ADOLESCENCE:
The Age of Minority in Contemporary Canadian Society

by

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A MAJOR PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(School of Social Work)

We accept this major paper as conforming to
the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
August 1981

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We see in youth not merely what is actually there; but the mirror of our own desires, hopes, satisfactions, frustrations, fears and disappointments.
The Author

The frequency with which this writer has resorted to editorial commentary within this paper appears to require an explanation of the experiential base from which such apparently subjective commentary emanates.

Subsequent to spending many years within that stage of life that we commonly term "adolescence" I have spent more than a decade working in the youth services sector of social services in three provinces of Canada. My professional involvement with youth began in 1970 when I worked as a child care counsellor with youth adjudged "delinquent" or "in need of protection" in a residential treatment centre about thirty miles north of Montréal in the province of Québec. Within two years, and in part because I was beginning to feel that I was becoming institutionalised, I transferred to a casework position in the community program of the same agency. In 1975 I was promoted to the position of Community Treatment Supervisor responsible for the supervision of caseworkers and for the development and operation of a day program for youth who were unable to function in the regular school system and who were unprepared to take their place within the work force.

During this period I also acted as a consultant to the newly created Katimavik program, a federal exchange program designed to expose Canadian youth to the various
cultures and geographic regions of Canada and to alternate lifestyles. In 1978 I transferred to Edmonton and worked briefly with Canada World Youth, another federal exchange program designed to expose Canadian youth to issues in international development education. I then accepted a position of Director of Preventive Social Services in central Alberta and initiated a process of assessing youth needs and developing preventively-oriented programs within this rural area.

Following a move to B.C. in 1979 I worked as a social worker with the Ministry of Human Resources providing child welfare services in the Vancouver area. During two years in the school of social work at the University of British Columbia (1980-81) I maintained contact with youth services through a two-day a week practicum which involved me in a social planning process in south-east Vancouver which is described as a case-study in this paper.
INTRODUCTION
In December 1979 the United Nations General Assembly voted to declare 1985 the International Youth Year. Each nation will be charged with the responsibility for preparing an Agenda for National Action whose theme will be Participation, Development, Peace. In the words of Kurt Waldheim, United Nations Secretary-General:

"...the purpose and thrust of these activities should be to address and deal with the specific needs and aspirations of youth, wherever those needs and aspirations are expressed...the primary focus of the year's activities should be on youth at the local and national levels."  

The respective levels of government in Canada, in partnership with interested citizen and professional groups, will be asked to undertake "...a thorough review of national policies concerning youth; of national and subnational legislation concerning youth; of services for and administrative structures relating to youth questions; and of mechanisms for involving young people in decision making for the purpose of proposing and implementing necessary improvements in these areas." The information generated by this review will conclude with the United Nations General Assembly considering the adoption of a Decade and Plan of Action for the world's youth.

"Youth" is a vaguely defined term which has differing meanings to different people within different cultures. Since the turbulent sixties the North American perception of youth supports a notion of an idealistic, rebellious group intent on, depending upon one's perspective, the development of a "new order" or the destruction of the existing order.
Romanticism and mythology colour our views of youth, and the literature has made a sparse contribution to the development of a more factual analysis of the youth predicament in our society.

As with any distinctions drawn between different segments of the population, the definition of "youth" appears as somewhat arbitrary and subject to varied interpretations. For the purposes of this paper "youth" is a term used synonomously with that other arbitrary term "adolescence", a widely used term for life after puberty but before adulthood and uniquely recognised as the transitional stage in the life cycle. Notwithstanding widespread recognition of the existence of an adolescent stage of life, our society has not seen fit to formalize this recognition within its laws and policies. Adolescents, for the most part, are considered as children.

The role of adolescents in Canadian society is a marginal one whereby they are expected, as children, to conform to the wishes of adults while their performance or behaviour is expected to resemble that of an adult. Though in theory the adolescent is ensconsed in a moratorium period where he or she is learning the skills necessary for adult functioning; in reality society has done little to provide mechanisms through which adolescents have access to meaningful participatory roles in preparation for the assumption of adult responsibilities. Even groups who advocate on behalf of youth are prone to serious inconsistencies and a lack of clarity when drawing distinctions between the child and the adolescent.
The upcoming Year of Youth with its participatory theme provides us with a unique opportunity to reconceptualise our perceptions of, attitudes toward, and treatment of three and a half million Canadian adolescents. This paper is intended as a contribution towards that effort and sets out to analyse the adolescent predicament in Canadian society while suggesting that a new deal is called for whereby adolescents are provided with the opportunity for access to more meaningful participatory roles which are recognisant of their actual capabilities and (often dormant) expectations. Any exploration of adolescence within our society is enhanced by the development of a greater understanding of the historical context in which this phase of life came into being. Indeed, at the turn of the century the abruptness of the transition between childhood and adulthood was such that adolescence, as we know it today, did not exist.

The Target Population: Demographics

The categorization of adolescents as children coupled with the difficulties inherent in any discrete definitions of adolescence render efforts at developing demographic profiles of the Canadian adolescent population hazardous and unreliable. Statistics Canada clusters young people within two age categories - ten to fourteen years and fifteen to nineteen years.
The Canadian Council on Children and Youth (1978) has estimated that there are over seven million children in Canada comprising about one-third of the total population and went on to state that these "children" were "...largely invisible in social policy and planning". The 1971 CELDIC Report found that 12% of the population up to 19 years of age, or over one million children and youth in Canada, required "...attention, treatment and care because of emotional and learning disabilities". This startling report was an eloquent condemnation of Canadian attitudes towards, and treatment of its children and youth and its findings have been largely ignored by policymakers and program planners for the past decade.

In 1966 ten to nineteen year olds comprised 19.7% of the Canadian population while in 1976 the percentile was 20.2%. While it is evident that the proportion of children and youth in Canada will decrease towards the middle of this decade it is also evident that children and youth will still comprise a significant proportion of the population. More importantly, this disenfranchised segment of the population will continue to depend upon the adult population to articulate and acknowledge their needs and aspirations.

This paper then, is concerned with the welfare of approximately three and a half million teenagers in Canada whose physiological, emotional and intellectual capacities remain largely ignored by social policies and practices which perceive them as "children".
PART I

TOWARDS A COLLECTIVE CONCERN FOR CHILDREN IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING CANADA

- A brief historical perspective of the evolution of the child welfare system.
The development of a collective concern for children in contemporary Canadian society has its roots in the nineteenth century and evolved out of a response to the practice of the United Kingdom whereby dependent and apparently parentless children were transported to the colonies. In November 1869 fifty little girls from the Kirkdale workhouse in Liverpool formed the first such party to arrive in Canada. By 1874 over one thousand children a year were arriving in Canada from Britain and by 1919 more than seventy-three thousand youngsters had been forcibly relocated in this country.

These young refugees have been described as falling into two distinct categories - "paupers", who were legal wards of the Poor Law Union Workhouses; and "street children", who were also termed "whaifs and strays", "arabs", and "gutter children" and who were rescued from the streets of London and other large cities by philanthropic organizations in Britain.

This influx of dependent children into Canada prompted an organized response by Canadian philanthropists, later to become known as "child savers", whose ideological motivations were described by Anthony Platt (1969) as "an amalgam of convictions and aspirations":

From the medical profession, they borrowed the imagery of pathology, infection, immunization, and treatment; from the tenets of social Darwinism, they derived their pessimistic views about the intractability of human nature and the innate moral defects of the lower
classes; finally, their ideas about the biological and environmental origins of crime can be attributed to the positivist tradition in European criminology and anti-urban sentiments associated with the Protestant, rural ethic.

Whatever their motives, there was no shortage of Canadian families prepared to take the orphaned British children into their homes. Sutherland (1976) reports that ten times as many families as could be provided with a British boy or girl offered to take a child into their homes. In a preindustrial, mostly rural society there was a great need for extra labour to help out with the work on the farm and until the latter part of the nineteenth century, apprenticeship was the only provision made for orphaned and deserted children:

Referring to the prevailing emphasis on the work ethic and a laissez-faire philosophy, only children bound into apprenticeship were offered any form of legal recognition and then only in exchange for their labour.

Throughout the nineteenth century the family was regarded as the sole institution responsible for the care of children. The state's intervention was limited to the provision of supports to the family and to the punishment and rehabilitation of minors found guilty of criminal behaviour. However, since pauper children remained as the responsibility of the state, in 1874 England's Local Government Board sent an Inspector, Andrew Doyle, to "investigate all aspects of the care and placement of its young dependents in Canada". Doyle's subsequent report was highly critical of the conditions in which many of the children were placed. "No class of Canadians", he stated
"would consent to accept such terms of service for their own children".  

The British government urged the provinces to investigate and monitor the placement of children in Canadian homes and their refusal prompted the federal government to reluctantly agree to have its immigration officers inspect each placement once, usually during the first year of the placement. Drawing on information from Doyle's report and Canadian discussion of it, Sutherland reaches some tentative conclusions about the situation of all children in English-Canadian society during the latter part of the nineteenth century:

English-Canadians showed little awareness of children as individual persons; ... young people played an important and often central role in rural and in family economics; ... contemporary English-Canadian child-rearing theory was intimately related to these perceptions and practices.  

An interest in children as persons deserving of respect was not evident in Canada in the late eighteen hundreds. English Canadians saw the child as a partially formed adult who, given an appropriate (familial) environment could be moulded into a moral, hard working and productive citizen. Most Canadians at that time would have been bewildered by the efforts of the contemporary Children's Rights movement. Children who were not apprenticed received little care or attention from the responsible municipal governments with their limited resource bases and, as we have seen, provincial and federal levels of
government were reluctant to extend their jurisdictions.

Although two Ontario statutes of the eighteen sixties used the term "adoption" as an alternative to apprenticeship for orphaned and neglected children, this legislation did not attempt to define what was meant by adoption nor did it describe what rights and responsibilities it entailed. In fact Doyle was told by one person he interviewed that "'doption sir, is when folks gets a girl to work without wages". Doyle also noted with some concern the early age at which Canadians put their children to work. Of greater concern to Canadians of this period, as it could be argued it is today, was the apparent increase in the incidence of juvenile crime.

The large proportion of children in the population of Upper Canada in the middle of the nineteenth century, many of whom were inadequately cared for, contributed to an apparent increase in the incidence of juvenile delinquency. Response to public concern about juvenile crime resulted in the development of prisons for young offenders. Although intended to house only the criminal element of the youthful population, these reformatories became dumping grounds for all types of homeless children. The fear of exposing neglected children to a delinquent environment prompted the establishment of industrial schools which were designed to bridge the gap between "...the public school, which large numbers of neglected children were failing to attend, and the reformatory, which was needed only for children with established records of delinquent behaviour".
Laws were gradually enacted, and periodically tightened, which required children to attend school for specified periods of the day and year and which provided more stringent conditions of employment for those children over fourteen years of age. Child labour laws, incremental extension of the school leaving age, and the development of the juvenile justice system were major factors contributing to the evolution of the adolescent stage of life as we know it today in Canada.

The origins of collective child welfare concerns in Canada can be traced to the early work of the "child savers", led in Ontario by J.J. Kelso, a journalist by profession. The Humane Society of Toronto was founded in 1887 "...as an expression of public concern about cruel and neglectful treatment of children and animals". The Child Protection Act (Ontario) was enacted in 1888 and provided for societies and institutions to keep a child under their "care" until he or she attained the age of eighteen years, with the cost of care being borne by the municipality where he or she resided at the time of committal.

The important Ontario Royal Commission on the Prison and Reformatory System (1890) led to the establishment of Canada's first Children's Aid Society (1891) in Toronto, and its impact was quickly felt. In 1893 an Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Better Protection of Children was passed in Ontario which called for the appointment of a Superintendent
of Neglected and Dependent Children. This Act also provided for the removal of neglected children from their family to a place of safety and for the punishment of those found guilty of the neglect of children. The foundations of the child welfare system as we know it today were being laid.

At the turn of the century Canadians were being told that a child was not "...plastic clay to mold and shape after a human pattern, but a seed of divine life for them to nurture and tend". The importance of environmental conditions was being stressed and a more "scientific" approach to child-rearing was evolving. The motivations underlying these philosophical shifts were not, however based merely on the best interests of the child, but rather were a reflection of a more rigid societal definition of "right and wrong" and of "good and bad". Collective expectations of how a child should be parented were evolving which Sutherland called "trying to make a child into what a child should be".

The greater ordering of Canadian society which was taking place at the turn of the century undoubtedly contributed to the perceived increase in the incidence of juvenile crime. A proliferation of statutes intended both to benefit and to control children logically led to a proportionate increase in the number of young law-breakers. The influence of prohibitionists was growing and laws were enacted to regulate drinking, spitting on streets, children working in factories, school attendance, vaccination of children etc.
The influence of the Ontario Royal Commission, who saw the "baneful influence of bad homes" to be the most serious cause of youthful crime, and the emerging Children's Aid Societies, who perceived "the neglect of child-training in the homes" as the major contributing factor, led to a heightened focus on the family as both the cause of, and the cure for juvenile delinquency. As the child savers saw it, the prevention of youthful criminal behaviour necessitated the removal of children from neglectful homes; the development of alternate home placements; rigorous enforcement of school attendance laws; curfews for children; the end of importation of immigrant children; more supervised recreational facilities; and more generous support to charitable organizations supporting children.

Probation services were seen as the key component of rehabilitation efforts with delinquent children along with an emphasis on family rather than institutional placements wherever possible. The thrust to keep delinquent children out of institutions turned into what was to become known as the "children's court movement" and this activity led very quickly to the passage of the federal Juvenile Delinquents' Act of 1908 which, in slightly amended form, still governs our practices seventy-three years later.

The first Juvenile Court in Canada opened in Winnipeg in February 1909 and the continuing close relationship between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems
was evident in the first case heard by Judge Daly when he "...suspended sentence and assigned four runaway girls to the care of the superintendent of neglected and dependent children". 22

In 1920 the newly established federal Department of Health appointed Helen MacMurchy as the first head of its Child Welfare Division and she helped organize the first national conference on child welfare. This conference decided to establish a broadly based Canadian National Council on Child Welfare "...to serve as a national clearing house for child welfare, to issue professional guidance materials, to inform public opinion, and to formulate briefs for legislation". 23

Under the strong leadership of Charlotte Whitton the Council "...assumed a central role in Canadian child health and welfare work" and "nudged the federal government to extend its actions to the limits of its constitutional jurisdiction". 24

The mostly Christian, middle-class child savers were now to be joined, and gradually replaced in their endeavours by the new professionals of the child welfare and juvenile corrections systems and, according to Sutherland:

A generation characterized by a great deal of creative social experimentation gave way to one characterized by a single-minded pursuit of its program. 25

Notwithstanding significant social changes that have taken place in Canada during the past sixty years, and the fact that children today are maturing at a much earlier age, much of the legislation drafted during the early part of the twentieth
century still governs us today despite significant changes in the range and type of services delivered to children under that legislation.

The "success" of the child saving movement was not achieved without cost to the children and adolescents of today. In their eagerness to protect children from the abuses of an industrializing society and to provide them with a "suitable" environment in which to grow, the child savers did not foresee the resultant effects of a prolongation of childhood dependency and a corresponding loss of the rights of children as persons before the law. The situation in Canada changed from one whereby children were regarded as immature working adults at a very early age, with the resultant harshness of treatment, to one in which children were protected and provided for over a prolonged period of time prior to being accepted as full members into the adult society. The pendulum, it seems, swung from one extreme to another without pausing at any midpoint to consider the real capabilities of young people.

The loss of status and opportunity for meaningful roles in Canadian society has had a particularly powerful impact upon the adolescent segment of the population. While adolescence is widely regarded in Canada as a distinct stage in the life cycle, the particular needs and aspirations of this population have received scant attention in the laws, policies and practices which govern our institutions. In the words of Daniel Jay Baum, who pleads for us to "Let Our Children Go";
For the young there is the assumption of incompetance. The young are not able to take on the responsibilities for living their own lives. And there is no law; there is no policy of the state which either requires or supports the development of the young into the status of independence.\textsuperscript{26}

Prior to an exploration of contemporary attitudes that contribute to this predicament, it is necessary to understand the distinctive elements of the adolescent stage of development.
Adolescence: A Developmental Perspective

The division of man into developmental stages has a long history. Aristotle identified three distinguishable stages of seven years each. The first stage he called infancy; from seven to the beginning of puberty he named boyhood; and from puberty to twenty-one, young manhood.

In 1556 "Le Grand Propriétaire de toutes choses", an early form of encyclopedia of "scientific" knowledge, distinguished between infancy, puerility and adolescence:

Afterwards follows the third age, which is called adolescence, which ends according to Constantine in his viaticum in the twenty-first year, but according to Isidore it lasts till twenty-eight... and it can go on until thirty or thirty-five. This age is called adolescence because the person is big enough to beget children... In this age the limbs are soft and able to grow and receive strength and vigour from natural heat. And because the person grows in this age to the size allotted to him by Nature.

Physical growth, however, was not seen as the only factor in early efforts to identify distinct developmental stages. The panels of a fourteenth century fresco indicated the interest of the visual arts in the social development of man:

First of all the age of toys: children playing with a hobby horse... Then the age of school: boys learning to read... Next the ages of love... boys and girls walking together... Next the ages of war and chivalry: a man bearing arms. Finally the sedentary ages: Those of the men of law, science or learning.
Though adolescence as a phenomenon had received serious attention, it was not until the publication of G. Stanley Hall's epochal work "Adolescence", in 1916, that modern scientific investigation of adolescence as a separate and distinct stage in human development really began. Hall pioneered the development of a scientific psychology of adolescence which is still evolving. As is largely the case with the works of one of his colleagues, Sigmund Freud, Hall's efforts have now been "...relegated with vague respect to the dusty archives of psychological history".  

Nonetheless, remnants of the works of these early pioneers may still be seen to influence contemporary, and often mythical perceptions of, and attitudes towards adolescents. Anna Freud was prominent amongst those theorists who viewed adolescence as a time of normative upheaval and crisis. She warned us to beware adolescents who show no outer evidence of unrest. Modern day "clinicians" can still be found who subscribe to such concepts, notwithstanding empirical evidence to the contrary.  

The role model concept is widely accepted as an important contributing factor to the healthy development of children and youth. Anthropologist Margaret Mead (1972) used the concept of role to highlight the problems in a modern, complex society, of the transmission of values and skills. Many adolescents are seen as having no adequate adult role models because the changes in modern society are so rapid and
confusing that parents' methods of dealing with their environment are no longer relevant or appropriate. Mead forsees a time when social change will be so rapid that youth will act as role models for their parents:

"Even very recently, the elders could say: "You know, I have been young but you have never been old". But today's young people can reply: "You never have been young in the world that I am young in, and you never can be."

A dominant figure in theoretical explorations of developmental stages has been Erik Erikson who was strongly influenced by the findings of cultural anthropologists as well as by his own humanistic background. Erikson elaborated upon the psychosocial tasks of the adolescent period, the most important of which was the establishment of a sense of an individual, unique (ego) identity and the avoidance of role (identity) confusion. Erikson regarded this identity, formed and consolidated during adolescence, as constituting the core of adult personality.

The birth of social psychology is largely attributable to the efforts of Kurt Lewin and more recent concerns with the marginal status of contemporary adolescents can be traced to his work. The essential dilemma is that while adolescents have largely renounced childhood during this period of development they have not yet been fully accepted by the surrounding society as an adult.
Partly accepted and partly rejected by the privileged group, he has a position somewhat similar to what is called in sociology the "marginal" (i.e. under-privileged) man. 33

This perspective effectively changes the target of our attention away from the physical, emotional, psychological development of the individual adolescent to the social environment and its impact upon young people. While an understanding of human needs and aspirations is essential to the development of effective national policies and programs, it becomes equally important to understand the environmental aspects which support or deny the individual access to the tools necessary for meeting his or her needs.

Societal responses to the adolescent population in Canada do not appear to be conducive to the development of meaningful roles that reflect the real capabilities and potential of young people. Policymakers, professionals and even parents appear somewhat oblivious to the empirical evidence that every decade the onset of puberty occurs four months earlier. 34 Even though, by the age of ten a child has acquired 95% of his adult brain weight, Canadian laws and policies continue in their failure to recognize or acknowledge the graduated capacities of young people even though "...it appears clear that the level of intellectual functioning achieved by late adolescence...and the extent to which the capacity is exploited during this period will determine in great measure the future course of adult cognitive functioning". 36
The attainment of "adult maturity" requires physical, intellectual and psychosocial maturation, none of which develop in a vacuum and all of which, in actuality, are inextricably interrelated. While the physical and intellectual development of the adolescent approximates adult capacity, psychosocial development is dependent upon the complex interaction between the adolescent and his cultural environment.

Although some agreement is evident that most adolescents are biologically, physically and intellectually capable of assuming adult status, it is left to the discretion of Canadian society to adjudge the point at which young people become psychosocially mature enough to assume adult roles and responsibilities. This highly subjective process is largely governed by contemporary norms and attitudes that prevail and upon collective perceptions of the capabilities of Canadian youth. The following section explores the degree to which these collective perceptions are influenced by mythology.
PART II

THE ADOLESCENT PREDICAMENT IN
CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN SOCIETY

- Myths and Realities
While recognizing the arbitrary nature of any distinctions between stages within the human life cycle, to the extent that they are necessary within an ordered society the literature supports the view that it is helpful to recognize clear differences between the child and the adolescent. An extensive review of the relevant literature led Conger (1973) to conclude that:

...although most theorists do not deny the existence of significant continuities, they have been impressed with what they perceive as crucial changes during puberty and the years thereafter...For such theorists the concept of adolescence as a stage of development is considered useful because it serves to focus attention on the importance of these perceived changes. 37

This apparent consensus has had little effect on Canadian policymakers and program planners who often operate under the authority of statutes which fail to recognize essential distinctions between childhood and adolescence, which act to maintain young people in low status, powerless roles pending the onset of legal adulthood with its confusing definition varying from province to province.

If widespread agreement about the existence of adolescence as a valid and important developmental stage is to be translated into policy prescriptions and program responses within Canadian institutions, then widespread societal attitudes that mitigate against such progress must be identified and overcome through a process of education.

The prevalent social "wisdom" that usually determines
policy setting and program definition for adolescents often
defies a rational analysis of the actual needs and abilities
of young people. Joan Lipsitz (1979) has identified five
common myths which can be considered as obstacles to any
qualitative appraisal of the adolescent predicament within
Canadian society.

The dictionary describes a myth as a "traditional
belief without historical verification" or a "false belief
which is widely held among the populace". There can be no
doubt about the harmful nature of mythology when it acts as
a roadblock to progressive attitudinal changes and, ultimately,
to policy prescriptions that will assist in eradicating the
widespread age-stereotyping of the young. Such stereotypes
would be offensive were they racial, religious or ethnic and
yet we appear blind to them when they impact on youth. In
Lipsitz' own words: "the mindset that leads to these attitudes
must be altered if we are to serve the needs of young people
during a critically important time in their development". Effective efforts to transcend our mythical perceptions of the
adolescent population and to provide subsequent opportunities
that recognize youthful talents will also lead to the unleashing
of a wealth of talent to the benefit of society at large.

Myth #1: Adolescence as a pathological time in the life span.

Six thousand years ago an Egyptian priest carved
on a stone, "Our earth is degenerate...Children no longer obey
their parents"; Aristotle believed that political revolutions were caused "not only by the conflict of rich and poor but by the struggle between sons and fathers"; Plato commented that "in their enthusiasm, young men would leave no stone unturned, and in their delight at the first taste of wisdom, they would annoy everyone with their arguments"; Socrates referred to "the love of luxury, bad manners, contempt for authority, and disrespect for elders found among youth", and commented that "children were now the tyrants, no longer the servants, of their households". In the eighth century B.C. Hesiod proclaimed:

I see no hope for the future of our people if they are dependent on the frivolous youths of today, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words... When I was a boy, we were taught to be discreet and respectful of elders, but the present youth are exceedingly wise and impatient of restraints.

On Saturday, November 1st 1980 an article in the Vancouver Sun railed against "The tacky, noisy, trivial phenomenon laughably known as THE YOUTH CULTURE". Such media descriptions of youth are by no means uncommon.

Superficial, historical and contemporary "evidence" would certainly seem to support the popular notion of adolescence as a rebellious and devious time in the life cycle. The literature is filled with descriptions of adolescence as a period of "sturm und drung"; a time when "...the best we (adults) can do is hold our breaths, wait for it to pass over, and meanwhile segregate as best we can the turbulent from the rest of society".
The birth of the "science" of psychology has done little to discourage popular notions about normative adolescent pathology and from a medical model perspective, psychologists have appeared largely preoccupied with the study of deviant youthful behaviour. Thus we are led to expect that young people will display various negative characteristics as a function of being adolescents: For Gesell these characteristics are "negativism, introversion, and rebellion"; for Lewin, "marginality, ideological instability, extremism"; for Hall, "storm and stress"; for Anna Freud, "psychological disequilibrium"; for Otto Rank, "a striving for independence"; for Kretschmer, "an increase in schizoid characteristics"; for Remplin, "a second period of negativism".

The weight of more recent empirical evidence, in fact, suggests that pathology is no more evident within the adolescent population than it is within the adult population:

Contrary to the assertions of many influential clinicians, a considerable body of data is accumulating to suggest that the modal teenager is a reasonably well-adjusted individual whose daily functioning is minimally marred by psychological incapacity.

Media fascination with juvenile crime combined with the "problem" focus of many helping professions have contributed greatly to our collective misperception of youth. The search for causes of juvenile delinquency have been largely restricted to studies of the individual adolescent and/or the youthful peer group at the expense of a broader investigation of
political, social, cultural and economic influences.

The "high" incidence of juvenile delinquency (depending upon what statistics are read and how they are interpreted) is often presented as evidence of "normative youthful deviance" and yet a closer examination of this "phenomenon" does not support such a notion. The existence of status offenses within Canadian statutes, whereby juveniles can be charged for offenses that are not considered criminal in adult jurisdictions, has caused a quantitative increase in the incidence of delinquency. It is also common practice in Canada to keep pre-adolescents out of the court system so that delinquent behaviour might be noticed in children but will not likely be officially responded to until the child becomes an adolescent. To the extent that this is so, it is clear that acting-out behaviour cannot be viewed as a function of normative adolescent pathology.

Although most delinquents are adolescents when they come to the attention of authorities, closer examination reveals that for many, delinquent behaviour began during middle childhood. It is also apparent that adolescents who are persistently in conflict with the law stand a greater chance of entering the adult criminal justice system long after the "turbulent" period of adolescence has passed.

There is no doubt that deviant behaviour during the adolescent period is as evident as it is within any other age segment of the population. To the extent that juvenile
delinquency exists, however, it might be wise to explore the marginal status of young people in Canada as a major contributing factor:

When the young are segregated from the adult world, held in low esteem and delayed entry into adult life, they are likely to constitute a potentially deviant population. 48

Largely through the work of cultural anthropologists, the notion of the extreme physiological changes witnessed at puberty being responsible for a heightened potential for pathology and deviance has been effectively discouraged:

...in cultures in which...demands are neither as complex, nor as restricted to one limited age, as in our society, adolescence is not viewed as a particularly difficult period of adjustment. 49

Notwithstanding evidence to the contrary widespread attitudes about "normative youthful deviance" continue to conspire against a formal recognition by Canadian institutions of the general competances and participatory capabilities of the vast majority of young people who:

...manage to cope with this time of remarkable change and growth through the coping skills that will serve them for the rest of their lives. What this means is that adolescence is as normal as any other time in life. In other words the majority of adults fare well in coping with day-to-day life and change, just as most adolescents do. We may not like the fact that some of us do not do so well but we must accept that either all of us are in a constantly pathological time in life or that adolescence is a normal time of development. 50
Myth #2: Adolescents are a homogeneous group.

The human intellectual penchant for categorizing the population into comprehensive segments facilitates the complex process of policymaking within an ordered society but also allows for negative stereotyping. We all carry with us our ill-informed perceptions of what constitutes a French-Canadian, an English-Canadian, a Black person, a Native Indian, a woman, a man, a Westerner or an Easterner etc. To the degree that we must generalise it behooves us to do so in an informed manner.

Women, Blacks, and more recently, Native Indians have achieved some notable successes in relation to some of the harmful stereotypes that have inhibited their progress towards recognition as persons of equality under the laws of Canada. Adolescents have had significantly less success in this regard and with good reason.

The former groups have organized relatively effectively as potent political forces in Canada with ammunition which includes a potential block vote. Adolescents do not comprise an effective lobby group - an essential component in bringing about change within a "committee democracy" such as Canada's. Young people remain as a voteless and powerless segment of the population, largely dependent upon well-meaning, but often patronising, adults to advocate on their behalf. Notwithstanding their actual abilities, adolescents as "children"
are neither encouraged nor are they taught the skills of participation within the democratic processes.

The implications of the "childhood" label being thrust upon young people will be more fully explored as a distinct myth and the issue it raises here is to indicate the responsibility that falls upon informed adults if the "youth culture" myth is to be effectively dispelled. To say that a person is a teenager is to tell just about nothing about him, except perhaps that he is, or should be, in school. Indicating their awareness of the dangers inherent in mythical stereotyping, the Secretary of State's Committee (1971) saw fit to emphasise the fact that "the attempt to 'define' youth is...a pointless exercise, since this age group exhibits all the heterogeneity of any other age group within this country".

Expectations and predictions about how adolescents will or should behave often stem from an ill-informed perception of youth as a homogeneous group within our society. The self-fulfilling nature of these stereotypic expectations was noted by Erik Erikson (1968) when he postulated that "some of our youth may not act so openly confused and confusing if they did not know that they were supposed to have an identity crisis".

The "youth culture" myth presumes a population of mindless followers with acne motivated by a common hatred of adults, especially parents. The perceived "generation gap" becomes an expected outcome of the adolescent's struggle for independence.
The avid follower of the mass media's "instant sociology" might easily conclude that there is not merely a universal "generation gap" between parents and adolescents, but an abyss. A grain of truth is evident within much of mythology which perhaps nurtures its continued existence. Natural tensions may be observed within any human relationship where one person is endowed with supreme power and authority over another. The feminist struggle is epitomized by the efforts of women to free themselves from male domination; trade unions are the outcome of the efforts of employees to be recognized for their actual worth, be that monetary or human. Notwithstanding natural tensions that exist within parent/adolescent relationships as a function of power dynamics, empirical evidence indicates little "...to suggest that a state of cold or hot war exists between parents and adolescents". Informed analysis leads us to the obvious conclusion that tensions within parent/adolescent relationships can be attributed to the input of both parties. Yankelovich (1969), in a study of adolescents and parents who were experiencing some tensions in their relationships found that an overwhelming majority acknowledged that the difficulties were "both our faults".55

Recently in Vancouver the public has been exposed via an eager media to the "facts" about juvenile prostitution, juvenile crime and adolescent suicide. Notwithstanding the reality that prostitution, crime and suicide are societal issues the tendency is to portray them as youth problems calling
for specialized program responses for the adolescent population. Attempts to ameliorate these "social problems" through a limited focus on a single target population appear doomed to failure.  

Prior to simplistically laying the blame for sensationalizing these issues on the media it is appropriate to explore the role of helping professionals and well-meaning child and youth advocacy groups in incorrectly labelling social problems as youth problems. The short term gains of obtaining additional government funding for youth services are inconsequential when measured against the dangerous generalizations that ensue from an ill-informed analysis of the presenting problem. The continued stereotyping of adolescents as vulnerable "children" in need of paternal protection from the harsh realities of adult society is a discount of the actual competence of the vast majority of young people. To the degree that society agrees upon the existence of social problems such as prostitution, it would be well to develop responses from within a societal context without singling out any one segment of the population for special attention.

The dangers inherent in any focus on "youth problems" without a contextual appraisal are evident in our tendency to generalise minority incidents and behaviours to the adolescent population at large. If an adult commits a crime, we are not prone to generalise that all adults are criminals. Yet we persist in our collective misperceptions that the adolescent
population, by reason of age alone, is acutely vulnerable to delinquent influences. The adolescent peer group is a much studied and much feared phenomenon in North America, conjuring up notions of like-minded adult haters intent on destruction of the existing social order. In fact Conger's extensive review of relevant research led him to conclude that "a majority of young people today are surprisingly traditional in many of their values and beliefs" and that "...sweeping generalisations about today's youth should be treated with considerable caution". If traditional beliefs and values can be correlated with conservative beliefs and values then Conger's findings are borne out by the findings of a recent survey of more than twenty-four thousand students in the U.S.A.:

American teenagers are swinging to the right. The newly released 11th annual survey by the publishers of Who's Who Among American High School Students shows they're against the equal rights amendment and legalized abortion, favor mandatory draft registration and nuclear power...the results mirror the conservative swing in last month's U.S. election.

A similar survey taken ten years ago might have reflected the general trend towards "liberal" beliefs and values. All this means is that adolescents can be seen as a microcosm of the society in which they live - the rich diversities within the adult segment of the population are no less evident within the supposed homogeneous adolescent population. This one characteristic of adolescence, its variability, poses the
greatest challenge to policymakers, program planners and service providers in Canada and it is one that we have done poorly with.

To a considerable extent, adults, and even many adolescents, while acknowledging the growing diversity and even polarization of contemporary adult society, have viewed adolescent society as monolithic. Consequently, they have considered the beliefs, attitudes, values and modes of behaviour of the more visible minorities as characteristic of young people in general. And ... they have been strongly encouraged in their tendency by the mass media, which almost of necessity are preoccupied with simplistic portrayals of the dramatic. The fact of the matter, however, is that adults are not alone in their heterogeneity. Adolescents, too, have their silent majority*.

59

The ability of Canadian institutions to provide effective services to the adolescent population is impaired to the degree that their policies and practices support a mythical perception of youth as a monolithic group. The challenge to parents, program planners, service providers and policymakers is to recognize the dangers of a continued collective misperception of young people. We have been no more successful in predicting the behaviours of adolescents than we have been in predicting the behaviours of any other age-segment of the population. To the degree that Canadian policies and programs for adolescents are based on a monolithic vision of this group we will continue to misperceive the actual richness of diversity and potential capabilities of our next generation.
Myth #3: Adolescents are Children.

Canadian society's collective failure to recognize and to respond to the developing needs for participatory roles of its adolescent population can be largely attributed to the continued misperception of youth as "children". This mythical perception not only slights the developing ego of young people, it also results in an immense amount of wastage of capable talent and youthful energy.

The largely honourable intentions of the child-savers to protect young people from the abuses of an industrialising society at the turn of the century have resulted in the prolongation of childhood and an extended state of dependency that fails to reflect the actual capabilities of most adolescents. As Daniel Jay Baum has pointed out:

> In the past there were no interim steps between childhood and adult status. Once the child developed the capacity to stand and think, there was work to be done. If the family lived on a farm, there were chores to perform. The child became a worker - just like every other adult member of the family; and it was not long before the child thought of himself, not as a child, but as an adult. Why not? The same work load was being carried.

The time has come to seek a more appropriate compromise between the harshness of the young adult's life at the turn of the century and the overprotected, marginal status of the adolescent "child" of the late twentieth century.

In their aptly titled study "Admittance Restricted",
the Canadian Council on Children and Youth, while resisting any consistent distinction between the child and the adolescent, acknowledged the developing needs of "older children" to participate in the decision-making processes of Canadian institutions:

Of paramount concern is the child's need for continuous growth as a person progressively able to make decisions and take responsibility for his or her own life. Society is in theory, pledged to meeting that need but many arbitrary and rigid attitudes and practices militate against the success of that undertaking. 61

The "arbitrary and rigid attitudes" alluded to by the Canadian Council on Children and Youth can be broadly categorized into three areas - each of which appears indefensible when subjected to close analysis.

Some people argue that the transformation of youth from a family asset as labour to a family liability as student consumer is a conscious ploy designed to lessen the pressures on an already overcrowded work force in Canada:

From adolescence to adulthood, the lengthy process of education, while ostensibly teaching the young the skills they will require for adult occupation, effectively prevents them from entering a work force unable to absorb them. 62

Others cling to a legally supported perception of adolescents as "children" who, by definition, are incapable of making informed (adult) decisions and so must be maintained in a continued state of dependency:
The most commonly cited argument for treating children differently from adults is that they are not sufficiently mature in intellect, emotion or experience to make rational judgements about what is in their best interests. 63

Finally there are those who, perhaps subliminally, fear that the encouragement of increased rights and responsibilities for the adolescent population will further erode the rights of parents and, thereby, the supremacy of the family system within Canadian society:

Another consideration that deters us from extending certain rights to youth is the fear that pushing children's autonomy will so undermine parents' authority and erode family cohesiveness that in the end the child who still needs the intimacy, emotional warmth, physical protection and nurturing of the family unit will lose far more than he will gain. 64

The major premise inherent in all of the above arguments is that adolescents are, or should be, maintained in a continued state of childhood notwithstanding the actual capabilities of most youth. An apparent weak link in the arguments of those who espouse the cause of children's rights, is the failure to recognize important distinctions between the child and the adolescent. While any such distinctions must be considered complex and somewhat arbitrary, this is no more the case than existing and arbitrary distinctions that are made in Canadian society between the child and the adult.

The children's rights debate is essentially concerned about the respective roles of the child, the family and the state. The issue, as defined by the Canadian Committee for the
International Year of the Child, is who should have the power (the parents, the state or the child) to make what decisions affecting the child or "who should have the sacred privilege of making mistakes". It is clear that this debate fails to address the qualitative differences in participatory capability between most children and adolescents. To talk, in the same breath, about the needs and aspirations of, for example, the five year old and the fourteen or fifteen year old "child" is to clearly confuse the issues and, ultimately, may prove to be a weak link in the arguments of children's rights activists.

Though stated in negative form, the 1970 CELDIC Report alluded to the clear distinctions between the child and the adolescent as a consumer of social services. Though they found a dearth of services available to the adolescents who were in need of services the problem was not as acute for children who "can usually be contained within the educational, health or welfare services of the community." The implications of these findings, which come as no surprise to those involved in youth work, are that the physically mature, independently oriented adolescents are a more problematic target population than are children who succumb more readily to adult controls.

Wide acceptance of the existence of an adolescent stage of life in Canadian society has not been translated into clear policy prescriptions that would require an analysis of the distinctive needs and aspirations of children, adolescents and adults within the social context. Canadian institutions
are bound by mostly archaic legislation which maintains youth in a prolonged state of dependency long after they have become capable of assuming greater responsibilities. As pointed out in a 1970 report on youth in Vancouver:

...the irony of contemporary society is that the very restrictions necessary to curb an immature populace prevents the same populace from becoming mature enough to live without restrictions. 67

The moratorium period which was envisaged by Erikson, whereby young people are permitted to experiment with different adult roles prior to accepting the full responsibilities and consequences of adulthood, is only evident through the efforts of skilled parents and professionals at the local level without supports from Canadian institutions.

It is only from within one of the "negative" institutions serving youth in Canada - the juvenile correctional system - that moves are imminent to formally recognise the response-able capacity of the adolescent population. Proposals for a Young Offenders Act to replace the ancient Juvenile Delinquents Act of 1908 call for a greater burden of accountability to fall upon the offending juvenile, replacing the "parens patriae" philosophy which essentially viewed a "child's" behaviour as the responsibility of his or her parents. The progressive Fourth Commission on Family and Children's Law in British Columbia concurred with this proposed change in philosophy:

It is our own conviction that any person sufficiently mature to appreciate the nature and consequences of his acts must
be dealt with on the footing that he must understand that he is responsible for what he does. We fully understand that a whole range of external factors may have contributed to a young person lashing out against his parents, his school, his community or society generally. Yet it must be borne in mind that if you say to anyone that he is not responsible for what he does you are in a sense diminishing him; you are stripping him of his dignity as a human being... Children and young people must realize that freedom is meaningless without responsibility. 68

What price freedom if adolescents are permitted only to exercise responsibility and are viewed only as response-able within the juvenile correctional system of Canada? A corresponding recognition of the growing abilities of the majority of youth to assume greater responsibility over their lives must surely be forthcoming from other, "positive", youth-serving institutions including families and schools. A 1973 Task Force on Correctional Services and Facilities in British Columbia alluded to this need by suggesting that "...in all our haste to provide for and protect children, we tend to isolate them, to deny them real involvement, useful roles or genuine responsibilities". 69

The dilemmas and contradictions inherent in our institutionalised response to adolescents as children is eloquently attested to within the 1970 Report to the President by the White House Conference on Children:

Our children are not entrusted with any real responsibilities in their family, neighbourhood or community. Little that they do really matters. When they do
participate, it is in some inconsequential undertaking. They are given duties rather than responsibilities; that is, the ends and means have been determined by someone else, and their job is to fulfill an assignment involving little judgement, decision-making, or risk. The latter remain within the purview of supervising adults. Although this policy is deemed to serve the interests of the children themselves by protecting them from burdens beyond their years, there is reason to believe that it has been carried too far in contemporary American society and has contributed to the alienation and alleged incapacity of young people to deal constructively with personal and social problems. The evidence indicates that children acquire the capacity to cope with difficult situations when they have been given opportunity to take on consequential responsibilities in relation to others, and are held accountable for them. It is worthy of note here that even well-informed reports such as the one above, drawn up by those who support the notion of greater participatory roles for youth, persistently fail to draw clear and consistent distinctions between the perceived needs and aspirations of children and adolescents. While an increased recognition of the rights and the integrity of children in our society is an eminently worthwhile cause, it remains evident to this writer that our continued confused perception of the differing needs and abilities of children and adolescents is a serious flaw in arguments and/or strategies for change. This would imply the conceptualisation of a dual focus within the so-called "children's rights movement" which formally acknowledges the distinctions. Having, as a collective within Canadian society, "invented" the stage of adolescence, it now behooves us to work more assiduously towards a better
collective understanding of the meaning and implications of this "invention".

This is a difficult undertaking which will inevitably result in the development of somewhat arbitrary guidelines. Yet, as previously mentioned, this is no less true when we define the line between childhood and adulthood. While "maturity" is most often cited as the prerequisite for the assumption of greater responsibilities, the social sciences have yet to provide us with a workable definition of this highly subjective concept. If we accept the tasks defined by Erikson as measures of preparedness to move from adolescence to adulthood, then we are faced with the anomaly that the vast majority of "adults" are, in fact, still struggling to complete the assigned tasks of adolescence:

According to Loevinger (1976), only about 3% of the adult population has successfully completed both the tasks of identity and intimacy, and moved beyond the pitfalls of those tasks to an autonomous, integrated level of ego development. 71

A recent survey of eighty-five adolescents in Vancouver found an overwhelming majority of the respondents (90%) objected to being called a "child". The most common reason given for these objections was "Because I am not a child..." Adolescents are desirous of assuming greater responsibilities within their institutions and their communities and for adults to continue in their collective failure to respond to this desire is to discount the potential payoffs to both youth and
society at large. In the words of Marshall McLuhan, "Even if he has to construct his own stage and procure his own stage properties, the modern youth wants to be an actor in life's drama, not just part of the audience". 73

To dispel the myth that adolescents are children is to take a tentative first step towards a more formal recognition of their participatory capabilities. The onus is on adults to formulate, with young people, the necessary structures that will provide young people with the opportunity to assume roles that are more congruent with their abilities. There can no longer be any question that adolescents are prepared:

...a growing body of human developmental data disputes the idea that rationality and judgement vest only in the later teens or early twenties. Without attempting to synthesize or refine that data, it appears that children at a much younger age usually attain stabilised IQs and develop (as much as they ever will) their sense of morality, their capacity to resist peer pressure, and their ability to think for themselves. Evidence also shows that today's children mature earlier - physically, mentally and socially - than older generations. That these talents develop at different rates for different children in different settings is obvious, but insofar as our social or legal policies must generalize, presumptions of decision-making capacity ought to conform to present knowledge, not to the ignorance or prejudices of past centuries. 74
Myth #4: The continuous, uniform, synchronized growth of adolescents.

![Figure 4.5](image)


One of the more obvious limitations of efforts at statistical analysis of the human species is the tendency to
quantify averages and then to relate to such averages as standards of "normalcy" within society. One outcome of these efforts is the anxiety produced within those of us who, for example, are not born into families whose exact size is 3.3.

Rapid growth of the body, the advent of sexual maturity, and changes in hormonal secretions of the endocrine system combine during adolescence to produce a rapid growth spurt following several years of relative growth stability. The impact of these physiological events upon the young person is intensified by a society which is preoccupied by "scientific" efforts to identify statistical norms and averages. The illustration on the preceding page indicates the need to concentrate on ranges of "normalcy" rather than on hypothetical "averages".

Among perfectly "normal" adolescents there are wide variations in the age of onset of the developmental sequence. For example, while the maturation of the penis may be complete in some males by the age of 13½, for others it may not be complete until as late as 17 years. The age of menarche in females may vary from about age ten to 16½. In fact few adolescents are clustered around any magical average or median with regards to growth rates:

...in view of the many unnecessary worries that often accompany moderate deviations from statistical norms, it may be worthwhile to restate the obvious fact that on any measure of maturation, almost 50% of girls and boys mature more slowly than the median adolescent and almost 50% mature more rapidly.
Ill-informed societal expectations for the continuous, uniform, synchronized growth of adolescents manifest themselves in harmful institutional responses to young people at a time when they are struggling to adapt to significant physiological change. Adults, as well as other young people, tend to have different expectations of the physically mature adolescent than they do of the one who develops more slowly. The early maturing male is able to cope more easily with his differing physical size than his later maturing age cohort because of the social sanction placed on rugged physiques in North American society. The late-maturer is more likely to have doubts as to when, if ever, he will assume the greatly desired adult physical state. Such doubts will be reinforced by adults and peers who respond to the young person based on his outward appearance rather than based on his competence as a whole person. If the youth looks like a child, in all likelihood he will be treated as a child within the nondiscriminating institutions which claim to be serving his best interests. It is evident that such differential treatment may lead to the development of adaptive patterns that persist even when the basis for them no longer exists. In one intensive study of boys aged twelve to seventeen:

...late maturers were rated as less attractive in physique, less well-poised, more "immoderate" in their behaviour, more affected and tense in manner, and more eager. They also tended to engage in more attention-getting behaviour and were more restless, talkative and bossy. In contrast early maturers emerged as more reserved, self-assured, matter-of-fact, likely to engage
in well-modulated, socially appropriate behaviour, and more able to laugh at themselves. Furthermore, late maturers were less popular with their peers, and fewer of them were leaders...late maturers revealed more feelings of rejection and domination, and persistent dependency needs, coupled, perhaps paradoxically, with a seemingly rebellious search for autonomy and freedom from restraint.\textsuperscript{77}

It is evident that the traits ascribed to the late-developers in this study can be considered negative ones within the North American cultural context. Moreover, these negative traits persist long after the passing of the adolescent stage of life. In a follow-up study of the original subjects at age thirty-three, "...the results of several objective measures of personality indicated that late maturers were relatively less self-controlled, responsible, and dominant, and more inclined to turn to others for help and support".\textsuperscript{78} To a lesser extent, similar response patterns were found within the female adolescent sample population:

Although developmentally related differences for girls were not nearly as marked or as consistent as for boys, nevertheless, early-maturing girls tended to score more favorably than the slow-maturing on "total adjustment" and also on family adjustment and feelings of personal inadequacy... early maturers were characterized by more adequate thought processes, a more positive self-conception, and a more relaxed, secure view of themselves and their world.\textsuperscript{79}

These findings are not drawn from isolated research studies, but are widely supported in a range of similar studies examined by Conger (1973). Societal expectations of, and responses to late maturers result in them being more likely than either early or average maturers "...to display feelings of guilt, inferiority,
and depression, as well as a heightened level of tension and generalised anxiety." 80

Notwithstanding popular misconceptions, biological, emotional, and intellectual growth during adolescence is not synchronized. The adolescent who is physically mature at an early age is not necessarily ready to meet common expectations for socially and emotionally "mature" behaviour. Conversely, the late developing adolescent may well be ready to assume greater responsibilities, regardless of his "boyish" appearance.

The early developing female adolescent is also faced with added sexual pressures that are all too well known to most women, prior to the development of the interpersonal sophistication necessary to respond appropriately and effectively to such pressures. The evidence of juvenile prostitution and incest in Vancouver and other Canadian cities are extreme examples of the fact that these sexual pressures do not merely emanate from the adolescent peer group, but are commonly applied by adults who should (or are supposed to) know better.

The challenge then, becomes one of ridding ourselves of stereotypic expectations which stem from mythical beliefs about continuous, uniform, synchronized growth during adolescence. "Normal" adolescents, like "normal" adults, come in many different shapes and sizes. To maintain, as we are prone to do, our rigid perceptions of what, for example, a fifteen year old should look like, is to place immense pressure upon a young person at a time in their life when such pressure is needed least.
Youth-serving institutions within Canadian society should be at the forefront of efforts to change popular misconceptions that have a harmful, and lasting impact upon young people. Unfortunately these same institutions are, for the most part, propagaters of false assumptions with regards to the expectations placed upon adolescents based solely on their chronological age. The educational system is a prime example of an institution which places rigid expectations on a student population with the major criteria being age. Ways must be found to transcend these short-sighted approaches to "serving" youth within the institutional setting. To the degree that grouping is necessary within any large bureaucracy, more effective ways must be found that take into consideration the actual emotional, social and intellectual capabilities of the individual student, regardless of their chronological and physical stature.

Myth #5: Adolescence as a transitional stage in the life cycle.

Every stage in the life cycle is marked by growth and change and yet we persist in labelling only one stage, that of adolescence, as "transitional". The harmful implications of this label are apparent in the common adult discounting of the day-to-day experiences of youth. The pervasive attitude is one whereby we say "they will grow out of it", and hence we do not have to take "it" seriously while "it" is happening.
Respect for adolescents presumes a recognition of their being in the here and now and yet we respond to them as if they were coming from childhood and going to adulthood. To relate to youth as if they are merely passing through a phase is to be indifferent to them and their immediate reality and, in the words of George Bernard Shaw, "...the worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them, that's the essence of inhumanity". Canadian institutions, albeit subliminally, are guilty of this sin in their treatment of adolescents. Our laws, policies and practices maintain youth in a prolonged state of phasic childhood from which there is only a chronological escape.

Postponement is the key word that we pass on to our young people. Rather than being challenged with functional tasks that are recognisable of their abilities, adolescents are taught the virtues of patience. Adolescence has become a holding period during which education, maturation and waiting are the major tasks to be faced. This misconception of preparation is discussed by John Dewey in his essay on "Experience and Education":

The idea of using the present simply to get ready for the future contradicts itself. It omits, and even shuts out, the very conditions by which a person can be prepared for his future. We always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the something in the future. This is the only preparation which in the long run amounts to anything.
The future for adolescents is NOW. To postpone opportunities for Canadian youth is to risk future generations of adults who espouse the values of conformity above creativity, patience above vision; apathy above participation. When the President of the United States of America can win a "landslide" election victory with a mere twenty-seven per cent of eligible voter support, it seems appropriate to question whether an apathetic trend is already evident in North America.

As long as adolescents are excluded from assuming progressively more meaningful participatory roles within their institutions and communities, they are unlikely to develop the values and skills necessary for full involvement in a participatory democracy and will remain as a wasteland of frustrated talent in a country which is sorely lacking in human talent:

Adolescence is largely wasted because our society refuses to let the adolescent grow, contribute, and define himself in terms of creative addition. 83

Formal structures must emerge that encourage the participation of youth in meaningful activities within their institutions and their communities and that will ultimately serve to strengthen the foundations of the Canadian democratic system. Young Canadians from coast to coast expressed their wishes to the Canadian Commission for the International Year of the Child for assistance and encouragement in developing "the complex skills of democratic participation...skills that are not gained without practice". This assistance is not yet
forthcoming at any level within Canada:

At a provincial level, only in Newfoundland is there a young peoples' advisory committee, made up of young people, with direct access to government. At the municipal level there is very little. At the federal, none. Organizations and institutions concerned with children do not, as a matter of course, involve children in their decision-making processes. 84

To continue our labelling of adolescence as a transitional stage in the life cycle is to promote the continued postponement of significant participatory opportunities for Canadian youth. The exclusionary nature of our policies and practices results in youthful frustration and has been identified as a contributing factor to the incidence of adolescent deviance whereby:

...delinquent behaviour is engendered because opportunities for conformity are limited...the desire to meet social expectations itself becomes the source of delinquent behaviour if the possibility of doing so is limited or non-existant. If we wish to reduce the incidence of delinquent behaviour or rehabilitate those already so engaged, we must provide the social and psychological resources that make conformity possible. 85

It is time to recognize the fact that Canada's adolescent population do not feel transitional, they do not see themselves as children, and they are not, for the most part, in a pathological stage of life. To be aware of, and to transcend these mythical perceptions is to take a step towards accepting the general health, maturity and readiness for participation of our young people. To fail in this
endeavour is to maintain a status quo which is, at best, confusing and at worst, destructive. To place ourselves, as adults, in the shoes of adolescents, is to better understand their predicament:

I am busy trying to make sense out of all the messages coming from my family, from my school, the socio-cultural milieu, the mass media etc. All I hear and see are paradoxes: I am to go to school, but I am not permitted to use my knowledge in practice or in daily life. I am told to shoulder responsibility, but I am not given any real responsibility yet. I am to learn about all aspects of sexuality, but I am not allowed to experiment with it. As a general principle democracy and self-determination of the individual are praised, but I am totally excluded from participating in my communities affairs or administration even when they are directly or strictly related to my own fate and future. I am told that I will have my share of the "good life" eventually but I gradually realise that the kind of creative work that I would like to do now or in the future is not attainable for me.

As a Canadian adolescent of the nineteen eighties I would feel deeply confused and frustrated.

The upcoming International Year of Youth provides Canadians with a timely reminder of the need to reassess our attitudes towards, and responses to the adolescent population. It is time to transcend the aforementioned mythical perceptions of youth and to explore feasible alternatives that permit and encourage young people to participate meaningfully in those institutions designed to serve them. Participation in the decisions affecting one's own life is an essential developmental experience but access to positive roles for young people will
ultimately pay dividends to Canadian communities, institutions and also the democratic foundation of our political system.

There are alternatives available that do not require radical legislative or social changes - merely radical attitudinal changes. Change will require us to rephrase the questions that we ask about youth. We must ask not "why do kids get into trouble?" but rather "how do most youth become useful, productive and contributing members of their communities?"
PART III

ADOLESCENTS AND SOCIAL SERVICES:

- The Program Response
National and International Youth Programs:

Physical and emotional developments in adolescence have been identified by educationalists, sociologists, psychologists and medical practitioners as presenting sufficient factors to denote a special stage in life which characterizes it as different from both childhood and adulthood. Furthermore, it is evident that adolescents concur with differentiations made by professionals. In a survey of eighty-five teenagers from British Columbia this writer found that 90% of the respondents objected to being called a child, the most frequently stated reason for their objections being "...because I am not a child". One female respondent put it more succinctly when she wrote: "...physically I am not a child! Mentally I am not a child! And emotionally I am not a child!" Given this apparent consensus it would seem appropriate to make special studies of, and specialist provision for, the adolescent age group within social policies and at the level of service provision.

The British Youth Service and the U.S.A.'s Youth Development Bureau appear to have had some constructive impact in acting as focusing mechanisms in policy planning and program development with regards to youth and youth issues in their respective countries notwithstanding their problem-focused tendencies. The efforts of the Youth Development Bureau in deemphasising individual adolescent pathology and investigating defects within national social structures played a significant part in the pre-Reagan Congress shifting its attention "from supporting efforts directed predominantly at the treatment of
young persons who are troubled or troublesome to a more balanced approach of guiding change in social institutions. This appears as an important policy shift which has obvious connotations for program planners and service providers.

Similarly, the Youth Service in the United Kingdom has served to generate a focused national discussion about the specialized needs of youth in that country. Though such a discussion appears to have largely revolved around the failures of the Youth Service to respond effectively to the social recreational and vocational needs of youth, this critical approach has served to highlight the ineffectiveness of auctioning off various youth services to a variety of government departments without the necessary context of a planned suprastructure. In advocating for the development of a national youth policy in Britain, John Ewan (1970) disagrees with those who call for a Ministry of Youth and suggests a move towards a grid pattern of administration whereby multi-ministerial youth services would be connected and coordinated across each level of service delivery. In arguing for the development of a secretariat with a coordinating mandate, Ewan stresses the importance of seeing youth as an integral part of society, not as something separated from it, while recognizing that youth have some specialist needs which require a focusing machinery.

The fact that neither the Youth Service in Britain nor the Youth Development Bureau in the United States has succeeded in their efforts to develop comprehensive youth policies or a system of integrated social services to youth should not
detract from a realisation that the intensity of discussion about youth policies and youth programs in these countries is far greater than is presently evident within Canadian society which has no comparable departments or institutions operating at a national level which serve to focus any debate about youth needs and youth issues.

Periodically, Canadian youth have been the target of national programs designed to provide increased participatory opportunities. The emergence of the Company of Young Canadians in the sixties with its social action goals attempted to respond, with varying degrees of effectiveness, to the participatory needs and aspirations of older adolescents and young adults. The Opportunities for Youth program, with a greater emphasis on locality development methods, displayed similar participatory ideals without the same collective political fervour of the Company of Young Canadians. Other national youth-oriented programs with more focused objectives include Canada World Youth, which exposes youth to issues in development education in Third World countries, and Katimavik which introduces youth to the varied cultures of Canada through a program focus on alternate lifestyles.

The relative impact of these national youth programs is largely unknown and appears to warrant closer scrutiny in the light of the sparsity of information available to students of adolescence and youth in Canada. The Company of Young Canadians and the O.F.Y. program appear to have achieved some notable, if localised, successes without having proven resilient and
adaptable in the face of social, economic and political change in Canada. Both programs appeared as a somewhat residual response to the youthful turbulence of the late sixties and early seventies and were dissolved within the time span of one generation of adolescents. As the rebellious sixties gave way to the sombre seventies and the conservative eighties these national youth programs disappeared and there is no evidence to suggest any move towards the development of a program which might serve to focus national attention on the participatory needs and aspirations of Canadian youth.

Given the dearth of national programs or forums from which a comprehensive youth policy might emerge, planners and policymakers are left to peruse the scant amount of information that is available to them from localised efforts that attempt to analyse and respond to youth needs and issues. For the past two years this writer has been involved in an inter-agency effort to define and respond to adolescent service needs in the south-east sector of Vancouver and a case study of this project serves to highlight some of the difficulties inherent in local planning efforts aimed at the youth population. It is worthy of note that the target population of this Vancouver case study is defined as adolescents while the aforementioned national programs were designed for older adolescents and young adults, for the most part responding to the needs of those young people who were out of school and not yet entrenched into the labour force (i.e. usually defined as sixteen to twenty-five year olds). This merely serves to indicate a collective confusion
with regards to any definitive definition of the term "youth" within our society.

Interorganizational Planning in Youth Services: A Vancouver Case Study.

This case-study covers a period from September 1979 to April 1981 and coincides with this writer's practicum and summer employment involvement with youth services planning efforts that took place in south-east Vancouver, British Columbia.

The Locale:

South-east Vancouver is an area of approximately fifty square miles delineated by the Fraser River to the south, the municipality of Burnaby to the east, Broadway to the north and Ontario Street to the west. As indicated on the map, this area of Vancouver is composed of at least seven identifiable districts and many more neighbourhoods, and its selection as a planning zone stems from the fact that it is one of five administrative regions within Vancouver as designated by the Ministry of Human Resources in B.C. This Ministry acted as the catalyst from which the planning efforts described in this case-study originated.

This sector of Vancouver is largely residential with a predominence of single family dwellings and duplexes though some light industry is evident, particularly in the north-east area. According to the 1976 Census, the approximate
population of south-east Vancouver was 125,000 comprising about 30% of the total Vancouver population. While the Vancouver population decreased between 1971 and 1976 the south-east Vancouver population increased, largely due to new developments in the Killarney district (see map).

Two-thirds of the reported 32,000 families residing in south-east Vancouver had children compared with just over 50% in Vancouver as a whole. Of the 22,000 families with children nearly 4,000 (or 20%) were single-parent families.

Estimates of the adolescent population in south-east Vancouver indicate that twelve to nineteen year olds comprised approximately 15% of the population in 1976 while in Vancouver as a whole the proportion of teenagers was a little over 11%. While the adolescent population was decreasing as a proportion of the total population in south-east Vancouver four areas, Fraserview, Killarney, Kensington and Cedar Cottage, showed an increased number of teens in 1976.

Ethnically south-east Vancouver is mostly caucasian although the southern sector (Sunset and Fraserview) houses a large East Indian population and the northern sector (particularly Cedar Cottage) is the home of many Native Indian families. Other minorities include eastern Europeans, especially Slavs and Croates, Chinese and Italians.

Social services structure:

Since the demise of the Resource Boards in B.C. in 1975 and their experiment in integrated social services under
community control, government social services have returned to a hierarchical, bureaucratic structure with policy emanating from the provincial capital of Victoria although district offices remain as the mechanism for delivering health, child welfare and juvenile probation services. Schools are operated on a city-wide basis under the auspices of elected trustees who comprise the Vancouver School Board. Many services of a "preventive" nature are funded by government but contracted out to voluntary social service agencies where the cost of operating such services is lower. Although some claim that the voluntary sector is best suited to deliver these services others argue that the government is abrogating its responsibilities by "farming out" these services. Some voluntary agency budgets depend very heavily upon government grants and contracts to the degree that their very existence might be threatened without such funding.

With regards to services operating in south-east Vancouver which might have an investment in providing services to youth the following agencies can be identified as key ones in the planning process to be examined:

**Ministry of Human Resources:** (Region 16) Nine District Offices operate in the various neighbourhoods with social work and financial aid staff. Central resources include a residential resource system, staff training, grants division, and family and children's services division. M.H.R. is a major regional funder of youth services in south-east Vancouver through its community grants and contracts.
Attorney General's Dept.: Operates two Juvenile Probation and Family Service Offices in south-east Vancouver staffed by Probation Officers. Community grants on a limited scale are provided from the regional office.

Health Dept.: Two Health Units operate within south-east Vancouver although only one of these offices has sole responsibility within the defined area. Medical services are offered within these units along with school health programs which are contracted out with the Vancouver School Board. A Youth Clinic is also operated on a part-time basis.

Mental Health: Two Mental Health Centres offer psychiatric services to residents within south-east Vancouver with nursing and social work staff. Some youth groups are offered within these units with a counselling focus.

Education: There are five High Schools and three Alternate Schools operating in the south-east sector of Vancouver with accountability falling under three separate school districts superintendents. Alternate School programs are a joint project of the School Board, who supplies teachers, and M.H.R. who supply Child Care Workers.

Neighbourhood Houses (2): Although there are four Neighbourhood Houses in south-east Vancouver only two of them are solely concerned with residents within the pre-defined area. These Houses are major recipients of government grants and operate a variety of services to youth.
Boys and Girls Club: There is one Boys and Girls Club in south Vancouver which serves a membership of about two hundred children and youth within a limited geographic area - i.e. Fraserview.

Canada Employment Centres: Two C.E.C.s provide services within south-east Vancouver primarily to young people over the age of fifteen years. A youth employment project is available which offers employment counselling and job-finding services to high school students. This is a joint program of C.E.C. and the Vancouver School Board.

Community Centres: Five Community Centres, under the auspices of the Vancouver Parks Board, offer a variety of recreationally oriented services to youth in south-east Vancouver.

Alcohol and Drug Commission: The Youth and Family Services section of this Commission offers counselling and education services to youth on a city wide basis. The headquarters of these services are not located in south-east Vancouver.

As previously indicated these services operate in relative isolation within discrete organizational structures and no formal coordinating mechanisms were evident at the local level. A regional Inter-Ministerial Children's Committee (IMCC) operates on a Vancouver-wide basis with representation from four departments of government (Education, Health, Human Resources and Attorney General). Historically, the major concern of this Committee has been to address the needs of children/youth who
have displayed severe emotional/behavioural/psychological difficulties and who appear to require a broad range of (usually residential) services which cross-ministerial boundaries. Notwithstanding the limited mandate of the IMCC (which has no immediate access to program funds) this body is viewed by the Social Credit government in B.C. as shouldering primary responsibility for the coordination of services to children and youth throughout the province. In theory local IMCCs feed information into regional IMCCs (e.g. Vancouver) who in turn provide input to the provincial IMCC. In fact no local IMCCs are evident in south-east Vancouver and hence the Vancouver IMCC's sources of planning information are somewhat restricted. It is also worthy of emphasis that although many programs/services to children and youth are operated by voluntary agencies through government grants and contracts, no voluntary sector personnel are represented on these Committees at any level.

The Planning Process: M.H.R.'s Resource Planning Committee

In September 1979 this writer, as part of his practicum with the U.B.C. School of Social Work, became a member of the M.H.R. Region 16 Resource Planning Committee. This Committee was mandated to provide planning input to the regional Resources Team in planning and evaluating program needs in south-east Vancouver for children and youth. The membership was comprised of M.H.R. front-line and supervisory staff from various areas of the region representing a variety
of perspectives about service needs.

The primary focus of this body rested on the network of residential services - Foster Homes, Group Homes, Boarding Homes, Treatment Centres and Assessment Centres - available to those children and youth who were in the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare. Region 16 was one of the larger M.H.R. regions in the province with one of the highest proportions of children in care (in September 1979 there were 427 children in care in the region, 261 or 61% of whom were between twelve and seventeen years old).

While it was generally agreed that the range of available child welfare placement services in the region effectively met the needs of younger children, there was widespread agreement that placement services to the adolescent population were inadequate and/or largely ineffective. A number of issues were identified by the Resource Planning Committee as examples of this concern:

1. A 1979 survey of adolescents on M.H.R. social work caseloads in the region indicated that about 130 were neither in school nor working at the time of the survey.

2. A high proportion of adolescents in care were also on probation. A 1978 report indicated the rates of probation involvement as follows: 13 years (12%); 14 years (29%); 15 years (22%); 16 years (29%); 17 years (36%); 18 years (31%).

3. A growing proportion of adolescents in care were females having implications for program planning. A survey by this writer in 1980 indicated that 53% of all adolescents on social work caseloads in Region 16 were females. Between Sept. 1978 and Sept. 1979 42 out of 53 referrals to a crisis centre for teens in the region were females.
4. A small but highly visible number of youth were identified by social workers as "highly disturbed" and requiring closed treatment facilities which did not exist. These youth placed a great strain on resources which were unable to respond to their needs.

5. Another small but highly visible number of youth were identified as "street kids" — many of them involved with drugs and juvenile prostitution in downtown Vancouver. As many of these youth were older (16 to 18 years) and "street-wise" the existing resources with their parenting focus did not appear to be effective as alternatives for those youth wishing to leave the street scene. The problems with placing these youth were magnified by the intense publicity which the local media was giving to juvenile prostitution.

6. The strains on residential resources were far greater when youth were not constructively employed in daytime programs — and many were not. The region's Alternate Schools were full and often had lengthy waiting lists and many youth lacked the adequate skills to obtain work.

The Resource Planning Committee experienced great difficulty in agreeing upon a common approach to any list of priority needs. Some members felt that the M.H.R. mandate was necessarily limited to providing adequate placement services to those children/youth who had already been taken into care while others argued that a broader, more preventively oriented focus in program planning would serve to reduce the number of children and youth coming into care and thereby relax the pressures placed upon the residential resources system. The availability of contract funds for programming at that time lent an urgency to this debate (these funds had to be allocated quickly) and a majority on the Committee opted for the development of a program which would respond to the perceived needs of those youth identified as out of school and not working (a population
which was commonly referred to as "drop-outs"). The primary targets of such a program were seen to be "high risk" youth who were not already in care.

The Program Response:

In October 1979 voluntary agencies and selected individuals in south-east Vancouver were informed that funds were available through M.H.R. for the development and operation of a "day program for adolescents who were identified as school drop-outs". Interested parties were invited to submit applications for these program funds and were asked to provide M.H.R. with a tentative outline for such a program. A sub-Committee of the Resources Planning Committee was appointed to interview selected applicants. Four applicants were interviewed including three agencies and one individual and a local Neighbourhood House was chosen as the most suitable organization to operate such a program. This Neighbourhood House already operated a number of M.H.R. funded programs, including Special Services to Children (a contracted one-to-one child care service to children on social work caseloads), and an Outreach Worker Program (where two social workers were hired to work with families and youth in two social housing projects in the region).

In January 1980 the new program (X) opened its doors to adolescents in south-east Vancouver. Program X was designed to provide child care services within a day program including individual and group counselling, life skills, tutoring, recreation and a woodwork option. Two part-time workers were assigned to reach out to youth in their neighbourbods and encourage them to become reengaged in constructive activities
encourage them to become reengaged in constructive activities (i.e. return to school, find work or participate in Program X). The five staff involved in the program were soon overwhelmed with more teenagers than they could cope with given their limited resources and the flexible referral process had to be tightened (it was previously agreed with M.H.R. that 80% of referrals would come from M.H.R. social workers with 20% coming from other agencies or self-referrals by youth).

Early in 1980 the membership of the Resources Planning Committee changed and the new membership was harshly critical of Program X with the following concerns being articulated:

1. It was felt that the considerable expenditure of funds for Program X (in the $130,000 range) was excessive to serve a maximum twenty youth (only twelve in the in-house program).

2. Some reiterated previously mentioned concerns that the money should have gone into residential resources (e.g. Group Homes of Crisis Home).

3. Youth involved in the program appeared to be well known to the system and were seen by some to be "hard-core kids" who should not be the primary targets of a preventive program.

4. Because of the perceived "hard-core" nature of youth in Program X some M.H.R. social workers were hesitating to refer "appropriate" youth for fear of their being "contaminated".

5. It was felt that the target population had been ill-defined and that "drop-out" was a term which was vague if not useless as a criteria for any program.

6. Many youth using Program X were residents of M.H.R. placements and were seen as "overusers" of limited resources. It was felt that residents of M.H.R. resources should be programmed within the existing resource without taking space away from "at risk" community youth.
The major concern however, and the one most pertinent to this case study, revolved around criticism of the way in which this program was developed. The newer members of the Resources Planning Committee felt that the planning process had been overly hurried and did not allow for adequate consultation with M.H.R. staff in the region. It was also felt that the program was developed outside of any broad planning framework. This criticism was heightened when Committee members found out that another Life Skills program had recently been contracted out by the Resources Department without the Committee being consulted. This Life Skills program appeared designed to serve a similar youth population and yet had not been considered in terms of its possible integration into Program X.

At this point in time the atmosphere within the Committee was quite hostile and personality conflicts were evident between certain members. A long standing poor relationship between the region's district office personnel and centralised resources personnel was apparently contributing to the poor communication between certain Committee members and there was no evidence of a willingness to openly resolve these issues. There was a mutual decision to cease the Committee's responsibility for Program X and the Committee decided to move onto other business which was less contentious. The responsibility for ongoing monitoring of Program X reverted back to the regional Resources Department. Prior to this decision being made however, this writer obtained the approval
of the Committee "to look at the range of M.H.R. funded, non-residential services to youth and to develop a planning forum whereby ways could be explored to better coordinate the existing network of services."

**M.H.R. Youth Services Workshop - "Towards an Integrated Approach"**

The planning process leading to the development of Program X was a testament to the lack of coordination in planning services to youth from within one agency, that is M.H.R. The following organizational chart exemplifies the disjointed responsibilities for the range of youth services in south-east Vancouver sponsored by M.H.R.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family &amp; Childrens Services Division</th>
<th>Income Assistance Division</th>
<th>Resources Division</th>
<th>Grants Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Family Support Workers Program (MHR staffed)</td>
<td>- Youth Incentive Program (Administered by MHR)</td>
<td>- Program X (Contracted out to a Neighbourhood House)</td>
<td>- Outreach Workers Program in Housing Projects (Two positions funded by grants to a Neighbourhood House)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Alternate School Child Care Workers (MHR staffed)</td>
<td>- Vocational Orientation for Youth Program (Administered by MHR)</td>
<td>- Life Skills Program (Contracted out to an individual)</td>
<td>- Youth Project in School (Two CCWs funded by grant to individual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Special Services to Children Program (Contracted out to Neighbourhood House).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This divergent accountability chart has a rationale within the context of M.H.R. organizational needs but was an evident hindrance to the development of a coordinated system of planning and delivering services to youth in south-east Vancouver. No structure existed within M.H.R. that permitted...
these four divisions to coordinate their efforts when developing new programs or adjusting existing programs for youth. According to the management personnel interviewed by this writer, weekly management meetings which included the supervisors of these divisions did not address this need for planning coordination primarily because the diverse responsibilities were not perceived as an organizational problem. That is to say that these services/programs to youth were not perceived as being closely linked at the field level notwithstanding obvious overlaps in program objectives and target populations.

Following broad consultations with M.H.R. personnel at all levels within the region it was evident to this writer that a consensus existed that this network of "preventive" services to youth was largely inadequate and that there was a widespread interest in the development of a regional planning workshop which would provide staff at different levels with an opportunity to articulate their concerns vis a vis youth programming in the region. The voluntary agency recipients of youth-focused grants and contracts were also consulted in this process and strong feelings of isolation were evident whereby these agencies felt excluded from the regional planning process. While voluntary agencies were expected to operate youth programs ipso facto, no mechanisms existed whereby their input could be heard in the planning stages.

This information was fed back to the Resources Planning Committee by this writer with a proposal for the development
of a regional planning workshop whose theme would be "towards the integration of services to youth in south-east Vancouver". A sub-Committee of the Resource Planning Committee was assigned to plan the workshop which was to involve representatives from all M.H.R. divisions and those voluntary sector agencies who operated M.H.R. funded programs for adolescents in the region.

The M.H.R. Regional Manager was strongly supportive of such a planning workshop being held with one important proviso. Based on a concern that M.H.R. be viewed as the sole agency responsible for providing services to youth in south-east Vancouver, the Regional Manager was eager to see representation from other Ministries such as Education, Health, and the Attorney General's Department. As the primary focus was to be on M.H.R. funded youth services the sub-Committee decided to invite "token" representation from these Ministries.

Planning for the workshop involved both M.H.R. personnel and voluntary sector representatives and the final agenda reflected this input. The workshop planning group identified two primary service delivery "models" which, broadly speaking, were defined as "centralised" and "community-based" models. Added to these two options was a third "model" which called for the appointment of a "Youth Services Coordinator" responsible for providing a common link in the planning processes.

The morning session of the Workshop (held on April 23rd 1980) involved a panel discussion of the problems in planning, coordinating and delivering services to youth in south-east Vancouver. A pragmatic note was added to this discussion by the M.H.R. Regional Manager who noted that the range of services
under discussion cost approximately $500,000 annually and she suggested that the question was not so much "how many extra services do we need" but rather "how can we develop a more effective service delivery system to youth within this already considerable range of services available?"

This writer reminded the workshop participants of the apparently cyclical nature of concerns about youth services when quoting from a report on youth services in south Vancouver prepared six years before:

A package of youth services has to be developed that will:
1. Integrate non-statutory services to youth with existing statutory services.
2. Promote the coordination of services and persons in the community who are dealing with youth.
3. Develop mechanisms for a more detailed assessment and evaluation of the extent and nature of youth needs and problems and enhance the development of flexible programs to meet these needs and problems as defined.  

A similar list of "to dos" was in front of the participants at this 1980 workshop.

The panel discussion of issues provided participants with a broad perspective on the problems apparent in planning and developing youth services:

- planning by crisis was the rule
- lack of continuity in planning
- need to recognize the fluid needs of youth
- lack of information and data available to planners
- no central body with planning mandate
- youth workers at neighbourhood level feel isolated
- need for voluntary integration at local level
- need to involve front-line workers in planning
- need to involve youth in planning process
- tendency to ghettoize youth and isolate them from mainstream community activities
- need to teach youth how to participate
- need for adults to learn how to listen to youth
- need to move away from labelling youth
- need to monitor and evaluate services
- need for more inter-agency cooperative programming
- concerns about apparent isolation of school system and unwillingness to plan cooperatively with other agencies
- lack of policies and programs for 17-19 year olds
- need for wider variety of alternate education options
- need to develop "sense of community" for youth
- more effective communication network among those serving youth in the region
- need to differentiate between younger and older adolescents
- need to further develop our understanding of, and responses to adolescents
- need to recognize the actual rather than desired abilities of youth

The presentation of alternative service delivery "models" reflected a differing perception of the purpose and focus of social services and the level at which such services should be designed. The "Community Based Model" was presented by Neighbourhood House personnel and was consistent with the community-based philosophies of a "grass-roots" organization.
In pointing out that any youth services delivery system should aim to respond to the wider spectrum of adolescents in the community (not only the 0.002% known to M.H.R.) the community-based "model" called for formal recognition of the fact that there were many distinct neighbourhoods within the geographic area of south-east Vancouver. If service delivery systems were to respond to the differing needs of these neighbourhoods then any system should incorporate the funding and decision-making processes as close to the community level as possible. With this in mind, the following "model" was presented:

A. Three maxi-communities or maxi-villages
   1. South Vancouver - Sunset, Fraserview, Killarney
   2. Cedar Cottage - Kensington
   3. Renfrew - Collingwood

B. For each maxi-community a Youth Advisory Council
   1. 4 M.H.R. Social Workers
   2. 2 Mini-Team representatives
   3. 2 Clients (youth)
   4. 2 Community volunteers

C. Formation of Youth Advisory Council
   1. M.H.R. District Offices select Social Worker reps.
   2. Social Workers organize Y.A.C.
   3. Y.A.C. receive "committee work" training
   4. Y.A.C. agrees on decision-making process

D. Initial Youth Advisory Council Tasks
   1. Y.A.C. assesses youth needs and plans strategy
   2. Develops programs in response (or ways of making use of current programs).
   3. Priorizes
   4. Allocates funds
   5. Y.A.C. may co-program and cost share
   6. Monitor functioning
The "Centralized Model" of service delivery to youth was presented by an M.H.R. supervisor responsible for the operation of the only centralised youth services staff team within the M.H.R. system in B.C. This team was comprised of nine youth workers, three alternate school child care workers, a clerical worker, and a coordinator - all M.H.R. staff.

The mandate of this centralized service was to keep youth out of the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare and its philosophy was "to be an accessible and visible resource within the community with the purpose of assisting the healthy development of self-concept and behaviour of young people, in the most effective way possible." Strategies included individual, group and family counselling, street work, school groups, recreation, volunteerism. This service was being provided on the west side of Vancouver (a higher income area than the east side) and was the basis used in the presentation of a centralized "model".

The application of this "model" in south-east Vancouver would call for the amalgamation of the considerable range of existing services to youth into one "Youth Services" staffed centrally by M.H.R. It was also suggested that an eventual goal might be to amalgamate all youth services in Vancouver within a single organizational structure with the purpose of providing a broader range of services to youth throughout the city. This structure might also serve to minimize the duplication of services and administrative costs, and enhance the comprehensiveness of the youth services network in the city.
A "complementary option" was also presented to the workshop by this writer which called for the appointment of "Youth Services Coordinator" for south-east Vancouver. It was suggested that any ideal "model" for service delivery, even if consensus was achieved, would require considerable time and energy in planning towards implementation. If no consensus was achieved then the impetus gained at this workshop might die without a specific person charged with continuing the process.

The initial responsibility of the Youth Services Coordinator would be to provide a point of linkage between the diverse units charged with the provision of youth services in the region. This would presume that the person be in a position whereby he/she could monitor the planning and development of youth services and act in the role of consultant to the existing network of services.

To ensure that the coordinating mandate of this person be credible and effective it was felt that the position should be a management one presuming involvement in management meetings within M.H.R. where planning and program development issues are raised. This person would also serve as an M.H.R. link between M.H.R. funded youth services and other agency youth services.

Given the probability that a new system of youth services would not evolve overnight it was also felt that the Youth Services Coordinator would be charged with the ongoing responsibility of planning towards a more comprehensive youth services network in south-east Vancouver.
The afternoon sub-groups were charged with assessing the mornings discussions and providing feedback on their preferences, if any, for a youth services delivery system appropriate to south-east Vancouver. Of the five sub-groups three opted for a "composite model" which gleaned the strong points of the presented "models". While the centralised "model" was generally seen to be more administratively feasible and of greater benefit to M.H.R. social workers, there was a general agreement that a community focus should be maintained. One sub-group opted for a fully centralized "Youth Services Centre" with one administrative structure. Services provided would be non-statutory and an "inter-agency advisory committee" would be appointed for planning input.

Another sub-group called for the development of a "Regional Lay Board" comprised of members from M.H.R. voluntary agencies and the community. A Director would be hired who would then assist in the establishment of a network of neighbourhood sub-committees who would be involved in needs assessment and program monitoring at the local levels, providing feedback to the Regional Board.

The concept of Youth Advisory Councils was supported by another sub-group who suggested that a Youth Services Coordinator be appointed to assist in their development. The possible use of existing Mini-Teams was suggested.

Following feedback from the sub-groups and full group discussion the following course of action was decided upon:
That a Task Force be set up by the Workshop with the following mandate:

1. To summarise the findings of the Workshop.

2. Out of this summary the Task Force will develop recommendations for the development of a single system for the delivery of services to youth in south-east Vancouver.

3. To present findings of the Task Force to a follow-up workshop.

4. For the Task Force to consult widely in its work with all concerned agencies and M.H.R. management.

The Task Force was asked to complete its work by July 1980 and its focus was to rest on preventive, non-statutory services to youth in south-east Vancouver. It was stressed that any review of youth services required an inter-agency focus and the members elected to serve on the Task Force reflected this view whereby four agencies were represented: M.H.R., Health Department, Attorney General's Department and Neighbourhood Services. This writer was also asked to serve on the Task Force.

The Youth Services Task Force

The eight member Youth Services Task Force met on a weekly basis throughout the summer of 1980 under the chairmanship of an M.H.R. District Supervisor. A summary of proceedings of the Workshop was developed by this writer and acted as an initial framework for discussions.

Early deliberations investigated the feasibility of a centralised Youth Services which would integrate all M.H.R. funded services within one administrative structure. Consultations
with regional M.H.R. management indicated that this would not be a feasible plan given Ministry policy supporting the contracting out of services to the voluntary sector. Any approach which called for additional public service staffing would not receive support from any of the relevant Ministries.

There was consensus within the Task Force that a community-based "model" of service delivery was both desirable and feasible and M.H.R. management appeared supportive of this approach. The Youth Council concept presented at the Workshop was discussed with three to five neighbourhood councils feeding into a regional council. Task Force members felt that these councils would require considerable staff support if they were to be effective, especially in the early stages of development - it was also evident that funding for such staff supports would be very difficult to obtain given present budgetary constraints.

Following considerable discussion the Task Force eventually realised that the complexities involved in working towards the development of an "ideal" youth services delivery system in south-east Vancouver could not be achieved within the time frame and limited mandate provided to the Task Force. It was further agreed that a more permanent body with broader representation from concerned agencies in south-east Vancouver and with a formal mandate from agency management personnel would be necessary if this planning process was to continue.

To this end the Task Force developed proposals for
the development of a South-East Vancouver Inter-Agency Youth Services Committee which would continue the work begun at the Workshop and continued by the Task Force. The objectives of such a Committee would be:

1. To provide a working forum through which the participating youth-serving agencies in south-east Vancouver may cooperate in the planning, organization and delivery of comprehensive services to the adolescent population.

2. To provide a forum through which youth, community groups and professionals may gain increased awareness of and access to youth services in south-east Vancouver.

3. To provide a forum through which the needs of the adolescent population in south-east Vancouver may be better understood and more effectively responded to at the community level.

Agency representation on this Committee was seen to include: Attorney General (Police and Probation); Boys and Girls Club; Canada Employment Centre; Health Dept; Human Resources; Mental Health; Neighbourhood Services; Parks Board; School Board; and Ad-hoc membership from the community at large.

The recommendations of the Task Force were summarised thus in their written proposals:

The Task Force recommends:

1. That a "South-East Vancouver Inter-Agency Youth Services Committee" be formed.

2. That the Committee comprise representatives appointed by agencies serving youth in the south-east sector of Vancouver.

3. That the Committee be mandated to develop mechanisms that will enhance inter-agency cooperation in the planning, organization and delivery of non-statutory services to youth in south-east Vancouver. Specifically this will entail:
i) Definition of agency mandates and areas of responsibility.

ii) Planning and implementation of inter-agency cooperative programs that respond to current gaps in the youth services network.

iii) Identification of existing services to youth in south-east Vancouver and incorporation into a current central index of information that is accessible to youth services professionals.

iv) Development and distribution of a current "Consumer Guide to Youth Services" in south-east Vancouver that is accessible to the community.

v) Ongoing collection of relevant statistical data necessary for effective planning and program development.

vi) Planning, organization and implementation of appropriate mechanisms aimed at increasing community and youth participation in the decision-making processes.

vii) Planning, organization and implementation of a community education program pertaining to the needs and responsibilities of adolescents.

viii) Presentation of a "Youth Services Planning Report" for the consideration of participating agencies.

x) Other assignments based on defined need.

That necessary resource supports, as defined by the Committee, be allocated in order to ensure effective functioning. As projected by the Task Force, the resource needs may include:

i) A permanent staff person available to the Committee on a full-time basis.

ii) Office space, telephone, stationary etc.

iii) Clerical assistance.

A critical path chart was developed by the Task Force which specified tasks to be undertaken by the Committee and the projected time-frame for their completion.
In September 1980 the Task Force presented its proposals to a meeting of regional management personnel representing all the agencies seen as potential members of the suggested Committee.

There was a strong consensus at this meeting that a coordinating body was required in south-east Vancouver and each agency agreed to the nomination of a representative and an alternate who would serve on a South-East Vancouver Inter-Agency Youth Services Committee. There was also agreement that the suggested tasks of the Committee, as spelled out by the Task Force, should be taken under advisement by the new body, including consideration of needed resource supports. Management would, in effect, respond to proposals forthcoming from the Committee following its formation rather than respond to the specific suggestions put forth by the Task Force.

This writer was assigned to act as a staff person to the Committee in its developmental stages on a two day a week basis (i.e. school practicum), and agreed to take responsibility for the organization of the first meeting.

It is worthy of note at this point that management personnel at this meeting, while unanimous in their support of the concept of a coordinating committee that would oversee the youth services system, differed in the enthusiasm with which they agreed to participate. Previous efforts at coordination of social services in B.C. (e.g. the Inter-Ministerial Children's Committees) had not achieved any notable successes in their efforts.
The South-East Vancouver Inter-Agency Youth Services Committee

The Youth Services Committee met for the first time in October 1980, elected its officers and outlined its operating structure. The goals of the Committee were agreed upon as follows:

1. To collect and provide information to professionals and the communities about services available to youth in south-east Vancouver.

2. To promote communication, cooperation and coordination between the existing network of services available to youth.

3. To develop a more comprehensive awareness of the service needs of youth in south-east Vancouver.

4. To encourage the involvement of community and youth groups in the appropriate planning and decision-making processes.

5. To assess and be involved in responding to the educational/informational needs of communities and professionals as they pertain to youth and youth services.

6. To assist agencies in the planning, organization and delivery of new and existing services to adolescents in south-east Vancouver.

During the formative organizational meetings the Committee also developed a list of projects that it intended to undertake:

- Inter-agency cooperative programs
- A central index of youth services
- A consumer guide to youth services
- Development of Community and Youth Advisory Councils
- Community and professional education programs
- Research projects related to youth service needs
- Consultation to agencies in planning youth services
The Committee decided to organise its operations on a steering committee/sub-committee basis with the committee as a whole acting as the steering committee and meeting on a monthly basis. Sub-committees were set up as follows:

**Program Sub-Committee:** This sub-committee was mandated to develop an inter-agency cooperative program to act as a pilot project within south-east Vancouver. A gap in services to youth was to be identified and a proposal developed that would bring together a number of agencies to respond cooperatively to the identified need. The rationale for this approach was two-fold:

1. To encourage an atmosphere of cooperative programming among participating agencies which would improve inter-agency communication coordination and relationships.

2. To ensure that the fledgling Committee be involved in tangible, task-oriented programming and not become emersed in what some people saw as "esoteric planning endeavours" with little relevance to practical tasks.

This program focus was strongly encouraged by the M.H.R. Regional Manager who believed that a task orientation was essential if the Committee was to gain credibility with M.H.R. staff. This program focus also gained strong support from some Committee members who did not relish the idea of sitting on a committee which was not "action-oriented". A minority of Committee members felt that the program focus was precipitous and that a planning focus involving necessary data collection should preclude any program development activities. The pilot nature of any cooperative program was seen by the former group as being part of the information gathering process, i.e., "action research".
Research/Planning Sub-Committee: This sub-committee was asked to collect all available information with regard to youth and youth service needs in the region; to assess what information was lacking and needed for planning purposes; and to develop, or encourage the development of needed research to collect additional information. The sub-committee was also asked to review agency mandates with regards to youth services and to identify any gaps and overlaps in mandates and services. The lack of "expertise" felt by mostly front-line workers on this sub-committee in the area of research and planning hampered it in its early work. Many members felt overwhelmed with the magnitude of their task and consequently the sub-committee did not meet very frequently. Support was offered by a researcher from the Attorney General's Department and a needs assessment survey of youth and families in the Sunset district of south-east Vancouver is presently underway.

Community Liaison Sub-Committee: This sub-committee was charged with the task of exploring ways in which community and youth groups might be brought into the planning process. The sub-committee had only two members and a decision was made that Committee members were spread too thinly among the sub-committees so this sub-committee was disbanded. It was agreed that all aspects of the Committee's work should consider the importance of community and youth involvement.

Executive Committee: Comprised of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer and Staff person, this committee dealt with the day to day administrative tasks of the Committee.
Early Committee Achievements:

Although there had been management agreement that appointed Committee representatives would spend at least three hours per week on Committee tasks the time spent on Committee work varied greatly between the members based on personal investment and commitment. While some members (most notably the Executive) spent many more than the allotted hours on Committee tasks, others merely attended the monthly meeting. This disparity did not, however, have any adverse affect on the generally harmonious relationships that were quickly developed between Committee members. A number of tasks were addressed quickly by the Committee, most notably: 

**Index of Youth Services:** It was soon realised that one of the few areas of absolute consensus between Committee members revolved around the need for an Index of Youth Services in south-east Vancouver that was current and easily accessible to professionals, youth and families in the region. The Executive Committee and Staff person, with support from other interested individuals collected all available information from organizations serving youth and an index of services was ready for operation by the end of February 1981. A local Community Centre agreed to operate the index which would be accessed by a telephone call. Flyers were prepared for circulation only to see a labour dispute postpone the commencement of the service. The index, when operational, will also attempt to record callers concerns with regards to perceived service gaps and overlaps in south-east Vancouver.
Cooperative Program Proposal: The Program Sub-Committee was the most active body in the early days of the Committee's life. Meeting weekly and consulting broadly with other professionals, a proposed inter-agency pilot project was developed for the consideration of the full Committee. The proposal called for the development of a multi-service centre for youth that would operate, initially on a two-day per week basis, out of two existing resources in south-east Vancouver. The program called for key youth-serving personnel from various agencies to operate a program or service out of the "multi-service centre" with the goal of reaching a broad range of youth who would not avail themselves of the same service from within existing (government) offices. It was also felt that bringing professionals together to work out of the same premises would enhance communication and coordination between agency personnel and indicate the appropriateness of planning towards the development of a more comprehensive "Multi-Service Centre for Youth" in south-east Vancouver.

This concept was vehemently opposed, particularly by Committee representatives from the voluntary sector, on the basis that: 1. the Committee should not become a service deliverer; 2. a two-day a week program for youth was unfeasible; 3. that it would represent the development of a new service when the focus should rest on the improvement of already existing services; 4. that the proposed centre would represent a centralised service and dilute a preferred community focus.
Follow-Up Workshop: As the original Workshop in April 1980 had asked the Task Force to report back to a follow-up gathering the Committee decided, with the Chairperson of the now disbanded Task Force to organize a Workshop which would a) provide feedback on the Task Force process and b) give an update on the work of the Committee. This Workshop was held in February 1981 and was attended by approximately fifty participants representing sixteen different organizations. The Program Sub-Committee's multi-service centre concept was the major topic of interest to Workshop participants and most of the time was spent in a critical analysis of this approach. The majority feeling was that such a plan was precipitous and that the energies of the Committee should be channelled into developing educational projects whereby inter-agency professionals inform youth of services already in existence and assist youth to make more effective use of such programs. The Workshop participants also reiterated the concern about involving youth in planning and developing programs. The Index of Youth Services was generally viewed as an important achievement and further efforts in needs assessment were encouraged.

Staffing: This writer's involvement with the Youth Services Committee ceased effective in March 1981. At that time funding had been obtained from the Attorney General's Department for a part-time person to staff the Committee. A Youth Services Coordinator is presently employed on a two day a week basis to facilitate the continuation of the Committee's work.
ANALYSIS

Those who espouse the values of social services integration and citizen participation in the planning, organization and delivery of social services in British Columbia witnessed the death, at least temporarily, of their dreams in 1976 when the Resources Boards experiment was dissolved by the newly re-elected Social Credit Party. The return to a highly centralised system of statutory services brought about a corresponding recognition at the local levels of service delivery for the need to develop more cooperative and coordinated efforts that might result in a greater linkage between the rather rigid boundaries of the various levels of government responsible for social services. Government policies which supported the contracting out of a great variety of non-statutory services to voluntary agencies made this sector a natural partner in these coordinating efforts. The planning process in south-east Vancouver, undertaken over a two year period, represents the efforts within one region of the province to address the need for coordination between services for adolescents. This case study raises a number of issues in this regard which have implications for social planners, community organizers and youth services personnel alike.

The Planning Environment

The rapid expansion of youth programs throughout Canada in the late sixties and early seventies has given way
to conditions of restraint in the early 1980s resulting in a change of emphasis in planning efforts. Throughout the planning process in south-east Vancouver management personnel from government departments consistently stressed the need to restrict planning efforts to the existing framework of resources for youth. It was clear that no new funds would be forthcoming from any level of government regardless of documented need.

Nonetheless, there was support in principle from all local agencies for the development of a representative inter-agency body which would address the issue of service coordination with regards to preventive programs for the adolescent population. This support was undoubtedly encouraged at the political level where critics, including many supporters of the integration process undertaken during the N.D.P. term of office, were eagerly pointing out the range of service gaps and overlaps that appear as a logical component of the existing hierarchical structure.

British Columbia's brief experiment with a decentralised, integrated and community controlled system of social services in the mid-seventies was seen by many human service workers and analysts as a progressive effort towards the provision of a more responsive and effective range of social services and the dissolution of the Resources Boards was seen by these people as premature. Efforts by the Social Credit government to provide leadership in addressing the issues of social services coordination through, for example,
the development of local and regional Inter-Ministerial Children's Committees, do not appear to have made any impact at the service delivery level. These Committees do not include representatives from the voluntary sector and have tended to focus only on those children in crisis who require the services of more than one government department. The perceived failure of the I.M.C.C.s has contributed to a widespread skepticism about coordinating efforts.

Social services to adolescents, as with other target populations, are still marked by a lack of clarity of objectives and crisis-oriented activities and agencies providing services remain highly individualistic, autonomous and non-collectively oriented. The delivery of statutory services is quite unimaginative and coordinating efforts generally take place only when it is to the advantage of the partners to the exchange or when it is imposed by policy directives from the higher levels of government.

The policy of contracting out non-statutory, preventively-oriented services to voluntary agencies in B.C. appears to have increased these agencies dependence upon government and has not served to generate a great deal of creativity or innovativeness at the program level. The traditional interest of the voluntary sector in the concept of citizen participation has not been enhanced by this greater dependence on government and has served, in many instances, to limit the scope of their services to target populations which are pre-specified under the contract terms.
Program X in south-east Vancouver was contracted to serve a population of "high school drop-outs" known to M.H.R. social workers and it was only after intense negotiations that the program was permitted by M.H.R. to accept up to 10% of youth on a self-referral basis.

The increased interdependency between public and voluntary agencies stemming from contracting out policies does not appear to have improved the working relationship or trust level between these apparently competing bodies. Although voluntary agencies are providing many of the services that the previous N.D.P. government believed to be the direct responsibility of the public sector there is no evidence of a greater voluntary sector involvement in the overall planning and development of social services in B.C. The involvement of voluntary agencies in the south-east Vancouver planning process appears as the exception rather than the rule.

Social services in B.C. remain traditional in the sense that the emphasis rests upon responding to crisis on the basis of individual pathology. Counselling and referral services remain the predominant feature of most youth programs in both the public and voluntary sectors and the thrust towards community development, so evident in the late sixties and early seventies, appears to have largely dissipated. To the degree that elements of community work practice are discernible in this case study they largely evolved from the involvement of this writer - a social work student free of the constraints of a pre-determined role within any single agency.
In short, the social service system in B.C. continues to be marked by contained and predictable patterns of interorganizational exchanges with the restrictive elements of fiscal restraint, organizational survival, and the maintenance of agency autonomy combining to inhibit any efforts at systemic change within the broad structure of social services. This is not to say that the environment is totally closed to innovative and creative effort in the planning sphere. There are those who believe that such apparent restrictions might serve to inspire a necessary reevaluation of the role, function and structure of social services within our society along with the development of new approaches based on different principles:

One of the challenges of social planning in the eighties will involve a more intensive search for new principles of social services restructuring and for innovative concepts of public services, based on collective patterns of social responsibility and on the use of social networks of support.

Organizational Survival and the Mandate to Plan

The mandate provided to the Youth Services Committee in south-east Vancouver is somewhat dependent upon the degree of investment in collaborative planning and the consensus achieved between the participating agencies. Although the Youth Services Task Force had identified a number of tasks to be undertaken by the Committee, there was a reluctance on the part of agency management personnel to commit to any
pre-specified terms of reference which would serve to guide the Committee in its work. In essence the Committee was provided with recommending powers only with regards to any perceived need for change in the existing youth services network. The authority to effect significant changes in this system was retained within the structures of individual agencies. Minimal resources were provided to the Committee in its formative stages; indeed a discussion about the potential need for a person to staff the Committee indicated that government budgetary systems were not flexible enough to permit for cost-sharing of a staff position between departments.

The onus, then, was placed on the Committee to prove itself effective prior to requesting tangible resource supports. The irony of this situation was that some members of the Committee felt that resource supports, most notably staff support, were necessary if it was to work effectively.

As is evident the Committee's mandate was at best vague and general, that is "coordinate youth services in south-east Vancouver", while its authority was limited to that of friendly persuasion. While non-controversial projects requiring no extra resources proved feasible (e.g. the Index of Youth Services) any significant restructuring of youth services (e.g. the multi-service centre concept) appeared as beyond the mandate of the Committee. Notwithstanding the Committee's desire to act as an overall planning body within the region through which individual agencies would consult
in planning and developing youth services, it is apparent that agencies are far from being prepared to risk losing any authority over their domaine and such a goal appears as idealistic.

In summary it appears that it is politically opportune to support in principle local coordinating efforts but the tangible commitment of the necessary resources and authority are restricted to non-substantive areas in terms of bringing about any systemic change within the youth services organizational structure. Both public and voluntary agencies appear reluctant to surrender any of their autonomy and the Committee is left to develop its informal influence and to undertake non-controversial projects such as the Index of Youth Services. At this point in time the primary intent of the Committee is to ensure its continued existance in the hope that its influence and mandate will at some point be extended.

The Nature of Change Proposals

The poorly planned development of Program X with its vaguely defined target population appears as a typical example of the crisis-oriented approach to social services planning and development in B.C. The planning of Program X was undertaken outside of any contextual appraisal of the existing network of services for adolescents in south-east Vancouver and served to highlight the fragmentation of youth services within the M.H.R. system. A holistic approach to
service delivery which recognized the multi-faceted and fluid needs of the adolescent population was not evident within M.H.R. (or any other agency for that matter) and the organizational structure was rationalised in terms of distinctions made between discrete service components. In other words the M.H.R. grants coordinator might be in the process of negotiating with a voluntary agency to provide a certain youth service at the same time that the M.H.R. resources coordinator was developing a similar service from within his department. No formal mechanism existed within M.H.R., let alone the broader interorganizational network, that ensured a coordinated planning approach. This fragmented M.H.R. non-residential youth services system was the initial focus of the planning process up to and including the first Youth Services Workshop. At the insistence of the M.H.R. regional manager representatives from other agencies were invited to the workshop ensuring a broader focus on the interorganizational network and at the same time preempting a closer examination of the M.H.R. system.

Once embarked upon an interorganizational focus the change objectives became more complex and obscure. Rather than attempting to define its own goals and objectives the Committee decided to adopt the tasks suggested by the Task Force, namely: the development of a central index of youth services; the assessment of youth service needs; planning cooperative programs; the development of community education projects; and the development of mechanisms that would ensure
the involvement of youth and community groups in the planning process.

The type of innovative planning that has been possible to date in south-east Vancouver would indicate that only minor modifications within the existing system are obtainable and that primary innovations (described by Warren as "breaking out of the established thought structure so that problems are redefined from an emphasis on individual deviance and deficiency to an emphasis on dysfunctions of the institutional structure") or even secondary innovations (substantial changes that remain within the accepted definitions) remain outside of the scope of the Committee's potential.

An example of the limited potency of the Youth Services Committee can be found in its inability to develop a consensus with regards to the stated goals of cooperative programming and citizen and youth participation. Intense debate about the desirability of these goals has not led to any progress in terms of methodology and implementation. It might be surmised that consumer participation is not necessarily compatible with an emphasis on primary innovations and cooperative programming might serve to threaten the autonomy of individual agencies.

Receptivity to Change

It is difficult to distinguish between agencies
receptivity to change and change objectives in as much as receptivity to change is dependent upon the level and degree of change perceived to be necessary and/or appropriate. To the degree that minor modifications are the objective the receptivity to change appears high within all agencies. That is to say that all agencies actively supported the development of a central index of youth services and the undertaking of a community youth needs assessment and have appeared willing to offer resource supports to those projects which would not impinge upon their autonomy.

As the degree of change required becomes greater and where primary or even secondary innovations are called for the receptivity to change appears to decrease accordingly. Hence, the Committee's efforts to conceptualise and plan a cooperative program has met with considerable resistance, especially from one (voluntary) agency which perceived the multi-service centre concept as a direct threat to the continued existence of one of its contracted programs. Similarly, control-oriented (government) agencies did not perceive the need to involve youth in the planning process and their ambivalence has served to lessen its priority within the list of Committee tasks.

Differing agency ideologies also effect the varying degrees of receptivity to change of the participating agencies whereby a change objective which calls for the centralization of resources (e.g. the multi-service centre
concept) is the antithesis of those (usually in the voluntary sector) who espouse the values of decentralised, neighbourhood based service delivery systems. Others (usually in the public sector) prefer a centralised service based on its perceived accessibility as a referral source for their specific target populations (e.g. "delinquents" or "children-in-care").

To the degree that resistance to change has been evident in the planning process in south-east Vancouver it has been forthcoming from voluntary agencies to a greater extent than it has from government agencies. The impetus which led to the development of the Youth Services Committee stemmed mostly from government agencies with the notable exception of the school system which has remained largely ambivalent throughout. The apparent insecurity of representatives of voluntary agencies has manifested itself in attitudes of mistrust towards the designs of the government agency representatives and their stance has been one of reaction to ideas rather than generating innovative approaches. Notwithstanding the aforementioned difference in ideologies between public and voluntary sector personnel, voluntary agencies have indicated little willingness to table their apparent reservations and have failed to effectively promote issues that are important to them, for example citizen and youth participation in the Committee's work.

The preventive focus and coordinating function of the Committee would appear as an ideal forum within which
the voluntary sector might assume a leadership role and utilise the opportunity to participate in the planning process and yet the apparent skepticism and mistrustful posture of these agencies has served to place them firmly in the rearguard of efforts undertaken by the Committee to date. The degree to which this situation is a reflection of the voluntary sector's felt dependence upon "big brother" government based upon the policy of contract services can only be surmised but the resultant constriction on the creative potential of voluntary agencies, free of restraints of government policy and regulations, has been a source of disappointment to this writer.

The issue of receptivity to change has been well documented in the social service literature and it is evident that interorganizational cooperation takes place only to the extent that an organization is assured of receiving high benefits while incurring low costs. Such costs might include financial, territorial integrity, influence, power, status etc, and it is therefore sadly predictable that receptivity to change increases in direct proportion to the superficiality of the sacrifices demanded. To date no agency involved with the Youth Services Committee has indicated any preparedness to risk more than superficial sacrifices.
Legitimacy

The early stage of evolution of the Inter-Agency Youth Services Committee in south-east Vancouver makes any definitive analysis of its legitimacy premature and yet a number of early indicators appear worthy of discussion.

To the degree that professional expertise and personal attributes of individual members along with their ability to work collectively are viewed as derivatives of the legitimation process, the Committee's potential for gaining legitimacy is somewhat confused. Of the ten agencies represented on the Committee only one is represented by a top (regional) management person while the remaining agencies are represented by front-line personnel with varying degrees of formal training and expertise. This level of representation is important a) to the extent that Committee members have access to decision-making forums within their respective agencies, and b) in so far as the representatives are in possession of the necessary information and skills to enhance the social planning function of the Committee.

Although most line workers, especially in government agencies, do not have formal access to management, most agencies have acted upon Task Force recommendations that line workers represented on the Committee be afforded such access as a function of their Committee responsibilities.

While all of the Committee representatives have considerable experience working with youth in south-east Vancouver and are aware, on a day to day basis, of youth
issues within their professional context, many Committee members have expressed feelings of inadequacy with regards to their expertise in the areas of social planning program development and research. As stated by one member: "It's one thing to have a lot of information but it's another to know what to do with it!" A collective willingness to learn and an openness to drawing on outside expertise has lessened the seriousness of these shortcomings although it remains apparent that the lack of planning expertise and experience among front-line social service workers is acute and widespread. This situation is less surprising when one considers the lack of emphasis on social planning theories and methodologies within professional training programs and the low priority afforded planning endeavours within most agencies. The Vancouver Social Planning Department was aware of the planning efforts taking place in south-east Vancouver but indicated no willingness to offer consulting supports, although it should be pointed out that, to date, the Committee has made no formal request for such support. Similarly, agency management personnel have not indicated a preparedness to freely provide planning and research supports and have essentially left their representatives to sink or swim based on their ability to learn the necessary skills.

As a collective it appears that the Committee's legitimacy has yet to be established and its effectiveness will ultimately stem from perceptions of its effectiveness
in improving the youth services system and its success in persuading participating agencies to cooperate in the planning process. It is apparent that Committee representatives, notwithstanding differing value orientations, professional philosophies, and target populations, share a commitment to the overall purpose of the Committee and a common desire to develop collegial relationships with their peers. In the short term the Committee's credibility will be enhanced to the degree that its individual representatives are able to develop and maintain a broad network of personal and professional contacts within their respective agencies and within the community at large.

The Planning Organization: Structure and Processes

The Committee holds no formal place within the independent structures of youth-serving organizations in south-east Vancouver and has been left to attempt its own definition with regards to its connectedness to the inter-organizational network within the limitations imposed by agencies and its ability to negotiate effectively with its environment.

Though formal officers have been elected by the Committee the operation of the Committee's affairs is largely informal and each member has an equal voice regardless of agency represented. Leadership by example has been forthcoming from a number of representatives who have expended
considerable time and energy on Committee projects. An atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect for divergent viewpoints has been nurtured by the Committee chairperson who commands considerable respect from all representatives.

The ideological stances of Committee members range considerably from politically conservative to radical and from pragmatic to mildly utopian. There are extreme disparities between representatives' views about the role and function of social services in general and youth services in particular. Divergent views about what is and what should be have been dealt with by a mutual acceptance of the majority rule principle although, to date, a formal vote has not been called at Committee meetings - a reflection of the fact that no controversial projects have yet been operationalized.

Planning Approaches

The two year planning process in south-east Vancouver was initiated by an internal review of youth services within the M.H.R. system inspired and undertaken by a social work student. The maintenance of the process was enhanced by the availability of the same social work student to provide staff support to the Youth Services Committee during its formative stages. In essence the planning process was an outcome of a community organization effort by an independent "outsider" rather than the result of a rational process of interorganizational planning between concerned agencies.
Notwithstanding the willingness of agencies to participate in the coordinating efforts, there is no evidence to suggest that similar efforts would have evolved from any single agency or combination of agencies without outside impetus.

Professional social planners were not employed at the regional level by any of the involved agencies and although government ministries have access to such specialists at a centralized level there is little to indicate any preparedness to utilize such services. While many agency personnel at both the front-line and management levels are concerned about the need for planning, their program responsibilities restricted their ability to engage in such efforts.

As previously indicated, Committee representatives have been largely drawn from front-line levels and have a self-acknowledged ignorance of formal planning theories and methodologies. Nonetheless, consciously or not, it is apparent that the Committee does utilize planning theories, mostly disjointed incrementalism or a simplified version of traditional rational analysis. The still confused planning mandate of a Committee which is still in its infancy makes any analysis of planning techniques premature though it is evident that the recent hiring of a highly skilled "Youth Services Coordinator" to staff the Committee on a two-day week basis augers well for the Committee's development of effective planning methods.
PART IV

THE YOUTH PREDICAMENT:

- A Summary of Findings
The Historical Perspective:

In a largely rural nineteenth century society, the role of children and young people was largely defined within the context of familial functioning, and the contribution of this segment of the population to the economic well-being of the family unit was considerable and tangible.

The onset of the industrial age around the turn of the century resulted in the transfer of child labour from the family farming unit to the less personal and often harsher industrial sector. As farm worker or factory employee young people represented a potent, and cheap, source of labour and, notwithstanding the harshness of treatment, played a significant and meaningful role in the family and national economies.

Child labour laws, juvenile delinquency and child welfare legislation, and progressively stricter enforcement of school attendance regulations, resulted in the transformation of the youthful role from that of contributor to the family and national economy as worker, to that of family and national economic liability as student. Notwithstanding the efficacy of these purportedly "child-centred" policies, the result has been an increase in the dependent status of youth and a postponement of access to meaningful, participatory roles for young people long after the age when they are
physically and intellectually capable of contributing to the economies of the family and the state. Childhood, with its dependency connotations, is now a term that is extended to apply to young people up to the ages of sixteen, seventeen, eighteen or nineteen dependent upon situational and provincial definitions. It is clear that in all our haste to protect, and provide for young people we have developed policies which have served to deny them access to meaningful roles within our society. What price freedom from the abuses of "slave labour" if the protection provided to young people serves to deny them access to meaningful roles?

As adolescents continue to mature at a faster rate than ever before it becomes imperative that we reassess our perceptions of, and treatment of youth. A number of options are available to us if we are desirous of recognizing the contributory potential of Canadian adolescents. We can maintain a status-quo position which perceives adolescents as children who require nurturing and control until they achieve "adult maturity"; we can continue to acknowledge the importance of formal education while increasing our recognition of the contributory role of the student (alternative examples might include student salaries and/or the integration of educational processes into mainstream community life); we can also begin to acknowledge that all students are not academically inclined and might benefit from the development of an apprenticeship system which responds to both student capabilities and industrial need.
Evolution of the adolescent role:

Pre-industrial rural economy:

- Young person as cheap labour within the family system.
- Chattel of the family unit.
- Role and treatment determined by parents.

Contributory role defined by adults.

Industrial economy:

- Young person as cheap labour within the industrial system.
- Chattel of industrial boss.
- Role and treatment determined by parents and industrial boss.

Contributory role defined by adults.

Post-industrial economy:

- Young person as dependent student.
- Chattel of parents and state (via school system).
- Role and treatment determined by parents and school system.

Non-contributory role defined by adults.
**Alternative options:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young person as contributing student.</th>
<th>Largely requiring an attitudinal change which recognizes the contributory nature of educational training within society</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributing member of family and state in position of training.</td>
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<td>Role and treatment determined by parents, school system and youth in partnership.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Young person as salaried student.</th>
<th>Requiring attitudinal, policy and economic change which recognizes the contributory nature of educational training and resultant benefits to industry within our society</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contributing member of family and state in position of training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role and treatment determined by parents, school system, industry and youth in partnership.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Young person as apprentice.</th>
<th>Requiring attitudinal, policy and legislative change (e.g. school leaving age) plus strong involvement of industrial sector with educational system.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contributing member of family, industry and state in active training position.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role and treatment determined by parents, industry and youth in partnership.</td>
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The availability to young people of alternative activities within society during their "training period" would automatically serve to increase their decision-making options, improve accessibility to meaningful roles, and recognize the existence of differing skills and aptitudes. An apprenticeship option for youth also appears as a viable approach which recognises that a rigid definition of education which pervades our school systems is not necessarily in the best interests of all adolescents. Such an approach would call for the development of closer links between the educational and industrial systems which might serve to increase the formal recognition of the interdependency of these systems.

Having moved our youth from the participatory, if harsh environment of the farm, to the participatory, and harsher, environment of industry and finally to the non-participatory and protective environment of the school, it is now time to seek out an environment for youth that will recognize their needs to learn and their abilities to participate.

The Need For Attitudinal Change:

If change is to occur then change must be desired. The foremost importance of attitudinal change was recognised by the authors of the 1970 CELDIC Report:
Many of our recommendations call for sweeping changes in policy, in planning, in practice, but most of all in attitude. We, the people of Canada, must want change; must demand it. A start must be made.

As long as our attitudes towards adolescents evolve out of our perceptions of them as in a time of normative pathology; as merely passing through a transitional phase in life which they will soon "grow out of"; and as immature, dependent "children", then any consensus about the need for change will remain elusive.

An understanding of the mythical basis of many of our perceptions of adolescents is essential if we are to move towards the development of new approaches to the treatment of young people within our society. The framework of myths presented in Chapter II serves as a reminder of the types of attitudinal change that must precede any systemic change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adolescent Pathology</th>
<th>Adolescent Homogeneity</th>
<th>Adolescent as &quot;Child&quot;</th>
<th>Uniform Growth</th>
<th>Transition Stage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- time of normative deviance</td>
<td>- stereotypic behaviour</td>
<td>- presumption of immaturity</td>
<td>- grow at same rate</td>
<td>- phasic stage</td>
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<tr>
<td>- susceptibility to delinquency</td>
<td>- Needs are same</td>
<td>- capacity congruent with age</td>
<td>- wait for them to grow out of &quot;it&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- rebellion against adult authority</td>
<td>- behaviour predictable</td>
<td>- prolonged dependency</td>
<td>- postpone access to meaningful roles</td>
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<tr>
<td>- generation gap expected</td>
<td>- time of crisis</td>
<td>- postpone access to meaningful roles</td>
<td>- expectations based on age and physical stature</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- protection emphasis</td>
<td>rather than actual ability</td>
<td>- postpone access to meaningful roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- present experiences negated</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
It is clear that these mythical perceptions of adolescents act as obstacles to change. They permit adults to maintain their control over an immature, pathological population while they are in the process of growing out of "it".

Rather than asking why some youth engage in antisocial activity we would be better to ask how come the vast majority of young people grow up to accept useful, productive roles in their communities? Recent research in the United States indicates that youth are unlikely to engage in antisocial behaviour when their stakes in conformity to the existing social order are high, and yet our present problem-focused approaches within the social services do not reflect such logic.

Present Paradigm: Pathological focus:

Youth perceived as:
- Immature
- Easily influenced
- Potential delinquents
- Rebellious
- Crisis ridden
- Resentful of adults

Youth are expected to:
- Behave as children
- Blindly follow peers
- Act-out
- Rebel against authority
- Have violent mood swings

Youth have low stakes in conformity and behave as expected to by adults

Institutional response:
- To control youth
- To contain youth
- To "teach" youth
- To protect youth
- To wait for youth to grow out of "it"
High stakes in conformity are most likely to occur when policies and practices operate so that most youth:
1. Have access to socially desirable roles; 2. Are seen positively by friends, family, teachers and significant others; 3. Feel substantial personal control over the direction of their own lives as integrated members of the community.

The problem-focus of present policies and practices would thus be replaced by a new paradigm:

**New paradigm: Developmental focus:**

- Youth perceived as:
  - Competant
  - Useful
  - Belonging
  - Potent
  - Responsible

- Youth are expected to:
  - Behave responsibly
  - Contribute to society
  - Assume responsible roles
  - Make important decisions

- Institutional response:
  - To provide access to meaningful roles
  - To provide opportunities for participation in community affairs
  - To recognize youth ability to control own destiny

Youth have high stakes in conformity and behave as expected to by respectful adults.
Past and present responses to youth in Canada have been largely unsuccessful in their attempts to move away from a residual, problem-focused emphasis within the social services sector towards a new paradigm which acknowledges the developmental needs and aspirations of young people within our institutional policies and practices.

Program Responses to Adolescents:

Historically, Canadian responses in the social services field have been drawn from research and practice pioneered in the United States and Great Britain. Policies in the field of child welfare are particularly dependent upon research that emanates from such bodies as the Child Welfare League of America. It is not therefore surprising to find that efforts to develop a policy and practice focus on youth in these countries is at an advanced stage when compared to the Canadian situation. Nonetheless, it is evident that both the United States and Great Britain have yet to scratch the surface with regards to the development of comprehensive youth policies. There do exist, however, organizations within both of these countries which serve as catalysts which ensure an ongoing debate about the youth predicament in their societies.

Great Britain:

The British Youth Service is a federation of youth organizations throughout Britain which attempts to coordinate the activities of its affiliates at the local
levels. In fact the E.Y.S. has been the target of intense criticism during the past few years (see for example Ewan 1970) largely because of a perceived failure to use its knowledge and resources in advocating for more cohesive and effective youth policies at the national level. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the British Youth Service. The issue here is to stress that, because of the existence of a British Youth Service a continued debate about the needs and aspirations of the youth population at the national level is ensured. Drawing from an analysis of the Youth Service experience John Ewan (1970) has called for the development of a Youth Secretariat whose function would be to coordinate policy decisions affecting youth and develop a planning capacity which would be predictive.

Notwithstanding the existence of the Youth Service, Ewan found that planning and service delivery systems were fragmented and believed that it was "...insufficient to auction off various youth services to a variety of existing departments unless this is done within the context of a planned suprastructure." 98

The level of debate about youth service needs in Great Britain is clearly higher than is evident within the Canadian context where discussions about "fragmented youth services" are localised and, with the possible exception of policies related to juvenile offenders, do not take place within a national framework. This situation will likely continue until a national focusing mechanism with research
and planning capabilities is in existence to ongoingly assess youth needs, monitor service delivery systems and policies, and to ensure that youth issues are maintained within the public sphere of debate.

United States:

Youth advocates have appeared more successful than their British counterparts in attempts to influence the policymaking and legislative processes in the United States. The Youth Development Bureau, within the Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) portfolio has had considerable impact in influencing policy with regards to juvenile delinquents. As a result of extensive research efforts the Youth Development Bureau has argued successfully for the formal recognition of a developmental focus in designing programs for young offenders. In essence this means that limited funds are more likely to find their way into innovative preventive programs than would otherwise be the case.

In the voluntary sector, the National Commission on Resources for Youth (NCRY) has contributed greatly to the efforts of the YDB by its research in developing a focus on the need for youth participation in their communities' and nation's affairs. The NCRY has also served as a coordinating body with clearing house functions for youth programs throughout the country whose objectives rest in the design and implementation of creative approaches to youth programming.

Again, it is apparent that the mere existence of the YDB and the NCRY have not solved the complex and varied
youth-related problems in the U.S.A. But the machinery is in place which will ensure that a youth focus will be brought to bear in the policy and planning spheres of operation within that country.

As if to serve as an example of the more formalised focus on youth within Great Britain and the U.S.A. both of these countries recognize the importance of specialized training in the field of youth work. Great Britain has in place an extensive network of specialized training centres for potential youth workers, while the U.S.A., largely through the efforts of the National Youth Work Alliance (NYWA), is also beginning to move in that direction. Training for the youth worker in Canada remains within the domaine of the existing helping professions who have, to date, shown little interest in the specialized needs of professionals whose goal is to work with youth. Should these professions, and their academic affiliates, continue to neglect the training needs of the youth worker it is feasible that a Canadian counterpart to the NYWA will one day evolve to add yet another "professional voice" to an already overcrowded scenario.

Canada:

The absence of a comparable body to the British Youth Service or the U.S. Youth Development Bureau has served to ensure a void within Canada with respect to any youth-focused voice in planning and policymaking. National youth programs in this country have been both sporadic and time-limited.
Periodic efforts to respond to youth needs through such programs as the Company of Young Canadians (CYC), Opportunities for Youth (OFY), Local Initiative Projects (LIP), and Young Canada Works (YCW) have had localised successes but have, as yet, failed to act as catalysts for the development of a resilient and comprehensive youth-focused organization within this country. These programs resulted largely from perceived situational "crises" - such as high levels of youth unemployment - and were apparently a response to the burdensome youth population which resulted from the post-war "baby boom".

The efforts and outcomes of these community-focused youth projects remain largely unrecorded and unknown, in part because no national body exists with the desire, mandate, and/or resources to collect and analyse the scattered documentation of their endeavours. Hence we remain ignorant as to the efficacy of the varied approaches of these programs, which proved to be as transient as the adolescent stage itself is perceived to be.

While the Canadian Council on Children and Youth (CCCY) has been effective in highlighting the powerless and vulnerable role of children in our society (as witnessed through such efforts as their published study entitled "Admittance Restricted: The Child as Citizen in Canada"), this organization has proven less effective in acting as a potent national force in youth advocacy. CCCY's provincial affiliate successes - such as the regional youth council network in Saskatchewan - remain largely localised and have not proven
influential at the national level.

The sparsity of available research and information on children in Canada is only surpassed by the almost total absence of data on the adolescent population. It is exactly a decade since the last significant national report on youth was published by the Secretary of State's Committee on Youth and even that report came as a result of a perceived "youthful rebellion" during the late sixties and early seventies. Must youth be perceived as "in rebellion" before Canadians are prepared to formally address their collective need? Notable national studies such as the CELDIC Report, Admission Restricted, and the Committee for International Year of the Child's "National Agenda of Action: For Canada's Children", all maintained a "child perspective" and paid little attention to the specialised needs of the adolescent population.

Even the powerful condemnations of Canada's treatment of its youthful population that pervade all of these reports have not spurred legislators and policymakers into action. It appears likely that unless child and youth serving organizations are able to unite and prove more effective in advocating for change, these reports will continue to gather dust in the dusty archives of libraries within schools of social work and child care. In the meantime we are left to assess the adequacy of the existing network of youth programs at the provincial and local levels outside of any national context.
Youth Service Delivery Systems - A B.C. Perspective:

The institutional response to adolescents within the social service sector has tended to concentrate on two populations: 1. Those young people who prove capable of adapting to adult designed requirements of a rigidly defined educational system; and 2. Those young people who prove incapable of adapting to the requirements of this same system.

As pointed out by the CELDIC Report:

Of great concern...is the fact that many children with emotional or learning disorders are "encouraged" to leave school or are "kicked out" at the earliest legal age because this makes it possible for the educational authorities to avoid the establishment of appropriate educational programs. This merely shifts the responsibility to other community agencies and in no way solves the problem.\(^9\)

The evolution of Program X in the Case Study is a typical example of the way in which social programs for youth (or any other segment of the population for that matter) are designed to respond to the failings within other social programs. Notwithstanding the fact that the school system is, in theory, a universal program designed to serve all children and adolescents, the CELDIC Report found that this was not the reality and recommended "...that educational authorities be financially responsible for the education of all children in their community". The premises upon which the school system in B.C. is developed seem to stem from aforementioned myths that adolescents are children, a homogeneous group and grow at the same rate. Again these false assumptions were brought into question by the CELDIC Report which suggested that:
"...educational authorities design curricula based on the needs, interests, and abilities of children (and youth?) rather than on the mastery of a prescribed body of knowledge". While not consistently drawing clear distinctions between the needs of children and adolescents, CELDIC did recommend that young people be involved in the process of curriculum development within the school system, so acknowledging the growing need of young people to participate in the decision-making forums of their institutions.

The much maligned educational and statutory social services systems in B.C. appear, however, to shoulder a disproportionate share of the blame for the apparent lack of creativity and innovativeness in youth services planning. The school system is one of the few departments where the community has the opportunity for input within the service delivery structures through the election of local school trustees. It is just possible that, in reality, the school system is a reflection of community mores and attitudes in which case advocates of radical change within this system might question the benefits of citizen participation! The statutory social service sector, for its part, is largely concerned with utilizing its limited resources to provide services to those who have already experienced some form of breakdown. It is perhaps naive to expect the statutory service areas to provide the required leadership in the planning and development of effective preventive social services.
Historically, a major share of the responsibility for developing new, innovative programs has fallen to the voluntary sector who, free from statutory obligations and distanced from changing political pressures, are, in theory, well situated to assess and respond to immediate community needs in a flexible and creative manner. And yet, as we have seen from the Vancouver case study, the policy of the B.C. government to contract out statutory support services to voluntary agencies has left many of these agencies with little energy and resources for creative program planning. As if to highlight this dilemma, a recent posting for the position of a Director to run a neighbourhood house in Vancouver placed great emphasis on the need for administrative skills and did not indicate any need for skills in community development. In effect, the person being sought was to fill a largely bureaucratic position with the major responsibilities being the administration of twelve million dollars worth of government contracts - most of which were support services to Ministry of Human Resources clientele.

DIRECTOR
Required for

NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

This senior executive position requires a qualified Social Work Administrator capable of managing and directing a large comprehensive and diversified program with $12 million in government contracts. Must have business management and budgeting experience and demonstrated leadership capacity re: diversified staff, community groups and resource persons and in working with a board. Salary — commensurate with qualifications and experience. Good benefit package. Apply to:
The pressing question is whether or not "grass-roots" organizations in B.C. are going to be able to withstand the temptation of large amounts of secure funding being offered by government departments in favour of a return to a role as social program creators and innovators as well as advocates of community-based planning approaches. Contracts offered to the aforementioned neighbourhood house were not restricted to service provision within the neighbourhood served by this agency and the effect of extending its geographic boundaries to meet the needs of the Ministry of Human Resources might be seen to have a questionable impact on its ability to remain "rooted" within the neighbourhood perimeters.

The original functions of voluntary sector agencies to identify community needs; advocate for effective, coordinated social services within the given locale; and to develop through "seed money" new and innovative social programs, appear in danger of taking a secondary place to statutory service support functions with their greater funds and more secure longevity. When the voluntary sector is invited into the planning processes by government departments, as in the Vancouver example, there is evidence to suggest that its role appears clouded by the natural organizational tendency to protect their growing "territory". Leadership in creative social planning is thereby in danger of giving way to a position of entrenchment whereby the major concern is to protect and/or expand the network of lucrative government contracts.
Relating this to an adolescent target population, it is clear that if we are to develop an understanding of the broader social issues relating to young people, and identify the need for new and creative approaches to social planning in the field of youth services, the impetus must, in great part, emanate from the voluntary sector. In times of fiscal restraint and political conservatism the government social service sector, no matter how well intentioned, will become increasingly concerned with maintaining its present levels of residual services.

Especially in times of economic restraint, it is unlikely that widespread recognition of the need for community-based preventive youth programs will translate into a supply of necessary resources from senior levels of government. Where preventive local efforts have been supported they have been largely concerned with the treatment of individual malfunction through counselling processes. There is little evidence of any concerted effort to develop new approaches - within existing budget limitations - based on a thorough reassessment of youth service delivery systems. Community organization and social planning techniques have, in the past, served to create innovative approaches to service delivery in the youth service sector, and yet personnel charged with such functions are a rarity today, even within the voluntary sector.

If community and youth groups are to learn the essential skills of co-opting the larger systems to meet their needs and to overcome a sense of being co-opted by them, then
the leadership role of the voluntary sector must be renewed as the mandates of these agencies are well suited to such endeavours. It is apparent that, at least in B.C., this will require that the voluntary sector undertake a serious re-examination of its role and function within the social structures of the society.

Brian Wharf and Ben Carniol have identified another key component of change whereby "...one of the pressing and potentially promising reforms lies in implementing the concept of participatory democracy". With the exception of a few experiments - of questionable success - with the participation of residents and consumers in managing human services, the social service field has contributed little to the debate on the concept and methodologies of participation. This situation is even more acute in the area of youth services where consumers are perceived as immature "children", ill-equipped to assume participatory roles and responsibilities. It is not surprising to find that the Youth Services Task Force and the Youth Services Committee in south-east Vancouver have both stressed the need to involve youth in the planning processes and yet no methods have been suggested with regards to how such an ideal might be realised. There appears to be a void between the concept of youth participation and the development of strategies for its implementation.

If the widely acknowledged ideals of community-based, preventive youth services with strong components of
participation are to be translated into action prescriptions, then it appears to this writer that a national dialogue must begin which will serve as a guide and motivator to local groups in their efforts to implement such approaches. The need for central direction and overall planning in developing cohesive youth policies and setting standards for youth programs is called for. Without central coordination and leadership, local efforts such as the one in south-east Vancouver appear doomed to obscurity and mediocrity in terms of their potential to effect broad ranging change in the way we treat and respond to the adolescent population.
PART V

NEW ROLES FOR CANADIAN ADOLESCENTS

- Youth Participation: The Concept and the Strategy
The Participatory Concept

The concept of citizen participation or democratic involvement came to the forefront as a legitimate component of the planning and decision-making processes in Canada during the 1960s. While the involvement of citizens in "pressure" or "interest" groups has long been a feature of the democratic style of government, it was not until the "time of ferment" during the sixties and early seventies that the concept of citizen participation was formalized and implemented on a widespread scale. 103

Prior to the rise of the civil rights movement, urban renewal and the War on Poverty in the United States, the values of expertise and leadership were prominent in the field of community organizing. The leadership of private philanthropists in developing welfare councils and planning social services during the 1930s was gradually replaced by the expertise and technicism of the evolving "helping professions" as the panacea of social planning and social program administration in the 1940s and 1950s.

The United States Economic Opportunities Act of 1964 provided formal government backing to the participatory concept, requiring that federally supported agencies assure "maximum feasible participation" of citizens in community actions. In 1966 the U.S. Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act called for "widespread citizen participation" whereby resident groups, business interests, and social welfare agencies
would be brought into the planning network concerned with the physical and social development of communities.

The term "participatory democracy" was introduced to Canadians by Prime Minister Trudeau and in a 1974 campaign speech he stated the case for citizen participation:

In every area, there is not a lack of willingness on the part of individuals and citizens' groups to participate and whether we like it or not, such participation is an irreversible fact in modern societies. And the only choice facing governments at all levels is whether to invite such participation at every stage of the decision-making process in an atmosphere of cooperation; or whether to encounter participation after the fact, in an atmosphere of hostility. It is really no choice at all. 104

Superficially the concept of participation appears as an "apple pie" issue although closer examination reveals it as a complex methodology with apparent benefits and costs. Supporters of the concept argue that, aside from the obvious benefits derived by the individual participant, citizen involvement is cost effective in as much as it assists planners in identifying unforeseen consequences and provides a potentially broader base of support at the implementation stage. Detractors argue that a vocal minority of participants is usually not representative of community views; the process of participation is unwieldy, confusing and costly; the public is, by and large, not in possession of the technical skills required for planning; and essential data must often be kept confidential to prevent, for example, financial speculation. 105

The ongoing debate over the participatory concept
is further confused by a lack of clear guidelines or models for implementing the concept. Some useful models have, however, emerged in recent times although "...the planning structures through which participation may be realized remains open to varying interpretations." The "Man and Resources Conference" held in Toronto in 1973 found that:

A recurring theme...was that there is no 'correct' or 'preferred' model for citizen participation. Rather, there are a variety of needs for, and degrees of, participation with numerous possible strategies, some proven, some experimental.

The most common measurements utilized in citizen participation models refer to the degrees of decision-making power permitted to the participants in the planning and management of services. Sherry Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation" is an example of such a model and reflects her belief that citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power.

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<tr>
<th>Ladder of Citizen Participation</th>
<th>108</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Citizen control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Delegated power</td>
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<td>6 Partnership</td>
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<td>5 Placation</td>
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<td>4 Consultation</td>
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<td>3 Informing</td>
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<td>2 Therapy</td>
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<td>1 Manipulation</td>
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| Degrees of Citizen Power       |     |
|                                |     |
| Degrees of Tokenism            |     |
| Nonparticipation               |     |
In the context of a discussion about citizen participation in community planning, Gilbert has pointed out the "dramatic ambiguities" of the "maximum feasible participation" clause in the (U.S.A.) Economic Opportunities Act as an example of the vagueness apparent in efforts to formalise participatory structures.

To observe the widespread mandate for citizen participation in planning federally sponsored programs at the community level is not to acknowledge the clarity of this charge. On the contrary, precise guidelines for implementing citizen participation are rare.  

In the Canadian context, Brian Wharf has also alluded to the immense complexities inherent in the efforts of those who advocate participatory approaches to program planning and service delivery in the area of social services. Wharf sees strong elements of truth in the Oscar Wilde quip that "the trouble with socialism is that it requires too many evenings". The experiences of many organizations which encourage consumer participation seems to show that only a minority of people tend to take advantage of the opportunity and studies conducted into the composition of boards of directors of voluntary agencies "...confirm a widespread suspicion that these boards are indeed highly unrepresentative of both the area and the consumer served."

The apparently primitive state of the art of (adult) citizen participation efforts makes it clear that any attempts to define and develop structures that enable the greater participation of adolescents must be approached in a flexible
manner and with regard to the special needs and interests of this population. It seems appropriate to surmise that the relative failure of the "maximum feasible participation" movement in the U.S.A. is at least in part due to the fact that citizens, from an early age, are not taught the skills of participation, and the concept, while broadly supported, is not an integrated component of the societal ethos. Childhood socialization experiences tend to be authoritative and provide little opportunity for learning the skills necessary for meaningful participation. Hence, the concept of youth participation should not merely be concerned with the immediate benefits derived by the individual, but must also be considered in the light of the imperatives of educating young people in the skills of participating so that they may become the informed citizenry of an enlightened democratic society.

The inherent dangers of maintaining policies and practices which effectively exclude youth from the assumption of meaningful participatory roles in the affairs of their institutions, their communities and their nation have been addressed by the Canadian Council on Children and Youth:

The children of today know a lot. They are anxious but they are still hopeful. Most of them still believe in democracy and their sense of what is fair is acute. But because too few of us are willing to spend the considerable time, energy and thought necessary to assist them in their growth towards political maturity, we risk creating, by neglect, a generation of disappointed, apathetic, cynical, uncommitted voters. Do we care enough about the future of democracy in our country to try to preserve it?
Youth Participation: The concept and the Strategy

The adolescent predicament, in the words of Canadian author John Mitchell, is an easily diagnosed malady: "it is a disorder which comes about when a person who considers himself important is expected to comply without having the right to contribute." Adolescence is a time of high expectations which are most often thwarted by a more powerful society which expects young people to sit on the bench until the adult coaches are ready for them to enter the game. If ever an "energy policy" was deemed necessary in Canada it should be designed to tap into the immense wasteland that is youthful energy. A national policy is called for that fosters self-reliance as an ethos rather than dependency as an ethos.

Adult concepts about the role adolescents can and should play in our society must be rethought. Mitchell has identified three reasons why it is necessary for us to change our outlook toward youth:

First, our ideas about adolescence are out of date and highly inaccurate. We insist upon viewing adolescents as grown-up children, whereas, in actual fact, they are essentially adult in their needs, preferences, and inclinations. Second, our ideas about adolescence encourage the alienation of young people from their parent society. Third, our ideas about adolescence allow the perpetuation of a system which results in the waste of millions of person-hours and billions of dollars annually. Extensive systemic changes are perceived by some to be the sole alternative to the present predicament of youth. Notwithstanding the efficacy of such radical proposals, it is apparent
to this writer that alternative options do exist which require no legislative mandate, no formal government sanction, and minimal expenditures of public funds. The guiding philosophy that forms the basis of such alternatives can be found in the concept of Youth Participation.

In 1967 the National Commission on Resources for Youth (NCRY) was founded in New York "...to expand opportunities for young people to participate in society". Through a national information-sharing network in the United States, NCRY "...seeks out, encourages and promotes programs that recognize both the capabilities and the developmental needs of young people." 115

The concept of Youth Participation is the core philosophy of the NCRY and was originally defined by the Office of Youth Development of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) and "...is taken to represent both the recognition of a problem facing youth, and a strategy for its amelioration." 116

The conceptualization of Youth Participation in the U.S.A. has emerged in a manner similar to the evolution of theories in the field of community organization whereby practice experience is the precursor of theory. Motivated by a common recognition of the marginal status of American adolescents, NCRY studied more than one thousand youth projects operating across the country out of which came an identification of the key components of what constitutes a true Youth Participation project:...

...it involves youth in responsible, challenging action, that meets genuine need, with opportunity for planning and/or decision-making affecting others, in an activity whose impact or consequences extends to others - i.e. outside
or beyond the youth participants themselves. Other desirable features...are provision for critical reflection on the participatory activity and the opportunity for a group (collegial) effort toward a common goal. 117

This guiding definition is eminently adaptable to the Canadian context and provides us with a common frame of reference from which to develop structures that will encourage and promote the meaningful participation of adolescents within their institutions, their communities and their nation. It is a definition which appears flexible enough that it may be adapted to any environment be it large educational systems or small local youth programs, and yet is specific enough to provide objectives that are measurable. Nevertheless, as with any projects which involve human subjects, this definition of a Youth Participation program will require further refinement and redefinition as data is accumulated and analysed within the Canadian context(s).

Elaboration on the key elements of this definition are useful to a fuller understanding of what constitutes Youth Participation:

**Responsible, challenging action** indicates that the activity undertaken by youth is not a token gesture on the part of paternalistic project leaders. It assumes meaningful and valued participation that extends young peoples' knowledge and skills.

**Meets genuine needs** means that the purpose of the participatory project goes beyond the common rationale behind many youth programs - that it is "good for them and keeps them off the streets". While the activity should benefit the adolescent, it
is equally important that it also benefit some segment of the community.

**Opportunities for planning and for decision-making** requires that youth participants be involved in planning and monitoring the goals of the program and in the design of activities aimed at reaching these goals. All too often this element is absent from youth projects which are designed by adults for youth - i.e. in the best interests of the "child".

**Provision for critical reflection** emphasises the need to link practice with theory, so maximising the impact of the learning experience for the youth participants. Experience alone does not automatically produce learning.

**Group effort towards a common goal** is often a formalised experience which is denied youth in a society which deifies individualistic values. Youth in groups are a much feared phenomenon in North American society and the potential for constructive collective action tends to be overlooked in most youth programs.

Youth Participation as a concept and a strategy is a useful framework that can be applied to all existing institutions and programs serving youth throughout Canada and has potential utility to educators, youth workers, program planners and policymakers. Youth programming will remain as a haphazard and purely "artistic" endeavour until appropriate structures evolve that permit theory-building to emanate from practice experiences.
Youth Participation projects exist, perhaps in abundance, throughout Canada, many of which would rate very favourably with the criteria just presented. Creative and innovative youth and youth workers are designing and implementing Youth Participation projects from coast to coast. This creativity and innovativeness will be constrained within very limited locales without the development of communication structures through which information might be shared. As a case in point a recent "Western Canadian Youth Conference" held in Victoria, British Columbia suffered from the lack of such structures within Canada.

YOUTH CAN began as an outcome of the International Year of the Child where a small number of adolescents, inspired by a professor from the University of Victoria, decided to organize a conference that would bring together young people from throughout western Canada to debate important issues that affected them. The YOUTH CAN organizing committee was made up of a handful of sixteen and seventeen year olds throughout the province of B.C. and over a period of eighteen months they conceptualised the project, designed and distributed brochures across the western provinces and organized facilities etc. While it was hoped that upward of three hundred young people and one hundred and fifty "V.I.P.s" would attend, the conference attracted only about thirty young people and two "V.I.P.s".

This experience was an immense disappointment to those youth who had worked so hard to make it happen and the causes of "failure" might be attributable to a number of events,
including lack of sponsorship, organizational weaknesses, inexperience etc. The point however, is not that this youth conference did not work but that the effort was made and adult support was not forthcoming that would have lent to the event a necessary degree of credibility. The youth organizers had distributed the brochures through high schools in western Canada and little response was forthcoming. The invited "V.I.P.s" did not only not attend but most of them did not even respond to the invitation. It is adults who control the school system and who were the "V.I.P.s" and their apathetic response cannot be regarded as atypical of adult attitudes towards youthful endeavours. The major lesson to be learned from this experience is that adolescents operating without adequate supports from the adult sector of society are a powerless group lacking in both skills and credibility. If constructive youth efforts such as YOUTH CAN are to succeed then structures must emerge which are reflective of adult support and encouragement. Youth and adults must work in harmony if changes are to emerge. Communication networks must be opened that permit interested youth and adults to share their thoughts, ideas and experiences across the country. For Youth Participation projects do exist and much is to be learned from their experiences.

A limited survey of youth service agencies in Vancouver undertaken by this writer in January 1981 is indicative of the varied and creative youth projects that are in existence:
Third World Exchange Program: Six hundred youth a year do volunteer community work in various parts of Canada and in Third World countries. The projects, by definition, have to be useful to the communities and expose youth to issues in development education.

Junior Achievement Program: Places youth in "miniature companies" and enables them to "gain a greater understanding of practical economic systems, develop management skills, human understanding and motivational techniques". One thousand youth a year participate in this program.

Youth and the Law Project: Involves up to fifteen youth at a time in "assessing and evaluating the efficacy and appropriateness of legislation regarding children and youth." Youth feedback is then passed on to planners and policymakers.

Youth Leadership Group: Involves twenty youth a year in "thousands of hours of volunteer time" in their community and enables them to assume responsible roles as, for example, Camp Counsellors and Youth Group Leaders.

Community School Project: Through involvement in community projects twenty-five students per year develop "leadership, organizing and social skills".

Youth Can: Recently held the first Western Canadian Youth Conference. This organization is operated by youth for youth and is hoping to develop organizational skills that will enable them to have an impact on social issues leading up to the 1985 Youth Year.

Alternate School Program: Involves forty youth per year in tutoring other youth.

Teen Leadership Program: Sixteen youth participate in practicums, planning and organizing courses in first-aid, group dynamics, outdoor activities etc.

Court Diversion Program: Sixty to eighty youth at any one time "provide direct assistance to less fortunate people - the elderly, children and handicapped."

Canadian Exchange Program: Youth from different provinces join together to "provide services to Canadian communities" and to learn about alternate lifestyles that emphasise "simple living and resources conservation."

Alternate Program: Up to eighteen youth who are neither in school nor working engage in community projects such as newspaper recycling, carpentry etc.
High School Project: A program has just been initiated to train youth as peer counsellors.

Hospital Project: When a psychiatrist advertised for youth participants to provide volunteer services in an adolescent unit he was overwhelmed by the response and with the quality and skills of the youth who applied.

Alternate School Project: Youth manage and operate a health food restaurant in Vancouver.

High School Project: Trains youth to act as "student staff" doing clerical work, typing, reception etc.

Insufficient information was collected in this survey to ascertain the degree to which these youth participation projects might conform to the standards prescribed earlier. Nevertheless, it is evident from these examples from one Canadian locale that many adolescents are already engaged in a multitude of diverse and creative projects that demand considerable skill and energy. Moreover, the diversity of organizations which sponsor and/or support these efforts - including the educational system, federal and provincial levels of government, health and human resource departments, voluntary agencies, business etc. - is an indicator of the potential creativity which exists at all levels of Canadian society. What is also evident however, is that these efforts are largely localised and result from individual rather than institutional initiative. These examples of youth participation projects must be regarded as exceptions rather than norms which stem from a societal ethos which recognises the participatory capabilities of Canadian adolescents.
The aforementioned youth projects operate in relative isolation with little evidence of any network of supports or information sharing. The marginal and transitory labels often ascribed to adolescents are also common characteristics of youth services in Canada. Youth work has traditionally taken place under fragmented and crisis-oriented conditions with little regard for planning and evaluation processes. Many youth programs are dependent upon time-limited government grants and, with few exceptions, the experience and outcome of their efforts remains unknown outside of the participants themselves. Those youth programs which have proven to be resilient in their continuing existence tend to operate in isolation - the reasons for their apparent effectiveness remains uncommunicated to potential beneficiaries of the knowledge gained.

Adding to the planning and program development malaise in youth services is the fact that "youth workers" are often perceived, accurately or not, as counter-culture people operating outside of the auspices of any single professional organization. Youth workers come from all, or none of the various "helping" professions and no professional body has indicated any sustained interest in harvesting and developing the special skills and expertise that is unique to those who work with an adolescent population.

The formation of the National Youth Work Alliance in the United States and the Youth Service in Great Britain evolved out of just such an apathetic atmosphere and the former appears
poised to spread its wings within Canada. While not averse to adapting constructive ideas from other countries, this writer is of the opinion that a Canadian branch of a U.S. National Youth Work Alliance would serve to further isolate youth work from mainstream professional activities. Just as a common goal in youth work involves the integration of adolescents into the mainstream of community life, so should the varied yet specialized skills of youth work be integrated within the already abundant range of helping professions.

A special focus on adolescence within the fields of education, psychology, psychiatry, counselling, social work, medicine and child care is a laudable and necessary objective but the knowledge gained from within the boundaries of these areas of specialization must be shared if a truly comprehensive picture about the needs and aspirations of Canadian adolescents is to emerge. Without the structures that will enable professionals, parents, community groups and youth, access to means through which they might communicate their knowledge and perceptions, the program planning and policymaking processes will be maintained in their present state of ineffectiveness; adolescence will remain as a void within the age span - an unrecognised, often alienated group drifting aimlessly from childhood to adulthood.

It is evident that just as there was a need for a national council on child welfare in 1920, so there is a need for a national council on adolescent welfare in 1981. It might be suggested that such a body is already in existence and
operates as the Canadian Council on Children and Youth. Leading towards 1985 it appears timely to suggest that this body begin now to activate the "youth" component of its title and begin to develop structures within Canada along the lines suggested by the Canadian Commission for the International Year of the Child:

The need for a structure or structures that would allow youth to have a real voice in shaping the country is obvious, and the Commission regrets that it has made so little progress towards addressing it. We have, however, recommended increased participation by children and youth in the decision-making processes in all of the items on the National Agenda...Young people from coast to coast have suggested ways in which they are willing to participate in, and contribute to the life of our nation. It is up to us to ensure that some permanent structures emerge so that what they say and do will really matter. Perhaps by 1985, the Year of Youth, we will have achieved this goal.
PART VI

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION IN CANADA

- Towards the 1985 International Youth Year
Level of change:

It would be both premature and presumptuous to suggest specific systemic changes with regards to laws and policies affecting adolescents in Canada. That such changes are necessary is obvious but until we have obtained a greater understanding of, and collective agreement about the adolescent role in Canadian society any attempts at substantive change will be rendered largely ineffective. This is not to demean the efforts of those who strive to have children and youth recognised as citizens with the same rights as any other segment of the population. In this case, for example, the Canadian Council on Children and Youth in its submission to the Joint Committee on the Constitution of Canada did not suggest a special charter of rights for children but chose to argue that "...any entrenched Charter should simply apply the rights of all persons to children and youth."^21

A clue to the level at which change strategies should be focused is evident in this same submission by the Council whereby they make reference to the "vulnerability" of the child:

The vulnerability of the child needs to be underlined. Children have their needs met through the actions of others.^22

This statement by an enlightened group of Canadians appears to have less validity or credibility when it is applied to the youth population and suggests the need for change at the attitudinal level. Adolescents do not perceive themselves as vulnerable nor do they wish to have their needs met solely
through the actions of others. Nonetheless this statement might be considered as an accurate reflection of popular attitudes towards adolescents whereby they are perceived as children. While such a notion gains credence within the eyes of the laws and policies of Canada it is not recognisant of the actual capabilities of youth nor is it respectful of the aspirations of youth.

Our collective misconception of adolescence and adolescents leads to the attitudes which permeate our laws, policies and practices related to youth and if change strategies are to be effective then they must begin with a process of national education which leads us towards a more realistic view of the youth predicament. Theoretical and empirical work in recent years has identified the conditions and actions which result in change in intergroup relationships and Richard E. Walton (1974) has observed areas of agreement in these writings which may be summarized in terms of the tactics of attitude change and which may be applied to the relationships between adults (group A) and adolescents (group B):

Increasing the level of attraction and trust between persons or groups involves the following types of operations, considering group A as the acting party; minimizing the perceived differences between the groups' goals; communication to B advocating peace; refraining from any actions which might harm members of the rival group (inconvenience, harass, embarrass, or violate them in any way); minimizing or eliminating B's perception of potential threats from A; emphasizing the degree of mutual dependence between the groups; accepting or enhancing the status...of the rival group; ensuring that contacts between groups are on the basis of equal status; attempting to involve
members in intergroup contact; attempting to achieve a high degree of empathy with respect to the motives, expectations, and attitudes of members of group B; adopting a consistent posture of trust toward the other group; being open about A's own plans and intentions; creating a network of social relations involving many mutual associations with third parties. The key concepts within this list can be seen as change objectives in the relationship between Canadian adults and adolescents and are indicative of attitudes which must change if we are to transcend our mythical perceptions about youth.

Minimize perceived differences between goals: Adolescents do, for the most part share congruent goals in life with adults. Where opportunities exist youth have a stake in conformity to social norms as evidenced by the fact that the vast majority of young people make the transition to adult life with minimal difficulty.

Communication advocating peace: As long as adults perceive youth as "normatively rebellious" as a function of their age, they will continue to promote an atmosphere of apprehended insurrection whereby youth are to be regarded with suspicion as potential rebels.

Refrain from actions of potential harm: As long as adults use their obvious power advantage over youth without wisdom and respect then they violate the dignity of young people and provoke intergroup tensions.

Minimize or eliminate perceived threats: If wisdom and justice are utilized by adults then adolescents will seek them out as advisors. If adults use their power to suppress youth and
maintain them in a state of powerlessness then alienation and rebellion are more likely to ensue.

Emphasize degree of mutual dependence: Youth are an integral part of any society as sons/daughters, students, consumers of goods and services etc. and the continuity of society is dependent upon their abilities to assume imminent adult responsibilities. Contrary to popular misconceptions youth are desirous of adult companionship and support but all too often find it to be missing.

Contacts on basis of equal status: Treating adolescents as thinking, feeling persons. Equality here does not refer to power or competence but to a human recognition of being important.

Involved in intergroup contact: Our societal structures are prone to isolate and segregate youth from the community. We tend to enclose them within schools and youth groups forcing them to turn inwards to their own peer group for most of their social interaction and supports.

Empathy for motives, expectations and attitudes: Far from being empathic, the adult community tends to perceive youth motives with skepticism and fear, their expectations as utopian, and their attitudes as disrespectful. Such notions are, as we have seen, largely based in mythology.

Adopting a consistent posture of trust: Adolescents appear in Canadian society as the most mistrusted segment of the population, notwithstanding the evidence which shows that the vast majority of youth are well-adjusted, law-abiding citizens.
Being open about plans and intentions: Stemming in part from the aforementioned mistrust, many adults have immense difficulty in being open in their communication with youth. After all they are only children and wouldn't understand anyway!

Creating a network of social relations: When youth are welcomed into the hallowed halls of the community at large they will have the opportunity to display their abilities in working towards the welfare of all.

Change strategies:

If existent attitudes towards adolescents in Canada are to be influenced so that systemic changes in relevant laws, policies and practices might ensue, then three essential strategies must be considered as integral components of any structures which are to emerge.

Information: Our knowledge about adolescents and adolescence in Canada is largely interpreted through the theoretical and empirical works of authors in other countries, most notably the United States and Great Britain. The need to encourage the work of Canadian theorists and researchers is obvious. However, notwithstanding the sparsity of Canadian research on youth there is evidence to suggest that considerable data does exist in Canada which is largely relegated to the dusty archives of anonymity. If youth advocates are to make headway in their efforts to carve out a new deal for Canadian adolescents, they
must strive to develop structures which broaden the knowledge base from which they operate.

Recommendation #1: That a national clearing house be developed which collects, analyses and disseminates information about adolescence in the Canadian context. This library might also include a collection of creative youth projects in operation throughout Canada which espouse the values of youth participation.

Education: Such a clearing house would facilitate the sharing of information between youth groups and organizations throughout Canada and broaden the knowledge base from which programs of education might be developed. The need to increase the public awareness with regard to the adolescent predicament in Canada should be obvious and if change is to take place the needs and aspirations of Canadian youth must be understood by a broad segment of the population. The guiding theme of any such program would relate to the need of youth for meaningful participatory roles within their communities.

Recommendation #2: That educational modules be developed which emphasise the participatory capabilities and desires of youth and suggest ways in which youthful energy can be integrated into the affairs of the community to the benefit of both the youth involved and the community at large. These modules should be made available to youth groups and community organizations throughout Canada for their use in community education projects.

Communication: Efforts in educating and informing Canadians about the adolescent predicament will be ineffective unless
mechanisms are developed which facilitate communication between youth groups and youth serving organizations throughout Canada. Those involved with or concerned about adolescents at the community level must be aware that they have access to information and support structures from other groups and organizations who share similar concerns. In 1968 a national "Directory of Canadian Youth Organizations" was published by the Department of the Secretary of State which, as far as this writer is aware, remains the most recent document of its kind in Canada. While each youth organization has its own personal network of contacts, it is evident that most operations exist in solitary isolation with exceedingly minimal awareness of, and therefore communication between, other groups who are working in similar areas of endeavour. At the aforementioned YOUTH CAN Conference in Victoria only one of the dozen or more groups represented had ever heard of the Canadian Council on Children and Youth. This one group represented the youth section of the Saskatchewan branch of the Council: If youth groups and organizations are to communicate with each other to the benefit of all then they must first become aware of each others' existence. Recommendation #3: That a national directory of youth organizations be developed which contains current information about projects that espouse the principles of youth participation.
Change agent.

Originally known as the Canadian Conference on Children, for over twenty years the Canadian Council on Children and Youth has "...acted as an informal umbrella organization, bringing together individuals and groups who share an interest in children and developing a variety of coalitions to advocate together for changes in the conditions affecting children." At the termination of the work of the Canadian Commission for the International Year of the Child the Canadian Council on Children and Youth was designated as the organization which was to follow-up on the Commission's report which called for the greater participation of youth in the affairs of the nation. The establishment of the quarterly journal "ACTION: For Canada's Children" is evidence of the seriousness with which the Council undertook this charge, (though the inclusion of youth within the title of child is a disappointment to this writer).

Given this mandate and self-perceived role, the Canadian Council on Children and Youth, with its national perspective, is eminently qualified to oversee and promote the types of recommendations suggested within this document. One proviso which seems appropriate to this mandate has already been aluded to, namely that the Council more clearly conceptualise the rationale for distinguishing between "Child" and "Youth" in their title.

While recognizing the dangers of making arbitrary distinctions between segments of the population based on age criter
it is clear that important distinctions do exist between the child and the adolescent and these distinctions are widely accepted, if not formally recognised, within Canadian society. Continued attempts to speak to the needs of adolescents solely within the context of their being (legal) children is misleading and potentially harmful to a population whose physical, emotional and intellectual attributes resemble those of adults more closely than they do those of children.

Recommendation #4: That the Canadian Council on Children and Youth conceptualise the important distinctions between the child and the adolescent, while being mindful of the continuities and develop a policy position with regards to the distinctive needs and aspirations of Canadian adolescents.

If structures are to emerge that provide youth with the opportunities to assume meaningful participatory roles in their society then it is critical that organizations at the community level take up the challenge. The role of the national body is to define broad principles and to coordinate the efforts of local groups. This implies that the Council develop and promote a national framework for action which will be implemented at the local level.

Recommendation #5: That the principles of youth participation, as defined in this document, be explored by the Council for its utility as a guiding concept and strategy in promoting efforts at the regional and local levels.
Because adolescents hold little power within our society, and because they are inexperienced and are ill-prepared to assume the responsibilities of citizenship, it is beholdent upon the adult population to play a leadership role in teaching the skills and providing the opportunities whereby youth can learn to develop the expertise necessary for meaningful participation in the affairs of their communities and their nation.

Collegial relationships must be developed between adults and youth which will ensure that the participatory ethos becomes an integrated component within the structures of all youth-serving institutions. To advocate for youth participation in 1985 is not to ensure its continued emphasis thereafter.

Recommendation #6: That the Council encourage professional schools and associations, most notably those of Social Work and Child Care, to recognise the distinctive aspects of youth work and develop mechanisms for setting standards considered appropriate for youth workers throughout Canada.

Youth advocacy has unique aspects which distinguish it from the noble philanthropic art of child advocacy. The need for adults who are prepared to advocate on behalf of children is obvious, but the advocacy process takes on a different emphasis when adolescents are the focus of our concern.

An essential aspect of youth advocacy involves the recognition that adolescents participate in the advocacy process.
We no longer advocate on behalf of youth, we advocate with youth. This is not to diminish the primary responsibility of adults to ensure that mechanisms exist through which the youth perspective might be heard, but rather it is to acknowledge the aspects of partnership between adults and adolescents that is essential to the credibility of advocacy efforts. This distinctive feature of the youth advocacy process is clearly embodied in the principles of youth participation.

Recommendation #7: That in all aspects of the aforementioned recommendations the input of youth be invited and encouraged and that the Council work towards the development of Youth Councils in each of the provinces and territories of Canada as mechanisms through which youth might communicate their views and ideas. Representatives from these regional Youth Councils would then be nominated to form a National Youth Council which will act as a consultative body to the Council.

In their comments to the International Year of the Child Committees young Canadians from coast to coast expressed "their great need to be trusted and respected and offered opportunities to demonstrate their capacity for responsible judgement and to learn the skills of community action."126

The Canadian Council on Children and Youth has effectively drawn our attention to the reality that children in Canada suffer from a lack of legal status and a lack of
respect. This situation may be even more acute for an adolescent population which has the conceptual capacity to understand the implications and impact of such treatment.

It seems reasonable to expect that the youth voice will be listened to during the 1985 Youth Year, but if this voice is to be heard and understood it is imperative that any structures which emerge as an outcome of this year be designed to have a continuing impact long after 1985.

Quite obviously, the adolescent predicament owes its existence to a variety of factors, each of which interacts with other factors. The time has come, however, to own up to those parts of the adolescent predicament which are correctable and improvable. The time has come for a more realistic and humane assessment of the way our society has allowed adolescence to deteriorate into a second-rate status. Most importantly, the time has come for a stop to the incredible waste which characterizes teen existence in our society. We (as adults) cannot afford the economic waste and adolescents (as growing people) cannot be expected to endure the diminishing effects which isolation and impotence make on their personalities.
FOOTNOTES
FOOTNOTES:


2. Ibid.

3. This is an estimate drawn from the 1971 Census as reported in Daniel Kubot and David Thornton, A Statistical Profile of Canadian Society (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1974), p. 52.


8. Sutherland, Children, p. 9.


10. Sutherland, Children, p. 6.

11. Ibid., p. 5.

12. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

13. Ibid., p. 10.

14. Richard Splane, Social Welfare in Ontario, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) p. 220 revealed the remarkable fact over half the population of Ontario was under sixteen years of age at the beginning of the Union period.

15. Ibid., p. 248.

16. Ibid., p. 265.


18. See Sutherland, Children, Chapter 9, pp. 124-151.

19. Ibid., p. 110.

20. Ibid., p. 17.

21. Ibid., p. 110.


25. Ibid., p. 233.


27. The term "man" is used throughout this paper to refer to members of the human species. The writer apologizes if this laziness offends women and hermaphrodites.
29. Ibid., p. 6.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p. 7.
36. Ibid., p. 139.
37. Ibid., p. 20.
40. Conger, Adolescence and Youth, pp. 4; 495; 526.
44. Lipsitz, Growing Up Forgotten, p. xvi.
46. Ibid., p. 25.
47. Ibid., p. 527.
48. Cockram and Beloff, Rehearsing to be Adults, pp. 15-16.
49. Conger, Adolescence and Youth, p. 10.
51. Secretary of State, It's Your Turn, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971), p. 3.
53. Conger, Adolescence and Youth, p. 185.
54. Ibid., p. 185.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., p. 544.
57. Ibid.
58. Vancouver Province, 7 December 1980.
60. Baum, Let Our Children Go, p. 22.
61. Canadian Council on Children and Youth, Admittance Restricted, p. 16.
62. Ibid., p. 21.
64. Ibid., p. 383.
66. Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders, One Million Children, p. 221.
70. Ibid., p. 7.
73. Source unknown.
75. Conger, Adolescence and Youth, p. 100.
76. Ibid., p. 105.
77. Ibid., p. 115.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., p. 117.
80. Ibid., p. 115.
95. Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders, One Million Children, p. 471.
96. Bird et al., "Youth Development Policy".
97. Ibid.
98. Brian Wharf, Towards a Youth Policy, p. 9.
100. Ibid., p. 143.
101. Ibid., p. 144.
102. Wharf, Community Work in Canada, p. 268.
103. Erager and Specht, Community Organizing, p. 10.
111. Landon Pearson article, ACTION, p. 3.
113. Ibid., pp. 236-237.
114. See for example Baum, Let Our Children Go.
116. Ibid.
117. Dollar, "Youth Participation", p. 26. More recent definitions include the term "in collegial relationships with adults," recognising the importance of youth activities being integrated into the mainstream of community life.
119. The supervisor of a prominent youth program in Vancouver informed this writer that he is negotiating with the (U.S.A.) National Youth Work Alliance to hold a future conference in British Columbia in the hope that Canadian youth workers will be attracted to join the organization.

120. Commission for the International Year of the Child, For Canada's Children, p. 127.


124. Secretary of State, Directory of Canadian Youth Organizations, (Ottawa, 1968).

125. Submission to the Joint Committee on Canada's Constitution, p. 26A:1.


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