective data collection and understanding of issues.

(2) Change in professional education courses to provide new participants with the skill to deal with data issues.

(3) Resources to enable N.G.O's to develop data systems which serve their own interests even when these are in conflict with government interests.

Some guidelines for data system development:

(1) Define the issue.

(2) Define whether need for data is routine or ad hoc, of local or national interest.

(3) Define how much investment is worth putting into the issue.

(4) Look around for others likely to have similar data-making claims made on them and accepting these claims from them.

(5) Choose the system to suit the purpose in mind. If it is a short term issue use a responsive system.

(6) Define exactly what data is needed in terms of aggregation and category definition.

(7) Find out what data is available. If appropriate data is not available can it be made available? If it exists but is not available analyse why not. Develop means of communication between interested parties.

(8) Find out what resources - money, equipment, skills - are available and what is needed.

(9) Decide who bears the cost and who gets the pay off.

These are just some of my own thoughts following the seminar. You have probably thought of most of these yourself and a great many other besides. If you would like to share your thoughts I should be pleased to hear from you.

Jerry Moller.

DATA COLLECTION FOR WELFARE DECISION MAKING/A DRAFT PAPER
              BY J. MOLLER, JUNE 1980.

Introduction

This paper sets out to raise some of the basic issues which must be faced
in determining the parameters for collection of data to be used for welfare
decision making. Its focus is specific to the decision making process in
the policy delivery system. It therefore does not attempt to cover public
use information systems which are generally focussed on informing people
about the range of services and benefits available or policies and plans
which are being considered.

It is written in the context of the report by the Senate Standing Committee
on Social Welfare on *Evaluation in Australian Health and Welfare Services
(1979)* and the responses to that report by the federal government and the
proposals of the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat for a number of minimum
data sets. It argues that the present approach only caters for the needs
of some decision makers and makes assumptions about the nature of priority
questions which are open to question. It develops a framework for deter-
mining the parameters of the data-base, which attempts to avoid these
limitations and assumptions.

Background

The Report of the Senate Standing Committee has drawn attention to consider-
able gaps in the data relating to the provision of health and welfare
services in Australia. The Committee's investigation highlights the lack
of cohesion of decision making in the policy-delivery system, a lack of a
tradition of evaluation, and a low level of skill and resources for evalua-
tion. The Committee suggests in its recommendations that this situation
should be improved. (Senate Report 1979 pp. xi-xiv).

As a result there have been moves on a number of fronts to upgrade
Australia'a health and welfare data collection and processing system. In
its response to the Committee's report the government allocated the
responsibility for the analysis of data needs to the Social Welfare Policy

Secretariat (S.W.P.S.) who have been asked to report to Parliament within two years.

On March 27 1980 the S.W.P.S. sponsored a seminar to discuss the data needs of non-government organisations. At this seminar a number of questions were raised about the structure and purpose of the proposed model for data collection. The Social Welfare Research Centre convened a seminar for July 1980 to look at some of the issues which need to be considered in the design of a data-base for welfare decision making.

The Context and Characteristics of the Present System

The Westminster system of parliamentary democracy provides a situation which does little to encourage movement away from the current policy/ delivery patterns. Graycar (1970) has noted that "in the parliamentary system the fusion of the executive and legislative branches of government means that the party or coalition with a majority of parliamentary seats will have its wishes prevail regardless of what research or evaluative studies might discover about particular policies and programs". The nature of the system itself therefore tends to limit the rationality of decision making which the Senate Standing Committee sees as ideal. It tends to perpetuate a situation where it could be argued data collection systems are likely to be designed primarily to meet the need to justify decisions which have already been made on other grounds and only secondarily to provide information suitable for guiding decision making.

The major characteristics of a data-base operating under these constraints are:

1. It is likely to be centrally planned using a top down approach.

2. It is likely to contain data in a highly aggregated form which tends to cover up small anomalies.

3. It is likely to be relatively inaccessible, either by declaring information confidential or private or by keeping data in a form which is inaccessible. (i.e. very high aggregations filed under categories not serviceable for other purposes or in systems not geared

to out putting data).

These characteristics are found in the current data collection 'system' in Australia and are likely to continue if there is no proper consideration of the range of questions to which a data-base should be addressed.

The welfare system in Australia tends to operate from a residual concept of welfare. (see Note 1, below). Its approach is to provide programmes which will rectify specific problems which appear in the community. A data system operating within a programme context is geared to finding the best programme solution to a problem. The major characteristics of such a data system are:

1. It is likely to be divided into sub-sets on a programme basis.

2. It is likely to be geared to the evaluation of programmes within the value perspective of the policymakers.

3. It is unlikely to draw on information from outside the welfare system because its focus is on optimising programmes whin the context of the welfare system, not on seeking interventions which are focussed outside the welfare system which may also have the desired effect.

The Senate Standing Committee's report adopts a programme framework. It focusses throughout on the creation of effective programmes which are accountable to Parliament for the resources they use and the results they achieve. The model presented by the S.W.P.S. is based on this programme framework.

If this framework is accepted as a basis for a data collection system it may well limit the range of interventions which are considered. A programme-based data system will provide programme type answers to programme type questions.

Note 1   "Welfare system" refers collectively to the various welfare systems in Australia. Not all parts of this system use a residual approach but the general thrust is residual.

Daniel Moynihan (1970) rejected the programme approach and suggested what he called a policy approach. He contrasted the two approaches by pointing out that the programme approach relates to a *part of the system* and policies to the *system in its entirely*. He suggested that the failure of the U.S. to make a great deal of progress in solving its social problems was due to a programme approach, which failed to come to terms with the systematic problems which required intervention. (See Note 2, below).

The Task at Hand

The task of defining a data-base for Australian welfare decision making is not as simple as it may at first have appeared. The assumptions underlying the design will have an impact on the pattern and range of decisions which are made. The simple question "what data do you need?" is insufficient to produce a useful data-base.

The recent work of the S.W.P.S. has not adequately addressed itself to these issues. Their approach is systematic and sound in the context of their role as upper level policy advisers operating in a programme context but there are many other decision making tasks which must be performed in the continuum between policy and implementation. These require a different scope and form of data because they ask different questions or analyse similar questions in a different way.

Policy evaluators may wish to evaluate policies related to programmes by considering not only alternative programmes but also other systemic interventions. Programme planners may need to make decisions about resource distribution across geographical boundaries and service deliverers may require information to assist them in setting priorities in selecting clients to receive a particular service. Each of these activities will require data of an 'appropriate scope and form.

Note 2   Whilst I agree with Moynihan's analysis I believe he held an optimistic view of the way in which improved knowledge about systems can improve decision making. For an exposition of the problems of his approach see Rule, J.B. *Insight and social betterment.* - Oxford University Press, 1978 pp. 56-59.

The present data collection system and that proposed by S.W.P.S. focusses mainly on providing data of a scope and in a form which is suitable for broad policy decisions. Whilst the upgrading of this system may well result in better policy decisions, (although this does not necessarily follow - see Note 1) there is little likelihood of better results if other levels of decision making are using data not specifically geared to their task.

Each level of the decision making spectrum has its own interests and constraints. At each level some questions are considered closed. The decisions have already been made for a range of reasons. Often the reasons for the closure are external to the question - perhaps related to political value systems or constraints. At other levels, however, the same question may be seen as open and whereas the first level would be likely to collect only maintenance data to support the decision, the other level would require a more comprehensive and potentially critical data set.

In planning a data set this must be taken into account. Domination by any one level in the definition of the limits of the data can seriously affect the way in which other levels can answer their questions. This in turn restricts the range of their decisions and ultimately the nature or quality of the intervention.

The Senate Standing Committee put forward recommendations which recognised the need for resources to be made available for data collection at all levels of the decision making spectrum. The government's response, however, has narrowed the focus to concentrate on a data-base which is useful for top level decision making and for ensuring the accountability to Parliament of the various programmes which are being operated. As the S.W.P.S. operates within this framework it is natural that questions related to executive policy decisions and accountability to Parliament will define their data requirements.

Taking a broader perspective on decision making, this sort of limited definition is contrary to the ideals of the Senate Standing Committee's Report. It also fails to consider the needs of those who wish to take a

policy rather than a programme approach. In order to avoid these problems it is necessary to create a new framework for the data-base.

Creating a New Framework

A data-base designed to any framework will always have limitations. Political, resource, and knowledge constraints always act to modify what is theoretically desirable. The importance of the framework is to enable us to identify what compromises have been made and what sort of questions the data-base will and will not address, so that it may be used realistically and not as a magical device for solving the ills of the welfare system.

The basis of this framwork is:what are the priority questions to be asked across the policy delivery spectrum? This basis was not considered by the S.W.P.S. because their model was based on the specific question of accountability to Parliament and executive policy. There is likely to be a huge number of questions useful to other decision-makers so the first step must be to identify different types of questions.

The traditional division of Federal, State and Local Government and non-government sectors is one way of identifying different questions. This division however is not suitable for determining which questions should define the data base because it fails to separate the different sorts of questions asked at different levels of decision making in the policy - delivery continuum. A better framework is developed by classifying questions according to the activity to which they are related, rather than the institution to which they are related.

As a starting point three basic activities can be identified to be useful in constructing the framework.

(1) Policy-making   (2) Planning   (3) Implementation

Each of these activities is likely to have different sorts of questions and therefore have different data requirements. Obviously there will be some overlap and clear separation will not always be possible but within each

activity the nature of priority questions is likely to be the same even though they are referenced to different institutions and different target groups. Any agency or person having multiple roles will have multiple questions and multiple data needs. (see Note 3). Some clarification of the three levels is needed:

(a) Policy-making is related to the formulation of a specific but universal set of guidelines and objectives which form the context of planning and delivery.

(b) Planning is related to the translation of policy into a specific setting resulting in a set of propositions for specification.

(c) Delivery is related to the process of translating the plan into action, culminating in the provision of services or the allocation of benefits.

These definitions are purely functional and do not purport to accommodate the technicalities which arise in a broader context. Within these activities a series of approaches may be taken:

1. Monitoring - which is related to questions of the description of context, input, process, output and outcome. It raises no value questions.

2. Evaluation - which is related to questions of context, input, output, process and outcome within a policy context. It occurs within a specific value framework.

3. Research - which is related to questions of context, input, process, output and outcome in a way which specifically sets out to question policy and value assumptions.

Note 3 Of course these three activities can be broken down further. Many authors on social policy have done this (e.g. Kahn, Perlman-Gurin Freeman and Sherwood). Further breakdown at this stage would unnecessarily complicate the framework. It is recognised also that many alternative frameworks could be considered. The important issue at this stage is not the comprehensiveness of the framework, but its ability to clarify the issues relating to determining data priorities.

These definitions follow the convention used by Graycar (1979). They differ
from the concepts of monitoring and evaluation discussed by writers such as
Scriven (1968), Tripodi et al (1978), Weiss (1972). They are used here to
avoid the problem of differentiating between differing levels of evaluation
and should not necessarily be seen as being appropriate in other contexts.

Combining the three activities within the three approaches produces a nine
cell matrix.

	Monitoring	Evaluating	Research
Policy-Making			
Planning			
Implementing			

This framework can be used to identify the range of questions which may
possibly be used to define the parameters of a data-base. Moynihan's
distinction between policy and programme perspectives was raised earlier.
This framework could be applied to either perspective. Appendix I contains
the framework applied to questions from a programme perspective, Appendix II
questions from a policy perspective and Appendix III specific questions from
the Child Care Programme.

Practical Issues

It may at first appear that this framework calls for a data-base which is
likely to be very large indeed. If the present constraints are accepted
it would appear to be beyond the resources available. This data-base is
actually not likely to be as large as it may seem. The question of con-
straints will be dealt with later. Many pieces of data will be relevant
to several questions and so the data-base's scope (i.e. the range of data
collected) is likely to be about the same size as if only one level's
questions were being used to define it.

Additional reductions will be possible because data not relevant to priority questions can be omitted from the data set. In some circumstances it will be found that critical data is unobtainable, so other data related to the same question can then be omitted. Apart from these economies, the fact that the data being provided to other levels is often useful at the level of collection is likely to result in greater accuracy of data and a greater willingness to participate in a data sharing scheme without the need for the coercion of making participation a condition of funding.

The form of the data-base is likely to change. In order to serve differing needs, data will need to be available in a form which can readily be adapted to those needs. This means that data will need to be kept at a relatively disaggregated level, with definitional categories suitable to several tasks, in a system which provides adequate access. Attention will need to be paid, at the time of design, to frequency of collection, collection method, sampling or population base and processing technology.

For example, service delivery agencies may require data about a range of individual clients in order to evaluate its service. This data can be aggregated across agencies according to the needs of planners and policy-makers, providing it is in the correct form.

The process of data collection is likelytochange to accommodate these require-ments. The required low level of aggregation and relatively fine definitional categories will tend to move data collection nearer the point of delivery. The use of the data-base at cell levels will also encourage active data collection at each level. The process therefore will tend to be decentralised. This will require that considerable effort will need to be made to ensure that data is reliable, compatible and accessible.

That part of the data which is to be shared across levels will need to be in a standard format. Questions of standardisation of collections have already been approached by VCOSS, NCOSS, Welstat, A.B.S. and their experiences will obviously be useful. Often, definitions used for local formats have a specific value base which precludes their use to answer questions arising from a different value framework. To overcome this problem standard agreed

frameworks, concepts and definitions will need to be developed which will allow redefinition according to the need of the user.

The free interchange of data is critical to the development of a useful data-base. (The Senate report has discussed the problem of locked-in data, Report p.83). Often this interchange of information is restricted for political reasons. For instance, information which calls into question 'closed' decisions is often restricted. The assumption behind this framework however is that all levels should be able to gain access to data required for another level. This implies a free flow of information in an accessible form. There are two major objections to this: privacy and secrecy.

Privacy can be violated if the information can be used directly or indirectly to discover information about an individual or identifiable group of individuals which they have revealed in confidence. Free information flow must never violate this sort of privacy. The United Nations describes data which has been vetted to remove links back to individuals or groups as "sanitized". It points out however that sanitized data is appropriate for answering all legitimate questions and that privacy need never be violated. (See note 4).

Often, privacy can be used as an excuse for restricting information flow. For this reason any framework for data collection must include acceptable standards for sanitizing data and all data collection points should ensure that they make available sanitized data for exchange. Freedom of information legislation is at present being considered and their considerations may be of value in deciding standards. The Law Reform Commission's *Inquiry into Privace and the Census* also provides a useful guide to the issues.

Note 4   Some work has been done on this by the United Nations. See "The Development of Integrated Data Bases for Social, Economic and Demographic Statistics". New York: 1979. (U.N. Series F., no.27).

Secrecy is often seen to be necessary by organisations. Information may be held or even destroyed because its revelation would have major repercussions for the agency which the information concerns. Obviously agencies are unlikely to participate in the provision of information to a data-base without some provisions for secrecy. A major question which must be answered is 'what is legitimate secrecy'? Earlier I pointed out that inaccessibility (which is often a technique for maintaining secrecy) is a characteristic of the present system. The dual issue of secrecy and inaccessibility therefore is likely to be extremely sensitive. It is essential, however, that the lowest possible level of secrecy is reached as it is unlikely that any organzation will provide data of a sensitive nature if another contributor is also withholding similar data. Failure to deal adequately with this issue could produce a data-base which has little or no value.

Issues of privacy and secrecy are common to both programme and policy approaches but are likely to be far more sensitive in a policy based approach due to the wide range of information required from areas which operate from a different value and theoretical base from that of the welfare sector. (e.g. information about taxation rebate claims even at a highly aggregated level such as by profession is likely to be considered private).

We must consider the issue of resource constraints. The recent restriction of resources available to A.B.S. for processing the 1976 census gives warning of severe resource limitations. The Government response to the Senate Standing Committee's recommendations also foreshadows constraints. In this climate it is important to identify what resources will be needed and where they will come from. This returns us to the issues of a policy versus programme approach. The resource constraints on the two approaches are quite different.

A data-base which operates in a programme context can only consider priorities for data collection within that context. The resources available to it will therefore be determined as a portion of the resources available for the programme and it will not be in a position to make

claims on other parts of the system. For example, within a programme context A.B.S. can only allocate those resources which have been set aside for social welfare and health collections. Other data collections are provided with separate resources and determine their priorities within that budget line. In a policy context, however, social welfare data collections are ranked in priority against all other collections in the system. For example, a system to determine the number of physically handicapped people may be seen as being of greater priority than knowing the number of eggs produced by Australian poultry - this issue does not arise in a programme context.

In a programme context there is little chance of affecting the form of non-programme data collections. Highly aggregated taxation statistics useful for broad tax planning may not be useful for analysing the impact of taxation changes on certain sectors of the community but because these statistics are defined to be external to the programme it is unlikely in a programme model that sufficient pressure could be brought to bear to change the format of collection.

A policy model suffers due to its own complexity. There are so many problems determining priorities within programmes that to bring the total system into consideration is daunting. Criteria for relative priority setting between statistics required by Treasury or large companies, for planning and by social welfare analysts are likely to be extremely complex and require such a complicated negotiation that no data would ever be collected.

The policy perspective therefore opens the question of resource constraints to cover a wider range of possible resources. This however introduces the difficult question of relative resource allocations within the total system. In a system with a residual concept of welfare and with its admitted lack of defined goals and clear data on needs and effectiveness, the welfare field is in a poor position to present convincing arguments for alteration of present priorities. Without this change however a convincing argument will be difficult to mount - Catch 22.

The implications of accepting resource constraints and a programme perspective must be clearly identified and weighed against the implications of accepting a policy perspective and the promises and difficulties it presents. This can only be done by identifying the full range of priority questions and determining what questions will <u>not</u> be answered under varying resource constraints.

This is a continuous process and at any time the situation will lie somewhere on the continuum between a policy and a programme approach. What is important however is that it is recognised that the continuum exists.

Appendix IV contains a path diagram which represents the process to be undertaken - there are two outputs:

(1)   the defining parameters of the data-base

(2)   a list of unanswered priority questions

CONCLUSIONS

The construction of such a data-base requires that those wishing to use it must clearly define their priority questions and the scope and form of data required to analyse them. At present it seems that the data which is available determines the questions which are asked rather than vice-versa. Both those with a programme and a policy orientation are unclear on their priority questions.

It is not therefore a matter of deciding once and for all what data should be collected or even what questions should be addressed. The process of constructing a data-base is continuous. It occurs along the continuum which lies between a policy concept and a programme concept. It must be well enough defined at any one time to allow legitimate and forceful claims to be made on the system to provide the resources necessary for its adequate functioning.

The politics of decision making will underly this process. A constant watch must be kept to ensure that the data-base is not partisan in its

content or restricted in its access. The questions of scope, form, access-
ibility are critical if the data-base is to do more than provide information
to back decisions made on other grounds.

APPENDIX 1 *DATA FOR WELFARE DECISION MAKING* by J. Moller.

PROGRAM APPROACH

The questions listed in this section are some of the possible priority
questions. Sometimes apparently similar questions appear in different
cells. It should not be assumed that the form of data needed for each
is the same. The context in which the question is asked has a major
influence on form.

For example:-   The policy maker and implementer may both want to
                      know who received a benefit.

The policy maker may be satisfied to know that

                      400,000 people received full benefit
                      200,000   "   "   partial benefit
                      150,000 eligible people did not apply for and so did
                              not receive the benefit.

The implementer, however, may want to know the characteristics of the 50
eligible people in his local area who did not apply in order to determine
ways of overcoming the local barriers. Other implementers who have a 100%
take up rate are not interested.

PROGRAM APPROACH

MONITORING

Policy Making: What are the numbers and characteristics of people
                      affected by the existing program?

                      What are the resources allocated to this program?

                      What are the resources currently being used by the
                         program?

                      How are these resources distributed

                      (a) geographically (b) to population categories.

What is the level of support for the program

(a) In the community (b) by politicians.

Planning:

In this area of concern - i.e. geographic or target group -

Who will be affected by the program?

What are the general population characteristics?

What resources are currently available and how much is being used?

What is the immediate climate surrounding programs of this type in this area?

What are the current criteria used to define the target group?

Implementation:

Who received benefit from this program?
What is the current level of demand?

What are the characteristics of the local population relevant to eligibility criteria?

What resources are being used?

Who delivered what?

What is the local reaction to the program? - (by users and non users).

EVALUATION

Policy Making:

Was the policy implemented as intended?

What was the impact of the program - intended or unintended?

How is this impact related to policy guidelines, planning strategies and delivery methods?

What were the barriers to effectiveness which can be affected by policy changes?

What is the need for the program?

Was the impact according to the goals or objectives of the policy?

Planning: Did the program meet planning specifications?

Was the impact of the program   intended or unintended?

How is this   impact related to planning strategies?

Was the impact according to the objectives and goals of the planners?

What is the need for change in planning and delivery strategies?

Implementation: Were the goals and objectives of the programme met?

What is the need for the program?

What were the barriers to effective delivery?

What were the actual criteria for allocation?

How efficient was resource use?

To what extent was implementation affected by policy or planning strategies?

What was the impact of the program as an implementation at this agency?

RESEARCH

Policy Making: How does this programme compare with other possible programme alternatives?

What policy changes would be necessary to change the programme?

What factors are operative which affect the choice of policy?

Are the constraints of parliament (both formal and informal) unreasonably restricting policy goals?

Planning: How does the planning strategy compare with other
                      possible strategies - given the policy constraints?

                      What were the value judgements and assumptions implicit
                      in the choice of planning strategy?

                      What was the planning process and how did it cater for
                      various interest groups? How would alternative
                      strategies change patterns of influence?

                      What is the relationship between the planning strategy,
                      policy context and final implementation strategy?

Implementation: Were the programme goals adequate?

                      What were the wider impacts of the implementation?
                      i.e. beyond the goals and objectives specified
                      including impact on allocation to other programmes and
                      on program staff.

                      What are the relative merits of alternative implement-
                      ation strategies?

                      How do they fit with policy and planning strategies?

                      What was the quality of the service offered?

DATA FOR WELFARE DECISION MAKING by J. Moller.

POLICY APPROACH

Many of the questions asked are identical to that from the program approach. There is, however, a different focus. The policy approach considers intervention at many levels and so requires data which is related to these.

For example:-   A program approach policy maker looks at policies about programmes for target groups. A policy oriented policy maker may want to consider intervention in the system at a point far removed from the target group - perhaps an alteration to economic policy. The questions outlined below are additional to the basic questions given in the programme approach.

POLICY APPROACH

MONITORING

Policy Making: What are the characteristics of the system in which policy is to be made?

What are the current resources of the system?

What are the demands being made on the system by other policies?

Planning: What are the possible sources of resources?

What are the characteristics of the system which are related to implementing intervention?

What are the positions of the various interest and pressure groups?

Implementation: What is the current avenue of intervention?

What resources are being used?

What are the characteristics of the part of the system in which intervention is taking place.

What is actually being done - by whom?

EVALUATION

Policy Making: Was the policy implemented as intended?

What was the impact of the intervention
       (a) on the system,
       (b) on the target group

How is this impact related to initial goals and objectives.

Planning: Did the intervention meet planning specifications?

Has failure to meet these specifications been due to unrealistic planning?

Was the planning strategy in accordance with policy guidelines?

Was the planning strategy relevant to the part of the system receiving the intervention?

Implementation: Were the goals and objectives of the interventions met?

Did the implementation match policy and planning strategies?

How efficient was the resource use?

What were the barriers to effective interventions?
Did these arise due to poor policy, planning or implemention?

RESEARCH

Policy Making: How does this policy fit against other policy alternatives?

What were the factors affecting selection of goals and objectives and policy strategies?

What were the relative interests of various parts of the

system in the policy strategy?

e.g. conflicts with other policy areas.

Were the goals and objectives adequate?

Planning: What assumptions were made in deciding the planning strategy?

Why was the strategy chosen?

What were the alternative strategies possible - what impact would they have had?

how 'good' was the strategy used?

What were the power relationships influencing the planning strategy? - How did the implementation change these?

Implementation: Were the goals of the policy adequate?

What were alternative interventions and what effect would they have had?

What was the quality of the intervention?

What system characteristic operated against this implementation? Was this due to policy and planning constraints?

CHILD CARE PROGRAM

MONITORING

Policy Making:

What are the characteristics of children using the services?

What are the characteristics of eligible non users?

What is the per capita resource use?

What is the distribution of services -
(a) geographical
(b) relative to target groups?

Planning:

Same as above but broken down on a finer geographical and demographic basis.

What are the predicted changes in the eligible population for this area?

How many children would make a service viable?

What is the current means of allocating resources?

What are transport patterns in the area?

How does local population feel about childcare services?

What resources are available -
(a) through government sources?
(b) from parents?

Implementation:

Which children received care?

What sort of care?

Who provided it?

What are the properties of the local target population?

What resources are being used?

How do people react to the service
(a) their involvement

(b) their attitude

EVALUATION

Policy Making: Are the children seen as target groups receiving the benefits?

Overall what effect is the program having
(a) on childrens' well being
(b) on family well being

Is the program meeting the policy goals and objectives?

What is the impact of the program - e.g. effect on child well being or development related to the policy established.

What is stopping children from receiving effective services?

Planning: Is the current planning strategy in line with the policy context?

e.g. Did the planning specification for allocation of resources make the resources available to the groups of children identified by policy as priorities, i.e. handicapped children, poor families etc.

Is the implementation consistent with the planning strategy? If not, why not?

Are child care services being provided where they are needed?

Implementation: Are the services being offered in line with the goals and objectives of the service? i.e. did eligible children receive child care, did handicapped or poor or other special need groups receive the service.

If funding was obtained for a special group of children - did they receive the service?

Were services to children up to the standard set.
e.g. did children receive adequate food? -
     was physical environment up to standard?

Has time and skills of the staff of child care centres been adequately used in dealing with children who attend?

RESEARCH

Policy Making: Should child care policies be oriented toward disadvantage groups or not?

What is the most appropriate means of providing child care - e.g.
(a) by an increased child allowance and private enterprise system or by selective funding of services.

(b) by family day care or centre day care.

How valid are the goals and objectives of child care policy?

Planning: How can planning strategies best be related to child and family needs?

Who should make the planning strategies?

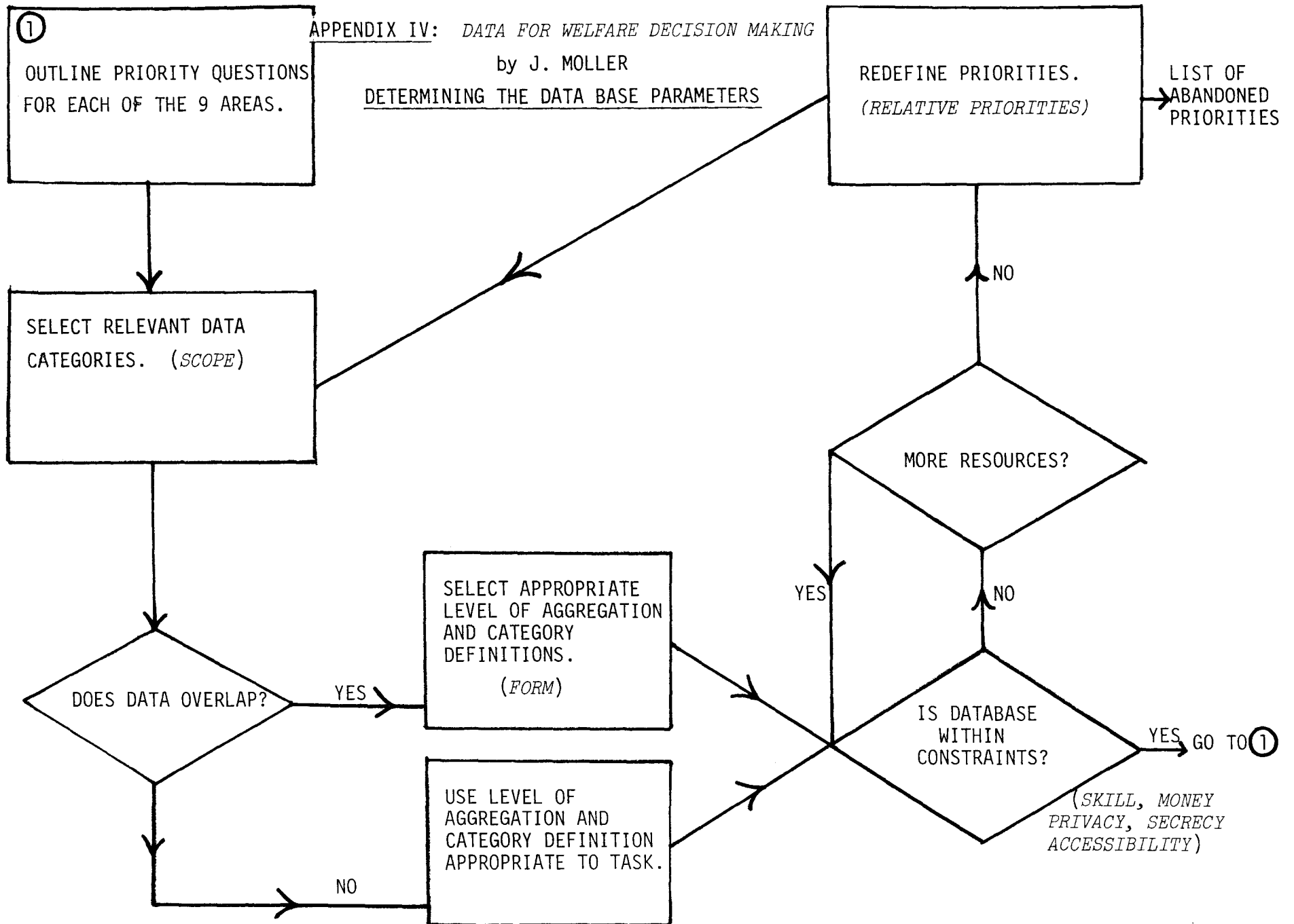What is the range of possible goals and what strategies are adequate to achieve them?

What is the network of influence which affects the successful planning of child care services in each state?

Implementation: What are the criteria for a 'good' child care service? - what should a services goal be?

What is the relative developmental progress of children using various service and those using no service?

What is the impact of not using child care services on families with young children?

① OUTLINE PRIORITY QUESTIONS FOR EACH OF THE 9 AREAS.

REDEFINE PRIORITIES. *(RELATIVE PRIORITIES)*

LIST OF ABANDONED PRIORITIES

SELECT RELEVANT DATA CATEGORIES. *(SCOPE)*

NO

MORE RESOURCES?

DOES DATA OVERLAP?

YES

SELECT APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF AGGREGATION AND CATEGORY DEFINITIONS. *(FORM)*

YES

NO

NO

USE LEVEL OF AGGREGATION AND CATEGORY DEFINITION APPROPRIATE TO TASK.

IS DATABASE WITHIN CONSTRAINTS?

YES GO TO ①

(SKILL, MONEY PRIVACY, SECRECY ACCESSIBILITY)

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APPENDIX II: FORWARD LIST OF PRIORITY QUESTIONS COMPILED FOR THE SWRC SEMINAR.

Note: The Social Welfare Policy Secretariat, the Australian Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled and the National Youth Council of Australia alone responded to the request by the organisers for a possible list of priority questions which faced them in the next five years. It was stressed that the questions were not intended to be the formal views of organisations but a list of ideas which could be used to assist seminar participants to discuss the wide range of possible priorities.

The contents of this appendix must be read, therefore, as *a discussion starter only* not as the formal view of the organisations.

(i) *Social Welfare Policy Secretariat*

Questions for policymakers:

. What total resources can be set aside for welfare purposes?

. Should policy be based on predominantly universal or selective philosophies?

. Which groups should be selected for particular attention?

. Which groups can afford to be given less than at present?

. Should assistance be in the form of benefits, services or a mix of these?

Questions for planners:

. Which groups are most in need of financial assistance or services?

. Is the situation of some groups becoming worse in relation to the population in general/is the range of income distribution becoming less equitable? If so, in what ways?

. What kinds of assistance or services will best meet the needs of the disadvantaged?

. What are the longterm costs and impacts likely to be of the forms of assistance and/or services designed to meet present needs?

. What are the social costs of existing policies?

Questions for implementers:

. Are programs reaching the people they were intended to reach? Are they appropriate to their needs?

. How can programs be made to run more effectively and efficiently?

. Which groups in need of assistance are falling outside the welfare net?

. What changes are need to bring these people into existing programmes or to create new ones suited to needs?

. Which people in receipt of assistance probably do not need it? How can their dependency be terminated?

(ii) *Australian Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled*

Policy Making:

. Funding - sources, security, priorities. Distribution public/private.

. Evaluation of philosophies e.g. de-institutionalisation, integration of disabled in community.

. Impact of technological change e.g. on services available, changes in workforce, implications for disabled.

. Implications of political/social events on health e.g. national insurance/compensation; drink-driving legislation; increasing unemployment-

. Where do health and welfare lie in pecking order of funding priorities?

Planning:

. Indicators of need - epidemiological, demographic (e.g. ageing pop.); needs of particular groups; changing needs.

. Alternatives to present services - trends elsewhere; implementing experimental programs.

. Duplication, consultation and co-ordination of related services.

. Manpower needs

Delivery:

. How will data collection improve services?

. Evaluation of existing programs and experimentatl programs.

. Cost-effectiveness - programs within welfare sector; health/welfare programs v. other sectors; costs of administration/data/policy v. funds available to users.

(iii) *The National Youth Council of Australia* responded with this letter:

Mr Jerry Moller,
Social Welfare Research Centre,
Box 1,
KENSINGTON,   NSW   2033.

Reference: Data Seminar

Dear Jerry,

Thank you for your memo regarding the data seminar proposed for early
July 1980. I am hopeful that both Peter Le Cornu (our Chairperson) and I
can attend.

The reason I have not completed your questionnaire is that I found that I
could not get what I wanted to say into the framework suggested.

There are a couple of points I would like to make, however. Firstly, I
believe that there are fundamental changes occurring with regard to the
political and bureaucratic processes of our society and within local
communities. As was highlighted by the recent Family Policy Conference,
consultation is now 'part and parcel' of the total political process in
Australia. The idea of consultation appears, however, to have a different
connotation within government to that espoused by community groups. For
Governments, consultation is still very much a legitimating information-
gathering process. For community, consulation is much more - a lateral
sharing of ideas, an empowering process (the power of the individual
strengthened by association with a group), a problem-solving process
(often without recourse to external assistance) etc.

As community processes develop, I believe the categories and frameworks
(or lack thereof) which governments use to organise their affairs will
become increasingly problematic. This prospect was highlighted by the
consultation conducted by the Victorian Consultative Committee on Social
Development for the White Paper on Social Welfare.

Secondly, (and in the light of the above) it is becoming less conceivable
than ever before for macro decision-making structures to be able to
determine appropriate categories, frameworks etc. without a collaborative
and consultative partnership with the community.

For me, therefore, the following questions appear paramount and run across
all three of the suggested categories:

1. How can community groups be assisted to participate in the re-definition
   processes which appear to be required?

2. Can perpetual update systems be established with a capacity to take
   account of the rapid shifts which are occurring?

3. Can systems be developed which actively seek out newly-emerging
   pockets of disadvantage and facilitate incorporation of new definitions?

4. How can a proper balance be maintained between those in political authority, those with expertise and the increasingly articulate voice of community?

4. How can the diversity and pluralism in our society be extended and fostered even further?

6. Can systems of data gathering be designed in such a way as to be of value to both planners and planned for?

In summary, I guess what I am saying is that the whole area of data-gathering concerns me in that the underlying questions with regard to overall context, unspelt-out assumptions and lack of truly consultative machinery appear to be continually by-passed.

The questions I have raised may not be capable of ultimate resolution, but I believe must form the back-drop to any specific decisions which are reached regarding the definition of data, its collection, and the uses to which it is put.

If my above comments make sense and you believe you can fit them into the three suggested categories, please feel free to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Cusack,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ACOSS INFORMATION TASK FORCE

MEETING HELD FRIDAY, 27TH JUNE, 1980.

PRESENT: M. Branson, A. Rein, C. Chappell, C. Maher, D. Tedmanson.

The meeting was convened to discuss the paper prepared for the Data Workshop Seminar 2-3 July, 1980, sponsored by the Social Welfare Research Centre, U.N.S.W.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

There should be a clear distinction between the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat (S.W.P.S.) model of data collection and analysis and a potential model for the non-government sector (N.G.S.). The needs, capacity and restrictions on the N.G.S. vary from government, for example - S.W.P.S. use of the broad-banding approach may restrict the N.G.S. if the same model were used. While it is suggested in the paper that policy review in government is limited according to the current government, this is not so for the N.G.S. The N.G.S. needs a broader based approach so that thorough review can occur (i.e. not be locked into existing policy and programs).

It was felt that perhaps a U.W.A.S.I.S. framework may be more relevant to the N.G.S. rather than broad-banding. Attention was drawn to the extracts from ACOSS Human Services Information Forum (12/3/79). The process of implementation of any system was seen to require considerable planning and resources etc.

The question of how non-users of services are included in evaluation does not appear to be addressed.

Generally it was felt that the paper was unnecessarily academic and directed toward top-level policy makers and a top level controlled system.

It was felt that the N.G.S. should not follow the lead of government but establish a system applicable to the sector. However, it was felt that there should be open access to the government data model. Equality was stressed rather than following the circumscribed debate of S.W.P.S. The distinction between policy and programs is not very useful.

Some information required will not be appropriate to be collected by A.B.S. Questions regarding A.B.S. role are not answered in the paper.

<u>SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON PAPER</u>

Page 2 - Constraints 1,2 & 3 appear to exist in the following system outlined in the papers.

Page 3 - 'A data system operating within a program context is geared to finding the best program solution to the problem' - incorrect.

Line 9 - Major characteristics are:

2. - undesirable.

3. - 'unlikely to draw on information outside the welfare ... within the context of the welfare system, ...'

<u>Comment</u> - doesn't recognise interrelationships, essential that a data system include all relevant data and that policy and program alternatives outside of this definition of the welfare system be considered.

Page 5 - 4th para - not applicable to the N.G.S.

Page 6 - first line - 'final data-base' assumes a static concept. It was felt that the data system should be clearly viewed as part of a Management Information System and is not static but continually being developed and reassessed itself.

- 4th para - A point made continually when reviewing the paper stressed that the data system must be developed at <u>all</u> levels, federal, state and local in non-government and government - critical.

Page 7 - 'Monitoring, Evaluation, Research.'
- felt that stage 2 should be 'review', i.e. are outcomes meeting original objectives.
It was stressed (with many government and non-government examples) that we are nowhere near 1. Monitoring yet, let alone 2, 3 or 4.

Page 8 - We query the practical application of the matrix particularly as it should be used at all levels.

Page 9 - 1st para - consideration should be given to 'data not relevant' and 'critical data is unobtainable' - assumptions which need close investigation.
Line 7 - ' ... greater willingness to participate...' - not necessarily so - considerable marketing of benefits to service deliverers must be undertaken.'

Page 11 - 4th para - "Resource constraints' - not only A.B.S. but all levels N.G.S. and Government.

Page 12 -   2nd para - 'A data-base ... context' - not necessarily so, in fact undesirable.
2nd para - line 10 - 'For example ....' - nonsense.

para 3 - nonsense.

para 4 - 'If state and local levels feed up this isn't necessarily so complicated.

Page 13 -   Conclusions - need to market data system - critical.

Appendix I   - Program Approach.

pg 1.   Example used for policy maker and implementer is incorrect. The degree of aggregation is the issue not different questions - the questions asked are relevant to policy maker and implementer.

pg 2.   Monitoring should be qualitative as well as quantitative.

pg 3.   Evaluation should question whether the original policy and premise was correct.

ACOSS ACTION

- Resources will be needed by ACOSS and Forum members to develop a system (i.e. same level of resourcing as government).

- Recommended that ACOSS and forum take responsibility for developing and testing out a framework the N.M.O's and state COSS/bodies. Must be piloted at all levels and follow up matters included in attached report.

- Recommended that the development of a model and process of implementation be regarded as a high priority by ACOSS.

- A.B.S. should market the services they provide to service deliverers.

Agreeed that ACOSS direction for the Task Force should be sought.

Agreed to meet again in 1 month to review the seminar results and consider future action.

APPENDIX IV:

EXTRACTS FROM RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE FORUM OF NATIONAL NON-
GOVERNMENT WELFARE COORDINATING BODIES' *CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS WELFARE
DATA AND PRIORITIES OF THE NON-GOVERNMENT SECTOR*, CANBERRA, 27 MARCH 1980.

Staging:

We recommend the following staging:

1. Establishment of Standing Committee on Social Welfare Data, which
   would assume responsibility for the following process.

2. Discussion of evaluation theory and social policy framework and
   development of data methodology.

3. Survey of existing data collection.

4. Consultation on theory, methodology and priorities for data collection.

5. Testing of methodology (refined by consultations).

6. Implementation of data collection.

7. Evaluation of : a) method of collection
                   b) the data collected

8. Dissemination/availability of information gathered.

9. Utilisation of the data (ongoing).

The selection of an exploratory/pilot project would take place at point 4.
That is, this staging places greater emphasis on the context of selection
and the need for this to itself be the subject of attention and discussion.

(iii) Information availability and dissemination

The Forum members regard the availability and dissemination of
information gathered as an equally important part of the total process of
data collection and program evaluation. We propose that this subject be
given equal status on future agendas. (Its relationship to the Freedom of
Information question also needs discussion).

(iv) Resources

In relation to the selection of exploratory/pilot projects, and indeed to ongoing data collection, we draw particular attention to the pressing need for additional resources to be directed to the non government sector, if there is to be any substantial improvement in current data collection.

This point was also made by the Senate Standing Committee in its report, and was partially acknowledged in the Government's first response to it. (See Recs: 13 and 30).