EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL

EVALUATION OF PREVENTION

PRELIMINARY REPORT

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National Council on Crime and Delinquency
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THE STAFF

Project Director:

Barry Krisberg

Co-Director:

Melanie Fong

Administrative Assistant:

Wanda Parker

Research Staff:

James Austin
Roosevelt Baines
Garry Coventry
Diane Zwicker Hammon
Linda Karpawich
Charmian Knowles
Susan Laurence
Wayne Lawrence
Judy Munson
Juanita Pipkins
Howard Schechter
Deborah Wilson

Consultants:

Edgar Brewer
Dennis Cohen
Michael Howe
Malcolm Klein
Ruth Kornhauser
Edwin Lemert
Walter Schafer
Herman Schwendinger

OJJDP Program Monitor:

Pamela Swain

Advisory Panel Members:

Albert Cardarelli, Co-Director
Community Sociology Program
Department of Sociology
Boston University
Boston, Massachusetts

Leonard Long, Project Director
Drug Education and Prevention
Program
West Dallas Community Center
Dallas, Texas

Lloyd Street, Professor
Department of Human Ecology
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

Richard Tillson, Assistant Deputy
Director, California Youth
Authority
Sacramento, California

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and development of the national evaluation;

Aneece Hassen	Cynthia Mahabir
Gina Hubbell	Karen Powers
Carolyn McCall	Andrew Sun

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In the fall of 1977 the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) awarded 16 grants totalling about $14.3 million to private not-for-profit agencies to develop and implement new approaches and techniques for delinquency prevention. These programs were designed for youth residing in communities characterized by high rates of crime and delinquency as well as high unemployment and other indices of poverty. An evaluation of these programs by the Research Center of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) was also funded by OJJDP.

This report presents the preliminary findings of the evaluation of these programs after approximately one year of program operation. The report is primarily descriptive of how these prevention efforts began and the difficult theoretical and practical problems they confronted. Later reports will probe these issues more deeply and explore the relationship of program activities to delinquency reduction. A description of the evaluation effort is also contained in this report.

The programs, as well as the research, are exploratory in nature. OJJDP wishes to learn about basic features of delinquency prevention programming that may inform national policy. It was thought that perhaps these youth-serving agencies may provide an opportunity for rapid and inexpensive expansion of services by use of volunteers or mobilizing and expanding resources through these agencies' ties with other service agencies.

The evaluation anticipated two levels of analysis. First, a traditional impact analysis, an attempt to measure the effects of prevention efforts on youth, communities and other youth-serving agencies. The second level of

research is process analysis, which is a descriptive analysis of how programs were conceptualized, planned, implemented, modified and terminated. The evaluation also examines the quality and relevance of project activities and the interactions of the project with the surrounding social environmen'.

The scope and magnitude of the prevention programs made it necessary to divide the programs into intensive and non-intensive sites for evaluation. Process and impact data are collected according to the plan outlined in the 243-page Design and Data Manual of the National Evaluation of Prevention.

The size and complexity of the prevention efforts themselves place some constraints on the evaluation effort. The programs, target community areas and participating agencies number in the hundreds. NCCD is collecting socio-demographic characteristics on project participants and the nature and extent of services through a Management Information System (MIS). This involves getting data on thousands of clients. Problems associated with agency record keeping, confidentiality, client/service flow, privacy, agency sensitivity, and other factors have complicated the data collection effort.

Efforts to implement a classical experimental design (control and experimental groups, randomization, etc.) have been frustrating and limited for a number of reasons. As a result, a quasi-experimental design is being used, and limited to one project site.

Problems with individual arrest data, community crime rates, data source and target area boundaries, comparable control groups, intra-jurisdictional definitions, and other factors preclude pursuing impact conclusions at most sites.

The task of process analysis has been far more fruitful. The projects have offered an impressive array of services to several thousand youth, and the organization and implementation of these projects have been heavily documented. This has been accomplished in nation-wide evaluation through

the joint efforts of Local Data Collectors (LDCs) working under the direction of the NCCD Primary Site Evaluators (PSEs). Despite problems of geography, program and evaluation complexity, and other factors, valuable data have been collected and will continue.

The delinquency prevention program described in this report does not provide an ideal model of mutually beneficial collaboration between action and research staff. In addition to methodological and technical constraints, there was not sufficient program/research staff consensus or preplanning on matters such as project goals, definitions of target populations, or theoretical assumptions for project methods. Some of this can be attributed to the time pressure under which grant awards for programs were made and the fact that the basic evaluation plan was formulated prior to the development of programs (or awarding of program grants).

Effective collaboration among Federal grantors, prospective grantees and evaluators could provide a more effective, economical and useful research effort as well as benefit program development. Despite these less than ideal research and program conditions to date, the current national effort holds great promise for a major contribution to the advancement in both the theory and practice of delinquency prevention programming.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONTEXT OF THE NATIONAL PREVENTION INITIATIVE

An assessment of this present national delinquency prevention effort should start with an examination of the conditions and assumptions which conceptually and operationally define the distinctive features of the program, i.e., context. In this report, NCCD examines these conditions and assumptions at the national level. Later reports will provide more contextual information about individual grantees.

A review of delinquency prevention literature in the United States reveals numerous competing claims about the scope of prevention efforts as well as appropriate definitions of clients and effective service strategies. The focus has changed over the past decades and has included the emergence, popularity and often the decline of concepts of preventive institutions, community based services, child guidance clinics, changing social and environmental influences on youth, group work techniques, and diversion from the criminal justice system.

Differences of opinion about the proper focus for prevention have resulted in some efforts directed at phenomena believed to be specifically linked to delinquency at the same time that others have questioned the possibility of ever establishing such causal links. Others have operated from the assumption that prevention efforts should be directed at providing "youth development services," i.e., any activity which contributes to "positive youth development."

Some have advocated strategies aimed at restructuring social institutions and conditions to prevent or reduce delinquency. These strategies include "community development," "advocacy" (both individual and class action), or

legislative changes affecting the behaviors which would be included in the delinquency category.

To date there is no consensus on the validity of these various approaches (individual or societal) nor on what constitutes a reasonable or effective mix. Given this "state of the art" in delinquency prevention, program planners at both federal and local levels face a difficult task in program development.

The problem is further compounded by the fact that neither the legislative history nor the language of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act defined "prevention"--although both emphasized its importance. Although causes of delinquency were seen as coming from a complex set of social structural problems, no clear guidelines for federal delinquency prevention policy exist in the legislation or the legislative history of the Juvenile Justice Act.

The current OJJDP national prevention program must be seen within this framework of a history of ambiguity concerning delinquency prevention in the United States, competing claims from various sides about virtually all theoretical and practical aspects of prevention programming, and ill-defined direction under current federal juvenile delinquency prevention legislation.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF THE OJJDP PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

In its announcement for "Program to Prevent Juvenile Delinquency,"
OJJDP noted that its program would seek the following results:

(a) To increase the number of youth from target communities using services of private and public not-for-profit agencies;

(b) To increase the number and types of services available to youth in target communities through agency coordination;

(c) To increase the capacity of target area communities to respond to needs of youth;

(d) To increase the capacity of national, regional and local youth-serving agencies to implement and sustain services;

(e) To increase volunteer participation and broaden community support for delinquency prevention activities;

(f) To disseminate information about successful prevention projects for replication through national youth-serving organizations.

There is a clear implication or assumption in this announcement that delinquency can be prevented if these results are attained.

General direction about prevention program strategies was given in the program announcement to the extent that emphasis was placed on "direct services" and "community development." Applicants were allowed to submit projects for "improving the delivery of services," provided that these were in combination with direct services or community development. "Direct services" was not defined, but certain conditions were required such as increasing the number of youth served, involving youth and residents in planning, using service models which result in new or improved social, educational, physical or vocational skills of youth, etc. Although the program announcement defines "community development," the community development strategies listed reflect ambiguity and lack of precision.

The OJJDP Program Announcement also reflected a disparity between the "Results Sought" and the "Evaluation Requirements" sections. Projects were expected to plan programs which address the results sought by OJJDP (as detailed in the beginning of this chapter). On the other hand, the evaluation plans mandated by OJJDP required the measurement of a different set of objectives, i.e., measurement of the impact of projects upon the delinquency of target area youth. No mention of delinquency impact was listed in the results expected by the OJJDP program announcement.

Recognizing potential grantees' need for delinquency prevention information, OJJDP provided a background paper to potential applicants to assist in program development. NCCD believes this paper, despite its extensive literature research, contains several misunderstandings and misinterpretations of key delinquency prevention literature. These center around "labelling theory," "positive youth development," and the special attributes of private youth-serving agencies which make them ready vehicles for delinquency prevention efforts. Also, the paper does not develop several of the perspectives on delinquency prevention that support the need for structural or institutional change. As a result, the paper appears to support only individual approaches (direct service) to delinquency prevention. The paper also can be construed as a subtle brief for private youth-serving agencies to maintain their current service models.

CHAPTER 4

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AND SELECTION

Research literature supports the notion that the quality of social
program planning can facilitate or hamper implementation of social programs.
OJJDP officially released its "Programs to Prevention Delinquency" announce-
ment in November, 1976, with responses due at appropriate LEAA offices by
January 30, 1977. Applicants were required to spell out project goals and
objectives, problems, factors affecting proposed activities, and the
project design.

A variety of problems were experienced in the proposal development
process. A frequently stated problem was the lack of adequate time to
prepare a response to the RFP. Few grantees relied heavily on community
needs assessment or community participation in the development of their
proposals. Needs assessments which were conducted consisted primarily of
quickly gathering data required by the RFP to document target area problems.
Only three of the eventual grantees made formal efforts to survey community
residents regarding service needs.

The time constraints also limited the involvement of community
participants. This affected the makeup of participating agencies and the
nature of services contained in the proposals. Many applicants reported
confusion about the OJJDP guidelines, i.e., the definitions of program
approaches, evaluation requirements, etc.

The development of proposals was accomplished in a short period of time
between the program announcement and the deadline. Not surprisingly, the
applications reflected sketchiness and weaknesses in program specifications
and rationale. Early NCCD site visits after program funding revealed that

some grantees were still at a very basic level of planning, while others possessed fairly specific strategies not adequately reflected in their proposals.

Problem statements in most funded proposals consisted mainly of statistics on population, housing, employment and juvenile arrest data, with little explanation of their relevance to the proposal being submitted. None of the funded applications articulated a full theory of delinquency causation to account for delinquency in their service area. For the most part, proposals listed a string of social-environmental or personal-psychological factors believed to contribute to delinquency or co-exist with delinquent behavior. Each proposal cited multiple factors but provided little about how factors contributed to delinquency in general, how any one factor produced specific types of delinquent behavior, or how these factors led to delinquency in the target areas. Without a greater degree of specificity about the factors assumed to be causal or associated with delinquency, it is impossible to identify a set of goals or d ,ign program activities that can be expected to impact delinquency or that are amenable to evaluation.

Goals should provide the framework around which program approaches and strategies are to be tailored. They should be clear and measurable. Most of the goals in the funded proposal are not clearly stated and are not amenable to clear measurement. The goal statements in the proposals seldom flow from the target area problems. Also it is difficult to see the relationship between the stated program goals and the activities and services described in the program proposals.

There were two distinct procedures for submitting prevention program applications to OJJDP. National youth-serving agencies or those projects proposing a multi-state approach submitted proposals directly to OJJDP.

Others submitted their proposals through their state criminal justice planning agencies to the then existing regional offices of LEAA. Over 400 grant applications were received by OJJDP. Few could be judged as a clear thrust toward prevention. OJJDP made it clear that even the "best" proposals possessed serious deficiencies needing immediate remedies and revisions.

CHAPTER 5

CONTEXTUAL ISSUES FOR SELECTED GRANTEES

Contextual issues (i.e., characteristics of the setting) are critical to the programs of prevention grantees. Each agency or multi-agency collaboration faces a distinctive set of local conditions. To provide a framework for analysis, NCCD has arranged the projects into four main categories: national projects, urban projects, rural projects and girl-service agencies.

Five national projects are being administered by national youth service organizations. Each project selected affiliate sites located in medium-sized urban areas throughout the nation to implement service aspects of its delinquency prevention program. Funds allocated to the affiliates are relatively small, ranging from $20,000 to $75,000. Some national affiliate programs are extensions of services in existence prior to the prevention grants.

At the national affiliate sites observed by NCCD, program activities focus primarily on direct services to youth. This direct service focus is also characteristic of most of the urban coalitions and rural grantees. The critical differentiation between the national grantees and the others appears to be that of organizational structure. The effect of different organizational models on delinquency prevention efforts remains an important issue of this research.

Urban projects in Boston, Los Angeles, Seattle, New York, Dallas, Philadelphia, Chicago and New Haven are operated by collaborative multi-agency arrangements. Both affiliates of national youth-serving organizations and smaller community-based agencies are involved. In each case, these collaborative networks of youth services were formed primarily to obtain

funds. Guidelines of the delinquency prevention initiative indicated that OJJDP was interested in funding agency coalitions.

The most basic feature of urban target areas is the density of population. Further, these target areas were selected because of their high unemployment, poor housing and high infant mortality rates. Any single private agency can serve only a small fraction of the large youth population in these target areas.

The urban projects encompass several quite diverse and distinct neighborhoods, with variations appearing in ethnicity, income, employment and educational level. Service agencies must employ a heterogeneous staff and offer a range of interventions. In urban areas, public services are offered by large, bureaucratic organizations with whom it is often difficult for small private service agencies to make linkages. Another important aspect of large urban areas is their high crime and delinquency rate. Preventing delinquency where crime is an ever present reality is quite different than where law violations are less frequent.

Large urban areas have a multiplicity of youth-serving agencies which often provide similar services in the same target areas, competing for clients and funding. The urban delinquency prevention projects have responded with collaborations or networks of youth services. However, multi-service coalitions are problematic arrangements and it is difficult to predict their future after the OJJDP grant period. What is clear, however, is that multi-agency programs hold out the promise that a greater range of services for a broader youth target population will be made available to urban youth.

Rural prevention projects operate in three areas of distinctly different ethnicity: Black, Native American, and mixed. These projects serve several small and isolated communities spread over large areas. The projects are plagued by transportation problems between project target sites and between

the project service area and communities where resources exist. Due to the distances and lack of transportation, weather conditions strongly affect project activities. The lack of community services leads these projects to feel that recreation is a legitimate and important strategy in delinquency prevention. Projects have made linkages with churches and schools for client recruitment and use of facilities and equipment. Difficulty in getting trained staff and out-migration of youth from the target areas are other rural project problems. Due to lack of community resources in general, rural projects tend to have no strict eligibility requirements.

A unique feature of the OJJDP prevention initiative was the awarding of two large grants to girl-service agencies. Recognizing the increasing rates of female delinquency and the discriminatory treatment given to females who come in contact with the juvenile justice system, these projects constitute the largest funded effort to date in prevention of female youth crime. Of the two grantees, one is a national organization with several affiliates; the other is an urban coalition of four girl-service agencies.

In many ways, the participation of girl-service agencies in this program could be viewed as unique in that traditionally delinquency has been viewed primarily as a male problem. This is the first time many of these participating agencies have received public money for delinquency prevention work.

None of these agencies articulated any specific causes of female delinquency. They identified "associative" factors, which in the main appear no different than those specified by other grantees. However, these projects feel these factors are accentuated for girls by other conditions such as unwanted or early pregnancies, limited vocational options, and

sexism.

The girl-service agencies are using direct service, capacity building and community development approaches. Most of the direct services offered are similar to those used generally in delinquency prevention, but all of the girl-service projects include some level of career/employment development, self-development and life skills.

The experience of some of the girl-service agencies suggests that while the more traditional services attract many girls and are easy to implement, some of the less traditional (i.e., career exploration, family life and sex education) appear to be less appealing, more difficult to establish and, in some cases, controversial.

Most of these agencies are well-established and have particular images in the community. Both grantees have raised concerns about the possible negative repercussions of receiving OJJDP money for delinquency prevention work.

While future funding may be a concern for all projects, the girl-service agencies feel they face discriminatory patterns in funding. They also seem to be affected by issues linked to traditional role expectations of girls and women. The agencies feel they must straddle a line of adopting less traditional approaches and at the same time preserve their image of respectability in the community.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLEMENTATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

Many of the problems during project implementation resulted from incomplete planning, such as commitment to a set of objectives without specifying the means to achieve them. Some problems, however, could not have been anticipated, including the most critical problem during start-up--the lack of operating funds. Agencies received their initial grant funds much later than they had expected. Some, through staff hirings, contracts, facility and service delivery commitments, were committed to begin program operations without the grant resources. Some used existing agency funds for start-up. For others this was not a viable option. For many it meant delay in start-up and loss of staff. For some the delay of funds had more lasting effect than just during the start-up period. Planned staff training was eliminated or substantially reduced at some sites.

The projects all require the services and cooperation of other community agencies and resources. Not all projects were fortunate enough to have successful relationships with community agencies upon whom they were dependent. Vital facilities or related programs were sometimes not forthcoming.

Many project administrators were faced by the fact that the scope of their project was too broad and that project goals were too ambitious. Also, some of the problems projects were trying to alleviate were difficult to control or beyond the control of the project resources (e.g., high rates of unemployment).

Administrative problems seem to be especially evident at urban coalition projects. In the first 90 days, many multi-agency projects had

difficulty operating according to management procedures outlined in their proposals. Roles and responsibilities of grantees and delegate agencies in many cases had not been well defined.

Coalition projects were not the only ones to experience problems concerning the proper administrative structure. Even among national agencies, where centralized headquarters existed for a long time, the lines of authority were often questioned.

It became clear early that organizational structure would loom large in the success or failure of these projects. The OJJDP grants were given to agencies representing a wide variety of organizational structures. The formation of delinquency projects within these different structures created new and complex administrative relationships and some significant organizational changes. The accomodation of a new project structure seemed easiest within the national youth services agencies. With others it was more complex. Urban coalitions assumed a variety of.organizational forms for service delivery and management.

Almost all of the private not-for-profit agencies were placed in new relationships requiring a greater degree of cooperation and interdependence than they were accustomed to. These new collaborative relationships are not easily integrated within organizations despite the persistent efforts of staff. The coalition and collaborative arrangements have required the greatest internal adjustment because constituent agencies were accustomed to autonomy. Single agency grantees had few problems establishing new administrative relationships because the project fit into the existing structure as an additional subsystem, not radically altering the agency already in existence.

The situation within the national agencies was somewhat more complicated. Even though the affiliate agencies share a sense of identity and mission,

there was some degree of confusion. While the affiliates enjoy a good deal of autonomy, grant requirements created uncertainty about decision-making authority on several key issues.

Lines of authority within the coalition agencies and interagency collaborations are more confused. Especially for the new administrative arrangements, there are gaps of authority--or decision-making authority overlaps.

Overlapping these complex webs of administrative relationships and lines of authority are many additional levels of authority and decision-making represented by project advisory boards, commissions, councils and committees. Their functions and authority are sometimes specified and sometimes left vague. Also some grantees have experienced confusion and delays as the result of the separation of fiscal and administrative authority.

The organizational management problems of grantees produced detrimental effects on program implementation. There has been an extremely high turnover of staff, particularly administrative personnel. During the first year, over half of the grantees lost an administrative officer with significant project responsibilities. Some service staff have also resigned. Although some project directors stated an expectation of staff turnover due to low salaries, NCCD believes these factors are only partially to blame. Some staff have been placed in new roles with unclear expectations and with tenuous relationships to the rest of the organization. Some lacked adequate training or supervision for their assigned tasks. Sometimes disparity between responsibilities and authority was a factor.

The staff turnover has added significantly to program implementation delays. Much time and energy is consumed by personnel changes. Some services have been interrupted and some clients lost. Some projects are

concerned with staff "burn-out".

In implementing specific service components, direct services were given top priority. Other activities, including community development, advocacy and youth participation, were often postponed. This is understandable since projects experiencing leadership problems, staff shortages and agency identity problems were simply not ready to establish relationships with other agencies, to initiate public relations campaigns or invite community participation in any significant way.

The revised workplan and budget, required of each grantee by OJJDP shortly after the grant awards, were early tools for re-evaluating project goals and objectives and to establish a more realistic plan of action. However, many of the organizational problems that would plague the projects had not yet surfaced.

For most projects, the second year continuation OJJDP application became a most important document for project clarification and planning. It formalized decisions and revisions which had taken place during the first project year. It served as a device to examine the first year's activities and set more realistic goals and objectives for the second year. For some projects, it resulted in redirection of the programs.

CHAPTER 7

IDENTIFICATION: WHO ARE THE CLIENTS?

Client identification, either for purposes of direct services, community development or agency capacity building, was discussed minimally in all of the prevention proposals. Generally, client identification was vague or broad, and explanations of client recruitment methods limited. These became more focused during the first year of operation. During this period, as was reflected in the proposals, direct service was the primary prevention strategy employed. Thus, this discussion applies only to client identification for direct service purposes.

NCCD uses a Management Information System (MIS), as reported in Chapter 1, to collect client data. Recognizing the limitations of MIS data reported to NCCD by individual projects(i.e., certain factors which affect validity and reliability), certain tentative findings appear.

A comparison of MIS data with statistics reported quarterly to OJJDP by individual grantees (for 8 of the 16 sites) reveals remarkably similar data on variables of sex, age and ethnic background. (MIS data included fewer cases, however. There were 5,742 MIS cases versus 6,735 OJJDP Quarterly Report cases at the end of the first 12 months of program operation. The reason(s) for this discrepancy is not yet known.)

The most general finding is that projects have been working with youth from low socio-economic class positions--the type of youth defined by OJJDP as those who should be the primary beneficiaries of youth services. Grantees are working with youth <u>not</u> currently under the jurisdiction of juvenile justice agencies. A high proportion of youth reside in single parent settings (typically mother only), and these families are dependent

upon various types of public assistance. There is great diversity of age and education among youth served. Most of the youth are enrolled in school full-time (not drop-outs or truants) and are at the proper grade level for their age. Predominantly, youth eligible for work are unemployed (81%), suggesting a need for projects to focus on work activities.

The dominant form of entry to projects is self-referral, followed by school and social agency referrals. Few come from law enforcement or juvenile justice sources. Projects appear to accept any youth residing in the target area without formal needs assessment and provide services according to informal criteria.

Most eligible target area youth do not enter the prevention projects (the eight grantees served between 6% and 8% of the youth in their defined target areas). Therefore, an important question remains: Who are the youth not attracted to grantee services?

Data show that 84% of the clients are newly served by these agencies. (This includes both new and previously existing agencies.) Thus, grantees appear to be meeting another major OJJDP goal--that of serving youth whom these agencies have not previously serviced.

Considerable variations exist in client characteristics among individual projects. There are marked differences on ethnicity and age. Grantees, however, are quite similar on youth employment and sex. The multi-agency projects exhibit diverse youth characteristics among the individual agencies of coalitions. The diversity of youth and intervention strategies among these programs present unique and complex evaluation problems.

When projects were grouped into national affiliate, urban and rural grantees, there were marked differences in youth ethnicity. On other client background variables, national affiliates and urban projects are quite similar. Rural project youth appear quite different, with more intact

families, more siblings, are older and have completed more school.
Also, rural project youth are self-referrals and have not been served
before.

An analysis by the variables of sex and ethnicity revealed no
significant differences on either personal characteristics or agency intake
processes, but this analysis must be treated with caution. Further insight
on these and other variables will come with fuller reporting and validation
by data from sources in addition to MIS data--interviews, observations,
and quarterly data submitted to OJJDP.

CHAPTER 8

INTERVENTION

The amount of and quality of discussion of intervention (prevention strategies) varied greatly in the proposals. While categorizing activities into the components of direct services, community development and capacity building is quite difficult, it is apparent that projects have in fact relied heavily on a variety of direct services as opposed to community development and capacity building. This experience during the first year was consistent with the content of the proposals.

With respect to direct services, although most described the categories of service (e.g., counseling, advocacy, tutoring, etc.), few explained the rationale for these services or gave more than an outline of their methods. Staff functions were discussed cursorily and generally not in relation to project objectives or goals.

Many grantees changed direct service components during the first year. These appeared to be largely as a result of pragmatic reasons such as more successful youth recruitment, administrative difficulties or realization that the project was over-extended.

Record keeping has been difficult at most of the projects. Informal methods, client flow procedure problems, modified agency forms, etc. have resulted in inconsistent client records. Projects have had difficulty with internal program monitoring and some have only informal methods to obtain data about service quality. Half of the projects have requested technical assistance for this purpose.

During the first year of data collection, NCCD did not receive extensive data on project services. Since few youth have terminated with agencies,

NCCD has received a limited number of MIS termination forms which include service.data. Also, weekly reports prepared by LDCs at each site which include some of this information are of uneven quality. A major thrust of the second half of the evaluation will focus on services as observed by NCCD staff.

The strategies employed by projects involve a multi-service approach, but are typical of those traditionally offered by well established youth-serving agencies: counseling, recreation, instruction. Counseling is most frequently vocational or educational. Instruction has generally been tutorial or remedial, aimed at improving youths' performance in school. Cultural enrichment and cultural awareness are offered by some of the projects. Recreation is viewed as the most popular and major attraction at nearly all of the project sites. Recreation activities have often been mentioned by project staff as a major prevention strategy--keeping youth busy and out of trouble. Recreation activities are also seen as recruitment devices and as providing positive adult role models. Some offer recreation since it is part of the agency's basic identity in the community.

Youth advocacy does not appear to be a major aspect of project activity, although many projects believe that most of their direct service activities indirectly represent youth advocacy efforts. A few do have clear youth advocacy activities, primarily with schools or the juvenile justice system. Many projects feel they lack staff and other resources for youth advocacy and are also aware of the potential political and economic consequences of confrontations which are involved in advocacy.

Project/school relationships for service delivery purposes vary greatly by project. Some rely heavily on schools, while others have no formal relationship with them. Few have established service related ties with the juvenile justice system.

Opportunity enhancement activities include vocational counseling, skill development, job training and placement. Despite some positive examples, there have been major drawbacks in the vocational/employment programs. These have included the difficulty in placing youth in jobs; but even where jobs have been available, youth have complained about the menial nature of the work and many have not attended the training sessions and have dropped out of the program.

The degree of capacity building and community development activities carried out by projects is difficult to assess at this point due to definitional problems and data reporting procedures to date. However, it is clear that while all grantees claim to be engaged in some type of capacity building, the degree to which this is true is largely a matter of definition--although there appear to be some exceptions. Community development appears to be the least developed program strategy. Instances where there has been a great deal of community resident participation in project affairs have generally centered around a specific task or issue. There is one notable exception in a rural area where it is the project's intent that target community residents will eventually operate their own prevention programs.

Generally, it appears that services have been initiated under difficult planning constraints. This does not of itself suggest that these services are of little value to youth; however, the services do not appear to correspond to the diversity reflected in the target areas and client populations. Also, delinquency prevention intervention methods flowing from well-articulated, theoretical approaches hold greater promise for achievement of project goals than a mixed group of services linked to clear assumptions.

CHAPTER 9

LINKAGES

Prevention programs maintain relations with a host of other agencies and organizations. Numerous outside factors and conditions constrain or support project activities. The majority of proposals did identify such factors. However, overall, grantees were slow to develop linkages with their community environment. This can be partially attributed to project organizational development problems in the early stages of program implementation.

Many of the grantees have developed only peripheral relationships with the juvenile justice system. Most have closer ties to the schools, but some projects have found this has reduced their autonomy and several have developed plans for new referral sources and the expansion of other ties with the community in order to become more independent of the schools.

There is a wide variation among grantees in their involvement with other public and private agencies. Some have formed linkages with public housing, public employment and private service agencies. A majority of grantees have requested technical assistance to establish linkages with other agencies in the community.

All projects included some initial plans for youth involvement, and many did involve youth in non-client roles--primarily performing tasks for which they are paid. Few projects have involved youth in formal decision-making and policy formation. Adult community resident involvement has been even more difficult for projects. One grantee has appeared to have notable success in both youth and adult involvement.

Grantee difficulties in forming crucial linkages cannot be explained

simply by organizational factors, inadequate planning or staff inexperience.
Some socio-political forces may be beyond their ability to handle, including
the criminogenic factors of poverty, unemployment, poor housing and health.
Although one of the major OJJDP premises was that communities with high
indices of these problems are in special need of youth services, no grantee
has adopted as a major strategy an approach that attempts to directly confront
these causes. Although such attempts were not envisioned by OJJDP guide-
lines and although the problems are clearly beyond OJJDP resources, it may
be true that project success may eventually be related to the degree projects
pay attention to these issues. The same may be true with respect to linkages
with major social institutions such as the schools, welfare, the criminal
justice system and the family.

Exploring these issues has not been a major part of NCCD evaluation
during the past year, but data collected to date suggests more attention
should be paid to them during the coming year.

Weekly reports of LDCs and site visits by NCCD staff indicate that
racism has a strong influence on how projects operate. In some cases
social conditions attributable to racism account for the existence of
the project. Some projects serve only one ethnic group; others are a
response to exclusionary service practices or perceived non-relevant
services for an ethnic group in a mixed community. Problems of ethnic
mixes also exist. There is a need for more purposeful NCCD observation and
analysis of these factors during the coming year.

While studies have failed to demonstrate a causal relationship between
poverty and delinquency, it is true that normally there is a high correlation
between high crime rates and areas with high indicators of poverty. Grantees
are serving poor communities. However, so far the project employment
services have fallen short of their goal to find work for youth.

Housing characteristics vary among and within project areas. The differential impact of housing patterns has not yet been explored, but appears a promising issue for some sites.

The issue of sexism was not obvious to most of the grantees during the first year and few have subsequently identified sexism as a concern. The girl-service projects are the exception, but they have experienced difficulty in translating their concerns into specific prevention programs.

Preliminary data suggests that client characteristics differ considerably when examined in terms of the source of referral. This and how socio-political forces influence clients and grantees will be examined more fully in the coming year.

CHAPTER 10

RESEARCH AGENDA FOR THE CONTINUED NATIONAL EVALUATION

From the outset of the national evaluation, it was obvious that the research would be exploratory. Novel procedures were employed because of the poor "state of the art" in prevention evaluations and the undeveloped practice of process evaluation. While OJJDP guidelines dictated the basic research questions, there were many other aspects crucial for study. Various aspects of program operations were incorporated into the research design. The findings after NCCD's first year of field work indicate the need to carefully rethink some aspects of the final research.

Data suggest the diversity among grantees concerning organizational contingencies, socio-political factors and linkages with other agencies and the community. These vary by site, and some were more pronounced, depending on type of grantee.

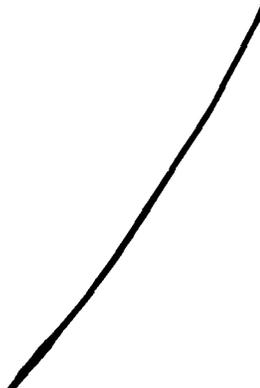Data also suggest certain similarities among grantees, including:

- Projects lack clearly formulated theories to serve as a basis for program strategies.

- Most grantees had little youth and adult community resident involvement in program planning and implementation.

- Grantees have confronted many difficult organizational problems during the first year. Multi-agency collaboratives have expended considerable effort working through new cooperative arrangements.

- Projects are serving only a minimal portion of youth in the target areas. There is the possibility of client "skimming."

- By and large grantees have offered traditional, rather than innovative youth services. Few grantees engage in activities directed at challenging social institutional policies deemed harmful to youth.

- Projects have established few collaborative ties with other private and public youth-serving agencies.

- Socio-political factors such as racism, sexism, poverty and unemployment greatly impinge on project operations.

NCCD intends in the coming year to focus more on acquiring the "how's " and "why's" of these and on emerging research findings. Careful and close documentation of how programs operate will be central. Impact analyses being conducted at selected sites will be completed. A major focus will be directed at project services--service activities, alternative methods of service delivery, and client assessment of services.

Another important area involves client identification--particularly the extent to which clients reflect the general characteristics of youth in the target areas and the practices and procedures used to recruit and select youth clients. Additional data on community and socio-political forces affecting target area youth and project services will be sought.

One critical research issue for the coming year is the future of the OJJDP projects after the initial funding period. Whether or not projects survive, wholly or in part, and why, are critical issues for future program administration and for OJJDP policy formulation.

END