

COMMUNITY WORK -
An Alternative To Imprisonment

(Principles & Guidelines)



Correctional Research Associates
Washington, D. C.

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PREFACE

The concept of Community Work for prisoners is not new. It dates back to a 1913 Wisconsin law and has wide implementation. Each year new states are added to the rapidly growing roster of jurisdictions that have passed enabling legislation for programs variously identified as "work release" or "work furlough". Each year additional correctional administrators and program managers face the tasks of planning and inaugurating these new programs. This publication is addressed primarily to the officials who have this responsibility.

There are many Community Work models in many correctional systems. The following pages attempt to find common ground among them and to focus on basic principles, planning steps and tested operating procedures. Major problems and limitations of the program are discussed and the final section views Community Work in the total spectrum of the administration of justice.

This pamphlet was produced by the staff of the Division of Community Services, Federal Bureau of Prisons. Mr. Mark S. Richmond, Deputy Assistant Director, served as principal editor. The manuscript was reviewed by a selected group of state correctional administrators and others who made several valuable suggestions which were incorporated in the text. While the text is technically oriented, hopefully it will be useful not only to the correctional worker, but to legislators, citizen groups and other non-correctional persons who have an interest in community work and training programs and how they operate.

MYRL E. ALEXANDER
Director, U. S. Bureau of Prisons

INTRODUCTION

Definition

Community Work is a program which enables selected prisoners confined in a jail, prison or other correctional facility to leave the institution daily for employment at a regular job nearby. The prisoners then spend non-working hours in confinement at the institution. In many jurisdictions, enabling legislation is broad enough to permit participation in community training programs and home visits for various purposes.¹

History

Programs of Community Work in operation today have their origin in the 1913 Huber Law of Wisconsin which authorized judges and magistrates, in cooperation with the sheriffs in charge of local jails, to impose conditional sentences in certain misdemeanor cases which would enable selected offenders to retain their jobs and, at the time, fulfill the obligation of a jail sentence. This 1913 concept was adopted in a few Wisconsin counties and has continued in practice off and on over the years.

It drew relatively little national attention until the past ten to fifteen years when the idea began to spread to other jurisdictions.

¹Correctional administrators and program managers today are confronted with a growing problem of semantics. The terms "furlough" and "release" tend to be too broad and to denote a status which can easily be misunderstood. There is also need for a generic, inclusive term referring to all kinds of extra-mural correctional programs, as distinguished from intra-mural institutional programs. There is further need to distinguish these actual programs from various community resources which are in-puts to institutional programs. Such a term as "Community Correctional Programs," for example, is broad enough to include components of work, training, visits and others yet to be developed.

In 1957, the legislature of North Carolina adopted the principles of the Huber Law and two years later became the first state to apply its provisions to felony offenders under limited conditions. Subsequently, Maryland and Michigan adopted legislation that included felons as well as misdemeanants. The broad provisions of the U. S. Prisoner Rehabilitation Act of 1965 brought community work opportunities to Federal offenders, along with authority to grant furloughs for other purposes. Other jurisdictions have followed suit rapidly.

Variations

Several operating models of Community Work can be identified. Some jurisdictions have retained the original, rather limited, scope of the Huber Law: the program exists only for misdemeanants confined in local facilities and it functions exclusively as a cooperative arrangement between the sentencing judge and the administrative authority of the local institution or correctional facility.

A rapidly increasing number of jurisdictions have extended enabling legislation to felony offenders confined in prisons and reformatories. In some jurisdictions, management of the Community Work program is placed in the hands of correctional administrators, while in others, the statutes require a positive recommendation of the sentencing judge or concurrence of the parole board.

Community Work programs function in some places within the limitations of statutory safeguards which exclude certain types of offenders, and define the portion of a sentence that must be served before Community Work eligibility can be established in certain cases.

So far, the most flexible enabling legislation was passed by the Congress of the United States (and by the several states which have adopted the Prisoner Rehabilitation Act of 1965 as a model). Federal prisoners are sentenced to the custody of the Attorney General who, by delegation, designates the place of confinement where the sentence shall be served. In the language of the Act:

"The Attorney General may extend the limits of the place of confinement of a prisoner as to whom there is reasonable cause to believe he will honor this trust, by authorizing him, under prescribed conditions, to . . .

"(1) visit a specifically designated place or places for a period not to exceed thirty days and return to the

same or another institution or facility. An extension of limits may be granted only to permit a visit to a dying relative, attendance at the funeral of a relative, the obtaining of medical services not otherwise available, the contacting of prospective employers, or for any other compelling reason consistent with the public interest; or

"(2) work at paid employment or participate in a training program in the community on a voluntary basis while continuing as a prisoner of the institution or facility to which he is committed, . . .

"The willful failure of a prisoner to remain within the time prescribed to an institution or facility, designated by the Attorney General, shall be deemed an escape from the custody of the Attorney General. . . ."

Thus, it was the clear intent of the Congress that Community Work be a rehabilitative tool administered by the Executive Branch of Government on a case management basis.

The Rationale of Community Work

Community Work is not a substitute for probation or parole. It is not part of an internal system of punishment and reward. Nor is it an obligatory means of offsetting the cost of public welfare payments to dependent families. It is intended to be a selective resource for the correctional treatment of certain offenders.

The tasks of corrections are only partly achieved when an offender begins to realize why he got into trouble in the first place, and really decides to do something about it. He also must make a reasonable adjustment to the environment of the community in which he will eventually work and live. This implies that society—and particularly the correctional system—must extend its programming concerns beyond affecting changes in the offender himself. For the majority of offenders changes are needed in the opportunities, influences and ways of life accessible to him in the community. It is also essential, before correctional processes start, that there be a thorough-going diagnosis of each offender and the setting of realistic individual correctional goals as guides in decision-making and in evaluating the performance of offenders as they progress through the correctional system.

Just as all prisoners are not suitable candidates for Community Work, by any standard of selection, so Community Work, as a correctional treatment tool, has little or nothing to offer certain offenders. As a practical matter a gangster or other professional criminal is ordinarily not sentenced to imprisonment with any significant intent that he will be "corrected" or "rehabilitated." Rarely does the typical "white collar" offender need any of the rehabilitation services which a correctional system may offer and his commitment, more often than not, is a reflection of public policy. In the light of present knowledge, there is grave doubt about how much can be done to change the ways of the chronic repeater who seems to "do life on the installment plan" with successive commitments to prisons and jails.

The predominant focus of correctional effort now and over the years ahead is on the younger offender who comes, typically, from a deprived economic, social and family background. He is most likely to be markedly deficient in educational attainment, without work skills and with little understanding or regard for the middle class values upon which our society is based.

This is the context in which the potentials of Community Work are seen. Community Work will be an effective correctional tool only to the extent that it is used wisely for specific purposes and as a means toward the attainment of goals of treatment, training and control of selected offenders.

Multiple Uses

Community Work is a bridge between the institution and the community. Its particular usefulness, in some degree, depends upon where in the spectrum of correctional treatment and control it is applied.² It has many possible applications, for example, to both the intake and discharge ends of institutionalization.

²Variations of Community Work are emerging from bail reform programs in some jurisdictions. In some instances, employment is a critical factor in determining the conditions of release on personal recognizance. Community Work may be an essential component of a regime which permits defendants awaiting trial or disposition to be confined only at night and on weekends. At the other end of the correctional spectrum, some jurisdictions are experimenting with "open-ended parole" wherein the effective date is set after the offender is employed and other elements of an acceptable parole plan have been completed in the community.

At the point of intake, especially for short-term offenders who are not suitable for probation or some other disposition, Community Work may provide opportunity for:

Continued employment, education or training.³

Continued or resumed family responsibilities, as through contributions to family support.

Accumulating savings for release, to make restitution or pay legitimate debts.

Continuing or acquiring the self-respect that flows from self-support.

A practical way of demonstrating ability and trustworthiness to gain or regain employer and community acceptance.

Remaining or becoming a contributing member of society.

Oriented toward the discharge end of institutionalization, especially for longer-term prisoners and those in whom substantial investments have been made to overcome handicapping deficiencies, Community Work offers similar opportunities and at least the following in addition:

A pre-release transitional experience leading to increasing personal responsibility.

A valuable experience in actual work situations related to prior vocational or occupational training.

Furthering the education and training started at the institution.

Giving the paroling authority a means of testing suitability for parole before final decision is reached

Reducing the risks and fears of both the offender and the community associated with the difficult period of adjustment immediately following imprisonment.

³The increasing use of community resources, in effective correctional programming, includes opportunities for enrolling selected inmates in courses of education and training in nearby communities when participation in such courses can be expected to contribute directly to the attainment of specific correctional goals for the inmates assigned. The program locations must be within commuting distance of the institution.

PLANNING A COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Despite the reasonableness of the rationale for Community Work and indications of its effectiveness in jurisdictions that have gained experience with it, not everyone is ready to accept the premises upon which the program is based. There continue to be many who are convinced that only by locking offenders up can the ends of justice be satisfied. Neither can it be assumed that a Community Work program can be initiated without comprehensive planning nor that, once started, the program will continue to function by itself. Basic principles must be identified. Within the framework of enabling legislation, implementing policies must be formulated. A thorough job of community organization is absolutely essential. Operating procedures must be worked out with care.

Basic Principles

From the experience of many jurisdictions operating different kinds of Community Work programs, the following rules are commonly acknowledged as essential to a successful program.

1. Community Work should be utilized to the fullest extent that circumstances permit. However, there can be no compromise with essential safeguards, community acceptance and the careful selection of participating prisoners.

2. There must be assurances that the local employment situation is such that Community Work prisoners will not displace employed workers and will not be used when there is a surplus of community citizens with similar skills or trades.

3. It is imperative that exploitation in any form or degree be avoided, either as it might affect the community or Community Work prisoners. The compensation of Community Work prisoners should be no less than that of comparable workers and offenders should not be employed under adverse working conditions or at less than prevailing standards. Conversely, Community Work prisoners should not be employed as strikebreakers or in situations that would evoke adverse public reaction directed either at the prisoner involved, the correctional system or the unit of government.

4. All prisoners admitted to Community Work status remain in technical custody and a prisoner who absconds should be treated as an escape.

5. Each job offer should be investigated to determine that it is bonafide, is consistent with Community Work policies and will fulfill the correctional objectives for the selected prisoner. While Community Work neither constitutes nor implies a contractual agreement between an employer and the correctional agency, it must be recognized that some mutual responsibilities exist. These derive from the fact that, although employed, the prisoner is still in custody and his work release status is primarily for a correctional purpose.

6. Responsibility for decision-making with respect to admissions and removals should be vested in an appropriate official of the agency which is accountable for the operation of the program. This may require the closest possible collaboration with judges and paroling authorities, especially in those jurisdictions where Community Work is recommended or ordered as part of the sentence or as a condition of parole.

7. Written procedures should be adopted and followed for the control, accounting and disbursement of salaries, wages or stipends received by Community Work prisoners. The distribution of earnings should be agreed to in advance and in writing by participating prisoners.

Community Organization

In no circumstances should a Community Work program be initiated until there is assurance that the local community has been adequately prepared for it. It is essential that correctional administrators and program managers promote public understanding and support for the program. In part, this is a matter of developing and maintaining communication networks for the purpose of imparting basic information, interpreting the aims of Community Work, and explaining its role in the total correctional process.

The public education effort should include:

1. Information to court, law enforcement and government officials: At least a consensus support of the program is required of the units representing the administration of justice and those components of the executive branch of local government that will be involved.

2. Use of community leadership: In any community there are particular individuals and organizations that are the major molders of public opinion. These may be found in business, in labor

unions, among the clergy, in the legal profession, the news media and in a variety of civic organizations. Preliminary discussions, similar to those held with government officials, should be planned with the leaders of these groups.

3. Use of citizens advisory committee: An advisory committee composed of persons representing local community leadership can be an effective structure for utilizing this leadership. While such a group would not have operational responsibilities, it may be an effective means of two-way communication as well as a sounding board for policy and program development. Members of such committees need to become actively involved beyond attending occasional meetings. Some may be prospective employers who can share responsibility for such functions as job development. In some localities, groups having an interest in corrections already exist and can help fill the role of citizen advisory committee.

Policy Formulation

The correctional administrator or program manager responsible for activating a Community Work program should, as part of his preliminary planning, develop a complete operating plan. In effect, this plan will be a detailed statement of operational policies and procedures.

The principles identified above, along with others that may be appropriate to particular situations, should be translated into definitive policy statements. The precise manner by which the program is to be administered must be fully outlined. Beginning with a statement of the purposes for which Community Work is to be used, attention should be given such matters as: selection of prisoners, transportation arrangements, housing, disposition and control of earnings, clothing, supportive services, records and reports. Staff assignments and responsibilities must be defined also. These matters are discussed more fully in the following chapters.

The importance of advance detailed planning cannot be over-emphasized. A successful program depends on the concerted, cooperative acts of many persons in diverse occupations and roles, both public and private. Such a joint endeavor cannot be "played by ear" but must have specific guidelines for all who are participants in the venture.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

Discussions of the program elements that follow are based upon the policies and operating experiences of a number of jurisdictions. To this extent they may be viewed, at least tentatively, as recommended minimum standards.

Selection

Any prisoner wishing to be considered for Community Work must apply on forms prescribed. If a prisoner is to be held accountable for his behavior under conditions of extended custody he must fully understand and consent to those conditions.

Full minimum custody should be an obvious prerequisite to all cases and, as a matter of policy, the opportunity of Community Work should be available to prisoners in all offense categories on an as-needed basis. Necessary precautions center around: the need to protect the community against further depredations and threats to safety and welfare; the need to protect the program from jeopardy arising from adverse public reaction toward the prisoner, the correctional system or the unit of government and the need to avoid subverting the intent of criminal justice by allowing certain prisoners to escape the onus of a sentence to imprisonment. These precautions can be taken by careful prisoner selection and by judicious timing.⁴

The candidate for Community Work should be in good health and physically able to perform the tasks of the proposed job. This requirement should not preclude the use of Community Work as an unusual opportunity to aid a physically handicapped person in obtaining employment consistent with his capabilities or as part of a physical rehabilitation effort. Others who are mentally or emotionally handicapped and who are not dangerous may be considered when it is apparent that community employment will significantly aid their post-release adjustment.

⁴ Greatest care should be taken in authorizing Community Work for offenders identified with large scale, organized criminal activity; offenders convicted of crimes against the person, or whose records include such offenses; offenders with serious emotional or personality defects and those with histories of violent or assaultive behavior; prisoners whose offenses involved violations of financial trust.

Community Work is not intended as a program or status to be made available to all who may be technically eligible. There must be indicated need for the opportunities and responsibilities which the program provides. This type of decision is a case management judgment to be related to the pre-release family need or other individual circumstances for which the program is particularly appropriate. Further, it must be ascertained that a selected prisoner will benefit from the experience. Decisions in cases of family need, restitution and debt payment should be based on investigation so that official records will establish the prisoner's responsibility and verify that the claimed need exists.

Where suitable contract work release facilities exist, or can be developed in a candidate's home area, he should not be placed in the institutional work release program.

Selection preference should be given candidates whose residence is in the vicinity of the institution or facility, or for whom release plans in this vicinity are reasonable and appropriate. Although this should not entirely exclude others, a number of factors should be carefully weighed:

1. It can be expected that many prisoners and their employers will want to continue their local employment after release from the institution or facility. Not infrequently, employers will make substantial investment in training Community Work prisoners for the jobs they hold and numbers of prisoners will experience job satisfactions which they are reluctant to give up.
2. A community will not tolerate its becoming a "haven" for former offenders who "belong" elsewhere, even though they may be under parole supervision.
3. There will be circumstances in which sound correctional treatment involves relocating an offender from a home or community that is untenable or lacking in opportunity. Experience, indicates, however, that strong ties in the new community are needed. Relocating an offender solely because he thinks it is a good idea rarely works out. This is especially true of younger offenders.
4. Whenever relation is contemplated, the views and cooperation of those who will provide supervision after release must be obtained. This proposal should

also be discussed with local officials and community groups who would be concerned.

There will be no general restrictions on the kinds of jobs for which candidates may be considered. The expectation is that the job selected will be legitimate employment and that which best fulfills the purpose of Community Work in each case, consistent with the fact that the employed prisoner is still in custody. Good employment placement will give reference to jobs that are related to prior training, work experience, institutional training, prisoner interest and may be suitable as continuing post-release employment. The "breakeven" point between wages and expenses will tend to eliminate temporary, part-time and intermittent employment.

When used for pre-release purposes for felony offenders, Community Work placements should be limited ordinarily to a period of not more than six months immediately preceding the probable release date. Although exceptions may be made when fully justified, present experience suggests the optimum period of program effectiveness to be from three to six months. Experience has also shown that the greatest number of in-program failures are likely to occur either during the first weeks on the program or after six months. The early failures seem to be associated with transitional adjustment difficulties. The late failures tend to be associated with the frustrations arising from the Cinderella-like existence of relative freedom on the job and returning to confinement each day.⁵

Transportation

All transportation arrangements should be approved by the correctional administrator or program manager in charge. As a practical matter, little can be accomplished if the travel time between the institution and the job exceeds one to one and a half hours each way. Within reasonable limits of convenience to the institution, jobs need not be restricted to "normal" work hours. When suitable transportation can be arranged, there should be no objection to work or overtime.

⁵This "rule of thumb" applies to pre-release use of Community Work. In some jurisdictions the Cinderella-like problem experienced by longer-term prisoners is partially alleviated by allowing occasional home visits and participation in company or community social activities. Prisoners authorized to participate in courses of education or training in the community normally remain in them for the duration of the courses.

In nearly every jurisdiction, transportation becomes and remains the greatest single operating problem of Community Work programs. It is handled in many ways, depending upon agency policy and local circumstances. In some jurisdictions, transportation is provided by institution vehicles. In others, there is total reliance on public transportation. Not infrequently, car pool arrangements with fellow-workers are approved. Various combinations of these are common. In all instances the prisoner pays the costs of transportation. In some instances, prisoners are permitted to drive personally-owned or company vehicles but this practice usually is not recommended because of additional problems related to licensing, insurance and liability.

Housing

There is no consensus whether Community Work prisoners should live within the confines of a main institution or in a separate facility outside the security perimeter of an institution. This decision is determined by many factors not central to the program itself--and no single pattern is necessarily preferable. Community Work prisoners may live in a main institution, whether or not in specially designated quarters. On the other hand, they may live in outside quarters, although exclusive use of outside quarters is not always possible, nor is it necessarily desirable.

When Community Work prisoners live in a main institution, problems of contraband control are increased. This not only adds to staff concern but may require special admission and release procedures. The prisoners, themselves, are subject to additional pressures from fellow inmates to engage in contraband traffic. On the other hand, this arrangement enables regular institution staff to manage the program and it makes essential supportive services more accessible to Community Work prisoners.

A number of institutions have reported vastly improved institutional "climate" and fewer disciplinary reports with the advent of Community Work, as the majority of prisoners become motivated and aspire to the program. The program is seen by personnel of these institutions as having a positive and significant impact upon traditional inmate culture and value systems.

The principal value of outside quarters is that management can become exclusively community oriented. This arrangement is likely to require additional staffing and access to essential supportive services at the main institution may become limited.

Supportive Services

As previously stated, Community Work is intended to be a correctional program. To be effective, it cannot be divorced from other correctional programs and services. While in the institution during non-work hours, participating prisoners should be encouraged, perhaps even required, to avail themselves of regular institutional activities, especially those which will improve work skills and increase their capacity to adjust in the community.

Case work, guidance and counseling services should be made available to Community Work prisoners to the fullest extent possible. Often there are special and immediate needs for such services arising from problems on the job and working conditions in addition to the usual range of personal and family matters. Counseling hours should be scheduled to permit no less than weekly contact with each Community Work prisoner.

For certain offenders, the full potentials of Community Work will be realized when regular employment and attendant job satisfactions become the means of an orderly, supervised transition to full community life. On the basis of individual needs and case management goals, correctional programming is aimed at the offender's progressive self-sufficiency in the community. Accordingly, participation in community religious, educational, social, civic and recreational activities may also be considered when there is reason to believe that such participation will contribute significantly to the offender's progress in learning and exercise of personal responsibility. Similarly, as statutes permit, occasional furloughs may be used as supplemental program resources.

Disposition of Earnings

All prisoners approved for Community Work or training who will receive salaries, wages or stipends should be required to execute an agreement for the disposition of such income. The agreement should provide the authority for all disbursements, whether they be payments to dependent families, reimbursements to the institution for various required purposes or other approved reasons.

In addition to paying the costs of their own transportation, Community Work prisoners in most jurisdictions, either by law or policy decision, are required to reimburse the institution for daily subsistence. Depending upon the jurisdiction, these payments are made at full per capita cost or on the basis of an adopted standard formula.

Participating prisoners need to carry cash with them while outside the institution to cover miscellaneous daily expenses. To make the prisoner fully accountable for such funds and to relieve the institution of additional responsibilities for contraband control, accounting and daily receipts and disbursements, many institutions provide accessible lock boxes for which each prisoner holds the key. In some jurisdictions, it is permissible for local banks to handle all Community Work funds. In cooperation with the bank, the program manager controls all withdrawals and check issuances.

Many prisoners enter the program entirely without funds. In some jurisdictions, procedures exist enabling cash advances, usually not in excess of \$100, to be used for the purchase of clothing, tools and payment of other necessary expenses until the first pay check is received. The amount and purposes of such advances, as well as full reimbursements from initial pay checks, are carefully controlled.

As the Community Work prisoner is not a free agent, even though fully employed, most program managers will not permit charge accounts or contracting for installment buying.

Clothing

In the Federal Prison System and a few others, prisoners on Community Work are outfitted with clothing suitable for the kind of work or other placement at which they will be employed. For the longer-term prisoners this constitutes the "discharge outfit". Community Work prisoners are required to purchase, with their own funds, all supplemental and replacement clothing. This may be purchased through regular institutional sources or directly from outside cash commercial sources. So that civilian clothing will not be worn inside the institution by participating prisoners, special check in — check out arrangements are made for lockers, clothing change and laundry service.

Laundry Services

Institutions which have laundries may provide this service for prisoners on the program, although special controls are required. Generally, this service is limited to the initial issue of clothing until the prisoner is established on his job and earnings are received. Typically, thereafter, arrangements are made with commercial laundries or nearby laundromats in accordance with the needs and services available.

Terminations

The removal of a prisoner from the program for willful negligence or misconduct is as much a case management decision as was the approval of his entering the program in the first place. He should be required to live up to the rules and expectations of the program. While a double standard of conduct is to be avoided within the institution, the status of a Community Work prisoner is different. As a general guiding principle, the judgments and standards which underlie disciplinary and removal decisions should be more closely identified with those decisions appropriate to the effective management and control of a parolee than with adherence to traditional prison discipline. This is a most difficult and challenging problem for the administrator. It tests the capacity of the correctional staff to truly practice individual correctional programming.

Reports and Records

The need to continually evaluate fully all aspects of work release cannot be over-emphasized. This is more than a matter of learning by doing during early developmental stages. Wherever a Community Work program exists for a significant number of prisoners, its impact is felt in all areas of institutional operations, by the entire correctional system, by the paroling authority and by those who are responsible for providing supervision after release. All officials must be alert to the impact of the program, must assess its meaning and plan continuing adjustments that will insure a balanced and increasingly effective total correctional program. Feedback to institution staff of actual community experience provides a basis for intelligent reprogramming.

Especially needed for this purpose and to assure continued monitoring of program management are basic facts relating to the selection of prisoners and the jobs on which they are placed. Standard data on earnings and payments should be maintained. Termination reports should be prepared in all cases showing the reasons for removal from the program with explanations of removals for cause. Monthly or quarterly summaries prepared by program managers should carry basic statistics and include narrative observations of the adjustment of participating prisoners, acceptance of the program by employers and others, operating problems and the effects of Community Work on institutional operations and parole. Ideally, individual case records will evaluate the progress made by prisoners in the program, as in other institutional program areas, and will assess the relevance of this to original diagnostic findings, the correctional goals that were set and the elements of release planning needed.

PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS

There are differences in the manner in which various institutions and correctional systems have viewed Community Work and considered its values. These differences have affected the quality and direction of implementation.

As effective as the program may be when used for the "right" offenders, at the "right" times, for the "right" purposes, it is not without its problems and limitations. Some of these have a philosophical basis, depending upon how the program is used. Not only is Community Work not a substitute for inadequate or non-existent probation or parole, a means of ameliorating the rigors of a sentence to imprisonment nor a reward for trustworthiness, it is not a panacea for the correctional treatment of convicted offenders. There is danger, however, that more will be claimed for Community Work than the program can produce.

Whatever the virtues of work alone, it is not a specific antidote or cure for the multiple and deep-seated causes of criminality. But when used in conjunction with other measures of treatment and control, it may help, in some cases, the attainment of specific correctional goals.

Administrative Considerations

While it may be necessary or expedient to start a Community Work program as a special project, the program should be incorporated into the total operational and program efforts of the institution as rapidly as circumstances permit. Ideally, the program is a framework around which other institution programs are integrated. To accomplish this, most institutions will need some additional staffing to provide essential case work, guidance and employment placement services. But this is not all.

Whether additional personnel may be acquired or not, effective Community Work programming needs the support of all institu-

tional staff. In part, this is a matter of spreading the additional workload and it requires the engineering of special staff functions and responsibilities. For some "old-line" staff, the advent of the program may be a threat to long training and experience in traditional institutional operations. The retraining of such personnel to prepare them for new roles and responsibilities that have a community orientation may be a major undertaking. Their early involvement in planning and initial operations is the most effective means for gaining their enthusiasm and support.

The more developed programs feature alert and relentless individual case management from commitment to release. This is the essence of effective correctional treatment. Community Work should be viewed as an important program resource to be correlated with a careful assessment of individual problems and needs and the formulation of achievement goals. Ideally, again, planning for participation in the program should begin at the time of initial case evaluation, as would consideration for any other program. The inference is that Community Work should be prescribed whenever the need for such programming is clearly evident. To effect this, a broad and flexible system for repetitive case decision-making must be established and cases reviewed frequently. In this context, the relationship between institutional treatment and training, Community Work placement and release planning is clear.

Community Work offers remarkable opportunities for research and evaluations of total program effectiveness, yet few systematic efforts are now being made. A stream of case history and program data should be fed into a central statistical and research unit. This would insure that at any given time this information can be reviewed and analyzed to audit the program. Systems should be developed for longer-range follow-up studies of participants after release. Information from graduates of Community Work is valuable. One intermediate method of obtaining it is to schedule recorded exit interviews which would provide both immediate feedback intelligence and data that could be assimilated for subsequent statistical analysis. Research can contribute also to continuing efforts to reduce in-program failures by experimentally applying techniques for identifying individuals with high failure potentials.

A basic need is the knowledge with which to train staff and prisoners in the specific behaviors which are required to master the specific tasks for successful community adjustment. Research of Community Work programs would contribute much of this know-

ledge and, at the same time, enable more sophisticated development of the program itself.

To illustrate: much more must be learned about the character types which can make most and least effective use of Community Work experience. Complex questions can be raised about the nature of the Community Work experience for the prisoners involved. There is evidence, too, of a need to study the appropriate "dosage" of community experience for differing types of prisoners.

Operational Problems

As mentioned above, adequate transportation is perhaps the single most serious and chronic operational problem. From a staff standpoint, concern may relate to the need for supplying institution personnel to make repeated trips to town to pick up and deliver Community Work prisoners. Requests for overtime or special shift work are particularly troublesome when non-scheduled trips have to be made. Breakdowns, delays and commercial transportation often is a serious handicap to good job placement for the simple reason that the prospective employment is inaccessible. Transportation problems are of concern to many Community Work prisoners for these same reasons. Rigid scheduling, by whatever means of travel, denies them the flexibility that fellow-employees enjoy and in large metropolitan areas where reliance is wholly on commercial transportation there may be infrequent services and long delays at transfer points between connecting transportation lines.

The proper handling of earnings is a substantial additional burden to the normal accounting and control of prisoner funds. As with transportation, there is no single solution to this continuing problem.

Reference has been made to in-program failures arising from initial adjustment and problems which may occur when the prisoner stays on the program too long. There are other causes of failure. Analysis of case records and program reports show that some failures inevitably result from poor staff judgment or a compromise of policy in selecting candidates for the program. Some can be attributed to hasty staff decisions or inattention to details that should have signalled the need for help or imminent danger. Other failures clearly are built in to ill-chosen forms of recreation on the part of Community Work prisoners themselves. There are relatively few failures that relate to the quality of work performed or that cannot be accounted for at all.

Staff eagerness for the success of the program and reliance on traditional disciplinary measures applied to infractions of Community Work rules has accounted for numerous premature removals and reluctance to consider the reinstatement of erring Community Work prisoners. Unless methods of discipline and control are intelligently conceived and purposefully administered to further the growth of the participating prisoner, the full potentials of the program can be wasted. Clearly, since the program involves a status that approximates the conditions of parole, rules of conduct and their enforcement that are designed to meet traditional institutional standards may be quite inappropriate when applied to a Community Work prisoner.

Institutional staff and Community Work prisoners are but two parts of a three-way relationship in the program. As readily as most communities have accepted and supported the concept of Community Work, it is important that this support be nurtured and continued. In part, this is a matter of good communications as, for example, when someone on institution staff thinks to notify an employer in advance that a prisoner will be leaving work because he was granted a parole to another area, or that he will not show up for work today because he is sick.

Effective working relationships with segments of the community also include recurring interpretations as needed. For whatever reasons, it is not uncommon for some employers to over-identify with Community Work prisoners. In a spirit of good brotherhood these prisoners can be extended unwarranted personal favors, excuses will be made for them or they may be indulged in various ways. Such overtures can lead to an individual's failure on the program. At best, they are inconsistent with the correctional purposes of Community Work.

Community Work like other correctional programs, must stand on its own merits. Isolated achievements, occasional difficulties or other incidents cannot be allowed to alter its direction. It cannot be a means of catering to the insignificantly small number of prisoners, staff or members of the community who do not fully understand its purpose and meaning.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Despite the absence of long experience in managing Community Work programs in most jurisdictions, their record has been predominantly favorable. Institutions, large and small, have found the capabilities of mounting such programs and of keeping them under adequate controls. There is no question that program managers will continually strive to improve their operational efficiency. General guidelines for accomplishing this are included in the preceding pages.

Increasing the correctional benefits of the program is a more complex problem. Clearly, this will be achieved only as the program is based on careful case diagnosis, the setting of treatment goals, preparation for the Community Work experience and continuing evaluation of results. But Community Work is only one of several alternatives to incarceration and it must be viewed in its relationships to the total correctional system.

There are many forces at work today which are supportive of a trend toward community alternatives to imprisonment. If this trend is to develop rationally there must be earnest concern over a number of issues.

Ideally, a correctional system should match types of offenders with types of programs geared to meet specific needs. The alternatives would range from non-supervisory measures through increasingly structured community programs to total incarceration. Greatest flexibility would attend these choices. But we are far from this ideal for both philosophical and practical reasons.

The very limited traditional view of corrections has not yet been abandoned. In this view one thinks of imprisonment and what happens after guilt has been established as comprising the universe of corrections. Actually, processes of corrections begin with the first contact between the alleged offender and the police and they may not end until eventual parole is terminated. In between is an increasingly broad range of decision points and alternatives, each of which influences and is influenced by the others. Not only must a great deal

more be learned about key decision points, what the choices are and who chooses among them, but information is needed which can be used to assess the effects of the decisions that are made.

Any increased use of alternatives to imprisonment, whether planned or unplanned, will greatly alter the existing system and these steps should be taken with full awareness that they will have impact. Unfortunately, some correctional policies and activities seem to be initiated more by intuition and educated guesses than by comprehensive planning and systematic evaluation.

The development of a more effective correctional system will require new knowledge and better research. More discriminating criteria with which to classify offenders is needed. There must be clear differentiation among those who need intensive, selective and minimal treatment and control, whatever the availability of correctional resources. Since new programs have considerable impact on the correctional organization in which they occur, research is needed to identify what the effects are so that change can be managed more efficiently. A central data bank is also needed in the development of a comprehensive correctional system. Until such repositories are established, it will be impossible to conduct follow-up studies across jurisdictional lines or to identify measures of success and failure that go beyond the single factor of subsequent law violation.

The conclusion is inescapable that Community Work, with or without other program innovations, will solve but few of many problems of corrections. Long-range perspective is needed together with the kinds of resources which will produce better understanding of the entire correctional process and enable careful study of whatever steps are taken to improve the system.

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