

PREVENTION

D.2. Community Crime Prevention

NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS

A Program Summary

Submitted to the Executive Committee
of the
Delaware Agency to Reduce Crime

by

Division of Evaluation - DARC

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I. Introduction - A Perspective on Prevention Projects

The problems associated with juvenile crime are not new. Since the first juvenile court was established in Illinois in 1899, the treatment and prevention of delinquency has been especially tenuous.

The early hopes and expectations that juvenile courts would drastically reduce youthful crime have been largely unmet. In 1957, the juvenile court referral rate was 19.8 cases per 1,000 children 10 through 17 years of age; by 1972, the rate had jumped to 33.6.¹

The problem of youth crime has reached a serious level. Persons under the age of eighteen now account for forty-five percent of all arrests for serious crimes and for twenty-three percent of all arrests for violent crimes.² This increase in juvenile crime is primarily responsible for the courts claim that they are ill-equipped to deal with overloaded case schedules. Schur (1973)³ and Lemert (1971)⁴ have argued that new structures outside the official juvenile justice system are necessary to provide services to less serious cases freeing the courts to direct their attention toward more "hard core" offenders.

There have been numerous national and state level proposals for programs dealing with the prevention of youth crimes and the diversion of juveniles from the criminal justice system. The rationale for funding such programs seems to be justified.

Recent criminological theory and research regarding delinquency, the development of social reaction theory and shifts in types and number of offenses being committed by youth, have all provided a strong case for diversion.⁵

There is, however, an additional perspective on this issue.

While there seems to be widespread agreement about the desirability of diverting youth from the juvenile justice system and a sizeable mobilization of federal, state and local resources for the development of community diversion programs, there is as yet no systematic evaluation of the consequences of diverting youth compared to simply releasing them or maintaining them in the justice system. The little research which has addressed this question has focused exclusively upon a comparison of the recidivism rates with no attention to other postulated "effects" of this processing practice on youth.⁶

The results of evaluations of prevention programs have been equivocal. Several have reported apparently greater success for these projects than for the more traditional processing. Others have indicated that a "widening of the nets" has occurred. They believe that youngsters who would not normally be retained in the juvenile justice system are constituting a large portion of project case loads. On the whole, no comprehensive conclusions can be drawn from the studies of prevention programs. There does seem to be agreement that the deeper an offender penetrates the existing criminal justice system and the more frequently the youth is recycled through that system, the greater is the probability that his criminal activity will continue. If this premise is accepted, it then becomes necessary to provide alternative programs for each step in the justice system process so that the probability that an offender's penetration will be minimized.

In an attempt to provide these alternatives, the Delaware Agency to Reduce Crime funded nine projects under category D-2 Community Crime Prevention. Each was evaluated by the Division

of Evaluation and these individual reports served as the basis for this program summary. The 1975 Comprehensive Plan objectives (the year in which most of the projects were first funded) were reviewed and assessed in terms of project performance.

II. Objectives and Accomplishments

Objective 1. To reduce duplication and fragmentation of services to youth in trouble.

Accomplishment. Each of the nine projects functioned as discrete entities. There was a paucity of coordinated planning among agencies resulting in a lack of knowledge transfer between agencies. It did not appear that the allocation of funds to these projects lessened or perhaps even addressed, in an organized manner, the issue of fragmentation of services.

It was equivocal whether the duplication of services to youth had been reduced as a result of allocations to the prevention area. It was possible that duplication of services had been increased. There appeared to be at least four DARC funded counseling projects which had the potential of serving identical clients in the northern Wilmington area.⁸ Three of the projects had been funded with prevention monies and the fourth, providing basically the same type of service, was funded with diversion funds. It would seem appropriate that in the future, the problems associated with service duplication be addressed in a broader context than simply double enrollments. Two additional concerns are; (1) the duplication of services within a specific geographic area,

and (2) the possible multi-servicing of parents and guardians.

Consideration should be given so that specific geographic areas do not receive disproportionate services at the expense of other areas with demonstrated needs. As it appears that the possibility of service duplication exists, consideration should be given to the unification of agencies providing similar or identical services. This is important for three reasons:

1. Duplicated administrative costs constitute service drains on direct service allocations. In conjunction with the doubling of personnel, there are duplications in records and office needs.

2. It is possible that projects could be involved with the same parents while dealing with different children.

3. It is possible that a client entering a project at one age could be shifted to another project after establishing relationships with workers simply because an age requirement made him no longer acceptable to the initial project.

Objective 2. To improve the quality and scope of services available.

Accomplishment. The traditional approach to prevention involves participation in programs within a community based setting. Typical of these programs are counseling centers and work placement projects. The underlying tenet of these programs is the belief that if the youthful offender is provided with an acceptable alternative to criminal activity, the desire to participate in criminal actions can be redirected into more socially acceptable behaviors. Most of the programs focus primarily on one aspect of the client's life (e.g., family problems or employ-

ment) and provide a specific type of service to address that problem.

Programs must avoid a "more of the same" approach to treatment and rehabilitation. Time after time traditional treatment models--intensive counseling, therapy, and other "change the offender" types of programs--have been shown to be ineffective. In one analysis of delinquency prevention programs, the John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Education and Human Development concluded that: "...recreation, individual and group counseling, social casework, and the use of detached workers have consistently failed to be shown to be effective methods in the prevention or reduction of juvenile delinquency."⁹

The majority of the projects funded (eight of the nine) presented a standard approach to the problem, that of counseling. While the specific mode of service delivery differed among projects, all except Big Brothers and the New Castle County School/Police workshop specialized in providing counseling services to youth. Of the seven, five projects involved the family in counseling sessions. The Rape Aid and Conrad projects dealt primarily with the client.

It was impossible to determine if the quality of services improved as a result of these projects as no indication as to service quality prior to their existence was available. It would be quite spurious to assume that the simple addition of services improves the quality of a system.

The nine projects provided direct services to 2,522 clients. (Table 1). That number of program participants is, at initial consideration, impressive. Nevertheless, it is important to ascertain of that number, how many would have had no contact or no further contact with the criminal justice system had they not received project services.

TABLE 1

Number of Clients Receiving Direct Project Services
D-2 Category

People's Place II	875
Conrad	640
Turnabout	524
NCC School/Police Workshop	200
Extended Services to Families and Youth	73
Big Brothers	69
Catholic Social Services	68
Rape Aid and Coordination	38
Northeast Demonstration	35
Total	2,522

It would appear paramount that projects demonstrate that their client load is derived from a high risk population; that is, their target group constitutes a population which has a high probability of court contact. It is imperative that projects (and the program area) demonstrate that participants were, in fact, prevented or diverted from something in which they would have participated. Without this capability, the funding of prevention projects would seem untenable. The demonstration of this, unfortunately, is extremely difficult and usually overlooked. It would be implausible to assume that the quality of the criminal justice system had been improved if individuals who would normally be released are now being placed in programs. A plethora of information is beginning to point to the fact that while the number of individuals involved in criminal justice projects is dramatically increasing, the number of crimes and those being detained has not been greatly influenced.

An important consideration in this problem is the source of client referral. Table 2 presents the referral sources for the nine prevention projects.

Of major concern was the dearth of criminal justice referrals. The three highest referral sources were the school, self and family and friends. Known criminal justice referral sources ranked fourth (courts) and total percentage as compared to other agencies was quite low; 250 or 9 percent of a total of 2,655 referrals.

Gibbons and Blake¹⁰, as a result of a review of police departments within Los Angeles county, reported that referrals to community agencies from police and individual systems have increased significantly over the past years but continue to remain relatively low. They believe this to be a national problem. It would seem that this is also a problem in Delaware and deserves attention. Consideration should be given to increasing the number and type of referral sources to encompass more disruptive court or police referred youth.

It is important that criminal justice projects not become dumping areas for individuals who desire to circumvent the problem by passing it on. If school systems (as the major referral source) are unable to provide services, a reasonable alternative would be to assist districts in coping with the problem as close to the source as possible and within the school system.

Objective 3. To improve citizen knowledge of and involvement in the criminal justice system.

TABLE 2

Client Referral Sources

Program Area - D2

	People's Place II	N.E. Demon.	NCC Sch/Pol Wkshop	Cath. Soc. Serv.	Rape Aid and Coord.	Conrad	Big. Bro.	Turn- about	Ext. Serv. to Fam. and Youth	Total
Self	273		200	3		50			16	422
Family and Friend	122			14		67	20		31	254
Courts	110	2		21		30				163
DHSS	62			12						74
School	56	23		10		583	14		13	699
Police	6					79	2			87
Div. of Mental Health	35			2			10			47
Counselors from People's Place II	28									28
Hospital	27				16					43
Office of Drug Abuse	24									24
Public Health	24									24
Lawyer	14									14
Other Sources	94			3		38	4		13	152
Unknown				3	22			479		584
Total	875	25	200	68	38	847 *	50	479	73	2,655

*Project was funded with additional county and local funds. Figure represents total number of referrals as the number of DARC funded referrals could not be disaggregated. The actual total of DARC referrals was 640.

Accomplishment. The New Castle County workshop and the Rape Crisis Center have provided information services to over 5,500 people.

The Rape Crisis Center has trained seventy-four volunteers and has presented eighty-seven lectures to 5,295 individuals as part of its community information program.

The New Castle County School/Police Workshop directly provided participants with criminal justice information. During the three years that the workshop was extant, over 200 school and police personnel have discussed their mutual concerns through this medium.

In addition to the direct training provided by Newark, 333 individuals have been introduced to the mechanics of the criminal justice system by participating as volunteers in one of the nine projects. These individuals were trained in criminal justice procedures and how they related to the projects performance as necessary information to their volunteer functions.

III. Costs

A rudimentary assessment of the cost per client for the D-2 category was conducted by the evaluation team. The figures in Table 3 present the cost per client for nine projects funded in this area.

TABLE 3

Project Cost Per Client*
Program Area - D 2

<u>Project</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>Cost Per Client</u>
Northeast Demonstration	Case Coordination	\$1,514
Big Brothers	Companionship	687
Catholic Social Services	Counseling	422
Rape Aid and Coordination	Counseling	385
Extended Services to Families and Youth	Counseling	332
Conrad Youth Service	Counseling	233
Turnabout	Counseling	183
People's Place II	Counseling	125
NCC School/Police Workshop	Workshop	14

Based on the total allocation of \$526,470 as depicted in Table 4, the cost per client equaled \$209. This figure is the maximum cost/client to date. Several of the projects are still in operation so that the cost per client will decrease as additional clients receive services.

IV. Project Impact

Due to the illusive nature of "prevention" and the vagueness of program area objectives (D-2) it is virtually impossible to delineate program impact. There is insufficient information relating to crime rates in controlled situations to indicate a measure of effectiveness. A lack of project follow-up further limits the ability to provide statements concerning the value of prevention programming.

*It is important to note that the types of services varied among the different projects as did the length and number of client contacts. The comparison simply provides an indication of the costs per client for different DARC funded agencies attempting to reduce delinquency. However, this assessment does not intend to provide information relating to project effectiveness.

TABLE 4
Budget Allocation
Program Area D-2

Budget Categories	Northeast Damon. (1 Grant)	NCC Police/ Sch. Wkshop (3 Grants)	Rape Aid and Coord. (3 Grants)	Catholic Soc. Serv. (1 Grant)	People's Place II (3 Grants)	Conrad Youth Serv. Ctr. (3 Grants)	Big Brothers (3 Grants)	Ext. Serv. to Fam. and Youth (4 Grants)	Turnabout (3 Grants)	Total
Personnel	\$38,603	0	\$ 7,070	\$23,722	\$ 71,293	\$ 86,779	\$36,601	\$21,472	\$61,144	\$346,684
Consultants	0	0	0	630	275	0	0	0	1,456	\$ 2,361
Travel	0	0	0	370	1,274	0	0	0	973	\$ 2,617
Supplies	0	\$ 504	300	0	3,871	0	1,110	111	3,318	\$ 9,214
Operating Exp.	0	1,499	2,615	900	4,241	0	3,464	249	14,798	\$ 26,766
Equipment	0	0	365	0	3,049	0	0	0	4,816	\$ 8,230
Other	0	0	2,765	230	0	887	800	0	794	\$ 5,476
Federal	\$38,603	\$2,003	\$13,115	\$25,852	\$ 84,003	\$ 87,666	\$41,975	\$21,832	\$87,299	\$402,348
Match	\$14,400	\$ 703	\$ 1,535	\$ 2,872	\$ 26,138	\$ 61,524	\$ 5,438	\$ 2,427	\$ 9,085	\$124,122
Total	\$53,003	\$2,706	\$14,650	\$28,724	\$110,141	\$149,190	\$47,413	\$24,259	\$96,384	\$526,470

One specific difficulty is that projects are funded without respect to a specific problem. It is certainly not surprising that minimal information can be assimilated when considering the fact that little direction or focus is provided in any project description. Project objectives describe the amount of counseling service to be provided but fail to make a bridge as to why. It would appear from the total funds allocated to this area and the types of projects funded (eight of the nine are counseling) that counseling is a panacea for a multitude of problems. The projected 1977 objectives as described in the 1975 Comprehensive Plan (p.400) require the agency "to continue to evaluate and modify existing prevention projects". It would seem reasonable that consideration for funding be based on demonstrated needs and awards made on the potential of the project to accomplish those needs. The majority of projects funded base their premises on the assumed connection that counseling reduces crime. While funds need to be available for the experimentation of novel concepts, care should be taken not to become trapped into faithfully following unproven beliefs or allocating the majority of program energies or resources to areas believed to be intrinsically good.

Individuals' behavior vary for a multitude of reasons. Some individuals violate the law because the peer group on which they are dependent for approval prescribed criminal behavior as the price of acceptance, or because the values which they have internalized are those of a deviant subculture. Other individuals break laws because of insufficient socialization, which has left them at the mercy of any except the most protected of environments. Still others are delinquently acting out internal conflicts, identity struggles, or family crises.

If one accepts the notion that offenders are different from each other in the reason for their law violations the implication follows that attempts to change the offender into a non-offender will vary in ways which are relevant to the cause.¹¹

It is curious that despite a dearth of supportive information validating the of counseling as an instrument of prevention, the focus of our attentions has gone into making counseling a cure-all to our criminal justice youth problems.

V. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. To reduce the chance of duplication of services, counties or municipalities assume a coordination role for those agencies operating within their jurisdictions.

2. Agencies select their service population from high risk target groups in order to assure that monies are not spent involving individuals with the criminal justice system who would normally have no contact or no further contact with that system.

3. The use of volunteers be strictly monitored to assure that the resources spent for their training and maintenance do not outweigh their usefulness.

4. Strong commitments be obtained by projects from referral agencies prior to funding as those projects which relied upon external referral sources frequently had difficulty obtaining a sufficient client load.

5. The Delaware Agency to Reduce Crime require projects to delineate their solutions to crime reduction or system improvement in a clear manner with measurable objectives.

6. Project staff be required to conduct thorough follow-up studies of their clients to assist in demonstrating project impact.

7. The Delaware Agency to Reduce Crime devote a reasonable portion of its resources to novel approaches to the prevention of juvenile delinquency. The majority of prevention monies are presently allocated for counseling practices.

8. Project staff be accountable for designated implementation dates as few counseling projects had developed a full counseling load within six months.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Diversion of Youth from the Juvenile Justice System. U.S. Department of Justice (LEAA), Washington, D.C., April, 1976. p. 1.
- 2 First Comprehensive Plan for Federal Juvenile Delinquency Programs. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., March, 1976. p. 16.
- 3 Edwin Schur, Radical Non-Interventions. Englewood Cliff, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1975.
- 4 Edwin M. Lermert. "The Administration of Justice to Minority Groups in Los Angeles County"; University of California, Pub. in Culture and Society, 2. p. 1-28.
- 5 Diversion of Youth from the Juvenile Justice System, op. cit., p. 1.
- 6 Delbert S. Elliott and Fletcher Blanchard. "An Impact Study of Two Diversion Projects". Unpublished. As reported in Diversion of Youth from the Juvenile Justice System, op. cit., p. 13.
- 7 Northeast Demonstration, New Castle County School/Police Workshop, Rape Aid and Coordination, Catholic Social Services, People's Place II, Conrad Youth Service Center, Big Brothers, Extended Services to Families and Youth, and Turnabout Counseling Center.
- 8 Youth Outreach, Union Baptist, Wilmington Police project and Northeast Demonstration project.
- 9 Diversion of Youth from the Criminal Justice System, op. cit., p. 12.
- 10 Don C. Gibbons and Gerald F. Blake, Evaluating the Impact of Juvenile Diversion Programs. National Criminal Justice Educational Project, Portland, State University, 1975.
- 11 Criminal Justice Monograph. op. cit., p. 124.

END

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