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CRIME PREVENTION ROLES OF COMMUNITY TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR UNEMPLOYED YOUTH

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SUMMARY

Although some analyses yield conflicting results, the broad statistical picture of advanced industrial countries from the 1960s to the 1980s shows the relative decline of young people's standing in the labour market and the growth of youth unemployment have led youth on the margins of society into a growing incidence of anti-social and criminal behaviour.

Evaluations conducted in North America and Western Europe indicate that training and work experience programs aimed at redressing the labour market position of unemployed youth and juvenile offenders can make significant reductions in the criminal behaviour recorded among program participants.

In Australia, a range of government funded programs conducted by community organisations have addressed themselves to these issues in the 1980s. The author made a series of visits in 1985 to these programs and had discussions with their officers and participants. He found the results of the local programs confirmed international experience. There were two models of successful programs in Australia:

- skills based programs conducted by experienced educators and combining basic and remedial education with training in specific skills and/or work experience;

- personal development programs conducted by social workers

and youth workers which combine efforts to develop individual confidence and group rapport with remedial education and vocational training.

These community-based models are most effective when regarded not as vocational training in themselves but as pre-training programs aimed ultimately at directing youth into the formal education system for skills and trade training to enhance their long-term employability.

Youth unemployment and crime rates[1]

The connection between unemployment and crime has been subject to greatly increased scrutiny in the past decade. Some have claimed the proposition that an increase in unemployment will increase the crime rate has become so accepted that it is now an 'orthodoxy' and actually influences the sentences given by judges and magistrates. It has been recently claimed, for instance, that judges in Britain, sensing economic dislocation as a threat to the social fabric, today give more and longer prison sentences than they used to.[2] However, in the statistical literature the issue is far from settled.

In the international data bases, there are more than 30 studies of the statistical relationship between unemployment, the business cycle and crime. Their results, however, are conflicting. One of the most extensive studies was published in Germany in 1980. It reviewed literature back to the nineteenth century and found that, while crime suspects and

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1. Research for this paper has been funded by the Criminology Research Council for whose support the author is grateful.

2. Steven Box and Chris Hale, 'Economic Crisis and the Rising Prisoner Population in England and Wales, **Crime and Social Justice**, 17, Summer 1982, pp 20-35.

convicted felons were frequently unemployed, the causal link between the two remains unproven.[3] However, others have argued that the most of the traditional literature is methodologically unsound in that it involves simple correlations between crude measures of both crime and unemployment. Certain crimes are more dependent on economic fluctuations that others so we have to distinguish between types of crime. Different age groups are affected in different ways so we should distinguish between ages and, of course, between males and females, between geographic regions and so on.[4]

However, once these distinctions have been made, the problems remain. One American econometric model shows that the adult unemployment rate, adjusted for age-sex composition of the labour force, has no effect on an index of crime rates, but variation in the youth unemployment rate appears to have a powerful effect on crime. Each one percentage point increase in youth unemployment is associated with an 8-10 per cent

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3. G. Steinhilper and M. Wilhelm-Reiss, 'Crime Prevention by Elimination of Unemployment - Preliminary Considerations for Prevention Program', Hans-Deiter Schwind (ed.) **Praeventive Kriminalpolitik**, Heidelburg, 1980.

4. H. and J. Schwendinger, 'Delinquency and the Labour Market', in James Garofalo (ed.) **Delinquency and Juvenile Justice - Linkages Among Systems**, Hindelang Criminal Justice Research Centre, Albany, New York.

5. I. Levenson 'Economist's Approach to Crime's Future', in Michael E. Sherman (ed.) **Long Range Thinking and Law Enforcement**, 1977.

index in violent crime. [5] There is an Italian study of southern and northern geographic regions which shows that there is a connection between high youth unemployment and crime but the crimes are against property rather than violent crimes against the person.[6] There are geographic studies in the USA, on the other hand, that show some poverty-ridden districts have very low offence rates. [7] There are other studies which show that juvenile crime has increased in periods of relative prosperity. These conclude that the causes of crime lie not in the economy but within individual personalities and family socialisation patterns. [8] [9] From this perspective, the fact that about 40 per cent of jail inmates in the US were unemployed when they were arrested[10] tells us more about their personal characteristics rather than the condition of the labour market.

A number of critics have argued that the official statistics

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6. S. Negrelli, 'Criminality and the Labour Market in Italy in Recent Years - Some Research Hypotheses', **Questione Criminale**, 6, 1, January-April 1980, pp 131-54.

7. D. Glaser, **Economic and Sociocultural Variables Affecting Rates of Youth Unemployment, Delinquency and Crime**, University of Southern California, 1978.

8. W. Becker, 'Unemployment of Adolescents - Cause of Criminality of Adolescents?' **Medizinische Klinik**, 73, 22, Munich 1978, pp 843-846.

9. J. Kraus, 'Juvenile Unemployment and Delinquency' in **Unemployment and Crime**, Institute of Crimonology, Sydney University Law School, 1978.

10. **Profile of Jail Inmates**, US Department of Justice, Washington DC, 1980.

for crime, that is, police records of crime reports, arrests, convictions and prison sentences, are unreliable guides to the true level of crime. However, when we look at other types of evidence the issue remains unresolved. A major study of offences as reported by victims in the American Crime survey between 1973 and 1978 was published in 1981. It compared eight different types of criminal behaviour, several indices of economic activity, age-race-sex-specific unemployment rates, sex and race speficic offending rates for juveniles (age 12 to 17) and youth (age 18 to 20) and, out of 32 relationships, found only four to be statistically significant. The statistically significant relationships were most likely explained by the laws of probability.[11] Further, self-reporting questionnaires in the USA have obtained delinquency data from adolescents themselves in the past two decades. Studies of this self-report data have found very low or zero correlations between socio-economic status and the kind of delinquency measured.[12]

We should not, however, allow these conflicting results to overshadow the big picture, that is, the most obvious statistical relationships. Whatever view one takes about the precision or the rigour of the studies discussed here, it is

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11. K.R. Danser and J.H. Laub, **Juvenile Criminal Behaviour and Its Relation to Economic Conditions**, Hindelang Criminal Justice Research Centre, New York, 1980, Monograph 4 of five-part series.

12. H. and J. Schwendinger, op cit.

nonetheless true that in the great majority of the advanced industrial countries in the past 20 years there has been a major increase in offences committed by young people. The accompanying table gives an idea of the scale of the growth of arrests for major crime by juveniles in the USA in the 1970s. A study commissioned by the Council of Europe in 1979 found a similar increase had occurred in France, West Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland.[13]

These increases began not in 1974, when most commentators acknowledge the industrial countries moved into a new low-growth phase characterised by high unemployment levels, but as far back as 1960. The 1960s are normally characterised as a period of full employment and strong economic growth. However, it was also the decade in which a major divergence occurred between youth and adult unemployment rates. Up to 1960, unemployment rates in most industrial countries were similar for those under and over 21 years but in the early 1960s youth unemployment rose relative to adults. In the USA, the ratio reached 2.5 youth unemployed to every one adult. In Australia, in 1964-5 the unemployment rate for male youth rose to 3.2 times higher than for male adults. This ratio has been

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13. **Social Change and Juvenile Delinquency**, Council of Europe, Directorate of Legal Affairs, Strasbourg, France, 1979.

14. Keith Windschuttle, **Unemployment**, Penguin, Ringwood, 1980, pp 45-7.

Table 1.1. Selected Total Arrest Trends, Percent Change 1969 to 1978

Offense Charged	Males		Females	
	Total	Under 18	Total	Under 18
Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter	+15.6	+13.6	18.9	+14.1
Forcible Rape	+35.6	+12.2	—	—
Robbery	+32.6	+33.3	+62.4	+48.7
Aggravated Assault	+48.1	+57.9	+58.0	+106.5
Total Violent Crime	+40.0	+40.6	+55.5	+82.6
Burglary	+31.7	+29.0	+92.1	+90.6
Larceny-Theft	+47.1	+23.3	+95.2	+58.6
Motor Vehicle Theft	−18.9	−27.3	+38.1	+41.0
Total Major Property Crime	+31.5	+16.6	+92.6	+60.2
Forgery and Counterfeiting	+20.6	+49.1	+85.7	+121.3
Fraud	+63.5	+44.3	+218.7	+148.4
Embezzlement	−20.6	+231.3	+4.5	+154.4
Stolen Property; Buying, Receiving, Possessing	+87.2	+95.4	+157.8	+148.5
Total Nonviolent Income-Related Crime	+56.2	+86.6	+164.0	+139.1

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, *FBI Uniform Crime Reports for the United States, 1978* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978) p. 189.

maintained intact to the 1980s.[14] In round figures, we have gone from an adult unemployment rate of one percent and a youth rate of three per cent in the 1960s, to an adult rate of eight per cent and a youth rate of 24 per cent in the 1980s. In other words, we have a broad long-term correlation between the relative deprivation of youth and a rising youth crime rate.

The Council of Europe report emphasised that we should regard the rise in juvenile delinquency as a multi-causal phenomenon derived from industrial development, increased urbanisation and economic dislocation. Rather than one solution, a three-tiered preventative approach was more appropriate:

- **Primary prevention:** reforms to social structures including improved housing, employment generation and labour market programs, efforts to stabilise and improve family life, child allowances, improved education programs and the expansion of community programs for youth;

- **Secondary prevention:** intervention programs for youth including remedial education and training at school and in the community for youth 'at risk' in order to counter negative influences;

- **Tertiary prevention:** programs aimed at preventing or reducing recidivism among delinquents including programs

to facilitate their integration into the community.

Within this overall strategy, it is clear that measures that may be broadly described as labour market, education and training programs have an important place at all three levels of crime prevention.

Outcomes of labour market and training programs

It is a common observation that labour market difficulties in industrial societies in the past decade have been concentrated among youth who experience a number of social disadvantages: those who leave school without gaining the minimum educational qualification, those from low-income and welfare-dependent families, and youth from poor ethnic minorities. Their typical labour market experience is composed of a series of short-term, unstable, unskilled jobs punctuated by periods of unemployment. In the past decade there has been a small but significant number of evaluations of labour and training programs aimed at these youth. These evaluations indicate where the most successful strategies lie.

Direct public sector job creation has been tried in a number of countries. These programs give unemployed youth from disadvantaged backgrounds jobs in the local government and community sectors as school and hospital aides, as cleaning and maintenance workers in public parks and as assistants in

welfare programs for children, the aged and the handicapped. The jobs are unskilled and there has been no training component. They are rarely permanent positions - most last a few months although in Sweden they run can run for two years. Their main benefit is assumed to be the work experience they provide and the work habits and attitudes they foster. Evaluations of these programs, however, are not promising. Youth who pass through them do not experience greater later success in the labour market than comparable youth who dont go through the program. In the USA, evaluations have found post-program unemployment rates, wage rates and probabilies of obtaining jobs which offer training and advancement are not significantly altered.[15] In other words, they do little to change the long-term work environment and opportunities of the youth who participate in them. One American labour economist has observed: 'Such small-scale, low-cost efforts appear simply too minor to make any dent in the employability problems of a seriously disadvantaged youth.'[16] A number of critics of the British work experience programs introduced in the wake of the Brixton and Liverpool riots in 1981 have made the same point. They are make-work schemes aimed at

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15. Michael E. Borus, 'Assessing the Impact of Training Programs', in Eli Ginzberg (ed.) **Employing the Unemployed**, Basic Books, New York, 1980.

16. Marc Bendick Jr, 'Improving Employment Opportunities for Minority and Disadvantaged Youth: Lessons from American Experience', Address to International Youth Employment Conference, Auckland, August 1985.

short-term public relations rather than training for the real world of employment and they engender no long-term upward mobility.[17]

On the other hand, there are programs for youth of similar backgrounds that are far more promising. One of these is the American program Jobs Corps which is targeted as disadvantaged, unemployed youth aged 16-21. Jobs Corps began in 1964, was initially regarded as a failure but was continued after a re-organisation in the late 1960s. It is a residential program that takes participants away from their homes into a 'total immersion' learning environment and provides full-time employment development activities for six months to one year. The background of participants is as follows:

- more than 90 per cent were receiving welfare payments or had incomes below the poverty line;
- more than 85 per cent had not completed high school;
- 85 per cent of those who had tried to enlist in the US military had failed to qualify;
- 38 per cent had been arrested at least once;
- 70 per cent had come to the attention of law enforcement authorities at least once;

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17. M. Brake, 'Under Heavy Manners - A Consideration of Racism, Black Youth, Culture and Crime in Britain,' **Crime and Social Justice**, 20, pp 1-15.

- more than one third had never held a job which lasted as long as one month.

Each Jobs Corps participant is given an individually-tailored program which includes remedial general education, work attitude and work readiness training, health care and health education, counselling, job skills training and job placement help. Part of the program derived from the study of 55 'experimental and demonstration' projects funded in the US in the 1960s which found that most disadvantaged youth were seriously deficient in basic reading and numerical skills and were totally unfamiliar with the routines and responsibilities of steady wage work.[18]

In 1977, the US Department of Labour commissioned an evaluation of Jobs Corps. The study involved 5000 of the 40,000 participants in the scheme in 1977. It tracked their progress for the next four years and compared their lives and careers to that of a control group of similar youth who were not Jobs Corps participants. The evaluation was published in 1982 and has since become a classic of its kind, being widely used for training postgraduate students in state-of-the-art methods of statistical and economic analysis. It found the average Jobs Corps member experienced:

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18. W. Mirengoff (ed.) **Breakthrough for Disadvantaged Youth**, US Department of Labor Manpower Administration, Washington DC, 1969.

- increased employment of more than three weeks a year;

- an increase in annual earnings of more than 15 per cent;

- a five-fold increase in the probability of receiving a secondary-school diploma;

- a reduction in dependency on social welfare of three weeks per year; and

- significantly reduced involvement in criminal activity.

The program was expensive - costing an annual investment around the same as an undergraduate at one of the more prestigious American universities - but the evaluation found it was cost effective. In 1977 dollars, the cost per participant was $5070 composed mostly of administrative and operating costs plus foregone earnings of participants while they were in training. In the same terms, the benefit from participation - mostly in the form of increased employment and earnings and reduced criminal activity - totalled $7399. The net difference was $2327 or 46 per cent of the total cost. For each dollar invested in the program, the evaluation calculated that American society was returned $1.46.[19] [20]

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19. Marc Bendick Jr, 'Research Evidence on the Cost Effectiveness of the Jobs Corps', statement to subcommittee on Employment and Housing, US House of Representatives, May 23 1985.

20. Charles Mallar et al, **Evaluation of the Economic Impact of the Jobs Corp Program, Third Follow-Up Report**, Mathematica Policy Research Inc, Princeton, New Jersey, September 1982.

There are a number of other smaller-scale community-based programs in the US that have achieved similar results, though not with participants who had the same level of disadvantage as those in Jobs Corps.[21]

In a review of American youth labour programs, Marc Bendick has argued two main points: (i) vocational training on its own makes no difference to the job prospects of disadvantaged youth; (ii) employment generation programs on their own produce the same result. Successful training programs are those that combine vocational education with reading, language, mathematics and other basic functional skills. Employers, he argues, are much more concerned to find training-ready or trainable workers at entry level than pre-trained ones. Further, some of the most effective programs for addressing the problems of minority and disadvantaged youth have been those directed at these youth while they are still at school. Special fundings for schools with disadvantaged populations that provide smaller classes, better teachers, more testing and counselling yield long-term educational and labour market benefits.[22]

In Western Europe, the last two years has seen several

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21. Michael W. Sherraden and Donald J. Eberly (eds.) **National Service: Social Economic and Military Impacts**, Pergamon Press, New York, 1982.

22. Marc Bendick, 'Improving Employment Opportunities for Minority and Disadvantaged Youth', op cit.

countries follow the example set by West Germany in the 1970s by introducing programs that are either entirely training-orientated or else combine work experience with technical training.[23] The general experience when trying to attract youth from severely disadvantaged backgrounds into such programs is that they are likely to need remedial or basic education, personal counselling and supplementary income support, especially in those countries where youth are not eligible for unemployment benefits. The OECD examiners who reported on Australian youth policy in 1984 recommended these latter measures in tertiary education programs for disadvantaged youth.[24]

Overall, since 1982, research evaluations and program experience have combined to produce a framework of consensus about the sort of measures that work best to give long-term benefits to those youth on the bottom socio-economic levels of industrial society in North America and Western Europe. That is, we can draw from this experience the most useful preventative measures to offer these youth who constitute the largest groups of both the unemployed and those engaging in law-breaking and other anti-social activities.

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23. Keith Windschuttle, 'Jobs for the Young', **Australian Society**, September 1984.

24. **Review of Youth Policies in Australia**, Manpower and Social Affairs Committee, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, November 1984, p 51.

Disadvantaged youth in Australian training programs

In the late 1970s, Australia introduced a number of labour and training programs of its own. These included the Special Youth Employment Training Program which offered wage subsidies to employers taking on long-term unemployed youth; the Education Program for Unemployed Youth, a short-term scheme to provide basic education and job seeking skills; and the Community Youth Support Scheme which funded community centres to provide training and work orientation for unemployed youth. In the early 1980s the Commonwealth government funded two job creation schemes, the Wage Pause Program and the Community Employment Program. All of these schemes are very similar to those introduced in other countries at the same time and they suffered the same deficiencies. SYETP provided work experience but no training. EPUY offered remedial and basic education but no job skills. Wage Pause and CEP offered no formal training component. CYSS has functioned primarily to provide welfare and moral support, although a minority of CYSS centres have established successful pre-training courses aimed at directing youth to taking up more formal instruction

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25. Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs in

through the TAFE sector.[25]

In the last eighteen months, there has been a shift in emphasis that has brought Australian policy and programs into line with the more successful of the current overseas strategies. The two key initiatives have been the Participation and Equity Program and the Australian Traineeship Scheme. PEP was introduced in 1984 and grew out of the earlier Transed program but has different aims. Instead of using special classes and intruction to orient youth towards the workforce, PEP tries to increase the education participation rate. Its two principal goals are: (i) to encourage all young people to complete a full secondary education or its equivalent in the technical college sector; and (ii) to promote a more equitable outcome in the distribution of educational achievement, that is, to assist those from currently disadvantaged groups to gain greater access to the higher levels of the education system.[26]

The traineeship program was announced in the August 1985 budget. It offers a minimum of one-year of part-time work and part-time technical training to 16 and 17 year olds who drop out of school before completing Year 12. Employers are subsidised to take on trainees who receive a lower-than-normal training wage. Off-the-job training is provided at technical

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Australia, **Report**, AGPS, Canberra, 1985 (Kirby Report).

26. Commonwealth Schools Commission, **Participation and Equity in Australian Schools**, Canberra, April 1985.

colleges or equivalent institutions for 13 weeks a year (or one and a half days a week over a full year). Traineeships are designed to operate in a much broader range of occupations than the traditional apprenticed trades. This includes the growth areas of the services sector and some of the new para-professions.[27]

The traineeship program is still in its introductory phase and it remains uncertain whether it will be implemented in the way the Kirby committee envisaged. PEP, however, has been in operation for over eighteen months.

During 1985 I visited more than 30 projects conducted by community organisations for unemployed and disadvantaged youth. They include projects under the Community Youth Support Scheme, the Community Employment Program and non-institutional projects under the Participation and Equity Program. Most of these projects have been targeted at youth who have been defined as unemployed. However, a number have also included participants who have a background as offenders, as school drop-outs and chronic truants, while others have had a clientele among youth who are de-institutionalised psychiatric patients.

The purpose of these visits was to discuss aims, objectives and results with project co-ordinators and participants. One

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27. **Youth Policies in the 1985-86 Budget**, Parliamentary Paper No 262/1985.

can learn a great deal about projects by observations and discussions even without going into a more formal survey of participant outcomes. Community programs of this kind all involve voluntary attendance and there are no sanctions such as the loss of a benefit for non-attendance. Where juvenile offenders have been referred from courts, participation has remained on a voluntary basis.

One conclusion from these visits was immediately clear: in terms of individual projects, there has been a mixed result. Some projects are manifestly successful while others are not. Both outcomes provide guides to the conduct of similar projects in the future.

Skills-based projects: A number of the CYSS and PEP projects were aimed at instructing participants in fairly specific skills. In all these cases, it was hands-on instruction, learning by doing. The range of skills include: carpentry and building; welding; word processing and secretarial work; waiting and bar attendance; hairdressing and personal grooming; acting and play-writing; radio broadcasting, video production, silk-screen printing; aboriginal arts and crafts; and outdoor skills such as canoeing, abseiling, caving, sailing and camping.

The aim of most projects was not to teach the skills as ends in themselves but as part of a process of giving participants the opportunity for personal achievement and success,

qualities that they had experienced only rarely in the education system. The underlying agenda was the building of self-confidence and self-esteem.

Two of the drama-based projects clearly succeeded in their aims of developing abilities. PACT Co-operative, Sydney, was funded by PEP to run an after-school program for low-achieving students and those at risk of dropping out. It turned them into capable writers and performers. Warringah CYSS did the same with a group of unemployed youth who developed and performed a children's pantomime. Radio 2SER-FM, Sydney, conducted a program for at-risk school students and taught them to write radio documentary and news scripts and successfully broadcast them. Coffs Harbour Youth Service did the same with video production. In all these projects, courses focussed on the development of one or two basic skills. The instructors were professionals in their field who had teaching experience.

On the other hand, projects which were based on teaching a variety of skills and which did not employ people who had experience as teachers were noticeably less successful. One CYSS project received special funding to run a course for a group of unemployed women in six separate skills. At the end of four weeks, with only three participants left, the organised cancelled the program. Other multi-skill CYSS and PEP courses met similar fates. They were not seen by participants as serious training courses.

Perhaps the most successful skills project I have seen is that of Compuskill at Matraville, Sydney, which is a CEP-funded project conducted by a local welfare agency and drawing its clientele from unemployed and other disadvantaged young people in nearby Housing Commission settlements. Compuskill offers a combination of very basic and fairly sophisticated vocational training. It includes a program of remedial education designed to bring the literacy of participants up to the level required for clerical work. It also provides instruction in typing, word processing and secretarial practice, and, for some more adept students the course continues into spreadsheet computer work for bookkeeping practice. The course has a formal nine-to-five program of hands-on computer instruction. Compuskill is intended to be a complete vocational course rather than a pre-training program, that is, it was designed to direct participants straight into the skilled workforce rather than into further education where skills would be acquired. It has a very high success rate. Its records show that more than 90 per cent of its graduates were in permanent employment at the end of 1985.

Personal development projects: The development of self-confidence and self-esteem is often the underlying curriculum in skills-based projects. However, several other projects have personal development as the major, overt aim.

Rosemount Services to Youth at Dulwich Hill, Sydney, is a program funded partly by PEP and the NSW Department of Youth and Community Services. It is targeted at youth with behavioural problems, with disturbed family backgrounds and with records of law breaking and chronic truancy. It is a full-time 14-16 week program applying professionally-developed groupwork techniques, family therapy and counselling. Youth are referred to Rosemount from the courts and juvenile detention centres, from state and local welfare agencies, from refuges for homeless youth any by word-of-mouth recommendations. Participation is voluntary. The service is co-ordinated by social workers experienced in groupwork and family casework, supported by qualified youth workers, an artist and woodworkers. The course is formally programmed, with a daily timetable of specific activities plus provision for informal aftercare and counselling. There is tuition is some direct skills including silk screen printing, computer operation, video production, and woodworking but the underlying aims are: to develop personal and group relationships; to improve communication skills; to develop assertiveness skills; to learn to cope with anger; and to foster a sense of individual worth. The project also involves parent counselling to help parents take more control of the family, to redefine their expectations of young people and help prevent family breakdown.

There has been some degree of controversy in the past year

about the concept of 'wilderness projects' for youth. Most of attention has centred on the Sydney City Mission's wilderness program on the New South Wales south coast. Some of the debate on this project has centred on its philosophy and methods; while some has focussed on its very high cost relative to other programs in the community sector. The controversy that has been engendered has left other community-based wilderness projects facing a very uncertain future. I have not visited the Sydney City Mission's Tallong Wilderness Centre nor investigated the overall program, so I am not in a position to assess this particular project. However, from the visit I made in August 1985 to Tooloom, New South Wales, however, I am convinced that well-conducted wilderness projects can be valuable components of community training programs for youth.

The project conducted by Tooloom Youth Services takes unemployed early school leavers, truants, juvenile offenders and youth with disturbed family backgrounds from its youth centre at Mt Druitt, Sydney, to an isolated rural property at Tooloom in the Border Ranges in northern New South Wales for a six week residential course. This course offers training for young men and women in building, welding, water supply and other practical skills involved in the construction of living quarters and restoration of land on the property. Its main purpose is the promotion of individual responsibility for the maintenance of relations between those in the group and for

the development and management of the property. It also aims to provide opportunities for participants to experience concrete achievements and success.

The isolated, near-wilderness environment is an important feature of the program and is designed to change the youth's concepts of their life chances which, to now, have been bounded by their immediate suburban surroundings and peer groups. The course has a daily program of work and activities. Tradesmen are employed on the building construction and the participants assist them. A cook and nutritional advisor supervises the youths as they prepare meals. The co-ordinators of the project are qualified and experienced youth workers who oversee activities and act as counsellors to participants. They spend a high proportion of time on counselling, especially giving emotional support in the evenings. There is no television reception so the evenings are an important time when the group is left to its own company and resources. The overall results are impressive: young men and women who, in their home environments were regarded as anti-social and/or uncontrollable, willingly engage in a fairly arduous program of work and learning on-the-job and develop a harmonious and congenial set of relationships with one another.

As with skills-based projects, the experience of personal development courses points to some models as likely to be most successful. These are projects conducted by

professionally-qualified social workers and youth workers who employ teachers and trainers as adjuncts to their main activities. They are aimed at youth from a variety of disturbed backgrounds, many of whom are hostile towards institutions and institutional authority. They are full-time, relatively intense courses that are sustained long enough to create their own sense of community and to make their own impact on individual participants.

Conclusion: Reforms to community programs

Without undertaking the more formal, and costly, longitudinal participant surveys that have been conducted in the USA, it is still possible to draw conclusions about the directions community training programs for youth are taking in Australia. Some of the programs that appear from personal investigation to be among the most successful in this country have adopted measures that international experience suggests should provide the best long-term benefits for their participants. For youth with backgrounds of disadvantage, long-term unemployment, legal offences and family disturbance, the most effective approaches are either:

- **skills-based programs** conducted by experienced educators and combining basic and remedial education with specific

skills training and/or work experience;

- **personal development programs,** conducted by social workers and youth workers which combine efforts to develop individual confidence and group rapport with remedial education and vocational training.

Although one of these programs, that conducted by Compuskill, was clearly effective in directing participants into paid employment, the majority should be seen as models of **pre**-training rather than self-contained vocational training from which youth can be expected to find permanent employment. The community programs described here can be an effective means of picking up and assisting youth who have moved into a syndrome of anti-social and self-destructive behaviour but they should not be seen as anything like a complete answer to their long-term problems. The rationale for both PEP and the Australian Traineeship System came from an analysis of the continued decline in the number of jobs for teenagers and from a recognition that the long-term interests of youth are best served by them gaining formal vocational qualifications, work skills and experience. In today's labour market, which employs only 32 per cent of teenagers in full-time jobs (a figure that will decline to 23 per cent by 1992 according to the scenario of the recent report by the

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28. Committee on Inquiry into the Quality of Education, **Report**, AGPS, Canberra, 1985, p 66

Quality of Education Review Committee[28]) where the demand for skilled and professional workers is growing but where the quality of work and income available to those without qualifications is rapidly declining,[29] community pre-training programs should be aiming to direct their clientele back into the formal education system, especially TAFE, on either a full-time or part-time basis.

However, many of those involved in the management of community groups are not aware of the full implications of the deterioration of the teenage labour market. Many still carry several of the assumptions that were current with the training programs of the late 1970s. They believe that the acquisition of part-time or casual unskilled work is a successful outcome for their participants. Although one of PEP's two principal objectives is to increase educational retention among disadvantaged groups, many community groups working with these youth have in the past primarily measured their success by their ability to direct their clientele into employment. As an example, the Daruk Training School for juvenile delinquent boys, which was funded by PEP to conduct a program in 1984, stated its objectives as:

- to satisfy the immediate needs of participants in terms of offering specific job application skills;

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29. Keith Windschuttle, 'The New Labour Market: Implications for Education and Training', Keynote address to International Conference on Employment and Training, Perth, September 1985.

- to make participants aware of the different types of jobs available to early school leavers;

- to give participants an awareness of work conditions.

There is a clear need to re-think objectives like these. If the Australian Traineeship System is successfully established under the principles recommended by the Kirby inquiry, then traineeships should be a high priority destination for participants in CYSS, PEP and similar programs described here. Traineeships have been conceived with many of the types of youth attracted to these programs in mind. If formal evaluations of outcomes are done, their real success should be assessed in terms of their ability to direct youth towards traineeships and other formally-credentialled courses within the tertiary education system. A important internal reform needed for community programs is to emphasise this point to project co-ordinators and to assist them direct their efforts to these ends.

The major overall reform needed, however, is that of proper funding. Many of the Australian community programs have adopted practices that their own experience tells them, and which the overseas literature confirms, are effective responses to the socio-economic environment in which disadvantaged youth find themselves. Yet most of them exist from short-term grant to short-term grant, tailoring their proposals to suit the requirements of the funding authority

with the most imminent application deadline - this month it may be the Department of Community Services, next month it will be Employment, then Education, after that the Drug and Alcohol Authority and so on. Most youth workers in the successful programs I have described are professionally-qualified people who will not remain in a system that fails to reward their efforts with proper continuity of funding. They have plenty of options elsewhere.

As a society, however, it is doubtful if we have many other options at all. It has taken a decade of experience around the world to get to the stage we are at now. We have a reasonable idea of the nature of the problem of disaffected youth and we have a body of programs we know respond to at least some of their needs. If we want to make a civilised and humane response to the situation, we should give proper financial support to these cost-effective services.