



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Delegate Magazine 1974

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WORKSHOP A: Elementary and Secondary Education Opportunities

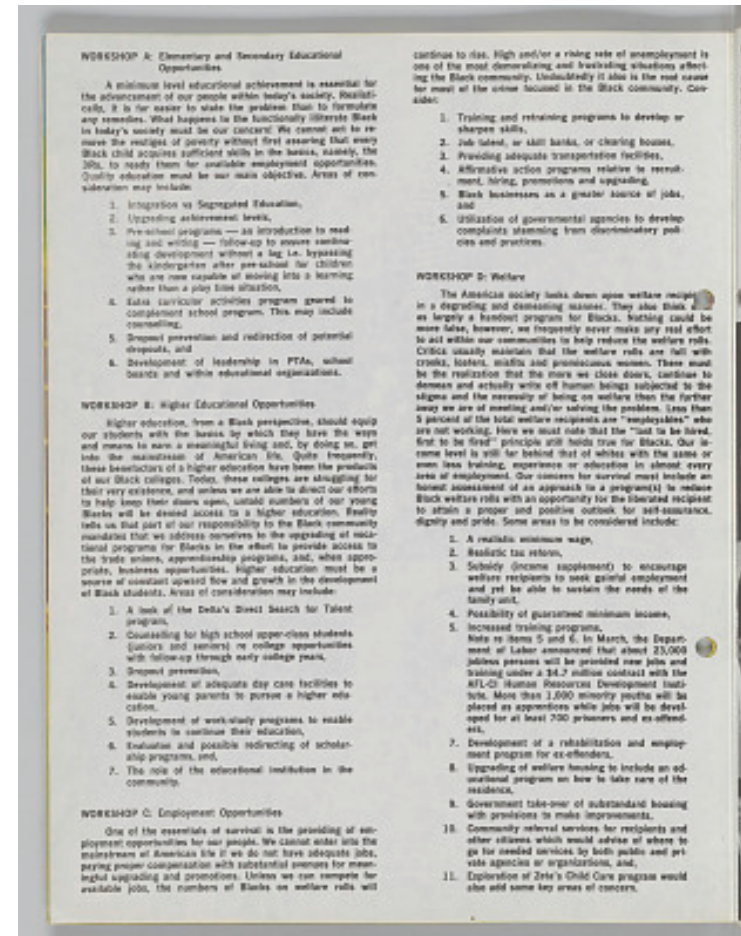
A minimum level education achievement is essential for the advancement of our people within today's society. Realistically, it is far easier to state the problem than to formulate any remedies. What happens to the functionally illiterate Black in today's society must be our concern! We cannot act to remove the vestiges of poverty without first assuring that every Black child acquires sufficient skills in the basics, namely, the 3Rs, to ready them for available employment opportunities. Quality education must be our main objective. Areas of consideration may include:

1. Integration vs. Segregated Education.
2. Upgrading achievement levels.
3. Pre-school programs - an introduction to reading and writing - follow-up to assure continuing development without a lag, i.e. bypassing the kindergarten after pre-school for children who are now capable of moving into a learning rather than a play time situation.
4. Extra curricular activities program geared to complement school program. This may include counseling.
5. Dropout prevention and redirection of potential dropouts, and
6. Development of leadership in PTAs, school boards and within educational organizations.

WORKSHOP B: Higher Education Opportunities

Higher education, from a Black perspective, should equip our students with the basics by which they have the ways and means to earn a meaningful living and, by doing so, get into the mainstream of American life. Quite frequently, these benefactors of a higher education have been the products of our Black colleges. Today, these colleges are struggling for their very existence, and unless we are able to direct our efforts to help keep their doors open, untold numbers of our young Blacks will be denied access to a higher education. Reality tells us that part of our responsibility to the Black community mandates that we address ourselves to the upgrading of vocational programs for Blacks in the effort to provide access to the trade unions, apprenticeship programs, and, when appropriate, business opportunities. Higher education must be a source of constant upward flow and growth in the development of Black students. Areas of consideration may include:

1. A look at the Delta's Direct Search for Talent program,
2. Counseling for high school upper-class students (juniors and seniors) re college opportunities with follow-up through early college years,
3. Dropout prevention,
4. Development of adequate day care facilities to enable young parents to pursue a higher education,
5. Development of work-study programs to enable students to continue their education,



6. Evaluation and possible redirecting of scholarship programs, and,
7. The role of the educational institution in the community.

WORKSHOP C: Employment Opportunities

One of the essentials of survival is the providing of employment opportunities for our people. We cannot enter into the mainstream of American life if we do not have adequate jobs, paying proper compensation with substantial avenues for meaningful upgrading and promotions. Unless we can compete for available jobs, the numbers of Blacks on welfare rolls will continue to rise. High and/or a rising rate of unemployment is one of the most demoralizing and frustrating situations affecting the Black community. Undoubtedly it also is the root cause for most of the crime focused in the Black community. Consider:

1. Training and retraining programs to develop or sharpen skills,
2. Job talent, or skill banks, or clearing houses,
3. Providing adequate transportation facilities,
4. Affirmative action programs relative to recruitment, hiring, promotions and upgrading,
5. Black businesses as a greater source of jobs,
6. Utilization of governmental agencies to develop complaints stemming from discriminatory policies and practices.

WORKSHOP D: Welfare

The American society looks down upon welfare recipients in a degrading and demeaning manner. They also think of it as largely a handout program for Blacks. Nothing could be more false, however, we frequently never make any real effort to act within our communities to help reduce the welfare rolls. Critics usually maintain that the welfare rolls are full with crooks, loafers, misfits and promiscuous women. There must be the realization that the more we close doors, continue to demean and actually write off human beings subjected to the stigma and the necessity of being on welfare then the further away we are of meeting and/or solving the problem. Less than 5 percent of the total welfare recipients are "employables" who are not working. Here we must note that the "last to be hired, first to be fired" principle still holds true to Blacks. Our income level is still far behind that of whites with the same or even less training, experience or education in almost every area of employment. Our concern for survival must include an honest assessment of an approach to a program(s) to reduce Black welfare rolls with an opportunity for the liberated recipient to attain a proper and positive outlook for self-assurance, dignity and pride. Some areas to be considered include:

1. A realistic minimum wage,
 2. Realistic tax reform,
 3. Subsidy (income supplement) to encourage welfare recipients to seek gainful employment and yet be able to sustain the needs of the family unit,
 4. Possibility of guaranteed minimum income,
 5. Increased training programs,
- Not re items 5 and 6. In March, the Department of Labor announced that about 23,000 jobless persons will be provided new jobs and training under a \$4.7 million contract with the AFL-CI Human Resources Development Institute. More than 1,000 minority youths will be placed as apprentices while jobs will be developed for at least 700 prisoners

and ex-offenders,
7. Development of a rehabilitation and employment program for ex-offenders,
8. Upgrading of welfare housing to include an educational program on how to take care of the residence,
9. Government take-over of substandard housing with provisions to make improvements,
10. Community referral services for recipients and other citizens which would advise of where to go for needed services by both public and private agencies or organizations, and,
11. Exploration of Zeta's Child Care program would also add some key areas of concern.

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