YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT**

1. The Extent of Unemployment


Lack of experience and work skills, and for minority youth, concentration in urban centers, are cited as the major causes of unemployment among young workers. The report includes brief descriptions of the provisions of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act and other manpower programs. Statistics on unemployment at mid 1977 are given.


Statistical tables, with brief introductory comments, show changes from 1967 to 1976, in the civilian labor force, unemployment rates by age, sex, color and occupation, and reason and duration of unemployment.

2. The Causes and Proposed Solutions


A background paper by Sari A. Levitan and Robert Taggart reviews the disparities between employment patterns of white and black youth in the ghetto. They identify the sociological, cultural and educational factors which affect the employment of young ghetto blacks. The Task Force discusses alternative strategies to improve the employment situation of black youths.


This paper assesses the extent of teenage unemployment and comments on the diverse characteristics of this group. Among the causes for the high unemployment are the impact of the recession, changes in population, declining military manpower requirements, market regulations such

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as minimum wage and child labor laws, inadequate education and training, and racial discrimination. The report outlines policy options.


The six papers presented at the conference discussed the nature and causes of teenage unemployment. Ralph Smith points out that a disproportionate share of the loss of jobs from the recession has been borne by teenagers and emphasizes that macroeconomic policies alone will not substantially improve the employment rate of younger workers. The paper by Barnard E. Anderson stresses that the job market for non-white youth is much worse than for whites. Two papers by James E. Coleman and Richard B. Freeman focus on issues and options in the role of schools in alleviating the teenage unemployment problem. Beatrice Reubens presents an international comparison of unemployment rates for young workers and comments on youth programs in other countries. Sar A. Levitan suggests various programs to help unemployed youths.


The Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act was signed by the President on August 5, 1977 (Public Law 95-93). It creates a Young Adult Conservation Corps which will provide year-round jobs in public parks, forests and recreation areas for unemployed youths aged 16-23. The urban counterpart is the program for Youth Community Conservation and Improvements Projects which will provide inner-city teenagers with work on neighborhood improvements. The act expands the existing Comprehensive Employment and Training Act by authorizing a mixture of work and job training programs for unemployed, underemployed and in-school youths, ages 16-21. Special provision is made for native Americans and farm workers.


The papers in this volume were prepared to assist the Commission in formulating policies for dealing with the employment problems of young workers. Paul E. Barton provides an overview of the social and economic problems of the transition from school to work. Marcia Freedman discusses the typical occupations and industries where young workers have traditionally found jobs. A staff report presents the findings of a survey of three large companies with respect to their experience with employing this age group. The findings of the National Longitudinal Survey of the labor market experience of young men and women are summarized by Herbert Parnes and Andrew Kohlen. Ralph Tyler finds that nearly one-quarter of the population lacks the basic skills to function effectively at work. Robert Taggart assesses the effectiveness of various federal employment and training programs. Some of the ap-
approaches tried by various communities to ease the transition to work are described by Dennis Gallagher. Seymour Wolfbein discusses the types of counseling and labor market information which young people need. Apprenticeship and training and its potential for reducing unemployment is considered by Ernest Green. F. Ray Marshall discusses the special problems of rural youth. Beatrice Reshens describes programs in other countries which have lowered the unemployment rate of young workers.


The panel, under the chairmanship of James S. Coleman, examines the capabilities of traditional institutions to provide youth with the skills needed to meet the demands of adulthood. In the second part of the report, a series of background papers discuss the social, economic and educational trends affecting young people in the postwar period. The third section draws together the most important issues to be considered. Among the proposals included in the final part are changes in high schools to allow for more specialization and a mixture of part-time work and part-time study. The panel is concerned that legislation designed to protect young workers may be too protective. They propose experimentation with a dual minimum wage. They suggest a pilot project of educational vouchers to be used either for higher education or for skill training. Finally, the panel recommends a broad, federally-funded public service program for youth.

3. Evaluation of Training Programs


The authors summarize and compare research studies which have evaluated the economic and noneconomic impact of government training and employment programs. Of particular interest in the context of teenage unemployment are the sections describing the Job Corps and Neighborhood Youth Corps programs.


This book describes the programs and facilities designed to provide disadvantaged youth with educational and vocational training. While acknowledging the high costs and high drop-out rate, the authors conclude that the Job Corps had a positive impact. They suggest ways of strengthening the program.

An analysis of the socioeconomic background of young men drawn from the Parnes National Longitudinal Survey who enrolled in manpower programs. The enrollees were concentrated in the Job Corps and in work experience programs rather than in institutional or on-the-job training. The study found that those who completed the programs earned more than noncompleters and nonenrollees.


The project reported on here was a follow-up of an earlier study by Phyllis Wallace in which she attempted to identify the personal, family, and community variables which determine the participation of young, female black teenagers in the labor force. The results of her research as set forth in Pathways to work, 1974, stress the importance of peer group support. The purpose of the second study was to test the effectiveness of such peer group mechanism in pre-work, work, and non-work situations. Among the findings of the demonstration project is that this group is highly motivated towards work and that training programs must have a reasonable guarantee of employment to be attractive.

4. THE EFFECT OF MINIMUM WAGE LEGISLATION


This paper investigates the theoretical and empirical impact of minimum wages. The evidence indicates that minimum wages reduce the full-time employment of teenagers, forcing them into part-time jobs and lower paid hourly work. The author finds some demobilization effect for adult men, but an increase in the number of full-time jobs held by women.


This study explores the analytical and empirical distinction between the employment and unemployment effects of minimum wages. The author finds that the largest increase in unemployment was experienced by nonwhite males (20-24), followed by nonwhite teenagers, white males (20-24) and white teenagers.


The purpose of this paper is to summarize the effects of minimum wages with special emphasis on the effect on teenage employment. The author concludes that minimum wage legislation has reduced the employment of this group, made them more vulnerable to the fluctuations of business cycles, and shifted teenage employment to the uncovered sectors.