

a study in
community
crime control

14653
Dup



Research Report-4
National Institute of Mental Health

The Center for Studies of Crime and Delinquency of the National Institute of Mental Health is interested in making available information gained from its research programs.

Research Report 4 is the fourth in a series of fliers designed to disseminate information to researchers, program administrators, and others who are involved in the fields of crime and delinquency and mental health.

The *Reports* provide brief descriptions of research projects supported by the Center and include the names and addresses of the researchers to help expedite the flow of information between researchers and researchers.

Research Report-4

CENTER FOR STUDIES OF CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH





Who, Where & Why

The Juniper Gardens housing project is a federally sponsored 390-apartment development for welfare recipients in a low-income area of Kansas City, Kansas. It is typical of many urban public housing projects in that its residents do not think of themselves as belonging to a community. Where there is no sense of community, there can be no community-wide standard of acceptable behavior for adults to follow and children to imitate, and community social pressure cannot effectively influence those who might commit crimes or other antisocial acts.

Some experts suggest that lack of "neighboring" in heavily populated urban areas may be associated with such community problems as delinquency, vandalism, and even citizen-police conflicts that arise when the police are called on to intervene in minor disputes which the residents of true communities would ordinarily handle on their own.

The Project

To try to overcome these problems and also to gather research data that might be useful in dealing with similar problems elsewhere, several University of Kansas behavioral scientists organized the Juniper Gardens project. Their objective was to give the housing development a sense of community by finding alternative social mechanisms that can enable neighbors in it to work together. With the establishment of some form of community organization, residents could agree on accepted standards of behavior and begin to enforce them. As "neighboring" increased, residents would use their new-found power of social pressure to discourage unacceptable behaviors and also gain the help of others in protecting their persons and property.

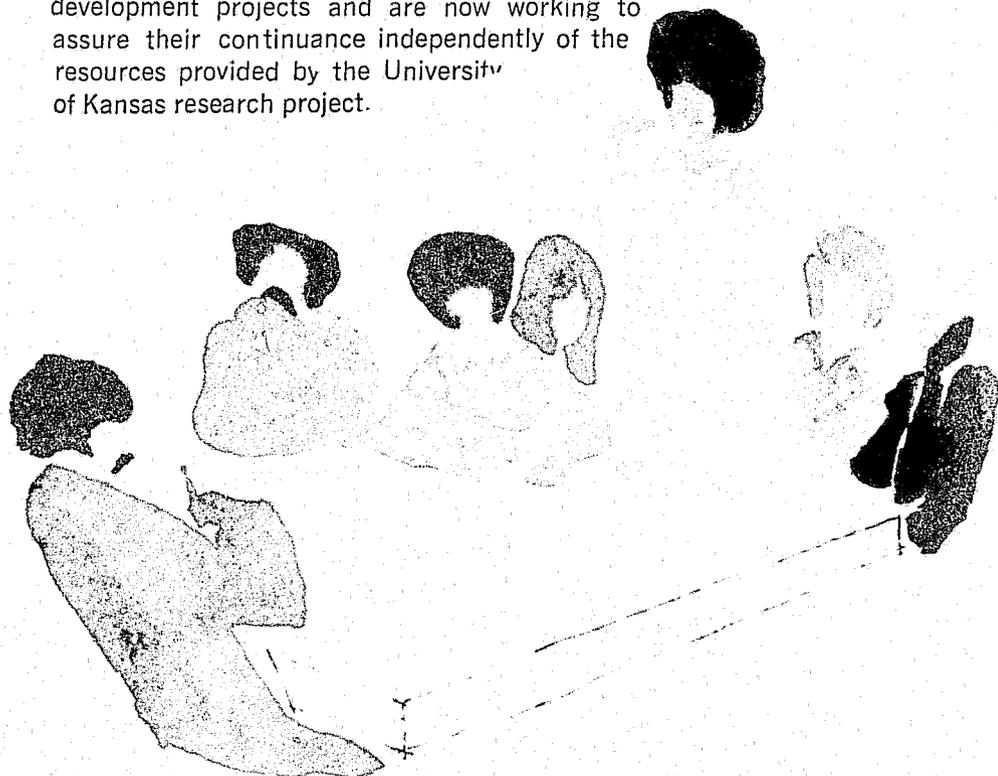
In addition to organizing the residents of Juniper Gardens, Dr. Todd R. Risley and his fellow researchers wanted to improve their

ability to measure social deviance and its effects on the community. And, because children and teenagers—who account for much of such deviance—need alternatives to delinquency, they are developing recreation programs that both fill time and teach appropriate social and citizenship behaviors.

Through these three separate but interrelated efforts—community organization, social deviance measurement, and youth program development—the Juniper Gardens project aims ultimately at reducing the level of crime in poor urban areas.

The Tenants' Association

The first need the University of Kansas investigators noted was for a forum in which residents could express their feelings about standards of behavior for the community. The establishment of the Juniper Gardens Tenants' Association (JGTA) met this need. The JGTA and its executive board have become the focus for community development projects and are now working to assure their continuance independently of the resources provided by the University of Kansas research project.



Residents' Code

JGTA's most significant achievement to date has probably been the creation of the Residents' Code of the Juniper Gardens Tenants' Association. When discussion of the housing development's problems began, it became clear that the problems the residents were concerned about were the same as those which would concern any middle-class community: protecting property, reducing noise, improving cleanliness, and insuring safety, particularly of children. "People's standards do not differ from neighborhood to neighborhood; rather, it is their ability to enforce standards that differs," Dr. Risley notes.

He and his colleagues thought that having the tenants explicitly list their responsibilities would help make the housing project more pleasant for all its residents. And so rules regarding visitors, damage (a tenant who causes damage should pay for repair), traffic (a 20 m.p.h. speed limit should be observed, and disabled vehicles should be removed from the streets), children (those under 10 should always be under adult supervision, and all children should be home by 9 p.m.), and property maintenance (tenants should keep their own yards clean), were all written with the understanding that everyone would benefit if each person fulfilled his responsibility.

POLLING

Not all Juniper Gardens residents attend meetings of the Tenants' Association. To insure that the Residents' Code represented the opinions of the entire community, procedures were developed to allow each family to cast a vote on each section of the proposed code. Since it was impossible to register each resident or keep track of those moving in and out, voting by household was decided on as most effective. House-to-house polling would also insure that the issues covered in the code would get a full public airing. Interviewers carried notebooks containing photographs taken at Juniper Gardens to illustrate specific neighborhood problems (e.g., littering and vandalism) and discussed each issue thoroughly before taking the household's vote from the adult representative who answered the door.

The housing development's residents voted almost unanimously in favor of each part of the Residents' Code. Five separate polls were taken, each covering a different section of the code. In each case, more than 80 percent of the 390 households agreed (only six households disagreed; others could not be contacted or refused to vote) that neighborhood problems existed in the development and that the Tenants' Association should draw up and implement a code to try to overcome them.

Security Patrol

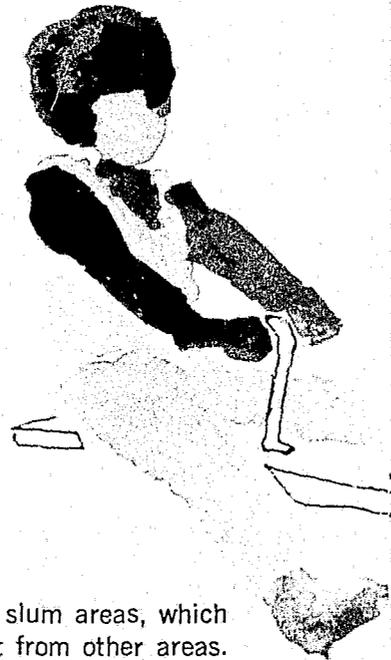
To enforce the newly approved code, the residents voted to set up a system of security guards who would not be community residents and so would not be subject to retaliation within the community. The JGTA contracted with a private security agency for two patrolmen to be on duty 40 hours a week, including those hours determined to be peak crime periods.

To encourage good working relations between patrolmen and residents, the guards were taken from apartment to apartment to be introduced to all residents of the community.

Since then, every resident who has filed a complaint with the security patrol has received a postage-paid feedback card on which to indicate whether the patrol handled the complaint adequately. The feedback has thus far been positive.

Urban Observation Battery

Anyone who drives through a city notices that slum areas, which usually also have high crime rates, look different from other areas.



They are dirtier, buildings in them are not well cared for, and traffic problems seem to be more common.

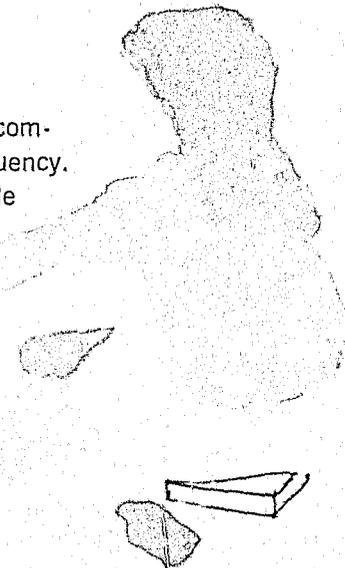
While these general observations have often been made, not much effort has gone into quantifying differences between neighborhoods or into establishing yardsticks by which to judge whether a particular neighborhood is improving or declining in appearance. The usual kinds of surveys used to pinpoint "high crime areas"—analysis of police statistics and victimization studies—also omit any measure of the neighborhood's appearance or traffic problems.

As part of the Juniper Gardens project, the University of Kansas researchers therefore developed an Urban Observation Battery, a set of measurements sensitive to changes in the urban environment. The battery quantifies street litter, the proportion of front yard space covered by grass, disabled vehicles, traffic flow (including speeding and jams), and defaced property. The house-to-house polling procedures the investigators have used to increase residents' participation in solving neighborhood problems are also part of the battery.

The battery has been so packaged that other communities seeking objective information about their neighborhoods can use it, and testing of each of the measurement packages has shown that untrained community residents can make reliable observations using the procedures.

Recreation For Youth

Recreation programs for city youngsters are commonly thought to be valuable in curbing delinquency. Too often, however, such programs simply provide



a place where children and teenagers learn social deviance and get practice in inappropriate behaviors. Because young people are often responsible for much of the property damage in urban neighborhoods, it is important to improve recreation programs so that they do provide a community supervised and organized outlet for youth that is more than a place to "hang out."

Using the facilities of Turner House, a community recreation center near Juniper Gardens run by the Episcopal diocese of Kansas City, Kansas, the researchers investigated ways to improve the operation, design, and supervision of recreation programs to encourage the active participation of children and adolescents in a setting where appropriate social and cooperative behaviors can be taught and practiced.

They have found that participation in games can be increased by such managerial tactics as organizing tournaments and altering game rules, and that membership drives can be successful if those bringing in new members are rewarded by an increase in recreation time. Similarly, reducing recreation time has been shown to be an extremely effective disciplinary measure in combating youthful disruptions at the center.

The researchers' studies of recreation materials have shown that the choice of toys must be based at least partly on what behaviors are desired. Some toys encourage children to play in groups, while others are played with by only one child at a time. If social behavior is to be learned, the research team believes, children must be provided with "social" toys such as games.

"Throughout our recreation research we have consistently demonstrated that it is possible to design, equip, and manage recreation programs that engage youth and strengthen those behaviors the community considers desirable," Dr. Risley says. "We are continuing to expand the citizenship emphasis of recreation programs with the aim of enlarging youth's contribution to the community."

RESULTS TO DATE

The experience of the researchers has shown that although the residents of Juniper Gardens vocalized concern about adult crimes and personal safety, this issue generated only a limited number of "man-hours" of voluntary community effort.

In contrast, programs for preventing delinquency by fostering citizenship and skills among children and teenagers, such as recreation and day care, consistently generated many hours of voluntary effort by a large number of Juniper Gardens' residents. Consequently, future strategies aimed at reducing crime and fostering pro-social behaviors in poverty areas such as public housing projects may do well to begin by involving adults in a neighborhood association and in programs for children and youth. Through these means a sense of community can be developed dealing more directly with problems of anti-social and destructive behavior.

Other Materials

Drs. Risley, Ed Christophersen, Charles Pierce, Bob Quilitch, and others who

make up the Living Environments Group at the University of Kansas have prepared papers and other materials describing specific aspects of the Juniper Gardens project. A list of the materials available may be obtained by writing to:

Dr. Todd R. Risley
Department of Human Development
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas 66045



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

ALCOHOL, DRUG ABUSE, AND
MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
5600 FISHERS LANE
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for private use, \$300



POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF H.E.W.
HEW 389

THIRD CLASS
BLK. RT.

NOTICE OF MAILING CHANGE

- Check here if you wish to discontinue receiving this type of publication.
- Check here if your address has changed and you wish to continue receiving this type of publication. (Be sure to furnish your complete address including zip code.)

Tear off cover with address label still affixed and send to:

Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration
Printing and Publications Management Section
5600 Fishers Lane (Rm. 6-105)
Rockville, Maryland 20852

DHEW Publication No. (ADM)74-91
Printed 1974

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

ALCOHOL, DRUG ABUSE, AND MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20852

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402, Price: 25 cents

Stock No. 1724-00385

END