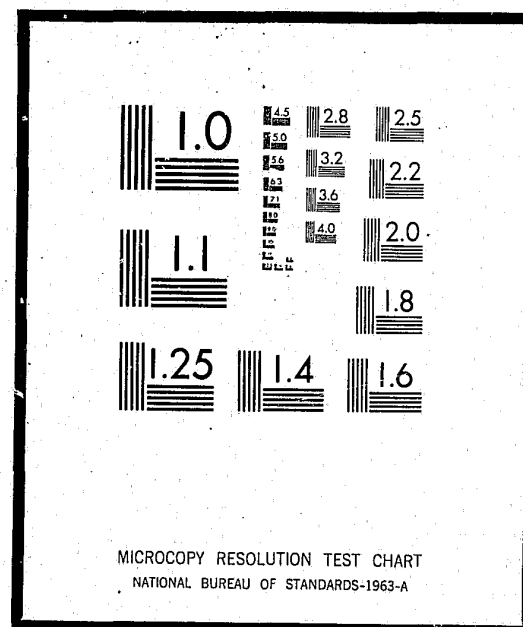


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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20531

Date filmed 5/29/75

INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT

APRIL - DECEMBER 1973.

PROJECT COPE (72-IC-0069) ✓

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The Community Outreach Probation Experiment (COPE) is designed to test the effectiveness of intensive case treatment and supervision through the use of community based paraprofessionals (COPE workers) working together with probation counselors offering team oriented services in the local neighborhoods through outreach offices. The project seeks to reduce recidivism, defined as a recurrent complaint certified for probable cause, on a probationer who had a background of an impact or auto theft offense through the intensification of supervision and provision of diversification and new services.

OBJECTIVE I: "REDUCE RECIDIVISM AMONG 900 ADJUDICATED JUVENILE IMPACT CRIME OFFENDERS BY TWENTY PERCENT (20%) AND RECIDIVISM FOR IMPACT OFFENSES BY 10%."

During April - December 1973, 930 Impact juvenile offenders were accepted in the program. All Impact offenders placed on probation and supervised by the Field Services Division of the Juvenile Court are automatically placed in the project. Of this total, 293 individuals recidivated for any offense. This constitutes a recidivism rate of 31.6% of the total number of individuals in the program. The number of individuals who had a complaint certified for probable cause for an Impact offense (burglary, robbery, rape and assault) was 140 or 15.1% of the total 930 individuals.

15630

These figures do not take into account the fact that individuals were in the project for different lengths of time and had different risk-exposure times. Later reports will indicate recidivism rates by risk exposure time.

The total number of complaints recorded since the beginning of the project up through the end of 1973 was 503. Dividing this figure by the total number of clients, 930, we obtain a rate of 541 complaints for the 930 clients. The total number of Impact complaints was 156 which equals a rate of 168 per 930 clients. Again, risk-exposure time is not taken into account.

The offenses cited on the Impact complaints are listed below:

OFFENSE	NUMBER	RATE (Based on 930 Clients)
Aggravated Robbery	20	.02
Robbery	5	.005
Assault (first or second degree)	15	.016
Assault (third degree)	10	.011
Forcible Rape	0	0
Rape	2	.002
Burglary	103	.111
Murder (both degrees)	1	.001
TOTAL	156	.168

Of the 930 clients in the project between April and December 1973, 44, or 4.7%, were committed to the Department of Institutions, 3 were transferred to adult court and 44, or 4.7%, were "on the run."

The recidivism reduction objective will be primarily measured by comparison of the recidivism rates (for all offenses and for Impact offenses) of COPE clients against a baseline rate. This baseline will be developed from juvenile court data for individuals placed on probation (formal) and who were referred to the court for an Impact offense or joyriding (auto theft) between July 1, 1971, and June 30, 1972. These individuals will be followed-up through court records for a period of one year after being placed on formal probation. In addition to re-filing with the juvenile court, adjudication and dispositions will also be recorded. The chief criterion of recidivism will be a recurrent complaint filed with the court and certified for probable cause. As of the time of this writing the baseline data has not been analyzed by the Denver Anti-Crime Council Staff so no comparative figures are available.

The project made an attempt to make comparisons. They compared the rates of recidivism defined as number of re-current complaints per 1,000 individuals of COPE clients between June and December 1973 with that of all field probationers between June and December of 1972 (Impact, non-Impact, CHINS and status offenders). They used the average monthly caseload as the demoninator and the number of complaints as the numerator. Comparisons between the COPE and 1972 groups are presented in TABLE 1 below.

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF RECIDIVISM RATES PER 1000 FOR COPE CLIENTS (1973)
AND ALL FIELD PROBATIONERS (1972)
JUNE - DECEMBER

COMPLAINTS	RATE/1000		DIFFERENCE ALL PROBATIONERS (1972) AND COPE PROBATIONERS (1973)
	COPE	1972	
Impact Offenses	178	184	-3.3%
All Other Offenses	326	416	-21.6%
TOTAL	504	600	-16.0%

The data shows an overall decrease for the COPE clients from that of all 1972 field probationers, including a slight decrease in Impact recidivism.

Although the data looks favorable, the 1972 group of all field probationers is not an adequate comparison from which to make any statements about the effectiveness of the COPE project to date. The assessment of Objective I cannot be made at this time. A more comparable comparison group, a constant time of risk-exposure (follow-up from time of placement in the project) and "internal" data relevant to measure the effects of program elements on recidivism are all necessary in order to attribute any decrease (or increase) in recidivism to the project.

OBJECTIVE II: "INTENSIFY SUPERVISION OF PROBATIONERS"

One of the chief considerations in the COPE project was the reduction of caseload size by hiring community-oriented workers (COPE workers) to deal with probationers, thus reducing the caseload of the professional probation counselors. This has been accomplished over the months through the assignment of cases to the COPE workers. The development of the project has been assignment of cases to the COPE workers alone, to a team consisting of a COPE worker and probation counselor and to the probation counselors alone. During the June - December 1973 period the average caseload for all personnel (COPE workers and probation counselors) was 21.7. The average size of the caseload for probation counselors was 27.6 and 15.8 for the COPE workers during the same time period.

In contrast to the figures quoted above, the average caseload per probation counselor was 51.3 during the June to December period in 1972. It should be noted that probation counselors supervise both COPE and non-COPE probationers, although COPE workers are assigned to COPE clients only.

Some COPE workers also deal with non-COPE probationers in the outreach offices, but are not part of their official caseload. The caseload size of probation counselors in 1973 stated previously are only for COPE probationers. The decline from the June - December 1972 period would be less than 51% (51.3 average caseload vs. 27.6 average caseload) if the non-COPE probationers are included, but the decline would nevertheless be substantial.

Specific quantified data on "intensity" of supervision is not available. There has been no data reported on what the probation counselors have done with the time available because of reduced caseloads. Part of the time undoubtedly had been taken up with supervision of COPE workers and other new activities. The amount of time spent with probationers in direct or indirect service and other new or increased activities have not been presented by the project. There is no direct evidence on how the probation counselors have distributed their time with a lower caseload nor the effects upon the probationers. Data on the activities of the COPE workers briefly mentioned under Objective III shows that there have been a varied group of services and activities for the probationers carried out by the COPE workers. Specific quantitative comparisons with activities and services prior to 1973 have not been reported.

During the second year of the grant, it will be necessary to maintain systematic records of activities of probation counselors with regard to clients as well as other activities in order to properly assess Objective II.

OBJECTIVE III: "UTILIZE PARA-PROFESSIONALS FOR COMMUNITY INPUT,
DIVERSIFICATION AND INNOVATIVE SUPERVISION TECHNIQUES"

The original grant called for 8 Streetworkers (full-time) and 8 Street-Worker Trainees (half-time), the latter to be supervised by the Streetworkers. These individuals (COPE workers) were to provide community input, closer identification with the probationers, reduction in probation counselor caseload size, and the manpower to work closely through a variety of techniques with the probationers. After much turnover among the COPE workers, especially among the Trainees early in the project, it was decided to change the mix to 10 full-time Streetworkers and 4 half-time Trainees. During the last quarter of 1973, stability was finally achieved with all positions filled.

The individuals chosen were knowledgeable about and identified with the community in which they were to work; many live in those communities.

In addition to providing more service to and identification with the probationers, COPE provides the first step in a career ladder within the juvenile court. Although not stated in the objectives, this was one of the major motivating factors behind the COPE project. A few Trainees have already been promoted to Streetworkers and one Streetworker has become a Probation Counselor. The racial mix of the COPE workers include Chicanos, Blacks, Anglos and one American Indian.

As of the last quarter of 1973, all COPE workers were actively involved in direct and indirect service to probationers and the community in which their outreach offices are located. All carry caseloads and all are

involved to varying degrees of responsibility to the probationers they serve. Each of the seven outreach offices, located in areas where most of the probationers live, are free to structure their program according to the types and needs of the clients and according to the particular arrangements between probation counselors and COPE workers. The variability in the operations of the outreach offices and the somewhat different roles played by the COPE worker is based on deliberate policy in order to allow the flexibility needed to deal with the specific clientele and community. Each outreach office has developed (with varying degrees of success) its own structure and modus operandi.

Among the specific activities in which the COPE workers are involved are:

- Referring and placing clients into other programs to meet their needs, including some funded by the Denver High Impact Program.
- Organizing and conducting a wide variety of recreational activities, both at the center and elsewhere, including team sports, swimming, bowling, trips to concerts, movies, sight-seeing, etc.
- Tutoring.
- Making contacts with schools regarding individual probationers.
- Supervising part-time employment programs for probationers and other neighborhood youngsters.
- Providing employment counseling, job-finding and job placement.
- Maintaining the outreach offices for the use of probationers.
- Contacting families of probationers on their caseload; attempting to help with special problems, such as obtaining a driver's license.
- Making contacts with and providing activities for neighborhood youngsters not on probation.
- Providing the probationer with an informal relationship, friendship and somebody to talk to.

These activities vary from office to office among COPE workers. The COPE workers also aid the Probation Counselor in terms of supervision and paperwork and some present cases in court.

The COPE workers have functioned in varying ways with regard to the probationers, community in general, local schools, government agencies and special programs. The COPE workers have added an "extra dimension" to the juvenile court. In some instances the COPE worker has provided a strong link between the probationer and his family and the court, and has increased the degree of personal contact with some probationers.

It is difficult to neatly summarize the activities of the COPE workers or their immediate effects on the individuals with whom they have worked. In order to more objectively assess the activities and effects of the COPE workers (Objective III), careful records of these activities and outcomes must be maintained by the staff. Responses of probationers and various segments of the community should also be obtained. The new evaluation plan of the project is designed, in part, to obtain and analyze this type of data. An attempt will be made to relate the activities of the COPE workers vis-a-vis individual probationers to recidivism and other behavior outcomes.

In summary, qualitative data and impressions show that some of the COPE workers and outreach offices have provided new links and personal services to probationers not available previously through the court. There is also evidence that some influence on the community has taken place through the

COPE workers and outreach offices. The number of probationers served by the COPE workers and systematic, ongoing accurate data is needed to adequately assess Objective III.

MAJOR PROBLEMS

The project has had several serious problems during the first nine months. Most of these occurred early and have been solved or are in the process of resolution. Among the major problems encountered were:

1. High turnover among the COPE workers (Streetworkers and Trainees)--

During the last quarter of 1973 a full complement of COPE workers was attained.

2. Lack of functioning of some of the outreach offices--

For many months some of the outreach offices were not used or used very little by COPE workers, probation counselors and probationers. Some were in a poor state of disrepair. All offices are now functional. COPE workers, probationers, some probation counselors and even some neighborhood youngsters not on probation come to the outreach offices. Many of the offices have regular hours and some are open during the evening. Outreach appears to be a reality as of the present time.

3. Conflict, lack of trust and lack of communication between COPE workers and probation counselors--

This situation existed for awhile for several of the "teams." It has been resolved to some extent. Much progress has been made in assigning cases and developing a set of procedures for communication within the teams. A self-analysis of the various outreach teams shows that there has been progress for most of the more problem-ridden ones in terms of developing structure, functions and internal and external rapport.

4. Lack of detailed, ongoing data on the activities of the probation counselors and the COPE workers--

The hiring of a management analyst/evaluation coordinator has, to some extent, provided a resource for more thorough evaluation. Cooperation on the part of both COPE workers and probation counselors is essential if this "process" data is to be collected and subject to meaningful analyses.

5. Difficulty in collecting and easily retrieving data on individual probationers with regard to recurrent complaints, dispositions and services rendered--

Most of these problems have been solved during the last quarter of 1973 by COPE staff, and more accurate, easily retrievable data is now available.

PROGRESS

The resolution of most of the problems stated above has been accomplished or is in the process of being accomplished. The outreach teams (probation counselors and COPE workers) have developed cooperation and communication and have developed working relationships with the clients, the community, the court and organizations which can provide services and activities for clients.

Training for COPE workers has been an important part of the first nine months of the project. Continuing training is planned. Among the areas of training which are planned for the second year are: court presentation of cases and communication and intra-group dynamics.

The COPE workers have contributed much to providing meaningful contacts with the probationers, their families and the communities. Although no objective data is available, it is believed that the team approach may be beneficial to both the COPE workers and the probation counselors. Its effects on probationers, with respect to recidivism, remains to be assessed.

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