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Report Urges Foundations, Government to Finance

WASHINGTON

Foundations and government agencies should stop supporting piecemeal projects to ameliorate urban poverty, a new report says.

The report also says grant makers need to step up their efforts to finance proven anti-poverty efforts.

The report, which focused on improving the lives of young people and revitalizing poor neighborhoods, urged the federal government to increase spending to expand effective programs, many of them developed by non-profits. It called for the creation of a new non-profit organization, the Corporation for Youth Investment, that would coordinate the distribution of over \$500-million in government and private money over five years to community-based organizations and put an end to spending on ineffective programs.

The 350-page report was published by the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation to mark the 25th anniversary of the report issued by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, known as the Kerner Commission for its chairman, Otto Kerner, then governor of Illinois. The commission was appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1967 to recommend ways to improve urban conditions following riots in Newark, Detroit, and other cities. The Kerner report warned that America was "moving toward two societies, one black, one white - separate and unequal."

'Growing Income Segregation'

The Eisenhower Foundation report found the Kerner conclusions to be "more relevant today than in 1968 and more complex, with the emergence of multiracial disparities and growing income segregation." The foundation was created in 1981 to further the work of three bipartisan Presidential commissions on crime and violence, including the Kerner group, that were created in the late 1960s. It gets its name from President

Dwight D. Eisenhower's youngest brother, who chaired one of those commissions.

"The tack the report takes is to say, Look, let's simply identify what works and do more of it, expand it on a national scale to everyone who is eligible to receive it, and toss out what doesn't," said Lynn A. Curtis, president of the foundation.

The report recommended increasing federal spending by \$30-billion a year for 10 years to pay for new or expanded programs that help young people and provide low-cost housing and community-development aid to poor neighborhoods. It suggested taking money from programs it found ineffective, such as the Job Training Partnership Act, to help cover some of the costs.

"If we acknowledge that it will take a long time to get to those levels in the current economic climate, then we are talking about at least one generation of inner-city children and youth," said Mr. Curtis. "But if we could turn things around in just one generation, we'd really be cooking."

Among the report's recommendations:

- Calling of a national summit, potentially titled "Children, Youth and the Inner City: Replicating What Works," that would bring together key figures from charities, foundations, and government. The conference could precede the convening of a federal commission, to be overseen by the White House, that would develop a plan within six months to restructure government efforts involving young people and inner cities.
- Creation of a new federal program that would channel more money from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to local community-development corporations. The report recommended that national non-profit organizations should act as intermediaries, deciding how the money should be distributed.
- Development of more sophisticated evaluations of charity and government programs to determine what impact they are having on poor children and on the community at large. More comparisons need to be made between people served by the programs and people who are not, the foundation said. However, it cautioned that programs need to be given time to work: It said most efforts take at least five years to show results.
- Greater reliance on public service advertisements, particularly televised appeals, to educate the public about effective programs. Those messages should be narrated by popular figures and should explain what makes the organizations work. "Successful programs must become

household images," the report said. In particular, foundations should encourage more spots by producers who are members of minority groups and who may have more streetwise approaches than "more establishment and powerful agents of influence."

- Increased foundation support for advocacy groups, like the Children's Defense Fund and Common Cause, that serve as watchdogs to the federal government, educate policy makers, and push for reform.

For information on how to order copies of the report, "Investing in Children and Youth, Reconstructing Our Cities: Doing What Works to Reverse the Betrayal of American Democracy," contact Vesta Kimble, Director of Field Operations, the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation, 1660 L Street NW Suite 200. Washington, DC 20036: (202) 429-0440. The cost for the report has not yet been set.

- Elizabeth Greene and Jennifer Moore