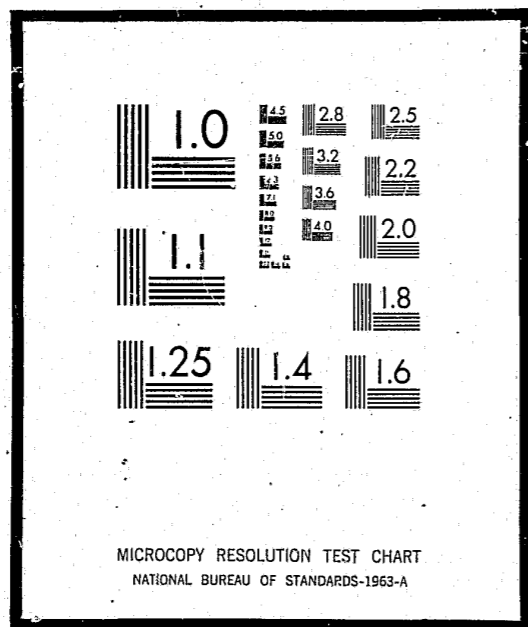


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Evaluation

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
OF
WARMINSTER'S (FR)
PROGRAM TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS

by
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September, 1974

sub-grant
SE-358-73A

INTRODUCTION

The Township of Warminster is a second class township located in Bucks County Pennsylvania, some sixteen miles northeast of the city of Philadelphia. The population of the township is estimated as over 37,000. Approximately 6,000 or 16% of this population reside within a 140 acre area known as Warminster Heights, a former World War II government housing project. The 1,150 dwelling unit project is now privately owned. Approximately 20% of the population of Warminster Heights are Spanish speaking, Puerto Rican people.

The physical facilities of Warminster Heights have deteriorated rapidly. The homes are in need of painting, and clapboards are often missing. The roads are narrow and filled with potholes. Trash and junk are evident in many of the open areas. It is only the presence of these open areas that makes Warminster Heights atypical of a slum.

However, the crime and juvenile delinquency problems are typical of such poverty areas with high unemployment. Typical also is the rapid increase of the use of hard and soft drugs by a significant portion of the community.

The problems of providing police service in Warminster Heights are also typical of those found in most slum areas. These problems however, are further aggravated by the language barrier between the police and the sizable Spanish speaking population.

In 1972, the Warminster Township Police Department recognized that the rapid influx of Puerto Ricans into the area was further complicating the problem of providing police service in Warminster Heights. At that time a sub-station was implemented and two Spanish and four English

speaking officers were assigned as patrolmen to the area.

In early 1973, the Warminster Police Department applied for and received a grant from the Governor's Justice Commission to fund the continuing operation of the sub-station and the adding of two additional Spanish speaking patrolmen. This document is an evaluation of this program through March, 1974.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

In the proposal for the sub-grant, the Warminster Police Department stated that the objective of the program is to:

" . . . improve and increase community relations in the area of Warminster Heights."

The proposal states that the major tactic to be used in improving community relations is to:

" . . . bridge the language barrier gap and thereby assist that segment of the community in their everyday demands and requests that ordinarily fall to a police department."

Although not stated in the proposal, it is supposed that the sub-station would be used to increase communications between the police and all of the citizens in Warminster Heights.

A comprehensive and objective measurement of citizen attitudes can only be obtained using survey techniques. Such a survey to determine if the Warminster Police Department has obtained its objective of improving community relations would cost on the order of \$50,000. Clearly the scope of the program does not justify the expenditure of such resources.

Therefore, it must be appreciated that the evaluation scheme outlined in the evaluation proposal (and repeated here) is far from comprehensive and could be in considerable error.

Two factors indicate that some information as to the citizen-police relationship can be obtained. The first factor is that the program is directed at a very limited target area which is a geographic entity. The second factor is that a significant portion of the target population is Puerto Rican. Puerto Rican enclaves in the Northeastern United States are generally very close knit groups. The religious and social leaders of these communities are very sensitive and aware of these peoples' attitudes and feelings about the police. Consequently, periodic interviews with these leaders offer an opportunity to obtain a measure of the communities' relationships with the police.

In any poverty area, various social workers are also very aware of the neighborhood's attitudes, and are a good source of the type of information required for this evaluation.

Specifically, the subjective evaluation plan proposed to the Warminster Police Department and accepted by them consists of the evaluator going into the area, talking to people who have some knowledge of the police community interactions, and obtaining their impressions of these interactions. In general, the people contacted would be social workers active in the area and community leaders who could be identified. The evaluation would consist of a before-and-after survey which will hopefully, indicate any change of the communities' attitude towards the police during the period of the program.

It should be noted that by accepting this evaluation plan, the Warminster Police Department has placed a great deal of faith in the objectivity of the evaluator.

The Warminster Police Department did not specifically note that the reduction of crime in Warminster Heights was an objective of the proposed program. Nevertheless, the Governor's Justice Commission indicated that reported crime data would be of interest. Before the evaluator became active in the program, the Warminster Police Department did not maintain a separate reported crime tally for Warminster Heights. In July of 1973, the Department began keeping such a tally.

EVALUATION

Program Implementation

At the start of the present program eight patrolmen, two of whom speak Spanish, were active in the area. A third Spanish speaking officer was accepted by the Department on January 7, 1974, and deployed in the area on March 18, 1974. As of April 15, 1974, the fourth Spanish speaking officer had not been hired.*

No additional training was given any of the eight officers. Their mode of operation is typical of patrol operations anywhere. That is; there is little police-citizen contact other than that which is clearly police business.

The sub-station was also in operation at the start of the program. It consists of an office in the Warminster Heights Community Center. The office is furnished with a desk, several chairs and a telephone. A sign on the office door identifies it as the Warminster Police Department and

*As of August 26, 1974 the prospects seem good to hire the fourth officer by September, 1974.

the Department's phone number is given. Although the office is austere, it is freshly painted, clean and neat, and should serve its purpose.

The sub-station is normally not manned. It is apparently used only when a citizen initiates a meeting by contacting the area officers through the Department's communication section.

Citizens Before and During Interviews

During late July and early August of 1973, the evaluator made contact with several social workers and/or community leaders in the area. Their views were solicited on the Warminster Police Department and specifically about police operational incidents in Warminster Heights. In March of 1974, these same people were contacted and their views again solicited.

These interviews summarized below are hopefully, a faithful interpretation of their knowledge which is pertinent to this program.

The evaluator feels that it his responsibility however, to add his comments as to his subjective evaluation of the interview's depth of knowledge and objectivity. This is done by rating both of these factors on a scale from one to five. A rating of K-1 indicates the subject's knowledge is severely limited; a rating of 0-5 indicates, in the evaluator's estimation, the person is very objective.

Observation

Subject #1 (K-2, 0-3) (An amateur social worker who spends several afternoons a week in the area.)

Before This individual clearly had a limited knowledge of the social attitudes in the Warminster Heights area, she had three comments: (1) she has the impression that there is little love lost between the people and

and the police; (2) there is a drug problem in the area (she had no knowledge of the use of anything except soft drugs); and (3) she was not aware of any excessive use of force by the police in the area.

After This subject could not be located on either March 18, nor April 15, 1974, when the evaluator was in the area.

Subject #2 (K-4, 0-4) A professional social worker employed by the State, Spanish-speaking. She and her staff spend about six days a week in Warminster Heights.

Before This individual has obviously had a great deal of ghetto experience, and is quite aware of community-police problems in such areas. Her impressions are that the community attitude is similar to that found in most low-income areas; i.e., the people blame the establishment for their problems and take it out on the police as they are the most visible part of the establishment. She knows of no excessive use of force by the police and is fully aware of the drug problem (she is convinced there is some heroin use).

After This individual has heard no negative comments about the police for sometime, from the Spanish-speaking people. Thus, she feels that the police community relations have improved since she was last interviewed. She still feels there is a serious drug problem in the area.

Subject #3 (K-5, 0-3) (Social worker in the area)

Before (Subjects 3, 4, and 5 all expressed the same sentiments and concerns.) All three of these people have a poor impression of the police. All expressed the belief that the police have no interest in the area and dislike coming into the community to provide police service. They feel

that this disinterest on the policemen's part is a mirroring of the attitude of the Chief. None of these individuals were aware of any excessive use of force by the police. All were deeply concerned with the drug problem (some use of heroin), and were very unhappy with the police's lack of activity in controlling the situation.

After This subject still feels there is still a serious lack of communications between the people and the police. However, she feels that there has been some reduction of tension between the two groups during the past year. Her impression of the Spanish speaking policemen is very favorable - they are "good guys." She pointed out that the sub-station is manned very sporadically and then for only short periods. She is still convinced there is a serious drug problem. (When pressed on this issue, she began naming specific individuals who are pushing both hard and soft drugs.)

Subject #4 (K-5, 0-5) (Social worker in the area)

Before See above, subject #3

After This subject now feels that many of the policemen are now known in the area, particularly the Spanish speaking officers. She has not heard any derogatory remarks about police operations in the area for sometime. She specifically pointed out that three officers on their own time are acting as advisors to the juvenile program and are making worthwhile inputs at advisory committee meetings. She pointed out the sub-station is never open, furthermore, its purpose and how it is to be used is now known to the community.

Subject #5 (K-4, 0-3) (Community leader)

Before See above, subject #3

After This subject still does not know any of the patrolmen in the area. She feels that police response is slow (when pressed on this issue she was only able to give one specific example). She doubts that eight men are committed to the area. She is still of the opinion that the police are not particularly eager to help. Drug usage is not a serious problem in her estimation.

Subject #6 (K-3, 0-1) (Housing consultant in the area)

Before (Subject not identified until March, 1974)

After This subject feels that the new policemen in the area have a chip on their shoulders. He grants that this impression may be due to the fact that these individuals could still not be sure of themselves. This individual is very concerned about police brutality, and claims to have extensive knowledge of specific incidences. He feels that neither the political nor the police establishment is particularly interested in providing good police services in Warminster Heights; that the sub-grant is merely a ruse "for getting additional cops." This individual knows none of the policemen in the area and sees the sub-station as having no functional use.

(It should be noted that the low objectivity rating was confirmed by questioning several people as to this subject's objectivity.)

Crime and Clearance Data

The pertinent reported crime and clearance data for Warminster Heights is displayed in the accompanying table. Before July of 1973, such data was not tabulated for the Warminster Heights area.

Offense	July '74		Aug.		Sept.		Oct.		Nov.		Dec.		Jan. '74		Feb.		March		April		May		June		TOTAL	
	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C
Homicide																									0	0
Rape											1	1													1	1
Robbery													1	1								1		1	3	1
Assault	1	1	9	3	1	1	3	2	5	2	1	1	3	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	30	15
Burglary	11	1	7	1	17	1	3	3	14	2	8	-	12	-	11	1	10	4	9		5		15	122	13	
Larceny > \$50			5		3		7	2	4		2	2	1		1		4		4	1	2		3	1	36	23
Larceny < \$50	14	4	9	4	2		1		12	1	4		9	2	12	1	9		6	2	8		7		93	14
Auto Theft	4	3	2	1	2				1				1		3		1	1	1		2		1		18	5
Total Part I	30	9	32	9	25	2	14	7	36	5	16	4	27	3	28	2	25	6	21	4	20	2	29	2	303	55
Part II*	61	18	102	43	55	27	62	36	59	16	37	15	22	5	16	3	31	8	39	19	49	26	65	9	598	225
Grand Totals	91	27	134	52	80	29	76	43	95	21	53	19	49	8	44	5	56	14	60	23	69	28	94	11	901	280

* Exclusive of drunkenness and liquor law violations

R- Reported crimes less unfounded crimes

C- Cleared Crimes

CONCLUSIONS

With one exception (Subject #5), all of the people interviewed have indicated there has been an improvement in the police community relationships during the past nine months. Upon reflection, this evaluator, however, now feels this is a too positive interpretation of these people's views. A more accurate statement would be "there has been a lessening of tension between the two groups." If the latter statement is more correct then it indicates that the Warminster Police Department still has a long way to go before positive interactions can occur. That is, the general attitude of the people in Warminster Heights is still negative towards the police.

It is of interest to note also that only Subject #4 was able to cite specific instances of a police action which were constructive to improving relations. All of the other subjects implied that the lessening of tension was due to an absence of specific incidents where the police mishandled the event or made operational mistakes.

Regardless of whether the attitudes of the people towards the police are positive or negative, or regardless of what the specific causes for change have been, the fact remains that the Warminster Police Department has made progress toward their goal of improving relations which is the purpose of this program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Warminster Police Department's program to improve police-community relations in the Warminster Heights area has suffered because of three factors, two of which are perhaps beyond the direct control of the Warminster Police Department.

The first factor has been the inability of the Warminster Police Department to recruit Spanish speaking officers.

The second factor is the extreme concern a number of the adults have for the drug problem in the area. This concern appears to have manifested itself in a manner which completely overshadows all police operations in the area. That is, it is expressed as "drug use is widespread in Warminster Heights and the police are not doing anything about it, hence, they are not doing their job."

The third factor is that as the program is presently constituted, it is not at all clear, at least to this evaluator, that the Warminster Police Department is really serious about improving relationships between themselves and the people in Warminster Heights. Community relations in a ghetto-type area are not improved by merely adding a few minority type officers to the department to patrol the area.

Each of these factors is commented upon in detail below.

Recruitment Problem

The fact that one of the major elements of the program (i.e., the deployment of four Spanish speaking officers) has, of this date, still not been completely implemented, implies either one or both of two conclusions. Either the magnitude of the recruitment problem was not fully appreciated at the time the program was proposed; or if it was, then suitable alternatives were not developed. Regardless of which of these is correct, there

was clearly a failure in the program's planning phase.

The Warminster Police Department has placed its major hope on the use of Spanish speaking officers to improve citizen-police relations. However, after this length of time (i.e., this evaluator understands that the Warminster Police Department has been trying to recruit Spanish speaking officers for the past eighteen months at least) it would seem that the possibility of having Spanish speaking officers constitute the majority of patrolmen in the area is rather remote. If this conclusion is true then it would appear that the development of other alternative means of improving community relations is ⁶mandatory.*

Drug Problems in Warminster Heights

The drug problem in Warminster Heights has been brought to this evaluator's attention by almost everyone with whom he has talked with in the past nine months. It is not clear whether or not these people have correctly assessed the magnitude of the problem. That is, when they have been pressed upon the issue as to specific types of drugs being used, or specific individuals that they know are using drugs, their answers tend to become vague.

*It should be noted that none of the above statements are intended to imply that there has been a lack of effort on the part of the Warminster Police Department to recruit Spanish speaking officers. The Department has made an extensive effort to acquire such individuals, by advertising, personal contacts, and so on. It is this evaluator's impression that over the past 18-24 months, the Department has tested some 20 or so individuals. Several of these have been tested more than once. The problem is not one of locating applicants but rather one of finding applicants who can pass the entrance examination.

Whether or not these people's assessment is correct is not the point. The point is that because of their preoccupation with the matter it places the Warminster Police Department at a considerable disadvantage in their efforts to improve their relationship with the adult (particularly the parental) portion of the area's population. The police are being blamed for the existence of the problem and being severely faulted for its not being eliminated.

The Warminster Police Department probably has neither the resources, man-power or training, to do much about this problem. But nevertheless, until at least a "show of force" is implemented their efforts of improving community relations will be severely hampered.

Depth of Program

It has been demonstrated countless times that the use of minority officers to police a minority community will not, of and by itself, improve community relations. The Warminster program however, seems to consist of little more than this. The officers patrolling Warminster Heights have not received any specialized training nor have specific guidelines or suggestions been provided them as to how to proceed to improve relations.

The function of the sub-station is far from clear to this evaluator, as it apparently is to most of the residents in Warminster Heights. Store-front offices, or sub-stations can be extremely effective, but they require detail planning as to their use. The Warminster Heights sub-station seems to have no such planned use, and its purpose is an enigma to all.

Without a program of greater depth than is presently underway in Warminster Heights, the possibility of making significant improvements in community relations seems remote.

In spite of the handicaps the program has faced, two factors indicate to this evaluator that the Warminster Police Department should continue their efforts to improve community relations in Warminster Heights.

The first factor is that unless a positive relationship exists between the police and the community, then Warminster Heights is going to continue to consume an inordinate amount of police resources, and will remain a potential source for a significant civil disorder. The President's Crime Commission quite clearly recognized the importance of community relations programs to effective law enforcement.

The second factor is that in this evaluator's opinion, Warminster Heights presents a police-community relations problem that is very tractable. There appears to be a sense of community awareness and cohesiveness in the area, as well as a desire for community improvement. The Puerto Rican segment is also a positive factor, because of their strong family structures, and their traditional respect for the law.

The recommendation that the program be continued is however, made contingent upon the following condition being met; viz the program must embrace, in spirit as well as the letter, the five basic principles set down by the President's Crime Commission for the implementation of an effective community relations program.*

Within this framework, two immediate steps should be taken. A comprehensive plan together with policies, guidelines and tactics should be generated. The techniques for conducting effective community relations programs are well known and can readily be adapted to the Warminster Police Department and Warminster Heights.

*The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society, A Report by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice; Sup. of Doc., Wash., D.C., 1967, p. 100.

Second, immediate steps should be taken to reduce the over concern with drugs in the Warminster Heights area. The steps should be in two directions. A vigorous enforcement program must be undertaken against pushers, using outside agencies if necessary. Second, a comprehensive educational effort should be implemented. This should probably take the form of community meetings where the police frankly discuss such matters, as the magnitude of the problem, the difficulty of erasing the problem, and the ways and means the community can aid in reducing the problem.

MAJOR EVALUATIONS UNDERWAY OR COMPLETED IN YOUR SPA

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Project or Program being Evaluated:

Grant Title: SE-358-73A To Improve Community Relations - Warminster
(include grant number)

Grantee: Township of Warminster

Brief Description: To operate a sub-station which will include one
(both project and evaluation effort)
Spanish & one English speaking officer to help improve relations
between the police & the community.

Scheduled date of final Evaluation Report: 9/20/74

Person to contact concerning the Evaluation:

Christine A. Fossett, Chief, Evaluation & Monitoring Unit

(name)

Governor's Justice Commission, Department of Justice

(address)

Box 1167, Harrisburg, PA., 17120

717-787-1422

(telephone)

If completed, is Evaluation Report on file with NCJRS? yes no

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~~Keith Miles~~

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END