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# crime prevention review

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**RESOURCE DIRECTORY**

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Compendium of Resources and Programs in California*

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# CRIME PREVENTION REVIEW

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# crime prevention review

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## Juvenile Justice and Resource Constraints

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Widespread attention to juvenile justice is sharpening the community's expectations for (a) effective response to the realm of juvenile-related problems, and (b) efficient delivery of services that may be inadequately responsive to these problems. Increased attention leads to enhanced superficial knowledge of the problem—just enough knowledge to be dangerous. Community exposure to the challenges of the juvenile justice system is growing rapidly. This growth occurs at a time when every citizen is induced to formulate personal priorities for the quality of life influenced by the public and private sectors. However, response to the aggregate citizen priority list by the two sectors is dramatically different in character and capacity; market research and product-line decision making in the private sector are not conducted under the pressure of dawn-to-dusk voting booth and legislative arena behavior by fraternities of uncertain and ever-changing membership.

Unfortunately, as interest in hula-hoops and carmel-covered cereal fades into the shadow of Star Trek space station kits, the realities of juveniles and families in need grow in scale and complexity.

This article purports to commit the heretical—the proposal of a *panacea*

in an era of scrutiny, gloom and doom, and "what have you *not* done for me lately?" However, this panacea is reserved for the juvenile justice practitioner and resource allocator. It only seems fair since more than a decade ago a man named Jarvis was as real as a man named Grimm—we are learning that fairy tales read beneath the cloud of personal survival, the muddle of fact and fiction glaring from the TV and that the myopic shadow of the voting booth can come true. This article summarizes an approach and a framework for integrating (a) the realities of juvenile justice service needs, practitioner capacities for service delivery, and the assertions of reform by legislative assemblies and standard-setting bodies with (b) a new set of resource allocation formulas and resource management accountability principles.

Do not be misled—the assertions and suggestions contained in the next few pages require more than faith alone. Unlike the passage of a Proposition 13, they require careful adaptation to the uniquenesses of each community, each agency, and each service population; and they require the professional courage to take the risk of measuring performance against *solicited* standards of both resource efficiency and service effectiveness.

### FORCES IMPACTING JUVENILE JUSTICE

A variety of conflicting forces are at work on the juvenile justice system. While not unknown to most practitioners (and most clients), it is important to sort them out in terms of their impact on possible strategies for system improvement:

**Revenue Reflex Actions** (better known as the "Proposition 13" mentality) represent the process of confusing restrictions on revenue generation with public damnation of government expenditures for services. In many cases this can be averted by the implementation of user or pay-as-you-go fee structures.

**Line-Item Expenditure Horsetrading** is one response to a threatened ceiling on expenditures (or across-the-board percentage increases/decreases). There is a tendency to (a) trade a currently unpopular service area for an unnamed future draft choice, or (b) make a high volume of "nickel and dime" reductions in various line-item budget categories. This process must be replaced by a rational integration of service objectives, required direct and overhead expenditures, and inter-agency or system dependencies for services.

**Dominos** is the childhood game commonly reflected in references to the juvenile "non-system" (because of how poorly it seems to work). While certainly not a system in aerospace terms, actions of each agency in the juvenile justice "non-system" definitely impact each other agency (while private sector lawyers have a capability for seeking their clients, public sector lawyers have some dependence on police activity for the generation of their business). A better picture of system spillover effects can be gained by analysis of *complete* client or program transactions (e.g., passing a student out of third grade has little significance if there is no fourth grade; diversion program costs are meaningless standing alone—their meaning derives from comparison with the alternative processing routes).

**Left Hand—Right Hand** is usually found when playing dominos (above), but tends to be characteristic of internal agency operations or agencies with similar functions operating at several jurisdiction levels (e.g., police-sheriff, state departments of justice and state criminal justice planning agencies). Characterized by the "duplication of effort" criticism, it can be minimized by clearly describing service functions and populations implied in statements of agency objectives (e.g., "crime prevention"). Historical illustrations heavily involve delinquency prevention (especially drug abuse), and a current example is the rush of agencies declaring a war on child abuse. (NOTE: left hand—right hand is often the result of attempts to snatch bunches of Federal funding carrots by redefining agency missions to reflect request-for-proposal specifications.)

**Shell Games** (also known as public agency hit-and-run, blindman's bluff, and who-can-pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey) usually represent a declaration of war prior to taking an inventory of the arsenal and results in fervent prayer that an enemy (pea) will not be found (under the chosen shell). This is most often played during campaigns, budget hearings, grant presentations, personnel appointment hearings, and public speeches at Kiwanis and Rotary Club meetings. Juvenile justice has been particularly plagued by this (witness "wars" on gangs, drug abuse, working mothers, drinking fathers, child abuse, failure in school, and unorthodox religious cults). In part, this problem can be averted by remembering that operational agencies should not represent research and development efforts for some decision-makers' hopes or promises. Operational agencies can assist these decision-makers in resisting the temptation by (a) providing very explicit descriptions of what they can do and are *licensed* to do (agency managers cannot assume that this information is generally known or understood), and (b) developing the rudimentary analytical capability to project responses to these hopes in hard data terms *before* the votes have been cast and the money allocated.

**Therapeutic Handoffs** are present when that statement "we've done all we can do" is heard as a client, file, or request for information from the public is passed along to another agency. This is not a problem if the other agencies in the system are clearly expecting the handoff and understand why they are getting the ball and what to do with it. Ineffective handoffs can be minimized by (a) recognizing and displaying alternative processing routes that reflect the range of decisions available to each agency, and (b) promoting self-contained and general function service units (e.g., Los Angeles county's "Juvenile Justice Center" in which all system components are represented and a constant service area is proscribed).

**Accountability Disco** also known as "C.Y.A." (or "shield your posterior") is often a symptom of the therapeutic handoff and is characterized by a process of spontaneous dancing when confronted with accusatory questions regarding individual or agency performance. There are limitless variations that can be constrained by (a) avoiding conditions in which practitioners with wide discretion are given enough rope to hang themselves and others (e.g., some grant agency project monitors), (b) designing and consistently executing practitioner performance appraisals that are reason-

ably related to service delivery capability (as defined by that practitioner's training, the characteristics of client flow and demands for service, and availability of *appropriate* versus makeshift service modalities), and (c) rewarding agencies and agency managers for system cooperation and long-term performance (as opposed to year-by-year statistics that may or may not reflect accurately the agency's contribution to services for juveniles).

**Who's on First** (?) is a natural partner in the accountability disco, and can be likened to musical chairs played by a combination of practitioners, clients, and community members to the tune of "On Wisconsin" while the head coach preaches that nice guys finish last, there are only winners and losers, and so on. It is represented by the conflicts between (a) service to client versus welfare of community, and (b) service to client versus welfare of employees. Perhaps the most pervasive and debilitating factor on this list, it is also the most difficult factor to contend with—its resolution requires (a) development of service delivery systems *and* legal processes that allow an acceptable equation of individual client and general community welfare, and (b) development of agency management and labor relations strategies that recognize employee strengths and weaknesses while equitably rewarding performance that is *clearly* within the individual practitioner's ability to control (in other words, all parties will have to give a little to get a little). Illustrations of this problem were numerous around the passage of Proposition 13, including (a) establishing termination lists based on seniority thus making secure those who are often the most distant from responsive service delivery, and (b) fighting for percentage increases in salaries and benefits while jobs and/or the quality of the work environment were at stake.

**Protect the American Dream** is a spin-off of the aforementioned revenue reflex action. This represents the bumper sticker process of convincing citizens that their votes on a particular measure mean something more or different than the measure's real authorization of action (this process is often evident in legislative voting—for example, California's AB 3121, the "something for everybody" attempt to reform juvenile justice). Unfortunately, many agency managers fall prey to this rhetoric and respond to everything except the substance of the measure. Once again, juvenile justice practitioners must be developing the analytical capability to project the impacts of such measures on broadly defined service populations.

**Rose-Colored Glasses** are typically worn by those responsible for the final production of advisory commission recommendations and universal standards. While the efforts of such groups have been commendable in recent years, they often promote the tendency to (a) forget that there are Bozeman, Montana, and Parker, Arizona, in addition to Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, and (b) forget that the vast majority of practitioners never requested the recommendations and standards in the first place. In order to prevent the possible waste of some very important macro-analysis, these distinguished bodies should be charged with taking the analysis one more step, i.e., developing a smorgasboard of alternative applications based on jurisdiction profile and juvenile service demands.

**Numbers are Obscene** is the common reaction of many practitioners in training programs when planning, evaluation, statistics, research, and budgeting are presented. Associated with the notion that these areas are the exclusive concern of the agency manager, this reaction ignores the fact that it is the line practitioners who create the statistics by which agency performance is measured, and are most affected when the rules of the game are changed. There can be a host of benefits to linking individual performance with the realities in budget justification and to soliciting practitioner input regarding the service *level* impacts of legislative, planning, and budget actions.

**Information Overload** (also known as the "I don't know who to believe" syndrome) reflects the inadequacy of juvenile justice community relations when faced with one-time media hypes (such as those present around elections). Since juvenile justice agencies cannot afford or justify the advertising budgets of campaigns, there is a need to develop and execute long-term, well-planned, and *low cost* public relations efforts that systematically fulfill the agency's mandate to inform and solicit feedback from all members of the agency's service population.

**Legal Refugees** (in light of Proposition 13, the legal refugees may be just a step ahead of the "accounting refugees") are practitioners who have abdicated service in lieu of legal technicality. The appearance that the system places a higher priority on legal rights than on legal responsibilities by default places a higher priority on individual welfare than on community welfare. Recognizing the validity of the legal position, the response by concerned practitioners can be to (a) promote legislative remedies (without hiding behind the banner that politics is dirty), (b) identify those components of judicial decision-making most sensitive to discretionary input regarding impacts on practitioner capacity in response to legitimate juvenile and community needs, and (c) capture the Proposition 13 mentality by developing the management analysis capability to project the real tax dollar cost of legal compliance!

#### A STRATEGY

The purpose of this article is not to promote an additional glut of bumper sticker language or to harass the juvenile justice system. Rather it hopefully represents a recognition that *we* as juvenile justice advocates may be our own worst enemies in responding to the lightning rod of scrutiny initiated by the politics and philosophy of a Proposition 13. **THIS IS NOT THE FINAL COMING, AND WE ARE NOT ABOUT TO BE SWEEPED INTO THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH!**

Over the past decade, the tools have been developed *with practitioners in mind* to respond to a Proposition 13 and its future offspring. Moreover, we have given recognition to the following critical realities:

1. The juvenile justice system cannot do the job alone; thus the roles of school system, recreation programs, and organized religion have been revitalized and legitimized.
2. Practitioners are not infallible and indestructible; training and in-house

personnel development efforts are emerging in recognition of the intellectual, emotional, and physical stresses placed on all system participants.

3. Client failure is not *always* the fault of the practitioner who implemented a service modality or the academician who designed it. Decision-making criteria (though unfortunately still subject to political influence) are gradually permeating the system to allow for rational analysis and prioritization of alternative client processing routes.
4. System cooperation does not imply freedom from conflict and disagreement. Our system of government was not designed to be a hand-in-glove operation. Recognizing the frustrations of a checks and balances process, juvenile justice system cooperation efforts are beginning to lend credibility to legitimate conflict of views and the notion of constructive feedback (e.g., child abuse teams, police-school attendance officer teams, probation "intercept" officers housed in police stations). Rather than goals of cooptation and passing-the-buck, Proposition 13 offers the critical opportunity to promote full utilization of *all* system resources.
5. There is no universal juvenile justice system; the era of national commissions and Federal "helping" agencies misled many (with some help from the media) into believing that most systems in most communities had the same characteristics and the same needs. Implementation of general programs now must be seasoned by technical assistance that recognizes the differences between urban and rural communities, sunny climates and stormy climates, large organizations and small organizations, and so forth; legislative reform must follow a similar path (as dramatically illustrated by the deinstitutionalization movement).

An overriding theme linking the above involves the notion of the juvenile justice practitioner as *resource manager*, regardless of so-called rank or organization status. Legislators, county supervisors, city councils, agency heads, and grant monitors merely set the parameters and execute the controls for aggregate allocation of resources. The line juvenile officer, probation officer, teacher, diversion agent, prosecutor, public defender, correctional officer, and "line" judge have the ultimate influence over the efficient (miles per gallon) and *effective* (reaching our destination) management of the salary, equipment, and other resource investments that link fiscal and service objectives.

Specific strategies, and the tools for implementing them, are available to deal with the confrontation of juvenile justice system and government resource management change. The value of these strategies is dependent upon the recognition and consideration of the factors and forces previously discussed *as they realistically apply or do not apply* to each juvenile justice service system and each component of that system. Neither gang violence nor Proposition 13 are relevant issues to every American community. While they might be in the future, effective resource management dictates that each agency prepare for the certainty of change, rather than the uncertainty of one specific disaster.

The figure at the end of this article illustrates the relationship of the forces

and factors to the proposed panacea—strategies and their tools. These strategies and tools are certainly not simplistic remedies; each requires some degree of information, expertise, *and* guarantee of consistent application. Each represents a component of an analytical discipline that space only allows mentioning here.

#### *Budgeting Process*

The alphabet soup development of management and administrative tools often leaves practitioners in an understandable state of cynical disbelief. "P.P.B.S." and "Z.B.B." have unfortunately often been implemented with all the trappings of a teenage dance fad. Program and zero-base budgeting, however, do represent alternative analytical formats for bringing rational resolution to the demand for long-range solutions in an era of short-term resource decision-making. Moreover, both provide conceptual frameworks that are valuable to apply even when the jurisdiction accounting system does not allow for comprehensive implementation. Two concepts are particularly fundamental:

1. Consider every direct service in terms of its *total* cost to the agency, i.e., every line item expenditure should be considered in terms of its relationship to direct services (the so-called "mission" of the agency). Ideally, this includes multi-agency costs; for example, a pure program budget for a police-school liaison effort would include appropriate percentages of supervisory and managerial salaries, utility and facilities costs, etc., in addition to the costs of salaries and supplies for those practitioners directly involved. Given the difficulty of initially building such an analysis, the benefits are clear when attempting to sort out the true impacts of potential program reductions *and* expansions.
2. Each year conduct a prioritization of all agency activities ("zero base") through a linkage of natural cost and service demand increases—the prioritization representing a clear picture of agency objectives. Common categories include:
  - ... increased *service* level, and increase in related costs
  - ... maintained *service* level, and increase in costs due to external factors (e.g., inflation, negotiated contracts)
  - ... maintained *expenditure* level, and resulting percentage decrease in service delivery
  - ... reduced expenditure and/or service levels
  - ... termination of activity area

#### *Planning and Evaluation*

These terms, and their associated concepts and technologies, are certainly not new. They represent critical components of a rational budgeting process. However, like Z.B.B. and P.P.B.S., they have been victims of much misuse and self-serving consultant and funding agency activity. Appropriate use of planning and evaluation provides the bridge *from* reaction to change *to* proactive influence over the environment. An additional bonus is the capability to rationally assess individual practitioner performance in terms of specific delivery of services. Even the amoeba-like characteristics of delinquency prevention—a particularly vulnerable area in a Proposition 13 era—

can be concretely defined, assessed, and projected utilizing much proclaimed but often ignored categories of planning/evaluation analysis (note the implied dependence on budgeting concepts):

1. **effort**—how much of what kind of resources did we invest (input) into this drug abuse education program?
2. **performance**—how many student-contact hours (output) were generated by our police-school liaison program? How many brochures were distributed by our neighborhood watch program?
3. **adequacy of performance**—what percentage of the school population received "Officer Bill" presentations?
4. **effectiveness**—did we reach our objective of reducing the rate of contacts with local hospitals by juvenile drug users by twenty-five percent (after factoring in demographic changes)?
5. **cost-effectiveness**—did we achieve our objective for reducing the number of gang-related criminal incidents by twenty-five percent without overspending our budget?

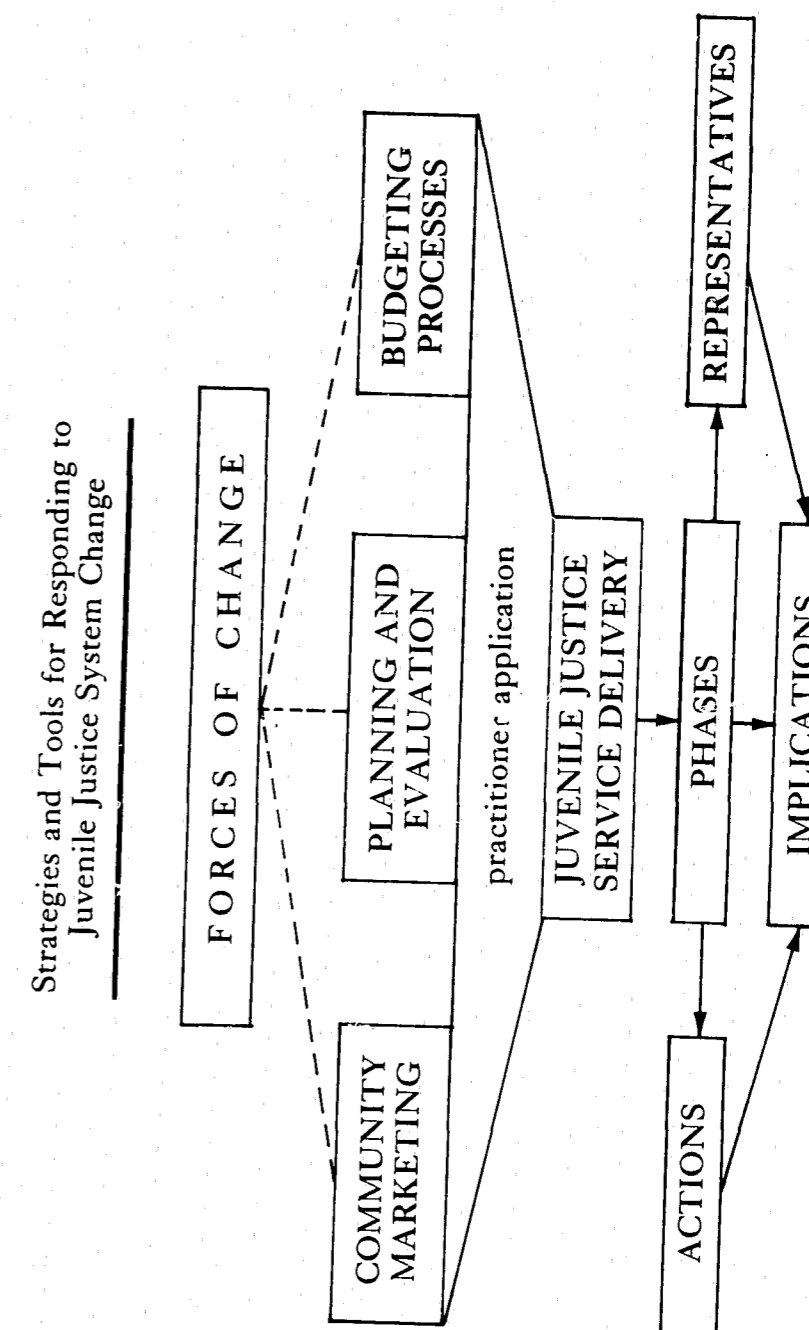
Quite simply, planning tools allow the rational projection of agency outputs in relationship to desired objectives; evaluation tools measure the success of our planning efforts *as an input* to the next planning cycle.

#### Community Marketing

Simple survey research tools may allow juvenile justice agencies to test the viability of various programs among constituents prior to implementation. During the course of implementation, these tools may allow for periodic assessment of how the community is reacting to a program and possibly suggest some "fine-tuning" that will (a) not compromise the program's service objectives, and (b) enhance community support. The notion of marketing implies a readiness to accept the fact that the primary purpose of government is to provide services citizens *desire* that cannot be efficiently or effectively provided by the private sector; at the very least, practitioners must seek visible license for the privilege of determining what the community should *desire* (e.g., the great philosophical battle over substance abuse control measures, particularly as it is divided into its alcohol and narcotics components).

Other strategies and tools include application of the above to small agency office and physical space management, records-reports-publications management utilizing manual and semi-automated systems, in-house training and personnel development.

To summarize at this point might unwisely suggest that the discussion has ended. Thanks to the continued desire of politicians to get elected, of citizens to demand more services for less taxes, and of juveniles to be juveniles, juvenile justice practitioners are just beginning a period of innovation—innovation not defined by the discovery of THE cause of delinquency but by the *cost-effective* and *community-responsive* delivery of juvenile justice services necessitated by causes that may never be agreed upon.



For a more specific presentation of the techniques and applications suggested above see S. C. Duncan, *Management Analysis for Juvenile Justice: A Training and Application Guide for Small and Medium Size Agencies* (Juvenile Justice Resource Center, 1000 E. Walnut Street, Suite 245, Pasadena, CA 91106), 1979, 155 pp.

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**END**