

Social Issues Are Themes for Seminars

Unemployment among black teenagers, the need for scientific and technical training for these young people, and the issues affecting the nation's children were the subjects of three recent AAAS Congressional Seminars.

"Black Youth Unemployment" featured economists Bernard E. Anderson, director, Social Science Division, The Rockefeller Foundation, and Robert Taggart, III, director, Youth Knowledge Development Project, National Council on Employment Policy.

The 52.6 percent unemployment rate for black teenagers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 1982) shows that unemployment among black youth is growing at a disproportionate rate. Among the reasons for this rise are the increasing number of black teenagers and the location of a larger percentage of the black population in areas of the country where jobs are scarce.

Government intervention, in the form of job-training programs, however, seems unlikely. Yet, both speakers pointed to the large body of evidence indicating that job-training programs have been successful. Graduates of these programs are less likely to commit crime and more likely to earn higher salaries than their peers with no training.

Anderson and Taggart urged members of Congress to use the knowledge accumulated from past job-training programs and to establish stronger programs. They also called on legislators to address the question of changing the labor market itself so that young people who complete a job-training program are not headed for a dead-end job.

Cosponsors for the 15 July luncheon, along with the AAAS, were the Subcommittee on Employment Opportunities of the House Committee on Education and Labor, the Congressional Science and Technology Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Consortium of Social Science Associations.

Children's Issues

A second seminar focused on issues concerning children. The speakers were Mary Jo Bane, Kennedy School of Gov-

ernment, Harvard University; Donald J. Hernandez, Center for Population Research, Georgetown University; and Nicholas Zill, Foundation for Child Development.

In spite of a falling birthrate and smaller families, there is a higher percentage of children living in poverty now than in 1970. With no voice in national affairs, many programs of critical importance to children are being drastically cut back. In addition to welfare programs, day-care facilities, school lunch programs, and scholarship funds, data gathering about children is also slowing down. Seminar speakers told the audience that these long-term studies are essential for federal, state, and local planning on issues such as health, education, welfare, reading skill levels, adolescent pregnancies, and drug use.

Cosponsors of the seminar, "Our Nation's Children: The Invisible Constituency," along with the AAAS, were Senator David F. Durenberger (R-Minn.) and the Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations of the Senate Committee on Government Affairs; Senator Christopher J. Dodd (D-Conn.); and Representative Paul Simon (D-Ill.) and the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education of the House Committee on Education and Labor.

Role of Education

Education and training of black students were discussed at the third seminar. It placed special emphasis on the important role science and mathematics education play in employability. As the science and technology job market expands and other fields, too, become more reliant on sophisticated technologies, this training becomes increasingly vital.

Speakers noted that while many science education programs are below par, black students often not only suffer from poor classroom science but also do not receive the career counseling necessary to prepare them for the job market.

Representative Mervyn M. Dymally (D-Calif.) called for closer ties between black colleges and industry and labor,

especially in light of reduced federal funding for scholarships. Other featured speakers and panelists were Vincent Reed, vice president, The Washington Post; F. James Rutherford, AAAS chief education officer; David Swinton, director, Southern Center for the Study of Public Policy, Clark College; and Hilda Mason, member, City Council of the District of Columbia.

Cosponsors of the "Black Youth Employment, Education, and Training Conference," along with the AAAS, were the American Council on Education; the Congressional Black Caucus; the Congressional Science and Technology Caucus; the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education; the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Washington Bureau; the National Council of Negro Women; the National Urban Coalition; the United Negro College Fund; and the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Employment Opportunity, Committee on Education and Labor.

Summary reports of the three seminars are available from the Office of Opportunities in Science ("Black Youth Employment" and "Black Youth Employment, Education, and Training Conference") and Office of Public Sector Programs ("Our Nation's Children: The Invisible Constituency") at the AAAS address.

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AAAS Summer Fellows

During the summer months, two groups of AAAS Fellows worked in two different worlds. Six Environmental Science and Engineering Fellows spent 10 weeks at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), while 17 Mass Media Science and Engineering Fellows were located at newspaper, magazine, and television and radio sites around the country.

The Environmental Fellowship program was started in 1980 with funding from the EPA's Office of Strategic Assessment and Special Studies. Its purpose is to identify and assess long-range problems and to improve the Agency's