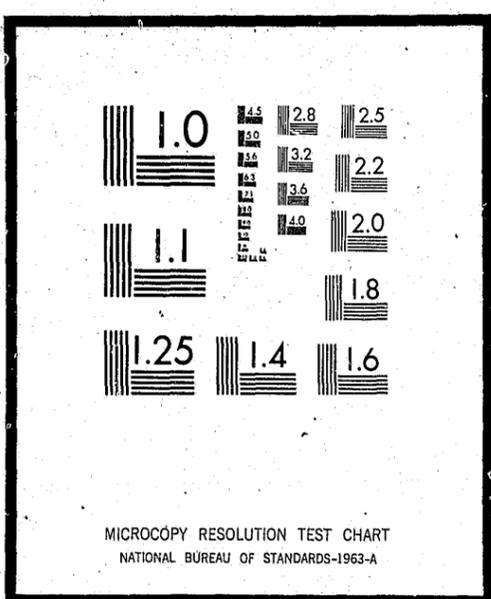


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MONTGOMERY COUNTY INTENSIVE PROBATION UNIT - FINAL  
EVALUATION REPORT Juvenile Probation Dept.



## FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Intensive Probation Unit (SE-278-72A)  
Juvenile Probation Department  
County of Montgomery  
Norristown, Pennsylvania

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Intensive Probation Unit of the Montgomery County Probation Department had two goals. First was to divert serious delinquents from commitment to institutions. Second was to decrease the waiting time in detention. These goals included several objectives. Among those objectives, most important was to provide a comprehensive program of intense probation to individual youngsters, their families, and communities. This evaluation explored the range of these intended objectives.

We chose to examine two key areas of activity. First, the selection criteria and the definition of the client population seemed to be a natural priority. Second, we chose to focus on the activities of the IPU staff to determine whether the clients were effectively served. These two areas were planned in order to assess the full range of real and potential impact of the program.

The selection criteria for the IPU are best demonstrated in describing the ultimate client population the program served. We compared the IPU clients to those on general probation. Over twice the general population percentage were from single parent homes; six times the general probation ratio came from foster homes; five times that ratio had independent living arrangements.

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IPU clients came from significantly different living situations than those clients on general probation. Furthermore, IPU youngsters had significantly twenty-five times more contact (court referrals) with the criminal justice system. IPU worked with seriously delinquent and hard core youths. Thus, the program definitely chose those youngsters it promised it would. Furthermore, the process of selection was in itself a training technique and signified the program's most important impact. The IPU staff formed an admission committee. The staff met with general probation staff to review potential cases. In the course of that review, a variety of additional, alternative treatments were suggested. IPU staff would also draw on IPU consultants in these and other reviews. Thus they formed an in-house treatment resource for each other and for general probation staff. And, besides an alternative to institutions, the project was a resource for alternative general probation treatments as well.

The project's impact on institutionalization is difficult to assess. Existing data on institutionalization suggests a drop of 7 - 14% in the number of institutionalized youth during the period of the project operation compared with the period prior to that. Such a correlation suggests that the program may have impacted on the commitment to institutions or on the judges' readiness to commit youngsters to institutions. Yet it is far too early, and the data far too sketchy, to make this conclusion now. The IPU represented one of several changes occurring in the probation department as a whole.



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It may have caused a change in institutionalization, but it is more justified to attribute the IPU itself to departmental change and to the changing climate of opinion in the county.

Project impact on detention is minimal, since every youth has to remain for three weeks in detention before final adjudication. The department as a whole is making every effort to send the committed youth to institutions without delay. Thus, if there is any impact on detention period it is due to the department's policy and operation rather than due to the project impact.

Through a review of actual activities of the IPU staff participating in staff and consultant meetings, a number of other conclusions were drawn:

- 1) Even though IPU staff did not provide a significantly different kind of program, it seemed evident that they had extensive contact with the youngsters, with their families, other agencies in the community and gained new skills and understanding of the youth and his problems.
- 2) The team of consultants played an important role in improving staff skills, increase their ability to work with the youngsters and provide them with new conceptual framework. However, this framework, namely more professional standards and attitudes were in conflict with court traditional operation; that is seeing the probation officer as an officer of the court who would carry the judges' orders.



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Thus, increased professional competency conflicted with the court operation.

3) Managing hard-core delinquents in the community can work.

It is a very demanding job and places pressures on the staff which in turn need group support and professional identification.

- 4) The IPU did not provide a significantly different kind of treatment. IPU did not use a peer group modality, and did not apply a unique community involvement. Instead, they were available to meet with their clients as frequently as possible, chose to work with families extensively, and were involved in the entire range of their clients' activities.

These results and impacts support our recommendations. We have recommended that the program continue, in much its present organization and structure. The program could involve some rotation of staff, to diffuse the training resource the program offers, as well as some change in the degree of autonomy, in the linkages with the courts and in the range of treatment modalities. Beyond such programmatic recommendations, we suggest that the intake criteria process applied in this program is a useful model for other IPU programs and that the training function of this program is a useful and supportable function to continue here and possibly to adapt to other probation departments. In sum, IPU is a very worthwhile project with benefits extended not only to its youth but to the staff, the department and the rest of the criminal justice system.



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It is currently used by the court and the department as an alternative to institutionalization and should continue so.



## FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Intensive Probation Unit (SE-278-72A)  
Juvenile Probation Department  
County of Montgomery  
Norristown, Pennsylvania

26 June 1974

### PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The IPU project is conceived as diverting serious delinquents from commitment to institutions, and to decrease their waiting time in detention. The original proposal describes the high cost of maintaining a child in institutions (between \$7,000 and \$8,000 per child, per year is their estimate). It also suggests that there are reasons to doubt that an institution provides any rehabilitation, and states that there is the danger of them becoming thoroughly institutionalized, more isolated from their family and community, and with a higher probability of recidivism. The proposal promises a comprehensive program of intense probation that would offer extensive individual and family contact and supervision. In short, the proposal suggests that offering intense probation to children is less costly, less abrupt and more successful for children, parents, and total communities - - successful in a therapeutic, rehabilitative, familial, and economic sense.

The proposal also lists six objectives, short and long-term, through which this goal would be achieved. These are: (1) to test the feasibility of managing serious delinquents in the community; (2) to reduce the commitment rate; (3) to eliminate the waiting time in detention; (4) to provide comprehensive treatment for children and families; (5) to individualize treatment and maximize effective control and supervision; and (6) to develop a repertoire of alternative treatment plans. These objectives describe a hybrid program half-way between intensive institutionalization and general or traditional probation.

The project planners realized that an important key to the project's success would be its selection criteria. These criteria describe a target population which is "ripe for further delinquency", "potentially responsive", with "family relationships ... sound enough", and without "such conflict" within the family to inhibit family counseling, without "serious character disorder", and generally without "serious acts of aggressive violence" unless "thoroughly" screened, and probably not "hard-core addicts". This target population suggests another balance between very serious cases normally referred to institutions and less serious cases usually referred to the general probation.



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Most discussions consisted of open-ended questions which led to staff-initiated issues and concerns.

### B. Other Data Collection Devices

Besides its annual report, this department receives monthly statistical information from the detention center providing information on court disposition of cases. The annual report has been most helpful in that it provided not only general information about clients, but also for substantive information about family and living style as well as specific criminal justice contacts in terms of the gravity and frequency of offenses.

The department provides a central file for only IPU cases. This file contained the following information: daily progress sheets concerning every case. There are also weekly progress reports which provide information for the consultants' discussion of the cases. In addition, there are minutes of the weekly staff meetings as well as minutes of the monthly consultant meetings. Such a wealth of information provides the basis for any number of additional research directions.

### C. Forms Developed for this Evaluation Effort

1. Weekly time-sheet: The first form developed for this evaluation is a weekly data sheet (See Form A) intended to elicit a rough proportion of each staff member's time resources as they are allocated for individual case work. That form has been most useful in (a) denoting how much variation is available to meet individual client needs; (b) suggesting how similar different staff members are in using that flexibility; (c) reviewing staff-perceived problems such as an over-balance of time spent in reporting and (d) implying patterns which remain roughly constant over time as a constant travel-case ratio. It could be used in other ways as well, as an internal management tool. Since, at a glance, individual case-loads are reflected, a review of individual probation officers' progress with cases could be simplified in weekly meetings. Since, equally visible, the same cases recur every week, patterns typical of those cases could be reviewed by the probation officers themselves - easier and more efficiently than through more extensive reports. If, for example, an individual case has not required contact with school for some weeks, that contact may become appropriate in spite of a variety of other contacts.



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Beyond its selection criteria, the planners outlined a program differentiated from general probation primarily in terms of numbers and intensity. With a case load of eight to ten cases - in contrast to general probation's ratio of thirty to forty - it was hoped that the probation officer would be able to provide daily contact with the child, institutions, schools, families, jobs, and other relevant agencies. They planned individual and group therapy supervised by a team of outside evaluators composed of a psychiatrist, psychologist and psychiatric social worker. Finally, the staff would act as a team, designing intensive treatment modes for each accepted case.

### EVALUATION ACTIVITIES (Methodology)

This evaluation effort was conceived with five purposes, each designed to respond to specific data needs of the project and its funding agency. These objectives were to: (1) describe the program - its strengths and weaknesses; (2) determine whether the program is living up to its promise; (3) develop a methodology for ongoing self-study for the program; (4) set-up a procedure for periodic reporting and (5) provide data for basic policy decisions about future versions of the program. These objectives were reflected in the range of evaluation activities initiated. They included on-site discussions, review of project materials, review of reports and other data gathering forms developed by the project, the design and application of several forms designed for this evaluation, interviews in person and by telephone of project personnel, youths, families, and others associated with the general and intensive probation departments. These activities are described in detail below:

#### A. Site visits and interviews with personal visits on February 24, and 25th, March 11, April 18, 19, May 30, 31 and June 21

This evaluator became familiar with the staff director, staff, some clients, and some client families. Discussions included a review of goals and operations, issues of concern to clients and their families, problems relevant to reporting, supervision and control, and concerns of all relevant actors in the project. Formal interviews were held with project staff and management, ten youths and one group of five. There were also interviews with four parents.

Most of these interviews and discussions were taped. The entire project demonstrated full cooperation, a readiness for and acceptance of feedback in all forms, and an eager interest in what revisions the project may make in future versions.



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2. Monthly Statistical Sheet: This form (See Form E) was introduced to give the administration as well as the evaluator basic statistical information concerning the project. It is helpful for case assignment as well as for following the discharge or assignment of new cases.
3. Case Record Summary: This form (See Form C) was used primarily by the evaluator to summarize and condense data and information collected from case records, probation officers meetings, consultants' monthly reports, et cetera. This form was also useful in analyzing data of IPU cases and comparing them with the general probation cases.
4. Monthly Court Disposition Form: This form (See Form D) was useful in collecting data concerning court disposition and was the basis for comparative data needed to assess the project's impact on institutionalization. The data was collected by the project's administration.

D. Reliability and Validity

The data collected through materials supplied by the department and through forms designed for this evaluation have not been tested for reliability or validity. The scope of this evaluation did not suggest that such testing would be cost-effective. Yet, we were supplied with time sheets for non-project staff members whenever we asked for them, and did get some sense of the project's departure from typical patterns of the probation department through those forms. With any self-reporting device there are built-in flaws, yet, because there were no punitive measures inferred or implied, because such forms were intended as a review rather than as a monitoring device, and, finally because there were significant variations each week and in each probation officers' responses, we are able to accept these reports at face value. That is, the general cooperativeness of all staff members is again reflected in their willingness to be frank on untested and experimental data collection instruments.

E. Limitations

As noted above, the statistical quality of these findings is limited due to the scope of the project. That quality is also limited, due to the plan approved in our initial proposal. We have not attempted to evaluate the individual performance of individual probation officers participating in this project.



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Nor have we assessed the impact of the project in strictly behavioral terms or in terms of the activities of individual clients. Yet the project's organizational impact, its intra-organizational structure, and its procedures and treatment modalities have been described.

Neither the original program proposal, nor our evaluation effort, devoted enough attention to the range of effects the court system has on every phase of this operation. Thus, juvenile court judges should have been included in the definition and clarification of goals of the project, and thus they should have been projected as limiting agents in terms of the restrictions and discretion they retain over not only intake but also the specific elements of the program designed for individual children. A more detailed discussion of the courts as an unexpected factor limiting the impact of the project occurs later in this report.

Our experience with the time sheet form (Form A) is a special case. In that case we would recommend several changes, based on responses, which suggest the results of an informal validity test. We would condense individual counselling and client counselling and would condense other activity with travel with client. All activities from individual counselling through travel would be in one large category of direct work with clients, while those activities from staff meetings through supervisor consulting and others would be in another category of indirect client support services. A number of respondents condensed the activities as we now suggest, and the forms are clearer when their responses are so aggregated. Finally, the dual categories of direct and indirect demonstrate the kind of support tasks which make the first category a priority reflecting the sense of priorities this evaluation has elicited from staff and clients.

This time-sheet would be most useful to management in cross-checking how the intensive probation unit contrasts with general probation. Since the flexibility of intensive treatment allows for more responsive and direct service to youngsters, the general probation service may show shifts overtime in greater emphasis on the first, rather than indirect, category of activities.

F. Feedback Utilization

The project and the department proved most ready and willing to accept feedback when it was provided. Certain plans have changed as a result of the interim report and subsequent communications, while others, due to departmental priorities, have not changed. Thus, for example, the project will continue with funding from the county as a training project - much as we suggested it might become in our interim report.



Also, the reporting procedures have lessened the amount of staff time spent in preparing reports, again as we recommended. There does not seem to be much more clarity on intake criteria, nor does the project plan a different pattern of group treatment, a new pattern of assigning cases regardless of sex, or an increased intake of females - each of which were recommended earlier.

In sum, this evaluation effort received the full cooperation, attention and interest and cooperation on the part of the director, the staff, the consultants and the rest of the department.

#### ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

From an early planning phase, in May 1973, the project continued to operate under the directorship of Mr. Anthony Guarna, Chief Probation Officer. The staff consists of four probation officers recruited from the general department: Winifred Backlund, Gary R. Ross, James Foster, and Steve Custer, under Mr. Robert Cannon, Supervisor. The staff and director operate as a sub-unit within the larger department, responding to referrals from that department and drawing upon outside consultants. The project regularly meets as a team with one or more of its regular consulting staff: Dr. Robert Gaukler, Psychiatrist, Dr. Aida Seltzer, Psychologist and Pat Burland, Social Worker.

Activities outlined in the interim report seem to have continued. That is, the staff and consultants have devised an individualized program for each of the youths referred to the IPU; the staff operates as a team in reviewing cases already admitted and in screening new cases; individuals and the staff-team provide in-house consulting to the rest of the department. The project as a whole seems to have impact on the greater department, on other staff members, on traditional procedures, as well as on its clients, their families, communities, and associated social service agencies. Most of that impact could be described as child advocacy, with a strong monitoring and review component.

Individual probation officer case loads have ranged from four to ten youngsters, with delinquency patterns ranging from larceny to runaway to incorrigibility. Each case is treated individually. That is, some cases demand an average as much as nine hours per week per officer, and others average one to two hours per week. The cases are distributed over a large geographic area and travel time ranges from four to eleven hours per week. Yet each case is matched to the skills, sex, or racial background of the probation officer, and, again as a form of individualization, the geographic range is somewhat explainable.

#### Intake Criteria and Description of Client Population

At first review the intake criteria appeared to be primarily procedural. That is, criteria outlined in the initial proposal were applied, but not clarified in the course of application. It seemed that, although a careful review of each potential case was conducted, the criteria ....



were primarily subjective and suggestive. The primary criterion then apparent was "whether or not the youth would otherwise be institutionalized"

This initial impression reflected observations and interviews. It did not encompass a review of the client population served by the project. That review, reflected in Table I, suggests far more specific intake criteria than the discussions and interviews would alone support. The review also did not account for specific intervention by the courts. Ten of the forty-eight cases were mandated by the juvenile court judges. That is, the court took the initiative and decided to assign the case to the unit. These decisions made it more difficult for staff to develop their own intake criteria. Noting this, a discussion of the effects of those criteria - as if they were experimentally applied and intended for scientific testing - would not be valid. If over twenty percent of the total number is so uncontrolled, the experimental evidence is minimal. On the other hand, there is evidence that the total sample differs in many important ways from the universe of youths in general probation. Those differences are intriguing both for what they suggest about the specific activities of IPU staff and for what they imply about the implicit, non-experimental application of the subjective criteria described in this and earlier reports, as well as in the initial program proposal.

Table I compares the IPU population with the total population of youths passing through the Juvenile Probation Department in 1973. Since the calendar for the program and the department were not the same - the program beginning with the fiscal year and the departmental data beginning with the calendar year - the data is not strictly comparable. We suggest, however, that the figures are dramatic enough to suspend the formal rules about comparability of data. Therefore, leaving aside specific statistical tests, the following conclusions are evident from a review of Tables I & II.

- a. Measures of family disorganization suggest that IPU clients come from far more severely damaged domestic environments. Less than half as many IPU clients come from two-parent family living situations over twice the general probation percentage come from families with the mother as the only parent at home. Six times as many IPU clients come from foster homes, than those in general probation; five times as many in independent arrangements; almost three times as many with a step-parent.
- b. Measures of previous contact with the juvenile justice system even more dramatically suggest the difference between IPU and general probation. Whereas general probation deals primarily - 78.4% - with youths with no previous police contact, IPU deals exclusively with youths with some police history.

TABLE I

## COMPARISON OF IPU CLIENT POPULATION WITH GENERAL POPULATION

## FAMILY LIVING ARRANGEMENT

CATEGORY	IPU#	GEN#	IPU%	GEN%	%DIFFERENCE
<u>Total</u>	48	1376	100%	100%	
Male	40	1109	83.3	80.59	
White	29	865	72.5	77.8	
Non-white	11	246	27.5	22.1	
Female	8	267	16.6	19.4	
White	6	207	75	77.5	
Non-white	2	60	25	22.4	
<u>Living Arrangements</u>					
Male with both parents	11	686	22.9	49.8	+2.175
Female with both parents	2	139	4.1	10.1	+2.46
Total with both parents	13	825	27.08	59.9	+2.21
Male with mother only	18	178	37.5	12.9	-2.9
Female with mother only	1	55	2	3.9	+1.95
Total with mother only	19	233	39.5	15.9	-2.48
Male with one step-parent, one natural parent	6	80	12.5	5.8	-2.15
Female with one step-parent, one natural parent	4	22	8.3	3.59	-5.2
Total with one step-parent, one natural parent	10	102	20.8	7.4	-2.8
Males in foster homes	3	12	6.25	.8	-7.8
Females in foster homes	1	7	2	.5	-4
Total in foster homes	4	19	8.3	1.3	-6.38
In independent arrangements	2	10	4.1	.7	-5.85

NOTE: % difference denotes the ratio between IPU and general probation statistics.  
A positive ration denotes a ratio in favor of the general probation figures; a negative ratio denotes a ratio in favor of IPU figures.

TABLE II

## COMPARISON OF IPU CLIENT POPULATION WITH GENERAL POPULATION

## PRIOR COURT REFERRALS

CATEGORY	IPU#	GEN#	IPU%	GEN%	%DIFFERENCE
<u>Male</u>					
None	0	846	0	76%	0
One	14	136	29.1	12.2	2.38
Two to four	15	75	31.2	6.7	4.65
Five or more	11	14	22.9	1.2	19.0
<u>Female</u>					
None	0	234	0	87.6	0
One	3	24	37.5	8.9	4.21
Two to four	4	5	50	1.8	27.7
Five or more	1	0	12.5	0	8
<u>Totals both sex</u>					
None	0	1080	0	78.4	0
One	17	160	35.4	11.6	3.05
Two to four	19	80	39.5	5.8	6.8
Five or more	12	14	25	1.0	25

NOTE: % difference denotes the ratio between IPU and general probation statistics.  
A positive ration denotes a ratio in favor of the general probation figures; a negative ratio denotes a ratio in favor of IPU figures.



This is particularly dramatic when one notes that twenty-five times the number of general probation youth have had five or more referrals. While one cannot generalize and say that IPU youths have twenty-five times the problems of their peers on general probation, such figures obviously imply a quantitative difference so extreme as to call for a qualitatively different program.

In summary, the program seems to deal with the target population it proposed to deal with: youths with a longer history of delinquency, with more severe family problems, and a worse prognosis than the general population of probated juveniles.

Project Impact

A variety of such qualitative effects are visible in the project's activities. Such effects may be termed impacts, due to the effect of the client population, the program design, or the kinds of interaction needed to meet the needs of that population. For convenience, we break these impacts into three categories: (1) change in the number and percentage of youth committed; (2) a change in detention schedule and (3) a change on the clients' criminal justice behavior.

1. Impact on the number of youths committed? To answer this question we compared the number of and percentage of youths institutionalize before and after implementation of the project (See Table VI). The data was collected through official reports of the department's detention center, Montgomery Hall. Table VI represents those figures. They demonstrate a major decrease in the number of commitments. The degree to which such figures are meaningful, or to which their meaning may be attributed to the activities of the project, is somewhat unclear. Whether the percentage drop in institutionalized youths represents a decision by judges, by general probation staff, by IPU staff, or by the state institutions - themselves undergoing change - may not be absolutely determined, based on available data. But, that drop occurred does suggest a dimension of project impact which was according to plan, and may have been a result of the project's service to youth, to general probation staff, or to juvenile justice authorities in the region.

2. Impact on the number and rate of youths detention: In this county youths are generally detained twenty-one days for detention and adjudication hearings. Thereafter, they may remain in detention for a short time, pending assignment to institutions. Because this project receives youngsters from detention directly, it may have effected some slight changes in the total number of days in detention.

TABLE III

Committed to Institutions through IPU

Within		
1-3 months	4	8.3%
3-6 months	4	8.3%
6-9 months	2	4.16%
Committed	10	***
total		20.83%

TABLE IV

Times Referred to Court While in IPU

	TOTALS	TIMES REFERRED	1	2 OR MORE
Female	8	7	1	0
Male	40	23	11	6
Total	43	30	12	6

TABLE V

Description of IPU Client Population

<u>Duration of Treatment</u>	<u>( Base of 48 Cases )</u>	
1-3 months	11	22.916%
3-6 months	10	20.83%
6-9 months	7	14.583%
9-12 months	20	41.6%

TABLE VI

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION BEFORE  
AND AFTER IPU PROJECT

	<u>INSTITUTIONALIZED</u>			<u>TOTAL # YOUNGSTERS IN CONTACT</u>	<u>% INSTITUTIONALIZED</u>		
	<u>State</u>	<u>Private</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>State</u>	<u>Private</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jan-June 1973 ( 6 Months )	14	43	57	239	6%	17.9%	23.9%
July-Dec. 1973 ( 6 Months )	10	30	40	250	4%	12%	16%
Jan-Mar. 1974 ( 3 Months )	1	8	9	95	1%	8.4%	9.48%



3. Impact on criminal behavior. Ten out of a total of 48 were committed in the course of the program. This number could be either high or low, depending on the reading. The program accepted youths with more severe problems than initially anticipated; the program was ordered, by the courts, to accept some who might not have been otherwise admitted; the program staff went through an extensive and exhaustive review of each case and made an institutional choice as carefully as possible. On the other hand, a failure rate of 20.8% is not a particularly favorable comment. Whether such a rate is, in fact, a failure, or whether, in contrast, a "success" ratio of 79.16% measures anything more than a years experience in an experiment will - must - await long-term follow-up research. The real impact of such a program cannot be measured in the course of one year, and the statistics presented in Tables III and IV are purely descriptive and for accounting purposes only. It could be used for future evaluations of this project.

PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

Based on discussions and formal data gathering devices, the activities herein described are described in two ways: First a description of the kind and degree of contact, between probation officer and youth, families, schools, employers, etc., are described subjectively, in terms of what people see themselves doing. Then, a review of worksheets developed by and with this evaluation effort describes the variety of activities in quantitative terms.

The role developed by the staff in this project is a complex and highly individualized one. Ranging from big brother, child advocate, family surrogate, counsellor, teacher, paralegal advisor and limit-setter, each staff member gets to intimately know his subjects. As one staff member was described by one of his clients, "he knows me well and keeps me out of trouble". Another youth summarized it, "I can talk to him without fear".

This closeness sometimes presents problems, since some youths resent it and sense it is an untoward invasion of freedom. "He's too much around", is a complaint rarely heard in general probation.

Family contacts are also intense and extensive. As one staff member describes it, "you almost become one of the family". Again, there are occasional problems with "professional judgement", as staff are sometimes called on to work with family problems extending well beyond the youth-client himself. Both the frequency and the intensity of these contacts are well beyond the general probation experience of experienced staff.



Some families seem to discharge themselves of responsibility when dealing with their children, and the ready availability of a probation officer with time and resources, make this pattern too accessible in some cases.

It is in setting limits to this kind of contact, in maintaining some professional distance and providing a professional support function, that the panel of consultants seems to serve a major role. The minutes of the meetings of staff with consultants show the diagnostic and therapeutic skills needed in this kind of intense counselling. It is in such meetings that the theoretical models available through experts allow the staff to view their own range of services critically and with imagination. Comments such as "this young person needs more direct confrontation", or "this one needs less pressure and more distance", suggest the clarity that professional outsiders have brought. There have been ten meetings during which eighteen cases were discussed, four of them brought twice before this group. The meetings have also dealt with most of those who became chronic problems and eventually were committed. There was some indication of the need to make the staff goals more realistic, more critical, and more objective and in some cases there was indication of the child's eventual commitment because of the child's need for a structured setting. This group seems to have been extremely helpful to staff morale, since the staff constantly felt the pressure of the newness and demandingness of the job, and of the courts' seeming lack of attentiveness or interest in the probation officers increased professional judgement.

An analysis of time-sheets for several weeks this Spring further details the kinds of activities in which the staff was involved. Table VII is a condensation of individual time sheets, actually collected over six weeks, with typical weeks listed here, and average hours in selected activities listed within the forms. In a random month - February 1974 - the number of cases remained stable; the rough allocation of staff energy remained fairly stable between client-centered, management oriented, and administrative; and the general allocation of resources reflected extreme differentiation among individual cases. For example, the time spent with individual clients ranged - for each probation officer - from fifteen minutes to nine or twelve hours in a given week. In a six week time span, from April through most of May, 1974, the same patterns occurred. Perhaps as a result of the interim report, or perhaps through an exogenous cyclical pattern, the case load was slightly higher - ranging from six to ten cases per officer - but this increase was directly proportional to the hours reported by the officers - an increase of five to seven percent.

Comparable data on non-project staff, working in the general probation program, suggest that the rough balance of project staff activities typified those of all staff members. That is, the largest portion of staff time was with individual youngsters, with parent or family counselling time, travel, telephone and reporting time, and discussions with schools or employers demanding a decreasing proportion of each members work week.

TABLE VII

CONDENSATION OF WEEKLY TIME SHEETS  
IPU STAFF

<u>Week</u> <u>IPU Beginning</u>	<u>Case Load</u> <u>Per P.O.</u>	<u>Individual</u> <u>Counselling</u> <u>Range</u>	<u>Family</u> <u>Counselling</u> <u>Range</u>	<u>Travel</u>	<u>Reporting</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Range</u> <u>Per</u> <u>Case</u>
2/4/74	7	11.25 (0-3)	4 (0-3)	7.25	4.44	4.25	2.25 12.25
2/18/74	7	5 (0-2)	3.37 (0-3)	3.94	2.94	3.94	0-9
4/1/74	7.5	8.66 (0-25)	5.75 (0-2)	7.68	3.18	1.94	1.5- 6.75

GENERAL PROBATION STAFF

Typical Work

13	8.44 (0-2)	3.75 (0-2)	7.75	4.19	2.5	1-8.7
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What is particularly significant, and could be expected given the staff-client ratio of the project, is that staff members in the project have the flexibility to offer each case up to approximately twelve man-hours of counselling. Non project staff simply do not have that option.

A number of other observations of the staff-time allocation may be made. Even without these data, our interim report noted what seemed an excessive amount of time spent in preparing reports - weekly, monthly, and at other periods. In February staff members ranged from one to seven hours a week in reporting time. In April, with a slightly heavier case load, they managed to cut their reporting time to an average of 3 hours. Since reports serve as progress markers, it seems that the staff was able to condense its observations as the project itself progressed, using either a short-hand of recurring pithy statements of a short-form of adding new statements to already documented observations. It may be hoped that the forms devised for time-charting staff and case work enabled some of this condensation.

As noted above, and previously, the cases are distributed over a wide region, and require a relatively large amount of travel time. The ratio of travel time to case load remained roughly constant from February through May, and this seems to reflect the project's continued attempt to match personalities between youth and probation officer, even at the expense of some travel. Again, such a match reflects the objective of the project, rather than its goals. An alternative to institutionalization must have the flexibility to "make the service meet the need" of individual clients, rather than make the clients fit the convenience of individual staff members.

Finally, the table illustrates relatively typical weeks from those surveyed. That is, a "light", "heavy" and "medium" week of project activities is contrasted to a "typical" week of general probation services. Case loads varied in the course of the project, increasing slightly in the Spring. Yet work in individual counselling sessions was not directly related to the absolute number of cases, since, as the project matured, previous relationships between probation officers and their clients took less time to maintain than to initiate. As would be expected, work with families and other agencies not represented in this summary, did tend to increase as clients "matured" in their contact with staff. This would be expected due to an increased advocacy role, in which staff - familiar with the needs of clients - acted as negotiators with other contacts in assisting clients to self-initiated and generally therapeutic goals. A review of these time sheet data imply that, due to a lower client-staff ratio, there ought to be some weeks in which there is less activity just as there ought to be other weeks in which there are more extensive demands on staff time. Such variation means that clients' needs may be a direct and un-impaired priority; that an individual client can demand time from a staff member without sacrificing other clients' needs; and that, at times, those demands may not be particularly heavy in the course of a single week.



We noted in the interim report that staff meetings occasionally serve as in-service training sessions for the general probation staff. Either because the form was inadequate or because such meetings are often informal, and hence not reported, the project staff - somewhat surprisingly - did not report a significant proportion of their time in meetings. That some staff members report general staff meetings in the same week that other members report no meetings suggests that the weakness was ours, in instructing the staff in the use of the reporting form.

#### Unexpected Factors

In our interim report we noted that the training function of the project seemed to be unexpected - anticipated only through the budgeted use of professional consultants. This remains the primary unexpected factor. The quality of personnel available to the project, its administrative structure within the overall department, and its approach to the problem appear to have been consistent from its initial plan. Yet the implications of its evaluation process - a consensual decision making review of new or current cases - has had a major impact on training; and training appears to be a major new thrust for the project in the future.

In neither the level or timing of funding, nor the allocation of staff resources to meet the needs of clients has the project departed from patterns planned initially or patterns which seem to pre-exist in the department. More specifically, the availability of staff to work intensively with few clients was an intended resource and has had its intended impact on those clients. That availability, and the accessibility of consultant professionals, is an intended output in the next phase of the project. Funding has catalyzed the need for such a resource but did not point to other needs.

In a summative review of all the data collected one factor does stand out as a question for further research and internal evaluation activity. That factor is the turn-over rate for intensive probation. We cannot make absolute cost-effective statements because that rate has been so low in this project. On the surface, intensive probation, with forty-one active cases and a total funded cost of slightly less than \$61,000, seems very economical in contrast to traditional forms of institutionalization. At about \$125. per month for each case, the project costs far less than most institutional care - which runs approximately \$600. per month in the region. Yet such figures - and they are the only data available for cost-effectiveness evaluation - ignore the turn-over of cases in institutions. Since most institutional care is short or medium term (two to six months), it may be estimated that the project is only slightly less expensive than its institutional alternative and, therefore, far more expensive than general probation.



Yet such estimates are notoriously superficial and dangerous. Such estimates also have the facile quality of ignoring the more substantive and organizational impacts we note with this project. If youngsters can be served at a slight improvement of cost-effectiveness, and, at the same time, the entire juvenile probation department can be improved at no additional cost, that initial gain in cost-effectiveness is magnified and multiplied in the activity of a far larger number of probation officers.

It is just such fuzzy and unclear generalizations as this which have become the unexpected factors with which the project and this evaluation has dealt. The direct issues - the quality of service and the variety of responses in an individualized project - have been apparent from the outset. It is the indirect issues - such as cost - effectiveness, turnover, training impact and overall impact on general probation - which have been both unexpected and which seem to have yielded even more positive results. It is not clear that, when the project was initially conceived, it was planned to fall somewhere between general probation and intense institutionalization. It does fall in that limbo - in terms of service to clients as well as service to the probation unit as a whole. It is that limbo quality which portends the greatest benefits the project may yet offer - to both youngsters and probation officer staff.

In limiting expected impacts to those activities directly related to the youngsters served by the unit an evaluation would miss the more important effects of this project. Beyond its impact on youth, it has had a most significant impact on general probation, a slightly less, and less direct, impact on criminal justice services in the region; and, perhaps, an impact on other youth services in the region.

As noted in the interim report and elsewhere in this report, the project has impacted the general probation services through a team building effort, a readiness and easy access to consultants, and a flexible administrative pattern. The effect of a team is only indirectly apparent to youngsters - individual probation officers still work with individual cases. Yet this individual work now a result of a group review of cases - both formally in weekly meetings and informally in often daily discussions with other team members. The more significant effect of a team is in the way the staff provides a review service to the rest of the department. When cases appear to be intransigent, they are referred by general probation staff to the intensive probation unit. That referral calls upon a careful team review - with the general probation officer - of all facets of an individual case. In the course of that review, according to the minutes of such review meetings and according to our direct observations, some very substantive consulting takes place.



IPU staff, with greater flexibility in their time and work-load, can suggest a wider range of treatments than a general probation officer might otherwise devise - different forms of family contact, new styles of interaction with employer or school, a wider range of other social service agencies, or specific contacts in local criminal justice agencies. Even if, as is most often the case, after such a review the IPU does not accept a referral, that case has gained a far broader and more careful perspective in the available modes of treatment as a result of the initial referral.

A corollary impact on the general probation staff is the teamwork presented in review sessions. Consensual decision making considerably increases the repertoire of behaviors normally encountered in probation work. The IPU staff responds to the hierarchy - works quite well with supervisory and administrative leadership - but it also provides a model mode of staff interaction, allowing the leadership a guiding rather than regulatory role. Such decentralization in decision making frees the project leaders for a more consultive and less authoritarian function and signifies to non project staff the degree of flexibility and responsiveness that might be available even without project participation.

In its impact on other criminal justice services in the region the project has been less distinct. That is, project staff have been more readily accessible to local police and courts, have worked more and more often with a wider range of legal and social service agencies, and have acted - increasingly - as advocates for their clients. In the course of such work they seem to have gained the experience of long-term staff members in a relatively short time. They have also provided other agencies with new and client-centered perspective in developing appropriate treatments. Such assistance must not be underestimated, nor can it be more than estimated since it has not been planned as a specific objective.

Finally, in its impact on other youth services in the region the project has had less direct effect. It seems to typify a broader thrust of the department as a whole, rather than to have direct effect on institutions and non-departmental services. That is, it has not directly effected change in detention, yet the department as a whole has been moving toward a shorter detention cycle. It might have affected institutional care indirectly by moving the department as a whole ~~has been moving~~ toward a variety of de-institutionalized services, and lower the commitment rate. If we could say that more family counselling by institutional staff were a direct result of this project, for example, we could attribute direct impact. That cannot be said, but, instead, we can point out a departmental priority for greater interaction with families by both institutional and general probation staff.



That priority was not initiated by the project, but the project is a visible and important evidence of a previous and highly impactful departmental decision.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN INTENSIVE PROBATION

The use of intensive probation around the country has increased significantly. While the differences in method and organization are not to be ignored, there seems to be two different directions. First, the highly individualized, one-to-one intensive approach, based on a matching of the needs of the delinquent with the resources of the probation staff. A project of this sort is currently operating in Cambridge, Massachusetts under the directorship of Mr. David Lilos. This project has developed a variety of indicators that relates the background of the delinquent to the resources of the project. Similar projects have been tried in California, using the "I-level approach". This approach categorizes the youth on a scale of maturity in an attempt to match him with the proper staff and program.

The second intensive probation design is based in a group approach. These programs are geared to provide group - peer - pressure on the youth in order to maintain him in the community. Two programs of this sort are operating in the Allegheny County Juvenile Court. They are the Twin River Project (TRP) and the Northside Project (NP). Both have been using the GGI approach in their work with individual clients.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned earlier, it is too early to assess the full impact of this project on the reduction of commitment to institutions or on the eventual maintenance of the project's subjects in the community. Early results, however, show that such a project is feasible; this year of the project has demonstrated a need in the county and the county court and criminal justice system has been ready to adopt it as an alternative; diversion of this project is a viable and practical alternative. The mere fact that 38 out of the 48 clients are still not in institutions suggests that this project has much merit and should continue. This first year has definitely justified the project's existence and demonstrated unexpected impact on its clients, its staff, and its host agency. The project's contributions through different team activities, new forms of treatment, improved skills in the staff, and uniquely resourceful roles in the general probation operation, have been both significant and surprising.

If we believe that these were youths otherwise intended for institutions, the recidivism rate of 20% is a low figure - very low when contrasted to that achieved by most institutional recidivism rates which in most cases exceeds 40%. A number of elements seem to have contributed to this success. For example, the strength of the department, prior and during this project, under the leadership of an able director - Mr. Tony Guarna - with a staff that is interested and eager to learn and adapt.



new behaviors; the quality and role of the consultants, and their ability to respond to the needs of the staff - as skill developers and trainers rather than, simply, diagnosticians - seems to have made a major difference.

These findings support the following recommendations:

- A) That the project continue, and it is rewarding to note that the project will continue with county support;
- B) That the project continue to work with and within the rest of the department, and to expand its function as a model and training, consultative and specialized sub-agency;
- C) That a team of consultants remain available, with a more specific function added, ~~that~~ a group consultant, who would add a focus on small group interaction ~~be added~~ to improve the cooperative success already gained;
- D) That further support programs in the community might be initiated, since the failures of this program seem to have had little support other than this program;
- E) That in rotating future staff assignments, a percentage ought to rotate at a slower speed, to maintain continuity in program and in approach;
- F) That in maintaining consultants, again, the experience of the program should be capitalized and some efforts be made for continuity;
- G) That the program begin to operate more independently as a solid unit, more as a group, as a semi-autonomous arm of the agency with effective voice in framing criteria for admission and case review.
- H) That more cooperation is necessary with the court system, possibly with the help of consultants and other professionals;
- I) Professional staff need autonomy and decision-making powers, and this has been provided for them through the department, but need be extended through the court system and the judges.



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For further and more significant impact evaluation, it would be necessary to keep track and maintain contact with those youths who have worked with the program.

These findings have two main implications for future program development. The first deals with what seems to have been an assumed priority: the selection criteria for clients in an IPU program. The second deals with what we have found as an unexpected result: the training function of an IPU program nested within a general probation department.

Selection criteria in this project were not clearly and specifically devised, yet, on the whole, it seems that a group of clients were served as adequately as possible by a group of IPU staff members. The process for selection extended far beyond the application of a set of formal qualifications for admission. We note that a central criterion for any program which attempts to treat individuals as individuals is and ought to be such a process. The review committee, consisting of all staff members, operated as an effective screening device to determine whether the staff had the inter-personal skills to meet the needs of prospective clients. That is the sum of all admission criteria and is, in effect, a substantive criterion in itself. We also note that the clients chosen were significantly different from the population served by general probation. That difference suggests the degree to which the staff actively sought clients who would otherwise be institutionalized. Thus the informal and fuzzy criterion - "would they otherwise be in institutions" - was fulfilled. And thus, as a guiding principle for the substantive inter-personal criteria, it served as a benchmark. Therefore, the final aspect of this implication is that the staff for an IPU project ought to be as responsible and as professional as the staff was in this IPU. Intensive probation is not merely general probation with a lower case load. It is an alternative to institutionalization, as demonstrated here. Such an alternative makes significantly different demands on staff skills.

A second implication stems from the first. That is the intensity of an IPU project demands more skills than are generally found in general probation case work. Those skills can be learned. Those skills, when practiced, ought to support better treatment in general probation. Work in an IPU project, supported adequately by consultants, maintained adequately with a different kind of case load, organized adequately with effective team work, provides an excellent opportunity to gain and develop those skills.



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Furthermore, that opportunity has been available with this project - and should be available in others - to interface with general probation staff members. Whether as a model, as a service unit, or as a developmental change agent, the IPU's catalytic function within a general probation department. That catalyst is best maintained as a service unit to delinquent youths. Yet it is also justified as a service unit to probation officers and other staff members in frequent contact with youngsters in trouble.

**END**