

youth who he is supposed to serve but rather is involved with filling out administrative forms and making sure attendance figures stay high. This results in neglected youth when a "quantity versus quality" situation is enforced.

#### FINANCE

Too often a DROP-IN CENTRE must operate programs solely to make money. Thus staff members again have time stolen from them and disadvantaged youth cannot afford to attend these events. The end result is alienation from the DROP-IN CENTRE and a destruction of the total concept. Thus a vicious circle has evolved.

#### Support Groups

Support groups are those persons to whom staff are responsible, who provide funds and back up services. In other words government and private agencies are the employers of those working in DROP-IN CENTRES.

Firstly, when erratic behaviour problems emerge, these groups become reluctant to continue operation and either close facilities or impose stringent rules, resulting in real problems with those attending the centre, i.e. those who have trust and faith in its operation. A middle-class bias is forced on the centre's operation and this renders the goals of the centre unobtainable. Support groups measure the effectiveness of the centre in unacceptable terms, i.e. in relation to numbers passing through the machine, "proper" behaviour etc. rather than personal success of participants and as a result are satisfied with the wrong results.

There is a lack of co-ordination between different agencies providing DROP-IN CENTRES. Administration is therefore haphazard.

The centres lack a positive perspective and is hindered in achieving goals.

#### Administration

DROP-IN CENTRES are structured so that they only operate when staff are available thus hindering an ongoing process. This results in the centre operating only for a small portion of the day and leaving youth on the streets during the rest of the day. Nothing meets youth's needs during these non-operational hours and hence we have developed the street corner society.

Presently facilities are located in church basements, YMCAs and schools. Disadvantaged youth unaccustomed to these more affluent surroundings and/or who may resent

these institutions for a variety of reasons feel uncomfortable in them and hence are reluctant to attend. This further complicates the problem already discussed regarding staff, who must keep attendance figures high. It becomes difficult for disadvantaged youth to relate the problems they encounter in the slums if the facilities for guidance, such as a DROP-IN CENTRE, are not placed in that area.

#### Community Support

Through a lack of a guiding body for DROP-IN CENTRES, there has been a failure in making the community aware of the goals, methods of operations and problems encountered. When difficulties arise, or when "results" aren't attained rapidly, an outraged community demands changes without understanding their ramifications. This lack of communication will always hinder the internal growth of the DROP-IN CENTRE. DROP-IN CENTRES need the commitment of the community, and this can be attained only through an attitudinal change and increased empathy.

#### Recommendations

The authors of this brief intend to make recommendations regarding the improvement of DROP-IN CENTRE. These recommendations are not only directed to the Special Senate Committee on Poverty, but also to Provincial and Municipal agencies, and private agencies. These recommendations will fall under five categories:

- Physical location of facilities
- Staff training and programming
- Improved administration of facilities
- Acquisition of funds
- Support groups and general community awareness

#### Physical Location

We recommend that DROP-IN facilities be provided in the slums and ghetto areas of the community. We also recommend that these facilities include certain facets of recreation, namely discussion facilities that provide an area where youth can discuss their problems comfortably with a staff member, an area where creative talents can be expanded, an area large enough for coffee houses, general discussion and indoor recreation. Ideally this physical location should be self-contained i.e. not under the auspices of another organization. These recommendations, if implemented, will allow the potential of DROP-IN CENTRES to be maximized.