Putting Theory into Practice

Kenneth Polk
Criminology Department
University of Melbourne

As communities seek to begin to both understand and attack crime problems at the local level, one potential source of support can be found within the social science academic community. While there are many difficulties that can arise in the forging of partnerships between community development workers and academics that arise from the different understandings that each of these groups has of the problem, and from the different agendas that each brings to the problem, nonetheless there are numerous examples of programs which have benefited from such collaboration. Here I will discuss three main ways that academics can help local communities as they develop locally centred crime prevention programs. These consist of academics contributing: (1) by virtue of their knowledge about the crime prevention, what it is, and the various and rather different approaches that are available to local communities as they proceed; (2) by providing support and advice regarding the importance of evaluation and it is possible both to provide an adequate descriptive assessment of the program, and perhaps some evaluation of its impact; and (3) helping to clarify the political problems that can be anticipated, and how these might be addressed.

Clarification of Meanings and Forms of Community Crime Prevention

One of the first ways that academics can contribute to local efforts is by helping communities to understand what is “community crime prevention”? There have been over the years an astounding array of different approaches to community crime prevention. For decades now, it has been clear that many forms of youth and adult crime appear to arise out of the particular conditions of neighbourhood life, and that a reasonable way of reducing crime would be to address these community conditions. What to do about these conditions, however, has been less clear. Under the banner of youth crime prevention we have seen such activities proposed as walking dogs, altering community nutrition, selling newspapers, involving young people in such athletic activities as boxing, football or baseball (among others), having young people walk for day after day in a pseudo-wagon train, trying to scare the crime out of young people by having them spend a “day in prison,” behaviour modification programs to improve reading, cross-age tutoring programs, providing special “learning centres” for those doing poorly in school, or providing various forms of either individual or group counselling either in natural setting “in the streets” or in more traditional clinical formats. Any local community can expect that as it starts off on the task of trying to “do something” about preventing crime, that from within its own neighbourhoods a similar and initially bewildering array of ideas is likely to be proposed.

There is no single way of grouping these approaches that would prove satisfying for all readers. What will be attempted here is to examine four different approaches which can be classified by virtue of the nature of the claims made regarding participation of local residents. The analysis begins with those which address the environmental sources of crime, which Hope (1995) terms “environmental modification” but which also are consistent with what Clarke (1995) has termed “situational crime prevention”, since it is the present position that the focus on environmental change is often distinctive because it specifically excludes local participation as a central issue. The remaining three approaches differ, in turn, in the level of claims made about participation, with “neighbourhood surveillance” (to again use a term suggested by
Hope, 1995) being organised around a relatively limited concept of resident participation, with the involvement of local residents being considerably greater in the “community mobilisation” model where in some variations there was the phrase “maximum feasible participation” of residents employed in increasing the “competence” of the community to reduce crime (Hope, 1995; Marris and Rein, 1972). The final variant, the “community integration” or “community enhancement” (Brown and Polk, 1996) approach, goes somewhat farther in that in not only asks that local residents be mobilised in the effort to reduce crime, but that this mobilisation be carried out in such a way to maximise the bringing together of groups which are likely to have become isolated and segregated from each other as a result of the workings of deleterious economic and social trends in contemporary community life. It will be argued here that there is something of value in each of these approaches. Within each are ideas that community planners may find relevant as they go about the task of organising crime prevention at the residential level.

Environmental Modification or Situational Crime Prevention Approaches

Sociologists and social geographers have long been concerned with the idea that there are important effects of space itself on human behaviour, including crime. In the early (and somewhat crude by today’s standards) studies, there was an attempt to identify how different “social areas” of cities appeared to promote dysfunctional behaviour of various types. These evolved into more focused notions of decay in the modern city (Jacobs, 1962) and then the concern of Newman (1973) for what he termed “defensible space”. Newman was interested in the issue of the way local residents identified with their community in terms of “territoriality,” arguing that improving social control was dependent upon facilitating that sense of territoriality which would encourage residents to claim “ownership” and thus a sense of responsibility for improved surveillance (Hope, 1995: 52). This view has led to a conclusion that some environments such as the mass public housing projects so common in contemporary cities are poorly designed and inhibit natural surveillance and defensiveness, and that “Appropriate design would remove these obstacles, and residential control would reassert itself naturally” (Hope, 1995: 52).

One of the clearest forms of environmental modification is to be found in the form of intervention known as “situational crime prevention” (Clarke, 1992, 1995). This approach was premised in the idea that crime could be seen as a result of: (a) individuals with motivations which made them amenable to pursuing crime; (b) the opportunities available for engaging in such crime; and (c) the absence of guardians capable of preventing that crime (Cohen and Felson, 1978). The essence of the situational prevention approach is that it attempts to engage in tactics which:

1. increase the effort necessary to commit crime (by such devices as “target hardening” through steering locks or bandit screens; “improving access control” with fenced yards or ID badges; “deflecting offenders” with street closures or by providing graffiti boards; or “controlling facilitators” with gun controls, credit card photos, etc.).
(2) **increase the risks** of crime (by entry/exit screening and procedures to improve surveillance such as provision of security guards, burglary alarms, closed circuit television) or

(3) **reduce the rewards** of crime (by target removal, including removable car radios, phonecards’ or by such devices as property marking, vehicle licensing, etc., Clarke, 1995: 109).

A community considering its prevention alternatives may contemplate the matching of any specific problem with one or another of the above techniques (for example, closing taverns in known “hot spots” as a device to control violence, providing street lighting in an areas where residents feel unsafe), or they might use the general approach in a comprehensive effort to “design out” crime within the community context. This approach tends to have, however, a relatively limited focus, often at low cost, as Hope has noted:

> Alternations to the physical environment for crime prevention purposes have thus tended toward relatively low-cost options: improving the security of individual dwellings, beautification and clean-up programs, improved street lighting, and installation of access-control and surveillance technologies. (Hope, 1995: 53)

**Crime Prevention Through Organising of Community Surveillance: Neighbourhood Watch**

In his discussion of community crime prevention, Hope (1995) suggests that the movement toward the organising of community surveillance came with the recognition that much of the earlier forms of urban planning were misguided because they obstructed natural means by which communities maintain order. Thus, a major task for planners was to organise ways whereby resident might regain informal social control over behaviour in public places through the encouragement of natural surveillance in order to strengthen a neighbourhoods informal defences against predation by strangers:

> Intentional organizing embodied a two-fold expectation: first, that organizing communities into collective crime prevention projects would have a direct preventive effect on crime (by increasing natural surveillance) and on fear (through joint participation); and second, that participation would indirectly reduce crime and fear through increased social interaction; a stronger sense of community solidarity, and thus more effective informal social control in the neighborhood. (Hope: 1995: 43)

A common form this approach to crime prevention takes, especially in Australia, is Neighbourhood Watch, which represents an attempt by the police to organise local residential groups to engage in such procedures as block watch, security surveys and property marking. Overseas, despite reports of early success of such programs in reducing crime (Cirel, et al., 1977), later evaluations have tended to be less positive (see the review by Hope, 1995). Studies have suggested that participation tends to be low in low-income, deteriorated, high crime areas, and that the actual participation in
many programs appears to be at a low level. It has been argued that in Britain only about one quarter of those who attended a launch ever attended another meeting, and that the most common activity of neighbourhood watch members appeared to be putting a sticker in the window (Hope, 1995: 49)

**Crime Prevention Through Community Mobilisation**

The third approach to the organising of community crime prevention calls for more expanded role for residents than is provided in the surveillance programs. Recognising that it is the fabric of neighbourhoods themselves that seemed to be the crux of the crime problem, over the years a number of different ways have been taken to try to mobilise the resources of the community to reduce crime. In its earliest forms, as in Chicago Area Project, the focus was on the attempt to organise the leadership of local residents to achieve a better co-ordination of community institutions in a unified program of crime reduction. This community organising was intended to bring about better recreational programs for children, campaigns improve conditions in the neighbourhood, and outreach work with individuals and groups (Kobrin, 1962; Hope, 1995).

One of the better known forms of resource mobilisation consisted of the programs that were put in place in the early 1960s in response to an initiative of the Kennedy Administration in the United States, of which the best known was Mobilization for Youth (MFY) in the Lower East Side of New York City. These programs, which provided the base from which the much more extensive “War on Poverty” was launched (Knapp and Polk, 1972; Marris and Rein, 1972) were initially premised on the idea that a central task was that of improving community competence to deal with crime, especially youth crime. Initially, this was to be brought about by bringing community leaders together in a broad ranging leadership group, with this leadership, supplemented with additional government resources, leading to a broad ranging attempt to improve schools, employment training programs, recreational facilities, housing, legal services and other programs for youth in the community. Over time, these projects were additionally pushed in the direction of bringing about a more effective recruitment and participation of local community residents, the notion of “maximum feasible participation” which become the focus of considerable ideological debate.

While the evaluation reports on community action approaches is decidedly mixed, at best, the idea of mobilising the resources of local communities is one that continues to flourish. The notion that experiences of crime arise out of conditions of local communities, and therefore that one important strand of public policy may be to help communities to organise themselves to resist crime is appealing both to common sense and to policy makers.

The options available in adopting a community centred approach to crime prevention are quite wide, and a typical set of alternatives laid out by a state agency for community action in Australia might include such diverse activities as:
Information Gathering through such processes as safety audits, fear mapping, and community consultations;

Social Crime Prevention which might include after school programs (to provide young people with activities to promote self esteem and skills development, for example) or providing a youth worker to work with youth identified as “at risk”;

Environmental Design mechanisms addressing improved street lighting, better design of parklands, procedures to improve the environment of shopping centres and malls, or better control of access to alcohol in the vicinity of such community space as parks and reserves; or

Developmental Programs, which might include parent education, family support programs, support for services for isolated parents with young children, and similar activities.

In Australia there have been a number of attempts by governments to mobilise local action to address crime. In the late 1980s there was established in Victoria a relatively broad ranging program of local crime prevention that produced a number of local initiatives, such as the parents in one community providing a “safe train” so that teenagers coming home late at night could use public transport safely. Shortly afterward, South Australia similarly engaged in a number of initiatives aimed to community action (for discussion, see Sutton, 1994, 1997). In Queensland, Homel (1997) has described the action program known as the Surfers Paradise Safety Action Project which was concerned with the problem of unacceptable levels of alcohol and violence in a way which makes clear the emphasis on local participation as a crucial character of the prevention initiative:

One way of summarising the project is to say that it provided a structure for focusing community militancy about safety and security by channelling energy into a steering committee, three major task groups, and a monitoring committee responsible for overseeing adherence to a code of practice developed by nightclub managers... all aspects of the project were designed in such a way that the local community --- business people, residents, community groups, representatives of council, taxi operators, police, security operatives, and licensees themselves ---had “ownership” of the project and therefore responsibility for developing solutions appropriate to the local situation. (Homel, 1997: 226)

This approach, at least in the short run, was able to report a significant reduction in binge drinking, violence and incidences of drunk and disorderly behaviour (Homel, 1997: 229-230).

In a recent discussion, Sutton has commented upon the idea of the “spontaneous rediscovery” of the “...community as a natural resource for minimising crime and healing its wounds” (Sutton, 1997: 23). There is something politically compelling about the idea of local community action directed at crime prevention. Currently, both South Australia and Victoria have in place crime prevention units which are designed to promote a strategic role of local government in community safety, and plans are under way for a similar development in New South Wales. Hopefully, planners can draw lessons from the past as they once again stir up local hopes and local action to engage in the task of community crime prevention.
The Community Integration Approach: Crime Prevention Through Community Enhancement

The fourth approach to community crime prevention is in many ways similar to community mobilisation. It presumes that an important resource for crime reduction resides within the structure of local communities. At this same time, however, there is a recognition that to some degree it may be aspects of these very structures that are an important part of the problem of alienation and crime. In particular, it is argued that there are mechanisms within communities which serve to isolate and “lock out” some individuals, especially some young people, from participation in mainstream activities which would give them a sense that they are part of the community with something to contribute to local activities.

In the early 1970s, there flourished for a brief time in the United States a “national strategy” which was promulgated by the Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Administration (YDPPA) which was part of what was then known as the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. An explicit part of this strategy was the notion that the organisation of community institutions had to be seen not simply as part of the solution, but part of the problem of youth alienation and crime. A declaration developed by a group of youth crime prevention professionals who met to provide a conceptual base for the strategy provided that:

We believe that our social institutions are programmed in such a way as to deny large numbers of young people socially acceptable, responsible and personally gratifying roles. These institutions should seek ways of becoming more responsive to youth needs. (quoted in Polk and Kobrin, 1972:2)

The statement went on to give emphasis to youth crime prevention programs which would:

[A]ssist institutions to change in ways that provide young people the socially acceptable, responsible, personally gratifying roles and assist youth people to assume such roles. (quoted in Polk and Kobrin, 1972:2)

The YDPPA strategy then moved to develop in partnership with communities which provided ways for neighbourhoods to promote youth crime prevention through youth development activities. At its theoretical core was the assumption that provision of educational and/or employment experiences were central to the building of stronger bonds between the young person and community. Local projects, it was argued, need to find ways within neighbourhood settings that young people might develop: (a) a sense of competence, so that they begin to feel that there are things which they can do well; (b) a sense of usefulness, such that they come to see themselves as contributing something of value to the community; (c) a sense of belongingness, whereby they come to see themselves as a meaningful part of their community; and (d) a sense of efficacy or potency, whereby disadvantaged young people come to see that what they do can make a difference in their lives and the lives of others.
For a concrete example, a local council may be under pressure to provide for increased public safety because of perceived problems of unruly youth in a local bus station. Using a community integration strategy, the council might appoint a community development officer to initiate a solution to the problem by giving a resident’s group the responsibility for carrying out a safety audit of the station, with the additional task of coming up with an action plan for making the station safer. The team of individuals might include adult residents (especially those most fearful, such as the elderly) and young people from the community (including, but not exclusively, those drawn from the group seen as “the problem”). Ideally the group should be paid for their efforts. The action plan that the group develop might be expected to address issues of environmental design (that is, some of their recommendations might constitute “situational prevention”), but it would be expected that they would give emphasis as well to a change in the human presence of the facility (perhaps, for example, by having teams of young and elderly patrol the area at times when threatening situations are likely to occur).

Action plans and safety audits carried out in this manner can provide a visible focus for developmental prevention work which has as its immediate focus the solving of a situational problem in the community, yet it is undertaken within the positive, developmental approach. There are a number of other kinds of activities which might be considered as part of developmental prevention, including creating:

1. **Community consultation teams**, organised to bring youth and adult competencies together to provide advice on community problems (mall friction, alcohol and violence, or drug use issues, for examples);

2. **Community action planning teams**, where young people and adults work together to develop action plans for solving visible community problems;

3. **Community action teams**, where young people and adults, often over a very short time period, to take action to solve a particular community problem;

4. **Community service teams** to provide some form of short or long term service within the community (such as tutoring for young children, food services for the elderly, expansion of recreation programs, etc.); and

5. **Specific programs of youth participation and involvement** which are designed to increase youth access to, and involvement in, existing community and work organisations (see for examples Pearl, et al., 1978).

These activities are designed to help community agencies and organisations address the myriad of processes that operate within them to exclude and/or segregate youth, especially marginal youth. The focus is not on specific issues of “how to control” youth but rather on how to expand and widen the opportunities for all young people, but disenfranchised young people in particular, to participate in mainstream neighbourhood and community activity. The cluster of programs should be seen as providing devices for bringing youth people into the centre of community life (centripetal activities) in sharp contrast to the activities of much of the criminal justice
system (which operate centrifugally to case young people progressively farther and farther to the margins of the community).

**Which Approach?**

Each community, of course, will have its own configuration of problems, its own policy making structure, and its own understandings about which of the above models might receive priority. What the outside academic can do is to provide a reasonably concise description of the policy alternatives, and some guidelines regarding how different programs can be organised, and then answer the obviously important question about what the expected outcomes might be. For an example, one of the appealing features of environmental modification programs is that these often achieve visible benefits in a short time for relatively little cost. In a context where the community is hoping to aim a bit higher to achieve more comprehensive forms of neighbourhood integration and participation, advice can be given regarding how the outcomes of environmental modification can be incorporated within wider strategies of community integration (as illustrated by the use of safety audits in the present programs being undertaken by the Glenorchy Council).

**A SECOND TASK: DEVELOPING COMPETENCE IN EVALUATION**

Another general way that communities might benefit from partnerships with trained social scientists is in the development of procedures for evaluation of community crime prevention programs. Its is clear to anyone trained in the technical aspects of evaluation that almost no competent evaluation is done in Australian programs of crime control, despite occasion lip service being given to the term by funding bodies. Thus, there has been little concern for the “nothing works” idea in Australia precisely because we have no idea whether things “work” or not.

The requirements of adequate evaluation are obviously little understood in Australia. Those in the business of program assessment are likely to draw a distinction between two general forms that evaluation can take: (1) descriptive evaluation, which is concerned primarily with providing a comprehensive portrait of what has been undertaken by the program; and (2) outcome evaluation which is addressed to the question of whether or not the program works.

Descriptive evaluation can be viewed as an attempt by the staff of the program (or the evaluator) to provide a set of information about what the program actually did, answering such questions as: how many clients were served? what kinds of clients were admitted into the program? from where and how where clients recruited into the program? what kind of service was provided to these clients? how long did they receive this service? how many and what kinds of staff were involved in providing the service? what kind of organisational structure was developed to provide for this service? how did that organisational structure relate to other organisations which are responsible for service to the clients of this program? and, what was the nature of the decision to end the participation of the program, where did clients go upon their exit from the program? In many respects these questions can been seen as an attempt on
the part of the program or evaluator to engage in a task of social accounting, since many of these questions can be viewed as being concerned with whether or not the program has met its contractual obligations as stated in the proposal that was the basis for the funding of the initiative. From the viewpoint of the social scientist there is the further purpose of making sure that the nature of the program itself is well understood, so that if the task shifts to the question of whether or not the program was successful, it is clear what it was in terms of program interventions that is responsible for any impacts observed. That is, if one attempts to ask the question “what is the effect of x on y?”, evaluators have come to understand that it is essential to know what “x” is (especially since the program, the “x” in this equation), as it evolves is never as specified in any original proposal).

Outcome evaluation is much more complicated, has more technical requirements, and is much more expensive than descriptive evaluation, which is probably why it is never done at least in crime interventions in Australia. Knowing if something “works” requires at a minimum that there be: (1) some way of formally defining and then measuring the criteria of program outcome (such as the reduction of crime among program participants, or the lowering of a rate of crime in a community); and that (2) there be some basis of comparison so that it is possible to compare any changes observed with what might have been expected if there had been no program (typically through the provision of some form of comparison with either a control group or control communities). Nearly always this will require the provision of funds for a staff of technically competent professionals well before the program is initiated (in order to develop “before and after” measures which are then available before the program itself begins). Furthermore, the evaluation team must be given some power in the decision regarding the location of the service either in terms of clients or communities, since inevitably part of such decisions involves questions of who will not receive the program, and these decisions must be adhered to with some rigour in order to avoid the problem of “contamination” of any program effects. Furthermore, evaluation personnel must be funded ideally for some period well after the program itself terminates in order to provide for careful assessment of the potential longer range effects of the program. Because of all of these requirements, as well as its large cost, there will be few, if any, serious attempts at significant forms of outcome evaluation in community crime prevention in Australia.

Having said that, it unfortunately does not mean that there will not be pressures to establish if a given program “works.” Inevitably, community policy makers, even if they do not provide adequate funds for evaluation, still will pressure program staff to show that there are positive outcomes of programs which are funded. Fortunately, there are a number of ways that at least preliminary information can be gathered which are at least suggestive when it comes to program evaluation. Those familiar with data collection techniques can suggest a number of possible pathways that might be followed, which obviously depend upon the type of program undertaken. For examples, if the intervention is of an environmental modification type, then it may be possible to note carefully the specific character of the innovation (thus carrying out a descriptive evaluation component), coupled with such possibilities as a comparison of crime rates over time in the area considered (perhaps compared with adjacent neighbourhoods), perhaps small community surveys in the given neighbourhood conducted by program participants or residents in the program area (also with
comparative data from adjacent areas), supported by focus group data from key program participants (such as shop keepers or pub owners if such were involved in the innovation).

Increasingly we can anticipate the steady erosion of funds from the public purse. It will be harder and harder to make claims for “soft” human service programs, especially when the benefits of these are far from clear. One of the most important reasons for carrying out evaluation is to provide examples and data regarding what can be achieved through effective community action, and it is highly likely that unless we have such information there will be less and less enthusiasm for neighbourhood based prevention programs.

Helping to Map Strategies

Those who have had experience with community crime prevention are likely to develop an appreciation for what might be termed the “political complexities” that often arise with these initiatives. Often the mandate for local action arises from the movement of political forces at a higher level, especially the state, but also Federal. That is, in general, most of the activities of what has been terms the “criminal justice system” (especially in Australia) are organised mostly at the state level, with some residual police and court functions retained at the national level. Accordingly, local communities are invited to participate only when these higher level governmental policy makers, for one reason or another, come to see some benefit in “local level initiatives”. What local communities are likely to find is that as a result, the nature of these initiatives is highly dependent upon the ebb and flow of the fortunes of one or another of the political parties at either the state or national level, so that when a government changes, local communities can anticipate that programs closely identified as previous government “initiatives” (which tends to be the case with anti-crime campaigns) are rapidly phased out, which means that funding for local programs may suddenly dry up. Those who have had experience with the ebbs and flows of several government are likely to be able to advise local governments in how best to reduce the impact of these episodic and eccentric shifts in policy.

One bit of advice that can be given, for example, is to urge local communities to think carefully about what their long range goals are in taking on community crime prevention programs. If they are content to take on short term funding to demonstrate the utility of one or another ideas of crime prevention (often those designated as “ideal models” by higher level public policy makers), and then phase out the program after the demonstration is completed, then by all means there may be compelling reasons to participate in “competitive” bidding to provide a site for a demonstration project. If the community is concerned with long range and more permanent structuring of local communities and policy, then its attitude toward glitsy new baubles of programs on offer by whatever the government of the day has put on the agenda may well be more cautious. Small communities will never be able to fill the financial gap left by large demonstration projects once the sponsoring state or national governmental agency withdraws funding, as is inevitable with demonstration-type projects. Instead, long term funding may depend upon a slow, careful and gradual building up of programs in small increments with a local and recurrent funding base.
Some of the advice can be of a more practical nature. For example, in my experience a local program will develop more smoothly if it identifies early in its existence some highly visible, short-term projects which can be used to demonstrate program accomplishments, especially through local media outlets such as community newspapers and local television. There is inevitable competition for the increasingly scarce local government dollars, and if a crime prevention program is to survive it will need a wide base of community support. Similarly, in negotiation with other agencies wherever possible activities might be designed as collaborative and co-operative, so that the funding that is attracted benefits all agencies which co-operate, rather than creating situations where individual agencies compete in a zero-sum game of funding, which probably in the long run will benefit those agencies which are likely to have a much longer history within local government than is true of the crime prevention units.

Conclusions

These comments have been organised as if it was only the local community that benefited from the forms of partnerships that have been described. This is obviously far from the case. Those of us interested in the study of community crime prevention find that direct involvement with local programs continually renews the flow of information and ideas necessary to keep ideas building and evolving around the questions which have dealt with here about the organisation of crime prevention. While there are striking consistencies over time in some of the core ideas around which community initiatives become organised, there are always new elements which arise the challenge previous conceptions.

There is much to be gained in my view, then, from effective partnerships which might be forged between local communities and academics with an interest in local crime prevention initiatives. My experience as well tells me that these partnerships are even more effective if they can survive over a significant span of time, since the role of the academic shifts from that of giving advice on a one-time consultant basis, to one where a true partnership can become possible. The benefits for both parties in such an exchange are potentially significant indeed.

Discussion

Communities face a wide range of choices when it comes to the implementation of crime prevention programs. It needs to be underscored that many of the directions that can be chosen will have effects dramatically in opposition to the integrative approach described here. Some programs, especially those under the heading of situational prevention or surveillance, can clearly serve to increase the isolation and integration of marginalised young people. As Sutton has pointed out, crime prevention can pose the threat of:

\[\text{Extending social control and facilitation the ‘de facto’ privatising of safety and security, and of allowing governments to withdraw from commitment to social justice and social development. (Sutton, 1994: 14)}\]
A central issue that has been identified in the present discussion is the particular stance taken with respect to the participation of community residents. A community integration approach is one which seeks to enhance community life by obtaining the widest possible participation of neighbourhood residents in undertaking change which will benefit their lives and their community.

There are two different kinds of suggestions that can be offered to aid in helping communities to engage in positive, in contrast to negative, forms of crime prevention. First, clear criteria can be developed which describe development programs. The kinds of activities which fit closest to the developmental model will (1) assure that young people are a part of crime prevention activities; (2) be integrative involving a mix of participants in change processes (such as youth and adults, marginal young people and more conventional appearing young people, different ethnic mixes, etc.); (3) ideally provide a wage, even if at a token level, to counteract the problems of voluntarism; (4) wherever possible have an educational skill development component (to help marginal young people in development of needed job skills); and (5) to have a strong evaluation component so it is possible to document the effects of the program.

A second suggestion is to provide a list of examples of programs which fit the desired model. In addition to participatory safety audits, programs have been tried both in Australia and overseas including youth-tutor-youth programs (where older students teach younger students), youth recreation programs (where older young people help provide recreation outlets for young children), direct service programs, youth consultancy programs, and the like. Running through such models is the guiding idea that young people can be given some ownership of solutions to community crime problems, and that young people, local agency representatives and adult neighbourhood residents can work together to bring about crime prevention programs which encourage the positive development of local neighbourhoods.

REFERENCES


