

The North Carolina Manpower Development Corporation
Addresses Increasing Poverty Levels in the State

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Look into the community mirror and devise its own answer.

Terry Sanford

The North Carolina Fund, in its inception, endeavored to reduce poverty rates in the state through increased private and government funding and programming. The Fund employed an innovative approach to fighting poverty by modifying and building on existing programs while creating new organizations targeted at North Carolina's growing economic problems. Terry Sanford, creator of the North Carolina Fund, suggested that the approach of choice "... might be likened to a supermarket, with a varied display of programs from which to choose, along with the ingredients to mold a whole new program."¹ In the years prior to the Fund, North Carolina witnessed a proliferation of technological advancements that would eventually reshape the nature of production in the state forever. Yet without corresponding improvements in human capital, such as increased education or job training courses, North Carolina risked shifting from a poor agricultural state to a poor industrial state rather than a technologically advanced and prospering economy. The economic changes occurring in North Carolina during the 1960s enhanced the state's monetary potential, yet created detrimental effects on the labor supply. As technology replaced much of the work previously done by low-skilled workers, many North Carolinians found themselves without work and unable to find new forms of comparable employment.²

Recognizing the necessity to facilitate the process of unemployed and underemployed North Carolinians finding suitable jobs, the Fund created a new organization in 1967, the North Carolina Manpower Development Corporation. Also known as the MDC, this new group would promote human capital development through the involvement of industry, education, government, labor, and local community action agencies.³ “The Fund has acted on its commitment to the discovery of new ways for more people to find a meaningful place in today’s world by initiating and supporting a variety of experimental and demonstrational programs.”⁴ Born out of the Fund, MDC became a private, nonprofit organization whose objective was to increase productivity and improve per capita income through the fullest possible development of the state’s neglected manpower resources.⁵ Through the implementation of diverse programs and access to a vast network of organizations, MDC established itself as one of the most powerful driving forces behind poverty alleviation in North Carolina during the late 1960s and beyond.

Poverty’s Presence Emerges

As expectations for the nation climbed steadily, Americans became increasingly aware of poverty during the 1960s. Seeking to pursue their liberal and activist goals, both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations also shed ample attention on the necessity to eliminate poverty.⁶ High national hopes coupled with an augmented sentiment to perfect the country thus cast America’s poor under a watchful eye.⁷ It, therefore, came as no surprise that while the nation enjoyed decreasing statistical poverty rates from 1929 until 1960, the real numbers of impoverished individuals in the country remained

unacceptably high in the eyes of average citizens. In 1960 almost 37 million Americans lived below the poverty income level: “under \$3,000 for families and under \$2,000 for unattached individuals.”⁸

North Carolina, like the rest of America, became progressively more concerned with its poverty rates. Governor Sanford, along with other liberal Democrats in the state struggled, even within the context of the North Carolina Fund, to create effective programs that would successfully target and combat the state’s underlying economic problems that often consisted of an increasing void of skilled workers in the state.⁹ This dearth of able workers stemmed from a period of transition that North Carolina underwent during the thirty years prior to the Fund. New technology changed the types of jobs available to workers in the agricultural and industrial sectors, replacing manual labor with more skills-oriented jobs. As physical capital became more efficient and useful thanks to technological and industrial improvements, displaced workers found themselves mismatched for the new jobs, because they did not possess the skills necessary to assume the available positions.¹⁰

Aside from unemployment problems, this mismatching of skills and labor worked against the state’s potential for economic growth. Because of a lack of skill in North Carolina’s work force, high paying industries often overlooked the state as a possible location for new plants because they saw little potential for industries’ futures in the state. North Carolina soon learned that, “the availability of skilled manpower can be a major determinant of the pace of a state’s socioeconomic development.”¹¹ With a large population lacking “education, technical skills, and social adaptability,” many North Carolinians found themselves “precluded entirely from contributing to and sharing in the

state's general prosperity."¹² Until workers obtained the training necessary to gain access to available jobs, North Carolina's economy would experience stagnant growth.

North Carolina promised ample potential with resources such as "people who [had] the desire to work, a good climate, pleasant and attractive cities and towns, convenience to markets, a statewide system of community colleges offering basic and skill education" that ensured a growth potential and a solid industrial base.¹³ President Kennedy ensured the need for human capital development when he stated in his first Manpower Report in the United States that, "how well we develop and employ human skills is fundamental in deciding how much we will accomplish."¹⁴ In order to pursue a stronger workforce with jobs offering higher wages, the state would have to ensure programming to implement changes in the right direction.

Many natives of North Carolina possessed unacceptably low levels of education and training. Of North Carolina's 2.3 million persons age twenty-five and older, almost one million had less than an eighth-grade education; and as of 1960, North Carolina had a "smaller percentage of its labor force employed as white collar workers than did 48 other states."¹⁵ Changes in North Carolina's educational system ensued, but, in the meantime, MDC needed to locate jobs for workers who had already suffered as a result of the state's substandard educational and system.

Some argued that North Carolina was economically sound, thanks to the advances it had made in income levels based on national rankings. Yet, with further inquiry, economists learned that those advances did not account for much when compared within North Carolina rather than against other states. The statewide income standards in North Carolina stood far below those of the nation.¹⁶ Through appropriate comparisons,

economists learned that, “while the income earned by people in North Carolina has been increasing, it has not been growing fast enough to reduce the absolute gap between the well-being enjoyed by the people living in this state and that enjoyed by the average American.”¹⁷ In order to evoke change, North Carolina would have to realize advances in per capita income. Yet, based on the existing economic trends of the time, this goal seemed unachievable for state policymakers.¹⁸

MDC Revises Manpower Development

In prior manpower development programs, the state had simply endeavored to match individuals who needed work with available jobs. MDC would have to enact more aggressive programming targeted at improving every North Carolinian’s standard of living: “[MDC needed to] be concerned not just with the number of jobs but with the quality of jobs which the North Carolina economy can generate.”¹⁹ Such an endeavor would prove “fundamental to sound planning for total development”²⁰ MDC sought to revive the state’s floundering human resources because any hopes of continued economic prosperity in North Carolina would depend on a “more inclusive, better educated labor force of higher skill.”²¹

Manpower planning consists of determining the policies and programs that will develop, utilize, and distribute manpower with a vision to achieving a state’s broader aims of socioeconomic and political development.²² As such, MDC endeavored to follow many typical manpower development procedures in order to revive North Carolina. Through concerning itself with identifying the requirements for manpower in various sectors of the economy; planning formal education, on-the-job training, in-service

programs, and adult skill training; analyzing the structure of incentives for the unemployed; creating necessary organizations responsible for the execution of manpower programs; and developing management and labor techniques, MDC employed a multifaceted approach that aggressively examined and planned for all aspects of manpower development.²³

During the 1960s “the growth and productivity in North Carolina agriculture . . . exceeded the growth in sales of agricultural export,” and, as a result, the agriculture industry required less labor and capital to produce the output demanded. Furthermore, advances in technology affecting the production of tobacco sharply reduced the demand for agricultural labor in North Carolina. This shift displaced about 15,000 workers annually, as the demand for agricultural jobs was becoming scarcer each year.²⁴ Without adequate manpower development programs in place prior to MDC, workers remained stagnant; and the excess supply of agricultural workers never shifted into other sectors of the economy. Women and nonwhite workers suffered the most, as they received little compensation for their job losses.²⁵ As a result, unemployment across the state increased, diminishing North Carolina’s per capita income.

Yet, in addition to a transitioning economy and mismatched labor, MDC faced the task of addressing North Carolina’s extremely low wages for those who could find employment. “In 1965, North Carolina tied with Mississippi for last place among the fifty states ranked on the basis of the average hourly earnings of production workers in manufacturing industries,” and “the average wage in North Carolina was \$1.82 per hour compared with an average for the country as a whole of \$2.61 and a level of over \$3.00 for the five states with the highest wages.”²⁶ Yet placing workers in higher-paying jobs

proved to be no simple task. Wages remained unacceptably low in North Carolina partially because a large share of the labor force was inadequately prepared for higher-paying jobs. Furthermore, the presence of racism in the workplace and in unions restricted blacks from obtaining higher wages. Despite Civil Rights Acts and policy-maker's best efforts, "racially separate seniority lines" existed, preventing black workers from exceeding an operational position in their industries.²⁷ MDC thus needed to implement programs that would equip workers with the knowledge they needed to raise their wages and help overcome the caps on wages that racism and segregation perpetuated in the workplace.²⁸

Tackling the problem of mismatched skills in North Carolina was a daunting task and many previous manpower programs had failed in their attempts. Programs prior to MDC attempted to place individuals in jobs, yet failed to do so because of inadequate planning and implementation of effective strategies. Learning from these failed attempts, MDC created a detailed plan of action that would ensure higher success rates and more specific goals for employing those who needed jobs. MDC commenced by researching the state's former manpower and economic endeavors before developing outreach strategies and programs original to the Manpower Development Corporation. Based on trends from the research, MDC sought to locate impoverished individuals, assess their needs, develop new jobs, and motivate individuals to obtain adequate training before they enrolled in existing jobs. In order to accomplishment its goals, MDC would have to execute this task in an organized and aggressive manner.²⁹

To facilitate MDC in creating effective programs from the start, former Governor Terry Sanford, chairman of the board of directors of the North Carolina Fund, brought

together state business and industrial leaders including National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) Executive Vice President, Richard Cornuelle. Together they discussed possible avenues for ridding North Carolina of the economic turmoil it faced. Their meeting resulted in a plan for MDC to first gather adequate material and research concerning the North Carolina's economy and its labor supply before proceeding with any proposals.³⁰

MDC thus began its efforts with a central plan consisting of the "Human Resources Development" program that stressed the rewards and demands of industrial employment. Training consisted of eight-to-ten-week sessions, employing diverse teaching styles that were far removed from the traditional approaches that had previously failed so many unemployed and underemployed North Carolinians. In place of the typical teacher, student, book relationships, faculty constructed more interactive classroom activities that involved the pupils and demanded their full attention and participation. Furthermore, subject matter remained focused on material that would help prepare enrollees for the jobs they sought so as not to distract pupils from the more important classroom material. Teachers, who were screened for adequate experience and subsequently employed by the MDC, fashioned unique strategies for their pupils to learn in efforts to foster a more welcoming, instructional environment.³¹ In short, through "Human Resources Development," MDC embarked upon a mission to develop human capital in conjunction with the state's growing potential as an industrial economy in an effort to end the cyclical and growing nature of poverty in the state.

The Manpower Development Corporation further distanced itself from failed manpower programs by attacking poverty with new strategies, such as bridging the gap in

understanding between management and employees. In efforts to address all sides of unemployment and underemployment, MDC created programming that targeted workers as well as employers, so all participants in manpower development possessed equal voices.³²

MDC, therefore, focused on creating economic gains through manpower development with business and industry intensely involved in every aspect of planning and operation. “Many of the training and administrative functions [were] subcontracted to industry” in an effort to involve workers and their supervisors as closely as possible.³³ With employers directly involved in training and orientation programs for their employees, individuals from all areas of the labor force were able to communicate more freely and empathize with one another. MDC was seeking to forge a relationship between people, education, and industry in an effort to bind all three aspects so tightly together that each depended upon the other for success. Moreover, individuals with the “training, the motivation, the capability to man an expanding urban and industrial economy” would exit from the program with the skills necessary to ensure a strong economic future in North Carolina.³⁴

Some of the largest problems between employers and employees arose out of a lack of communication. Many North Carolinians had spent their lives working in the fields, using the sun as their clock. Helping these individuals transition to a job in a fundamentally different culture proved challenging, but possible with direct communication between workers and their supervisors. As George Autry, participant in the North Carolina Fund, revealed, “why you have to work on the opening day of deer

season and when it's raining, but you don't necessarily have to work fourteen hours the rest of the days of the week," remained perplexing to transitioning laborers.³⁵

Yet, marrying the poor with those capable of educating and employing them was not always an easy task as one anonymous Fund member noted: "the poor, just like everyone else, are not easily motivated as individuals."³⁶ When the impoverished were not adequately involved in programming, ideas backfired on MDC. "If the poor are not participating and influencing community decisions that affect the poor, they feel that the war on poverty is just another paternalistic, halfhearted group of programs operated by people who don't know what it's like to be poor."³⁷ MDC had to take the necessary precautions to involve those targeted by the programs in the planning and organizing phases prior to programs' implementation, as "existing resources and services can be of more significant value to the disadvantaged when these services are channeled and coordinated through field personnel" who are in direct contact with the impoverished themselves.³⁸ Welcoming the poor to participate would prove vital to the success of MDC programming.

The North Carolina Fund proved helpful in this arena as it helped MDC establish itself among existing agencies in the state that were quite experienced in dealing with the poor. By compiling an MDC staff and personnel, the Fund established liaisons between MDC and the National Association of Manufacturers; the Center for Independent Action and their consultants; state officials; and educators. The Fund also aided MDC in its endeavors before it became a self-sufficient corporation by overseeing projects and approving program proposals.³⁹ In the meantime, the Fund had provided MDC with ample outlets for success. Once the MDC had become fully operational, the Fund

assisted with terms of consultation, outreach techniques, research, and reports. The Fund also acted as a liaison between MDC and local and state governments, helping the corporation to establish itself as a functional part of North Carolina's transitioning economy.⁴⁰

These powerful relationships that the Fund helped the Manpower Development Corporation establish would later become some of the driving forces behind the Corporation's long-lasting success. Many of the programs established by the North Carolina Fund functioned during the Fund's active years, yet failed without the support of a "mother" organization. MDC, however, was created with enough foresight and planning that when the Fund's days had passed, it could prosper on its own.

MDC also incorporated the "flexibility, sensibility, and imagination required to bridge the psychological, geographical, and communication gaps which exist[ed] between traditional employment programs and the people to be served by them."⁴¹ Recognizing that manpower programs in other locations in America were failing to place individuals in jobs, MDC often sought to train individuals specifically for existing jobs.

Retaining realistic goals for itself, MDC involved industry in locating available jobs, understanding their requirements, and training individuals for those jobs. Following through with its thorough analysis and proposal for an effective manpower development program, MDC agreed to involve itself with outreach, recruitment, and processing; supportive services; basic education, vocational skills training, and prevocational training; job development and computerized matching procedures; development of new careers; housing; economic development; promotion of nondiscriminatory practices in industry and labor; post employment follow-up; and fixing of goals and priorities.⁴²

MDC also attempted to work with preexisting programs in efforts to build on previously established networks and organizations to compliment rather than duplicate other operating agencies in the state.

Computer Match Project and Work-Oriented Retraining Centers

In addition to working with established organizations, MDC created experimental programs and projects in order to better combat the state's poverty problems. Two of the principle pilot demonstrations that MDC implemented were the "Computer Match Project" and "Work-Oriented Retraining Centers," similar to existing STEP (Solutions to Unemployment Prevention) programs that had been developed by the National Association of Manufacturers.⁴³ These programs mirrored those of other organizations that had sought to create solutions to unemployment through community and organizational interaction.

The computer match pilot program, funded by the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, sought to locate jobs for the jobless in at least fifteen categories of work in North Carolina. The program matched workers with jobs by developing a language for processing clients, defining jobs by the exact skills they required, and matching individuals with appropriate jobs. The program also sought to create cost-effective methods for industries to perform computer matching on their own, further facilitating solid relationships between workers and their employers. Involving industry directly in the manpower development process also guaranteed better fits between laborers and their jobs, as no middleman existed to complicate or slow the matching process.⁴⁴

Sergeant Shriver, OEO Director, voiced great optimism concerning the program when he told a meeting of businessmen that the project would be the first “statewide industry-oriented manpower training model” in the country and would “provide ideas for worker-training and job placement programs across the country.”⁴⁵ Shriver’s high hopes reached fruition because as a fully operational plan, the computer match program employed 3,000 individuals with at least fifteen entry-level positions.⁴⁶ After completion, the program became capable of “expanding to serve any size population base, any number of employers and any number of jobs or training opportunities at any number of locations.”⁴⁷

In conjunction with the program, two work-training centers operated in areas of “tight labor markets” to develop prototypes of procedures which the state could use later in programming. These “Work Orientation and Retraining Centers” functioned to supply “unemployed and underemployed people with the training and basic education needed to qualify them for job openings indicated by the computer match project.”⁴⁸ Beyond unemployed and underemployed individuals, participants also included those persons locked in entry-level positions in their labor fields. Trainees such as these were also tested and matched with jobs better suited for them as determined by the computer match program. MDC worked to compile research on the program to determine its success levels and effectiveness.

Based on results from the Computer Match Program and the Work Orientation Retraining Centers as well as other MDC-initiated agendas, MDC, along with Terry Sanford and the National Association for Manufacturers, agreed that, “education and skill training alone [would] not do the full job; full development of human potential [was]

vital.” This included various supports such as “motivation, job orientation, help in adjusting to new surroundings and situations, the worker’s rights, the employee’s expectations, as well as medical and other services.”⁴⁹ With little if any attention to North Carolinians’ full development, conditions in the state prior to MDC had steadily worsened for many years causing human capital flight as many individuals opted to leave North Carolina.

Aside from the structural and ethical difficulties in creating effective and lasting manpower development programs, geographically, the task of reaching unemployed and underemployed individuals was overwhelming. Many of the individuals who needed education, training, and work resided in rural mountain and coastal communities where little, if any, infrastructure existed. In response to this challenge, MDC created centers in towns and communities across the state in an effort to “provide a loose framework for construction of a manpower service network spanning the [entire] state geographically.”⁵⁰

The North Carolina Mobility Project

Through a similar method of outreach, MDC also addressed the growing out-migration of North Carolina residents to northern ghettos where job opportunities were becoming increasingly scarce. The North Carolina Mobility Project was an eight-year experimental program, financed by the Department of Labor and designed by the North Carolina Fund and MDC, that placed unemployed and impoverished individuals from rural areas of the state in jobs located in more industrialized cities in the Piedmont through assisted relocation. By removing persons from their economically depressed regions in the coastal plains and the mountains, the Project attempted to find more

satisfactory employment for these individuals in areas with a higher demand for labor. The demand areas consisted of Charlotte, Greensboro, and High Point where the North Carolina Fund and MDC created extensive job development efforts to ease relocated workers into new jobs. Other Piedmont cities in need of labor included Raleigh, Statesville, Lexington, and Gastonia; yet, relocation efforts in these cities existed on a more informal basis.⁵¹

The Project's goals included determining how relocation could match surplus workers from rural areas with surplus jobs in urban areas, how relocation could be used to ease the effects of plant closings in single-industry communities, and how to help assure individuals the opportunity to find adequate job opportunities in their home state. Prior to the Mobility Project, many argued that the skills training and education occurring in North Carolina's rural towns was obsolete because individuals were preparing for jobs that did not exist locally.⁵² As a result, the state needed to "change the pattern of out-migration which took so many North Carolinians from rural poverty to equal or worse poverty in the ghettos of the North and Upper Mid-West."⁵³ By placing impoverished persons in urban locations that offered more opportunities for education and training, the North Carolina Fund working with the MDC would stop a dangerous and growing trend.

Skeptics of the Mobility Project feared that relocating North Carolinians from rural to urban areas would only shift concentrations of unemployment in the state from the coast and mountains into urban cities as individuals searching for work in the cities would be displaced by the Project's rural recruits. The Mobility Project staff ensured displacement would not occur in the selected cities, because recruits were only sent to cities where "unemployment rates were low and labor force participation rates were

high.”⁵⁴ Such statistics demonstrated that these selected locations were in need of additional labor and that the current population of workers was unable to supply an adequate volume of workers.

Critics of the Project further questioned whether or not individuals from rural areas would be willing to relocate themselves as well as their families to urban areas. In order to avoid complications within the Mobility Project, extensive precautions were taken to ensure a healthy, enthusiastic group of recruits would be supplied. The Department of Labor limited recruitment selection to “farm families with less than \$1,200 yearly income, workers unemployed six weeks or more regardless of cause, or workers discharged from work for cause other than misconduct.”

The Mobility Project added to these restrictions that families with more than six members were excluded from eligibility due to their heightened financial needs. Workers under eighteen and over forty-five years of age were also disqualified because too few jobs for those age groups existed in the demand cities. The Project further stipulated that female heads of households with minor children would not be accepted into the program because of a limited availability of day care, too few realtors willing to accept such a group as tenants, and the low wages and limited jobs open to females. Physically and/or mentally handicapped individuals and chronic alcoholics were also excluded from eligibility due to their lack of job skills and an inability to hold a steady job.⁵⁵

Having taken many precautions in choosing recruits for the program, the Project enjoyed high success rates with its participants. By preserving and cultivating human capital more aggressively and carefully, the North Carolina Fund and MDC were able to increase the supply of able workers in the state. Once workers were recruited and

financially assisted for relocation to the Piedmont, they were provided with local housing and other services to help them adjust to their moves and new surroundings.⁵⁶ The Project's extensive and well-trained staff assisted in this process, coordinating all relocations, finding jobs and housing for each recruit and his family, as well as providing counseling for each worker.

In the first years of the project, coordinators learned vital information concerning relocation, such as the most effective recruiting techniques that produced the largest number of individuals willing to relocate and most likely to remain in cities once they received training and support. By pursuing job development for each worker, the Project ensured a proper match of employers and recruits. The Project did face challenges in matching recruits with available jobs when recruits were given choice as to where they could work. Staffers at the Project found that recruits would flock to the same types of jobs, those that were most similar to their previous forms of employment. Such clustering around similar jobs proved problematic as the Mobility Project aimed to increase recruits' skill sets and hoped to spread its participants throughout different industries. The Project soon offered less job choice to recruits and remained successful in the meantime.⁵⁷

Recruits for the Mobility Project typically made significant economic gains thanks to their relocation and later returned some of those financial gains to their rural hometowns. The Fund along with MDC thus demonstrated that a mobility segment within a comprehensive manpower system could be employed as a successful job placement tool in addition to training and local placement plans.⁵⁸

Johnnie S., a twenty-two year old eastern North Carolinian, could only find employment through odd jobs. Since dropping out of school in the ninth grade, Johnnie lacked the skills and education necessary to find a more steady employment opportunity. Recognizing Johnnie as a qualified applicant, the Mobility Project placed him in an on-the-job training program with an electric trade company in a nearby eastern North Carolina town. Without funds of his own, the Manpower Improvement through Community Action Program financed his move and subsequent expenses. Johnnie remained in the training program until he learned the trade and accepted a position with the company. Within a year he was earning a steady income and saving enough money to live independently.⁵⁹

In some instances, the Mobility Project was unable to directly help individuals in need. Mr. B did not qualify for the Project, but after spending time with Mr. B., a Manpower field worker learned that he had a mentally impaired twelve-year old son who qualified for welfare services. Mr. B. and his family subsequently received the necessary aid from the North Carolina government to help them care for their son. Such an example exemplified MDC and the Project's commitment to helping as many impoverished individuals as possible through as many methods as were available. The Project's motto, "Manpower is people. Mobility is people" embodied this commitment to helping those in need through any means feasible.⁶⁰

Race and Poverty

Aside from human capital flight, MDC also dealt with more emotionally charged issues such as racism. Although it had made some advances in civil rights, by the 1960s

the South was still plagued by lingering racism and structural discrimination that often made life for African Americans and Native Americans more difficult than necessary. In terms of poverty, occupational segregation and discrimination prevented countless African American residents from receiving jobs they deserved based on skills and experience. Yet, as a minority, this group was excluded from equal opportunities, often concerning education. Such racism trapped African Americans and Native Americans in cyclical poverty that was virtually impossible to break.

In the workforce, unions often retained racist policies that functioned to subordinate minorities, most often blacks, in North Carolina. Unions at the time organized themselves on a “segregated basis”, meaning blacks and whites were held up to different standards.⁶¹ The subsequent Civil Rights Act affected controversy concerning these racist unions, but facilitated little actual change, and the “battle to secure integrated jobs and facilities was long and difficult. Efforts to integrate the industry were hampered by lingering ideas of segregated job assignments,” as well as white resistance to black gaining more mobility within the workplace.⁶²

Yet preventing blacks and other minorities from obtaining jobs above the operational level constricted North Carolina’s economic growth and added to the state’s financial crisis by reducing North Carolina’s potential GDP. “Forty-five percent of nonwhite males worked in low-wage, dead-end jobs as laborers, compared to only thirteen percent of whites.”⁶³ As a result, the average minority family earned only fifty-five percent of what the average white family earned, doing little to increase the state’s extremely low income levels. Furthermore, unemployment in the black community far exceeded that in the white community, as twice as many blacks than whites found

themselves without jobs. If minorities were given access to more jobs, the state's unemployment rate would decrease, thus alleviating some of the root causes for poverty in North Carolina. Blacks continued to work in the least desirable positions and found themselves locked into their jobs by "racially separate seniority lines" which prevented them from exceeding a minimum status, preventing them from advancing their own as well as the state's financial status.⁶⁴

Recognizing this institutional problem, MDC offered assistance by suggesting that industries implement equal opportunity employment practices. MDC also worked to eliminate the practices preventing North Carolinians from obtaining available jobs based on race alone. Industries involved with MDC were encouraged to establish practices free of racism for other industry personnel to follow and emulate.

Thanks to its diverse and varied approach, the North Carolina Manpower Development Corporation was enjoying high levels of success. Manpower development was simultaneously gaining popularity federally, as well nationally. States often employed manpower development programs like North Carolina's, which worked to promote job placement through increased training and education. North Carolina's MDC proved more successful than that of most others; yet, some states created especially unusual programs that targeted their own problems concerning poverty and unemployment that North Carolina could later mimic, thus employing as many different manpower development methods as possible.

Manpower Development Programs Around the U.S.

Chicago, Illinois, for example, faced extremely high numbers of unemployed youths who lacked high school diplomas and the skills necessary to find adequately paying work. In response, Illinois manpower programming created a two-week orientation program entitled “Job Now” in efforts to prepare unemployed youths for suitable jobs. During the two week period, enrollees took courses in “hygiene and grooming, money management, . . . , the city and its transportation system, a well as individual counseling.”⁶⁵ Program graduates had little trouble finding jobs as “Jobs Now” was recognized amongst employers as a sound facility for fully preparing youth to enter the labor market. This program also enjoyed high levels of success, thanks to its attention to the whole individual, fostering a well-rounded youth, rather than a highly skilled, emotionally distraught person which so many manpower development programs created.⁶⁶ North Carolina, like Chicago also found itself with many uneducated youths, many of whom tried relentlessly, yet in vain, to find work. North Carolina therefore implemented similar programs that focused on participants’ entire well being.

The North Carolina Volunteers summer program, for example, involved 250 college students in community action against poverty problems. The program was funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity as a demonstration project for methods by which communities could expand and improve the distribution of basic community services through the recruitment, training, and utilization of volunteers. Jack Mansfield, the Project Director, viewed the program as a technique for brining a more energetic, human approach to community outreach such as involvement in “health, education, welfare, and library programs.”⁶⁷

Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, also implemented specific manpower development programs to help alleviate some of the state's largest causes of poverty. By establishing CANDO, Community Area New Development Organization, Luzerne County attracted new industries to its once prosperous coal-mining area. When coal mining declined in the U.S. during the 1950s and 60s, Luzerne suffered and was, consequently, left with few job opportunities for its inhabitants who had once been employed by coal mines. CANDO brought twenty-five new firms to the area, creating as many as 5,000 jobs for the economy. Community, local, and federal funding facilitated many of the new plant openings in hopes that providing new facilities for the town would attract new businesses. As a result, the new industries that appeared revived the once floundering county. North Carolina could relate to a county such as Luzerne that relied on a single industry for income, as many towns in North Carolina functioned as single-industry economies that faced dire employment and livelihood problems when those industries closed.⁶⁸

It, therefore, became evident that manpower development was becoming increasingly popular and effective across the United States. In efforts to involve the state government in manpower development issues, MDC suggested the creation of State Manpower Council that would “be the Governor’s means for providing dramatic leadership, planning, and coordination. Such a Council – with membership drawn from leaders in local government, industry, labor, and agencies concerned with manpower development – would evolve the ‘system’ lacking in North Carolina.”⁶⁹ Implementing a State Manpower Council in North Carolina would ensure a place for manpower

development on all local and state agendas. It would guarantee a lasting dedication on the state's behalf to developing human resources and following through with the results.

MDC Solidifies its Presence in North Carolina

The North Carolina Manpower Development Corporation enjoyed some of the most successful and lasting programs that were born out of the North Carolina Fund. Its lasting success surprised many North Carolinians as previous manpower development programs often received poor success rates due to the difficult nature of developing human capital. Yet, through a network of supportive organizations, MDC spread its roots strong and wide throughout the state. The North Carolina Fund, its staff, programs, and most important, its understanding of the poor enabled MDC to establish itself as a new and optimistic corporation able to reach and understand the impoverished and their plight.⁷⁰

Other organizations such as the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges, the Employment Security Commission, The State Planning Task Force, the Research Triangle Organizations, the State Department of Conservation and Development, North Carolina State University's Adult Basic Education Program, the Center for Occupational Education at North Carolina State University, as well as countless other state agencies aided MDC in every form possible.⁷¹ Such support allowed MDC to attack poverty from as many angles and through as many different methods as possible, creating a more diverse, varied, and inclusive approach to battling North Carolina's economic tribulations.

MDC sought to empower the poor in an effort to stop poverty at its roots. MDC members and volunteers worked with impoverished communities and individuals until appropriate programs and infrastructure were created. The Corporation provided as many individuals as possible with an opportunity for improvement. By seeking to ensure sustainable economic growth in North Carolina as well as to establish safeguards against reoccurring periods of economic turmoil, MDC confirmed itself as an organization committed to aiding North Carolinians during the Fund's years and beyond.

MDC's commitment to North Carolina has lasted, as the corporation still exists today. Retaining its realistic and proactive approach, the organization now seeks to facilitate the transition "from an ethnically diverse but culturally segregated manufacturing and low-skills workforce to a high-tech workforce that embraces cultural diversity."⁷² (www.mdcinc.org). North Carolina currently faces challenges concerning globalization, changing technology, and an increasing immigrant workforce; and in response to these obstacles, MDC has created realistic and applicable goals to once again address and lessen the existence of poverty in the state.

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- ² "Outreach Techniques in Manpower Programs." North Carolina Manpower Development Corporation. Chapel Hill, NC: North Carolina Manpower Corporation, 1967, 2.
- ³ "Manpower Development." North Carolina Manpower Development Corporation. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Manpower Corporation, 1967, 1.
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