

Discussion and Overall Analysis

The following discusses the overall findings of the CPWS projects in terms of the strengths and issues which were consistently identified across a range of community settings.

Strengths

Each of the CPWS projects administered under the Crime Prevention Package was different. However, they all targeted young offenders and each has demonstrated a range of positive outcomes for project participants. These have included:

- reduced offending
- increased participation in (and identification with) mainstream economic and social life, including family, marae, education, training, work, cultural and volunteer activities
- increased positive social networks with reduction in community ties between offenders and negative role models/at risk peers, and access to alternative networks and relationships
- improved self esteem and confidence
- development of social, academic and behavioural skills

Projects implemented a number of methods identified by Sherman et al (1998) as effective in preventing and addressing at risk behaviour. They also demonstrated how specific agency, worker and community variables could be employed to enhance the use of these methods.

Clarifying and communicating behavioural norms by way of community based mentoring programmes, pro-social role models, and holistic integration of the major influences in participant's lives to consistently provide positive reinforcement

Four of the five projects specifically targeted young Māori and, as such, emphasised hapū networks. These projects aimed at instilling young people with a sense of identity, belonging and pride. As indicated by Sherman et al (1998), communities with high levels of crime tend to be characterised by structural features leading to individual isolation and alienation. Data and anecdotal evidence from the projects suggest that within the Māori community, negative stereotypes and the damaging effects of colonisation are likely to further compound these problems. As such, young people may identify with the negative portrayal of their cultural identity and perpetuate the associated “at risk” behaviours, or reject their cultural identity and become alienated and isolated from their familial and community networks.

Developing positive associations between young people and their cultural identity appears to provide young people with positive ways to identify with their cultural community. This identification reduces the pressure to become alienated and isolated from it. An important component of facilitating community identification is the provision of positive, pro-social role models (Sherman et al, 1998). All of the CPWS projects (including the one that did not specifically target Māori) provided young people with role models by way of intensive, meaningful contact with mentors from within their community and cultural context. Furthermore, these mentors worked in a holistic manner, engaging whānau and the wider community and encouraging them to support and model the behavioural changes desired for their young people.

For Māori this holistic approach was particularly important as Māori culture traditionally incorporates a holistic perspective. Therefore, it is essential that Māori mentors and role models accommodate this perspective into their work.

Such liaison and involvement with the wider community has also been important as a means of ensuring that young people are provided with, and accepted into, educational, training and work opportunities. Furthermore, these processes appear to be important in ensuring that young people's behavioural changes are reinforced by their environment.

Recommendation

1. Continued emphasis should be placed on ensuring that positive role models and mentors are culturally appropriate to the young people with whom they work. This is especially important where negative stereotypes are common for a specific cultural identity. It should take account of differences between cultures within a specific ethnic group (i.e. urban compared to rural Māori) or grouping (i.e. distinguishing between different Pacific Island identities such as Samoan, Tongan, Niuean, Cook Island, Tokelauan, etc.)
2. Fund administering agencies (especially government) could enhance the holistic approach, especially in terms of young peoples increased involvement in social and economic activities, by further encouraging support for the community projects from other relevant agencies working in the locality. In particular, fund administering agencies should receive the resources and assistance to work further with business, educational and training providers so that young people leaving the projects are able to access real opportunities. In terms of the CP-CPWS projects, intervention could include resources and assistance to facilitate the formation of partnerships between DIA and other agencies such as local authorities, Skill New Zealand, Schools and Polytechnics, Department of Labour, etc., and to embed maintenance of these partnerships into the core activities of each of these agencies.

Accurate identification of at risk young people so that the most intensive services can be targeted to them, combined with a graduated system providing access to lower contact programmes as the level of risk decreases

Crime prevention literature (Sherman et al, 1998) shows that successful initiatives are dependent on the use of effective risk assessment techniques. They also include access to a graduated system of high contact programmes for the highest risk young people, and lower contact programmes for 'lower risk' young people. Of particular importance is that the young people are able to move through this system as their level of risk decreases. In three of the projects (in Hamilton, Kaikohe, and Christchurch) such processes were clearly in place.

Furthermore, it has been shown that the effectiveness of assessment techniques is largely influenced by cultural appropriateness. All of the assessment techniques used in the three projects identified above were developed within the cultural context of the young people concerned, by culturally appropriate individuals and agencies.

The graduated systems used in the Hamilton, Kaikohe, and Christchurch projects were supported by the fact that the agencies involved provided a range of services for young people, and co-ordination across services proceeded in an integrated manner with clearly defined mechanisms for internal referral. Such systems also provided significant support for the CPWS workers.

In addition, the Te Puna A Rona Project in Hamilton developed a risk assessment tool. Similarly, both the Whaia Te Tika (Christchurch) and Awhinatia Te Whānau (Kaikohe) projects used assessment and interview methods that were subjected to regular peer review by individuals working in the fields of education, social welfare, police and justice.

The use of effective risk assessment techniques resulted in some agencies identifying young people who could not be served by the project they provided. In particular, it was noted that a number of referrals demonstrated extremely severe violent behaviours, which could not be addressed within a prevention oriented approach. It was suspected that such individuals required intensive psychological and or psychiatric intervention.

Recommendations

3. Fund administering agencies should ensure, where at all possible, that any additional community based crime prevention projects are based in agencies that offer a range of social services. These should include other youth services for varying levels of at risk behaviour, and links to services targeting the whānau, schools and other community resources associated with the young people.

4. Risk assessment tools and methods used within each of the current projects should be further tested to establish their validity in measuring at risk behaviours and their reliability in consistently measuring these behaviours across different at risk youth. Specifically, the risk assessment tool developed for the Te Puna A Rona project could be trialed in some of the other CPWS projects. Similarly, the methods used in the Whaia Te Tika and Awhinatia Te Whānau projects could be further reviewed by other professionals external to the agencies involved.
5. The CPWS projects should be assisted to clearly define the type of young people they are able and willing to work with. Although target populations were identified in the project proposals, some of these changed in response to community and project developments. Furthermore, in some cases a lack of recognition from referring agencies meant that a number of referrals did not fit the specified criteria. Therefore, agencies need a mechanism to effectively communicate these criteria to referring agencies. For young people who do not fit the criteria, clearly defined methods for referring to other agencies must be established, along with knowledge of the most appropriate agencies for such referrals.
6. Referring agencies should ensure that referrals conform to the projects' target population. In particular, intensive assessment procedures should be applied to particularly violent offenders before they can be referred on to community organisations.

Structured and focused programmes aimed at addressing offender characteristics associated with individual criminal activities, using behavioural methods to improve young people's reasoning and social competency skills, and reinforcements for clearly identified positive behaviour

Progress towards rigorous identification of client issues was slower for the Gisborne and Otago Crime Prevention Projects. This was largely due to the lack of structure in the project formats. However, since introducing the OSCAR and ROAM programmes, the Gisborne CPWS worker has been able to undertake a "pre-risk assessment and health plan" for each young person who became involved with him.

Both the Gisborne and Otago CPWS workers identified structure as a necessary component for youth at risk crime prevention efforts. From their experience, they stated that drop in centres by themselves were not particularly effective in facilitating behavioural change. This view is reinforced by the research evidence presented in Sherman et al (1998).

It is also supported by evidence from the projects themselves. Data collected by the CPWS workers suggested that participants tended to invest more time in project components which employed behavioural interventions to address behaviours associated with offending (for example drug and alcohol abuse, truancy, violent behaviour, negative family functioning, poor literacy, lack of education/training, poor school and community relationships). Examples of these included:

- developing literacy skills through intensive supervision and reading contracts (Otago)
- developing and implementing personal plans regarding educational, training, personal and employment goals (Christchurch)
- providing an active learning environment implementing role plays and practising communication and personal expression skills within simulated and real life situations (Hamilton)
- facilitating supervised involvement in recreational and employment activities and reducing connections with negative peer groups (Kaikohe)
- encouraging identification and expression of personal issues through art, written word (literacy) and other "productive" activities and facilitating social identification and connection through these (Gisborne)
- reinforcing positive social participation through fun activities and opportunities not otherwise available to the young people concerned (All)

An important component of these interventions was that they drew on resources which already existed within the communities involved and with which the CPWS workers had some form of connection. For instance, the development of literacy skills in the Otago project drew largely on the CPWS workers relationship with, and previous experience in, another literacy programme. However, the fact that he

was able to offer these skills to young people who did not fit the criteria of the other programme meant that this resource was enhanced by his involvement. Similarly, the Gisborne CPWS worker had previously worked as an art teacher; the Te Puna A Rona project was supported by external agencies skilled in facilitating active learning of communication and personal expression; and the Awhinatia Te Whānau CPWS worker maintained significant connections with local employers and community groups.

Recommendation

7. Development of community projects aimed at specific outcomes should emphasise the need for structured interventions. Although a drop in centre may provide a useful place for attracting young people, and co-ordinating workers, it should not be the sole focus of crime prevention efforts. Rather, such centres must be accompanied by services, activities and/or programmes specifically aimed at reducing at risk behaviours. In order to facilitate this emphasis, government should target agencies with the capacity to deliver such interventions and/or assist them to develop this capacity prior to initiating intervention. An implicit part of developing this capacity is the recognition of positive trends within communities upon which to build. Specification of such trends could be requested within project proposals.
8. Individuals and groups working with young people at risk should be identified for their skills and connections and encouraged to use these to enhance the nature of the interventions they provide.

Continuous improvement of quality interventions

Recognition of the need for structure resulted in the changed focus of the Gisborne CPWS project. The Otara CPWS worker expressed a desire to institute structured learning activities at the Otara Youth Embassy, but lacked the human resource support to make this happen. However, the fact that this recognition occurred, is but one example of the evolving nature of the CPWS projects.

Indeed, one of the strengths of the CPWS projects administered under the Crime Prevention Package has been that they allowed communities to develop and test intervention methods specific to their own needs and cultural context. As such, they facilitated the development of knowledge which increased each community's capacity to address the issues associated with at risk youth.

The capacity for continuous improvement has been identified as an important component of effective crime prevention programmes (Sherman et al, 1998). Furthermore, as demonstrated in the CPWS projects, empowering community members to learn from their own actions increases the likelihood that the resulting information will be accommodated within their activities.

In most of the projects, participants were given the opportunity to contribute to project and community development. Feedback from these young people suggests that this process was particularly constructive in reaffirming their sense of value within their communities and attachment to them.

Similarly, all of the projects included external agencies in their development process and shared the knowledge which they obtained with these agencies. The effectiveness of this process, and the project changes which resulted are evident in:

- a very strong pattern of Police, DCYFS, Corrections and schools referring significant numbers of young people to the community programmes in order to meet their own statutory responsibilities
- increasing number of referrals from whānau and families indicating trust in the programmes and providers

To date, most of the information collected as part of the ongoing development of the CPWS projects has been descriptive. In order to effectively assess the projects and target resources for future development it is necessary to access data which accurately measures change by controlling as far as possible for external influences (e.g.. comparison groups, time series measures, etc.).

Recommendations

9. Further support should be given to community groups and agencies to allow them to develop and test intervention methods specific to their own needs and cultural context. In particular, fund administering agencies should encourage them to access feedback from the young people involved in them, and ensure that these young people are represented on wider community forums. Such representation might also include obtaining opinions and ideas from young people and passing them directly to local authorities and central government.
10. Collection of data which accurately measures change and documents progress requires commitment from within the fund administering agency, to allow time for planning, co-ordination and analysis.

Issues

In addition to demonstrating the effective implementation of methods aimed at reducing at risk behaviours, analysis of project processes also highlighted a number of issues that consistently made the projects more difficult. These included:

Community attitudes and negative labels

In some cases young people's behavioural changes were not reinforced by their communities. Despite evidence to the contrary, some project participants continued to be treated as "criminals" after undergoing intensive change processes through their involvement with the CPWS workers. Indeed, this was one of the main obstacles identified by stakeholders involved with each of the projects. In particular, potential employers were unwilling to take on young people, even in a voluntary capacity, because they did not trust them, schools were loathe to take them back, and the police continued to pick them up for questioning.

While none of the projects show any sign of punishment focused programming, these methods may exist in other community programmes and interventions. Indeed, as is the case for law enforcement authorities, they may even be institutionally and legally identified as implicit parts of society's structure.

As indicted by Sherman et al (1998) punishment or negative focused programming is of concern when it exists in the absence of structured rehabilitation programmes. The provision of the CPWS crime prevention initiatives contributes to filling this gap. However, in order to be effective, the initiatives must be recognised as such.

Research shows that if individuals are punished (or treated negatively), regardless of how they behave, they stop trying to initiate positive interaction with their environment (Feldman, 1999). Similarly, when individuals only receive attention in response to one type of behaviour (i.e. negative), they cease to demonstrate any other types of behaviour. Clearly then, if communities continue to treat individuals as criminals (or only attend to them as such), regardless of their efforts to change, they will stop trying to change.

Therefore, it is essential that community agencies acknowledge the interconnected nature of their activities, and positive outcomes should be afforded as much (if not more) attention and credibility as negative ones. In the case of the CPWS projects, the increased attention given to participants, especially in relation to tracking and monitoring their ongoing behaviours, should not be viewed as a means of "catching them out". Rather, the focus must also include reinforcing positive activities and changing attitudes in response to them.

Recommendation

11. It is essential that all projects be supported in developing data collection and monitoring methods that accurately define and measure outcomes. These systems should be community wide and include information about positive activities as well as those that are less desirable. As such, they should contribute to facilitating community recognition of any changes made by project participants. In terms of the CP-CPWS projects, DIA staff could encourage representatives from other government agencies to assist with the development of such tracking/monitoring systems.

Community co-ordination and vertical links with institutions operating outside of the immediate community

Other issues of concern include the lack of relevant referral options in some communities, and the fact that service administration methods may actually prevent access to them. The latter appears to be particularly true for government agencies. Almost all of the project workers indicated the need to invest significant time and energy establishing relationships with social workers and government officials, only to return to “square one” as a result of staff turnover or restructuring.

Furthermore, many of the CPWS workers felt that their projects were sometimes treated as a “dumping ground” by government agencies. They indicated that they were given referrals but no support or resources to deal with them. Some CPWS workers stated that once social workers had referred clients to them they provided little if any follow up, and only rarely checked on the progress of their clients. This was particularly true of the Whaia Te Tika project (Christchurch).

As an urban Māori authority, the organisation associated with the Whaia Te Tika project (Te Rūnanga O Nga Maata Waka) stated that they often received referrals only after iwi agencies had given up on the young people concerned. In many cases, the young people referred to Whaia Te Tika were local iwi members who had had negative experiences within their hapū or iwi. Despite these experiences, almost all previous referrals had been to iwi service providers, often involving individuals the young people knew. This continued contact with a possible source of their problems had made them resistant to the efforts of such agencies, and to the positive effects of providing culturally appropriate role models as a means of generating pride in their ethnic identity.

Interestingly, Te Rūnanga O Nga Maata Waka was the only project provider which did not indicate significant concern about State determined care arrangements for young people (when the family environment was viewed as contributing to at risk behaviours). All of the other agencies indicated that they took every measure to avoid the removal of young people from their family. This was considered particularly important when working with Māori young people as State imposed care arrangements were seen to weaken the whānau, hapū and iwi links necessary for cultural development.

The CPWS workers frequently included a mediating function within their roles. This function involved working with whānau to assist them to overcome any problems they were experiencing. However, in all cases, CPWS workers indicated that the safety of the young person was paramount. Where whānau problems required significant long term intervention, the CPWS workers attempted to work with statutory agencies to ensure that care arrangements were conducive to maintaining whānau, marae and hapū associations.

In Kaikohe, Hamilton, Gisborne (and Christchurch), the agencies managing the CPWS workers maintained established relationships with statutory agencies and iwi authorities, and systems which facilitated this type of interaction. However, the links between the Otago Crime Prevention Project and statutory agencies were weaker. The nature, and location, of this project made it more difficult to monitor project participants over the long term.

Furthermore, the fact that Otago Crime Prevention Project participants came from a range of different cultural backgrounds, including urban Māori and members of diverse Pacific Island groups, meant that the workload associated with co-ordinating between these groups was much larger than for projects where cultural affiliation was less fragmented. The effects of this fragmentation were further compounded by the urban location of the Otago community within Manukau City, and the way in which this location contributed to increasing the mobility and transience of the young people involved. Not only is it easier for transient young people to “fall through the cracks”, but their mobility was commonly accompanied by movement between social service providers within South Auckland.

Each time a young person moves on to a new provider, resources are required to assess their needs and integrate them into a programme structure. As such, more resources are needed than if the young person remained in the same location with the same service provider. This results in competition for funding that is already scarce. Service providers could help overcome this problem by ensuring effective communication between them. However, the size of the population involved, their significant workloads in dealing with the diverse cultural context in which they exist, lack of resources, and the

clear or primary need to keep the young people off the streets, means that there is little if any time left to dedicate to such an activity.

Recommendations

12. The relationship between community agencies, urban Māori and iwi authorities, and government agencies needs to be enhanced so that there are clear mechanisms for interagency referral. Specifically, these mechanisms should define how and when government agencies can refer young people to the projects, including the resources and support required. They should also define the means by which CPWS workers may refer project participants, and/or their whānau, to government agencies, or work with government agencies to resolve issues of concern to project participants, and/or their whānau. In terms of the CP-CPWS projects, intervention could include additional resources for liaison between DIA workers and other government employees, as well as urban Māori and iwi authorities to establish specific guidelines for these processes. In order for such an intervention to become sustainable, effort would need to be made to ensure that the mechanisms through which it operates are embedded in the agencies' core systems and processes.
13. In terms of Māori development, intervention for Māori is most effective when it is undertaken by Māori. However, where a range of Māori service providers exist, it is essential that all appropriate options be explored. Referrals to these providers should be made on the basis of need as well as culture. As such, prior experience that the youth have had with each provider (including iwi authorities) should always be considered. Where this experience has been negative (or non-beneficial), alternatives should be sought. Furthermore, where urban Māori authorities are working effectively with local iwi, allowance could be made for diversion of some iwi targeted funds to the urban Māori authority.
14. In terms of the CP-CPWS projects, future targeting of resources needs to allow time for Community Advisors to explore all options when projects are being established. It is imperative that Māori service providers be effectively assessed from within their own communities, before the project is established.
15. In the case of urban and culturally diverse populations, there is an additional need for government support to assist with co-ordination between groups. Providing additional funds for such activities may be appropriate, but the significant need in these locations is more likely to result in the diversion of such funding to address the immediate requirements of the young people involved. Rather, it may be necessary for government officials to assume a pro-active role in leading this activity.

Time, knowledge and information

To date, much of the development undertaken by the Crime Prevention projects has concerned "macro" issues concerning structure and focus. Identifying these issues has generated a number of questions which need to be addressed in order for more specific development to progress. These questions include the need to investigate the link between at risk behaviours and at risk status. It is currently unclear how at risk behaviours contribute to the likelihood of offending. Therefore, it is difficult to relate reduced offending to reduced at risk behaviours.

There are also concerns about targeting project resources, both in terms of ensuring police crime statistics match the area they purport to describe, and in terms of allowing sufficient time for needs assessment and project development. Indeed, social science researchers have shown that the development of community projects requires significant time before outcomes can be identified. Resnick (2000b) describes US programmes which have been shown to be effective in reducing at risk behaviours but which have taken up to five years to yield such results.

Under the CPWS criteria, funding for the Crime Prevention projects was only identified for a three year period. At the end of that time, projects faced a significant amount of uncertainty regarding their futures. This stress, and the resulting need to consider alternative courses of action, occurred at the very time that projects were beginning to show effect. As such, project workers had moved beyond initial planning and administration activities and were fully engaged in delivering their programmes to youth.

This presented a conflict of interest between continued intensive involvement with project participants, and diversion of energy to address issues associated with sustainable funding.

In 2000, Government made further Crime Prevention CPWS funding available to five projects, at the same level as the preceding years (\$36,800 GST exclusive per project, per annum).

Recommendations

16. Identification of questions regarding the nature of the relationship between at risk behaviours and status, as well as issues regarding the targeting of project resources point to the need to further test the effectiveness of specific interventions. In particular, the difference between individual and group approaches to intervention, the different needs of different age groups, gender and ethnicity need to be explored.
17. Given that community projects appear to take considerable time to develop, particularly in terms of community capacity and co-ordination, evaluation of outcomes should only occur once the project has had time to achieve its objectives or outputs (i.e. at least three years after initiation). However, in order for this to happen, data collection and periodic analysis needs to be an ongoing process.
18. The initial funding period should be extended to account for the time taken to develop projects and effect outcomes. It is recommended that at least five years be allowed for this process. Furthermore, decisions regarding ongoing funding after this period should be made in sufficient time for alternative options to be explored, without detracting from project delivery. Ideally, there would be no time periods put on funding duration. Rather, projects and funding options could be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the feasibility of both.
19. Government agencies should work together to co-ordinate statistical reporting boundaries between police, local authorities, Statistics New Zealand, central government and other relevant agencies.

Lack of resources

All of the project providers identified a lack of resources associated with the Crime Prevention Projects. Specifically, funding was targeted at the employment of a CPWS worker and it was left to these individuals or their agencies to find money for activities, administration, evaluation data collection, and expenses.

The lack of resources was also identified by DIA community advisors within each of the project areas. Advisors indicated that the eight weeks they had been given to identify issues and agencies, and to work with these agencies to develop project proposals, had been insufficient. It was this lack of time for planning and issue identification that contributed to the hasty formation of the Otago United Crime Prevention Committee, and probably resulted in its “disbandment” one year later.

All programmes dealt with 50 to 150 percent more young people than they were funded for and many received a number of referrals which they could not meet. Managing these extra referrals often required significant time and energy, especially where the young people involved demonstrated severe behavioural problems. Given the limited resources available to the projects, care had to be taken to manage the dynamics inherent in working with small groups. For one project this resulted in the exclusion of female participants and, for others, the age range of youth identified under the crime prevention package was limited to exclude older or younger participants. Almost all of the projects received referrals for young people under the age identified in the Crime Prevention package.

Recommendations

20. In all cases, projects require increased funding to cover project expenses other than the salaries of the project workers.

21. The development of effective data collection methods requires additional resource allocation. Resources should either provide project administrators with the means to contract evaluation professionals, or provide them with time and training to develop their own skills and put these into practice.

Differences between youth populations

All of the projects identified differences within at risk youth populations. The effectiveness of specific interventions were found to vary according to the age, gender, level of risk and ethnic group of the project participants. It was recognised that different populations required different approaches to intervention, and that the limited resources available under the CPWS funding was unable to provide for these. Therefore, projects tended to focus on characteristics with one or two main characteristics, most commonly Māori males.

Furthermore, project referrals indicated a need for crime prevention projects which addressed the needs of young people outside of the criteria of the Crime Prevention Package. All of the projects received referrals for young people under the age of 13. In addition, CPWS workers identified the need to provide projects for young people who were neither offending, nor demonstrating behaviours consistent with a disposition to offend, but who could develop such behaviours. Such individuals included youth in areas of high unemployment where resources were scarce and although they remained in the school system there were few opportunities for them outside of that environment. These youth indicated that there was little motivation for them to continue with the effort that they were making, especially given that any resources which became available were dedicated to individuals who were not doing so. As such, the at risk youth got to do all the “fun stuff” whereas those that were “struggling to stay on track” were not rewarded for doing so.

Recommendations

22. In terms of ongoing development of crime prevention projects, there is clearly a need to develop and fund projects targeting at risk youth under the age of 13 years. This is especially true in isolated communities and those where culture encourages participation as a family group, such that individuals are likely to bring along younger brothers and sisters (i.e. Māori).
23. The data also suggests a need for similar projects addressing the needs of high risk young women (especially Māori), and medium risk young people who are not yet committing crimes but are still considered disadvantaged.

