



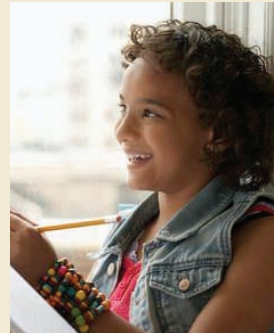
NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION CENTRE

Building the Evidence – **EVALUATION SUMMARIES**

2007-ES-12

NATIONAL ART AND YOUTH DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The National Art and Youth Demonstration Project (NAYDP) was created as an alternative method for child and youth to prevent behaviour problems. The project was implemented in five sites (Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and one rural location) to reflect the diversity among rural and urban communities. At each site, the project involved 30 to 35 children, aged 10 to 15, enrolled in a structured art program, which was held twice a week during a nine-month period.



This three-year demonstration project aimed to determine the effectiveness of art programs on positive outcomes for children and youth, such as staying in school, improving academic performance, improving self-esteem, instilling hope for the future, encouraging a focus on career development, and inhibiting their involvement in negative social situations such as substance use, crime and violence.

Project assessment

Process and outcome evaluations were conducted. Data was collected from parents, children and school personnel regarding 183 children who attended the project over its duration.

The design of the evaluation was a pre- and post-test method, with a six-month follow-up. Additionally, a comparison group was established, based on matched cases from the National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth (NLSCY).

The process evaluation included information on project implementation, community mapping to identify appropriate locations for outreach, and recruitment strategy forms. The outcome evaluation included the collection of pre- and post-test data from standardized instruments that measured self-esteem, pro-social behaviour, conduct disorder, hyperactivity, depression and family functioning.

Key findings

The process evaluation showed:

- That the project was implemented successfully in all five sites, and reached children and youth;
- A high and sustained attendance rate; participants attended an average of 82% of program sessions;
- That two-thirds of participants were girls, who had slightly higher attendance rates than boys;
- That participation in the project was enhanced through offering food to participants during activities; adapting arts curricula to participants based on their needs and skills; following-up with parents and adopting effective conflict resolution techniques.

The outcome evaluation showed that:

- Girls rated slightly higher than boys on participation, task completion, developing art skills and positive social skills;
- There was a significant decrease in the emotional problems of participants after full participation in the art instruction compared to the comparison group;



- Participants in the project reported benefits such as increased confidence, improved interpersonal and conflict resolution skills, improved problem solving techniques as well as the acquisition of art skills;
- Involvement in evening activities for family, seeing their children's performances and having contact with project staff helped parents feel attached to their community;
- Participants had a higher frequency of emotional problems than the comparison group. The level of problems, however, decreased at a faster rate than that of the comparison group.

Lessons learned

Lessons learned included:

- Using pro-active recruitment strategies to engage participants, parents and stakeholders is critical to overcoming barriers and reaching underserved children;
- It is important to have facilities that allow for break-out sessions and flexible curricula;
- Greater attendance of parents has a positive impact on children and should be emphasized in similar programs;
- The curriculum should be flexible to the unique local community characteristics;
- Staff and teachers should be from the same cultural background as participants, so that they can build empathy and bond more readily;
- Public recognition of children's efforts is important.

Conclusion

The National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project showed sustained attendance in the art programs and improvement in the children's behavioural and emotional well-being. Because they can reach children and youth at-risk, arts activities and performance can be effective ways to prevent or reduce crime with the involvement of youth at risk of drug use, dropping out of school and criminal involvement.

It is relevant to assess the impact of art instruction on the psychosocial functioning of children and youth and their involvement in drugs, crime and violence.

For more information or to receive a copy of the final evaluation report please contact the National Crime Prevention Centre at 1-877-302-6272, or visit our website at: www.PublicSafety.gc.ca/NCPC.

You can also visit the website of National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project at: www.mcgill.ca/naydp/.

If you wish to register for the NCPC mailing list to receive information from the Centre please visit the subscription page at: www.PublicSafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/maillinglist/subscribe-en.aspx.