

**THE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTRE
TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN**



**THE IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS
OF THE GARDA SPECIAL PROJECTS**

**FINAL REPORT
TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
EQUALITY & LAW REFORM**

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Academic Co-Director, Children's Research Centre
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ABBREVIATIONS

APCs	Area Partnership Companies
CCYDG	Corpus Christi Youth Development Group
CDPs	Community Development Projects
CDYSB	City of Dublin Youth Service Board
CE	Community Employment
CYC	Catholic Youth Council
CYPs	Community Youth Projects
DEDs	District Electoral Divisions
FÁS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair
GRAFT	Give Ronanstown A Future Today Project
GSPs	Garda Special Projects
HSL	Home School Liaison
JELR	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
JLOs	Juvenile Liaison Officers
LYF	Louth Youth Federation
LYS	Limerick Youth Service
MAY	Mahon Action For Youth Project
NYF	National Youth Federation
NYPs	Neighbourhood Youth Projects
SPCs	Strategic Policy Committees
TEAM	Teen Energy Advancing Muirhevnamore Project
VECs	Vocational Education Committees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aims and scope of the evaluation

This evaluation study was conducted by the Children's Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin and commissioned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The initial terms of reference adopted were subsequently revised, following consultation in relation to existing data sources. As such, the evaluation focus was guided by the following aims:¹

- To assess and evaluate the Garda Special Projects in relation to:
 - The success, or otherwise, in targeting young people engaged in criminal and anti-social behaviour;
 - The impact in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour amongst participants;
 - The improvement of quality of life in the areas where the project is in operation.
- In addition, the research sought to:
 - Identify examples of best practice within management, operation and organisation of individual projects;
 - Comment on the potential for improving links with other statutory and voluntary agencies providing related services in the same area(s).

The evaluation was managed by a joint committee comprised of representatives from the commissioning agency and the research body. In addition, the research body established a multi-agency advisory group to advise the research team and managers on the conduct of the evaluation and the issues emerging.

Summary description of the Garda Special Projects

The Garda Special Projects are locally based youth crime prevention Projects, managed locally by either a youth service organisation or an independent management committee, and funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. At the outset of the evaluation, a total of 14 Projects were in existence and this has since been significantly increased by an additional fifteen. The Projects are operate under the aegis of the Garda Community Relations Section and are co-ordinated by the National Juvenile Office. The Project, have four aims, as follows:

Through a combination of intervention and prevention programmes, Projects aim to:

- Prevent crime through community and multi-agency co-operation and to improve the quality of life within the community;
- Divert young people from becoming involved in criminal/anti-social behaviour;
- Provide suitable activities to facilitate personal development and encourage civic responsibility;
- Support and improve Garda/ community relations.

Where a local youth service acts as the 'managing' body, they are advised by a committee consisting of Gardaí, Probation and Welfare Service and members of the local community in the Project area.

The first two Projects were set up in 1991 following disturbances involving young people and the Gardaí in Ronanstown in November of that year. The Report of the Interdepartmental Group on Urban Crime and Disorder noted the work of these Projects and recommended their continuance.

Overview of research elements

The main evaluation research had the following research components:

- A survey of 14 Projects involving a self-administered questionnaire (Chapter 4);
- A closer study in five Project sites involving:
 - Interviews with Project promoters and key stakeholders (Chapter 5);
 - Interviews with Project participants (Chapter 6);
 - Interviews with local residents or community respondents (Chapter 7).

¹ There is a slight difference in this set of aims as terms of reference to those presented in the text of the report. This specifically relates to the second indent where the emphasis shifted to examining the impact on reducing offending, rather than reductions in crime levels. This change was adopted following consultation with the Gardaí on the utility of local area crime statistics.

The five sites studied in-depth were identified using objective criteria so as to create a balance encompassing the main types of Projects, their respective location type, the form of management and length of time established. The sites chosen were as follows:

- The Woodale Project, Priorswood, North Dublin City;
- The Give Ronanstown a Future Today (GRAFT) Project, Neilstown, West Dublin;
- The Teen Energy Advancing Muirhevnamore (TEAM) Project, Dundalk;
- The Corpus Christi Youth Development Group Ltd. (CCYDG), Limerick City;
- The Mahon Action for Youth (MAY) Project, Cork City South.

The evaluative research was preceded by a preliminary research stage in which qualitative interviews were conducted with key senior management personnel in stakeholder organisations at regional and national level. From this process a set of research questions were developed which were, in turn, submitted to a broadly based advisory group.

This summary highlights the main findings from the evaluation in response to the key research questions established. Each finding is presented in response to a pre-set question and under four main categories, corresponding to the principal aims of the Garda Special Projects. These headings are:

- Crime prevention through multi-agency co-operation and improving the quality of life in Project areas;
- Creating diversion mechanisms and achieving diversion;
- Activities, personal development and civic responsibility;
- Supporting and improving Garda community relations.

Main findings: Answers to questions posed by the evaluation

The research questions were set out as *mechanism* and *outcome* questions. Mechanisms refer to resources, processes and reasoning deployed by Projects to achieve the aims of the Garda Special Projects. Outcomes refer to *changes* brought about by Projects using these mechanisms. For instance, it is assumed that, if youth crime needs to be prevented, actions of Projects are positively contributing to, or positively influencing, this in some way.

Crime prevention through multi-agency co-operation and improving the quality of life in Project areas

MECHANISM RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Community safety/quality of life mechanisms deployed by Projects:

- How is the community engaged in the process and through what means is the community made aware of Project actions?

FINDINGS

- Community members are engaged in the advisory and management committees. Advisory committee community members give advice and support to the promoting youth service.
- In general, the community does not engage with local Gardaí through the Projects for responding to broader crime prevention issues. The GRAFT Project is an exception to this, in that the committee acts as a mechanism that allows local representatives to identify and raise issues with the Gardaí.
- Processes and procedures for selecting community representatives are not in place to any great degree.
- Local people interviewed reported that they are made aware of the Project through community groups that they are associated with, and through the medium of community newsletters. Community respondents reported that there was a lack of knowledge about Project actions in the wider community.

MECHANISM RESEARCH QUESTION 2

- How does this promote subjective feelings of security in individual residents which make them feel safer?

FINDINGS

- Interviews with community respondents reveal that, while they were aware that the Projects were intended to deal with young people who were offending, this did not result (for a majority of the interviewees) in them feeling any safer or more secure living in their areas.
- Community respondents reported positively that they could see the benefits of the Projects – in that they provide an extra resource for young people in the area and that they neutralise any negative impact of

groups of young people ‘hanging around’ – but this does not translate into any greater feelings of safety or security. Security and safety, it seems, are influenced by so many other factors that it seems hard to justify having a primary aim of ‘improving the quality of life in the area’.

MECHANISM RESEARCH QUESTION 3

Multi-Agency Co-operation

- How was the multi-agency and community co-operation formed? What were the roles played by those involved, their level of involvement, their actual mechanisms of communication, and their modes and methods of engagement?

FINDINGS

The principal mechanisms of multi-agency co-operation are:

- Project Management or Advisory Groups;
- Networking and Support work with other agencies and community based initiatives – the survey of 14 Projects revealed that Projects generally do make networking and support linkages with agencies other than justice or youth work related agencies;
- Sharing resources with community groups/projects;
- Referrals between Projects and the agencies, where relevant;
- Co-funding of Programmes in a small number of cases.

MECHANISM RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4 (i) to (viii)

Identifying and recruiting young people

- What are the key mechanisms through which the Projects identified and recruited their target group?
- What agencies made referrals?
- What role these agencies played in the progression of the individuals referred?

(i) What referral processes are in place?

- It was assumed by the researchers that the referral process gives meaning and focus to multi-agency co-operation, both at committee and wider levels.
- The survey revealed that all 14 Projects had received referrals from a variety of sources including justice, youth, educational and community sources.
- The study of five Projects revealed that all had some process for receiving referrals both formally and informally, and that there was considerable variation across Projects in terms of how developed or underdeveloped their referral processes were.
- Where a young person is identified, formal referrals are made/received, where a structured mechanism or procedure exists for this – for instance, at a meeting between agencies or where a referrer completes a detailed referral form.

(ii) How are individuals identified and selected?

- There are a number of methods used to identify prospective participants. In some cases, where a young person has not committed an offence, it is unclear what criteria are used.
- Those who have offended are identified mostly by the Garda JLO.
- In two Projects studied – Woodale and TEAM – the co-ordinator engages in a further screening process once a referral has been made. In the case of Woodale, these screening criteria include whether the co-ordinator can make a clear judgement as to whether the Project can work effectively with the young person, and whether the person referred can be clustered with a natural group of peers. In addition, the Project operates a policy of not taking on clients who are identified as having problems with drug taking.

(iii) What are the mechanics of this process?

(iv) What is the process for informing a young person that they are referred?

- Where a referral is being made by the JLO, it is usual that the officer involved asks or suggests to the young person if they would want to be referred. In the remainder of cases, it is the co-ordinator that informs the young person that they have been referred. In the case of the TEAM Project this is a

negotiated process involving the JLO and the co-ordinator who consult as to the appropriate way to engage the young person.

- With the exception of the Woodale Project, there is no formal induction process. Woodale host an induction evening meeting where the young people referred and their parents meet with the co-ordinator, the JLO and other Project staff. At this meeting it is presented to the young people and their parents that there is a clear expectation of behavioural change and that continued participation is to be reviewed on this basis.
- In other Projects, participants had an awareness of an expectation of behavioural change as revealed in interviews with the young people. In these cases, the expectation of change is communicated on an informal or implied basis.

(v) What happens after referral or how is a referred person tracked?

- In two Projects, the progress of participants in terms of how they respond to the programme is formally tracked. In Woodale, this process is highly structured, in that the referrer becomes directly involved in the review process through meetings held on a fortnightly basis with the co-ordinator. In TEAM, this process also takes place, albeit in a less structured format.
- In unstructured programmes involving leisure, youth club or 'drop-in' activities there is no pre-condition laid down for behavioural change or progression. In this context there is no evidence from our research that tracking of progress or behaviour outside of the Project occurs.

(vi) What is the role of the referrers in this progression process?

- In relation to structured programmes, there is an expectation of behavioural change along with regular attendance, commitment to the Project and to other participants. Mechanisms deployed for tracking and monitoring progress in these programmes remain unclear, except in the case of Woodale where referrers and Project/youth work staff operate formal exchange mechanisms for monitoring how participants respond to the programme.

(vii) How are those referred processed to a (successful) completion?

- In structured programmes participants' completion is largely defined by a pre-determined timeframe. However, there is no clear rationale given by Projects for these timeframes in the context of behavioural change. For instance Woodale operates on a one year intake cycle whereas GRAFT engages with some of their groups for up to three years in some cases. In general it can be concluded that there is no evidence that Projects develop clear criteria for gauging successful completion by a participant. Establishing such criteria would be contingent upon having procedures for individual participant goal setting from the outset. The small and focused intake policy operated by the Woodale Project has been conducive to the Project developing a mechanism for monitoring and reviewing these criteria.

(viii) What is the meaning of progress and what are the specific routes of progression?

- There is no uniform meaning between Projects (or for that matter between agencies involved within Projects) attributed to 'progress' or 'progression'. In this context, it is difficult to discern any pattern of progression or to identify the progression routes. However, it is clear that Projects are active in making outward referrals in the area of employment, training and further education and, as such, are achieving some level of referral output.

OUTCOME RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Multi Agency Co-operation Changes

- What new support systems have been established in the area?

FINDING

- It is evident that all Projects have been active in networking and collaborating with other agencies. They have all established support systems by linking with the agencies at advisory and management level.

OUTCOME RESEARCH QUESTION 2

- As a result of Project actions, what new systems are in place for networking and co-ordination of the work of the agencies involved?

FINDINGS

- It is less clear how collaboration and linking may result in the effective co-ordination of the work of the agencies engaged in these processes. There are examples of where this has worked and others where it is not clear that any effective change is or ever has taken place.
- In the case of the CCYDG in Moyross in Limerick, for instance, the management group has acted to achieve effective co-ordination in relation to the roles played by the agencies involved specifically in relation to the Project's establishment of the 'target group' programme. Notably in this instance, the Project acted as a vehicle for co-ordinating the work of all of the agencies in crystallising the various elements of the programme in relation to identifying the target group, receiving referrals and establishing practice guidelines for the Project staff.
- In the case of GRAFT in Neilstown, Clondalkin, it is evident that, at the level of practice, the Project has created a very extensive network, based on sound relations with various practitioners and local managers of services. At management level, the CYC, GRAFT's parent youth service, hosts an annual meeting of agencies at senior level. That said, it is decidedly unclear, at either practice or managerial level, how this translates into co-ordination on any formal basis, even at the level of the advisory committee.

Diversion mechanisms and diversion outcomes

MECHANISM RESEARCH QUESTION 5

- What are the specific features of Project interventions which are diversionary in their intended effect?

FINDINGS

- Based on an analysis of the five sites, there appear to be three core features:
 - Creation of alternative progression/development routes;
 - Challenging young people's offending and other unacceptable behaviour through personal development or through one-to-one interventions;
 - Providing leisure and recreational activities.
- Three of the five Project sites studied are identified as having these three features in operation simultaneously, albeit that there are differences between them in terms of the degree of intensity and emphasis.
- Two of the five Projects studied have focused, in the main, on the provision of leisure and recreational activities. One of these has constructed a large leisure programme but is now moving towards working with small groups and using more intense interventions involving literacy/numeracy, group and individual counselling. The other Project has utilised outdoor pursuits activities, partly as a function of the fact that they have had restricted access to premises.
- An analysis of the programme sheets submitted by Projects for the survey revealed that the majority of Project programmes were of the personal development orientation. In addition, three of these Projects reported that they were involved in critical reflective interventions involving the exploration of broader social, cultural and political issues relevant to the young people's experiences.
- Projects that adopt a personal development focus use leisure or arts as the mode of engagement with the young people while balancing their programmes with scheduled group or individual interventions. An analysis of the objectives of the various programmes organised by the Projects revealed that, in a small number of cases, some projects had programme objectives that were leisure or recreational only in their orientation, in that they had no personal development objectives.

MECHANISM RESEARCH QUESTION 6

- Why was this type of intervention chosen and who was involved in deciding on this?
- What alternative interventions were considered?

FINDING

- It would appear, from the study of the five sites, that the parent youth organisation itself acts as the 'prime-mover', in terms of deciding upon the rationale and content of the Project programmes, in the four youth service managed sites. In the one case of a non-youth service managed Project, the initial content and rationale were constructed by the key volunteers who founded the Project, but that this has shifted recently since the Project has contracted its first full-time salaried co-ordinator.

OUTCOME RESEARCH QUESTION 3

- What lifestyle changes have participants made?

FINDINGS

- Participants across the five Project sites studied in depth indicated that they made changes in behaviour, attitude and lifestyle.
- The participants reported decreases in their offending and unacceptable behaviours as a result of their involvement with the Project.
- Positive changes and learning outcomes were reported including:
 - Development and acquisition of personal skills and abilities;
 - Changes in lifestyles, outlook and socialising patterns.

OUTCOME RESEARCH QUESTION 4

- What are the participants' own perceptions of lifestyle changes made, and what are their perceptions of the mechanisms bringing about this change?

FINDINGS

- From interviews with participants there are three mechanisms contributing to the change. These are:
 - (i) *Positive relationships with Project staff*
For the young people, the Projects have facilitated the creation of positive, trusting and supportive relationships with adults;
 - (ii) *Awareness of boundaries and rules*
Participants believe that they have to abide by rules or codes of behaviour in order to stay involved in the Project. This is more effective in structured group, where there is an apparent pre-condition of compliance to codes of behaviour both inside and outside the Project. Conversely, this is less effective in activities of a casual or 'drop-in' nature or other unstructured Project actions where the same pre-condition is not enforced.
 - (iii) *Creation of positive alternatives by the Project*
All the young people reported positively about their experiences of the Project, in that they perceived that the Projects were providing them with alternative leisure, creative and developmental opportunities.

These mechanisms, in turn, contribute to a sense of attachment and commitment to the Projects. The majority of young people reported having an input into programme content, which further reinforces their commitment to the Project and their adherence to codes of behaviour. The latter is especially true where there is a sense that the participant has had a direct input into the formulation of agreed boundaries.

Activities, personal development and civic responsibility

MECHANISM RESEARCH QUESTION 7

- What planning is conducted around participants' needs?

FINDING

- Across the five Projects studied closely, there was no evidence of a mechanism for individual needs assessment from the outset. Juvenile Liaison Officers referring young people to the Projects would have conducted their own assessment within the guidelines of the Garda Diversion Programme. The Woodale Project conducted an individual risk assessment procedure with the referring JLOs, to determine the risk of re-offending of those identified as prospective participants.

MECHANISM RESEARCH QUESTION 8

- What defines their suitability in this context? What are the specific activities which facilitate personal development?

FINDINGS

- Generally, Projects determine the suitability of programmes based on assumptions made about the general needs of the young people of the area.
- Specific activities facilitating personal development.

OUTCOME QUESTIONS AND FINDINGS 5 (i) to (v)

(i) What skills have participants learned – what do they perceive they have learned?

- Participants interviewed in five Project sites reported positively on learning outcomes in the following categories:
 - Learned to be aware and gained insights into own attitudes and behaviours;
 - Undertook new activities and gained new experiences including the development of practical skills in computing and woodwork, literacy and numeracy skills.
 - Acquired positive social attributes, including responsibility, self-confidence and leadership.

(ii) Do participants report on qualitative changes in the make up of their social networks?

- Through their involvement with the Project, the young people have, de facto, been linked to a new social network. It is not clear whether there are qualitative changes in their social networks as a result of Project interventions. However, it is clear that there are changes in their social activities.

(iii) What life decisions have participants made since commencing the programme?

- The majority of young people interviewed reported that they had aspirations to future employment, training or further education, whereas only a small minority were unsure of their futures.

(iv) What are the attitudes of participants towards Gardaí and do they perceive change or shifts in these attitudes?²

- Almost half of the young people interviewed indicated that they had generally negative attitudes towards the Gardaí, one-third were positive and the remainder were either indifferent or gave more nuanced answers.
- In Projects where Gardaí play a role at programme level the response of the young people was quite positive towards this involvement. However, in the majority of cases, this did not result in shifts in attitude toward the Gardaí as a whole.
- Generally the young people drew very clear distinctions between community Gardaí and regular Garda officers. In addition, their attitudes appeared to be shaped by other factors, such as their own previous experiences of the Gardaí and those of their families and peers. So, although the majority had positive attitudes towards the community Gardaí, this did not translate into positive attitudes towards the regular Gardaí.

(v) What is their level of involvement or participation in community since beginning the programme?

- What is their perception of change in themselves in this regard?
- There is evidence of the young people becoming involved and participating more widely in the community through taking part in other group, projects and events. In their areas. It was clear in the case of the TEAM Project for instance, that they actively encouraged young people to take up leadership roles by undertaking youth leadership training or becoming peer educators.

Supporting and improving Garda/community relations

MECHANISM RESEARCH QUESTION 1

- What are the precise mechanisms that Projects have put in place to enable exchanges between the Gardaí and local community?

FINDINGS

- Of the five sites studied, only GRAFT had any precise mechanism for enabling exchanges between the local community and the Gardaí. The GRAFT committee reserves an item on the agenda at each meeting where local representatives can raise general crime prevention issues.
- The advisory committee as a focus for this exchange is limited where the local community members are invited at the committee's invitation and their capacity to deliver on Garda/community relations restricted by the obvious limitations of their mandate.

² It had been intended at the outset to gather data on other adult figures but there was insufficient data in this regard.

MECHANISM RESEARCH QUESTION 9

- What is the precise means through which Gardaí interact with the Projects?

FINDING

- In all five sites studied, the common mechanism for interaction is through the advisory or management group. Community Gardaí have an active role at programme level in both TEAM and CCYDG. Garda JLOs and community Gardaí are active in making referrals.

MECHANISM RESEARCH QUESTION 10

What are the mechanisms deployed by Projects to raise awareness/stimulate consciousness of Garda involvement?

FINDINGS

- Projects utilise a variety of formal and informal mechanisms for making the community aware of Garda involvement including:
 - Promotional posters;
 - Small grant giving to sports and other clubs;
 - Community newsletters;
 - Networking with community groups;
 - Other informal communication including word of mouth.

OUTCOME RESEARCH QUESTION 6

- Do local people use mechanisms created by Projects and the Gardaí and, if so, how?

FINDING

- Local tenants' and residents' associations channel crime prevention issues through the community reps only in the case of GRAFT. This same Project also provides a service to young people and other members of the community where they act in a go-between capacity for those who wish to access police services or to resolve police or court related matters, e.g. outstanding warrants. Individual members of the community often use this latter service but, in general, the former mechanism is not available to individuals as the community reps wish that their membership of the GRAFT committee be kept discrete in the local area.

OUTCOME RESEARCH QUESTION 7

- Do the awareness and knowledge of the Project mean that local people are positively disposed towards the Gardaí?

FINDING

- Although local community respondents perceived the involvement of Gardaí in the Projects as beneficial, there appear to be too many other overriding issues which determines people's predisposition towards the Gardaí. Predisposition appears to be influenced by an accumulation of factors, such as presence of Gardaí, visibility and accessibility. Most of these factors are generally outside the scope of the Projects.

Conclusions and recommendations

While the Projects have had some positive impact, mostly in relation to their work with young people, this report highlights areas of local and central management, monitoring and support functions that will need to be developed even to sustain the numerical growth of Projects in the past 12 months. The positive impact that the Projects have made overall does, of course, justify their retention, provided that there is a shift to a more strategic approach. The key issues identified in the conclusion are as follows:

- The selection and recruitment of participants is too broad and may mean that, in some cases, the Projects are not offering interventions to offenders, but rather to those loosely defined as being 'at risk', where there are no clear criteria for defining same;
- There is a need for clear programme guidelines governing the local structures and setting out models of good practice in relation to achieving clear crime diversion outcomes;

- The Projects have little or no impact on the policies of the state agencies involved, as no mechanisms have been established for this;
- The establishment of Projects over the years has been and remains ad hoc insofar as their development has been based upon initiatives from the local area, without the setting down of objective criteria for designating strategic or priority areas;
- The local structures for implementing the aims of the GSPs are underdeveloped;
- The Projects do not, in all cases, have an established legitimacy in their own areas, in that community members of the advisory committees are invitees of the committee and, as such, are not, in most cases, in a position to deliver a mandate from the community;
- It remains unclear in these arrangements as to who has ultimate responsibility for ownership of assets or who bears the onus in the case of a claim, crisis or conflict;
- Projects have been effective at establishing programmes and networks;
- It is unclear how Projects operationalise their aims in relation to improving quality of life and improving Garda/Community relations.

The report recommends that:

- The Projects should have a primary focus on offenders and, insofar as the Projects have up to now emphasised diversion from crime, they should equally emphasise diversion to alternative systems such as education and training;
- The Projects should be moved towards a strategic approach and, in doing so, the policy and support infrastructures built around them should be developed by establishing a National Advisory Committee, a Support Unit, a process for designating priority areas, a local planning process involving local Project committees and comprehensive guidelines;
- The Projects should intensify Garda involvement, where appropriate and desirable, and should regard improved relations with the community as a positive spin-off of this process rather than a primary aim, as is currently the case;
- Local Projects should develop strategies for linking with other initiatives that contribute to the promotion of community safety.

PART ONE

**CONTEXT, BACKGROUND
AND METHODS**

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of the evaluation and terms of reference

The Garda Special Projects (GSPs) are a scheme of youth oriented, locally based projects funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. They are managed centrally by An Garda Síochána Community Relations Section. By September of 1998, a total of 14 Projects had been established or were in the process of start-up. It is these fourteen GSPs that are the basis of our analysis in this evaluation. The Projects are collaborative, in that they are locally managed in conjunction with youth services, and are advised by a multi-agency committee with membership also drawn from the local community. As such, the Projects overlap a number of policy, operational and legislative areas, particularly in relation to crime prevention, the Juvenile Diversion Programme, community/neighbourhood policing, youth justice, youth services and youth work. Some of these policy areas are described in greater detail in sub-sections below.

Faced with increasing demand and applications for the funding of new Projects in other areas, the Department decided to undertake a comprehensive review of the Projects and to evaluate their impact and effectiveness.

The Projects expanded from a total number of two in 1991 to four by 1994 and fourteen by 1998. Between 1995 and 1998, a total of 10 projects were established and 3 projects per year were launched since 1996 (see Table 1.1 below). Projects have been developed in a range of settings and with a mix of organisational structures.

Table 1.1: Projects by area and year established

Project Name	Location	Year Established
Give Ronanstown a Future Today (GRAFT)	Dublin	1991
Killinarden Engages Youth (KEY)	Dublin	1991
Knocknaheeny Hollyhill Outreach Project	Cork	1994
Corpus Christi Youth Development	Limerick	1994
Working to Enhance Blanchardstown (WEB)	Dublin	1995
Cherry Orchard Developing Youth (CODY)	Dublin	1996
Mahon Action for Youth (MAY)	Cork	1996
Ballybeg, Larchiville and Lisduggan	Waterford	1996
Woodale Project	Dublin	1997
North Inner City Keeps on Learning (NICKOL)	Dublin	1997
Limerick City South Youth Initiative	Limerick	1997
Teen Energy Advancing Muirhevnamore (TEAM)	Dundalk	1998
Finglas Action Now (FAN)	Dublin	1998
Glen Action Project (GAP)	Cork	1998

During this period, a central administrative and support system has evolved. The Garda Community Relations section is responsible for evaluating applications for Projects and for making recommendations for funding to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Three annual conferences have been held since 1996. These conferences serve as a means of sharing practice ideas, and identifying policy issues and appropriate responses. The first conference stimulated the discussion which led to the establishment of the administrative system. Projects submit an annual report, which includes a financial report, to the Garda Community Relations section. Applications for Projects are made by the local Garda division. Project guidelines are issued in the form of a Garda HQ Circular, which is the official means of communicating Garda policy to all Garda stations in the state. Projects are either managed directly by a local management committee or by an existing youth service organisation with a multi-agency advisory group.

Since the evaluation report was commissioned the number of Projects established or being set up grew from 14 to 24 in January 1999 and by a further five to 29 by July 1999. While the first 24 are financed by funds sourced within the Garda vote, the newest Projects are 75% co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the Human Resources Operational Programme.

The Projects comprise a key element in the strategy of An Garda Síochána to underpin positive relations with the community in specifically identified locations in the state's urban centres. The first Projects were established in Dublin in 1991 at Killinarden in Tallaght and at Neilstown, North Clondalkin. Since then, the Projects have been maintained and new ones emerged through a process of evolution.

As a result of a competitive tendering process, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform commissioned the Children's Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin in September 1998 to:

- 'assess and evaluate the Garda Special Projects in relation to:
 - the impact in terms of the reduction in crime levels on the areas concerned;
 - the success, or otherwise, in targeting young people engaged in criminal and anti-social behaviour;
 - the improvement of quality of life in the area where the project is in operation.
- In addition, the research will:
 - identify examples of best practice within management, operation and organisation of individual projects;
 - highlight value for money issues, where these arise;
 - comment on the potential for improving links with other statutory and voluntary agencies providing related services in the same area(s).'³

There was discussion in the early stages with senior Gardaí, Department officials and other key informants as to the precise methods and data gathering strategies to be deployed. This process was useful to the researchers involved, in that it aided clarification and reappraisal of the terms of reference. In particular, it was decided through this consultation process that the research would not investigate the impact on crime levels by examining crime data, as it was advised by senior Gardaí that there were too many intervening variables and that the impact of the Projects might not be discernible in this regard.

1.2 Overview of the structures and stages of the evaluation

A management group for the evaluation was established jointly by the Department and the Children's Research Centre in September 1998. This group consisted of representatives from both institutions.

The Children's Research Centre deployed a full-time researcher from the staff to conduct interviews with senior personnel in Garda Special Project stakeholder organisations. This process mainly included youth service managers and senior officers at central and local level in An Garda Síochána. The researchers brief from September to December 1998 was to conduct and analyse interviews, and:

- to provide an interim report;
- to design a framework for a more intensive evaluative research phase;
- to develop and recommend criteria for the selection of Project sites for closer study.

In order to provide advice and support to the research, the Centre convened an advisory group whose membership comprised experienced personnel from agencies involved in Garda Special Projects. These include the Garda Community Relations Section, youth organisations,⁴ the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Probation and Welfare Service, and the Youth Affairs Section at the Department of Education and Science.

Initially it was proposed that the research would progress in four stages as follows:

- **Stage 1:**
Project conceptualisation, research planning and design (September to December 1998)
- **Stage 2:**
Evaluation fieldwork and data gathering (January to March 1999)
- **Stage 3:**
Structured feedback to the stakeholders (April/May 1999)
- **Stage 4:**
Analysis and reporting (May/June 1999)

As a consequence of interviews, consultation and discussions at Stage 1, a number of changes were made to the main components of the research and to the overall timeframe. It was intended that the core of the evaluation research would consist of four Project area studies, with some additional data to be gathered from adjacent non-Project sites. During Stage 1 of the evaluation, many of the key stakeholders suggested that they felt that the researchers should visit all 14 sites. The research management group decided that this was not feasible with current resources and that, unless it had a tight focus, it would not yield useable research data. As a compromise, it was decided to conduct a survey in all 14 sites. Despite the initial intention to undertake the survey by way of a

³ Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, document inviting tenders, June 1998.

⁴ Including the Director of the Dublin Youth Service Board, a sub-committee of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee, and of the KEY Project as nominated by the Garda Community Relations Section.

field visit to each Project, this too became unfeasible as it placed pressure on time and resources. It was finally decided to undertake a self-administered postal survey. This process curtailed the capacity of the research team to complete the research within the original deadline, and took precedence over the form and extent of direct feedback to stakeholders at Project level.

1.3 Crime prevention and An Garda Síochána

The responsibility for formulating, implementing and evaluating all crime prevention measures utilised by An Garda Síochána rests with the Community Relations Section (GCRS). A Garda Chief Superintendent manages the section and reports to the Assistant Commissioner 'C' Branch with responsibility for crime and security. The two superintendents, one responsible for community relations initiatives and the other who acts as the Director of the National Juvenile Office, report to the Chief Superintendent for Community Relations. Two inspectors, each with responsibility for community relations and crime prevention initiatives, respectively, report to the Superintendent, Community Relations. Equally, an inspector reports to the Director of the National Juvenile Office (NJO).

The NJO has co-ordinating and management responsibilities for the 'juvenile diversion programmes' including:

- The Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme (or JLO Scheme)
- The Garda Special Projects
- The Garda Schools' Programme.

The GCRS was formalised as a section by the Garda Commissioner in 1978 'in order to promote community-based projects as a means to encourage the community to accept its role in Law and Order matters' (Byrne, 1995: 10). The terms of reference with which the Section operates includes 'to inculcate in young people respect for authority and for Law and Order, and to utilise all measures available to rehabilitate young offenders' (*ibid.*).

1.4 Youth policy and youth work in Ireland

The National Youth Policy Committee Final Report (Costello Report, 1984) and the White Paper *In Partnership with Youth* (Government of Ireland, 1985) set out the main policy framework for youth policy and youth work in Ireland. The structures for the development of youth services were to be administered through local youth service boards. In 1995, the White Paper on Education proposed the establishment of Local Education Boards (since abandoned), which would include youth services in their remit. The terms of reference of education boards in relation to youth service provision were set out in section 4 of the Youth Work Act, 1997, but, as this Act was to be based on proposed provisions of a main Act (The Education Bill, 1995), it is not implementable. New legislation is now required to designate youth services within appropriate regional structures. The responsibility for youth policies and youth work at government level is vested in the Minister for Education. The Act made provision for the establishment of a National Youth Work Advisory Committee (NYWAC) to advise and consult with the Minister in relation to specific matters of policy and provision. Whilst the form of regional structures to implement the provisions of the Act have yet to be clarified, the remainder of the Act is currently operational. In particular, the Minister has established the NYWAC, which has begun the process of drawing up a National Youth Work Development Plan. It is likely that the new legislation will, *inter alia*, redefine the role of the Vocational Education Committees (VECs) in relation to youth work provision locally, redefine the purpose of youth work, and establish Voluntary Youth Councils in each VEC area (National Youth Federation, 1998: 8). At present, the only statutory agency with responsibility for youth services in its operational area is the City of Dublin Youth Service Board (CDYSB), a sub-committee of the City of Dublin VEC.

According to the National Youth Federation (*ibid.*), the definition of youth work will be revisited in a new Youth Work Bill. There has been relatively little policy development on the definition and purpose of youth work in the Irish context since the Costello Report. It restated that role of youth work within a comprehensive youth service should be to:

- ... offer young people, on the basis of their voluntary involvement, developmental and educational experience which will equip them to play an active part in a democratic society, as well as meeting their own personal developmental needs. (1984: 114)

Observers of youth policy have argued that, in the absence of a policy and institutional framework for youth work, organisations and practitioners have delved into other sectors or related fields in order to develop and maintain services. Cullen (1999), for instance, suggests that youth work risks becoming only an appendage to other policies and, as such, is not a coherent area of policy at all:

- As it is currently, youth work policy may be considered as made up of a little bit of education policy, a little bit of justice policy, a little bit of health policy and now a little bit of partnerships. While the sum of these little bits may add up to a lot, if they reflect more the comparative advantages of competing youth

services rather than a critical discourse about young people’s needs and young people’s participation, then the sum of these little bits – no matter what their size – will fall far short of a policy. (1999: 9)

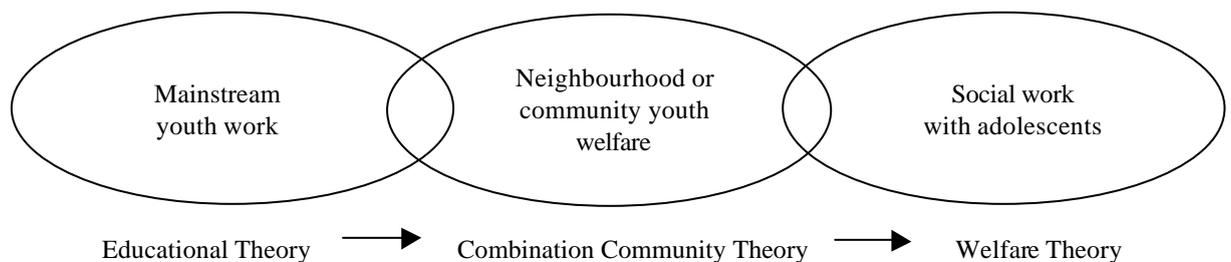
Thus, youth work is an eclectic area of policy and intervention, in that it relies upon a vast array of funding sources, both state and European Union, to finance everyday youth programmes. In this sense, it might be argued, youth work in Ireland is ameliorative, as it operates in a context where its role is to repair the intended and unintended consequences of other policies, and with ‘fixing’ young people’s relationships to social systems in terms of school, the labour market and the justice system.

1.5 Youth work models, practice and social education

Given what youth policy commentators have contributed – i.e. that youth work is based upon responses to available resources or finding niches in policy arenas where a youth service organisation becomes the mode of delivery of a state or EU funded programme – it is necessary, before any evaluation of youth interventions, to briefly examine some conceptual models of youth work. The intention is to draw attention to these in order that the report might relate its findings to the models later on (see Figure 1.1 below).

Staunton (1995) suggests that Irish youth work is facing an ‘identity crisis’ in that it is struggling with external demands. He sets out three youth work domains. These three models are best illustrated, as Staunton does, in the following diagram:

Figure 1.1: Models of youth work in local youth services



Source: Staunton, 1995.

Mainstream Youth Work, which is based on social education philosophy, emphasises needs-based process-oriented youth programmes in the context of voluntary participation. Young people are encouraged to take leadership roles, be responsible and make their own contribution to social and community development. It is conducted usually in voluntary organisations with full-time staff, and operates on a multiplier basis, in that the training of voluntary leaders will, in turn, produce volunteers to work with young people. The activities are usually club or interest-based and the focus of the programme is on ‘prevention’.

Neighbourhood or Community Youth Welfare Work, based on community development theory and practice, it is principally located in the context of multiple deprivation. Community groups develop their own analysis of their situation and design, manage and operate their own response to youth issues, specifically marginalised and ‘at risk’ youth. Theoretically, this model utilises key concepts such as structural analysis, community action, marginality and social exclusion.

Social Work with Adolescents is based on a psycho-social conceptualisation and is organised by providing counselling, group-work and family interventions to those who experience trauma in their personal and familial contexts, and helps with their adaptation to school and other forms of social engagement. It is a form of specialised intervention where the youth social worker is employed in a statutory setting with a legal base. Staunton’s framework is linked to a public health model in that it separates these three interventions along similar lines to that of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention (Cullen, 1999: 11).

1.6 Youth crime prevention and diversion

The Garda Special Projects operate in the context of a broader framework for youth crime prevention and the diversion of specific young people. The broad literature on youth crime prevention suggests that the diversion can be applied in a variety of contexts.⁵

⁵ See Lundman (1994), for instance, for a detailed discussion of pre and post adjudication diversion.

Diversion from prosecution: Programmes which divert from prosecution operate on the basis of welfarist principal that subjecting children and young people to the full rigours of adult justice is fundamentally harmful to their development and is counterproductive in societal terms. In Ireland, the principal mechanism utilised for this purpose is the Garda Diversion Programme which is operated locally by Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers under the direction of the National Juvenile Office. The scheme enables those aged between 7 and 18 to be cautioned formally and informally without being prosecuted.

Diversion from criminality: Programmes which seek to divert from criminality assume that there are personality traits which are fundamentally criminogenic, that individuals have criminal tendencies which require correction. Alternatively, a person who develops a criminal career is viewed as being incomplete in their socialisation, and the goal of intervention is to remedy this gap by the provision of skills and competencies.

Diversion from custody: The application of alternative sanctions laid down by the court and implemented by the Probation and Welfare Service. An example of this in the Irish context is the Community Services Order, where the court directs the diversion from custodial sanction where the desired outcome is the prevention of reoffending.

The Garda Special Projects operate alongside two other youth crime prevention programmes in Ireland. These are largely generic programmes of primary prevention in that they are targeted at children and young people in general.

- (i) Firstly, the Garda Schools Programme, which is delivered by Gardaí to students in 5th class primary schools.
- (ii) Secondly, the Copping On Crime Awareness Initiative is a lifeskills programme that enables practitioners in youth work, youth training and other contexts to use its resources as a means of incorporating a crime prevention dimension to their work (Quinn, 1996; Bowden, 1998).

Looking at developments internationally in the areas of youth justice and youth crime prevention/diversion, two major progressive trends are obvious. The first of these is a shift away from the use of adversarial or retributive measures utilising courts and a formal justice system, and towards developing alternative sanctions and preventative programmes within the community. The second trend, again moving from the socially disintegrative effects of incarceration policies, is towards utilising family and community based restorative justice practices in which the offender has to face his or her victim. While the latter trend is at an earlier stage of development, it has been exceedingly influential in the shaping of the proposed youth justice legislation for Ireland in the form of the Children Bill (1999) as discussed in 1.8 below.

In relation to the former trend, it has been noted in the UK that processing of young people through the formal justice system, involving police and court decisions, is far too inefficient and expensive, and does little to boost community safety overall. A report by the Audit Commission for England and Wales suggested:

The present arrangements are failing the young people – who are not being guided away from offending to constructive activities ... Resources need to be shifted from processing young offenders to dealing with their behaviour. At the same time, efforts to prevent offending and other anti-social behaviour by young people need to be co-ordinated between the different agencies involved: they should also be targeted on deprived areas with high crime rates, and piloted and evaluated. (Audit Commission, 1996: 96)

Accordingly, there has been considerable rethinking of the type of responses to youth crime and disorder that are required. Equally, the Audit Commission's report on young people and crime recommended that there be an intensification of efforts to co-ordinate and strategically manage programmes at local authority level. Multi-agency initiatives, the report suggests, are insufficient if they do not integrate the work of the agencies involved at three levels:

- The strategic level involving key policy makers and senior personnel;
- The management level involving local or service level management;
- The practitioner level involving the direct service providers who are the frontline implementers of multi-agency arrangements. (1996: 99)

More recent thinking on youth crime prevention initiatives stresses vertical and horizontal integration in the policy making arrangements and in the delivery of action programmes at the local level.⁶

While Ireland does not have the devolved local government model to implement such a system now taking shape in Britain, there have been significant moves towards integrated service provision and social partnership to

⁶ For a discussion of this type of model in action see also Northamptonshire Diversion Unit (1998), *Diverting People from Crime: A Guide based on Northamptonshire's Experience of Working in Partnership*, London: NACRO.

tackle major social and economic problems. A major policy shift in how such initiatives are implemented is taking place and informing the shape of new social programmes, driven, in the main, by the Strategic Management Initiative.

1.7 Policing and the social order in public housing areas

The Garda Special Projects operate in specific local contexts and they originate from particular social and political concerns in relation to public order in local authority housing areas.⁷ This is a central context feature of the Garda Special Projects and differentiates it from all other youth crime prevention measures deployed within the state. Moreover, it is this context which connects it to other policing measures, especially neighbourhood/community policing. In a recent study of social housing in Ireland, O'Higgins (1999) stated that social order problems in estates range from nuisance behaviour to more serious behaviours, including dealing in illegal drugs, drug use, vandalism, intimidation and harassment. As she pointed out, the problems varied between the estates studied, but:

It is clear that the presence or absence of social order problems was the single most important influence on the collective quality of life of residents in the estates in the study. As a general rule, where such problems were severe, social life in estates suffered badly; where they were less severe or absent, estates had a much better prospect of settling well and becoming attractive as a place to live, irrespective of other conditions in those estates. Furthermore, residents everywhere overwhelmingly blamed the worst of the social order problems on small numbers of individuals or families, and they drew sharp contrasts between the behaviour of these small groups and the decency and neighbourliness of the majority of residents in the estates. (1999: 171)

The GSPs operate then in the context of areas requiring effective responses to problems of order. Mechanisms are required for policing areas while maintaining legitimacy in the authority of the Gardaí. Responses need to be proactive, according to McAuliffe and Fahey (1999), as exclusionary measures (evictions and prosecutions) may tend to push those labelled as 'troublemakers' to the margins, and thus potentially exacerbate existing conflicts:

This points to the need to go much further beyond reactive policing than has been done to date, whether by the Garda or the local authorities. It points especially to the need for much more effective integrative and supportive mechanisms for troubled young people, especially through such mainstream services as the schools, child care services in the Health Boards, and youth services. At the same time, normal policing activity (whether by the Garda or other agents of authority) needs to be constantly monitored and refined so that it does not worsen, but rather alleviates problems of social order in affected areas. (McAuliffe & Fahey, 1999: 189-190)

1.8 The emerging legislative framework: youth justice

Since the 1970s, there has been considerable debate about the shape and form of a youth justice system in Ireland. Draft legislation was prepared in 1996 which has been since redrafted and published as the Children Bill 1999. The Garda Special Projects are not directly affected by the provisions of this Bill and their role in its implementation is not yet understood. Nevertheless, it should be noted, in the context of this evaluation report, that the process for introducing new youth justice legislation has been set in train. In terms of some of its specific provisions, the Bill:

- Proposes that the age of criminal responsibility be raised from seven to 12 years;
- Sets out an early intervention mechanism for children at risk through the 'family welfare conference', either on the direction of a court or by a health board;
- Places the Garda Diversion Programme (JLO scheme) on a statutory basis and includes, *inter alia*, provisions for:
 - the introduction of 'restorative cautioning' allowing the victim of a crime to attend whilst an offender is receiving a formal caution;
 - the establishment of a restorative 'conference' in which parents, other family members and relatives discuss and review the child's behaviour and decide on an appropriate 'action plan';
 - the bringing together of offender and victim 'so that the child may be given an opportunity to understand the consequences of his or her actions';
 - the placing of a child under the supervision of a juvenile liaison officer;
- Sets out the proposed procedures governing the treatment of child suspects in Garda stations;

⁷ See Chapter Two of this report for a more detailed analysis of the origins of the GSPs.

- Proposes the establishment of the Children Court, the various proceedings therein and the powers of Courts in relation to child offenders;
- *Inter alia*, the court may direct that a child offender attend a day centre run directly by or under the supervision of the Probation and Welfare Service;
- Proposes to abolish reformatory and industrial schools and to replace them with educationally based 'children detention centres' run by boards of management appointed by the Minister for Education and Science;
- Children detention centres, it is proposed, will be monitored by a special residential services board.

1.9 Summary

The Garda Special Projects are operating in an era of opportunity and change. In that the Projects are multi-agency, they integrate the positive aspects of the roles of the respective partners. As suggested above, they are part of the changing nature of policing in Ireland as An Garda Síochána moves its orientation from one based on enforcement to one where it is seeking to achieve its goal of being a policing service. Within this change, there has been great emphasis placed on the role of community and neighbourhood policing, on crime prevention and on diverting young offenders from prosecution and further offending. The GSPs integrate crime prevention with youth work practice. This poses many questions for youth workers who are operating in an uncertain policy climate and in an area of practice which is undergoing an identity crisis, as Staunton (*op. cit.*) has suggested. There are fundamental changes proposed for how the system of justice treats children and young people (Children Bill, 1999) which will, if passed, usher in a system that is more suited to modern day conditions than those of the current 1908 legislation. There are still many problems and issues to be faced in relation to securing stable and health socialising environments for children and young people, not least dealing effectively with problems of order, as highlighted by Fahey *et al.* (1999, *op. cit.*).

2 RESEARCHING THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECTS

2.1 Stage I: Methodology

The purpose of this stage of the research has been to design the evaluation framework. The key research task was to ascertain, from stakeholder agencies involved, their own definitions and understandings of what the Garda Special Projects (GSPs) are trying to achieve, their intended impact on crime reduction, the community and individual changes being sought, and the practice and service principles expected during the implementation of the Projects.

To gain an overview of the GSPs, the initial stage of the research focused on accessing the insights, definitions and experiences of informants. Those who informed the research at this stage were:

- a) senior Gardaí responsible for GSP policy and administration;
- b) youth service organisations responsible for *managing* the GSPs;⁸
- c) other agencies currently associated or historically involved with GSPs.

Local senior Gardaí were interviewed in Dublin, the South East and North Leinster regions. This selection was made on the basis that they coincided with youth service personnel interviews outside the Dublin region and to facilitate data gathering in a very short period of time.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the following informants:

- Garda Chief Superintendent, Garda Community Relations Section;
- Garda Superintendent, Garda Community Relations;
- Garda Inspector, Community Relations;
- Youth Service Managers in Dundalk and Waterford;
- Chief Superintendent, south east area;
- Youth Service Manager, Catholic Youth Council, Dublin;
- Youth Service Managers and Director, Foróige Dublin;
- Director, City of Dublin Youth Service Board;
- Principal Probation and Welfare Officer and Assistant Principal Probation and Welfare Officer;
- Senior Probation and Welfare Officer historically associated with establishment of GSPs;
- Garda Inspector, north Leinster area;
- Garda Inspector, Dublin area;
- Asst. Secretary, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform;
- Superintendent formerly attached to Garda Community Relations.

Two group interviews⁹ were conducted with:

- Senior Probation and Welfare Officers involved in Project committees;
- Local people invited to become members of Project committees.

2.1.1 Review of Project documentation

The researcher spent two days reviewing background files at the Department. Project documentation was requested from Garda Community Relations and from individual Projects. Projects were invited to submit documentation to the researcher and despite a slow rate of response, information was gathered from all relevant Projects. The researcher conducted a preliminary review of Project documents to develop an overview of models in operation. This served as a means of establishing the criteria for selection of Project sites for closer study.

2.2 History and evolution of the Garda Special Projects

The concept for GSPs has its origins in the emergence of new challenges facing An Garda Síochána in policing particular socially disadvantaged areas. Two projects were established in 1991 in Killinarden (Tallaght) and in Ronanstown (North Clondalkin). They were seen initially as a means of engaging young people whom, it was perceived, were at the centre of disruption and disorder in these areas, and as a way of promoting confidence in

⁸ Not all youth service organisations involved have a direct management role. Those who have this are Foróige, the Catholic Youth Council, Waterford Regional Youth Service, Louth Youth Federation and the Dublin Youth Service Board.

⁹ These interviews were conducted late in the Stage 1 process. Thus it is not possible to present a fuller analysis in this document.

the policing authorities. The thinking, that the Gardaí would need to become involved in a form of intervention to engage these particular young people, has its origins in specific events. For instance, a senior Garda reported in an interview that, when officers from Tallaght Garda Station went to the scene of a murder at a park in the area, they were confronted by a group of young people whom, it was reported, knew of the existence of a dead body in the vicinity but proceeded to ‘disrupt’ the scene. There was damage caused to Garda cars leading to an interference with the Gardaí in the execution of their duty, following a serious crime. For the informant senior Garda, this was symbolic of a drift between the police and young people in the particular community, or as a sense of ‘anomie’ or ‘normlessness’, as he put it:

It’s a combination of early school leaving and what they call anomie or normlessness. They do not see that the normal society as being anything to them. (interview with Senior Garda).

There was a growing awareness amongst officials at the Department of Justice that some investment would need to be made in community policing and community building in areas with high concentrations of newly constructed local authority housing. Department officials were involved in a variety of activities in the Ronanstown area in advance of the establishment of the GRAFT Project. This included supporting some local cultural and sporting activities – the setting up of a boxing club in the vicinity of Wheatfield prison and participation in an inter-agency task force established by the North Clondalkin Community Development Programme (interview with Department official).

A review of Departmental documentation, and interviews conducted by the researcher with officials in the Department and the Probation and Welfare Service, revealed that there were concerns in relation to seeming breakdown of order in disadvantaged areas. The following paragraphs (i) to (v) outline these concerns and some of the responses to them:

- (i) The building of local authority housing estates on the periphery of Dublin (and by implication other areas of the country) was conducted over a relatively short time period. This process of relocation drew together a new population from a mixture of traditional inner-city communities, from other parts of suburban Dublin and from rural areas. In this context the process of community building was problematic and thus mechanisms for informal social control which may have operated in traditional communities were not present in the new suburban areas.
- (ii) The allocation of families with young children to these areas in the late 1970s and early 1980s created the conditions for communities with a higher than average demographic dependency ratio and disproportionate youth populations in the following decade.
- (iii) Specific events where groups of young people and the Gardaí were involved in clashes were of particular concern to the authorities. One particular incident on the night of November 20th 1991 involved the police pursuing a stolen car, the burning of the car and the stoning of fire brigade crew when they arrived at the scene. These events led Department officials to recommend that the Minister for Justice establish an interdepartmental group to review the issues involved. The Government decided to establish the Interdepartmental Group on Urban Crime and Disorder, as announced by Minister Ray Burke a week after the fire brigade incident.
- (iv) During 1990 and early 1991, the Department’s concern to make a response in both Killinarden and Ronanstown was heightened by the following;
 - high levels of concentrated long-term unemployment in both areas;
 - official neglect leading to environmental decay in these areas;
 - the after events of the infamous ‘five thousand pound grant’¹⁰;

There was a sense that groups of young people were controlling the situation and hampering the community building process. In an interview, a Department official stated there were:

... few adult male authority figures involved on the ground. [A lifestyle was emerging that involved] boys and men getting up when it was dark, crowds hanging around [which created] an air of menace. (interview with senior Departmental official).

- (v) Garda morale in Ronanstown (in particular) was low and both senior Garda management and Departmental officials were concerned that this would not fester into a complete drift between the police and the community. This warranted investing in mechanisms to underpin neighbourhood and community policing (interview, senior Departmental official). Department of Justice files reviewed reveal that Departmental

¹⁰ A scheme introduced in the late 1980s whereby local authority tenants could avail of a State grant towards private sector house purchase, thus freeing up public housing stock. The unintended effect, according to some informants, was to enable those most economically stable to move out and therefore undermine community building in new suburban local authority housing estates.

officials endeavoured to source funding within existing budgets to improve the policing service in the Ronanstown area, including the provision of extra security for the Garda station and funding for the GRAFT Project.

The Interdepartmental Group report noted that, while crime figures were relatively high in the Ronanstown area, they were not unparalleled in Ireland. Most crime occurring in Ronanstown was committed by residents of the area, with a noted increase in vandalism particularly to school properties. Moreover, the problem, it seemed, was one of managing a crisis in which a small group of 'criminally inclined' were manipulating others frustrated by social and economic deprivation (1992: 30) and as the report notes:

The Gardaí advised us that tendency towards the emergence from time to time of general disorder problems involving groups of youngsters can be attributed to a significant extent to the presence of a small hard core of criminals who incline towards the view that (a) authority in all forms (Gardaí, fire services, etc.) should be 'taken on' and (b) that the local community should be made to understand that it is this hard core rather than the authorities who hold the upper hand. (1992: 29)

What is clear from this short quotation (the point is made throughout the 1992 report) is that the problem, as defined, is about the need to manage difficulties created within this socio-economic context (and other similar areas in the country). Put another way, the issue is one of managing conflict and of the authorities maintaining order with the support and legitimacy of the 'community' once they have become enlightened to the need for this.

The report took an broad welfarist¹¹ stance on the issues, recommending a range of social, economic and environmental improvements, as well as specific Garda and criminal justice measures. The Interdepartmental Group took the view that opportunities should be created for 'those who have already erred' to be diverted from a 'path of crime', while ensuring that adequate resources were in place to 'enable the due process of law to operate effectively' for those who had no inclination to desist (1992: 39). The Group were convinced of the need to reach young people that were more likely to get involved in crime

... so as to divert them away from what could otherwise be the very destructive (and expensive) path of crime. The Department of Justice has in fact been organising and participating in various schemes to that end. One very good example of such a scheme is the GRAFT (Give Ronanstown a Future Today) Scheme. [The scheme] is seen by the Gardaí, the Probation and Welfare Service and others as one which contributes significantly in crime prevention terms and the decision to maintain funding is therefore welcome. (p. 51)

The Garda Special Projects had their earliest beginnings in this historical context. What is crucial for the context of this evaluation research is that the concerns seem to be more about responding through introducing mechanisms for maintaining order and developing the means for informal social control, than about responding with actions aimed at reducing the crime rate *per se*.

2.3 Issues identified in interviews with key stakeholders

2.3.1 Overview

The purpose of interviews in Phase 1 was to identify the desired impact or change which GSPs are intended to bring about. A semi-structured interview schedule was used by the researcher. The schedule was divided into the following sections:

1. Motivations (of stakeholder organisations/agencies);
2. Roles in relation to GSPs;
3. Views of stakeholders as to the purpose of GSPs;
4. Intended impact (outcomes);
5. Effectiveness and quality in implementation (mechanisms).

The responses of stakeholders are summarised in this section under these headings.

2.3.2 Motivations

2.3.2.1 Youth services

For four of the five youth service organisations involved, the Projects represented an opportunity to engage in work with a group of young people who were not catered for within existing operations. For Foróige, the Projects

¹¹ A policy and legal orientation founded on the understanding that the incarceration of minors is detrimental to their emotional and social development. The emphasis of welfarist interventions is to rehabilitate offenders. Welfarism can be contrasted with a retributive justice model, in which the goal of intervention is to incapacitate the 'criminal' mainly through incarceration.

represented an opportunity to expand ‘direct’ work, i.e. interventions outside the Foróige youth club model. In Waterford, the Projects were a way of focusing resources on particular areas which had no specific youth provision, and, in Dundalk, as a means of enhancing interventions which had already begun with a targeted group prior to receiving GSP funding. The Dublin Youth Service Board undertook to manage projects in the context of the regionalisation of its services.

2.3.2.2 Gardaí central management

Projects developed in the context of the overall development of community and neighbourhood policing. The mechanisation of the police force implied that there was a drift from traditional models of policing. Community policing developed as a specialism in this context. Shifts in emphasis in Garda training allowed for the opportunity to establish new methods of community policing.

2.3.2.3 Gardaí local management

Projects are seen as a way of gaining presence in an area which is difficult to police because of the legitimacy of the Gardaí in the area. This arises where the Garda station is distant from the area in question, or where there is a fear that ‘vigilantes’ or even ‘paramilitaries’ will fill a vacuum. It should be stressed that the latter only applies in some areas. In addition, the Projects allow Gardaí to become involved in more innovative forms of neighbourhood policing – given also that they have a budget for additional activities of which they are the promoters.

2.3.3 Roles in relation to GSPs

2.3.3.1 Youth services

Five youth services are responsible for managing 11 projects. This involves the youth service organisation acting as the employment mechanism while, at the same time, providing support and in-service training mechanisms to individual co-ordinators. Youth services managing GSPs provide opportunities for co-ordination and integration of GSP activities with their own mainstream actions.

2.3.3.2 Garda central management

The Garda Community Relations Section is responsible for evaluating and making recommendations on new Special Projects. It provides advice to those preparing a proposal to establish a new Project. It liaises with Projects and convenes an annual conference to share practice ideas and identify policy issues.

2.3.3.3 Garda local management

The local Garda Superintendents (district officers) are responsible for the Project in their areas and responsible for the management of funds. The district officer identifies the need for the project, liaises with other relevant agencies and forms a management or advisory committee. A more senior officer reviews proposals for renewal of funding before submission to the Garda Community Relations Section. Local Gardaí participate in management through committees, and in operations through referrals and through taking part in some activities.

2.3.3.4 Probation and Welfare Service (PWS)

Senior Probation and Welfare Officers are members of advisory and management groups. The PWS typically deals with offenders who are older than those attending Projects, but in a small number of cases they make referrals. Probation and Welfare Officers usually act as professional advisors at management or advisory group level.

2.3.3.5 Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

The Department receives recommendations from the Garda Community Relations Section and approves funding of Projects as appropriate. The Department issues guidelines to An Garda Síochána as to how, *inter alia*, projects should account for funding. The Department is responsible for the external evaluation of Projects.

2.3.3.6 Community representatives

Members of the local community are nominated to advisory and management committees usually by other members of the committee. Community members are selected because of the contribution it is felt they can make and, as such, there is usually no election or formal selection procedure. Community members play a variety of roles, such as participating as volunteers, identifying potential Project participants and making referrals. They

also provide a link with the wider community and are in some cases a means through which the Project identifies needs and issues.¹²

2.3.4 Views of stakeholders on the purpose of GSPs

2.3.4.1 Youth services

There was a variety of responses to the researcher's questions in relation to the purpose of GSPs:

- *Means of acquiring extra resources* (a regional youth organisation)
- *More young people being involved in youth development process* (Foróige)
- *Provide progression for young people [who are offending or at risk] and to co-ordinate work of various actors* (Dublin Youth Service Board)
- *Provide response to needs and behaviour of those most at risk* (regional youth organisation)

For these agencies, the Projects represent an opportunity for additional financial support to develop and implement programmes with young people who might otherwise be excluded from mainstream youth provision, or not be in a position to access or avail of existing youth services.

2.3.4.2 Garda central management

The primary purpose for the Garda Community Relations Section is twofold:

- (i) first, *diversion from crime*, that is, 'identify young people at risk through the JLO, Probation and schools and to target the appropriate group and get [them involved] in *legitimate* activity'; and
- (ii) secondly, to improve Garda-community relations – 'project co-ordination is a resource to the Gardaí' (interview, member of senior Garda management). 'Diversion' in this case means redirection towards 'legitimate' activity. Garda involvement in this process is perceived as having positive returns in terms of relations with the community, in that it is *seen* that the Gardaí are key actors in actively redirecting young people.

2.3.4.3 Garda local management

Interviews with senior Gardaí at local level reveal that the projects are seen as being consistent with community policing. The purpose of the Project is '[to] divert away from conflict with the law' [and] 'furthering Garda-community relations – you need constant contact with the community. You must talk to the people' (senior local Garda, Dublin). In more specific terms, it is suggested that this is about *humanising* the Garda [and the Garda Síochána]. This 'proactive' police work – being involved with local youth and in community activity – is about preventing disorder. The public might not contact the Gardaí about nuisance or incivilities, because it is perceived that the Project is a mechanism for dealing with these, but they will contact the Gardaí if there is a more serious crime committed:

Put a face on the Gardaí, a human face. When they [young people] go home, they carry this with them. The phone rings here when there is a serious crime. In 1991 you had disorder but this type of proactive policing will prevent this happening again. (interview with senior local Garda, Dublin).

2.3.4.4 Probation and Welfare Service

The Projects serve the purpose of being a 'multi agency development bringing a range of agencies on-side for the purpose of crime prevention'. The role of the service vis-à-vis preventative work is not defined, given that core responsibility is to act as officers of the courts. However, the Service would like to gain more clarity of the purpose of GSP interventions and for the crime prevention focus of GSPs to be further defined (interview with Principal and Assistant Principal Officer).

2.3.4.5 Community members

All participating in a group interview agreed that the main purpose was to motivate young people to participate in community activities and mainstream youth provision. While there was general consensus that all young people in their areas were at risk the crime prevention focus of the Projects was intended for a smaller group where there was an immediate and identifiable risk of offending (group interview with community members).

¹² Group interview with community representatives, Templemore, 13 Nov. 1998.

2.3.5 *Intended impact (outcomes)*

The core of any intervention is to bring about a change. In the case of the GSPs, it is desired that individual young people who engage in disruptive or uncivil behaviour will, through personal development, make a change and desist from that behaviour. It is also desired that the intervention by the agencies involved will bring about systemic change, i.e. changes in structures and processes at community level, and net changes that enhance the quality of life in the areas concerned. This will, in turn, impact upon people feeling safer in the community and having greater confidence in the Gardaí. There is also the desire, when individuals desist from vandalism for example, that there is an aggregate benefit to the community more generally (see Table 2.4 below). In this section, data from semi-structured interview schedules are utilised to clarify the intended impact of Projects on participants and at the wider local level.

Informants in youth service organisations and in the Gardaí were asked to identify the intended individual changes as a result of intervention. One of the central aims of Projects outlined by the Department and An Garda Síochána is to ‘provide suitable activities to facilitate personal development and encourage civic responsibility’. Responses to researchers questions in relation to individual change fall into two categories: ‘personal development’ and ‘civic responsibility’ (see Tables 2.1 to 2.3 below). Noticeably, youth service personnel responded by indicating that desired changes were of a personal development nature, whilst Garda personnel placed more emphasis on the desired adoption of civic responsibility by individual young people.

Table 2.1: Youth service personnel: desired changes at individual level

<i>Personal development responses</i>	<i>Civic responsibility responses</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved self-confidence • Know more [as pre-requisite to doing more] • Enabled to belong to the community [those who don't join activities would join] • Learn specific skills • To be enabled to create • To be able to manage stress • Improved self-esteem • Improved quality of life • Widened sense of expectation/broader expectations • Develop new skills and talents • Engage in exploration and life plan (pre-foundation/pre-Youthreach) • Find alternative ‘highs’ • Motivated to remain in school • Motivated to return to school • Motivated to engage in ‘mainstream’ activities • Create own links to network of support • See own potential/get wider sense of selves and future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility • Ability to serve others • ‘Make their mark in the community’ • Be enterprising • Have an active role in the community [as opposed to passive role] • Change attitudes of individual Gardaí towards young people and vice versa through constructive engagement • Stop joyriding • Stop behaviours which encourage joyriding and other ‘anti-social’ behaviour • Become convinced of the ‘risks’ associated with joyriding and anti-social behaviour • Become active members of a group

Table 2.2: Local Garda personnel: desired changes at individual level

<i>Personal development responses</i>	<i>Civic responsibility responses</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Possibly] gain certification [if available] • Enhance their personal skills • Be better able to deal with their own situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop hanging around • Stop anti-social behaviour • Refrain from crime and vandalism • [Young girls] ‘stop “stirring up” the boys’ • Change attitudes towards the law [become pro-law or law abiding] • Change attitude towards ‘ourselves’ [Gardaí] • Realisation that they are responsible for their actions • [That] ‘they as individuals [will realise] that they are responsible for their environment and have to [come to] respect this • Understand how they impinge on others • Respect property and the person who owns it • [Understand] ‘why did the Garda give you a clatter’

Table 2.3: Central Garda personnel: desired changes at individual level

<i>Personal development responses</i>	<i>Civic responsibility responses</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gain new experiences • To go back to education or to [progress] to Youthreach • To realise their own potential [through] guidance and assistance, information and understanding, and personal skills • Crime narrows life chances – crucial to broaden these through intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change negative attitudes to Gardaí to positive • See the dangers of joyriding • See Garda as an ordinary person • Become familiar with Gardaí and that they become an acceptable part of their lives

It is a key assumption, implicit in the aim of the Projects, that personal development, through the mechanisms that Project programmes provide, leads to the adoption of a civically responsible orientation by Project participants. This includes, as in the Tables 2.1-2.3, understanding the dangers of joyriding, realisation of risks associated with offending, and shifting of participants’ attitudes to a positive orientation towards Gardaí and authority more generally. In addition, it is assumed that participation in group or collective activities and being active in community life is itself a component of a ‘civically responsible’ orientation.

The Projects seek to have an impact at wider community level. It is assumed that the existence of a Project, and the intervention mechanisms it introduces, creates shifts in the system of social support in the areas concerned. These shifts introduce the possibility to enhance the quality of life of residents in the area. It is desired that shifts in individual orientation by the young people involved will lead, in the aggregate, to a reduction in acts of vandalism and crime by the target group.

Table 2.4: Intended impact of Garda Projects at wider local level

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Systemic change</i>	<i>Quality of life change</i>
Youth Service Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional resources into the community • [exploration of] a negotiated model of policing • projects de-label the community/local area • provide networks of support • generation of activity [especially at night] • upskilling of local leadership and linked to accreditation • provide a conduit for agencies and community to deal with difficult issues and to provide a means of referral [to and from] 	
Garda Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishes (with other agencies) a network of support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people in the area feel safer • people in the area will have more confidence in the Gardaí • safer feeling demonstrates our commitment to the people
Garda Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a means through which the community inform the Gardaí of crime prevention issues – e.g. public lighting • ‘break into groups’ [i.e. a means to gain access to groups who are contra Gardaí or whose behaviour is intimidatory towards Gardaí and local people]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘make people think something is being done about the youth’ [instil or restore confidence] • increase(d) community safety

2.3.6 Effectiveness and quality in implementation (inputs/mechanisms)

The interviews with senior youth service and Garda personnel indicate that there is a wide range of principles and practices in operation across Projects.¹³ In general, Project practices and resources shape the efficiency and effectiveness of Project mechanisms in meeting the overall aims of the GSPs. Project mechanisms are the means through which the Projects produce outputs and thus variations in Project resources, practices and systems may produce a range of outcomes.

¹³ See Appendix 2 for a detailed schedule of responses to semi-structured questionnaires.

2.3.6.1 Accessibility

Some Projects operate without premises in the area they serve, allowing some to be more accessible to participants than others. However, most Projects aim to be accessible through a variety of means, such as conducting outreach, allowing participants to meet the co-ordinator outside office hours, and building in staff contractual arrangements for non-social hours and weekend work.

There are no specific policies or practice guidelines issued by An Garda Síochána in relation to participant accessibility. Accessibility is shaped by availability of premises and, in this regard, Projects operate with resources that are available to the promoting youth service in the area.

2.3.6.2 Appropriateness, professional procedures and boundaries

Interventions are usually guided by internal codes of practice to ensure that they are appropriate and efficacious. Child protection and family welfare issues are referred to relevant agencies as they arise. One youth service stressed that workers were absolutely clear about the distinction between therapeutic and educational youth work, and staff should not engage in intervention where it is clear that a young person has behavioural difficulties. For youth service managers, frontline staff should be clear about limits to competency and should seek to make referrals. Other mechanisms include contracting outside facilitation to resolve some specific issues/needs as these arise.

Garda central management does not issue guidelines in this regard, as it is assumed that this matter is dealt with by the youth service organisations' codes of practice.

2.3.6.3 Recording

There is no standard set of recording criteria across Projects. Most projects keep records on client evaluation and self-evaluation. Some have developed a range of forms for managing participant information and as a means of discussing participant progress at team meetings. In most cases, detailed personal information is not kept and two youth services reported that this was a matter of policy.

The Community Relations Section of An Garda Síochána does not issue specific guidelines for standard recording procedures. An attempt was made to establish a system and a pilot was established in one Project. It is desired that Gardaí do not have access to individual records to maintain and secure confidence in Projects.¹⁴

2.3.6.4 Monitoring progress

A variety of practices exist for monitoring individual progress. Each Project seems to draw upon the resources of the promoting youth service for direction in this regard. All of those interviewed reported that there were systems in place for doing this. Some of the youth services organisations interviewed reported that individual reviews conducted by staff formed the basis of staff meetings on either a weekly or monthly basis. One service reported that some monitoring of school attendance is undertaken by teachers.

Project progress is monitored by advisory groups and a variety of mechanisms are used for this. In addition, monitoring is conducted by Project co-ordinators and related youth service staff.

Garda central management requires that an annual report is submitted to them as a means of monitoring progress.

2.3.6.5 Financial system and monitoring

In most cases the system is largely the same, but Projects have evolved practices and procedures to suit their own local requirements. This is, to some extent, as a result of negotiation at local level and to suit the requirements of the promoting youth service.

The Community Relations Section requires that a financial report be submitted in the Annual Report on each Project.

2.3.6.6 Recruitment and staffing

Most staff are appointed with same working conditions as other staff in the promoting youth service organisation. Volunteers are recruited by Projects, with informal screening used in some cases.

Guidelines on staff recruitment are laid out in the Headquarters Circular issued by An Garda Síochána.

¹⁴ Interview with a member of Garda Central Management.

2.3.6.7 Inter agency policy exchange/development mechanisms

Projects provide a focus for multi-agency co-operation at local level. Projects generally do not have inter-agency contact above advisory group level. This is largely confined to the annual conference and occasional informal contact. One youth service, however, hosts a meeting once per year which is attended by senior personnel with responsibilities at policy level within their respective agencies.

2.3.6.8 Intra agency policy mechanisms

Promoting youth services utilise internal communication mechanisms for informing management committees or governing boards of issues relating to GSPs. Gardaí inform the Divisional Officer of the activities of Projects through occasional review and regular circulation of advisory group minutes.

Garda Community Relations Section officers are in regular contact to deal with emerging or current issues.

3 METHOD: KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

3.1 Framework for research questions

Following the interviews with key personnel in the first stage of the evaluation, a set of research questions was formulated based upon the researchers' understanding of the background and context of the Projects. The researchers utilised, as a basic framework for organising the questions into categories, the four key aims of the Projects as detailed in the Garda HQ Circular (September, 1998):

Through a combination of intervention and prevention programmes, Projects aim to:

1. Prevent crime through community and multi-agency co-operation and to improve the quality of life within the community.
2. Divert young people from becoming involved in criminal/anti-social behaviour.
3. Provide suitable activities to facilitate personal development and encourage civic responsibility.
4. Support and improve Garda/community relations (HQ Circular, 1998).

3.2 Overview of Stage 2: Evaluation research

The data for the evaluation research were gathered through two main collection strategies. Firstly, descriptive quantitative data were required to identify the basic characteristics of the 14 Projects as in Box 1 below. (The details of the precise method, instrument and approaches used in the collection of data are outlined in relevant sections of the report.) The following text boxes outline the aims of the two key components of the evaluation research stage.

Box 1: Aim and purpose of the survey of fourteen Projects (see also Section 3.7 below)

A general dataset, to provide background on all 14 Garda Special Projects, will be compiled by way of a General Project Survey using a structured interview schedule. The aim of the survey of Projects is to establish baseline data in relation to the Projects. The survey will establish, *inter alia*,

- a demographic profile of participants;
- the range, nature and purpose of Project interventions;
- the range and nature of multi-agency linkages;
- the physical/human resources available to Projects;
- the numbers of Project participants in core and peripheral Project activities;
- the principal sources of referral to the Project and referral or progression of participants from the Projects.

Data from the survey will be used to ascertain whether Projects are effective in targeting appropriate participants/clients. In addition, it will be possible to map the extent and nature of multi-agency networks. Data on referral sources and progression routes for participants will enable observations to be made as to the nature of diversion in GSPs.

Box 2: Aims and purpose of study of project mechanisms and outcomes in five sites

The researchers will conduct a close study of the mechanisms put in place by GSPs and the outcome pattern emerging in five areas where Projects are in operation. The purpose of this component of the evaluation is to address key research questions as detailed in Sections 3.3 to 3.6 below. The study will gather data from interviews with a range of Project level sources as set out in Section 3.7 below. It is intended that each of the five areas studied will provide data to analyse and discuss the impact and effectiveness of Project mechanisms for delivering on the aims of the Garda Special Projects as a general initiative.

The key assumption to be explored in the evaluation is that in a variety of *contexts* Projects develop *mechanisms* to achieve desired *outcomes*. This conceptualisation is based on the *realist* evaluation framework for crime prevention initiatives set out by Pawson and Tilley (1997)¹⁵ who argue that evaluations should go beyond the 'what works?' form of inquiry and examine what works for *whom*, in what *contexts* and *how* it works. In addition, the quality of mechanisms developed and deployed will determine the nature of the outcomes. In this sense, outcomes are the desired changes or impacts which the Projects aim to bring about as

¹⁵ Pawson, R., Tilley, N. (1997) *Realistic evaluation*, London: Sage.

a result of the range of interventions they deploy. The goal of the evaluation is to observe and identify qualitative shifts as a direct (or indirect if collaborative) result of Project strategies. Projects are required in their practice to balance primary prevention actions (such as public education strategies or school discussions) with interventions focused on the welfare and developmental needs of specific groups¹⁶.

3.3 Crime prevention through multi-agency co-operation and improving the quality of life in Project areas (five selected sites only)

It is assumed that multi-agency and community co-operation (mechanism) will prevent crime and promote community safety which will in turn improve the quality of life in Project areas (see Section 2.6 above). The premise for multi-agency and community co-operation is that crime prevention requires a range of responses beyond that of a single agency. As such, responses can be co-ordinated at local level. The involvement of the local community in this co-operation makes the Project acceptable and legitimate. This leads local people to have confidence in the initiative. The knowledge that Gardaí are also key players in the process in turn instils confidence and credibility in An Garda Síochána as a legitimate and credible agency in the community. This dovetails with the aim of projects to support and improve Garda/community relations (see Section 3.6 below). A summary of our research questions and methods is outlined in Table 3.1 overleaf.

Table 3.1: Crime prevention through multi-agency co-operation and improving the quality of life in Project areas

<i>Mechanism questions</i>	<i>Method</i>
<p>(a) <i>Community safety/quality of life mechanisms:</i></p> <p>How is the community engaged in the process and through what means is the community made aware of Project actions? How does this promote subjective feelings of security in individual residents which makes them feel safer?</p>	Interviews with Project staff and stakeholder agencies.
<p>(b) <i>Multi-agency co-operation:</i></p> <p>How was the multi-agency and community co-operation formed? What are the roles played by those involved? What is their level of involvement? What are their actual mechanisms of communication, and their modes and methods of engagement? What referral processes are in place? What are the mechanics of this process? How are individuals identified and selected? What happens after referral or how is a referred person tracked? What is the process for informing a young person that they are referred? How are those referred processed to a completion? What is the meaning of 'progress' and how defined and what are the specific routes of progression? What is the role of the referrers in this progression process?</p>	Interviews with staff and stakeholder/referring agencies.
<i>Outcome Questions</i>	<i>Method</i>
<p>(a) <i>Community safety/quality of life changes:</i></p> <p>What new systems [or enhanced systems] are put in place by Projects to ensure that people living in the area feel safer as a result of Project actions?</p> <p>Do local people feel safer as a result of their knowledge that a Garda Special Project exists in their area? Does this mean that they are positively disposed towards the Gardaí?</p>	Interviews with stakeholders and local community informants Individual interviews in each of the five areas chosen with a small selected sample of residents who know of the Project's existence
<p>(b) <i>Multi agency co-operation changes:</i></p> <p>What new support systems have been established in the area? As a result of Project actions, what <i>new</i> systems are in place for networking and co-ordination of the work of the agencies involved?</p>	Individual interviews with Project stakeholders, referrers [including Garda JLOs, teachers, and community informants].

3.4 Diversion mechanisms and diversion outcomes (five selected sites)

In general, it is assumed that programme mechanisms and systems put in place by Projects have a diversionary effect. That is, that *pathways* towards a crime-free civilian life will be established by Projects. As a result of intervention, Projects will effectively create the means through which young people will cease their involvement in criminal actions and desist from engaging in anti-social behaviours (such as vandalism, bullying, causing

¹⁶ Except the Woodale Project, in that its actions are geared towards interventions with those specifically referred.

nuisance, disruption, disorder or incivilities). The evaluation will assume that a diversionary effect has been achieved (i) where participants' self-reports on lifestyle and behavioural changes indicate this and (ii) where those specifically referred by the Gardaí (especially the local JLOs) are not re-referred whilst engaged in a diversion programme (see Table 3.2 below).

Table 3.2: Diversion mechanisms and diversion outcomes

<i>Mechanism questions</i>	<i>Method</i>
What are the specific features of Project interventions which are diversionary in their intended effect? What are the assumptions underlying Project interventions? Why was this type of intervention chosen and who was involved in deciding on this? What alternative interventions were considered?	Individual interviews with Project co-ordinator, management/youth service staff and other related staff. Interviews with selected members of advisory or management group.
<i>Outcome questions</i>	
What lifestyle changes have participants made? What is their own perception of lifestyle changes made? What is their perception of the mechanisms bringing about this change? Have participants referred by a criminal justice agency been re-referred to that agency for an offence committed whilst engaged in a diversion programme?	Individual interviews using semi-structured schedules with a representative sample of Project participants. Interviews with JLOs and other referring agents in the juvenile justice process.

3.5 Activities, personal development and civic responsibility (five selected sites)

Projects aim to provide activities to facilitate personal development and encourage civic responsibility. Projects engage participants in activity led programmes with implicit personal development intentions. In addition, Projects also establish specific group development programmes aimed at enhancing personal and social skills. The evaluation will seek to identify how activities (mechanisms) lead to personal development and civic responsibility (outcomes) (see Table 3.3 below).

Table 3.3: Activities, personal development and civic responsibility

<i>Mechanism questions</i>	<i>Method</i>
What planning is conducted around participants' needs? How are needs identified or assessed? What defines their suitability in this context? What are the specific activities which facilitate personal development? How does the Project encourage civic responsibility?	Individual interviews with Project co-ordinator, management/youth service staff and other related staff. Interviews with selected members of advisory or management group.
<i>Outcome questions</i>	
What skills have participants learned? What do they perceive they have learned? Do participants report on qualitative changes in the make up of their social networks? What life decisions have participants made since commencing the programme? What are the attitudes of participants towards Gardaí, teachers and other adult figures? Do they perceive change or shifts in these attitudes? What types of experiences do they have with Gardaí, teachers, youth workers and other adult figures? What is their level of involvement or participation in the community since beginning the programme? What is their perception of change in themselves in this regard?	Individual interviews using semi-structured schedules with representative sample of Project participants.

3.6 Supporting and improving Garda/community relations (five selected sites)

It is assumed by the promoters of Garda Special Projects that Garda involvement leads to the enhancement of relations between the Gardaí and civilians in the Project area. This is a desired change being sought by Gardaí. The rationale is that dealing effectively with disorder and nuisance associated with young people inspires confidence in An Garda Síochána (as in Section 3.2 above). The evaluation will identify the precise mechanisms through which local Garda involvement brings about improved community relations. Assuming that there are mechanisms created, then the desired outcome is achieved if local people [including young people and adults] are conscious of and prepared to use these mechanisms (see Table 3.4 below). An example of this is where a Project acts as a means through which community representatives pass on crime prevention issues through the Project advisory group to the local Gardaí present. If local people are conscious of this, and prepared to report either through this or other channels, then Projects are effective mediators in this process.

Table 3.4: Supporting and improving Garda/community relations

<i>Mechanism questions</i>	<i>Method</i>
What are the precise mechanisms that Projects have put in place to enable exchanges between the Gardaí and local community? What is the precise means through which Gardaí interact with the Projects? What are the mechanisms deployed by Projects to raise awareness/stimulate consciousness of Garda involvement?	Interviews with Project co-ordinators and related staff. Interviews with Garda personnel. Interviews with community representatives and other members of advisory group.
<i>Outcome questions</i>	
Do local people use mechanisms created by Projects and the Gardaí and, if so, how?	Individual interviews in each of the five areas chosen with small selected sample of residents. Interviews with Gardaí (community and regular) who have links with Projects.

3.7 Summary of principal data sources and data collection strategies used

The evaluation was gathered drawing upon the following sources and utilising the following methods:

- A **survey of Projects** (see Chapter 4 below) involving all 14 Garda Special Projects was conducted in order to collect the following data:

Demographic data	Participant profile: age, gender, source of referral and reason for referral; Definition of Project area: Precise operational boundary and DED/Ward areas;
Programme data	Specific programmes of activity in 1998 and precise number of young people involved; Average length of time participants spent in programme in 1998;
Systemic links	Agencies in contact with Project and strength of link. Utilisation and leverage of additional funding;
Resources	Premises used, number of rooms available, core and ancillary staffing, volunteers, transport. Staff profile: training and qualifications, in-service training experience.

- The **study of mechanisms and outcomes in five sites** involved a series of interviews with Project level stakeholders, young people taking part in Project activities and local residents in the Project area.

Interviews with staff (selected sites only)	For the purposes of this research, ‘staff’ included principally the co-ordinator and related youth service staff – i.e. youth service section manager or senior youth worker. The purpose of these interviews was to identify the precise project mechanisms used, how these developed and how they are maintained and reviewed. The researcher will use a semi-structured interview schedule and interviews were tape-recorded (see Chapter 5 below).
Interviews with associated agencies, committee members and referrers (selected sites only)	This included the Gardaí involved with the Project at management and operational levels, with community and agency representatives on the Committee (see Chapter 5 below).
Interviews with Project participants (five selected sites only)	A sample representative of the participant profile in each project was drawn and interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule (see Chapter 6 below).
Interviews within the local community (selected sites only)	Interviews were conducted with a selection of residents in each area who knew of the existence of the Project. Interviews combined use of structured and semi-structured schedules (see Chapter 7 below).

PART TWO

EVALUATION RESEARCH REPORT

4 SURVEY OF 14 PROJECTS

4.1 Data gathering: method, approach and response

The data from a survey of 14 Projects are presented in audit format and set out to define some of the basic characteristics of the GSPs. The survey of Projects was conducted in May and June of 1999. Projects were issued with a structured, self-administered questionnaire seeking information in relation to:

- Establishment and start-up dates;
- Physical resources, including premises and equipment;
- Human resources available, including staff and volunteers;
- Financial resources;
- Throughput of participants in each GSP by age, gender and source of referral;
- Multi agency linkages established;
- The objectives and make up of Project programmes.

Thirteen of the fourteen Projects were briefed before the questionnaire was issued. Project co-ordinators made a contribution to the questionnaire design through their attendance at a briefing session conducted by the researchers, which coincided with a training seminar held at Dundrum, Co. Tipperary in early May 1999. A protocol for completing questionnaires was discussed and agreed as follows:

- Projects would not be compared against each other's performance;
- Data from the survey would be aggregated;
- Projects would have researchers available to them by telephone for any clarification or general support while they were compiling and sourcing information for the questionnaire;
- Projects would receive a detailed set of instructions with the questionnaire (see Appendix 1);
- On return of the questionnaire, the researchers would contact each Project to clarify and verify its content.

The following data sheets were issued (see Appendix 1):

- A general survey questionnaire;
- A set of confidential *staff sheets* to be given to all paid staff, including full-time, part-time, seconded and sessional workers who contribute to the Project programme;
- A set of *programme sheets* which sought detailed information in relation to specific activities in each Project.

All Projects completed their general questionnaires and programme sheets. The staff sheet was to be given to individuals, completed confidentially and returned, in a pre-paid envelope provided, separately from the general data sheets. It became evident that there was considerable inconsistency in relation to whom the sheet was given by co-ordinators. Instructions suggested that the sheet only be given to those working in excess of four hours per week. Some did not follow this guideline. In addition, with the exception of co-ordinators, many of the respondents did not provide information on their job title and, consequently, it was impossible to distinguish co-ordinators from other staff. This rendered the data from the sheets unreliable and largely unusable. A total of 12 co-ordinators returned their sheets.

4.2 Project structures and establishment

By October 1998, a total of 14 Projects had been approved and established as Garda Special Projects. Of the 14 GSPs a total of 11 are described as 'being managed by' a parent youth service organisation and advised by a multi-agency committee. In three cases, Projects are managed by a multi-agency management group independent of a youth service.

In most cases, Projects reported that an *ad hoc* group existed prior to the submission of a proposal for funding as in Table 4.1 below. Four Projects reported that their management/advisory group was established in the same month as funding was first approved by the Department. Four other Projects reported that the management/advisory committee was established between two and seven months following approval of the funding. The remainder reported that their respective committees were established prior to the approval of funding.

Table 4.1: Stages in the start up process by Project

<i>Project</i>	<i>First meeting of ad hoc group</i>	<i>First meeting of advisory/ management group</i>	<i>Submission of proposal to GCRS</i>	<i>Funding approved</i>	<i>Co-ordinator appointed</i>	<i>Programme of activities commenced</i>
GRAFT	N/A	July '91	N/A	July '91	Sept. '91	Nov. '91
KEY	N/A	July '91	N/A	July '91	Nov. '91	Feb. '92
CCYDG Moyross	July '93	Oct. '93	July '94	Sept. '94	Apr. '98	Sept. '94
Knocknaheeny	Sept. '93	June '94	Mar. '93	Jan. '94	Dec. '94	Feb. '95
WEB	Oct. '94	Feb. '95	Mar. '95	May '95	Sept. '95	Nov. '95
BALL	N/A	Nov. '95	Aug. '95	Feb. '96	July '96	June '96
CODY	Aug. '95	Dec. '95	Nov. '95	Dec. '95	Apr. '96	July '96
MAY	Oct. '95	Feb. '96	Dec. '95	Feb. '96	July '96	Sept. '96
NICKOL	Oct. '96	Oct. '96	June '96	Sept. '97	Jan. '98	Mar. '98
Limerick South	Jan. '96	Oct. '96	June '96	Jan. '97	May '97	July '97
TEAM	Aug. '95	Sept. '97	Aug. '95	July '97	Nov. '97	Nov. '97
Woodale	Sep. '96	Sept. '97	Feb. '96	May '97	July '97	Aug. '97
Glen	Feb. '97	Jan. '98	Unknown	Dec. '97	June '98	June '98
FAN	Nov. '97	June '98	May '98	Jan. '98	Oct. '98	Dec. '98

N/A – Not applicable

With one exception, all Projects reported that their management or advisory committee was established in advance of commencing a programme of activities. The length of time taken from the first meeting of this group acts as a crude indicator of the period required for Project start up. The average time taken for the 14 Projects was 7.64 months, ranging from a negative -1 to +15 months as in Table 4.2 below. (The negative value for the Woodale Project reflects the fact that the Project reported that the advisory body was established one month after the programme of activities commenced.)

Table 4.2: Length of time from first meeting of management/advisory committee to programme start-up, by Project

<i>Project name</i>	<i>First meeting of advisory or management committee</i>	<i>Date programme of activities commenced</i>	<i>Length of time from 1st meeting to Project start up in months (inclusive)</i>
GRAFT	July '91	Nov. '91	5
KEY	July '91	Feb. '92	10
CCYDG Moyross	Oct. '93	Sept. '94	12
Knocknaheeny	June '94	Feb. '95	8
WEB	Feb. '95	Nov. '95	10
BALL	Nov. '95	June '96	8
CODY	Dec. '95	July '96	8
MAY	Feb. '96	Sept. '96	8
NICKOL	Oct. '96	Mar. '98	15
Limerick South	Oct. '96	July '97	10
TEAM	Sept. '97	Nov. '97	3
Woodale	Sept. '97	Aug. '97	-1
Glen	Jan. '98	June '98	7
FAN	June '98	Dec. '98	7

Projects typically submitted a proposal to Garda central management or to the Garda Community Relations Section (GCRS) for appraisal and recommendation. This process has taken anything from two to 25 months, as illustrated in Table 4.3 below. Taking the length of time taken from input (submission) to output (approval) as a crude measure of the speed at which central management of both the Gardaí and the Department process a proposal, it is evident that there is a considerable variability in how approvals were conducted. The CODY Project in Cherry Orchard submitted a proposal in November 1995 and had their proposal approved by the Department the following month, whereas the promoters of the TEAM Project made their submission earlier in 1995, but had

to wait two years before they received approval. This may reveal that there was some mechanism for prioritising some Project approvals [as in the case of Cherry Orchard] and delaying others until such time as policies for approvals changed. It is unclear what these mechanisms were but it does leave it open to suggest that project approvals may have coincided with incidents where public order was most challenged and it was expedient to respond. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform had moved Projects toward approval to respond to individual requests from senior Gardaí to establish a Project, depending upon whether money was available. The GSPs have been rather *ad hoc* in their development to date and the above would seem to point towards the need for clearer and more transparent criteria for submissions, appraisal and approvals, and for the need for a pre-Project development phase.

Table 4.3: Length of time from proposal to funding approval stage, by Project

<i>Project name</i>	<i>Submission of proposal to GCRS</i>	<i>Funding approved</i>	<i>Submission to approval time in months (inclusive)</i>
FAN	May '98	Unknown	-
GRAFT	N/A	July 1991	-
KEY	N/A	July 1991	-
Knocknaheeny	March 1993	January 1994	11
CCYDG Moyross	July 1994	September 1994	3
WEB	March 1995	May 1995	3
CODY	November 1995	December 1995	2
BALL	August 1995	February 1996	7
MAY	December 1995	February 1996	3
Limerick South	June 1996	January 1997	8
Woodale	February 1996	May 1997	16
TEAM	August 1995	July 1997	24
NICKOL	June 1996	September 1997	16
Glen	Unknown	December 1997	-

4.3 The physical resources available to Projects

4.3.1 Premises

The majority of Projects (ten) share premises with another organisation. In most cases they share with a youth organisation as in Table 4.4 below. Two of the Projects share with two or more organisations. The area of premises ranged from 60 to 6,000 square feet, and number of shared rooms ranges from one to 13.

Three of the Projects that were based in their *own* premises had leased them (none of the Projects had or were purchasing their premises) The rent for these premises ranged from £3,000-£7,500 per annum. The area available to Projects reporting that they have access to their *own* premises ranged from 374 to 7,000 square feet, and the number of rooms ranged from one to ten.

One of the Projects was unique in that it had two premises, one which it shared with a youth organisation, and another which it leased for its own use. One of the Projects at the time of data collection had no access to premises but had secured space in a building that was undergoing renovation.

Thus in relation to access to premises, it is evident that there is little uniformity in relation to tenure, total area available and number of rooms. A small number of Projects have very large premises available to them while others, in some cases, operate from a corner of small open plan offices.

Table 4.4: Status of Project premises

<i>Project premises</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
Own premises (used exclusively by Project)	3
Shared with a Youth Organisation or other Project	10
Both (2 premises, one own and one shared)	1

4.3.2 Location of premises and Project catchment area

Ten of the Projects have premises located in their catchment area (i.e. from which participants are drawn), while the remaining four are outside of their catchment area.

4.3.3 Function of premises and use of additional premises

Projects reported that their main use for premises was for administrative and office work. Other uses reported included meetings and Project activities, as in Table 4.5 below. Four Projects indicated that their premises were used by other agencies and groups for meetings and programmes.

Table 4.5: Use of Project premises

<i>Function</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
Administrative and office work	14
Management and staff meetings	12
Project activities	10
Used by other agencies/groups	4

Twelve Projects reported that they availed of additional premises for the purpose of programme activities and seven Projects indicated that they use additional premises for meetings, as in Table 4.6 below. Three Projects mentioned other reasons for availing of additional premises including storage, counselling and summer Project activities with other groups.

Table 4.6: Number of Projects using additional premises

<i>No. of additional premises and function</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
1-2 premises for activities	5
3-4 premises for activities	5
5-8 premises for activities	2
1-2 premises for meetings	4
3-4 premises for meetings	3

Ten of the twelve Projects that avail of additional premises have to pay rent for at least one of these premises, as in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: Number of Projects using additional *rented* premises

<i>No. of additional rented premises used</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
1 Premises	4
2 Premises	2
3 Premises	3
4 Premises	1

4.3.4 Equipment

In the survey questionnaire, Projects were asked to identify items of equipment they had access to, and to indicate the ownership status of the item. In other words, Projects were asked to say whether they owned the item (i.e. purchased with Project funds), whether they co-owned and shared it, or if they shared somebody else's. Projects were also asked to indicate the number of items they owned and if the item had been donated. Most Projects reported that they had access to the items as listed in Table 4.8 below. Half of the 14 said they had access to a computer for participant use and half also reported that they had access to musical instruments. In relation to the status of all items, and insofar as there is a general pattern in this regard, most Projects reported that they either owned an item or that they shared equipment owned by others. Few reported that they had any of the listed items donated. Box 3 below gives some indication of the types of materials available to Projects in some of the categories below. Insofar as Projects opt for purchasing equipment, as opposed to renting, they are accruing assets. It is unclear who has title or ownership of these assets, a question to which this report returns in the final chapter.

Table 4.8: Numbers of Projects that have access to specified items of equipment by status of ownership/access

<i>Item of equipment</i>	<i>Access to item</i>	<i>Ownership status</i>					
		<i>Owned</i>	<i>Rented</i>	<i>Jointly owned & shared</i>	<i>Shared but owned by others</i>	<i>Donated</i>	<i>Have more than one</i>
	<i>No. of Projects</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
Telephone ¹⁷	14	8	2	2	7	0	5
Fax	14	4	1	1	9	0	1
Photocopier	14	3	1	1	9	0	0
Computer (office use)	13	6	0	1	7	0	1
Television	12	5	1	1	6	1	2
Video	12	5	1	1	6	0	1
Video Camera	11	6	1	1	4	0	1
Camera	10	7	0	1	2	0	1
Hi-fi system	10	4	1	1	3	0	0
Computer (for participants)	7	3	1	1	2	0	1
Pool/snooker table	10	5	0	1	3	2	2
Musical instruments	7	4	1	1	1	1	1
Outdoor pursuits equipment	9	4	1	1	1	1	1
Other equipment	10	7	1	2	1	1	1

Box 3: Examples of equipment that Projects have access to

- Outdoor pursuits equipment:
 - Camping gear, rain jackets, canoes, paddles, wetsuits, boots, bikes
 - Bodyboards
 - Rain coats
 - Football, plastic hockey sets, thermos, torches.
 - Boots, back packs
 - Mountain bikes, abseiling equipment, camping equipment.
- Musical instruments:
 - Pipe and drum band – drum kit, PA system, guitars, tambourines,
 - Guitars, percussion, karaoke.
- Other equipment – boxing equipment, table tennis, soup run flasks, haversacks, jackets, first aid kits. Goal posts, net stands, kit bag. Photographic equipment (enlargers), badminton racquets, body boards
 - Table tennis table, board games, various sports equipment
 - Digital camera
 - Disco equipment: speakers, amp, CD decks, cassette decks, mics.
 - Sound studio, craft equipment (t-shirt paints, glass paints, clay, woodwork)
 - Indoor (uni-hoc, basketball, soccer ball, board games)
 - Board games.

4.3.5 Transport

All of the Projects reported that they used hired or loaned mini-buses for transport for programme activities. Half reported that they use taxis and staff cars while only two Projects reported that they use public bus and rail services, as in Table 4.9 below. Staff cars are generally not used for transporting participants, but are used by coordinators for programme activities such as doing outreach work or in an emergency.

¹⁷ Own telephones – refers to owned mobile telephones. By definition, all Telecom phones are rented except where Projects purchase an internal telephone system.

Table 4.9: The main modes of transport used by the Projects

<i>Mode of transport</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
Public bus/rail	2
Taxis	7
Minibus (hired/loaned)	14
Staff car	7

Table 4.10: Frequency and type of motor transport hired by Projects

<i>How frequent</i>	<i>Hire driver & minibus</i>	<i>Hire self-driven minibus</i>	<i>Hire taxis</i>
	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects
Daily	0	0	3
3-5 per week	3	1	1
1-2 per week	3	1	2
Fortnightly	1	0	1
Occasionally	4	0	0
Never	3	12	7

Three of the Projects that reported they 'hire a driver and minibus occasionally', stated that this was during the summer months, ranging from 3-4 times per week to every two weeks.

Eleven Projects reported that they had *access* to a minibus, including ten Projects who had access to a *loaned* (as opposed to hired) minibus. One Project stated that it had shared ownership of a minibus with the Gardaí. Six of the loaned buses were from the Gardaí, three loaned from the youth organisation and one from a school. Those who had access to a Garda minibus were asked how frequently they availed of it.

Table 4.11: Number of Projects using Garda transport

<i>How often use Garda bus</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
Frequently (daily)	1
Sometimes (summer months)	1
Subject to availability	3
Never used/used just once	2

How often Projects were able to avail of the Garda bus varied enormously. One Project had access to a Garda bus on a daily basis but this was the exception. One Project availed of the Garda bus primarily in the summer months and felt that the Gardaí were accommodating and that 80% of their requests for use were granted. Three Projects reported that their access to the Garda bus was subject to availability (this was often due to the availability of a driver). Two Projects indicated they had never used it. One of these Projects had only been operating for a short period, but had planned to avail of the Garda bus. The other Project which had used the Garda bus on at least one occasion had made a decision afterwards not to avail of it again.

There seems to be inconsistency in relation to the use of Garda transport. While there is great variation in use one Project could report that it had access to a Garda bus on a daily basis and that its use was not contingent upon driver availability. Others who have access, whether on loan or even on a shared ownership basis, have strictly limited access depending upon the availability of a Garda driver.

4.4 Profile of human resources available

4.4.1 Paid staff

Twelve of the Projects had one full-time co-ordinator, while two of the Projects each had two full-time co-ordinators. Two of the Projects that had full-time co-ordinators also had an additional full-time worker. In one of these Projects, the additional worker co-ordinates the Project's drug prevention activities. The remaining ten Projects have access to part-time and/or sessional staff.

Table 4.12: Numbers of staff currently working at each Project site

<i>Site no.</i>	<i>Total no. of staff</i>	<i>Total no. of males</i>	<i>Total no. of females</i>	<i>No. of part-time & sessional staff</i>	<i>Average hours per week – part-time & sessional staff</i>
Site 1	4	2	2	3	11.67
Site 2	4	3	1	3	4.67
Site 3	4	1	3	3	3.0
Site 4	6	3	3	5	4.8
Site 5	2	1	1	1	20.0
Site 6	6	3	3	5	2.6
Site 7	10	3	7	8	2.0
Site 8	13	5	8	11	2.0
Site 9	3	2	1	2	18.0
Site 10	2	1	1	1	2.0
Site 11	3	2	1	2	20.0
Site 12	4	2	2	2	7.5
Site 13	5	2	3	3	2.67
Site 14	3	3	0	2	20.0
Total	69	33	36	51	120.91 hours
Average	4.9	2.36	2.57	3.64	8.64 hours

The total number of staff currently working on the Projects is 69, as in Table 4.12 above. However, there is substantial variation across the 14 sites; the number ranges from two to thirteen, with an average of 4.9 staff per Project. The overall average number of males and females for the Projects is similar, even though the total numbers reveal that there are slightly more female staff than males.

Apart from the full-time workers (mostly co-ordinators), the Projects have access to part-time and sessional workers. The numbers of part-time and sessional workers range from one to eleven per Project, with an average of 3.64. The number of hours worked by part-time and sessional staff range from a minimum of two hours to a maximum of twenty hours, with an average of 8.64 hours worked. Generally, it appears that there is a small number of Projects which have access to a large number of additional staff working less hours than in the Projects with smaller numbers. Those with smaller numbers report that their additional staff work on the Project for more hours per week.

Table 4.13: Sources of payment for Project staff

<i>Site</i>	<i>Total no. of staff</i>	<i>Paid by Project</i>	<i>FÁS/CE</i>	<i>Health Board</i>	<i>VEC</i>	<i>Gardaí</i>	<i>Other</i>
Site 1	4	2	2	-	-	-	-
Site 2	4	3	-	-	-	-	1 x Corporation
Site 3	4	1	1	1	1	-	-
Site 4	6	5	-	-	1	-	-
Site 5	2	1	1	-	-	-	-
Site 6	6	6	-	-	-	-	-
Site 7	10	8	-	2	-	-	-
Site 8	13	5	-	-	1	-	5 x Dept. of Education 1 x Drugs Task Force
Site 9	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
Site 10	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
Site 11	3	1	-	-	-	-	2 x CDP
Site 12	4	4	-	-	-	-	-
Site 13	5	5	-	-	-	-	-
Site 14	3	1	-	-	-	2	-
Totals	69	46	5	3	3	2	10

All Project co-ordinators are paid by the funding from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. While some of the staff are paid from other sources, the majority (46 or 73% as in Table 4.13 above) of total staff are paid from Project funds. The remainder are paid from a variety of other sources including FÁS, VEC, Health Board, Gardaí,¹⁸ Corporation, Department of Education, Drugs Task Force and Community Development Programme. The range of job titles given to part-time and sessional workers is illustrated in Box 4 below.

Box 4: Job titles of staff working on Projects

• Outdoor Pursuits Instructor	• Assistant Facilitator	• Teacher, Resource Person
• Resource Staff Cookery	• Arts Worker	• Parent Facilitator
• Resource Staff Sports	• Community Gardaí	• Swimming Instructor
• Resource Staff Crafts, Video & Woodwork	• Group Leader	• Support Teacher
• Youth Worker	• Senior Youth Worker	• Karate Tutor, Music Tutor
• Community Worker	• Youth Community Worker	• Photographic Instructor
	• Education Worker	

Half of the co-ordinators currently working on Projects have been working between one and two years as in table 4.15 below. One co-ordinator has been employed in the same Project for almost eight years but this is the exception.

Table 4.14: Duration of employment of Project co-ordinators

<i>Duration</i>	<i>No. of co-ordinators</i>
3-12 months	5
13-24 months	8
2-3 years	1
4 + years	2

4.4.2 Volunteers

Nine of the fourteen Projects reported that they have at least one volunteer currently working on their Project, as in Table 4.15 below.

Table 4.15: Number of volunteers working on Projects

<i>No. of volunteers</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
No volunteers	5
1-2 volunteers	4
4-6 volunteers	2
10 + volunteers	3

Nine Projects have volunteers who work 1-5 hours per week and two of these have volunteers working 6-10 hours per week.

4.4.3 Students

Eleven of the Projects had at least one student on placement with the Project since January 1998, as in Table 4.16 below.

Table 4.16: Type and source of student placements

<i>Type of Student</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
Garda student/probationer Garda	7
3 rd level student	9

¹⁸ One Project reported that two Gardaí are involved in its programme. Projects were asked to include Gardaí as additional staff only in cases where they had been specifically assigned to work on the activity programme by their managers. The same applied to other agencies.

Seven of the Projects had Garda students/ probationer Gardaí working on their Project. The numbers of Garda students varied from one to eight across the seven Projects. The majority of these placements were for two weeks; one was for one week, and another for a number of days and weekends throughout the summer programme. Nine of the Projects had 3rd level students working with them. The numbers ranged from one to seven, with the majority having one. The duration of their placements was between one week and four months, with the majority working between a month and two months on the Project.

Three of the Projects had second level students working on the Project. This number varied from one to five. The duration of their placement ranged from one day to eight weeks.

4.5 Core and additional financial resources

Over half of the Projects are operating with a budget in the range of IR£50,000 to IR£55,000. Two Projects are operating with a total of IR£60,000 and IR£76,000 each, respectively. Three of the 14 Projects have a budget in the range IR£80–89,000 while one outlying Project operates on a budget (IR£106,000) which is over twice that of the Project with the lowest (see Table 4.17 below).

Table 4.17: Total budget for *current* financial year for Projects

<i>Budget Range</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
£50,000-55,000	8
£60,000-76,000	2
£80,000-89,000	3
£106,500	1

Table 4.18: Amount of funding Projects receive from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

<i>Funding range</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
£46,000-50,000	8
£55,000-60,000	3
£70,000-80,000	3

Projects draw upon other sources of funding as outlined in Table 4.19 below. Four GSPs manage to add significantly to their budgets and these are comprised of three that reported that they accessed funding from the Local Drugs Task Forces, while one Project reported that it had secured £15,000 from a combination of sources.

Table 4.19: Number of Projects utilising additional funding sources by amount

<i>Source and amount</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
Local Drug Task Forces (£25,000-35,000)	3
Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (£1,500)	1
VEC (£4,000)	1
Area Partnership Company (£490)	1
Peace and Reconciliation Programme (£3,500)	1
Léargas (£7,000)	1

4.6 Profile of participants

4.6.1 Gender and age

In the survey questionnaire, Projects were asked to return data on the number of young people engaged in structured activities during 1998. Structured activities, for the purposes of the evaluation, are defined as representing groups or actions that are comprised of specific members and who attend the Project at a scheduled time for that purpose.

The 14 Projects reported that they had a total of 1,094 young people engaged in such activities in 1998, ranging from a total of seven in a recently established Project to 211 in a more established one, as in Table 4.20 below. Projects engaged a total of 718 males (65.63% of the total) and 376 females (34.37% of the total). Gender ratios within Projects range from almost 9 : 1 in Site 4 to parity or 50 : 50 in Site 14, and thus reflect a wide range of

gender recruitment policies and practices between Projects. An examination of data for January to May in 1999 as in Table 4.21 below, indicates that gender participation ratios might be subject to considerable fluctuation, given that some sites reported percentage changes for females. In general, looking at the average numbers per site in Tables 4.20 and 4.21, the average number of participants dropped from 84.15 to 61.29 per site. This attrition is more acute for males than for females, in that the average number of males per site dropped from 55.23 to 36.79 participants while, some sites reported increases in the percentage of females in the first half of the year from +11% to +30%.

Table 4.20: Participants engaged in structured Project activities in 1998 per site by gender

Site no.	Males		Females		Total participants
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Site 1	54	58.06	39	41.94	93
Site 2	48	62.34	29	37.66	77
Site 3	6	85.71	1	14.29	7
Site 4	24	88.89	3	11.11	27
Site 5	15	78.95	4	21.05	19
Site 6	83	55.70	66	44.30	149
Site 7	160	75.83	51	24.17	211
Site 8	113	68.07	53	31.93	166
Site 9	43	76.79	13	23.21	56
Site 10	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
Site 11	16	61.54	10	38.46	26
Site 12	47	75.81	15	24.19	62
Site 13	43	63.24	25	36.76	68
Site 14	66	49.62	67	50.38	133
Total	718	65.63	376	34.37	1,094
Average per site	55.23		28.92		84.15

Table 4.21: Participants *currently* engaged in structured project activities by site and gender (January to May 1999)

Site no.	Males		Females		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Site 1	54	58.06	39	41.94	93
Site 2	32	50.79	31	49.21	63
Site 3	9	64.29	5	35.71	14
Site 4	23	88.46	3	11.54	26
Site 5	11	73.33	4	26.67	15
Site 6	36	59.02	25	40.98	61
Site 7	43	66.15	22	33.85	65
Site 8	90	62.50	52	36.11	144
Site 9	38	76.00	12	24.00	50
Site 10	61	57.55	45	42.45	106
Site 11	8	33.33	16	66.67	24
Site 12	14	70.00	6	30.00	20
Site 13	30	68.18	14	31.82	44
Site 14	66	49.62	67	50.38	133
Total	515	60.02	341	39.74	858
Average per site	36.79		24.36		61.29

An examination of the ages of participants in Projects reveals that, overall, there is a wide variation in the age groups that Projects target. Four Projects reported that they work with children who are under ten years of age. Looking at the overall 1998 mean age (13.57 yrs – boys, 13.8 yrs – girls), five Projects are working with

participants close to the mean age for males and four Projects close to the mean age for girls as in Table 4.22 below.

Table 4.22: Age ranges and mean ages of participants involved in structured activities in 1998 per site, by gender

<i>Site no.</i>	Males		Females	
	<i>Range</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Site 1	11-18	14.39	12-17	14.64
Site 2	9-16	13.58	9-16	12.62
Site 3	13-15	13.83	13	13.00
Site 4	11-16	12.71	15	15.00
Site 5	11-15	12.80	11-13	12.00
Site 6	9-16	12.05	10-16	11.45
Site 7	10-16	12.39	10-14	12.00
Site 8	8-17	12.99	8-16	12.68
Site 9	9-18	13.14	9-18	13.00
Site 10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Site 11	13-17	15.31	13-18	14.90
Site 12	10-17	13.64	10-16	13.13
Site 13	10-17	13.63	10-16	12.20
Site 14	11-18	15.89	12-19	14.66
<i>Overall mean age (13 sites)</i>		<i>13.57</i>		<i>13.18</i>

Table 4.23: Age ranges and mean ages of participants involved in structured activities per site, by gender (January to May 1999)

<i>Site no.</i>	<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>	
	<i>Range</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Site 1	11-18	14.39	12-17	14.64
Site 2	9-15	12.97	9-16	13
Site 3	12-14	13.11	11-13	12.2
Site 4	9-16	12.69	15	15
Site 5	12-14	13.18	12-14	13
Site 6	9-18	13.69	9-16	11.32
Site 7	10-16	12.95	10-15	13.18
Site 8	8-16	12.41	8-16	12.65
Site 9	9-17	12.87	9-17	13.42
Site 10	10-19	13.38	10-18	12.38
Site 11	12	12	12-17	13.44
Site 12	16-17	16.5	16-17	16.5
Site 13	10-17	13.37	10-16	12.29
Site 14	11-18	15.89	12-19	14.66
<i>Overall mean age (14 sites)</i>		<i>14.57</i>		<i>13.40</i>

4.6.2 *Principal sources of inward referral*

Projects were asked to report on the number of cases referred to them in 1998 and to identify the referral source. Data were gathered for cases rather than individuals referred, as any participant could, in theory at least, be referred by more than one source. For males, the principal sources of referrals are the Gardaí, schools, other youth workers and Project outreach activities. A total of 10, 11, 9 and 10 Projects, respectively, reported that they received referrals from these sources. As a crude indicator of referral activity, the role of the JLOs and Project outreach work is noteworthy in terms of the average number of cases referred from these sources. For females, the most active referral sources are schools and outreach work in comparison with the justice agencies, and the JLO in particular, as in Table 4.24(i) below.

Table 4.24(i): Range and average number of cases of inward referrals by source and gender

<i>Referral source</i>	<i>Males</i>			<i>Females</i>		
	<i>No. of Projects</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Average</i>
Juvenile Liaison Officer	10	5-38	16.50	6	1-9	4
Other Gardaí	5	4-30	16	6	2-13	5.33
Probation Officer	3	1-4	3	0	0	0
Teacher/principal/home-school liaison officer	11	1-61	16.55	10	1-30	10.50
Social Worker	5	1-9	2.80	4	1-3	1.75
Parents	8	2-20	5.88	7	1-18	4.29
Community representatives	9	2-13	5.56	7	2-14	5.57
Youth work staff (from other Projects)	9	1-22	6.11	4	1-7	3.25
Outreach work	10	2-61	24.60	10	2-47	12.90
Self	6	1-81	21.50	4	2-91	26.75
Others (see sub table below)	8	1-102	21	4	1-25	8

Table 4.24(ii): Others include

<i>Source</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
	<i>No. of Projects</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>
Clergy	2	1
Family Education Support Team	1	0
Travellers Project	1	0
Peer referral	3	2
School Chaplain	1	0
Former Project workers	0	1

4.6.3 Outward referral of participants

Projects make referrals to other agencies and sometimes make referrals regardless of whether the young person referred actually becomes a Project participant. In addition, an outward referral can often be made in parallel to participation in the Project's programme. Equally, Projects refer participants to more than one agency or service. As such, data gathered refer to cases as opposed to numbers of individuals. The data from the survey is thus a crude indicator of overall outward referral activity by Projects. A small number (2) of Projects that are more recently established have yet to become active in making outward referrals, and an equal number of established Projects (2) reported that they made no referrals.

The data in Table 4.25(i) below draw from the returns made by ten Projects. Interestingly, the numbers of Projects reporting that they made outward referrals for males is larger than that for females overall, and thus Projects are more active in referring-on males to other agencies. There is only one destination where there is an exception to this rule, in that Projects seem to be active in making onward referrals to the Local Employment Service (LES) in substantial numbers. It is noteworthy that Projects make significant numbers of referrals to drug treatment services. Five Projects reported that they made such referrals of males while one Project reported that it referred a total of 20 females to the drug treatment services.

Table 4.25(i): Range and average number of cases of outward referral by destination and by gender

<i>Referral destination</i>	<i>Males</i>			<i>Females</i>		
	<i>No. of Projects</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>No. of Projects</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Average</i>
FÁS	8	1-20	5	3	1-5	2.33
Youthreach	7	3-12	5.43	2	3-6	4.50
Local Employment Service	5	2-40	11.20	3	1-40	14.67
Counselling	4	1-20	7.50	2	2-10	6
Social workers	3	2-7	3.67	1	-	3
Drug treatment services	5	1-40	11.20	1	-	20

Other (see Table 4.25(ii))	8	4-22	8.40	4	3-5	3.67
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Table 4.25(ii): Others include:

<i>Referral destination</i>	<i>Males No. of Projects</i>	<i>Females No. of Projects</i>
Family Support Team	0	1
Probation project	1	1
Public Health Nurse	1	1
Asgard (national training ship)	1	0
Back to school	2	0
Local employment/jobs	2	0
Community training workshop	1	1

4.7 Project programmes

4.7.1 Structured Project programmes

Projects had been instructed to include on a *programme sheet* the basic details (i.e. objectives, activities and duration) of all activities, services and events conducted by the Project, currently and in the last year, with individuals, groups of young people, and their parents. All programme sheets completed by Projects were divided by the researcher into *structured* and *unstructured*.

Structured Project activities include those programmes in which a specific number of young people are engaged in and regularly attend a specific group, with a clear set of objectives, for a given period of time. Projects reported that they were currently running, or had in the past year run, an average of eight structured programmes each. This ranged from two in a more recently established Project to 21 for two Projects that have been established longer and have more than one member of full-time staff. Two Projects reported that they ran three structured programmes each. One of the two involved a total of 15 participants and the other involved 68 participants. One Project reported that for five programmes it involved 20 participants. This variation in the number of participants per programme indicates clearly that Projects operate with quite different emphases in relation to the quality of input and the quantity of output. This might be explained in part by the objectives of each programme. A sample programme sheet for structured programmes is provided in Appendix 2.

Table 4.26: Number of structured programmes per site

<i>Site</i>	<i>No. of structured programmes</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>No. of structured programmes</i>
Site 1	9	Site 8	18
Site 2	13	Site 9	7
Site 3	2	Site 10	5
Site 4	5	Site 11	4
Site 5	3	Site 12	7
Site 6	6	Site 13	21
Site 7	13	Site 14	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>116</i>		

A fuller analysis of the nature of Project programmes is not possible at this stage. The *survey questionnaire programme sheet* (see Appendix 2) did not return clear enough data to discern the precise categorisation of Project programmes. However, an analysis of the objectives of each programme allows for some observations to be made in relation to the differences in programme emphases. Larger numbers are related to the number of staff that Projects have and this is particularly true for those Projects that have access to paid part-time and sessional staff. There is one exception to this, where one of the structured programmes in one Project involves 44 young people and is organised by one staff and two volunteers.

Most of the programme objectives are of a personal development orientation. Most Projects reported that they used leisure activities balanced with group work/group discussions and/or one-to-one contact. Personal development programmes assume that participants require some form of skills acquisition and Projects typically reported that their programme objective was to 'build social skills', 'challenge attitudes to bullying and anti-social behaviour', 'provide support to the young person'.

A small number of Projects reported that they ran individual programmes that were of a leisure only orientation, i.e. where the Project reported that it had no personal development objective. These programmes are described by writers on youth work models (see Hurley & Treacy, 1994, for instance) as ‘character building’ in orientation. Projects organising these activities reported that the typical objectives were to ‘develop new leisure pursuits – constructive activities [and] build relationships with adult leaders’.

In a small number of cases, Projects reported that their objective for specific programmes was to engage in more critical reflective interventions by assisting participants to explore their own culture and broader social issues around them in addition to personal development and leisure activities. These Projects (n=3) are noted by the researchers as having reported the same objectives for most if not all of their programmes.

With the exception of these, the remaining Projects reported having programmes involving either entirely leisure based with no personal development, or entirely personal development (with leisure as the medium of engagement). Interestingly, some of these Projects ran leisure only programmes alongside their personal development programmes.

4.7.2 Unstructured programmes

Unstructured Project activities refers to seasonal groups and events, such as summer groups, parades, exhibitions, soccer groups, and ongoing services such as ‘drop-ins’, parent groups, home visits, one-to-one work, and other large community events. Some of the Projects included various types of community work with other groups, or support they provided on various committees, on the programme sheets (see Appendix 3).

Eleven of the fourteen Projects were currently running or had in the past year run unstructured Project programmes. Out of these eleven Projects the number of unstructured programmes ranged in number from one to twelve, with the average number of unstructured activities being four to five in each Project. The numbers of young people that are engaged in these activities are significantly larger than the structured programmes. For example the summer groups incorporate a range of young people from fifteen up to 250 and ‘drop-ins’ incorporate from a minimum of 20 up to 45.

The types of activities, services and events included in this section were categorised into: once-off events and services; ongoing groups and services; and outreach/home work. The content and objective of these programme are outlined below.

Once-off events as illustrated in Box 5 include a variety of activities that are organised on a periodic basis, such as seasonal events, shows and exhibitions, and various programmes that were conducted in schools, such as drug awareness, drug prevention and anti-vandalism programme. Six of the eleven Projects reported conducting one of these events/programmes currently or in the last year.

Box 5: Examples of once-off and seasonal events

• Easter/Halloween event	• Exchanges
• Christmas disco	• Community drugs seminar
• Exhibitions	• Drug prevention programmes
• Fitness programme	• EU Drugs Awareness Week
• Inter-project challenge matches	• Anti-vandalism programme

Seasonal events such as the Easter/Halloween event and Christmas disco were conducted by two Projects. These were strictly once-off events which incorporated from 40 to 130 young people. A common objective for such events is to contribute to building a reputation for the Project in the area. In addition some of these events appear to enable Project staff to make contact with a larger number of young people in the area. Sporting activities such as fitness programmes and inter-project challenge matches similarly incorporate large numbers of young people (20-127). These activities are seen as a way of making contact with young people in the area, fostering an interest in sporting and fitness. They provide an opportunity to mix with large numbers of young people, youth leaders and, in one Project, the Gardaí. Once-off programmes such as drug prevention programmes and anti-vandalism programmes were conducted by two Projects and, in most cases, were run by Project staff in conjunction with others in schools in the area, or the community. The numbers of young people involved in these programmes ranged from 500 to 1,500. These were more or less information campaigns implemented to increase young people’s awareness of the effects of drug use or vandalism which were conducted through meetings, seminars, presentations, and creative methods such as art, surveys, and posters. In one Project, a community drugs seminar was conducted in the Project area which was targeted at young people’s parents and other concerned adults in the area.

Ongoing groups and services include drop-in services, summer programmes and various groups which are run on an ongoing basis for larger numbers of young people. In most cases these groups and services run on a drop-in basis i.e. there is not a set group that turn up each week or month but are availed of by those who appear. The summer programme is one of the most popular ongoing (i.e. each summer) programmes run by the Projects. Eight Projects reported operating a summer programme. In addition, five Projects reported operating a drop-in service; one of these discontinued this service.

Box 6: Examples of ongoing groups and services

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in service • One-to-one work • Summer programme • Music programme • Schools education programme • Soccer groups • Sports club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports drop-in • Indoor soccer • Boxing club • Inter Project challenge matches • Confirmation club • Home management programme • Drama workshops
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The summer programmes run by Projects operate for a period of four to eight weeks. It is apparent that the principal objective of these activities is to involve a wide range of young people from the target area in constructive, enjoyable activities and through this identify possible participants for the Project. In addition the summer programme enables the Projects to engage with larger numbers of young people and in doing so helps build the profile of the Project in the area. The majority of activities are leisure based including a variety of sporting and outdoor activities, e.g. canoeing, soccer, rock climbing, dance, drama, competitions, etc.

Four Projects were currently providing a ‘drop-in’ service. The numbers attending this varied but in most cases include between 20 and 60. Across these Projects, the objectives and structure of the drop-in were similar. The focus is on providing a safe recreational area, and an alternative to ‘hanging out’ on the streets, so as to link up with young people who otherwise would not formally join a youth club. The general activities of a ‘drop-in’ include pool, table tennis, music, television, games, computers, soccer, quizzes and so on.

One-to-one work is an ongoing service operated by a small number of Projects and usually on an ‘as required’ basis. In general this is a way for Projects to provide individual support, practical advice and information as appropriate to the young person.

4.7.3 Project outreach work

Projects also conduct outreach work in a number of sites and this work typically involves street-work, home visits and parent groups. Two Projects conduct street work and three Projects reported that they undertook home visits as part of their ongoing work.

Box 7: Examples of Project outreach work

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street work • Home visits <p>Home visits and family support are viewed by some Projects as multi-functional in that they enable Project staff to inform parents about group activities, enhance relationships with young people, help families access service and information, gain greater insight into the young person’s home environment, whilst informing parents of the young person’s progress.</p> <p>Streetwork is seen as another means of making contact with the more difficult to reach groups of young people and enables Project staff to gain a better sense of drug, alcohol and crime issues. One Project operates a late night street run late Friday night and early Saturday morning which enables Project staff to contact those who are out late, and to provide ‘soup and sandwiches’ for some homeless young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family support • Parents group
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4.8 The extent and nature of multi-agency links at Project level

4.8.1 Data on multi-agency links

Projects were asked to complete a standardised grid requesting information in relation to their relationships with agencies. Respondents were asked to select from a list of 21 agencies and to indicate the purpose and frequency

of meetings with that agency. Five closed options were provided relating to purpose of contact including ‘jointly fund programmes’, ‘representation’, ‘networking and support’, ‘technical support/advice/training’, and ‘share resources’. These options were presented in statement form in the survey questionnaire (see Appendix 1) and, as they are not mutually exclusive categories, it was possible for Projects to indicate more than one, or indeed all, options, in their responses.

4.8.2 Extent and purpose of meetings with agencies

Projects reported that they had contact with between ten and 16 agencies each, or a mean of 12.14. Table 4.27 below maps out the extent and nature of agency links for each Project site. It is revealed that most Projects communicate with agencies for the purpose of networking and support compared with the other options. Analysed with the total number of agencies that a Project has contact with, and expressed as a percentage, the data reveal that most Projects meet agencies for networking and support. For instance one Project (Site No.7) indicated that it met all (100%) of its listed agencies for this purpose, and ten Projects indicated that they met in excess of three-quarters of their listed agencies for this type of contact. In general, it appears that Projects develop networks wider than those agencies that comprise the management or advisory body, or indeed their own parent youth service. Eleven of the 14 Projects studied reported that they had contact with between three and 11 *additional* agencies for networking and support.

The Projects reported that they were less likely to be involved in jointly funding programmes with the agencies selected. This is partly to be expected, as many of the agencies listed in the questionnaire would not be in a position to grant aid or even co-fund GSP programmes. Nine Projects reported that they were in contact with an agency for jointly funding programmes and two of these had funding arrangements with four agencies. In general, most Projects are involved in sharing resources with other agencies.

Table 4.27: Number of agencies with which Projects have links, by site and purpose of contact

Site	Total agencies linked	Purpose of Link				
		Jointly fund programmes	Represented on advisory or management committee	Network and support	Technical support, advice and training	Share resources
	No. of agencies	No. of agencies	No. of agencies	No. of agencies	No. of agencies	No. of agencies
Site 1	10	0	4	7	1	4
Site 2	11	3	3	10	0	4
Site 3	12	0	3	10	1	4
Site 4	10	0	4	8	0	2
Site 5	11	0	3	10	1	0
Site 6	10	1	4	4	5	3
Site 7	13	1	2	13	3	2
Site 8	13	1	6	10	1	5
Site 9	15	1	5	14	6	3
Site 10	10	0	2	9	1	3
Site 11	12	4	6	5	2	3
Site 12	16	3	3	13	5	6
Site 13	16	4	4	13	7	7
Site 14	11	3	5	6	4	5
Mean	12.14					

4.8.3 Links with justice agencies

Most GSPs have links across sectors. With the justice-related agencies, a pattern is discernible (see Tables 4.28 and 4.29 below). Twelve Projects reported that the purpose of contact with the Probation and Welfare Service arises from their representative role, and only half that number of Projects reported that they linked with the PWS for network and support reasons. Added to this, 13 Projects reported that they met with the PWS on a monthly basis (see Table 4.29) indicating a virtually homogenous pattern. This contrasts with the reports for links with the Gardaí, in that their contact with the Projects is equally divided between representation and network/support.

Added to this, Projects reported that the frequency of contact with Gardaí was more dispersed, given that meetings occur in each of the categories in Table 4.29 below.

4.8.4 Relationships with agencies in the youth and education sector

In relation to the Youth and Education sector, seven Projects reported that they met with a school attendance officer for networking purposes¹⁹. As expected, Projects reported that they have significant levels of contact with the youth service and other youth projects in their area. Surprisingly, only seven Projects reported that the youth service was represented at advisory/management committee level,²⁰ although greater numbers reported that they network and share resources with youth services. Much of the contact that Projects have with schools, both primary and secondary, is for networking and sharing resources. In relation to the frequency of meetings in this sector, the most consistent pattern reported by Projects is that meetings are on an ‘as required’ basis although four and five Projects, respectively, indicated that they had a weekly meeting with primary and secondary schools.

4.8.5 Links with community/local development bodies and the local authorities

Project contact with development bodies and local authorities in their areas is quite varied. Twelve Projects reported that they had a link with the local CDP and nine reported that this was for networking. Five Projects reported that they shared resources with the CDP. All of the 14 GSPs have Area Partnership Companies (APCs) in their area and six Projects reported that they met with them for networking and support. Ten of the 14 Project areas are designated for a Local Drugs Task Force and a total of eight Projects reported that they had established a link, half of whom were engaged in a joint funding arrangement. Most Projects (nine) have links with the relevant local authority in their area, most of which is for networking and support, but three of the nine Projects reported that they were involved in joint funding arrangements.

4.8.6 Links with training, employment and other bodies

Data in relation to training and employment services is unreliable in the tables as there is evidence from some of the returned questionnaires that Projects may have interpreted ‘FÁS’, as it appeared in the list (as the funders of the local CE scheme) rather than FÁS the agency. Twelve of the 14 Projects had contact with the regional health board in their area,²¹ whilst eleven reported that they met for networking and support, three for technical support, and four shared resources with their Health Board. Four Projects had contact with counselling services in their areas. Six Projects reported that they had contact with a range of other non-listed agencies, including the school chaplaincy, Neighbourhood Watch, 8-15 Initiative, Copping On, Arts Squad, Fuse Box, Barnardos, and a community group.

Table 4.28: Number of *Projects* linked with agencies, by sector and purpose of link

Agency and sector	Total Projects reporting link	Jointly fund programmes	Purpose of Link			
			Represented on advisory or management committee	Network and support	Technical support, advice and training	Share resources
	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects
<i>Justice related</i>						
Probation and Welfare Service	14	0	13	6	2	1
Garda JLO	13	1	11	11	4	2
Garda Community	13	1	10	10	5	5
<i>Youth & Education</i>						

¹⁹ School attendance officers are only available within the municipal boundaries within city areas at present and in rural and suburban areas this responsibility rests with the Gardaí.

²⁰ This may be explained by the fact that most co-ordinators completing questionnaires are youth service organisation employees and may have interpreted the term ‘agency’ as meaning agencies other than their own.

²¹ Questionnaires included categories for ‘health board social work’, ‘mental health services’, and health board ‘other’. Too few reported in the first two whilst there was a clustering of the data in ‘other’. All data for health board contact was then aggregated.

Agency and sector	Purpose of Link					
	Total Projects reporting link	Jointly fund programmes	Represented on	Network and support	Technical support, advice and training	Share resources
			advisory or management committee			
No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	
School Attendance Officer	8	0	0	7	0	0
Youth services or other Project	12	3	7	11	3	10
Primary school	10	1	1	9	1	5
Secondary school	12	0	2	8	0	5
Youthreach	6	0	1	6	1	1
Other VEC	1	0	0	1	0	0
School Psychological Service	1	0	0	1	0	0
<i>Development bodies & local authorities</i>						
Area Partnership company	6	0	1	6	0	0
Community Development Project	12	2	2	9	3	5
Local Authority	9	3	2	6	1	1
Local Drugs Task Force	8	4	0	7	3	2
<i>Training and employment</i>						
FÁS	7	1	0	4	3	2
Local Employment Service (LES)	5	0	1	4	1	0
<i>Health and other bodies</i>						
Health board	12	0	0	11	3	4
Counselling services	4	0	0	4	1	0
Other misc.	6	3	2	5	3	4

Table 4.29: Number of Projects linked with specific agencies by sector and frequency of link

Agency and sector	Total no. reporting link	Frequency of meeting				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	As required
	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects	No. of Projects
<i>Justice related</i>						
Probation & Welfare Service	14	0	0	13	0	1
Garda JLO	13	0	6	5	0	2
Garda Community	13	4	3	1	1	4
<i>Youth and education</i>						
School Attendance Officer	7	0	0	3	1	3
Youth services or other Project	12	6	1	3	0	2
Primary school	10	0	4	1	0	5
Secondary school	12	0	5	1	0	6
Youthreach	6	0	2	0	1	3
Other VEC	1	0	0	0	1	0
School Psychological Service	1	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Development bodies and local authorities</i>						
Area Partnership company	6	0	0	4	0	2
Community Development Project	12	3	1	2	0	6

(CDP)						
Local authority	9	0	0	4	1	4
Local Drugs Task Force	8	1	2	1	0	4
<i>Training and employment</i>						
FÁS	7	2	1	1	0	3
Local Employment Service (LES)	5	0	0	3	0	2
<i>Health and other bodies</i>						
Health board	12	1	1	4	1	5
Counselling services	4	0	2	0	1	1
Other miscellaneous	6	0	2	0	0	4

4.9 Summary

4.9.1 Establishment and structures

- Eleven of the fourteen Projects reported that an *ad hoc* committee met prior to the submission of a proposal to Garda Community Relations.
- Six of the 14 Projects established their management/advisory group prior to funding approval. The remainder were either established in the same month as approval or some months after.
- Thirteen of the Projects started programme activities after the establishment of management or advisory committees, but the time lapse between these two points varied.
- There was considerable variation in the time lapses from submission of proposal to approval, ranging from the lowest of two months (inclusive) to the highest of two years.

4.9.2 Physical resources

- Most Projects (ten) share premises with others, mostly with their parent youth organisation.
- The size of the area available varied substantially between these Projects.
- Of the remaining four Projects, three had leased their premises and one Project had two premises, one leased and one which it shared.
- Four of the 14 Projects reported that they were operating from premises that were located outside their catchment area.
- Twelve Projects reported that they availed of additional premises for Project activities and ten of these twelve Projects reported that they paid rent for at least one of these premises.
- Projects either purchase equipment from Project funds for their own use or they share equipment owned by others. Few Projects reported that they rented any items of equipment.
- Projects are accruing physical assets.
- The majority of Projects reported that they are using a minibus, either loaned or hired, as their main mode of transport. Eleven Projects reported hiring a minibus (either self-drive, or driver and minibus).
- Six Projects have access to a bus on loan from the Gardaí. They reported variation in terms of how often they could avail of this bus.

4.9.3 Human resources

- Four Projects have two full-time members of staff, while the remaining ten have one full-time worker.
- All Projects reported that they had access to part-time and/or sessional staff ranging from a minimum of one staff to a maximum of eleven staff.
- Overall, there are 63 paid staff in the 14 Projects. The total number of staff for each ranges between two and thirteen. Out of the total (n=63), 46 (73%) are paid from Project funds and the remainder from a variety of sources.
- Nine of the 14 Projects have at least one volunteer currently working with them.
- Eleven of the 14 Projects have had at least one student on placement since 1988 and half of the Projects have taken Garda students.

4.9.4 Financial resources

- Over half (n=8) of the Projects operate within a total budget of between £50,000 and £55,000. Six of the 14 Projects operate from a total budget size of more than £60,000, one of which has a budget in excess of £100,000.

- Only four Projects accessed additional funding from other sources. Three of the four accessed substantial funding from one source (Local Drugs Task Force) while the remaining Project accessed smaller amounts from a combination of sources. These four Projects, and particularly the first three, have managed to top-up their budgets substantially.

4.9.5 Participants

- An examination of the numbers and ages of participants reveals that there is a variation in the numbers and age groups that Projects have included. In addition, there is a wide range of gender recruitment policies and practices in operation.

4.9.6 Inward referrals

- For male participants, the principal sources of referral are Gardaí, schools, other youth workers and Project outreach activities.
- For females, the principal sources of referral are from schools and the Projects' outreach work.

4.9.7 Outward referral

- Four Projects are not making outward referrals.
- The Projects are more active in referring males on to other agencies.
- Projects are most active in referring to FÁS and Youthreach, while smaller numbers of Projects refer significant numbers of cases to the Local Employment Service, counselling and drug treatment.

4.9.8 Project programmes

- There are huge variations in the number of programmes that Projects run, and this is related to a number of factors, including number of staff available and length of time established.
- Projects are differentiated by their emphasis on quantity or quality, but it is not possible to explore this matter further based upon the survey data.
- Most Projects run programmes where their objective is personal development and use leisure as a means of engagement.
- Some Projects reported having leisure only objectives for some programmes.
- A small number of Projects had the same objective for most or all programmes where they had the additional objective of involving the participants in the exploration of broader social issues.
- Unstructured programmes consist of a variety of events, activities and services which Projects engage in for the young people in the area. The main purpose of these is to:
 - Make contact with a wider group of young people in the area;
 - Raise the profile of the GSP in the area;
 - In doing this the Project engages young people in constructive activities which in general are all leisure based. A function of these events and activities is that it helps the Project establish itself in the area in terms of liaising with other groups and creating opportunities for public recognition.

4.9.9 Multi-agency Links

- Projects have links with between ten and 16 agencies each, and the basis of their contact is for networking and support.
- In relation to justice agencies, projects have a different type of relationship with the Gardaí than with the Probation and Welfare Service. Their relationship with the latter appears to be more restricted to the formal, whereas contact with the Gardaí is more frequent and diverse.

5 EVALUATION STUDY OF PROJECT CONTEXTS AND MECHANISMS IN FIVE SITES

5.1 Method and approach

The Project site reports below have been developed from interview data conducted in each of the sites studied. Informants were selected in each site by the researcher in consultation with Project co-ordinators and Project managers, where appropriate. In each case, Projects were issued with a letter requesting a list of the main stakeholders, including:

- Project co-ordinators, youth service staff and other related personnel;
- Advisory or management group members;
- Senior Gardaí and other Gardaí associated with the Project;
- Key referring agencies and other referrers;
- Teachers/school principals where the Project plays an education/awareness role;
- Community Development Projects or local community leaders, as relevant and/or appropriate.

The research team was deployed to fieldwork in Project sites for one week in each of the five Project areas. Five sites were chosen, as opposed to four as initially proposed. A list of key informants was received from each site. The researcher then arranged an interview timetable to match the availability of informants on the days allotted to each site visit. Those not available were generally not interviewed, although there were a few exceptions made, depending upon the circumstances.

Informants were divided into categories as follows:

- General stakeholders – those with a direct stake at advisory or management level including Garda, community and Probation and Welfare Service representatives;
- Referrers – practitioners or agencies making referrals, but not necessarily involved in advisory or management level;
- Linked agencies – those not necessarily making referrals but which have a strategic interest in Project developments, or share programmes or resources with the Project;
- Co-ordinators and senior youth work staff;
- Youth work staff working with the Project in either a sessional, part-time or consultancy role;
- General community informants or secondary stakeholders – those who are more generally interested in broader socio-economic development of Project areas but who do not have a direct role at advisory or management level, e.g. Community Development Project staff;
- Other Gardaí, including community Gardaí and those not at advisory or management level, but who have a stake in Projects at an operational level.

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed for each category of informant, each containing common questions and areas for exploration in the interview. A *general stakeholder interview schedule* (see Appendix 4) served as the main template for redesigning appropriate schedules for use with other informants. Interviews took place in a variety of locations. Most of the Garda interviews were conducted in Garda stations, with one or two exceptions. Project staff and related youth service personnel were interviewed at Project premises, and others generally took place at offices or in the person's home. Projects generally accommodated the research by giving space in their own premises for interviews.

A total of 62 interviews were conducted with key stakeholders as set out in Table 5.1 below. Most of these lasted 45 minutes but, in a small number of cases, they exceeded one hour.

Table 5.1: Number of interviews conducted, by Project site and informant category

<i>Informant Category</i>	<i>Project Site</i>					<i>Total</i>
	<i>Woodale</i>	<i>GRAFT</i>	<i>TEAM</i>	<i>CCYDG</i>	<i>MAY</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
General stakeholder	5	3	4	8	5	25
Referrers	2	0	1	0	0	3
Linked agencies	0	5	0	0	0	5
Co-ordinators and senior youth work staff	3	2	2	1	2	10
Other youth work staff	2	2	2	1	2	9
Secondary stakeholders	1	1	1	1	1	5
Other Gardaí	0	2	0	2	1	5
Site Total	13	15	10	13	11	62

A handwritten note was recorded onto each interview schedule. In the majority of cases, interviews were tape-recorded to back up the hand-written notes. The handwritten notes for each interview conducted were typewritten. Interviews were analysed according to a thematic template code schema, and the researcher selected issues from each interview per site which dealt with key themes as in Box 8 below.

5.2 Project site reports

Project site reports outlined below are structured using the themes in Box 8. The five site reports are presented chronologically, representing the order that the researchers visited each site. Once a project site report was drafted, the Project was circulated with a text. Guidelines were issued with the text to assist the Projects in giving feedback. Projects were given six weeks in which to respond to the text, and they were informed that, if they did not make comments within the deadline, it would be assumed that they agreed with the content of the text. Only one of the five sites studied did not return comments. The site reports are consensual, in that they afforded the personnel in management, staff and advisory groups the opportunity to clarify and re-inform their content.

Box 8: Project report template codes

Context related

- TPA: The Project area
- CDO: Crime, disorder and offending in the Project area

Development of Project mechanisms related

- SUP: Setting up the Project
- DPM: Deciding on Project methods and interventions
- MAD: The multi-agency dimension
- EPL: Embedding the Project in the local context
- IRP: Identifying and recruiting Project participants
- PMM: The Project management model
- MIG: Methods for improving Garda/community relations

Outcome/change or impact related

- ENS: Establishing new systems and new networks

5.3 Project site report 1: The Woodale Project

5.3.1 The Project area

The Project is situated in an area which has a high density of local authority housing and is located about 7 miles north of Dublin city centre. Transport to and from the location is by either bus or car. The nearest DART station is situated in the adjoining area of Kilbarrack. The housing estates in the area are served by a main arterial route which has over recent years benefited from a speed control/traffic calming programme. The Project base is a prefab building which was previously a temporary school classroom. It has had its front entrance inverted to allow access from the public road. The Project premises is owned by the Community Development Project, Priorswood Limited.

The area is a designated area of disadvantage for the Local Urban and Rural Operational Programme and is situated in the Northside Partnership area. The Project catchment is that of Priorswood, Darndale and Belcamp and comprises the District Electoral Divisions (DEDs) of Priorswood A, B and C. A Northside Partnership report on youth disadvantage and youth service provision in the area (Farrington, 1998: 15), based on 1991 census data, noted that the projected increase in the youth population aged 15 to 24 years over the decade 1991 to 2001 would be 15% for Darndale and 80.8% for Priorswood. In addition, the report notes that the Project area had lower retention rates of 15 to 24-year-olds in full-time education compared with other adjacent areas (1998: 21). A high proportion of the youth population in the area is concentrated in semi-skilled, unskilled and unclassified categories – almost 70% for Darndale and 56.4% for Priorswood (1998: 25).

Research informants associated with the Woodale Project, who are active in local and community development, suggested to the researcher that some of the main problems to be dealt with were those associated with early school leaving. It was suggested to the researcher that children leave school, or do not return after school holidays, but may remain on the school register. It has been contended by local groups that the problem was not officially recognised, as it was not being recorded. A group of local activists and community workers initially wanted an alternative school project for the area, modelled on the Youth Encounter Projects, which would deal with children as young as nine years. It was reported to the researcher that the same group of local people, through the 'community house' in the Priorswood area, were involved in lobbying the Minister for Justice at the time to fund the GSP in the area.

The history of the development of the Woodale Project is bound together with that of the Community Development Project (CDP) and with the decentralisation of the services provided by the City of Dublin Youth Service Board (CDYSB).²² The CDP had noted in its work plan that there was dissatisfaction with the level of voluntary youth service provision in the mid-1990s, in that it was failing to deal with 'youth at risk'. Thus, the CDP identified this as a priority area for its own work, and made efforts to resource interventions with this target group. There are three CDYSB community youth projects within the Project area, at Bonnybrook, Priorswood and Darndale. It was reported to the researcher that a youth service in one part of the area had sought to work with 'youth at risk', but it did so without structures and adequate guidelines for acceptable behaviour of the young people, and, as a result, it had difficulties sustaining itself.

A Garda who had been stationed in the area since the early 1980s had witnessed other areas in the Garda district 'quietening down' as the population aged, and suggested to the researcher that the Project area would take at least five years to do the same. Local Garda management felt that the area 'suited the profile for a Project', and it had come to their attention when one officer was attending a 'promotions course'. It was felt by the Gardaí that youth clubs were not able to deal with the young people with whom they were coming in contact, and that a 'proactive' approach was required. In addition, the Gardaí had a problem with public order, particularly at Halloween, which created 'policing problems'.

The Probation and Welfare Service was concerned that there were very few opportunities locally for clients of theirs to engage in 'positive' activities. Typically, their clients were those young people involved in petty offences, who were perceived as 'a nuisance' in the local area. The area needed to have some form of infrastructure to provide new experiences for, and be a positive influence on, their clients.

5.3.2 Crime, disorder and offending in the Project area

Agencies and members of the local community involved in the Project reported that there is a significant heroin use problem in the area. This seems to be lessening in the past year which might, in part, be attributed to the fact that the Eastern Health Board has established a clinic in the area, offering methadone maintenance and detoxification. In relation to the target group, the nature of offending seems to be restricted to the following:

²² The CDYSB is a sub-committee of the City of Dublin Vocational Educational Committee and hence it is a statutory agency. See also section on Project Management Model below.

- driving stolen cars (joyriding)
- driving ‘company cars’²³ without tax or insurance
- allowing oneself to be carried in a stolen car
- ‘throwing bricks at buses’
- criminal damage
- larcenies and petty crimes
- public order offences.

Those interviewed suggested that there was a particular problem with stolen cars and dangerous driving. Not surprisingly, it was reported that this is mostly a problem with boys and young men. Most of the target group for the Project have been involved in ‘joyriding’ related offending. One interviewee said that the problem is one of driving, rather than stealing. The initial thieves would travel to Malahide or Howth and steal a car, tour it around and drive back to the area, where they abandon the vehicle. Another group of young people then drive it around the area. The second group tend to be younger boys, aged 13 to 15 years. These drivers typically inflict serious damage on the car by crashing it and ramming with it. It is subsequently abandoned by this group and then, perhaps taken over by another group of younger children, who would use it to play in, by breaking glass and setting it on fire. It is the second group rather than the initial thieves who, the interviewee suggested, are those who get caught and who come to the attention of the Gardaí, the JLO and, *de facto*, the Project. It was put to the researcher that ‘there is always one guy who is addicted [to driving cars] and this person draws others in.

Another respondent suggested that the problem of order was most challenged by the spectacle that a stolen car creates. The event is usually watched by a substantially larger group of ‘spectators’. This itself creates public order difficulties, as it draws large groups of young people together. Thus a small core group of drivers displaying driving skills creates a wider problem. In setting up the Project, youth work staff were clear that the intervention had to be focused on ‘taking out the smaller group and changing their behaviour’. In doing so, the Project would contribute to preventing the phenomenon of larger gatherings.

It was reported to the researcher that the Project had difficulties engaging young men described as ‘the main ones’ or older teenagers. It was hard to find a common activity that would form the group. After eight weeks, the group dissipated as it seemed that some were ‘happy enough joyriding’.

5.3.3 *Setting up the Project*

The initial idea to set up the Project was first mooted by the local Garda Inspector. Discussions began between the CDYSB Liaison Officer, the Community Garda Sergeant and the development worker with the Priorswood CDP. The Gardaí in the area had heard about the scheme of Projects, and felt that they could get one for the area. They were particularly aware of a Project in another city which had a large premises and ran a programme that was substantially leisure activity oriented. The initial discussions between agencies were tense, as the CDYSB did not see the point in engaging in leisure or youth club type activities when what was required was a more focused intervention. At this stage, there were three CDYSB Community Youth Projects in the area and what the Gardaí were proposing, it seemed to the youth service, was to establish yet another. The CDYSB was not prepared to establish a Project unless it was specifically focused on intervening with identified individual young people.

The CDYSB were also involved in another GSP in the Dublin area, the CODY Project. The CDYSB Liaison Officer involved in the discussions was unhappy that the Project would follow the same route that the CODY Project took, as it seemed to mirror a Community Youth Project (CYP).²⁴ These CYPs involve youth work staff being employed by a local management committee. The management committee in the case of the CODY Project decided on project expenditures and paid grants to other local groups. The worker had also to get the management committee to approve funding for programme activities. This was not acceptable to the CDYSB, as it was considered that it would be more desirable for the Gardaí to pay funds directly to the CDYSB, and hence funding would be channelled through a City of Dublin VEC account.

In deciding upon management structures for the Project, the CDYSB took the view that it was more desirable to have a multi-agency *advisory committee*, which would inform the content of the programme rather than having a body with a management, finance or funding role. This was required as, for the CDYSB, the Project would be

²³ The term ‘company cars’ is used where a group of young people club together to buy older, almost wrecked cars from dealers for £40 to £100. They are sometimes converted for stock car racing but, in this context, are used for displaying driving skills to other young people.

²⁴ The CDYSB funds a programme of locally managed community youth projects in disadvantaged areas in Dublin. The staff are usually employed and managed by a local voluntary management committee.

focusing on an identified target group, and would not require decisions in relation to the funding of external primary prevention actions in the wider community.

5.3.4 Project methods and interventions

Discussions between the Gardai and the CDYSB were protracted over an 18 month period before the Project reached start-up. Once it was agreed that the Project would not be replicating primary preventive youth work, the next step was to agree on the core methods. The Gardai interviewed by the researcher said that, at the outset, they were unclear about the subtleties of youth work interventions, and the distinction between primary and secondary prevention. However, once the Project began, they became more convinced that choosing to focus on particular young people, rather than all young people in the area, was the correct route.

The agreed guideline on methods and interventions were that:

- there would be a maximum of twenty young people accepted into the Project at any one time;
- there would be four groups of approximately five young people, and that one group would be referred through the Probation and Welfare Service;
- the group would form around a core project activity and this would constitute the ‘educational’ aspect of the Project;
- there would be a social or ‘fun’ element;
- specific interventions to meet individual needs could be provided for, e.g. counselling.

For the youth service personnel, the specificity of the group means that the purpose of the interventions, in terms of the programme content and methods, is to change individual behaviour. Thus, the Project is outcome focused – the goal is that those who are offending will choose to follow other paths of behaviour.

At the practice level, those interviewed suggested that the programme emphasises the following:

- Progression to training or further education, and that participants become self-reliant in planning their own social lives;
- Creating awareness of the wider space outside the immediate area of residence of the participants;
- Encouraging ‘traditional hobbies’ such as horses, pigeons and fishing;
- Using ethical questions or dilemmas in everyday interaction to teach respect for themselves and others;
- Using activities to promote self-awareness where the emphasis is on ‘fulfilment’ and not ‘achievement’.

One member of Project staff suggested that he and his colleagues were motivated by the belief that the young people learn in ordinary situations with adults, and the purpose of the programme activities was to maximise the opportunities for learning. He described the core of his work as helping the young people to understand unique qualities about themselves, and reflecting this back. His job was then about trying to find a ‘facility’ to channel this. Activities which optimised this process were chosen over others and evaluated. He suggested that if there was no ‘payback’, then it was not the best activity to choose. The intervention is, he said, about identifying skills, and orienting and motivating the young person towards developing them. If the young person is motivated to joyride, then the role of the project staff is to identify a means of shifting the direction of that motivation.

As the Project suggests that it seeks to optimise opportunities for young people to learn, and that they learn in ordinary as well as structured settings, the location of the Project in a centre which houses a Community Development Project is itself of developmental importance. This is so, as one member of staff suggested, because Project participants have to ‘come and be civil to the receptionist, and engage with people without being aggressive’. Learning about what other workers are doing, and the supports they provide in the community, it is suggested, leads the young people to develop a sense that there are support services available which may, in part, develop a stronger feeling of attachment to the community for the participants.

5.3.5 The multi-agency dimension

The Project structure is comprised of:

- an overall management committee;
- an advisory committee; and
- a referrers’ review/monitoring group.

Each of these elements of the structure are multi-agency, and meetings are arranged in a formal manner, in that they follow agreed procedures. The structure has evolved over an 18 month period. Initially, while there was provision for an advisory group, it seldom met. In late 1998, the advisory committee was reinvigorated and expanded to take in representatives from community organisations.

The management committee, which is not a feature of most GSPs, grew out of the need and the desire that there would be some mechanism to deal with cross agency issues at local management level. This committee is comprised of the CDYSB Senior Youth Worker (SYW), the Garda Inspector and the Senior Probation and Welfare Officer (SPWO), and meets every two months. The group discusses issues in relation to referral and suspension policy, and makes recommendations to the advisory committee to inform and guide practice. Recently, two participants in the programme were alleged to have taken part in a serious crime. This event underlined for the stakeholders involved the need to have a management committee, as it potentially left the Project staff in an exposed situation. The particular incident could have precipitated a crisis of confidence in the Project in the local community, if they were seen not to take action to expel the particular individuals. In the absence of guidelines and precedent, the Garda Inspector felt he had no option but to take a unilateral decision to expel the individuals. There then began a process of forming guidelines. The Committee were charged with making recommendations to the advisory committee. In sum, the role of this committee is to develop policies for the Project around issues that arise. This means making decisions around the participants' legal or criminal justice status changes.

The advisory committee is comprised of the Gardaí (Inspector and JLO), the Probation and Welfare Service, three local community representatives, a teacher from the post-primary school, and the City of Dublin Youth Service Board. The co-ordinator attends and provides the committee with updates on programme developments and the senior youth worker takes responsibility for the executive functions of the meetings, including minutes and agenda.

5.3.6 Embedding the Project in the local context

The Project has created links with a broad range of community networks, projects, tenants' groups, parents, schools and local professionals. Its special relationship with the CDP in particular gives it access to a complex web of local area groups and to communities of interest. The community members of the advisory committee are themselves members of networks, which potentially embeds the Project locally. The CDP management committee, it was reported, is pleased with the Project, in that it fulfils the goal of having the interventions targeted at young people 'at risk'.

The Project has engaged in and organised particular local events which are designed to root it in the community. For instance, the Project organised a soccer league and the Halloween pageant, which was aimed at stimulating interest and at the same time involve the target group in community activities.

The Project, by design, does not engage in more deliberate crime prevention actions in the local community. Its contact with the community policing unit is largely on an informal basis. Neighbourhood policing is a key feature of the Priorswood and Darndale areas, and both Gardaí and local tenants' groups have been active over the years in developing ways of identifying crime related problems.

The Project is known amongst young people as the 'JLO club'. This means that the Project has been recognised as being a presence in the area worthy of being given a local name, and, perhaps more significantly, that it has been given a name which clearly identifies it with the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer.

5.3.7 Identifying and recruiting Project participants

Project participants are identified and referred through three main sources:

- The Garda JLOs;
- The Probation and Welfare Service;
- The post-primary school.

The Garda JLOs compile a list and discuss this with the Project co-ordinator. The process of selecting participants is then filtered:

- by identifying those young people with whom the co-ordinator feels he can work;
- by whether it is possible to cluster a group of those as a 'natural' or pre-existing group of 'mates'.

The young people referred from the post-primary school have, up to now, also been known to the Garda JLO. The Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers have contact with individual offenders once they have been cautioned. They assess the level of family, school and other social supports available to the young person. In this context, the JLOs associated with the Project will ask the young person if they would like to be involved in the Project. The co-ordinator will then contact the young person, and uses photos of activities to enthuse them to become involved. While the young person is referred, their participation is voluntary and they have to opt in. The prospective participants are then asked to attend an induction night, which parents are also asked to attend. The induction is facilitated by the Project staff and is attended by the JLO. Those attending are informed that their participation in the Project will be reviewed pending their offending behaviour. A non-offending condition is not

laid down. The Project participants are predominately males. The senior youth worker co-facilitates a group of young women who also attend a special class in the secondary school for those ‘withdrawn’ from other classes.

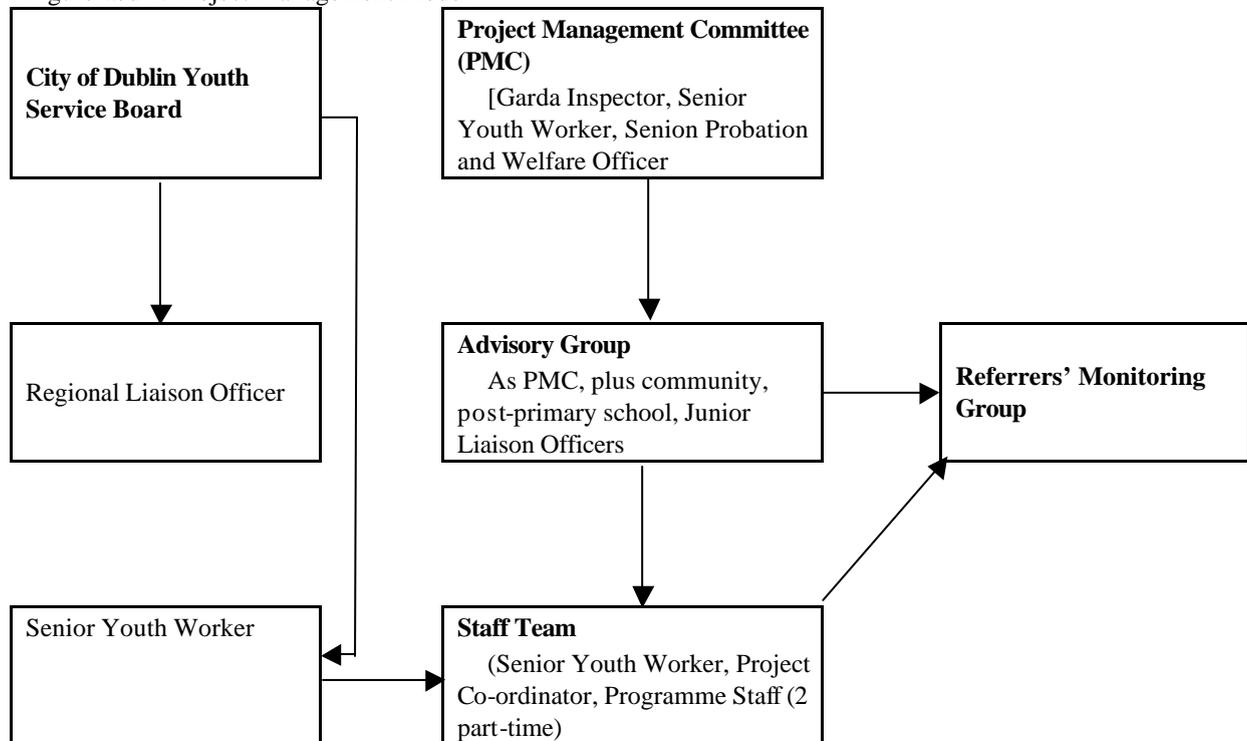
The Probation and Welfare Service refers clients who are typically younger offenders, who are ‘not particularly into drugs’, have never been in custody, but who are identified by the PWO as being ‘troublesome’. Referrals are conditional on non-offending *de facto*, as this is a condition of probation bonds. The PWO contacts the client to ascertain interest. The SPWO told the researcher that the clients usually know about the Project anyway.

5.3.8 The Project management model

The City of Dublin Youth Service Board is responsible for supporting youth services and youth work within Dublin City municipal boundary. It established a decentralised service in the Project area, and has a Liaison Officer responsible for supporting youth services in the region in which the Project is based. The Senior Youth Worker is responsible for specific programmes in the Project area, including the Woodale Project itself, and is the CDYSB representative on Project committees. This worker is also responsible for managing the programme with the Project co-ordinator.

The model is perhaps best described as a structured professional youth service model, with input from agencies at management committee level and with additional input from the local community at advisory level.

Figure w/d 1: Project Management Model



5.3.9 Methods for improving Garda/community relations

According to community representatives and Gardaí there is an established mechanism for dealing with anti-social behaviour complaints in housing estates. This has been developed over a number of years by the Garda community policing unit, tenants’ associations and other groups. This is an area of activity in which the Project has no direct role at this point.

The Project has facilitated question and answer sessions between the young people and uniformed Gardaí where the aim is to establish a dialogue between both parties.

It was put to the researcher by one Garda, that if young people are seen to be involved in crime at all, and more importantly if the Gardaí are not seen to be dealing with it, then this in itself is not good for Garda/community relations. Unlike other GSPs, the Project does not provide funding for activities organised by local groups. Instead, this has been dealt with more directly by the community Gardaí who have established a fund separately for this purpose and monies are raised through activities such as golf tournaments. The Garda sergeant involved in community policing and the JLOs are members of community projects, networks and initiatives in the area. It is

felt by senior Gardaí that they are well accepted as a legitimate agency with a contribution to make to development but that there is a gap in their own organisation in terms of engaging the regular station Gardaí.²⁵

5.3.10 Establishing new systems and new networks

While the process of establishing the Project had been a protracted one [initial discussions began as early as 1995] there was a general acceptance by those involved that it had been worthwhile. It was agreed by the agencies involved at an earlier stage that the Project would only accept 20 individual young people and that it provide a quality input aimed at changing the behaviour of this group and towards finding progression paths to training and education.

For the Garda JLO and for the PWS, the Project offers an additional service. The JLO, in particular, had to operate on the basis of ‘persuasion or prosecution, . but since the Project was established, the range of interventions has broadened substantially. Local community members on the advisory committee felt that the Project represented a means of identifying problems and working these through with the young people referred.

5.4 Project site report 2: Give Ronanstown a Future Today (GRAFT)

5.4.1 The Project area

The Project is situated in Neilstown, also referred to as North Clondalkin, about 6 miles west of Dublin city centre. The area covered by the Project is largely made up of local authority housing estates. Much of the housing in the area was built in the late 1970s and the majority finished by the mid-1980s. North Clondalkin is bound by the N4 dual carriageway at its northern perimeter, the M50 motorway to its east and the main railway line at its southern end, with access at this point through a narrow railway bridge. The area is served by public buses and has an Arrow suburban railway station situated close to its southern perimeter. The main arterial route through the area, the Neilstown Road, is about one mile long and, in recent years, has had traffic calming measures put in place. The name ‘Ronanstown’ refers to an administrative boundary and is, according to a community informant, not used in general discourse by local people to describe where they live.

The Project covers the area within the DEDs of Clondalkin-Moorefield, Clondalkin-Rowlagh, and parts of Lucan-Esker, Cappaghmore and Palmerstown west. A report published by the Clondalkin Drugs Task Force (1997) indicated that the Project area is a severely disadvantaged one, with higher than average dependency ratios, levels of unemployment and a significantly large youth population. The report also highlighted that the area had higher levels of drug use than other parts of the greater Clondalkin area.²⁶

The area is part of a designated area of disadvantage for the Local Development Programme and has also been included in the EU URBAN programme. The local authority is the South Dublin County Council, which took over responsibility for the housing stock from Dublin Corporation in 1998.

In 1991, the area gained much notoriety as a result of public disorder incidents involving young people and the police. The government established the Interdepartmental Group on Urban Crime and Disorder as a direct result of these and other related events. In the lead up to this, the North Clondalkin Community Development Programme (NCCDP), a Community Development Project (CDP), established an interdepartmental task force, with participation from senior civil and public servants, to set in train an integrated approach to the area’s difficulties. Community informants were of the view that this had a profound affect on the approach taken by the Interdepartmental Group, and later by the government, in designating it for inclusion in the Local Development Programme.

More recently, the opening of the Liffey Valley Shopping Centre, and the siting of other major industries within the Dublin west region, has had a ‘trickle down’ affect on the area. Research informants interviewed were all of the view that this has had an affect on stabilising many aspects of life in the area. Development efforts of the many local community organisations and the variety of state-led projects have, it was suggested, also made a significant impact on improving the quality of life generally.

5.4.2 Crime, disorder and offending in the Project area

The history of crime and disorder in this area is well documented in the Interdepartmental Report. The main issues at that time, according to informants, were the problems associated with a ‘hard core’ of offenders [mostly drivers

²⁵ Garda units are subdivided into shifts, also referred to as the ‘station party’. The terms ‘regular’ or ‘station party’ are used to distinguish Gardaí not assigned to community or neighbourhood policing duties.

²⁶ Based on data for treated drug use, i.e. it is based on the number of drug users presenting for treatment to the various drug treatment agencies and service providers.

of stolen cars] and with ‘gangs’ who congregated in the public spaces, most often at night. The Ronanstown Youth Service (RYS)²⁷ has witnessed the changing nature of crime and disorder. The RYS suggested to the researcher that the pattern of offending in the area changed in 1995, when more serious visible offending declined. The old ‘hard core’ of joyriders progressed to more serious crime. Some got into ‘ram raiding’ and eventually ‘did a stretch’ in prison. The change in the pattern of offending is largely attributed to the onset of the use of heroin by young people from about early 1995. A member of the RYS staff suggested that violence has become more of an issue as well as ‘disrespect for property’. He attributed much of the problems to the absence of a ‘civics programme in the schools ... where there should be a weekly class to raise consciousness.’

A Garda pointed out to the researcher that the area has quietened down over the years, in that ‘major civil disorder’, as he put it, had not occurred since the local authority put in the traffic calming measures. He recalled that in 1991, the ‘civil disorder’ came to a peak when, on one occasion, after it had been snowing, a group of ‘youths blocked the roads and started pulling people out of their cars’.

A community member of the Project committee remarked that, since the drug problem, there were more burglaries in some of the better-off areas, especially in new private housing estates built in the last few years. Burglaries tended, she added, to come in spates, and usually coincided with a well-known offender ‘being released early’.

5.4.3 Setting up the Project

The Project was set up in 1991. A local person was recruited to the position of co-ordinator. Initially, the Project was driven by a steering group comprising the Gardaí, the RYS and the Probation and Welfare Service (PWS). An informant suggested that, at the time, the PWS was ‘interested in moving out to the community’. The GRAFT committee soon incorporated members of the North Clondalkin Community Development Association (NCCDA), an umbrella of tenants’ and residents’ groups in the area. Following the report of the Interdepartmental Group, the GRAFT Project continued to receive funding while the Probation and Welfare Service began to put together the basis of an intervention programme for offenders, which subsequently became the Tower Programme.

The GRAFT Project was initially to be modelled on a PWS project in Ballyfermot, known as We Have a Dream (WHAD), which organised an intensive programme around a particular group of offenders. GRAFT began to become more involved in primary prevention actions – such as giving lectures in schools and making an anti-joyriding video. Its work with known offenders was less intensive than that of WHAD. When the Tower Programme²⁸ was established in 1995, GRAFT began to turn its attention to a younger age group, according to the RYS.

From the outset, the GRAFT project worked within the RYS, and has continued to do so for the last eight years. The RYS provides office and activities space to GRAFT, without charge. The Catholic Youth Council (CYC) acted, and continues to act, as employer to the GRAFT co-ordinator under the same conditions as other members of CYC staff.

5.4.4 Project methods and interventions

Over the eight years of its life, the Project has had to alter the nature of its work to meet the demands presenting to it. In general, the Project has sought to identify groups of young people who are troublesome in the community, and to engage them by developing a ‘structured programme’ around them. This approach has remained intact since 1991. The process is described by various informants as ‘identifying and responding to new problems’. For instance, residents in a particular part of the area complain to the Gardaí about young people hanging around late at night. The Gardaí inform the GRAFT co-ordinator or the RYS who go out at night and engage the group. The young people are invited to attend the RYS on a drop-in basis, and a programme of activities follows this on a more structured basis. This approach was recently adopted in a part of the area where the engagement of young people was accompanied by a GRAFT leaflet campaign which asked parents to reflect upon the question, ‘Do you know where your children are?’

GRAFT’s main areas of work can be summarised as follows:

- *Activities organised within the RYS and part-funded from the GRAFT budget*
- *Primary prevention Projects with specific groups of children and young people:*

These projects are usually categorised as a ‘club’. Some, like St. Bernadette’s Club, are organised within St. Bernadette’s National School premises, with the permission and co-operation of the principal. Another

²⁷ The Ronanstown Youth Service is a regional youth service of the Catholic Youth Council and is a joint project with County Dublin Vocational Education Committee.

²⁸ An intensive community-based programme of the Probation and Welfare Service.

project in this category is the 'Best Club'. GRAFT describes these activities as those where 'the programme material centres on issues such as self-esteem, bullying, relationships at school/home/Gardaí and also address social behaviour/skills' (GSP Precise, 1998). These two particular projects target children of primary school age. A 'Tuesday Night Club' is organised around a group of teenage boys aged 15 to 16 who are out of school where 'progress has been made in challenging behaviour and directing some of the group towards training centres, etc.' (GSP Precise, 1998). GRAFT has also co-funded a programme with St. Kevin's Community College, in which the GRAFT co-ordinator and a youth worker from the RYS run a modular leisure and social skills programme.

RYS staff organising some of these projects said that the children in the schools programme are identified by the teachers as 'at risk'. Interaction with the children, one worker said, was to identify issues and difficulties the young people experience, and to address these. Some activities, such as the 'cultural trips', are aimed towards showing the children what other areas in Clondalkin are like, where more care is taken of the environment. It was suggested to the researcher that graffiti becomes the norm in an area like this, and that the purpose of the intervention with the children is to say, 'That is not normal,' and that the same goes for 'drinking during the day – it's not right. We show them through research that it is not right.' The RYS has contact with the child psychiatry service at St. James's Hospital, which developed a self-esteem and self-awareness programme involving the children keeping scrapbooks. It also holds group discussions which are structured around specific issues, such as the environment and crime.

- The late night drop-in is held in the RYS premises and is staffed by the GRAFT co-ordinator and RYS personnel.
 - Outreach/streetwork or the 'late night street run', as it is described, provides soup to young people out of home while also providing contact and support.
- *Individual case problem solving*
This is largely carried out by the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator describes this work as 'solving issues', and it especially applies to young people with outstanding warrants which have been issued by a court. This usually occurs, the co-ordinator suggests, because the young person commits a petty offence and decides, often as a result of misinformation from peers, not to turn up in court to answer the charges. Consequently, a warrant is issued for their arrest and, in most cases, this exacerbates the seriousness of the offence. The co-ordinator advises the young person to turn up for any future court appearances to avoid further warrants. Contact is made with the Garda prosecuting the original case, with a view to having the warrant served to the young person at a Garda station, at a mutually acceptable time. The Project engages in this, as it is felt that this does away with the need for the Gardaí to raid a young person's house in the early morning and this, in turn, reduces ill-feeling towards the Gardaí. This element of the work of GRAFT is viewed as local youth and families 'getting a fair hearing where the co-ordinator sorts out some of the hassles'. A member of the RYS staff suggested that this was 'individual mediation work' where the focus of the intervention is to 'look at the implications [of law breaking] for the youngster'.
 - *Networking and collaboration with other Projects and initiatives*
The GRAFT co-ordinator is a member of the selection committee for the Tower Programme and makes referrals on a regular basis. In addition the co-ordinator co-facilitates a group in the Clondalkin Addiction Support Programme (CASP), a project providing detoxification and support to drug users.
 - *Primary crime prevention actions in conjunction with the Gardaí*
The co-ordinator engages in classroom based lectures on the role of the Gardaí, in conjunction with the community Garda, and has collaborated with staff from Dublin Bus in organising an anti-vandalism programme in schools.
A member of staff described this work as invaluable as it means that it gives the GRAFT co-ordinator a profile. Children get to know him and he can advise them, if they get into trouble, to 'come down and have a chat with me'.
 - *Grant giving and funding of community events*
The GRAFT budget is used to provide small grants to community events or to clubs, such as the summer project scheme. In addition, the GRAFT committee organises an annual event to 'thank' volunteers working in the community on various committees, sports groups, etc.

5.4.5 *The multi-agency dimension*

At a formal level, the Probation and Welfare Service, the Gardaí, the RYS and members selected from the NCCDA form the GRAFT committee. It meets every two weeks at the Ronanstown Garda Station. The committee receives an information report on the RYS programme activities. The agenda usually has provision for the identification of 'local matters', in which community members are invited to identify crime prevention related issues. Local people can raise issues of concern in relation to policing matters identified in the community, and the Garda Inspector will explain why such a policy exists. Community members suggested that 'at least it can be raised' but, on the other hand, felt that there should be some way in which issues identified at committee level could have a route into policy making. An annual meeting is convened between the CYC head office, the RYS and the agencies at senior level.

At the informal level, GRAFT has regular contact with the community Gardaí. A community Garda suggested that the relationship with GRAFT was good, as 'the [same] names keep popping up and you get to know them and get them into a programme'. The GRAFT co-ordinator is a member of the selection and referral committee at the Tower Programme. Staff there see the role of GRAFT as essential to its link with the local community, and, because it is not part of the justice system, it is in a position to advocate for clients from outside that system.

GRAFT also has a link with the Youth Support Training Unit²⁹ through the outreach staff there who share information and who attend the RYS for late night drop-in once per week.

The Local Drugs Task Force has begun the process of establishing a Community Policing Forum in conjunction with the Gardaí. The local CDP sees a vital role for GRAFT in this forum. GRAFT has 'no formal organisational link' with the CDP, according to staff there.

5.4.6 *Embedding the Project in the local context*

The GRAFT project and the RYS are often criticised, according to RYS staff, for appearing to be 'rewarding bad behaviour' by providing leisure activities for troublesome young people. The RYS regards this as being unfounded, and can usually provide critics with a list of clubs and activities that any young person can join. The RYS, through GRAFT, gives a small grant each year to local summer project activity schemes for children. This is seen as good public relations for GRAFT.

Also, GRAFT hosts an annual function for volunteers in the area. For the RYS, this is something they see as benefiting both GRAFT and Garda community relations or, as a member of the RYS staff put it, 'it's a political night for the Guards and sure every 'oul one wants to dance with them'. The Gardaí see this event as crucial to their profile in the area, and consider it a small amount of funding [c.£1,000], worth considerably more in return.

The local community is represented on GRAFT through the NCCDA, and the representatives attend a meeting every six weeks to report back to tenant groups' representatives on issues discussed with the Project committee.

Three informants, in agencies which maintain a link with the RYS, were unsure of the distinction between GRAFT and the RYS, and one of these suggested to the researcher that the basis of the co-operation was established in the name of CYC and the RYS.

5.4.7 *Identifying and recruiting Project participants*

For the GRAFT programme activities, participants are largely identified through the outreach work conducted by the RYS. The drop-in facility operated by the RYS also serves as a means of identifying and recruiting young people. Both primary and post-primary schools have made referrals to programmes run by the RYS in local schools. Community, Garda and RYS respondents were of the view that 'potential criminals' can be identified early because they are members of 'difficult' families. It was suggested to the researcher by one informant that the 'potential' can be identified in 3rd class in primary school, and that this is one reason why GRAFT interventions 'have to hit the schools'.

Contact with a young person, according to RYS staff, is undertaken to attract them into the service, build a relationship and then 'look for opportunities to raise crime prevention issues'. This may involve challenging the young person about their offending behaviour. The RYS will maintain contact with the young person, regardless of whether they have a commitment to changing their offending behaviour. This distinguishes the RYS and GRAFT from the Tower Programme which demands a commitment to change from clients as a condition of participation.

In primary school programmes, the participants are identified as 'at risk' by the teachers and are referred to the 'club'. The RYS operates a policy of mixing groups so that they are comprised equally of those who are described

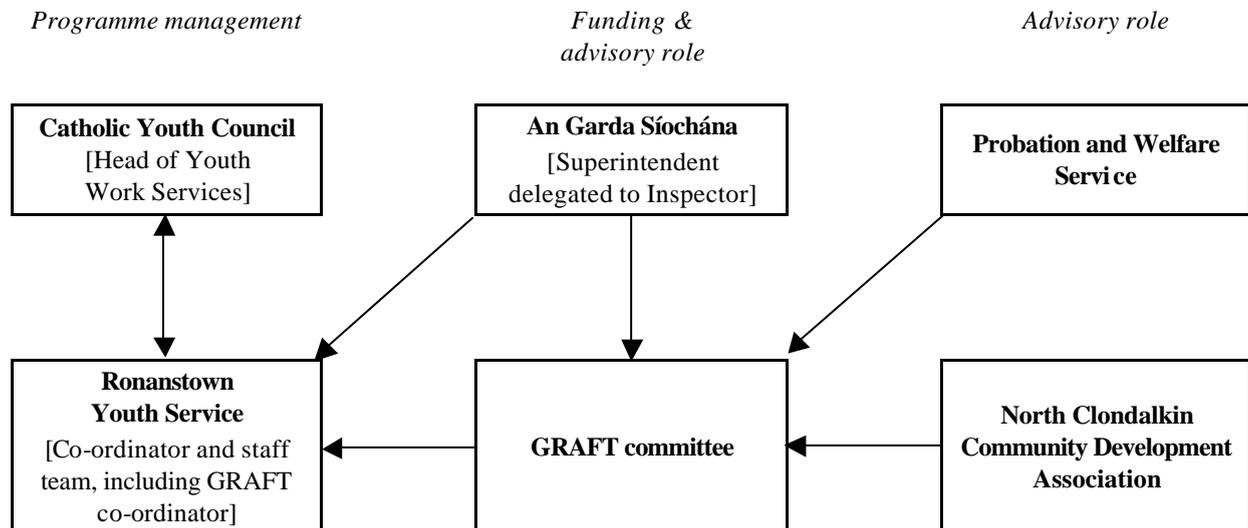
²⁹ A project established by the Clondalkin Partnership to identify young people in need of support to enter training or further education.

as 'high achievers' with high self-esteem and those with low self-esteem. Teachers are asked to use this guideline when referring names of prospective participants. For post-primary school based programmes organised by the RYS, the school identifies and refers 'potential early school leavers'. The teacher who acts as 'year head' will contact parents to seek their approval. At both primary and secondary school level, the method of following up on the progress of participants is not structured and is largely informal.

5.4.8 The Project management model

The Ronanstown Youth Service is a participant within the GRAFT committee. The CYC acts as the employer for the GRAFT co-ordinator and invoices the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform directly for salary costs. The GRAFT committee has a 'think in' meeting every year, where problem areas to be addressed are identified. The RYS integrates the outcome of this meeting into the programme planning process, and decides upon the deployment of personnel. A weekly review of the programme of the RYS takes place at staff level, and includes the GRAFT co-ordinator. As staff of the RYS are allocated to work on programmes funded from the GRAFT budget, and the GRAFT co-ordinator engages in general youth work duties, the Project is, in effect, integrated into the RYS. The RYS co-ordinator reports to the Head of Youth Services at the CYC on a periodic basis. The GRAFT committee acts as a forum for communicating progress with the Gardaí and the community. The Garda Inspector retains the programme cheque book and, in effect, is responsible for signing off on programme funding.

Figure g/r 1: Project management model



5.4.9 Methods for improving Garda/community relations

The Project uses a variety of mechanisms, key personnel suggest, for improving relations with the Gardaí. These are

- The co-ordinator provides an introduction to local people seeking policing services where they 'would feel uncomfortable knocking on the station door'.
- The co-ordinator sets up an agreed meeting between offender and Garda to voluntarily execute³⁰ outstanding bench warrants, as a means of reducing the exacerbation of the import of the original offence, and as a means of offsetting the need for raids on houses and, as the co-ordinator suggests, 'this stops the situation of family members seeing the Guards as the bullies'.
- The co-ordinator and RYS staff have contact with senior Gardaí, should they need to access particular Gardaí in relation to warrants for individual RYS clients.
- The GRAFT committee, which is attended by the Garda Inspector, serves as a forum through which local community members can raise 'matters' in relation to policing in the area. Community members keep their membership discrete.

³⁰ To resolve this, the Garda has to bring the offender to court.

- The grant giving activities of GRAFT allow the Gardaí to fund actions which are seen to have a return in community policing terms – e.g. it provides a grant for school attendance awards and the annual volunteers’ night.
- According to community policing Gardaí, contact between the RYS, the Gardaí, and the NCCDA has allowed them to mingle and integrate with the community. This was described as ‘we broke into the community’.
- The Project co-ordinator lives locally and is often called upon after the RYS is closed to respond to requests for assistance or to mediate where a young person gets into trouble with the Gardaí. A Garda interviewed suggested that ‘GRAFT is a 24-hour project, others close down. The co-ordinator has come in at all hours [saying] ‘I have a problem’.’
- The RYS hosts students from the Garda College.

5.4.10 Establishing new systems and new networks

The RYS sees GRAFT as a mechanism for developing communication with the Gardaí, the youth service, the NCCDA and ‘offending families’ in the area, and that this has led to ‘spin-offs’ for the Gardaí. Members of the NCCDA suggested that, while it was positive to have access to senior police officers to raise matters, the system of communication stopped at the local level, thus averting access to policy-making processes at a central level.

GRAFT adds value to:

- Other initiatives and projects, such as the Tower and CASP, by participating in their structures [referral/selection committee] and programmes. Its own monitoring and review of referrals made from schools is managed on an informal basis.
- The RYS, in that it allows for youth crime prevention programmes to be included in its programme.

GRAFT has established a response to potential public order issues by incorporating identified groups of young people into the activities of the RYS. The Project has acted as a mediator between the community and the Gardaí, in that it has acted to assist those who, for whatever reason, feel that they cannot access some policing services directly.

5.5 Project site report 3: Teen Energy Advancing Muirhevnamore (TEAM)

5.5.1 The Project area

Muirhevnamore is a large local authority housing area on the south-eastern outskirts of the town of Dundalk. It has a population of approximately 3,000 persons and is made up of 721 dwelling units. The town has a population of approximately 30,000. Muirhevnamore is one of two large local authority housing developments in the town.

The building of the estate began in the late 1970s and the houses are spatially arranged into several small developments of different house designs in a series of smaller *cul de sacs* containing approximately 15 to 20 dwellings. The area is bound by the N1 Dundalk by-pass road linking Dublin and Belfast on its eastern flank and by the old route through the town on its western side. The area is approximately two miles from the town centre. There is a public bus service and many local people use one of the various hackney cab companies operating in the area. In the last two years, there has been a major private housing development completed to the west side of the estate.

In the mid-1990s, a household sample survey conducted by *Áit na nDaoine*, the Community Development Project in Muirhevnamore, indicated that the unemployment rate was 70% and that 20% of households were headed by a lone parent. The present picture is unclear, according to *Áit na nDaoine*, as the area falls between two DEDs which makes CSO data difficult to interpret. There is a strong sense, locally, that the unemployment rate has fallen as the growth in the economy takes effect but this has yet to be verified objectively. That a substantial proportion of households are headed by lone parent women is a significant factor in problems of public order, according to *Áit na nDaoine* staff: ‘there are some streets where there is no man. They get a share of badgering and they [young people] know that a man is not going to come out’. The community Gardaí suggest that the area has some families which are ‘destructive of community’ and which seem to reject support services for themselves and their children.

Muirhevnamore is often referred to in Dundalk as ‘little Belfast’ as many of its first inhabitants had fled from Loyalist persecution in Northern Ireland in the 1970s. The Muirhevnamore Community Council (MMCC) was established to represent a positive view of the area and includes in its membership all the relevant tenants, residents and development groups in the area. It has campaigned for some years to establish community services and facilities to resource the development of the area. The area has been a beneficiary of the Peace and Reconciliation Programme (PRP) which provides funding for the Muirhevnamore Community Youth Project and the Community Gardens Project. The area is also to benefit further from both the PRP and the Department of

Social, Community and Family Affairs funding approved for the building of a community facilities project. The Department of Health and Children has also selected Muirhevnamore for the Springboard initiative.

Local people came together in the early 1990s as 'Parents Aware' to respond to the issue of cannabis, ecstasy and alcohol being sold from houses in the estate. The local Garda JLO made contact with the community in Muirhevnamore during this period and it was reported that sound relations were established with the community Garda. A group of mothers met as a support group following the setting up of Parents Aware and were anxious to see a Project established to deal with young people who were at risk of becoming involved in taking substances. A parent interviewed suggested that many of the young people in the area were 'bored out of their brains – nobody ever thought about catering for them in mind' and that her children have over the years had 'to befriend the worst in order to survive – that's why they are not touched. If one of them sees a thing it's "go away, she is with us".'

The Project is located in a council house within the area and has access to a second house nearby, which it uses for some programme activities.

5.5.2 *Crime, disorder and offending in the Project area*

It was reported to the researcher that there is a small group of adult criminals in the area and that the problem of maintaining order in the estate initially was because of a large group of about 50 young people who would 'hang around at empty houses'. According to one community informant, there was a lot of nuisance made and it was observed that the community Gardaí recognised the situation, but 'didn't want to arrest buckos – they wanted them onsite'.

Gardaí suggested that serious crimes are generally not committed inside the local area and that, by and large, crimes in the area tend to be 'criminal damage', some car theft, and other public order offences associated with a combination of 'boredom and drink'. They suggest that there is a tolerance of petty crime, as some residents are prepared to buy stolen goods.

5.5.3 *Setting up the Project*

The Louth Youth Federation (LYF) established the Muirhevnamore Community Youth Project (MCYP) in 1988. A multi-disciplinary group of professionals, of which the MCYP was a participant, had identified a substantial group of young people at risk in the area. There was a sense of urgency about starting an intervention which would target young people involved in offending, or seen as being at risk of offending. A small amount of funding, £3,000, was made available from the Dundalk Employment Partnership and used to fund a small scale programme. Staff at the MCYP had been in constant contact with the Gardaí involved in community policing, and became aware that a project could potentially be funded. An initial application was made in 1995, but the Department had not, as yet, approved Projects outside the main cities.

A voluntary youth worker who had been involved in the MCYP, and later worked in the pre-funding phase of TEAM, was selected as the Project co-ordinator, once the Department of Justice approved funding. The working relationships established between the MCYP and the Gardaí in this early period transferred into the TEAM committee.

5.5.4 *Project methods and interventions*

TEAM is integrated into the work of the MCYP, in that it seeks to engage specific young people, referred by the JLO, in a similar youth work process as those identified through other sources. The Project has operated on the basis that providing fun and exciting activities serves as a means of motivating young people to become involved, and to remain involved, in a group development process. Activities used include a boxing club, swimming, drama and outdoor/adventure sports. It was reported that there is a considerable use of residential sessions, once groups have begun to form, as these are seen as providing an opportunity to 'move people on developmentally'. The Project also utilises cross-border and international exchange programmes, and orients groups toward these events over an extended time period. Groups usually convene in the afternoon or early evening. Young people who come to the Project are usually a member of a group, but individual services, such as literacy/numeracy, are provided as appropriate.

The Project, in conjunction with FÁS, has established a related programme, the Restart Project, for older teenagers who have either dropped out of or finished formal schooling and who are unemployed. This project uses the FÁS Community Youth Training Programme (CYTP) mechanism which provides for a full-time supervisor while also paying a training allowance to participants.

The Project places considerable emphasis on the notion of 'peer pressure'. In theory, groups form around Project activities and the group process will act as a check on the behaviour of each individual. If young people

break agreed behaviour codes, the Project activity can be withdrawn, insofar as the group takes entire responsibility for the behaviour of all members. Thus Project staff seek to address behaviour, both in the Project and in the local community, by incorporating the young people in this process. One member of staff said that 'issues are taken up and they have to behave themselves on the street. There is a sanction if they don't own up, and go around and apologise.

The Project, like other aspects of the programme of the MCYP, seeks, where practicable, to integrate participants with mainstream LYF peer leadership and youth leadership training programmes.

5.5.5 The multi-agency dimension

The Project has an advisory committee which includes a Garda inspector, the Regional Director of the LYF, the manager of the MCYP, two 'parents' representatives, one community representative, a business person, a senior Probation and Welfare Officer, a community Garda and a JLO. At operational level, most contact between the Project co-ordinator and agencies is with the Gardaí, through the JLO and the community Garda. The extent of the multi-agency links of the MCYP gives the TEAM Project access to this network also. Over the years, the MCYP has developed a relationship with the community care services of the North Eastern Health Board. The Project co-ordinator represents the MCYP on the management committee of the local CDP. The Project has also developed a working relationship with FÁS, and has effectively utilised the CYTP mechanism to add value to its own work. A community representative on the committee is also a Community Director on the Dundalk Employment Partnership, and is the manager of the local Community Employment Scheme which has workers based in the MCYP.

Formal meetings of the advisory committee take place on a monthly basis. The Garda Inspector acts as the treasurer, as in other areas. Regular and ongoing meetings between Project co-ordinator and the Garda JLO, to identify participants and discuss referrals, take place informally, as do meetings with the local community Garda.

5.5.6 Embedding the Project in the local context

The TEAM Project has utilised the following key mechanisms to establish itself in the local community:

- TEAM has two parents' representatives involved in the TEAM committee, in addition to a community representative.
- The Project co-ordinator represents the MCYP at the MMCC and on the management committee of *Áit na nDaoine*, the CDP.
- The Project has a regular slot in the local community newsletter (*News and Views*) which usually includes a full page of information about TEAM.
- The LYF, the managers of the MCYP and TEAM operate within a community development model, in that it is their policy to recruit and upskill local leaders to play key roles in development. Through TEAM, it has recruited local staff including the co-ordinator, part-time youth worker and the supervisor of the Restart Project.
- The Project is perceived locally to have, in conjunction with the Gardaí, 'got rid of the mad gangs at night' and, according to a parent representative, this in turn has given the Project legitimacy in the community.

5.5.7 Identifying and recruiting Project participants

The Project operates a policy of recruiting males and females on a 50 : 50 basis, and applies the same policy to self- and agency referrals. The main source of agency referral is through the Garda JLO. Those recruited are in the 10 to 18 age group. The Garda JLO discretely mentions to each young person from the Project area, in the context of an informal caution, that 'it might be better to be involved in activities'. It is usually agreed between the Garda JLO and the Project co-ordinator who will make first contact to recruit. Names are given to the co-ordinator verbally by the JLO and are recorded in the Project. Personal or background details on the young person referred are not given by the JLO to the Project. In the course of cautioning, the JLO will inform the young person that, as part of the Diversion Scheme, the JLO will visit the person either at home or in the activities. This involves the JLO having considerable contact with the Project. In addition, the JLO became Chairperson of the LYF in 1999, which effectively gives him a role in the management of all LYF activities, including the MCYP and the TEAM project.

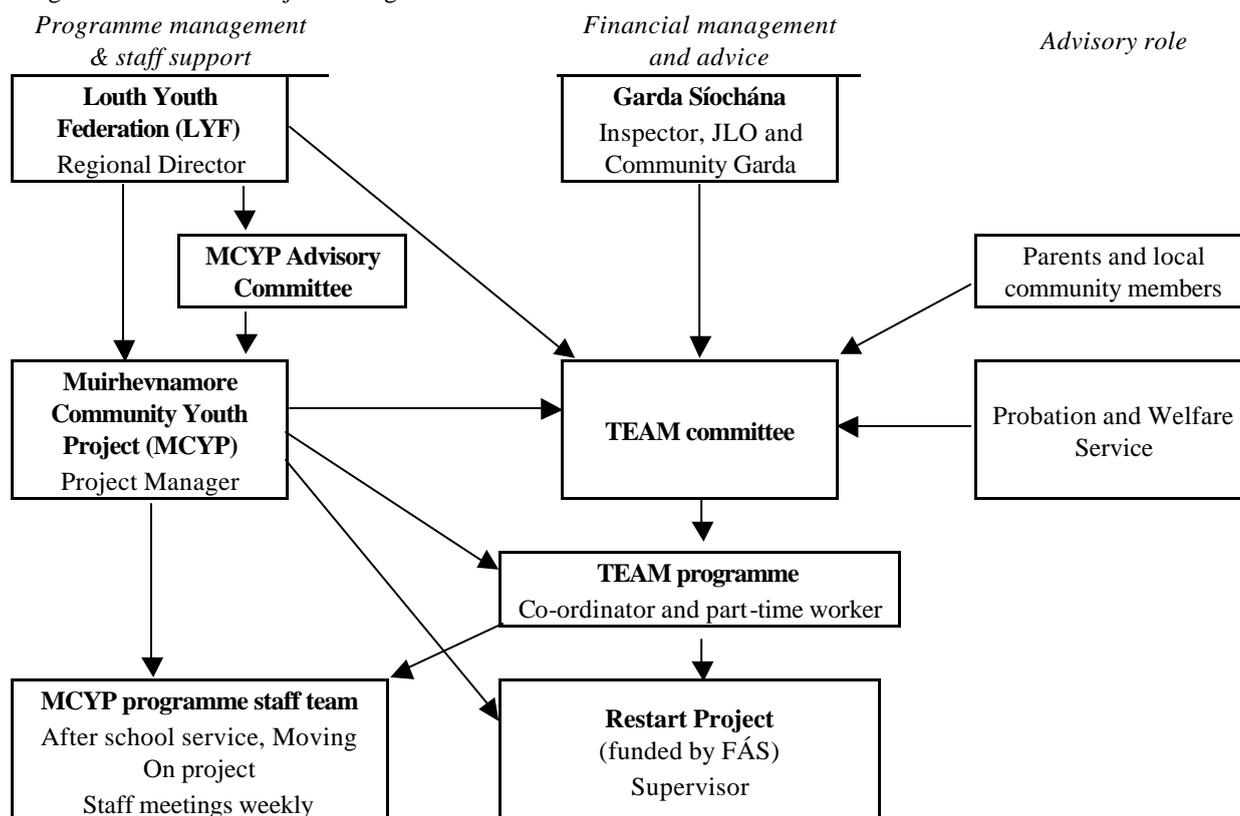
The final decision in relation to recruitment of a referred young person is left to the Project co-ordinator. The co-ordinator refers to the manager of the MCYP when a decision whether to terminate a young person's participation in Project activities is required.

5.5.8 The Project management model

TEAM is embedded in a complex system of arrangements and structures, as represented graphically in Figure t/m 1 below. In order to understand this complexity, the following should be noted:

- The Louth Youth Federation (LYF) is an autonomous regional youth service affiliated to the National Youth Federation.
- The LYF is an umbrella of affiliated youth groups in the county. It is governed by a voluntary council and employs a regional director and other youth work staff across County Louth.
- The TEAM Project operates as an integral part of the MCYP.
- The MCYP manager reports to the Regional Director of the LYF.
- All MCYP staff are employed directly by the LYF.
- The Project Manager of the MCYP provides support and supervision to the TEAM co-ordinator, a part-time worker and to associated staff in the Restart Project, which was established by the MCYP as an arm of TEAM.
- The MCYP staff are assisted by Community Employment Programme workers.
- The TEAM and Restart workers are members of the MCYP staff, in that they participate as full members at the staff team meetings and the occasional evaluation/review meetings.
- There are two advisory committees within the MCYP – for the MCYP itself and for the TEAM Project.
- The TEAM co-ordinator proposes the Project programme each month and circulates the Project manager and the TEAM Committee.
- The TEAM Committee advises on the programme and finance is approved by the Treasurer (a Garda Inspector) using an imprest system.

Figure t/m 1: TEAM Project management model



5.5.9 Methods for improving Garda/community relations

The JLO and the community Garda are involved at advisory level, and both have participated in programme activities. Informally, the community Garda has utilised the TEAM/MCYP premises as a way of meeting with local people who do not necessarily want to see a Garda car calling to their house. The co-ordinator reported that local

people know that the community Garda is in the Project premises frequently and they leave messages there for him. In addition, the community Garda has used the premises as a neutral place to meet an injured party.

The community Garda also deals directly with the local tenants' and residents' groups and with the Muirhevnamore Community Council, in relation to public order and anti-social behaviour matters.

5.5.10 Establishing new systems and new networks

The Garda JLO sees the Project as an effective resource to the Diversion Programme, and he reported to the researcher that he had three times more referrals made to him from an adjacent local authority housing area than from the Project area.

The Project chairperson is convinced that TEAM has acted as an effective means of accepting referrals from the JLO, but it faces challenges in how it addresses the issue of progression routes for those referred. At present, progression tends to be defined in terms of becoming involved in mainstream youth provision. However, according to the chairperson, the Project needs to open up routes into the labour market and, consequently, needs to look at how it integrates with FÁS and the Local Employment Services.

5.6 Project site report 4: Corpus Christi Youth Development Group Ltd (CCYDG)

5.6.1 The Project area

The Project catchment area is the parish of Corpus Christi at Moyross, about 1.5 miles north west of Limerick city centre. Moyross is a large local authority housing estate built by Limerick Corporation from the mid-1970s. The area is subdivided into 11 'parks' or smaller estates. It is bound on the southern side by a main thoroughfare which leads traffic around the city centre to join the main route for Shannon Airport and Ennis. At its northern perimeter, it is bound by an old country road. The Project premises is located in a set of under-utilised small enterprise units built by Shannon Development in the 1970s. The units are known locally as 'the bays' and are accessed from the old road. The road at the eastern flank leads to one of the main landfill sites in the county, beside which there is a travellers' halting site. The area is dissected by the railway line between Limerick and Ennis, and parts of the area are connected via a bridge close to the centre of the estate. The Project area contains 1,165 households.

In the centre of the area, there is a primary school and a church. A range of community services, including a mid-Western Health Board health centre, are provided from Moyross Community Centre. Around this centre, a complex of buildings has been developed which houses the local crèche, an enterprise project, the Local Employment Service, and the Moyross Community Development Project (CDP). Throughout the area, there are other community-based initiatives, such as the Bungalows Project – an after school youth project modelled on the Neighbourhood Youth Projects (NYPs), managed by the Limerick Youth Service and funded by the health board. Also, the child welfare agency Barnardos has a project operating from a house in the area. Beside the Project, the Probation and Welfare Service has located a project dealing with offenders in the 16 to 24 age group. The area is benefiting also from an estate management initiative co-ordinated by Limerick Corporation, and there is an active local estate management group. According to the Moyross CDP, the area is well resourced with service providers, which leaves it free to build community networks and to develop integrated strategies across a range of community based initiatives. There is a noticeable absence of graffiti and litter, as the area benefits from an environmental improvement scheme promoted by Moyross Development Company (MDC) through the Jobs Initiative. The MDC describes itself as a holding company employing 44 people and is currently promoting the development of a shopping centre, a pharmacy, a library, post office, home care project and other community related facilities.

While the area is now enjoying a regeneration of sorts, it is not long since there was a widespread sense of apathy in the area. In 1992, the CDP reports, almost 80% of households were social welfare dependent. Unemployment is reported to have reduced in recent years, with the rate falling from 46% to 32% over a period of 4 years. This is thought to be the result of the 'trickle down' effect of the locating of DELL, the computer manufacturer, in the Limerick area, and the fact that a substantial proportion of the local workforce (10%, according to the CDP) are availing of CE schemes. During the early part of the 1990s, when some tenants left the area, their houses were vandalised and burned. There are various reports of the actual number of units destroyed, but the highest estimates report that a total of 87 housing units were burned to the ground. Most of these have since been rebuilt and refurbished. A senior Garda described a scene of near chaos which he suggested was 'like London in the blitz'. Gardaí interviewed suggested in general that there was little respect for them and that those who were law abiding were often jeered and intimidated. Community policing operations began in 1992 and were based in the nearby Mayorstone station. A community Garda said that that Limerick has a culture of 'long tail

families' – that is that extended family networks still exist, but they are scattered throughout the city. This means that some families have connections (and enemies) in various parts of Limerick.

Over many years, Limerick has borne the brunt of negative media reporting, according to local Gardaí and, in particular, the Moyross area has been singled out for much negative coverage, even from local media.

Community informants report that it has been difficult to develop local leadership in the area over the years, and this served as a rationale for starting the CCYDG.

5.6.2 *Crime, disorder and offending in the Project area*

Gardaí describe the area as being typical of any other urban area of similar profile. Local community members of the CCYDG committee were of the view that the main problem was with 'young people running riot around the place'. Following the burning of the 87 dwellings, Limerick Corporation, in association with the Gardaí and the Moyross Development Company³¹ (MDC), set up a 24-hour closed circuit television security project.

There is no organised gang in the area; rather, order was largely challenged by a number of smaller groups of young people who congregated in various parts of the Moyross area. Both a senior Garda and the local school principal suggested that public order problems had to do with 'a lack of parental control and responsibility'. The station sergeant at Mayorstone reported that most of the Gardaí's time is spent responding to domestic disputes, family feuding, criminal damage, school attendance and stolen cars.

Most informants were of the view that much of the offending in the past was because there was a general lack of adult leadership in the community, and young people had no other outlets. Gardaí report that the public order problems have largely been contained, and most other informants were of the view that the area has felt this change. Indeed, the Moyross CDP reported that many people in Moyross are beginning to get work, as the economy lifts, and, as a consequence of the growth of the private housing market, those benefiting are deciding positively to remain in the area.

5.6.3 *Setting up the Project*

The Project had its beginnings when a local curate and a new community Garda, both of whom started working in the area on the same day, decided to set up a youth club. They took young people camping in the summer. Soon after, they established a boxing club by offering a home to an established coach who had been located in another part of the city. The setting up of the various clubs was made possible because the Moyross Development Company approached and successfully managed to get a suitable lease on a set of disused industrial units. They agreed with Shannon Development that rent would be offset against refurbishment undertaken by MDC. The Minister for Justice Ms Geoghegan Quinn visited the area in 1994. A proposal was developed and the CCYDG secured funding.

Between 1994 and 1998 the Project was driven by the energies of two key people who worked full-time and sometimes put in eighty hours per week. Project funding was used entirely for programmes, rent and equipment. The Project established a pipe band in 1995. In the summer of 1998, the first full-time co-ordinator was employed.

5.6.4 *Project methods and interventions*

The Project has had two development stages. In the first the Project was lead by the vision of two key people – a community Garda and a local priest. Much of their input was voluntary in nature and both were reported to have at times spent twice the average working week running CCYDG. This stage lasted from the commencement of the Project in 1994 to the Spring of 1998 and much of the Project activities were of a primary preventative nature. In the second stage of development the project recruited a full-time co-ordinator from summer 1998 and, while all of the Project's primary prevention actions were continued, the Project began working with a 'target group' of young people who had left formal schooling. In addition, the Project funds a programme for young women which is implemented by Barnardos.

5.6.4.1 *Primary prevention activities*

The Project has established the following key mechanisms:

- The Corpus Christi Pipe and Drums (CCPD)
- The Shades Youth Club
- The Boxing Club
- Indoor soccer facility

³¹ The MDC is the parent organisation of CCYDG and is a major sponsor of CE in the area.

The CCPD was first established in 1996 and has since made two trips to the United States. It now appears regularly in the Limerick St Patrick's Day Parade. The idea of having a band was an attempt by the founders to generate a positive image for Moyross, as it was felt that the area was bearing the brunt of negative media attention. Moreover, one informant suggested that the purpose of the band, along with the other primary prevention activities, was to create a sense of belonging to Moyross. In this context, the various actions were conceived as 'socialising agents' and were a means of 'building a big "we" around them [young people]'. In addition to the desire to create a positive image, the young people involved learn musical skills. The Project has a specific room in the complex of buildings set aside for use as a band room.

According to a senior Garda, a large scale project involving a range of activities was required. It was suggested that choosing to work with a 'core group' would not have dealt with the scale of disorder in the community. Rather than there being one core group of offenders or creators of nuisance, there were several and this determined that the required response was a large scale project.

Using music and sporting activities were suggested as a means of diverting young people from offending in the local community, as, by attracting them to sports activities indoors, 'you [were] draining off their energy'. A member of the management committee suggested that the Project has been successful in that taking 'kids off the streets has diverted them from idleness'. A key assumption underlying the approach according to a member of the management committee is that 'most kids like sports' and it is felt by most others that it is important to work with young people by 'giving them what they like doing'.

5.6.4.2 Secondary prevention activities – the 'target group'

In the summer of 1998, the Project decided to engage in specific interventions with a referred group of participants, aged between 11 and 14 years. A policy and programme document was drawn up by the new co-ordinator, and a counsellor was made available to the Project on a voluntary basis. The Project visited a number of other GSPs, but it was decided to develop the programme based upon their examination of an alternative education project in the south-east inner-city of Dublin. To support this type of intervention, the Project management committee established a separate advisory group and included the involvement of, amongst others, the Limerick Youth Service (LYS) and the Home-School Liaison teachers. The LYS, in particular, have assisted the Project in drawing up practice guidelines for the 'target group'. Participants are identified through a variety of mechanisms, including the JLO 'register' at Mayorstone Garda Station, community Garda/school attendance officer and the local clergy.

This intervention is still at an experimental stage, in that the co-ordinator and counsellor are working through programme ideas. At present, the programme consists of literacy/numeracy on a one-to-one basis, food and nutrition through cooking, and leisure/sports activities. The 'target group' programme is, in essence, operating as an alternative to schooling for those who have been suspended because 'they can't handle it [school]'. The CCYDG describes the 'target group' programme as 'a family community support system for those suspended or dropped out [of school] with a view to reintegrating them within the system'.³² The programme began with 6 participants in January 1999, and was still working intensively with a small group of four in March 1999.

5.6.5 The multi-agency dimension

CCYDG has a management committee and, as it is a limited company, it has a board of directors. The committee is comprised of two senior Gardaí, including an Inspector and Superintendent, the school principal of the parish primary school, a representative of Limerick Youth Service, the parish priest, the community Garda sergeant and two parent representatives. Recently the committee set up a separate structure for the CCPD and other activities, in order to make them self-managing. The management committee established a separate multi-agency advisory structure for the 'target group' programme and has additional members drawn from the home school liaison teachers in the area.

At the operations level, the Project has regular contact with the community Garda, who spends 15 to 20 hours per week working in the programme with the co-ordinator, and is keenly involved in the youth clubs and indoor sports. The Project has been given full-time access to the Garda Community Relations mini-bus, as the co-ordinator has been insured to drive it.

5.6.6 Embedding the Project in the local context

The Project does not engage in crime prevention activities in the community. It was reported that there are other mechanisms for dealing with this, the principal one being through the estate management group, with which the

³² Written communication with the researcher.

community Gardaí report they have a firm relationship. Observers outside the CCYDG have suggested that, in the initial stages of development, the Project tended to work in relative isolation from broader developments in the community but, more recently, there has been a noticeable shift in its orientation. The CCPD has a band director who works with the band's committee. Recently, the Project established a committee for the parents of those in the band. Parents are involved also in the maintenance of band uniforms. The Project has invited two parents to become members of the management committee of CCYDG itself. It was reported to the researcher that that this is, in some way, a response to a demand by some parents with children in the CCYDG to have a more inclusive structure and to adopt more sound community development principles.

The appointment of a co-ordinator has resulted in the Project making more connections and linkages to other initiatives. This may, in part, be because the founders, as one informant put it, 'were too busy *doing* to network'. It appears that the Project, in the initial stages, was engaged primarily in the tasks of developing the various activities, without necessarily enabling and incorporating others into the structures, or indeed linking and networking. One key local informant put this best as a balanced and constructive criticism of the CCYDG:

The Band has been a massive PR machine that has shifted the balance of publicity for Moyross post-1997 in the media. It presented a different image. There has been a major shift in how Moyross is perceived. The Moyross Band is perceived as belonging to Limerick – symbols make a difference. It is important that symbols make a difference inside the community. This is more difficult to do. They've won the PR war in the media outside but people in Moyross still perceive of themselves in the same way – they still have low self-esteem. What is needed is the inclusion of people in the structures to create this.

5.6.7 Identifying and recruiting Project participants

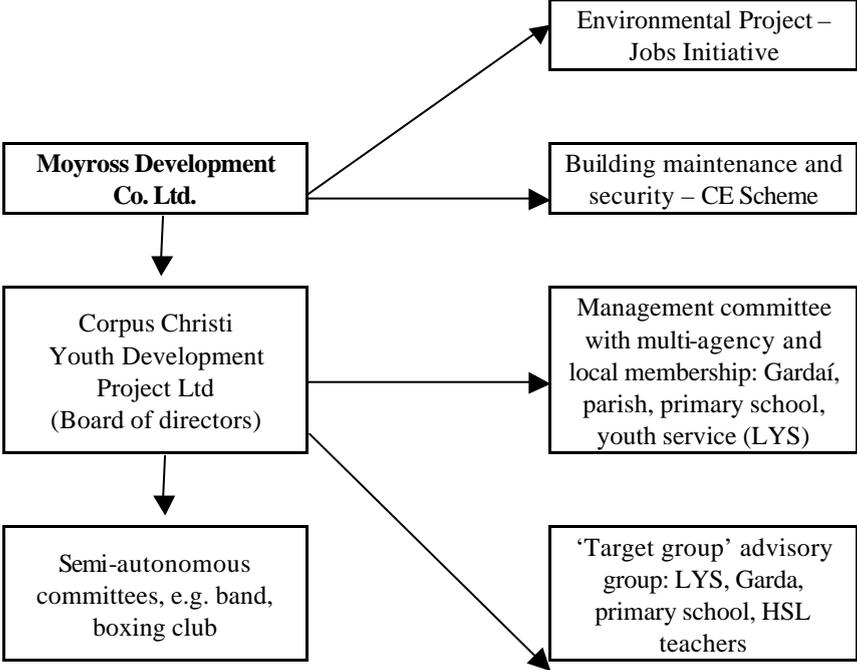
As the Project, up to now, has largely developed primary preventive activities, most participants have been self-referred. The Shades Youth Club, for instance, operates an open attendance format, in that most young people turn up and opt in voluntarily. For the Pipe Band, the Project engages in a recruitment drive every year.

For the 'target group' the advisory group is still working through the referral procedure. For the present intake, the Project identified thirty-four names through a combination of the JLO register, the station sergeant at Mayorstone station, the community Gardaí, the HSL officer, the primary school and clergy. The HSL teacher made first contact with the prospective participants. The Project is also developing and testing out a standard referral form.

5.6.8 The Project management model

The Project is managed by a management committee, composed of personnel from a variety of agencies and including two parents' representatives. In some cases, individuals carry dual membership of the board of directors and management committee. The CCYDG is a subsidiary of MDC and has its own autonomous board of directors. The Project receives funding from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and raises funds from other sources. It is a consumer of the FÁS CE scheme, sponsored by the MDC. It funds the primary prevention activities – the boxing club, the band and the youth club. The CCPD and the boxing club have their own committees and these are semi-autonomous structures, in that they are self-governing while being accountable to the CCYDG management committee in relation to funding and expenditure. The co-ordinator is employed by the CCYDG directly. In drawing up the terms of reference, job specification and contract for the co-ordinator, the management committee of the CCYDG availed of consultancy provided by the LYS. The CCYDG aims to establish and make contributions to a pension scheme for the co-ordinator. A key challenge to the co-ordinator has been to attempt to maintain the level of intensity and input of his voluntary predecessors. It was acknowledged by one key informant that he feared that one co-ordinator might not be able to sustain a 'hands-on' commitment to all primary and secondary actions of the Project, in the longer term. It is acknowledged within the Project management committee that a commitment to the 'target group' in the longer term is not sustainable without the input of the Department of Education and Science, given that it recruits early school leavers who also happen to be known to the JLO and other Gardaí.

Figure c/c 1: Project Management Model



5.6.9 Methods for improving Garda/community relations

The Project has not had to establish specific mechanisms to improve Garda/community relations, as this is promoted directly through the community Gardaí who have established extensive links. The two Gardaí assigned to community policing duties in Moyross utilise the Moyross Community Centre to provide access to a wide range of policing services. The Project’s methods for improving Garda/community relations are implicit – firstly, through Garda involvement in management and programme and, secondly, through the access to transport provided by Gardaí in the form of the Community Relations Bus. Garda involvement in other activities, such as the CCTV security scheme and their relationship with the estate management group, provides other direct mechanisms through which the Gardaí have established sound relations with the community. Publicity afforded to the CCYDG, especially through the band and the boxing club, is seen by Gardaí as providing good public relations.

5.6.10 Establishing new systems and new networks

In its first four years, the Project relied heavily upon the voluntary effort of two key individuals. At the same time, it was reported, the CCYDG management committee was formed around the activities and resources. The Project was concerned to establish a base and to accrue resources in its first four years. In doing so, the structures formed around supporting the efforts of the two key people and the need for local consultation and networking was not apparent. However, it is clear that the CCYDG itself is a collaborative effort of personnel from a variety of agencies. Since the appointment of the Project’s first full-time co-ordinator, the Project has accelerated its networking efforts and has established new mechanisms, codes of practice and referral procedures for supporting interventions with the target group.

5.7 Project site report 5: Mahon Action for Youth (MAY)

5.7.1 The Project area

Mahon is located on the southern side of Cork city, about three miles from the city centre. The area occupies the tip of a peninsula and is hemmed in by older, more established areas. Indeed, the suburb of Blackrock, which borders with Mahon, was the place of settlement of rich merchants of Cork city in the latter part of the 19th and early part of the 20th century. Mahon is predominantly comprised of public housing constructed in the 1970s and completed by the early 1980s. There are three main access routes – from the north side of the peninsula, along the River Lee or through old Blackrock, and from the southern side via the west Cork ring-road and Douglas. The new River Lee tunnel has its southern termination at Mahon. Most housing is located in *cul de sacs* off two main thoroughfares – the Avenue de Rennes and the Ringmahon Road. There is a small commercial development at the former which houses a pub, shops and some community facilities. The Mahon Community Association has recently acquired an abandoned supermarket for redevelopment for community purposes, and it is intended that

this will house a number of services and initiatives. Otherwise, it was reported that one of the key development issues in the area is the lack of public investment in physical space and the absence of any commercial property for rent.

According to the CDP, the original architects were the winners of a town planning award for their 'open plan' design for Mahon, but, over the years, residents have become unhappy with this layout. The open plan means that there is a large number of open green areas, and alley ways leading to a lack of 'defensible space'. Over time, this has had to be rectified, and alley ways are now being blocked up and fences erected to protect the school and other premises. Cork Corporation has planned a major landscaping project for the area.

The Mahon Youth Development Project (MYDP) was established in 1988 by Foróige and funded by Cork City VEC. It has been active in providing youth development programmes and works alongside the MAY Project.

Between 1986 and 1991, the population grew from 11,082 persons to 11,761, representing a 6.12% growth. By 1996, the population had grown at a lower rate of 0.62% to 11,834 persons. Analysis of census data by the Mahon Community Development Project (CDP) in their 1998-2000 workplan suggests that the area has a high dependency ratio, with almost one-third of the population under 14 years.

It was reported that there has been growing use of alcohol, cannabis and ecstasy amongst young people in recent years. Youth leaders reported to the researcher that it is difficult to establish youth clubs, owing to the lack of available premises. In addition, one youth leader reported that it has been difficult historically to motivate and recruit indigenous volunteers, resulting in dependency upon the voluntary efforts of a few committed people. Community representatives on the MAY Project committee feel that there has been a decline in volunteering associated with the increase of paid youth workers in Mahon. A Garda suggested that the difficulty in recruiting volunteers was a major problem in that it reflected 'poor self-esteem' in adults and was manifested in poor attendance at gatherings and open days.

5.7.2 Crime, disorder and offending in the Project area

A community informant reported that the area never experienced a 'riot situation' as others had. Rather, it was suggested, there was a small core group of 20 young people, at maximum, who had an influence on others and who were described as being 'out of control'. This group has since matured, but there exists a group of young men in their twenties who are perceived to have a negative influence on others. The same community informant described this group as 'local icons' who 'wouldn't fit into local youth clubs', are early school leavers and 'don't have much parental control'. At the same time, this group was seen as not having much chance of social mobility:

They'd come into the Partnership [local area action plan group] and you'd help them to write out their CV. But they had nothing. They hadn't even got hobbies and no qualifications. How could they have a real experience?

A Garda suggested that 60% of all crimes in the area were committed by juveniles, although the MAY committee feel that the figure is closer to 40%. The main type of offences are described as: public order, criminal damage (especially in recent times to the tunnel site), possession of cannabis and occasionally shoplifting. Public order incidents in the area are caused by boys and young men, it was suggested by a community informant. Girls and young women who offend tend not to congregate in the area: 'Girls weren't too bad. Girls never gathered in gangs. Girls went shoplifting in town'. The MAY committee feels that it is now the case that girls are more likely to be in trouble than in previous years. It was reported by almost all informants that joyriding was not an issue; because the area is situated on a peninsula, the main routes could easily be sealed off by the Gardaí and this is a disincentive. The area has not had any crime problems associated with the supply of heroin.

5.7.3 Setting up the Project

The initial proposal for the Project came about as a result of interaction between the community Garda sergeant in Cork city, the Mahon Community Action Plan, the Mahon CDP, the MYDP and local community activists. The idea was mooted in this interaction and the CDP played a major role in bringing about the proposal. The Project was conceived as 'filling a gap' in targeting young people who had come into contact with the Gardaí, for which the MYDP was not resourced. It was decided by the consortium developing the proposal that the managers of the Project would be Foróige, the national youth development organisation, for two principal reasons:

- There was general satisfaction with Foróige as an organisation, and community activists had a positive experience of working with Foróige through MYDP.
- Some local people and professionals had had mixed experiences of using limited companies as an employment structure and it was seen as more expeditious to utilise an existing youth service provider.

For the Gardaí, the Project would ‘fill a vacuum’ as they felt that they had few resources for the JLO to refer young people coming to their attention. A crucial role was played by the community Garda sergeant who was at the time the Chairperson of the Mahon Area Action Plan Group Ltd and was in a pivotal position to forge collaborative efforts between key actors.

The Project was set up in a portacabin on a site adjacent to the Garda station which was also used by the MYDP. The premises was purchased from a local youth club by the City of Cork Vocational Education Committee for use as a base by the MYDP. The portacabin has since been damaged and was set on fire. It is intended that the MAY Project will have access to the new community centre building when it is refurbished.

In December 1998, the co-ordinator resigned from her post. The fieldwork for this evaluation was conducted at a time when the Project was recruiting a new co-ordinator. The programme was placed on hold until such time as a new co-ordinator could be hired.

5.7.4 Project methods and interventions

To a large extent, the lack of suitable premises determined that much of the Project’s activities were held outside the area. Thus the Project utilised the medium of outdoor or adventure sport type activities. It purchased equipment for this purpose, it had access to a Garda bus to transport groups of young people and it hired the services of an outdoor sports instructor to provide tuition. The Project also responded to needs and issues as they arose. For instance, somebody broke into a nearby heritage park/city farm and slaughtered some animals. Whilst it was unclear who had perpetrated this, the Project felt that it was important to create awareness in relation to animal welfare while at the same time creating links with the heritage park. The approach taken by the Project here was to see this incident as an opportunity for young people to do something positive in their community. A senior member of the youth service staff suggested that responding to acts of vandalism is more about young people doing good things than just desisting. In relation to the outdoor sports activities, the staff of the Project saw activities as an opportunity for learning social skills. Programmes were planned in consultation with the group of young people. The purpose was to use the activity as a medium to learn health and safety, concentration and listening skills, and in participating in the activity, the young people had to achieve set goals. Programme ideas were brainstormed between staff and young people and then each party would engage in a process of negotiation in prioritising the programme of activities.

For the promoting youth service, the purpose of intervention is ‘to enable the participants acquire the knowledge and skills (personal, social and technical) and attitudes necessary for their development as individuals and as members of the community. This is how we aim to divert young people from involvement in crime and anti social behaviour’.³³ In addition it is felt that young people ‘need positive recognition and that they contribute to their own development’. A by-product of intervention is to give young people a positive image in the community. If they can change they will, it is contended, and they will be seen positively by adults, and not as a threat. It is suggested that, through their involvement in the Project, the young people will have vision and expectations, and will learn to behave appropriately. The Project programme aims to help young people to ‘develop ways of developing their own leisure time’ and the Project will divert them into other projects/programmes for education and training. The Project itself organises structured educational activities with young people. Programme activities are brought to the MAY committee and they are informed as to why Foróige staff ‘go for these and what we hope they will get from them’.

In terms of diverting young people from ‘crime and anti-social behaviour’ local representatives initially thought that this would involve ‘keeping them away from the shop fronts [and that] people would never re-offend’. There was some disappointment expressed in that young people were seen to be ‘using’ the Project while they were ‘still blackguarding’. It was anticipated that the Project would get involved in providing an educational service and especially that they would provide literacy and numeracy as well as computer skills. This was so because the young people were unable to access work or education as they couldn’t write a curriculum vitae [see above].³⁴

Gardaí interviewed were unsure how the Project programme challenged young people’s behaviour as, in some cases, participants were re-offending and being re-referred to the JLO. Two Garda respondents suggested that the Project needed to be more aware of the young people’s behaviour outside the Project, and that some form of outreach or streetwork was required. If the Project co-ordinator came across young people on the street late at night, it was suggested, he/she should be able to say, ‘What are ye doing here, lads?’ and impose a small

³³ Point made by the MAY committee in written communication with the researcher.

³⁴ In written correspondence with the researcher, the MAY committee has pointed out that the Project co-ordinator provided a computer skills programme designed to help with literacy and numeracy difficulties.

sanction. One Garda suggested that the committee had difficulties reaching an agreed understanding of what 'diversion' meant' and that they were confused at times. He felt that the Project needed:

... a more hands-on approach in the area between 8 p.m. and 1 a.m. when there is most street activity. The community Garda and the youth worker [would] do this. These hours are when most public disorder occurs – gangs congregate. [We] need an effort to target these. Some of these might not be referred to the JLO or the criminal justice system, have charges or have ever been prosecuted.

The community Garda sergeant in Cork city secured funding from Cork City Local Drugs Task Force to employ a 'drugs programme co-ordinator' on a 12-month contract. The worker took up the post at the end of 1998. The person recruited had previously operated a counselling service in the city through a voluntary agency. It was decided to use the MAY Project as a mechanism, with the drugs programme co-ordinator working as an employee of Foróige and reporting to the MAY advisory committee. In a similar way, the drugs co-ordinator would act as a resource to the JLO and other Gardaí as a service to which referrals could be made. The drugs programme co-ordinator reports every month. The service provides:

- Referral to treatment services;
- Referral to self-help fellowships;
- Counselling and support to young people aged 10-20 years, and their families;
- Educational or drugs awareness workshops in schools;
- Public seminars.

The drugs programme co-ordinator receives referrals from the Gardaí, the Probation and Welfare Service and youth workers.

5.7.5 The multi-agency dimension

The structure of the Project is:

- Foróige acts as manager and employer;
- The station sergeant at Blackrock Garda Station acts as treasurer to the Project as the nominee of the Superintendent;
- The advisory committee meets once per month.

Foróige acting as employer implies that its staffing policies apply in relation to the recruitment and selection of staff. Foróige also provides staff support, facilitates a team structure and integrates Project staff with in-service training programmes within the organisation. The advisory committee availed of external consultancy where, it was reported, considerable time was spent clarifying Foróige's role. It was suggested to the researcher that members of the committee 'felt disempowered by their advisory status' in that 'they were not making decisions'.

A number of key issues were raised with the researcher by informants:

- It was reported that, in relation to the drugs programme co-ordinator post, the funding was applied for by the Gardaí, but MAY or Foróige were not consulted until after the fact;
- It was suggested that, while the advisory committee is a multi-agency structure, it needs some sectoral balance as it is felt by some informants that it is balanced in favour of justice agencies;
- Concern was expressed by informants from all sectors that the Project needed to recruit volunteers in order for the Project to survive independently;
- As Foróige policies apply vis-à-vis recruitment, the 3rd level qualifications requirement for prospective staff seemed to be running counter to community development principles, according to some informants [again across sectors], as it potentially debar local recruitment in the eventuality that a post becomes available.³⁵

At practice level, interaction between the Gardaí and Project staff has been conducted largely on an informal basis. The Project has played a key role in establishing, with other initiatives, a network of personnel working with young people and families in the area.

The Probation and Welfare Service are represented at advisory group level. As in some of the other areas studied, they do not make significant numbers of direct referrals largely as their client group is older than that targeted by the MAY Project.

³⁵ The MAY committee later pointed out in written communication that the Foróige organisation's policy is that it 'normally requires a degree or other appropriate third level qualification. An exception to the qualification requirement may be made in the case of candidates with an outstanding track record of relevant experience. This policy does not debar local recruitment ...'

5.7.6 Embedding the Project in the local context

The Project co-ordinator had developed sound relations with the local schools and especially with principals and home school liaison staff. The Project has also played a key role in establishing a network of professionals providing services to children, young people and families. The purpose of the network is to avoid duplication and to ensure that families get a co-ordinated response from service practitioners.

The Project has also a close relationship with the Mahon CDP. It used its premises for meetings and also used its administrative resources. This is underpinned by a commitment in the CDP workplan to resourcing initiatives with young people at risk.

By the admission of many informants active at advisory committee level, the Project has not been successful in recruiting volunteers and developing local leadership. Local people who have been involved with the Project over the years have expressed disappointment over this issue. A Garda suggested that it was important that 'locals are running it'. When the co-ordinator resigned in December 1998, it exposed this issue for Project stakeholders, as they were acutely aware that there was nobody available to the Project immediately to ensure continuity in the programme. Moreover, there was some frustration expressed by some informants that, even if there had been a local person/volunteer available, they would have been unable to compete for the post because of the Foróige staffing policy. A key informant within the committee went as far as suggesting to the researcher that perhaps advisory committees for GSPs should be *pro tem* in that their function should be to 'grow and develop an independent management committee'.

5.7.7 Identifying and recruiting Project participants

Project participants were identified through the following sources:

- Garda JLO
- MYDP
- Schools
- Self-referral

Referrers usually made contact with the young person first and then an approach would be made by the Project co-ordinator. At one point, the Project had a stock of 75 referrals on a list. Each year, the co-ordinator reviewed the list and decided, in consultation with referrers, who would move on. Upon recruitment, the Project facilitated a registration evening. In the first few weeks of participation, young people and the co-ordinator established ground rules and limits to behaviour. Breach of the conditions meant that participation would then be reviewed. While the initial policy was to accept referrals from those in the justice system – i.e. those referred by JLO – the Project established a practice of balancing groups with self-referred participants.

5.7.8 The Project management model

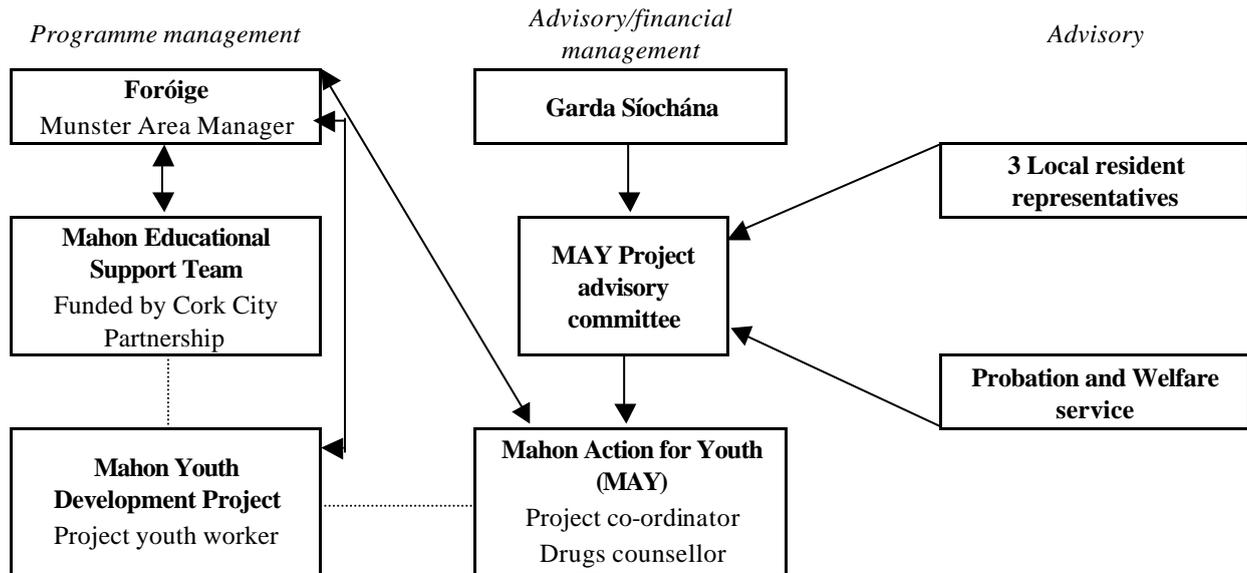
Programme management is carried out by Foróige who take advice from the advisory body in relation to the programme. The Foróige Area Manager is a member of the committee in his own right. The Area Manager supports Project staff in MAY, MYDP and the Mahon Educational Support Team. Effectively, the staff of these three initiatives are a team of Foróige workers but projects are not merged at a structural level. Foróige management point out that 'each staff member's role is to achieve the aim of his/her project and that they work as a team when this is an appropriate strategy to achieve particular aims'.³⁶

The Gardaí retain the role of treasurer at the advisory committee. The treasurer informed the researcher that the committee decides where the programme money is spent and payment is made to the promoting youth organisation on receipt of invoices. The treasurer produces an annual financial report for the committee.

Local representation on the committee is at the invitation of the committee.

³⁶ Written communication from committee to researcher.

Figure m/y 1. Project Management Model



5.7.9 Methods for improving Garda/community relations

Unlike many other new suburban housing areas in Ireland, the Garda station is situated in the heart of the community. Blackrock station is on Ringmahon Road and is centrally located. The Gardaí there have a direct relationship with the community. The station sergeant and the community Garda are directly linked to a variety of community groups and projects, and both report that they have an extensive network.

The Project made occasional use of the Garda community relations bus, but access was restricted as there were only two insured drivers, and use depended upon their availability. The Garda JLO was himself critical of the design of the bus in that because it has a perspex screen between the Garda driver and the passengers, it defeats the purpose for which it is intended. In relation to creating awareness of Garda involvement, it was put to the researcher by an informant that ‘we didn’t go overboard but we didn’t hide it either’. The former co-ordinator informed the researcher that on one occasion when a Garda car was parked outside the Project’s premises, the group she was waiting for inside the portacabin didn’t turn up. Gardaí acknowledge that community officers and the JLO will always be seen in a different light to Gardaí assigned to the station party. A Garda said that ‘our relationship could be destroyed when the lads go out in the squad car’. There was an understanding expressed by a senior Garda that it may suit the co-ordinator to be seen as independent from the Gardaí, and that it was proper that this be left to the co-ordinator’s discretion.

The former co-ordinator suggested that what ‘worked wonders for the young people and changed their views’ [of Gardaí] was having student Gardaí on placement with the Project.

5.7.10 Establishing new systems and new networks

Over a three year period there has been a growth from one to nine in the number of youth related professionals working in the Mahon area. The Project and the managing organisation have seen it as essential to engage in setting up a more formal network, especially as five of the nine are employed by Foróige. The Springboard Initiative is being managed by Barnardos and there is a Department of Education and Science early school leaving consortium in the Mahon area. Moves to set up this network to date have involved practitioners, and a MAY committee member made the point that he felt this should also happen at committee level, on a periodic basis.

5.8 Summary of Project contexts, key mechanisms and perceived impact

The summaries below highlight the key features of the contexts in which the Projects operate and detail the key mechanisms that the Projects have put in place to meet their objectives. The perceived impact of the Project by informants in each area is stated below. The issue of outcomes is dealt with later in this report.

Project: Woodale

Context features

- Dublin Municipal – inner suburban
- Problems associated with early school leaving/low retention rates.
- Established in context of regionalisation/decentralisation of parent youth service, the CDYSB.
- Specialised youth intervention was required to fill gaps in generic provision.
- Policing problems associated with Halloween.
- Public order problems associated with atmosphere created by young people driving stolen cars attracting large groups of spectators.

Key mechanisms

- Focus on 20 identified young people who are specifically referred by either the Garda JLO, the PWS or the local post-primary school;
- Programme groups formed around identified young people;
- Focus on changing individual behaviour of the participants through:
 - Challenging and redirecting individual motivations;
 - Providing social and mobility skills;
 - Management of finance by redirecting funds to CDVEC account;
 - Management committee comprised of personnel from local senior management in the agencies to deal with cross agency policy issues;
 - Advisory Committee to inform and guide programme and practice;
 - Referrers' Monitoring Group to track progress of individual participants referred;
 - Senior Youth Worker acts for youth service at committee level and provides support to Project co-ordinator and other staff;
- No direct Project mechanisms for supporting and improving Garda/community relations.

Perceived impact

- Provision of quality input/focused youth work interventions with a target group;
- Increased possibilities and broader range of interventions available to the Garda JLO;
- Mechanism for identifying and referring specific young people.

Project: GRAFT

Context features

- Dublin County (South) outer suburban;
- High dependency ratios and high levels of unemployment;
- Historically located in economically/commercially underdeveloped area;
- Higher levels of treated drug use than other parts of immediate environs;
- History of public disorder;
- Recent infrastructural, commercial and industrial developments including siting of new regional commercial centre at Liffey Valley;
- Reported changed crime and public order context, in that the area no longer has major public order problems;
- In recent years, crime associated with increasing opiate use is a problem.

Key mechanisms

- Project funding utilised for additional CYC youth work staff – GRAFT project co-ordinator;
- Project identifies groups of troublesome young people with Gardaí and incorporates them into the parent youth service;
- Supports primary prevention actions or generic youth work within the parent youth service and especially with children identified by schools;
- Primary prevention programmes funded by GRAFT budget and staffed by generic youth workers with support from Project co-ordinator;
- Runs, as part of generic youth services;

- A late night drop-in centre;
- Street based outreach with young people out of their homes;
- Conducts secondary prevention, engaging in individual case problem solving with those who have entered the criminal justice system, which has the additional objective of reducing ill-feeling towards the Gardaí;
- Co-ordinator makes contribution to the programmes of other agencies/services, e.g. the Clondalkin Addiction Support Programme (CASP);
- Conducts classroom based lectures and talks with the Gardaí;
- Engages in grant-giving to promote Garda/community relations;
- Advisory committee acts as a mechanism for identifying crime prevention issues;
- Gardaí retain programme funding and sign off on same;
- Parent youth service acts as employer and invoices Department of JELR directly for pay costs;
- Co-ordinator acts in a 'go-between' capacity to help local people access public services provided by the Gardaí.

Perceived impact

- The Ronanstown Youth Service sees GRAFT as a mechanism that enables it to act as a mediator in improving communication between the Gardaí and 'offending families'.
- GRAFT is perceived by local representatives and others as being a mechanism for identifying crime prevention and policing issues, despite its limitations.
- GRAFT adds value to the RYS and other Projects and initiatives.

Project: TEAM

Context features

- East coast – outskirts of regional town;
- Project operates in a catchment that is strictly confined to one neighbourhood;
- Historically high levels of unemployment and large number of households headed by lone parents;
- Neighbourhood has a large number of resettled households who fled persecution in Northern Ireland in the 1970s;
- Reported absence of planning for the youth population and lack of generic recreational facilities, commercial and public;
- Has had problems associated with illegal sale of alcohol to young people, and with sale and use of cannabis;
- Reported that some streets have no adult males and results in harassment of women heads of households;
- Policing problem associated with above in that injured parties do not wish to be seen to involve Gardaí for fear of further intimidation;
- Reported mistrust of police in young people as a factor handed down from resettled parents from Northern Ireland.

Key mechanisms

- Emphasis on involving young people in group formation and development;
- Activity programme is seen as a way of underpinning the group development process by acting as a motivating factor to stimulate young people's initial and continued involvement;
- All attending participants are members of specific groups;
- Uses the FÁS CYTP mechanism with older teenagers who have left school;
- Utilises the concept of 'peer pressure' and 'peer learning' techniques as a mechanism for group maintenance;
- Has linked into an informal network of communication in the neighbourhood whereby all misbehaviour by participants becomes public knowledge;
- Project is embedded in a parent youth project, the MCYP, which operates from a community development perspective – those now employed by TEAM are trained local leaders from the MCYP;
- Half of those recruited are referred by JLO and remainder are identified by TEAM;
- The Project operates a 50 : 50 gender recruitment policy;
- Project co-ordinator proposes programme to the advisory group each month and the treasurer, the Garda Inspector, signs off on funding;

- Gardaí use Project premises as a contact point in the community but apart from this the Project itself has established no formal mechanisms aimed at improving Garda/community relations.

Perceived impact

- Perceived as an effective resource to the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme;
- Provides progression to mainstream youth work;
- Acts as a check on misbehaviour in a neighbourhood context.

Project: CCYDG

Context features

- Limerick City – midwest regional centre;
- Moyross – historically a marginalised area;
- Both Limerick and Moyross have received negative media attention as the city has gained a reputation for violent crimes;
- Moyross reported also to have been a dispirited community where law abiding citizens suffered intimidation;
- Most stark representation of decay was the burning of 87 local authority dwellings allegedly by young people from the area;
- Problems of public order associated with ‘young people running riot’;
- Large number of smaller groups of young people congregating in parts of the estate leading to public order problems.

Key mechanisms

- Emphasis has been on developing primary prevention activities, largely leisure.
- Key mechanisms have been the Corpus Christi Pipe and Drum Band, the Boxing Club and youth club activities.
- Key rationale for this was that negative publicity had effect upon self-esteem within the area.
- Leisure activities en masse seen as a way of draining excess energies and as means of offsetting problem of young people congregating in public space.
- Project established and maintained initially based upon voluntaristic energies of two key founders.
- Employment of first full-time co-ordinator in 1998.
- Experimenting with first secondary prevention programme since autumn 1998 which emphasises developmental and educational work in small groups.
- Project has full-time access to Garda Community Relations mini-bus and community Garda spends considerable time working with co-ordinator and volunteers in the Project’s programme of activities.
- Otherwise Project has not established formal structures or mechanisms for improving Garda community relations although it is evident that Garda involvement with Project is highly visible.

Perceived impact

- Establishment of physical premises and accrual of resources impacting on the youth facilities available in the area;
- Collaborative effort of those represented has led to a significant organisational development in the Project area;
- Now gearing up to develop response to ‘target groups’.

Project: MAY

Context features

- Cork City South, outer suburban;
- Mahon is located on a peninsula on Cork Harbour and enclosed by established middle-class suburbs;
- Lack of physical premises (commercial and public) for community activities has been key issue in development in the area;
- High dependency ratios, and one-third of population aged under 14 according to 1996 Census.
- Difficulty experienced by youth service in recruiting volunteers and seen as a result of low self-esteem in adult population;
- Disorder associated with small group of young people (now in their twenties) described as being ‘out of control’ and now having negative influence;
- Area has experienced problems associated with ecstasy and cannabis use, it was reported;
- Because of its physical geography, the area has not experienced a significant problem with driving of stolen cars as roads into and out of the area can be sealed off.

Key mechanisms

- Project is embedded in area through the historical relationships established between the Mahon CDP, Foróige and the Gardaí over the years;
- Lack of premises has curtailed the type of programme that Project could offer but despite this it has worked to overcome this issue;
- Project used outdoor activities as a medium of engagement with the young people;
- Underlying philosophy in youth service that young people acting responsibly will gain positive feedback/regard in the community;
- Project attracted additional funding from Local Drugs Task Force to employ a counsellor who organises prevention and provides support and referral to young people and their families;
- Project has played key role in establishing a network of professionals providing services to children, young people and their families;
- Project accepted referrals from JLO, MYDP (Foróige), schools and from young people themselves;
- Programme management is conducted by Foróige, which acts as employer and provides support and training to staff;
- Advisory committee has input to Project programme, and are consulted about this at monthly meetings;
- Gardaí retain role of treasurer, and the advisory committee advise in relation to how funding is spent;
- The Project supports the improvement of Garda/community relations through grant giving to community activities;
- For the Gardaí, MAY acts as another point of engagement with the community as Gardaí have been active over the years in developing a wider variety of means for improving community relations independent of the Project.

Perceived impact

- Project provides additional resource to Garda JLO;
- Broadens range of young people that can be attracted into the youth service provision in the area;
- Has contributed to development of the area and to the establishment of networks.

5.9 Conclusion: Issues raised by the five case studies

5.9.1 General observations

It is evident from the site reports that Projects have developed in similar socio-economic contexts. However, they have come about as a result of unique sets of relationships between the key actors at different points in time. The older Project in our analysis, GRAFT, has indeed been somewhat eclipsed by history as it struggles to maintain a specific identity and focus of its own. That the parent youth service in this case has been instrumental in the development of resources in the area generally has, in an ironic way, made GRAFT a victim of its own success. The various sets of relationships between key actors has, to a considerable extent, shaped the type of management and practice model within which Projects work.

Projects have been generally free to decide their own programme emphasis and content. Each site examined presented the researchers with unique characteristics. They are unique in how they were established, how they interpreted their role and how they decided on target groups. It is clear from the site reports that each Project has been afforded a form of autonomy, which has both advantages and disadvantages. For instance, it is quite positive for Projects to be given sufficient flexibility to respond to needs in their areas as they see fit. On the other hand, Projects have a limited mandate and their consultative processes are not always transparent. Again, it is positive that Projects have independence from the centres of decision making but, on the other hand, they are relatively isolated, especially when it comes to impacting upon public policy in relation to young offenders and good practice in community based youth crime prevention. This is because Projects are multi-agency at local level. There is no strategic level forum to transfer policy issues from that level into the decision making arena within state departments.

The following are some general observations made arising from the site reports:³⁷

- Projects engage in models of intervention as either decided by the youth service in consultation with an advisory group, or by an independent management committee;
- In some cases this is based on an assessment of what constitutes good youth work practice and in others it is based upon assumptions about what young people like;
- Most Project activity is output focused, as opposed to strategically focused;
- The Woodale Project is much more outcome focused than others, in that it has set limits on what it can deliver in relation to reducing offending behaviour;
- There is variation in choosing appropriate target groups – from those that decide to focus on specifically referred young people to those that have tended to respond to all young people in the Project area;
- Projects innovate with various management models to meet the demands placed upon them and the Woodale Project has been exemplary in this context;
- Projects operate in some cases without a strong mandate from the local community;
- The GSPs studied do not, by and large, have clear strategies for delivering upon the community relations aims set down by An Garda Síochána.

5.9.2 Models of youth work practice in the five sites

As outlined briefly in section 1.5 above, Staunton (1995) sets out three youth work domains, each with its own sphere of reference and intervention emphasis. It should be noted that Staunton's framework is not water-tight, as it is evident that the suggested domains are not mutually exclusive. It is possible for hybrids of various models to emerge depending upon a range of factors, including the nature of the implementing organisations, the local communities, the supporting agency or the combination of agencies involved. However, it is useful for the purposes of this report in terms of examining models evident in the study of five sites.

Insofar as this model is applicable to the Garda Special Projects, the following observations can be made in relation to models and Projects operating in this context.

Mainstream youth work

Examples of this model in practice:

- CCYDG by virtue of its predominant emphasis on club based or interest based activity oriented programmes. Moreover, the Project has attracted large numbers of young people into its programme of primary preventative recreational and cultural activities.
- In part, the MAY Project operates within this model, because of its utilisation of activity programmes for social education. That said, a dynamic exists currently amongst Project stakeholders as to the nature of the model, and there is an internal demand for an emphasis on neighbourhood/youth welfare oriented work and elements of youth social work.
- GRAFT, again in part only, by virtue of its focus on integrating young people within the mainstream programme provided by the Ronanstown Youth Service, its emphasis on primary preventative school based programmes, its use of the club as the unit of organisation, its relationship with its central management unit, and its focus on the provision of a wide range of advice, information and advocacy services to individual young people.

³⁷ The report returns to some of these issues in the final chapter of the report.

Neighbourhood or community youth welfare work

Examples of this model in practice:

- The TEAM Project, because of the nature of its embeddedness in the local community, its relationship to formal and informal community structures, its role in creating informal mechanisms of social control, its ability to network, formally and informally, and its commitment to community development principles. TEAM operates strictly within a single neighbourhood and its position within the well-established Muirhevnamore Community Youth Project places it firmly within this model.
- The Woodale Project, in part because of its emphasis on targeting and limiting its target group, and its development of support and management structures around the needs of the young people, as well as the needs of the workers in their engagement with participants. While the Project is integrated into services provided by the regional unit of the Dublin Youth Service Board, it has embedded itself into the local context. That the Project has become known locally as the 'JLO Club' is an indication of this and, moreover, this gives it a very specific identity in the local area. In comparison to TEAM its orientation is more towards youth welfare than it is towards community development.

Those with responsibility for the Garda Special Projects either at local or policy making level need to have a clear conception of the area of practice they are involved in, as it raises a range of issues in relation to establishing clear boundaries and practice guidelines. There are, it seems, too many demands on Projects to be all things to all people – to be part crime prevention, diversion programme, a referral source, a youth programme, to be working with families – which perhaps underlines the variety of expectations in relation to the model of intervention to be adopted. Agencies involved need to have a clear conception from the outset of the limits of the interventions.

It should be noted that there are no pure examples in the five areas of 'social work with adolescents'. However, the case studies reveal that in some cases Project practices spill over into individual case work, where project co-ordinators and other staff engage in resolving individual crises or broker services that clients require access to. This may, where it becomes an intrinsic part of what a Project provides on a day-to-day basis, blur the lines delimiting good practice in youth work. Moreover, it may involve services being demanded of Project staff for which they are not adequately trained and for which they have no suitable support structures and supervision procedures.

5.9.3 Questions for implementation and further development

The site reports raise the following questions for the implementation and development of youth diversion and youth crime prevention programmes:

- What are the support structures required to promote good practice and provide training for those involved at project level?
- What are the capacity building measures that might be required to augment the planning process at local level and to develop consultative processes both locally and nationally?
- Who is responsible for defining and disseminating models of good practice in youth crime prevention and diversion?
- Who is responsible for establishment of appraisal criteria for assessing the impact of Projects in achieving actual outcomes and developing strategic responses to youth crime in their areas?
- What form of support structures would serve as a vehicle for affording the Projects the means of impacting upon state policy?
- What level of accountability to the local community is required from Projects and what form of reporting is required to senior management in the education [youth affairs] and justice agencies?

6 PERCEPTIONS OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS IN FIVE SITES

6.1 Methodology and approach

6.1.1 Rationale

Participants on the Projects were included in the data collection in order to gain insights into their perceptions of their involvement and engagement with the GSPs and, most importantly, their perception of change and self-development.

6.1.2 Sample

The researchers selected a sample of participants on the Projects which would adequately represent the experiences of the participants in general. It was decided to obtain the sample of young people from each of the five sites. A purposive quota sample was the most appropriate sample type to draw together. The selection criteria struck a balance in recruiting informants and these included age, gender, source of referral, duration of involvement, and type of involvement. The aim was to interview a group in each of the five Project sites that would closely represent each Project as a whole. For example, if a Project mainly had male participants and mainly took referrals from the Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) then the majority of participants selected for interview were male and referred by the JLO. The overall size of the sample (n=51) is sufficient for some observations to be made in relation to the general impact of the Projects but as the individual Project level samples average only ten respondents in each site, comparisons between Projects are not feasible. Thus, while our sample has the capability to report on overall impact it does not have application in the scoring or ranking the effectiveness of intervention models relative to each other. Such comparison is best placed within a larger research project.

The selection of participants was done by the researcher, to minimise biases that could occur if the Project staff were selecting. The research was advised and supported by the Project co-ordinators and other staff during the selection process.

6.1.3 Interview schedule

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed to obtain information on how the young people experience and perceive their involvement in the GSPs, and any outcomes arising from their involvement. The interview schedule was designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data (see Appendix 5). The instrument contained a series of grids which recorded responses to closed questions in order to simplify the collection of quantitative data. Respondents were given time in each interview to elaborate on key experiences in relation to their behaviour, experiences and lifestyles.

The main sections of the interview schedule included: family composition and living arrangements, school experiences, participation and experiences of the Projects, perception of progression and self-change, self-report on offending and other specific behaviours, alcohol and drug use, attitudes towards crime, interaction with the Gardaí, lifestyle including social and recreational activities, and aspirations for the future.

6.1.4 Procedure

Once the sample had been selected, arrangements were made to approach the young person to seek agreement to take part. Given the age range of possible participants, arrangements were made to gain consent from parent(s)/guardians of the younger participants. In two of the sites, the co-ordinator gained parental consent for all those interviewed. In the other three sites, parental consent was obtained for those under 15 years. In all cases, this was negotiated with the co-ordinators and Project staff, and a decision was reached in terms of practical and ethical considerations.³⁸ The next stage was to gain consent or agreement from the young person themselves. The procedure varied somewhat from site to site; in general, the researcher adopted a flexible approach. In some of the sites (it was not possible in all cases), the researcher met the participants prior to the interview, explained the research and sought their agreement to participate. In cases where this did not occur, the co-ordinator or other youth worker explained the research to the young person. To ensure that all the participants were aware of the purpose of the research and the confidential nature of information, the researcher spent some time with the young person before commencing each interview. In all five sites, the participation of the young people was facilitated by the encouragement of the co-ordinator and/or other youth worker.

³⁸ This process involved negotiating with Project co-ordinators with reference to their own practice guidelines on parental consent, which varied from site to site.

Interview location: Thirty-five (68.6%) of the young people were interviewed at the Project premises and the remainder, 16 (31.4%), were interviewed in the participants’ school. All interviews were conducted individually with the young person in a private room. Almost all of the interviews conducted at the Project premises took place in the evening time, whereas those conducted at school took place during the day. Generally, all pre-arranged appointments were kept and, in a lot of cases, the young people made an extra effort to meet the researcher at a time separate to their Project time. It was decided from the outset that, where possible, the researcher would not conduct an interview with a young person if this meant interfering with their Project time. In most cases, this was adhered to, though there were a small number of cases where this was not possible.

6.1.5 Consent and confidentiality

All of the young people interviewed were given an explanation of the research, along with assurances relating to the confidentiality of the information. Having agreed to participate each young person along with the researcher signed a consent form. The participants were reminded of the confidentiality of information throughout the interview (particularly directly prior to the questions on offending and other specific behaviours).

6.1.6 Data analysis

All interviews were tape recorded and ranged in duration from twenty-five minutes to ninety minutes, with an average duration of forty-five minutes. All tapes were listened to in full and all the sections relevant to the research questions were transcribed in full.

The findings are both quantitative and qualitative. All coded quantitative data, including age, gender, family, schooling, self-report of offending and other specific behaviours, and drug use, were entered onto SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviations and crosstabulations, were used to report on the data relating to these variables.

6.2 Sample profile

6.2.1 Overview

This section presents a brief profile of the young people, including information on their age, gender, family composition, living arrangements, educational status, training and/or employment. The purpose of presenting the profile is twofold:

1. to illustrate the general background of those interviewed;
2. to place the Projects in context.

6.2.2 The sample

Overall, 51 young people from the five sites were interviewed — 33 males and 18 females. On average, ten young people from each site were interviewed — see Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Numbers of male and female participants interviewed across the five sites

<i>Project Site</i>	<i>No. of males</i>	<i>No. of females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Site 1	8	2	10
Site 2	5	5	10
Site 3	7	4	11
Site 4	7	3	10
Site 5	6	4	10
Total	33	18	51

The age of the participants interviewed ranged between ten and twenty-two years. The mean age of those interviewed was 14.84 years, with a standard deviation of 2.4 years (see Tables 6.2 & 6.3 below).

Table 6.2: Mean age of participants interviewed in each site

<i>Project site</i>	<i>Age range in years</i>	<i>Mean age</i>	<i>SD</i>
Site 1	10-17	13.90	2.03
Site 2	10-22	14.90	3.73
Site 3	13-18	15.64	1.36
Site 4	13-19	16.00	2.11
Site 5	11-16	13.70	1.70
Total	10-22	14.84	2.40

Table 6.3: The age distribution of the young people interviewed

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number</i>
10 years	3 (5.9%)
11 years	1 (2.0%)
12 years	5 (9.8%)
13 years	4 (7.8%)
14 years	9 (17.6%)
15 years	8 (15.7%)
16 years	9 (17.6%)
17 years	7 (13.7%)
18+ years	5 (9.9%)

6.2.3 Family composition and living arrangements

Thirty-three (64.7%) of the young people reported that they were living with both their parents, sixteen (31.4%) were living with one of their parents, and two (3.9%) were living with others (one was living with a friend and the other living with extended family members). Of those who reported living with one of their parents, ten were living with their mother and six were living with their father. Five (9.8%) of the young people had experienced the death of one parent, their mother in each case.

The mean number of children per family for the entire sample was 5.47, with the number of children in families ranging from two to ten.

6.2.4 School

Thirty-three (64.7%) of the young people were currently attending school.³⁹ Fifteen (29.4%) had left school before completing secondary school. Three had already completed secondary school to the Leaving Certificate (see Table 6.4 below).

Table 6.4: The school status of the young people interviewed

	<i>No.</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Currently attending school	33	64.7%
Completed secondary schooling to Leaving Certificate	3	5.9%
Left school prior to completion	15	29.4%

Nine of those interviewed were attending primary school, ranging from 4th to 6th class. Twenty-four were attending secondary school, ranging from 1st to 6th year.

Exams:

Fourteen (27.5%) of the young people interviewed had completed state exams. Eleven had completed the Junior Certificate, and three had completed both the Junior and Leaving Certificate. Twenty-four of the participants were either in 3rd year or below and as yet had not completed a state exam. Of the fifteen who had left school prior to

³⁹ This includes one male who, although he had left mainstream schooling, was in an educational project preparing for the Junior Certificate.

completion, only two had completed the Junior Certificate and the remaining thirteen had not completed any state exam.

Suspensions and expulsions:

Over half (56.9%) of the young people reported that they were suspended from school on at least one occasion. Seven were suspended once, seven between two and four times, and fifteen (29.4%) were suspended five or more times. Two participants were suspended at the time of interview. In addition, seven (13.7%) of the young people had been expelled from school.

The young people interviewed were also asked more generally about times they had ‘got in trouble’ with teachers at school, and the frequency with which this occurred. Thirty-nine (76.5%) reported that they had got into trouble at school, however the frequency of this varied greatly amongst the young people as indicated in Table 6.5 below. Six young people mentioned that the frequency with which they were getting into trouble changed dramatically from ‘all the time’ and ‘sometimes’, to ‘not at all’.

Table 6.5: Participants who had ‘got in trouble’ at school

<i>How often in trouble</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
All the time	12	23.5%
Once a week	3	5.9%
Few times/sometimes	16	31.4%
Infrequently	8	15.7%

Attendance:

Thirty-five (68.6%) of the young people reported that they were regular attenders at school. Sixteen (31.37%) reported having current or previous problems with attendance. For twelve (23.5%) young people, this resulted in teachers or principals speaking to the young person and sending letters or calling parents at their home as a result of poor attendance. In addition, six young people reported that a school authority figure (e.g. a teacher, vice-principal, or home school liaison teacher) had called to their home regarding their attendance at school. For those who were currently attending school, two respondents still reported poor attendance, eight young people reported that their attendance had improved, i.e. that there had been a change in their attendance at school.

Experiences at school:

The young people were asked some general questions about their experiences in school, including their general predisposition towards school, their relationship with teachers and classmates, and their general progress at school.

Over half (54.9%) of the young people reported that they generally felt positive about, and liked attending, school. Eighteen (35.3%) generally disliked school, and five (9.8%) had mixed feelings regarding liking and disliking school (see Table 6.6 below).

Table 6.6: Young people’s general predisposition towards school

<i>Attitude towards school</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Positive	28	54.9%
Negative	18	35.3%
Mixed	5	9.8%

In terms of how the young people perceived themselves to be getting on in school (such as progressing in their subjects and succeeding in class tests), thirty-four (66.7%) reported that they were getting on ‘alright’, ‘okay’ or ‘good’. Fifteen (29.4%) perceived themselves to be getting on ‘bad’, ‘poor’ or ‘not well’, and two of the young people reported mixed progress.

With regards to their relationship with teachers 25(49%) of the young people reported that they related well with their teacher(s), whereas 26 (50.98%) reported experiencing difficulties or problems with their teacher(s). In general, for those that were in secondary school, there was at least one teacher that they got on with reasonably well. Only two reported that all relationships with teachers were negative. Some of the young people reported changes over time in how they related to their teachers, from negative to positive.

Those that were still attending school were asked about their intentions to complete school. The majority wanted to complete school; however, 24.24% indicated that they would not complete school (leaving either at the end of 3rd year or in 5th year) and 12.12% reported that they were unsure about completing secondary school (see Table 6.7 below).

Table 6.7: Participants' intentions regarding completing school

<i>Termination of school attendance</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
End of 3 rd year (Junior Cert.)	5	15.15%
5 th year	3	9.09%
Completion (Leaving Cert.)	21	63.64%
Unsure	4	12.12%

Those young people that were attending school were also asked about their intentions and future plans after leaving school. The majority indicated that they would seek employment and, in a number of cases, the young people had a specific career in mind. Seven (21.2%) indicated that they were intent on going to 3rd level for further education and two were undecided between 3rd level and seeking employment. Three had training or specific apprenticeships in mind and four (12.12%) were unsure about their plans after leaving school.

Table 6.8: Future plans for those currently attending school

<i>Future plan</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Seek employment	17	51.52%
3 rd level	7	21.21%
FÁS training/apprenticeship	3	9.09%
Undecided between 3 rd level and employment	2	6.06%
Don't know	4	12.12%

Of the three who had completed their Leaving Certificate one was in 3rd level, one was working and one was leaving college to take up employment abroad.

Those that left school early:

Of those fifteen who left school before completion, thirteen were male and two were female. Their average age at the time of leaving school was 13.6 years. Three left in primary school before completion, and twelve left at some stage in their secondary schooling. Six of those left in 1st year and the remainder throughout up to 5th year. In relation to the reasons for leaving school, five reported that they left school because they were expelled, and one as a result of a suspension. For eight young people, their motive for leaving school appeared to be as a result of negative experiences at school with teachers, or with their subjects – ‘... it was too hard. I knew I was going to fail’. In addition two mentioned leaving school as a result of being offered employment. Seven young people stated that they regretted leaving school, six did not, and two had mixed feelings. Those who regretted leaving school indicated that this was due to now having no qualifications, particularly the Junior Certificate, and for others their regret was attributed to boredom. Seven would like to return to school, two would not and one was unsure. Even those that indicated a desire to return to school believed they would not actually do so as they felt that schools would not accept them.

Do you regret having left school?

Yeah.

Why?

'Cause I never got to do me Junior Cert.

Why would you like to do the Junior?

To be able to hand in for a good job, show that I've done something. (Male, 16 years)

Do you regret having left school?

Yeah.

Why?

'Cause I really always wanted to do my Junior and my Leaving. (Female, 16 years)

Since leaving school, eight young people had attended FÁS or a Youthreach programme, and eleven had gained employment. Two were currently on a Youthreach/FÁS programme, one was due to start, and four were employed. All those who had left school before completion were asked about their future plans and intentions. The majority indicated that they intended seeking employment.

Table 6.9: Future plans for those who have left school

<i>Future plans</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Seek employment/new job	10	66.67%
Continue in present job	2	3.92%
Go to Youthreach	1	2%
Return to school	1	2%
Don't know	1	2%

6.3 Involvement with Projects

6.3.1 Overview

The interviews with the young people focused on their perception of their participation and involvement with the Garda Special Project and any outcomes or changes arising from their involvement. The young people were asked questions in relation to the duration of their involvement, the process of initial involvement, and their motivations for taking part. They were also asked about the activities and programmes they had engaged with as a result of their involvement with the Project, the functioning of the Project in terms of decision making and the existence of rules. In addition, they were asked about their relationship with staff on the Project, and more generally about their attitudes and experiences of the Project, including their perceptions as to the objectives of the Project, its impact on the community, and on the young people in general. These are dealt with in later sections of this chapter.

6.3.2 Duration of involvement

There was variation amongst the young people in terms of their duration on the Project, reflecting the fact that the five Projects had different starting points. The majority of those interviewed had been engaged with their respective Projects for at least nine months; however, this ranged from the shortest of two months to the longest of seven years.⁴⁰ Establishing a baseline date for when each young person joined the Project was problematic in certain situations and appears to be a reflection of how young people are engaged by the Project. This was particularly the case for those who had previously participated in the youth service/organisation which was linked to the GSP. Some had difficulty differentiating between the GSP and the youth service/organisation, so their own recollections of a start date are at best an estimate.

6.3.3 Process of initial involvement

As detailed in the survey (Chapter 4), the Projects draw on a number of sources of referral. It was seen as important to gain an insight into how the young people themselves perceive or understand their initial involvement with the Project. The young people were asked how they initially got involved with the Project, including who suggested it to them and what they heard or knew about it. A variety of ways exist by which young people were engaged, reflecting the various routes into the Projects (see Table 6.10 below).

Table 6.10: How participants initially engaged with GSPs

<i>Referral source</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
JLO/Garda or Probation Officer	7	13.7%
Parent	5	9.8%
Teacher/principal	4	7.8%
Co-ordinator/youth worker	13	25.5%
Self-referral	21	41.18%
Community referral	1	2%

⁴⁰ Only one person had been involved with the Project for seven years and it was currently on an informal basis.

Interestingly a large number of participants (41.18%) reported that it was through their own referral that they engaged with the Project, i.e. through asking the co-ordinator, youth worker or other whether they could join the Project. However over 60% were conscious that they had been referred by a particular source. It is important though to consider that some of the 41.18% may have been referred from a source and were simply not aware of this. Seven (13.7%) reported that they were linked into the Project through the Garda JLO or Probation Officer. All of these seven were from one particular site. The remainder of referrals were through the co-ordinator or the youth worker asking the young person directly (25.5%), school referral (7.8%) and parent referral (9.8%).

I think it was through [youth worker], he told us that there was a club on and to join it ... doing all activities and all.

Did he call around to your house and tell you about it?

Yeah ... no, the probation office, r he told [youth worker], he gave him my name and address. (Male, 17 years)

Those who reported that they got involved through the JLO had a clear understanding that this was directly as a result of their involvement with the Gardaí or because they had offended.

I got in trouble with the Guards ... I got JLO'd ... went in JLO club. (Male, 15 years)

'Cause mmm ... me JLO officer got me into it, 'cause I was in trouble, like, with the Gardaí. (Female, 14 years)

In one site in particular, there was a clear perception that the reason for them being engaged by others in the Project was to keep them out of trouble. There was also an understanding that their participation was voluntary.

It was over robbing [item] ... [got caught by] the Garda.

What did they do after that?

I just got, like, into this club I had to go to talk to them [the Guards] and they just put me in this club ... put me name down for this club.

Did they say you had to come here?

They didn't say. It was just, like, if I wanted to. (Female, 15 years)

Those that were referred through parents appeared to perceive that parents wanted them to have something to do and, in some cases, to keep them out of trouble.

Me ma just told me to go down to the centre, that there's a club on.

Somebody told your mother about it?

Yeah. I think it was [co-ordinator] 'cause we [me and two friends] used to always be in trouble at home. (Male, 14 years)

I wanted to get on the Project 'cause I was bored, my ma put me on it, there was nothing to do. (Male, 11 years)

Those that were referred by the co-ordinator or youth worker reported that this occurred mainly as a result of outreach work. This is illustrated by the following comments from participants in different Project sites. Some reported that, although the Project staff asked them to join, they themselves had previously been asking staff to join.

We used to hang around the church ... [co-ordinator] used to come over ... so we moved, sometimes we didn't listen to him, we moved from the church to the shops and then he came over one night and asked us would we not come in and play a game of pool, and all. Say, for the first two weeks it went well, then we start paying 20 pence, we used to go mad to get your 20 pence to come in and get out for a few hours. (Female, 18+ years)

Well, one of the leaders here, good mates with a few of us, came down the street and asked a few of us did we want to come up for a meeting about this place, and [1] just said, 'yeah', and I went up and [2 leaders] was running it. So we had that meeting and about a week later we knew that the whole organisation was up and running for us and we just started on time. (Male, 16 years)

[Co-ordinator] asked us did we want to join ... we had been asking her all the time, we knew the Project was there, like. (Male, 14 years)

In one site, a number of young people were targeted through school for prevention work. In some of these cases, the young people were not aware that they were targeted.

I think the names were put into a hat or something, and they were picked out. (Male, 10 years)

A female who had participated in one of these school targeted groups, which was no longer running, appeared to perceive that there had been a targeting process.

[The teacher] *just got a few of us together, kinda. He was kinda trying it out, at first, but it lasted for three years, I think.*

Why did he just pick a few?

I think it was, like, people that weren't really mad into school 'cause in First Year I wasn't really.

(Female, 17 years)

A 15-year-old male knew he got onto the Project through the vice-principal knowing that he was no longer attending school.

[Co-ordinator] *came up to my mother. Him and [vice principal] had a discussion about who came in, and me and [friend], we got in here.* (Male, 15 years)

The community referral relates to one male who was encouraged to attend the Project by a nun who was involved in various community groups and activities.

[A nun] *told me. 'Come down on Wednesday,' she said, 'there's something good to do down there,' so I came down, and that. I'm still here and my attendance, like, is good. Only missed one day since I came.* (Male, 14 years)

Self-referral encompasses a number of situations. For the majority, this was as a result of hearing about a group or drop-in, through friends or siblings, and turning up or asking the co-ordinator or youth leader to join. Others were linked in with the youth service prior to engagement in the Project and so perceived that they were progressing from one element of the youth service to another. In addition, some of these were referred by their own peers.

A young fella in the club told us that [co-ordinator] was starting a club for [our estate]. (Male, 16 years)

[The leader] *she asked one of my friends to get a few girls together, organise a youth club. Got a group together of ten.* (Female, 17 years)

We just used to hang around the streets and we knew about [the Project], and all that, but they never started up a group for anyone in, like, [estate]. We just went over and asked [co-ordinator]. Like, it was my brother and another mate of mine, he just goes, 'Will ya start up a group for us?' So then [co-ordinator] said, 'Try and get a group going for us.' A few weeks later started up a group. (Male, 15 years)

My brother started going up first, but he never told me at first, a few lads then told me, we went up then it was good. (Male, 13 years)

We asked her [co-ordinator] ... my friends used to be in it, they needed new people in it. Yeah I asked her and I joined that group. (Female, 15 years)

They done all the sports and all that during the summer, we just joined in and then [co-ordinator] asked us did we want to do it all year round. (Male, 14 years)

Those involved in one specific site were all self-referrals:

We used to go to the clubs down here and then [leader] told us like there was a band starting and would we join, we were all excited like so we came down and we've been here since. (Female, 17 years)

6.3.4 Young people's motivations for attending Projects

Young people were asked generally about their reasons for initially joining the Project. All of the responses fell into four main categories. Table 6.11 illustrates the numbers who mentioned each response. The majority (68.6%) reported that they joined for the activities for 'something to do'. Others reported that it was because their friends were already involved and they in turn wanted to be a part of this. The same number reported that they joined in order to stay out of trouble (in these cases, this followed on directly as a result of getting into trouble and suggests that they did not want this to continue). Others simply reported that they thought it would be enjoyable or 'good fun'. Some reported a combination of these factors.

Table 6.11: Reasons cited by the young people for starting on the Projects

	No.	%
To stay out of trouble	4	7.8%
Friends were in the Project	4	7.8%
Activities/something to do	35	68.6%
Thought it would be fun	8	15.7%

The following comments by the young people across all the five sites illustrate the common motivation for engaging with the Projects.

'Cause you go places and it's good ... you go on places, on trips.

So did you want to become involved in the Project?

Yeah, so I have something to do after school. (Male, 10 years)

I just seen all the good stuff and all getting done and that ... thought, 'Yeah I'll join this club.'

What good stuff?

When you come home from school and have something to do, without going out, like, messing and all that.

What do you mean messing?

Like hitting people and all that and then getting kept in for the night, have to go up to me room and play me Nintendo and all does be boring so there's really nothing to do so I just go to me club and just do be doing everything. (Male, 12 years)

'Cause there's nothing really to do around here. (Female, 14 years)

'Cause I wanted to do more things, I wanted to go meet new friends there and all the leaders and people as well. (Female, 12 years)

'Cause when me friends came home they used to say, 'ah the club is deadly today' and, like, they just used to say, 'it was deadly, had a bit of a laugh, and played football and done art.' (Female, 14 years)

'Cause it's so much fun and if you've any problems at home you just come up just get away from it all. (Female, 16 years)

A female who had been recruited through outreach work on the streets initially went to the Project due to situational factors, but then decided to stay for 'something to do'.

Why did you go in?

'Cause it was freezing, first we thought they were all nosy, ya know, like school and all, trying to be counsellors, but them you could tell, you didn't have to say anything if you didn't want to ... (Female, 18+ years)

One male who indicated that he believed that the reason they had started a club for young people like himself (from one particular area) was because they were getting into trouble with the Guards. He said: 'All we do is sit on the walls, get in trouble with the Guards and all'. He perceived that starting the club was a means of stopping this.

Why did you decide then to come down?

Every night the Garda come around and just arrest us. Thought it would be a change. (Male, 16 years)

To stay out of trouble ... the JLO told me that the programme was to keep you out of trouble and go on trips and all. (Male, 14 years)

Just to keep us off the road, 'cause we were getting into trouble. (Male, 17 years)

To stay out of trouble, and better than sitting out on the walls. (Male, 13 years)

6.3.5 Induction to and understanding of the Project

The majority of young people appeared to have an understanding about the Projects previously through friends, siblings, neighbours and other people in the community. For those that already had been linked in with the associated youth service, the Project was not seen as different and they explained that they knew how the groups, programmes and services operated. However there were some cases in which the co-ordinator had an induction meeting and/or talked with the young person's parent(s). In one site, all the participants mentioned having an informal meeting with the co-ordinator or youth leader for the purpose of explaining the Project to them. In some of these cases, the meetings held at the Project premises were with the new recruits, the co-ordinator/youth leader, Guard/JLO and parents/guardians. As a result of this, the new recruits appeared to have a clear understanding of the Project and its objectives.

What did the co-ordinator tell you about the club?

That I was in and go places and all and came to a meeting here in this place.

What happened at the meeting?

Just talking ... two Guards saying have to be doing your best behaviour and all ... just you have to be on your best behaviour and all ... they [Guards] know who we are and all. (Male, 15 years)

Just came to a meeting with our mas like and then they told us about it [youth leaders and JLO were there] ... they [Guard] just start telling us about all, like, keep you out of trouble and all. (Female, 15 years)

Those young people who were in organised or structured groups, as opposed to those involved in 'drop-in' activities, were more likely to have reported that the Project had been in contact with their parents. In most cases,

this was through discussion, explanation or issuing consent forms. In most cases, the group leader or co-ordinator explained to the young people about the Project and activities they would undertake at the outset of their involvement.

She [home school liaison teacher] brought us up into her room and told us we were going to be joining the club and go home and tell our mams and dads and then get forms for them to fill out for consent. (Female, 10 years)

Did the leader explain to you what you'd be doing?

No, me friends explained to me. Then, when I went up to the club, then they told me all about it ... told me what the club was about, and all, and what day it's on and all, what we do and all. (Female, 14 years)

They told us be like a school. We'd be doing literacy and that, getting woodwork then doing computers, and we'd be getting sent out on work experience.

I told me mother and she rang up [leader] and he explained it to her. (Male, 16 years)

I knew what I'd be doing, that's the first thing I heard from school, so I said I'd go to it. (Male, 15 years)

Like she [co-ordinator] put down rules first, say no cursing or fighting and she talked what we'd be doing and all that, like what kind of stuff, and what do you like to do, some people wanted to do all different things but [co-ordinator] said we'd all have to do the same thing. (Female, 12 years)

For those that were involved in the Project through a drop-in, this was much more informal, in that there was no official discussion or explanation about their involvement; it was taken at face value, so in these situations there was no initial contact with parents. In most of these cases the young people had heard about the drop-in through friends or neighbours and, as a result, knew or were aware of the leaders and what occurred. As with most of this type of youth work contact, there is no contract in relation to behaviour outside the drop-in.

So when you came down here, did the leaders talk to you about what you could do here?

We just came in and that said like no messing – the usual but basically just came in you play pool, table tennis there was a dart board there but nobody used to play it. (Male, 16 years)

6.3.6 Type of involvement

For our analytical purposes, Projects appear to organise programmes in the following four ways. This enables us to conduct further analysis, based on the categories below:

'Structured groups' refers to those who reported that they were involved in a specific group for a certain time period.

'Drop-in' refers to those who engaged with the Project on a casual basis usually in an evening, in which there was no formal structure, and where the activities were mainly leisure oriented.

'Band' refers to one particular site in which young people were participating in the Project through a drum and pipe band.

'Regular attenders' refers to two groups in two different sites who attend on a daily basis (in one case) or for three mornings per week (in the second case). The first of these is for those aged above the statutory minimum school leaving age and is funded by FÁS. The second is for a smaller group in a younger age group who have left school.

The majority of those interviewed were in a structured group, with those in drop-in next, followed by the regular attenders and the band. See Table 6.12 below for breakdown of numbers in each structure.

Table 6.12: The number of participants by programme type

<i>Type of involvement</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Structured group	35	68.6%
Drop-in	7	13.7 %
Band	4	7.8 %
Regular attenders	5	9.8 %

6.3.7 Frequency of participation

The majority of participants (66.7%) engaged with the Project on a one session per week basis. A smaller number, 12 (23.5%) were involved twice a week. Frequency of attendance depended on whether the young person was engaged in a *structured group*, a *drop-in*, or a *regular attenders group*. At times, those involved in a structured group or the band met up more frequently, in preparation for a big event like a competition or parade. Others

reported that they sometimes engaged with the Project on more occasions; for example, if they needed advice with a particular issue, or had a problem. Five of those interviewed were involved in a regular attenders group, and were attending the Project between three and five mornings a week. As this data represents the young person’s response to how many times they attend the Project per week, it may mask the overall extent of contact that they have. As staff undertake outreach and other activities, contact is not necessarily limited to attendance at the Project premises. This does raise the question of the specificity of Garda Special Projects as youth diversion programmes, and whether or not interventions should be more intensive with smaller groups, as opposed to infrequent contact with substantially larger groups.

Table 6.13: How often participants attended the Project

<i>Frequency of participation</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Once a week	34	66.7%
Twice a week	12	23.5%
Mornings (3-5 days)	5	9.8%

6.3.8 Activities

All participants were asked to describe any activities, programmes, trips, events and discussions that they had taken part in through their involvement in the Project. This varied according to the type of structure they were involved in.

Structured groups: those who participated in these groups took part in many different activities. Table 6.14 below gives an indication of the wide range of activities which groups undertake.

Table 6.14: Typical activities undertaken by those in structured groups

<i>Outdoor activities</i>		<i>Indoor activities</i>	
Swimming	Go-carting	Arts (drawing, painting) and Crafts (jewellery making, clay)	Meditation
Canoeing	Outdoor trips	Pottery	Pool/snooker
Bodyboarding	Cinema	Woodwork	Board games
Sailing	Bowling	Cookery	Football
Surfing/windsurfing	Camping	Computers	Hockey
Hill walking	Residential weekends	Photography	Tennis
Abseiling	Exchanges	Video camera (video making)	Basketball
Mountain climbing	Adventure sports complex/leisure plex	Drama/play	Volleyball
Cycling	Museum	Party	Group discussions (including drugs, vandalism/ crime, personal development)
Fishing	Trip to farm – animal education	Competitions	
Horse riding		Watch video	

Most structured groups maintained a balance between outdoor and indoor group activities such as those listed in Table 6.14. One site had a bigger emphasis on outdoor recreational pursuits; this was directly related to the fact that the Project had no premises and thereby were restricted to outdoor activities.

We do, like, different stuff every week. Sometimes we go out to the pictures. We went bowling with them, we do, like, woodwork and all, and painting and all. (Female, 14 years)

At the end of the week, we can go on an adventure, say if we do be good at the end of the week we go on an adventure ... like going up the mountains and on the bikes. (Male, 12 years)

Usually we do like a sport like play basketball, hockey or something, and then we’d make something do home economics make something or else we’d go out for the day, like go bowling or horse riding [sometimes stayed in] and make something, do a sport or watch a video. (Female, 17 years)

Well we’re starting to make a film now, we started that two weeks ago. We went to a cross-border Project during the summer there, people from [other Project] they came, we went to [outdoor adventure place], they went we just spent like the activities there with them, trying to improve relationships and all that. (Male, 15 years)

We went to the Canaries, did fundraising and all that, cooking, arts and crafts, went away on residential and all cross border things like that.

When you stay in here premises what do you do?

Do art, playing games, snooker or sometimes we might just sit down and talk about something. (Male, 16 years)

We done art, we done cookery, we went to [farm] working, taking care of the animals and stuff, we went to the beach body boarding, like, went for walks, used to play games inside and do, ya know, have meetings and stuff, and sometimes we have a little party. (Female, 12 years)

Cooking, bowling, pool, swimming, canoeing, we canoed for a couple of months, abseiling, surfing, volleyball, camping, bodyboarding, we used to cycle around [area]. We did pottery as well. (Male, 16 years)

6.3.9 Discussions

Some of the young people reported that as part of their group work they had discussions or ‘chats’. This varied, though, and was more frequent in some groups. In some cases, these discussions were facilitated by the co-ordinator or group leaders, whereas others were given by visitors to the groups, like Guards or nurses. The topics for discussion included issues around personal development, such as school and family life, bullying, alcohol and drug use, vandalism and offending in the Project area. This was mentioned particularly in three sites.

Talk about how things are at home and how’s school and all that. (Female, 16 years)

Just about what makes you happy, what you like about yourself. (Female, 14 years)

Do you ever sit around in groups and talk?

Yeah, sometimes.

What do you talk about?

Like all stuff like all problems ... on roads, all the robbed cars and joyriders ... like [leaders] they just tell you that ‘cause everyone, like, hates the Garda and they try to tell you that the Garda are there for you. (Female, 12 years)

Drug awareness talks, talks about different stuff.

What other stuff would you get to talk about?

What we’d be doing at home and all that, what we’d be doing out on the streets.

Who does them talks with you?

We get sheets and then have questions on it and we write down answers, there was one person who came in and talked to us about the drugs programme. (Male, 13 years)

What would you talk about?

If anybody got in trouble, talk about it ... with the Guards or anything ... we just sit down and have a chat between us, like, [once] there was a man from down Trinity House prison home or something, he was just saying about the kind of people that’re in there and all, he knew a few boys here [area] that was in it when he was there, so he was just telling us, trying to warn us to stay out of trouble and all, that it’s not worth it.

What did you think of it? Was it a good talk?

Yeah, a bit of sense in what you’re doing and all. (Male, 16 years)

Did you ever have discussions?

Yeah, about anything really, anything that we wanted to talk about. I remember [co-ordinator] used to talk to us about drugs and what happens to you and stuff like that. (Female, 17 years)

Yeah, we had other people giving us talks ... about drugs, drinking, all about vandalism [Guards had been talking about the vandalism]. (Female, 15 years, site 5210)

The regular attenders groups were different in structure and programme. Both regular attenders groups incorporated an educational element, including literacy and numeracy work, while balanced with leisure and recreational activities, and maintaining an emphasis on skills development, such as woodwork and computers. The types of activities and work that the regular attenders groups undertake is illustrated in Table 6.15.

Table 6.15: Types of activities undertaken by those participating in the regular attenders groups

Activity		
Literacy & reading	Mathematics	Woodwork
Computers	Work experience	Jobs club
Swimming	Pool/snooker	Football
Watching video	Table tennis	Unihoc
Hockey	Day trips	

So what do you do in the mornings when you come down?

Cup of tea and we play pool, depends on the morning, every Tuesday and Thursdays we have English in the mornings then we knock off at one o'clock and then Thursday today is pay day so we go up town get our wages. Monday morning is activity morning we either go swimming or go to snooker hall, then in the afternoon we come back and watch a video, Tuesday morning have English and art and Wednesday computers. Friday mornings is jobs club, telling us what kind of jobs we can get into and what experience do we need for it ... it's like we're working for FÁS, see it's FÁS are paying for us. (Male, 16 years)

We come in, get our breakfast cereals, then a game of pool, go back down, do our work ... do a bit of reading, cutting up timber, we're making our own room ... go down about half twelve, have dinner, might go down then for a game of soccer ... might go out for a spin in the bus or else we might do some games. We can pick hockey, table tennis, soccer or a few sports. (Male, 15 years)

Those who took part in the Project through an unstructured *drop-in* programme mainly took part in leisure activities illustrated in Table 6.16 and by the comments below.

Play pool, I usually come over and play pool and chess draughts, ya know the board games. (Male, 16 years)

Play pool or some Tuesday a few of the Guards get a few Guards from [city Garda station] or [local Garda station] and five of us from here play soccer above. (Male, 17 years)

Table 6.16: Activities undertaken by those participating in drop-in

Activity		
Pool/snooker	Table tennis	Board games (e.g. chess, cards)
Darts	Football	

For those who participated in *the Band*, their involvement consisted mainly of attending weekly practices, going away on trips for competitions and parades. The band required a certain amount of commitment from the participants particularly when at certain times of the years they attended twice or more times a week for practice or preparation for parades, shows (exhibitions) and competitions.

We've been to Scotland three times, we've been to America once and we've been all over Ireland, Tulla, Dublin, we've been to so many competitions, parades in Ennis and Killaloo, we're actually playing three times this Paddy's Day – we're playing Limerick, Nenagh and Ennis. We're always busy, like. (Male, 19 years)

6.3.10 Participants' input into programme content

Thirty-five (68.63%) of the young people mentioned that they themselves had an input into the decision making and choices that were made in relation to programme content. Decision making regarding Project activities was seen as a negotiated process between the young people and Project staff. However, there was some mention of awareness of limits with regards to insurance and funding. This perception of input was more likely to occur in the group format than with the drop-in, where there was little change of activities or little opportunity for the young people's input.

We had a list of things what was in the club to do and he [co-ordinator] asked me what I'd like to do and I just told him. (Male, 15 years)

She [co-ordinator] had a piece of paper ready for all of us, a sheet with all the activities on it, bring it home and pick out things we'd like to do. (Female, 13 years)

Who decides what you do in the group?

The group does like [co-ordinator] just say if he wanted to do something we'd do it then but then other times [co-ordinator] say like what do you want to do today. (Female, 14 years)

Who decides?

We do, they said at the start of the club we can choose where we want to go but we have to be on good behaviour. (Male, 14 years)

Who makes the decisions about competitions and everything?

They did at the start, who we played for because we didn't know, but now there's a committee like and we decide. (Female, 17 years)

We decide, we wrote down on a sheet of paper what we wanted to do depending on what we're insured for. (Male)

We've the choice more or less within reason. (Male, 16 years)

6.3.11 Participants' awareness of Project rules

Forty nine (96.1%) of the young people indicated that there were rules that existed in the Project and that had to be abided by. Some of these were specifically laid out in a contract between participants and staff, and others were more general. For some of the young people, the rules were explained from the outset as part of an initial discussion they had with co-ordinator and/or youth leader. The types of rules varied and the way in which the young people learnt these rules varied. Some were laid out by Project staff, whereas others learnt from peers in the group. The rules with the premises are very basic, ranging from no smoking, littering or cursing to more general behavioural rules of no messing and fighting. The rules regarding general behaviour appear to be required within Project premises, within the group, and outside the group (i.e. behaviour in the community). Other rules mentioned included having respect for others in the group and staff. Across all Projects the young people were aware that abiding by the behavioural guidelines was a positive incentive for special activities such as 'going on trips'.

Yeah, no messing, no fighting.

What would happen if you did start fighting?

You'd get thrun out. (Male, 15 years)

Not allowed curse, not allowed fight, not allowed eat in the van or drink, not allowed spit.

Who told you that?

I knew most of it when I came and then [co-ordinator] and all the others told us. (Male, 10 years)

No messing, and if you don't turn up two weeks in a row someone takes your place. (Male, 15 years)

Yeah, no fighting or language or being cheeky or anything.

Who told you these rules?

The co-ordinator.

What happens if you do any of them things?

[Co-ordinator] just warns you not to do it again sometimes they ban you from the club for a week.

Has this happened?

Yeah, it happened to all the boys before, they were all slagging each other and all. (Female, 14 years)

Yeah we get a form like with all the rules and regulations, just that you have to attend practice regularly and keep up practice. (Female, 18 years)

It's not set, it's just basically no fighting or messing and you have to be over 15. Like there wasn't any pages you had to sign. (Male, 16 years)

Yeah like you're not allowed in when your leaders aren't here, and there's no smoking, not allowed smoke in the house have to smoke out the back. If you make tea or anything if you dirty anywhere you have to clean it up straight away after you and most important rule is if you're out on the streets and all and you're not in the [Project] if you mess or anything it gets back to [co-ordinator] so we're not allowed throw stones at anybody or anything ... they told us the rules at the start. (Female, 16 years)

If we're doing something personal, said something personal like just that it wasn't to be said outside like [of the group]. (Female, 14 years)

She told us what rules we could have, no mocking, no name calling, no fighting or smoking. (Female, 15 years)

He's going to be bringing in more good things, we're going away starting to do go-carting 'cause we're starting to get good behaviour. You know, go-carts and bring us horse riding, when he says he will, when our behaviour changes, he will, we'll go swimming, go around nature things.

What do you mean when your behaviour is going to get good?

We were fighting with each other two weeks ago we do none of that now and there's no slagging mothers, he's strict to that. (Male, 15 years)

6.3.12 Relationships with staff

All participants were asked questions pertaining to their relationship with staff on the Projects, i.e. the co-ordinator, youth worker or volunteer. They were asked about the amount of contact they had with staff, and how they perceived their own and young people's relationship with the staff in general. All answers were coded according to whether their responses were positive, negative or mixed. All participants had contact with two or more members of staff, and in most cases this was the co-ordinator and one other member of staff (e.g. youth worker, art teacher, volunteer etc). All participants would have had some contact with the co-ordinator.

All 51 young people interviewed reported having positive relationships with Project personnel. In general, they reported that they got on well with staff, that they could talk to them, and that they could relate to them as young people. Typical responses were 'they're sound, they are', 'grand, they're easy to talk to'. Some mentioned characteristics like trust, particularly those who went to Project staff for help with problems or to obtain advice, and had confidence in them treating their information confidentially. Some felt that the relationship the Project staff had with the young people, as one female said, was better than 'most parents have with their own kids'. One aspect that was mentioned repeatedly was that they were good at 'listening'. Mainly, young people reported that they enjoyed being with them. Although there was not a definite perception of staff being strict, the young people were very aware that the staff required that participants abide by certain rules and boundaries. Others mentioned positive attributes, like the respect staff had for the young people, and a genuine understanding or willingness to understand, as a male participant said, 'like they know what we're sort of thinking.'

Some of the participants reported that they would have some contact with members of staff outside of their involvement with Project, through seeing them in the area or through staff dropping into young people's homes (this was particularly true in one site). In two sites, the co-ordinator was living in the area, but in all sites there was at least one worker (whether paid or unpaid) living in the Project area; this gave a certain amount of familiarity and contact with the young people. Overall, the young people's perception is that they are there to help if needed – 'just they're there to help you out'.

Grand. I like them.

What is it you like about them?

They're funny ... have a good sense of humour.

How do you think they get on with young people?

Good, they can handle them good. (Male, 17 years)

They're real funny and that, they tell jokes. (Male, 10 years)

They listen to everything that you want to say and all. (Male, 16 years)

Had a very good relationship with us.

Why do you think this was?

Think it was 'cause they talked to us, like. Ya know what I mean, they didn't like give out orders and say, 'Ah well, this is what we want,' or 'this is what you have to do and if you don't do it well then you're gone.' It was kind of more like they let you go your own way kind of thing. (Female, 17 years)

How would you describe the relationship that the staff have with the young people?

Good, it's not like just anybody. Most people don't give a shit about teenagers around the place ... the staff over here, they listen to you and all, if you've got something to say – like to do with the club or do with anything – they will listen to you and they'll take it into account. (Male, 16 years)

Well they're just, they just get on deadly.

Why do you think that is?

'Cause they like, they understand – you know that kind of a way? And they respect them and all. (Female, 16 years)

Good. They're well able to speak to them, like, and communicate with them – even the bold ones. (Female, 17 years)

I think they get on great. They keep people out of trouble. They were nice, like. They have to put up with a lot of cheek. They're nice bringing us away. (Male, 16 years)

Just, like, they get on well, like, they know what we're sort of thinking. [The worker] is not that old himself.

So do you think it's because they'd understand young people?

I think so, yeah. The two of them [leaders] grew up in [area]. (Male, 15 years)

This is important, as a positive trusting relationship with an adult is extremely beneficial and could potentially act as a buffer from risk, particularly when young people may be experiencing negative relationships with parents, teachers or others in the area.

Forty-three (84.3%) of the young people mentioned that staff listened to them and took their views into account.

Yeah, they treat you like friends, ya know what I mean? Not like younger like children or anything. (Male, 16 years)

Ah yeah, like I've a few problems at home and I'd say it to [youth worker/leader]. (Male, 16 years)

Yeah they listen, like. We get to say what we want to do, then they try their best. (Male, 15 years)

Yeah they do, but, like, we have to respect them as well. 'Cause if we don't respect them, we won't be able to get to go places and they won't respect us. (Male, 13 years)

Apart from the questions that were specifically asked about staff, all the young people were asked in general about adults they could talk to, particularly in situations where they needed advice and in situations where they were in trouble. Eight (15.7%) reported that if they were looking for advice from an adult, the first person they would go to would be the co-ordinator or other youth worker. Ten (19.6%) reported that, if they were in trouble and had to tell someone, the first person they would approach would be the co-ordinator or other youth worker on the Project. One 16-year-old male, although he was aware that the co-ordinator would not condone or approve of his cannabis use, felt he could discuss it with him rationally, whereas this could not be possible with his mother. Generally, there was a perception that the workers were more in touch with issues such as drug taking and problems at school.

Who would you go to if you needed advice?

I'd say [co-ordinator] or the teacher, but I'd say I have more access to [co-ordinator], he's considerate and he listens. (Female, 17 years)

It would appear that, in general, the young people view the Project staff as accessible and available, although there were differences across sites.

You could walk in on [co-ordinator] or [youth worker] or anybody in a meeting, they'd just drop anything for you ... the best thing about this is you could walk in the door and you don't have anyone asking you what do you want. Come in here and [co-ordinator] is, like, 'Have a cup of tea'. You're made feel welcome.

But even it's not even the centre. [Youth worker] or [co-ordinator] would say, 'Just because the centre is closed doesn't mean we're closed'. Like, you'd see us walking around, or knock over to the house any time. (Female, 18+ years)

Generally, it appeared that the Project staff had facilitated in the creation of an atmosphere of trust which has led to the development of positive relationships between staff and the young people. A number of young people reported receiving individual support which helped them deal with specific personal problems and issues they were experiencing.

In sum, it is evident from the participants' reports that the Project workers help to meet important needs for some of the young people.

6.3.13 Contact with parent(s)/guardians

The extent of contact that Project staff have with parents varies depending on the type of programme the young people participate in, i.e. more in cases of structured activities and less in cases of more casual or drop-in type programmes as in section 6.3.5 above.

In one site, the co-ordinator had a lot of contact with family members and it was not unusual for the co-ordinator to drop in and inform family members of upcoming group activities. This contact occurred from the outset of their involvement. In this particular site, one of the researchers was introduced to the parent(s)/guardians of the ten young people interviewed, and it was evident that the relationship between parents and co-ordinator was extremely positive. Similarly, in one other site, the co-ordinator appeared to have contacts

with all family members. In the two sites where the co-ordinator lived in the area, it was likely that in some cases parents already knew the co-ordinator.

Thirty-five (68.6%) indicated that the co-ordinator or other Project worker had some contact with their parent(s) or guardian. In situations where participants had been referred to another Project/programme, or received more individual work, it was more likely that the Project staff had contact with their parent(s) (e.g. in cases where young people were referred to counselling, Youthreach and so on). In addition, four (7.8%) mentioned that, although the Project staff did not have contact with their parents regarding the Projects, their parent(s) or guardian had previously met Project staff under other circumstances through living in the same area.

Like if we're going on a trip or anything, they come down and check with your parents. (Female, 14 years)

Chatting about what they do, she'd go to my mam if we needed things, sign things. (Female, 15 years)

Yeah, all our parents came in before the club started and they were talking. (Female, 10 years)

6.3.14 Perceptions of the aims of the Projects

The aims and objectives of the Projects, as perceived by the young people, were explored in the interviews. The majority of responses indicate that the purpose of the Project, as perceived by the participants, is to give the young people in the area something meaningful and constructive to do and, in doing so, to prevent the young people engaging in troublesome behaviour. From the comments below, there does seem to be an understanding of the role of the Project in terms of offending/crime/anti-social behaviour.

[Why do you think they have this Project?]

Keep us off the streets. (Male, 17 years)

Like, they're getting something for us to do so we won't be in trouble anymore. (Female, 14 years)

I don't know. Just some clubs just, say, start up to keep kids in off the road, so they don't go on drugs and all. Some people get bored and just go on drugs ... keep out of trouble. (Female, 14 years)

Try and help people like get them off the streets and all that, 'cause if they're on the streets they're probably messing, causing like mischief, getting in trouble then with Guards and all that. (Male, 15 years)

To get them off the street, give them something to do, keep them occupied ... stop them from doing things they shouldn't be doing out there. (Female, 16 years)

Why do you think Project runs these different groups?

Well [area] itself is a highly populated small area and from what I know I think there's high unemployment in it and there's high birth rate, d'ya know, among young people and I think they're running Project to educate the young people of today. Really, like, learn how to get on in society, like, with their family, like, respect themselves, each other, their friends, 'cause you can't respect anyone if you can't respect yourself. Well, that's one of the things I learnt here.

So you think that's why they have the Project to educate them?

Yeah and to keep them off the street. Have something for them to look forward to in the week ... keep them occupied. What else would they be doing? Sniffing or robbing. Keeping them occupied, really. (Female, 17 years)

Why do you think they have this club?

Keeping everyone off the roads, Guards start harassing everyone around, the Guards were harassing everyone. That was too much. Houses and cars being burnt out, just get some of the kids off the road.

[If the Project wasn't here] ... place would be like the North. (Male, 17 years)

Keep people off the streets ... in case get involved in drugs and fags and drink.

How did you get that idea?

Everyone used to say that's what it was, the Project to keep you off the streets. (Male, 14 years)

Get people off the streets, there's awful hassle down there with drugs and all that.

How do you know about that?

All of us just guessed like.

What kind of hassle was going on?

The primary school got burnt out, the portacabin got burnt out, there was all vandalism, cars robbed and all that. (Male, 14 years)

6.4 Progress, development and change

6.4.1 Overview

The interviews with the young people were, within the context of the design of the evaluative research, designed to explore and identify outcomes in relation to specific aims of the Garda Special Projects. These are:

- To *divert* young people from becoming involved in *crime and antisocial behaviour*.
- Provide suitable activities to facilitate *personal development* and encourage *civic responsibility*.

This implies that, for the Project to be effective in meeting these, those young people who are already involved in offending/antisocial behaviour will desist, and that those who have not already offended will be prevented from doing so in the future. The aims also imply that all those taking part will go through a process of personal and social development, a process which facilitates the development of positive personal and social attributes. The research questions for the evaluation were designed in this context. This section of the report explores both the nature of how Projects achieve these aims, and the extent to which their programmes bring about changes in behaviour and the acquisition of positive social attributes.

6.4.2 Outcome questions

The specific *desired* outcome questions addressed in this section include:

- What skills have participants learned – what do they perceive they have learned?
- What is their perception of change?
- What is their perception of the mechanisms bringing about this change?

These questions were explored with participants using qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The young people were asked questions regarding their learning experiences, and change in their own attitudes and behaviour, as a result of being involved in the Project. The transcripts were coded in order to track any changes in behaviour or attitude throughout the interview. The self-report section in the interview schedule enabled the collection of data on young people's involvement in different types of offending and other specific behaviours at different stages of time. Some of these questions, particularly regarding *change* and *learning*, were difficult for some of the young people to answer, in that they required a certain amount of self-reflection. However, this was a section that worked well for many of the young people, as it appeared to stimulate thinking about their behaviour and the impact of the Project on their lives.

Table 6.17: Number of participants who reported *learning* from their participation on the Project

	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes – Learned	44	86.3%
No – Did not learn	2	3.9%
Unsure/didn't say	5	9.8%

As can be seen from Table 6.17 above, the majority (86.3%) of the young people reported that they had learnt as a result of participating on the Project. The young people reported a wide variety of different learning outcomes. Many reported that they had learnt a new skill, or undertaken a new activity that they had undertaken as part of a team. Others indicated that they had learnt about aspects of their own personal behaviour and/or attitudes. In many cases, this was reflected more clearly in their self-report of change. Others felt that, as a result of the work they had engaged in through the Projects, they had gained positive social skills, such as improvements in their ability to communicate. Those who took part in the regular attenders groups reported that they learnt new skills in areas such as woodwork and computers, and reported on improvements with their reading and maths. Those who took part in the band felt that they had acquired positive personality characteristics/attributes, including self-confidence and responsibility, as well as mastering a musical instrument. The Projects appeared to be providing opportunities for new experiences to develop new skills, and, in some cases, assisted in helping with issues and problems particular to the individual. Overall, there appeared to be benefits for all the participants, in all the sites and in all the settings.

Categories of learning outcomes

- New activities and skills;
- Change in behaviour and attitude;
- Acquisition of positive social and personal attributes.

Some reported that their behaviour and attitude towards school changed as a result of their participation on the Projects. Some became more interested and motivated to progress at school, while, for others, it helped them to reshape their general conduct at school.

[I] learnt not to be messing in school and all.

How?

'Cause we'd be thrown out if we did and it's an easier thing if you stay and not be messing in school. It's easier for you if you don't mess in school. (Male, 15 years)

One 17-year-old female, looking back on her participation on the Project, believes now that she matured as a result of the involvement, and that her whole approach to problems and difficulties had changed for the better.

Did you learn anything from the club?

Think it kinda made you more ... kind of gave you a bit of cop on. You know what I mean, like? You're saying to yourself, kind of matured us all a bit.

How do you think it did that?

It's just the way they talked to you and the way they bring you off and you kind of get to see more stuff you, know what I mean, and you say to yourself, well, you know, say you might be having a problem with a teacher or something, and they'd say well go about this and kind of gave you advice, you know what I mean, and you're saying, and then you're looking at it and other people are going, are saying, 'No, you should be doing ...' like, you're kind of standing back and looking more, instead of jumping in. (Female, 17 years)

For some participants, the impact of the Project was on how they spent their time. This was evident from the first of the following comments, from a female who believed that the Project facilitated herself and others in undertaking new activities. This, in turn, led her and her friends to engage in the same activity, independent of their time on the Project.

Have you any new interests?

We get to go swimming and so we would go swimming and we've been to the gym so we can go by ourselves. (Female, 14 years)

Loads of things, learnt art and cookery, learnt how to get on with others, like d'ya know, to talk to each other and all that, and to work out things.

How did you learn that?

Learnt from [co-ordinator] to have good manners and be patient and all that, if she was talking to someone in the office, we'd have to be quiet. (Female, 12 years)

Learnt to swim better, canoe, I know how to canoe now, I got certs for that, learnt how to cook. (Male, 16 years)

Learnt to know that you can be a better person and be more ... there's things out there, you know, you can do in your life instead of getting into trouble.

Have you learnt any new skills?

Yeah, loads of skills, like talking to people, you'd think there'd be nothing out there for you and there is.

So is it kind of realising you're important and that there's things out there for you?

Yeah. (Female, 15 years)

From the talks we've had I've been educated like I've learnt more from, I've learnt a lot of stuff in the [Project] that school can't offer but that I couldn't talk to my mother and father about. I'd say that's why, if we asked for a discussion on a certain topic, the [Project] will help us out if we really want it. (Female, 17 years)

Many felt that they had learnt about their *behaviour* and *attitude*.

Just to behave yourself, not to be fighting or getting in trouble with anyone else ... if you get in trouble, you wouldn't be allowed stay in the [Project].

Why do you think people like yourself being in the group, you've learnt to behave yourself?

Just if we don't behave ourselves or we're not good for the leaders, we won't get to do anything or go anywhere. (Male, 13 years)

An awful lot, not to touch drugs and all, say it calmed us down an awful lot as well.

What were you like before?

Was going around smashing cars windows and all.

Did you stop when you joined it?

Yeah.

Did people talk to you about that?

No, just calmed us down, 'cause all the good things we were doing. (Male, 14 years, 2109)

Yeah I learnt, a while ago, for a while there I was a fucking mad yoke and then I came over here and [co-ordinator] was talking to me and all, he was the one who got me into [alternative school] so only for him, he got me tutor teachers and all, helped me with reading and writing stuff, I've learnt a lot.

(Male, 16 years)

Yeah, to really help animals and not to slap and kill them all the time, like I normally do.

What would you normally do?

My dog he bites me and I'd slap him with something – a stick.

And now you wouldn't?

No way. (Male, 12 years)

Those in the band reported a variety of learning outcomes, as illustrated by the following comments.

Being part of the band you've learnt to play the pipes but have there been other things that you have learnt?

I've become way confident, like. Now I'd consider myself a very confident person like through playing the pipes like, it's a different side of life, like, if I had never joined the band I'd probably just be just hanging around the streets, like before I used to know everything that happened like you know whatever would go on in [Project area] but now I kind of have more interest in the band side, I don't see that side of [Project area], well I know it's still happening like but whatever the bad side of it.

What do you mean, the bad side?

Like if someone say drugs and whatever, you'd know who's doing this and that, like, and you'd be kind of tended to sway that way, like, if you've nothing else to do, like. It's the same thing for some of the kids like. If I'm with the band, like, I don't have time to do that.

Do you think that would be the same for a lot of people who've got involved in the band?

'Cause when we joined, the first group of us if you met us, like, you wouldn't sit in a room with us, we weren't scumbags, like, but we were kind of off the rails like. (Male, 19 years)

Yeah kinda more outgoing with people, made a lot of new friends, friendlier with people, like I hang around with other people now that are in the band that I didn't know when I started. (Female, 18 years)

Those partaking in the regular attenders group were much more specific about what they learnt and, in many cases, this related to direct educational learning (numeracy and literacy) and to skills acquisition (computer skills, woodwork). However, there were also attitudinal and behavioural changes reported.

Multiplication sums, I've learnt them, I've learnt better how to takeaway [subtract], I've learnt a good bit about other wild animals, I've learnt a good bit about how to take down partitions [woodwork]

...

So you've learnt good skills?

Yeah, we could even get a job, you know [co-ordinator's] a carpenter we could even get a job like him 'cause the way he teaches us, he's so good. (Male, 15 years)

Kind of laid back on me attitude.

What do you mean by that?

When I was out on the streets, giving cheek to the neighbours and walking around drinking on the streets.

Are you saying that you're not doing this anymore?

Yeah.

Why do you think you've stopped?

'Cause there's no point in fighting. (Male, 16 years)

It was evident that many of the young people were learning new skills through participation in a range of activities which, in turn, appeared to be increasing their self-esteem and competence.

Table 6.18: Number of participants who reported a personal change from their participation on the Projects

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes – Changed	32	62.7%

No – Did not change	16	31.4%
Not sure	3	5.9%

All the young people interviewed were asked whether they perceived themselves to have changed as a result of their participation on the Project. This was a crucial question, considering that there is an inherent expectation or notion of change, diversion and progression in the objectives of the GSPs, particularly for those that have offended or got into trouble in their area. This question required participants to self-reflect on their behaviour and attitudes for the duration of their time on the Project, and to give a judgement as to whether a change had occurred.

Well over half of the participants reported a change in themselves personally (see Table 6.18 above). The majority of participants that reported positively indicated that this was related to a change in their behaviour, i.e. this was the case if they reported that they were no longer getting into trouble or if they had stopped joyriding and so on. Some of those that indicated a change were directly relating this to their involvement in the Project which is evident from some of the following comments.

Do you think you've changed since you've got involved, like since you started in September, do you think you've changed personally in any way?

Stopped joyriding. (Male, 17 years)

Yeah. Stay out of trouble, I do.

Why do you stay out of trouble now?

'Cause if you get into trouble with the police you won't be in the club anymore. (Male, 14 years)

Yeah ... a bit.

How do you think you've changed or what's changed about you?

I'm not messing anymore ... used to be all robbing and all and I don't do that anymore.

And why don't you do that anymore?

'Cause you're just gonna get in trouble and have your ma upset and all ... get thrown out of the club. (Male, 14 years)

Me attitude ... I was cheeky to anybody who said anything. (Male, 14 years)

It got me out of trouble.

Were you in trouble beforehand?

Yeah.

For what kind of things?

For smashing windows ... since I joined it, just kept me busy. (Male, 16 years)

No, not really, just still the same except I come up here, but I don't get in much trouble now. I used to get in trouble lots of times, all the time, now I don't.

Why do you think you don't get in trouble anymore?

'Cause I've better things to do.

Do you think it's because you're doing things here?

Think it is have something to do, yeah, 'cause we're going on trips and all; if we get in trouble, we won't be able to go on trips.

Did someone say that to you?

No, like, but, you know like, if you get in trouble, like, you're not going to be allowed come up. (Male, 15 years)

A lot changed for me.

In what way?

Just see before I started the club here I was always in trouble with Guards those things like but since it's grand. Nothing.

Why do you think since you've been coming up here nothing has been happening?

We're not staying down around [area] anymore. (Male, 17 years, 4106)

For many of those who reported changes in their behaviour and attitude, it was evident that this, in turn, was having spin-off effects in their lives, such as at school or at home. One 16-year-old male believes his change in attitude has, in turn, led to changes in his family relationships, particularly with that of his mother which had been quite negative as a result of his getting into trouble.

She [mother] thinks my attitude has went down, me and her never used to get on so we're getting on good now since I started [on the club]. (Male, 16 years)

Even as regards minor nuisance behaviour, the Project appeared to be having an impact.

Do you think you've changed at all since you've started in the club?

Yeah, little bit.

In what way?

I used to be real bold and always spit at people.

Why did you stop doing that?

'Cause I never did it in club.

Have you changed how you spend your time, what you do after school, do you do different things now?

Yeah, 'cause me friends used to always go around nick-knacking. (Male, 10 years)

Other changes indicated were cases of young people reporting that they had become more involved in other aspects of the community, more active and outgoing, with increases in their self-confidence, and more motivation to become involved. Like the responses to the previous question regarding learning outcomes, some reported that their ability to communicate and their personal and social skills in general had changed positively. Others reported changes in their behaviour and attitude towards school.

It was a difficult question for some of the young people to answer. Many felt that it was difficult to speculate what they would be like had they not been involved in the Project. There were others who felt they had changed, but found it difficult to verbalise in what way they had.

Yeah I think I kind of I was very quiet in first year, very, very shy, I hardly talked, I think I came out of meself a bit more and by the end of it.

What good things has the Project led to for you?

It got me more into school, it was more like thinking ah well I'll go into school and I'll be grand.

Do you think you changed as a result of the three years (on the Project)?

Yeah I think I would've gone a different way, I think a lot of us, there were some of them [in the group] that were going down the wrong path if you know what I mean like, kind of going the wrong direction I think [co-ordinator] and [youth worker] and that kind of sorted them out more you know. (Female, 17 years)

Yeah, like, you know, see, ages ago, like, when I wasn't in the club, like, just walk around and do nothing. And now that I'm, when I went into the club, it got me more interested in football and doing all things so when I'm at home we have a game. (Female, 14 years)

I think so, I've met more friends like instead of sitting in the house and watching TV I go to cinema or the club, just getting you out and taking part in stuff. (Female, 14 years)

Before I was even in the [Project] yeah before I was even in the [Project] just like I dunno just my personality has changed like my respect for people, I used to go around thinking I was the big one in the gang when I was twelve, when I was thirteen and I was sniffing gas and we had a talk here one night about what could happen to you that's when I stopped, I realised what I was doing, I've changed a good bit like people have said like my friend when I went to the [school] ... she couldn't believe how, how quiet I got ... I changed, I got quieter, just I was more interested in schoolwork.

What positive things has the Project led to?

Made me realise like how to work with children, but for me I do be excited coming up here, it's giving people something to look forward to, it's changed people like all my group, it's something we all look forward to 'cause we have a great laugh up here. (Female, 17 years)

Sort of ... I've gained self-confidence, I've also gained the respect of all the boys in the group, all the friends as well ... just builds up. (Female, 14 years)

All those from the band who were interviewed reported that they had learnt a variety of personal and social skills, and reported developing positive traits, like self-confidence and responsibility, and, as a result, some were now taking on leadership roles themselves. They indicated that these changes were directly attributable to the band.

I don't know if I've changed 'cause I don't know what I'd be like unless I was in the band but I'd say my life wouldn't be as good as it is if it wasn't for the band, like, 'cause I've had the world of opportunities. (Male, 19 years)

Yeah, definitely.

In what way?

More open. I used to be quiet and never talk to anyone I didn't know in general but now I can sit down and talk to people that I haven't met before and find out different things about them. (Female, 17 years)

A number of participants reported that, through being engaged in a number of Project activities, they had changed how they spent their free time, believing now that they participated and got involved more. Participants reported that they 'weren't as bored'. Many had developed new interests in sports and arts. Others commented on how the Project just kept them physically off the streets. As a result of having things to do and being engaged in the Projects, participants were reporting simply that they 'know what to do when bored'.

Do you think in anyway you have changed what you do in your spare time, like what you do in the evenings?

Yeah 'cause usually I just go out down the street but now I come up here, [co-ordinator] might ring me say come over and give him a hand, take a group swimming or something and stuff like that, help him out rather than down the street doing nothing. (Male, 16 years)

Well I used to hang around, you know, talking to people at the corners like, but now I don't. I come up here. (Male, 13 years)

This male was referring to the fact that he now availed of the other recreational facilities available where the Project premises is based, including pool, indoor football, etc.

Yeah, keeps us, just there around the roads, more come up here than anything, kept me off the roads. (Male, 17 years)

Probably would, yeah.

In what way?

Down the road standing at the corner probably hassled by cops, suspicious on road, kept out of trouble. (Male, 17 years)

Some talked about changes they had noticed in themselves in terms of their motivation to participate and be actively involved. This was particularly marked for a 15-year-old male who had left both mainstream schooling and a Youthreach programme, but now appeared to be motivated and committed to attending the regular attender group in the Project.

Well the minute my mother just said [his name] from her room 'cause she'd be getting up and I jump out of bed but if that was on a Saturday or Sunday she could say [my name] 20 times I would not move.

Why do you think you do get up?

'Cause I like it. (Male, 15 years)

Some reported that, as a result of their involvement with the Project, they got involved or referred on to other Projects/groups or specialised type help (e.g. counselling, Youthreach, jobs training, drug treatment and so on). Other positive changes reported by young people were the development of social skills. Some reported that they were more sociable and outgoing, and related this to different types of experiences in the Project, such as mixing and integrating with other groups in their own and other areas, including cross border Projects, and with other cultures through international exchanges.

In addition, a number of young people mentioned that, through their involvement in the Project, they had the opportunity to take part in various courses, such as leadership training and social education courses, and, for many, this transferred into the young people gaining experience working with groups of younger children. Some of these young people reported helping out with younger groups in the community, such as in the local youth service. Some mentioned helping out with summer projects and sports coaching in the area. One 16-year-old male described how he himself was now taking on a leadership role through engaging with younger groups.

Me and another fella in this place [Project] we're going to the community schools next Monday and just basically showing that our friends, most of our friends are troublemakers we just want to show them like what you can do and what we're achieving now.

So you and your friend are going down to the community school and are you meeting with people?

Just meeting it's like [Project worker and co-ordinator] you know being a leader for younger clubs and basically we just want to show them what we got out of it, just give up joyriding, drugs and all that.

Why did you decide that you were going to do that?

[Co-ordinator] had a talk with us.

So now it's like you're being the leader?

Yeah.

Other changes mapped out in the young people's reports include changes for some in their use of alcohol and drugs (see sections 6.5.8 and 6.5.9 below) and school behaviour, such as attendance, conduct and motivation to progress through school.

The majority of young people reported a desire to maintain their involvement in the Projects; however, there is an awareness that, as they progress in their lives, their participation in the Projects will become less of a priority. This is evident from the comment below.

Like, all the lads I joined with, four of them left, they were here [Project] for three years, they got jobs. Some of them are labourers and apprenticeships and couldn't really make time for it if you're working. Like, it's no problem. They [Project staff] just say like their lives have progressed on. (Male, 19 years)

Those who wanted to stay for a longer duration were those that mentioned wanting to become a leader themselves.

Over half of the young people indicated that, aside from the GSP, they were not involved in or engaged with any other Project group or team, either in the community or outside. An important consideration here is that, for these young people, this may be the first time that they have engaged constructively in a group/facility in their own community.

It is evident, then, that the Projects are facilitating a process of social and personal development in which young people are learning and even contributing, in some cases, to change in their behaviour and attitude which is affecting their lives across a number of settings, including school, home and their community.

6.5 Self-report on offending and other behaviours

6.5.1 Overview

The interview schedule was designed to obtain information on the extent of offending and other specific behaviours among the young people participating on the Projects. To do this, the researchers needed to develop an instrument that would return reliable data and be culturally appropriate to the contexts that Projects operate in. Given that this is not a longitudinal study, the researchers resorted to constructing a Self-Report Behaviour Checklist (SRBC). The checklist drew a number of categories together, in an eclectic way, from the following:

- Taking account of specific behaviours leading to urban crime and disorder, as specifically indicated by informants in Stage 1 of the evaluation;
- The context of urban crime and disorder, as highlighted in the Report of the Interdepartmental Group (1992);
- Standard offence and 'anti-social behaviour' categories used by psychologists (DSM-IV) insofar as these reflected the typical pattern of urban crime and disorder within Project contexts.

Thus the SRBC includes the following categories and sub-categories:

- Aggressive behaviours (fighting, use of weapons);
- Destruction of property (graffiti, arson, smashing windows);
- Car related offences (joyriding, driving without tax and insurance);
- Theft (shoplifting, burglary);
- Violation of school and revolt against familial codes (truancy, running away from home).

The SRBC is periodised so as to gather data on whether respondents:

- *Ever* offended or broke any social rules (as above);
- Offended *since* being involved on the Project;
- Offended *recently* – in the past month.

This enabled the gathering of data to map the behaviour of the young people over a specific period of time. In this way, the SRBC was used to assess the impact of the Projects on diverting young people from offending and other antisocial behaviours.

This method has limitations. It does not specifically link the reporting to particular Project mechanisms which may have caused or influenced personal or behavioural change. Lifetime prevalence or 'ever offended' as an indicator have the obvious limitation of clustering together those who are persistent in the various categories of behaviour and those who only ever committed an offence once. The researchers are conscious that the results emanating from the SRBC have to be tempered in this context. In addition, as it is based upon self-report, it is not comparable with reported or detected crime. Recognising these limitations, we present, in this and other sections, direct quotations from the transcripts of interviews to contextualise the data given in the relevant tables.

6.5.2 Results

The results reveal that forty-five (88.2%) of the young people had engaged in the behaviours listed on the SRBC as in Table 6.19 below. This represents the majority of the young people involved with the Projects. As expected, there was huge variation amongst this group in the extent of the involvement and the frequency with which they engaged in these behaviours, from those who wrote graffiti on a wall or trespassed on private property once, to those who engaged in a variety of aggressive and destructive behaviours on a more frequent basis.

Table 6.19: Number of participants reporting 'ever' committed offence or engaged in listed behaviours

<i>Behaviour category</i>	<i>Ever</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Got in trouble with the neighbours	13	25.5%
Started fights	25	49.0%
Involved in gang fights	21	41.2%
Used a weapon to hurt someone	15	29.4%
Deliberately set fire to somebody's property	8	15.7%
Deliberately destroyed somebody's property	33	64.7%
1. Graffiti	26	51.0%
2. Smashed windows	15	29.4%
3. Damaged cars	8	15.7%
Car related offences	16	31.37%
1. Broke into a car	8	15.7%
2. Present in a car that was stolen only	4	7.8%
3. In a car without owner's consent	2	3.9%
4. Driving a car without tax and insurance	2	3.9%
Broke into a house	2	3.9%
Stole directly from person	5	9.8%
Stole items from somewhere	25	49.0%
Sold drugs	3	5.9%
Ran away from home over night	9	17.6%
Mitched (truant) from school	28	54.9%
Entered property without owner's permission	18	35.3%
Total number of young people who ever engaged in the above behaviours	45	88.2%

Although 88.2% had engaged in behaviours on the SRBC, it is evident that there was a higher occurrence of specific types of behaviour. The behaviours that the highest number of people had engaged in were: destruction of property (64.7%), truancy (54.9%), theft (49.0%) and starting fights (49.0%).

For those who had deliberately *destroyed somebody's property*, the majority reported that this was graffiti, writing on walls, gates, poles or the pavement. Other types of destructive actions included smashing windows (houses or vacant buildings), damaging cars (taking hubcaps and breaking windows) and generally defacing property (such as damaging roofs and cutting cable wires). Typical comments made in interviews include:

Have you ever smashed windows?

Yeah, in phone boxes. We used to rob the cars and tie a rope around the phone boxes and speed down the street and take the phone box down the street. (Male, 16 years)

I was throwing stones at cars with one of my friends. (Male, 16 years)

Like, if a robbed car came in, like, sometimes they'd rally it and while they're driving people just pick up a rock and throw it through the window. Like, everybody does it and they still do it to this day. (Female, 14 years)

Another form of destruction of property, 'deliberately set fire to property', was reported by 15.7% of the young people. In general, this referred to the burning out of cars, but there was a case where one male had burned a farm with his friends after they had been using solvents.

[We were] sniffing [gas], didn't know what we were doing, the squad car came and the whole place went up. (Male, 16 years)

A car, yeah, if there were people going around in a field, and just left the car, we just burnt it. It wasn't just me. (Male, 15 years)

Fighting was reported by 49% of the young people, and 41.2% reported having being involved in gang fights. It was not unusual for the young people to mention that at these times they had been drinking alcohol. Of those who had been fighting, 29.4% reported having used a weapon of some sort to hurt someone. The type of weapon varied but mainly included one of the following: sticks, bats, stones, knives, bricks, bottle.

Getting in trouble with neighbours in the area was a general category used to include those who had got into trouble for a number of reasons but, generally, this represented cases where young people had been a nuisance to neighbours through being disruptive or loud on the street. Thirteen (25.5%) young people reported that this had occurred. A 16-year-old male described how he and his friends had got in trouble with the neighbours as a result of drinking and noise levels, and that, in certain cases, this had resulted in confrontation with some of the neighbours. This was not an unusual comment for those who had got in trouble with neighbours.

Just drinking and neighbours coming out, just when you're drunk, just tell them to fuck off.

And why would the neighbours come out?

Too much noise, making too much noise. (Male, 16 years)

Well, neighbours gave out about the noise a lot of times.

What would you do?

Mainly walk away, turn off radio ... I'd say one or two given abuse, shouted something at least, most of the times walk away. (Female, 16 years)

You would've said to a certain extent you annoyed the neighbours?

Yeah, but what else can you do? Especially in an area like this. I was always getting in trouble for hanging around [area], like, 'cause there used to be about 30 of us altogether, summer nights drinking and whatever. We were only about 14-15. It wasn't my friends, like, 'cause I still hang around with the same friends, wasn't them, that they were misleading me or anything like that, do you know when you have nothing to do or nowhere to hang around and they constantly tell us to move and move on, and nowhere else to go.

When did that all stop then?

I was still in school anyway, I remember they had community meetings about us. There are things, like, you don't want to, don't want things, you look back at and say it was good crack, like, I wouldn't like to be saying that or boasting about it.

So there were meetings about you?

Yeah, we were kind of like a problem. There used to be benches up and we were constantly there and around the shops.

Were you being an annoyance?

Yeah. Nothing to do like ... mostly the people's houses.

Have you ever, when you were hanging around like that, got into trouble for things like throwing stones or intimidating neighbours or anything like that?

I suppose we were intimidating when I look back, hanging around with a group of 15 people sitting on your wall, like we wouldn't be there till 10 o'clock and might be there till one or two in the morning.

And drinking?

Not every night.

When did you stop hanging around?

When we got, I think the [Project] was just starting, we all got involved in the [Project]. We just weren't around, weren't up there any more, and the lads that didn't join the [Project]. There was only about four or five of them left so they kind of took off different ways. We used to come up after the [Project]. We used to hang around for a while, a half an hour or whatever, and then go home. It did really kind of have a change on the group of us that started, 'cause there was about eight of us that joined out of that gang, and, of the eight of us, none of us can't say a bad word about any of them that had got into trouble, they're all working. (Male, 19 years)

Some, mostly males participants who got into trouble in the area, had developed a name for themselves and consequently reported getting blamed for other incidents and occurrences which, in many cases, resulted in further confrontations between neighbours and the young people. This should be borne in mind as a key factor in disputes. It should not be assumed, because young people report that they end up having disputes with neighbours, that they caused the dispute, but, as in all disputes, they are one party. The possibility that adults cause disputes, because of over-reaction for instance, cannot be ruled out.

Eighteen (35.3%) reported *entering someone's property without their permission*. In many cases, this referred to people's gardens and walls but, in other cases, referred to vacant buildings and private fields and orchards.

Sixteen (31.37%) reported some type of *car related offences*. This was broken into a number of offences as they emerged from the interviews. Eight (15.7%) said specifically that they had broken into a car. All but one of

these reported that they would have been joyriding in the car (one broke into a car; however, he was unable to get the car started). One of the eight also mentioned that sometimes he broke into a car to steal the radio. All eight were males. Four (7.8%) other participants mentioned that, although they did not break into a car, they were present in a car that was stolen. Two females reported this.

Have you ever broken into a car?

I went around with them when they were breaking into a car, like. I was in a few cars but only caught in one, like. I'd check the window or see if there was an alarm on but never tried to do it meself.

(Female, 18+ years)

Have you ever been in a car that someone else had taken?

Once.

When was this?

During the summer. He just dropped me up to the shop, I wouldn't want to stay in it.

How did you know he had stolen it?

He told me when we were going up the road. He left it at the side of the road. (Male, 16 years)

The remainder of car related offences related to those who specifically indicated that they had driven a car without tax and insurance, and the those who had taken a car without driver's consent (this referred to two separate males who had taken a car in which they had access to the keys of the car).

Me friend took his ma's car. We went out on a spin in it and the Garda caught us in it ... it was during the day ... [they] brought us down to the Garda station in [area], took statements off us ... we shouldn't have been in the car. (Male, 14 years)

Twenty-five (49.0%) indicated that they had *stolen items from somewhere*. In general this referred to shoplifting, but there were cases where young people had stolen items from school, houses/gardens and gyms. The types of items stolen varied to include food, clothes, money, bikes, alcohol and so on. Eight of the young people that reported shoplifting indicated that they had stolen only food/sweets/drinks. Others reported stealing small items such as stationery and toiletries; a smaller number stole more valuable items, such as bikes, money, jewellery and clothes.

Yeah, all the time. Go in, take bars, can of coke.

Have you taken other things in town?

Yeah, football jerseys. (Male, 16 years)

Five (9.8%) indicated that they had *stolen items directly from the person*. This generally referred to pick-pocketing wallets; there did not appear to be any confrontation in these cases. Two (3.9%) reported that they had ever broken in to a house.

[Robbed] houses, I never robbed anybody else, like. I'd never rob anyone on the street or anything like that. I'd go in the house and rob but I wouldn't rob them on the street.

Broke into a house four or five times.

What would you take?

Something small. Wouldn't take a video – too big to carry. Anything ... jewellery.

Would it be houses in the area?

No, we'd go outside the area, we don't take from our own ... just posh areas. (Male, 16 years)

In terms of *violation of rules*, 28 (54.9%) reported that they had been truant from school, and nine (17.6%) had run away from home overnight.

The young people were also asked about times they got in *trouble with the Guards* as a result of their behaviour. Their responses are broken into two categories: those that were officially charged, JLO'd or cautioned, and those that were informally reprimanded by the Gardaí (name and address taken) or given an informal warning. The numbers of young people who reported this are revealed in Table 6.20 below.

Table 6.20: 'Got into trouble with the Gardaí'

<i>Involvement with the Gardaí</i>	<i>Yes</i>		<i>No</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Official: (Charged or cautioned)	24	47.1%	27	52.9%
Informal: (On-the-spot, e.g. name taken or reprimand)	29	56.9%	22	43.1%

Over half of the young people had received some informal warning or caution from the Gardaí, and under half were officially charged, JLO'd or cautioned. It was noted through some of the interviews that those who had got into trouble officially with the Guards were unaware or unsure of their status in terms of whether they were charged, JLO'd or cautioned. Generally, there appeared to be a lack of understanding amongst the respondents in this regard. From what the young people mentioned, it appeared that six (11.8%) were 'JLO'd', five were charged (9.8%), and five (9.8%) were cautioned; the remainder were unsure of their status.

The types of offences for which young people were arrested or charged include: fighting and gang fighting, robbing cars, deliberately damaging property, shoplifting, assault, drunk and disorderly behaviour, selling cannabis.

Have you ever been JLO'd or charged?

Yeah.

Were you JLO'd?

I don't know what I was charged with. I was just arrested one night.

What happened?

I think I was drunk and disorderly ... about two years ago.

Can you remember what happened?

I was out with friends. That's all I can remember.

What were you doing that the Guards arrested you?

I haven't got a clue.

What happened? Did they take you to the station?

They took me down to the station, and took me home and I sobered up.

Did the Gardaí ever call up then again?

No, that was it.

Has anything ever happened since with the Guards?

No.

Yeah. Got caught in the old shop, it was burnt down and we were in there, then a few months later, throwing stones. They said we were throwing stones at the car. (Male, 16 years)

Breaking windows, stupid things like that ... caught with drugs or something. (Male, 17 years)

Yeah. Got charged. They told me that they'd send a summons to me house and Guards been to our house so many times they know us real well. Me ma, like, she snapped so I came straight over there like [co-ordinator] phoned the Garda and I didn't hear anything about it. (Female, 18+ years)

Those who mentioned receiving informal warnings from the Gardaí mentioned that they were as a result of trespassing.

Have you ever got in trouble with the Guards at all?

Just there was a house around the corner. It was empty, and one of me friends was over there and I went over there ... one of the Guards came in and just took our names.

What were your friends doing in the house?

Just sitting. It was just a place to go. (Female, 14 years)

As part of the SRBC in the interview schedule, the young people were asked to indicate not only whether they had engaged in any offending or other behaviour, but also *when* they had engaged in this behaviour. Data in Table 6.21 below is presented in aggregate form and comprises all the responses from all the young people that were interviewed. Not all behaviours from the original SRBC are included in this table (i.e. information on trespassing and truancy), and their elimination is either due to missing data or categories not being relevant to all participants. For each category of behaviour, there were clear and, in some categories substantial, percentage decreases in offences and behaviours 'ever' engaged in.

What must be considered, in examining Table 6.21, is that the middle column indicates whether individuals engaged in the behaviours listed *since* they have been involved in the Project and, for some, this covers a long period of time. The data do not link specific categories of change with particular mechanisms deployed by Projects; however, when placed alongside other comments from young people, they contextualise the changes reported by the young people. In some cases, the direct connection between Project participation and behavioural change is made by the young people.

Looking back on it, yeah, it is dangerous. I could've killed everybody in that car that night. (Male, 16 years)

A 16-year-old male who had been in trouble a number of times (including for selling hash, robbed cars arson) talked about how joyriding was ‘good craic’ and doing it as a result of boredom. His comments below appeared to illustrate a shift in his attitude.

Have your ideas about it changed or are they just the same?

Yeah I gave up the joyriding so I did, I’m trying to cut down.

Why?

’Cause it’s stupid, it’s not worth it. Like, if I go to jail – fuck it, I don’t want to be in jail. (Male, 16 years)

Since I joined the club I stopped joyriding. [Youth worker] said if you get more charges for joyriding, [I’d] get thrown out of the group. (Male, 17 years)

One 16-year-old male went from ‘causing trouble every night’ (throwing stones and damaging property and cars) to no trouble, currently.

Things have changed since I started coming up here anyway ... I don’t want to be living my life in prison. (Male, 17 years)

Since I got caught, that was, say, last month, I got caught in the car. The following day I was only thinking of [co-ordinator] getting charged and all, and not going to be able come over here, well I know I would, they’d never turn you away but feel ashamed, ’cause you let him down. Then, when I was caught in that robbed car, [the co-ordinator] ate me, I was that ashamed ’cause I let him down more than going back in telling me da, like, I let [co-ordinator] down more than anyone else. (Female, 18+ years)

Table 6.21: Offending and anti-social behaviour of participants over a period of time

Behaviour	Ever		Since joining the Project		In the last month	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Got in trouble with the neighbours	13	25.5%	8	15.7%	4	7.8%
Starting fights	25	49.0%	16	31.4%	6	11.8%
Involved in gang fights	21	41.2%	10	19.6%	3	5.9%
Used a weapon to hurt someone	15	29.4%	5	9.8%	1	2.0%
Deliberately set fire to somebody’s property	8	15.7%	1	2.0%	0	0%
Deliberately destroyed property	33	64.7%	21	41.2%	10	19.6%
1. graffiti	26	51.0%	15	29.4%	5	9.8%
2. smashed windows	15	29.4%	8	15.7%	1	2.0%
3. damaged cars	8	15.7%	5	9.8%	4	7.8%
Car related offences	16	31.37%	11	21.57%	6	11.8%
1. Broke into a car	8	15.7%	6	11.8%	4	7.8%
2. Present in a car that was stolen	4	7.8%	2	3.9%	1	2.0%
3. In a car without owner’s consent	2	3.9%	2	3.9%	0	0%
4. Driving a car without tax / insurance	2	3.9%	1	2.0%	1	2.0%
Broke into a house	2	3.9%	1	2.0%	0	0%
Stole directly from person	5	9.8%	2	3.9%	0	0%
Stole items from somewhere	25	49.0%	11	21.6%	3	5.9%
Sold drugs	3	5.9%	3	5.9%	1	2.0%
Run away from home over night	9	17.6%	4	7.8%	2	3.9%

As with decreases in offending and other behaviours evident in the SRBC, those who reported getting in trouble with the Guards as a result of these behaviours mentioned that they either stopped getting in trouble with the Guards, or not to the same extent. Out of the 24 (47.1%) who reported officially getting in trouble with the Guards, ten (19.6%) reported that this occurred while on the Project and three (5.9%) reported this happened in the past month.

Why do you think you’re not getting into as much trouble with the Guards?

I want to be out of their way.

Why?

I want a school to go to, stay here [Project] instead of going to jail, want a decent job.

So is that why you're staying out of trouble?

Yes. (Male, 13 years)

I don't want to get in trouble, when you're a grown man, don't want to be in jail, out robbing or anything. (Male, 12 years)

You were saying that you used to get in trouble, all sorts of times and do all sorts of stuff, why do you think you've stopped?

'Cause I knew where it was going to lead, like, that I was going to keep getting in trouble, eventually I'd get me comeuppance. Eventually someone would give me a good hiding. Like people get beatings for robbing cars and all I would've ended up. (Male, 15 years)

Things have changed for you, you're getting on well with your mum and you're not getting into trouble why do you think there has been this change?

'Cause I've been helped out ... by [Project worker].

So do you think it's a good thing for everyone in your group?

Yeah, most of us are settled down. (Male, 16 years)

6.5.3 Friends in trouble

Thirty-eight (74.5%) of the young people reported that at least one of their friends had engaged in any offending behaviour (as listed on the SRBC). Thirty-six (70.6%) young people reported that at least one of their friends had got in trouble with the Guards as a result of these behaviours. The types of behaviours which their friends had engaged in varied, but included fighting, trespassing, damage of property, shoplifting and joyriding as in Table 6.22 below.

Table 6.22: Types of behaviour and offences committed by friends

<i>Behaviour/offence</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Joyriding/taking cars	13	25.5%
Shoplifting/stealing	11	21.6%
Damaging property	7	13.7%
Fighting	2	3.9%
Trespassing	2	3.9%
Unsure	2	3.9%
Selling drugs	1	2.0%

This indicates that a substantial number of the young people had a friend who had engaged in offending behaviours. Some indicated that this was the case for a large proportion of their friends.

6.5.4 Siblings in trouble

Nineteen (37.3%) of the young people reported that at least one of their siblings had got in trouble with the Guards; this mostly referred to their brothers, particularly their older brothers. The type of involvement varied substantially. Some reported minor involvement with the Gardaí as a result of trespassing and shoplifting; others reported the imprisonment of siblings. Six mentioned specifically that this was related to joyriding, eight mentioned stealing (most cases shoplifting); others mentioned drug-related offences, and two respondents were not sure of their exact involvement. Three mentioned that their brothers were currently or had been previously in prison.

6.5.5 Attitudes to crime

Following on from the self-report section, the young people were asked about crime in their community and attitudes towards certain crimes. It appeared that the majority of young people are exposed to offending behaviours in their area, and all would have an awareness of this in their community. Some of the young people would be very exposed to joyriding in their area. For some, this is a nightly or weekly occurrence, as their responses reveal – 'three or four robbed cars a night', 'every second night', 'before Christmas, there was seven

on one day'. The general attitude towards joyriding was that it is a highly dangerous behaviour, and not an acceptable one. However, there were those who perceived it as being fun as well as dangerous.

A 14-year-old female said she had never been in a stolen car, but she felt she could understand why others did joyride. So, while perceiving joyriders in a negative light, at the same time she empathised with and understood their motives. For others, it is the spectacle that is fun.

It gives you, like, a buzz 'cause there's nothing else to do. You'd just be hanging around the wall so you get a buzz out of that ... They're scumbags but, like, there's nothing else for us to do. (Female, 14 years)

It's fun when the cars are going up the road and you're not in it, that's fun, when you're just looking at it going down the road. (Male, 12 years)

Those who were not exposed to joyriding were exposed indirectly to other types of offending, in that they were acutely aware of the damage to property and graffiti in the areas. The general attitude is that graffiti is more acceptable; there were those who described it as 'nothing ... harmless ... nothing, get it in every estate you go into', 'is not damaging anyone'. However, there was the perception from some that it's not right: 'you're writing on someone's wall', and the impact on the community: 'pretty bad, 'cause it's ruining the neighbourhood'. There were those that differentiated between graffiti and other types of destruction of property, such as smashing windows, with the latter being more serious.

There's plenty of that around here ... I don't mind it, there's writing on nearly every wall in the estate ... There's always been writing on the walls. (Male, 16 years)

What about things like vandalism?

Everybody does it, you wouldn't even think about it.

Does it matter?

Yeah, it does matter. People have to pay. (Male, 16 years)

No right to be breaking windows for nothing. (Female, 16 years)

What do you think about writing on walls?

I think, like, see all their joyriding names, you know, 'Up the hoods' and all that, all around our place.

It just looks disgusting 'cause if you go into, like, a nice area and just look at yours and then look at theirs, just say 'God!'. (Female, 16 years)

Others perceived that there were changes in crime in the Project areas. This was mentioned in two areas.

Do you think that there is a lot of crime in the area?

There is, but I think you can't see it anymore because there's so much good coming out of it now, like.

The crime is decreasing in a way or else you just can't see it, I don't know. (Female, 17 years)

It appeared that offending is seen as a relatively common activity in the Project areas. It is evident that, in their view, the rational explanation for others offending is because there was a lack of any real constructive alternatives in the area for young people.

Joyriding?

I was going to try loads of times 'cause there was nothing to do. (Male, 14 years)

I wouldn't joyride, but it's good watching the cars.

Why is it good?

It just is. Nothing else to do. (Male, 15 years)

What kinds of things do they do?

They rob motor bikes, they rob things out of the backs and burn them, and rob a shop ... they've nothing else to do down there. (Female, 13 years)

A 17-year-old male who had been involved in joyriding reported that, since his involvement in the Project, this has ceased. He indicated that the group has somewhat contributed to this change, in that 'it keeps your mind off it'.

What do you think about joyriding?

Used to like it ... when I was doing it ... just to be in the gang.

Do you think joyriding is fun?

Not now. I've copped on. (Male, 17 years)

I used to think joyriding was good, like, watching it, like.

Why don't you think it anymore?

I just don't 'cause, like, too many people getting killed. (Female, 15 years)

6.5.6 *Impact on the area*

In addition to looking at the impact of the Projects on the lives of the young people, participants were asked about the impact the Project had on their area (neighbourhood and community). The majority believed that the Project was making a difference. The main difference was that it was providing constructive activities, and physically 'keeping young people off the streets', as opposed to having nothing to do. In addition, there was the perception that the people involved in the Project were 'keeping out of trouble', which makes a difference in how they perceive their area.

Do you think that the club makes a difference for people living in the area?

Yeah. People that are in the club won't be robbing cars and all, 'cause they'll get in trouble.

So do you think that there's less trouble on the streets because of the club?

Nah. I wouldn't say that now ... I'd say that people that are in it are staying out of trouble.

Do you think all the young people that come to the club are staying out of trouble?

Yeah. (Male, 15 years)

Yeah ... takes all the dossers off the road. (Male, 15 years)

If this centre wasn't here, there'd be nothing. (Female, 18+ years)

They probably think it's good keeping young people off the streets. (Male, 16 years)

Do you think that the club makes a difference for people living in the area?

It doesn't make a difference for them, makes a difference for us. (Male, 14 years)

Yeah, 'cause they're not hanging around sitting on walls and that. (Female, 16 years)

Yeah, 'cause, like, people wouldn't be breaking windows or anything like that, wouldn't harm any other people. (Male, 13 years)

I think since this [Project] started up, [area] has quietened down a lot, 'cause it's taken most trouble makers off the street and shown them what they can do instead of going out and ruining themselves. (Male, 16 years)

Just think it's a big advantage to [area], that's being honest.

Yeah, 'cause the children come here and not getting in trouble, and then people don't have to worry about them. See, they probably get in trouble if they're on streets and people would have to complain about, now they're probably not, 'cause, you know like, smashing windows. Now people probably aren't doing that. (Male, 15 years)

In one area, there was the perception that the Project has raised the profile of the area from being one of predominantly negative to positive which, in turn, was contributing to a feeling of pride in the area. This comment by a 17-year-old girl echoes the comments of others in her area.

Yeah, because we get, a lot of times, we get articles in the paper about [area] like the bad parts of it, but now the [county newspaper] kind of brings up bringing in the band and the clubs, they're talking a lot about that in the paper, so it's not just the bad things anymore ... I'd say a lot of people are proud to say now ... before they'd say, 'Where are you from?' ... they'd kind of hesitate, but now don't, 'cause people know there's good in [the area], like. (Female, 17 years)

Yeah, like, there's trouble again now, d'ya know [now the Project has stopped temporarily], they'd all be smashing bottles and things in the day, they've nothing to do ... the boys, they have nothing to do, they just does that for fun. (Female, 13 years)

6.5.7 *Enjoyment of Projects*

It was evident from the interviews with the young people that they enjoyed being involved in the Projects and, as a result, were committed and motivated to attend and partake in Project activities. The Project was something they looked forward to, as a 14-year-old female said, 'Just that it's something to look forward to'. In addition to the learning and changes the Projects had contributed to, the young people also pointed out other benefits to being engaged in Projects. The main reasons for enjoyment fall into the following categories:

- Enjoyment of the activities and trips;
- The social interaction with friends;
- Provides an alternative to just hanging around and/or getting into trouble;
- Receiving help and advice with particular problems or issues.

Are you happy that you got involved in the Project?

Yeah ... keeping me out of trouble and all that ... so I don't get kept in for the whole night. (Male, 12 years)

Just getting together with all your friends and all, it's interesting. (Female, 12 years)

Mainly the trips and the way they listen to you if you've a problem. (Male, 10 years)

Just that I thought it was a good thing for us, you know, like. It kind of helped us out a lot and it was, like, you always knew if you had anything to talk about and you couldn't talk to anyone, you could always go to [co-ordinator] or [other workers], you know. I think it was a good thing for us ... I think it benefited us all. (Female, 17 years)

It's just brilliant, have a laugh ... gets me out of the house, gives us something to do, I think it's the same for everybody, like, 'cause there's nothing to do at all down in [estate], just sit on a corner or something, there's no point in doing that. (Male, 16 years)

Yeah, it's something to do, the different stuff we do. (Male, 13 years)

I like the leaders and like all the people that's in it. Me friends and all like the activities we do. (Female, 16 years)

'Cause I think it's brilliant, think they [those who fund Projects] should do more of them in different places, everywhere that needs them. We definitely needed them for a boost. (Female, 17 years)

What are the good things about it being here?

Definitely for most of the young fellas keeps them off the roads; if it wasn't there, [they'd] probably be all locked up. (Male, 17 years)

We've gotten to go places and on our first day marching down O'Connell Street, it was a pure proud feeling. Everyone was cheering for us. No one believed that we'd be out there ... it was a brilliant feeling ... all of [area] go down to cheer us on. (Female, 18 years)

Have a laugh, don't cost you nothing. (Male, 16 years)

It was about everything, d'ya know, talking to people, making new friends, and making friends that they call up to you every day, and all that, get invited to slumbers, birthday parties ... It's a very good club to go to and it's very nice. (Female, 12 years)

It was something to do for starters, you won't be stuck at home doing nothing, sitting watching TV. (Male, 11 years)

6.6 Interaction with the Gardaí

6.6.1 Interaction mediated by the Project

All the young people interviewed were asked about the involvement of the Gardaí in the Project, with the aim of looking at their awareness of the type of involvement and their attitudes towards this involvement. The answers were coded into different types of involvement, as illustrated in Table 6.24 below. In a later section, data on young people's attitudes towards the Guards in general is presented.

Table 6.23: Participants' awareness of the involvement of the Gardaí on the Project

<i>Awareness of Garda involvement</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	40	78.4%
No/don't know	4	7.8%
Aware of contact but not perceived as involvement	7	13.7%

The majority of young people interviewed (78.4%) indicated an awareness that the Gardaí were involved in the Projects, as in Table 6.23 above. Awareness of the type of involvement varied enormously, from Project to Project, and within Project. Only four (7.8%) reported that the Gardaí were not involved. These had no awareness of any involvement, and had no contact with them through the Project, and it appeared that they had not been given any information regarding this. Seven (13.7%) participants mentioned contact that the Gardaí had directly with the Project; however, they maintained that the Gardaí were not involved with the Projects.

Table 6.24: Young people's perceptions of the type of involvement of the Gardaí on the Projects

<i>Perception of Garda involvement</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Project activities	17	33.3%

Management role	5	9.8%
Contact with co-ordinator or other Project staff	7	13.7%
Talks/discussions with groups	3	5.9%
Combination of the above	14	27.5%
Provision of transportation	1	2.0%
No involvement	4	7.8%

Some of the young people had a very clear understanding that the Gardaí were funding the Project. This was mainly specific to one Project. This type of clear understanding appeared to be as a result of being referred initially through a JLO, and a possible meeting at which the JLO was present with the co-ordinator. A total of five respondents (9.8%) perceived that their involvement was purely on a **management** basis, mainly through funding the Projects.

Do any of the Guards get involved with the club?

That's what it's all about, Garda give them money to do it. (Male, 15 years)

Yeah ... they just represent it or something. (Male, 12 years)

I think the Gardaí run it, I think the Minister of Justice ...

How do you know that?

'Cause I was down in the Garda station, it has it on the wall ... there's a poster [of the Project]. (Male, 17 years)

There is Guards down here, [community Guard].

Why does he come down here?

That's his Project, it's the Guards' Project. You see, it's their bus, that's the Guards' bus there. (Male, 15 years)

Seven (13.7%) perceived that the Gardaí were involved through maintaining *contact* with the co-ordinator and youth workers. Some believed that the purpose behind doing so was to see how the young people were getting on in the Project, whereas others believed it was to help resolve issues between the young people and any trouble they may have got into with the Gardaí.

I think they ring now the odd time when we're up in the [premises], I'm not sure.

And why do you think they ring?

To see how we're doing and all. (Male, 15 years)

Mostly you get a few blokes coming in about 10 o'clock who have to sign on at the Garda station ... so most of them come into [co-ordinator] and [co-ordinator] walks over to the Garda station with them, no problem or [youth worker] will do it. If they weren't there, the young fellas wouldn't go over to the Garda station, so then they'd be getting back into trouble, taken back into prison. (Female, 18+ years)

One 16-year-old male indicated that, although he had never seen the Guards in the centre, he was aware that the Guards were involved in some way, through the co-ordinator. He reported how he sometimes saw young people who had got in trouble with the Guards dealing with this through the co-ordinator who, in turn, dealt with the Gardaí.

Yeah, sometimes.

Have they ever come down here – centre?

No, I've never seen them down here.

You never see them coming down here, do you think they're involved in any way with this club?

Yeah, 'cause [co-ordinator] like, sometimes young fellas come in and [co-ordinator] just says, 'I have to go off and get to the Garda station with him'. (Male, 16 years)

Another male participant was aware of their involvement through playing soccer with them at Project premises. As a result of this, he believed that young people were provided with a way in which they could approach the Gardaí, should the need arise. This did arise for him, as he was able to get advice regarding a summons he received for driving with no tax and insurance.

Yeah, they take kids down and play soccer.

Gets other Guards to come down here and play soccer with us. If we've a problem, say with Guards, go and talk to [the community Garda]. (Male, 17 years)

Others were aware of Garda involvement through the Project *activities* and *group discussions*. This involvement was usually with the community Guards (41.2%) and/or trainee Guards (7.8%). It appeared that this type of involvement, in which community Gardaí were present at Project premises, and engaged with the young people through activities and discussions, was more pronounced in two sites.

Sometimes they come up ... to talk to us and everything.

What kinds of things do they talk to you about?

Talk to us about keeping us, keeping us out of trouble and all, ask us how we're getting on. (Male, 15 years)

Well [name] the community Guard, he comes down sometimes and chats to [co-ordinator]. We know him. This year, he done the summer project in the summer with us, so he was involved with that also. The summer project is getting kids from the estate, getting youth leaders and helpers [under 18s], take them off on trips for a week, different age groups. He used to help out. (Female, 16 years)

Yeah ... sometimes they [community Guards] come in and have a chat with you, like, say, talk about the streets and people and – you know – all that, like. They come in and have a chat with you.

Have they ever come in and had a chat with your group?

Yeah, they came in. The Guard [name] came in once and was telling us that there's people in [area] complaining and that we shouldn't be on the streets and all that. (Female, 16 years)

Yeah, the day we were getting our pictures taken [with the Guards, they were warning us].

What did they warn you about?

Don't be robbing and never go near robbed cars. (Male, 10 years)

A number (27.5%) of young people believed that the Gardaí played a role in the *operation* and *management* of the Projects as well as partaking in *Project activities* and *discussion groups*.

They run it ... [the Project worker] has the receipts, he spends that and has to bring to the Guards to get money.

Why do you think that the Guards pay for it?

Keeping people off the streets makes their job easier.

Did the Guards ever go on trips with you or visit in the (premises)?

Whenever we were in the soccer competition they brought us out in the Garda van. The community Guards, they brought us out in their van. Like, at the opening night there was all them, they were speaking, they were speakers, like, they were talking, like. (Male, 14 years)

They're part of it as well.

How did you know they were part of it?

Because when you're going away, like, they tell you whether you can go or not, like, and then they do talks and things, they're like [the youth worker], they're like part of it. (Female, 15 years)

Why do you think they get involved here?

[Name] is the community Guard. He's based here. It's his job to come down. Same with [JLO] – he gets paid to come down.

What do they do when they come down here?

Nothing, they just go away with us, like.

Go away on trips with you?

Yeah, it's not just that they're there to keep an eye on us, it's just they have to do it to get funding, of ... I don't know what it is. (Male, 16 years)

Although some had no direct interaction with the Gardaí, they were aware that the Gardaí had some input with other groups within the Project.

Don't know, I think they come in every so often and have talks or something.

With who?

I think they ask [co-ordinator], and all, could they talk with the young people.

Have they ever talked to your group?

No ... they went on trips with the people in other groups. (Male, 13 years)

Although the majority of young people were aware of the involvement of the Gardaí, as seen above, some did not perceive that they were directly involved in the Project, but had noticed that there was some contact between the Gardaí and Project staff, particularly with the associated youth service.

Are the Gardaí involved with the Project?

No ... but [co-ordinator], I think the youth service is involved with the Guards ... or something.

How do you think that, how did you get that impression?

Don't know. Just, like, they all work together or something. The youth service works with the Guards from [area].

Is that something that you've heard?

Like, everybody knows that they work with the Garda but, like, they don't. They help, just. There's other higher groups, there's other groups for, like, older people that is on drugs and get their phy and all. They all go up with the Guards. (Female, 14 years)

I've seen them come up once or twice.

Why do you think they do that?

Just checking, I don't see them in this place.

So do you think they do anything with this place or have any involvement here?

No. They just know [co-ordinator]. (Male, 18 years)

For one ten-year-old female, although she perceived there to be no involvement, her group had got a talk from a trainee Guard.

Well, only the one that came last week. She was only helping out for a while ... well we saw a girl last week and she was going to be a Garda, and she brought in her Garda suit and things, and she brought in her hat. She didn't bring any of her bat [baton] or nothing.

What did she say to you like or talk to you about?

She tells us about things you shouldn't do when you grow up like joyriding and things like that. (Female, 10 years)

Likewise, two males from one site, although they reported there was no involvement, had mentioned a time when a trainee Garda had gone on a trip with them.

For those who were aware of the involvement of the Gardaí, the young people went on to provide different explanations, from their own perspective, as to the reasons behind their involvement. In general, their explanations fall into one of the following categories:

- To get to know the young people in the area;
- Keep a watch on young people;
- Prevent young people from getting into trouble in the area;
- To join in on activities themselves;
- Safety reasons, to ensure people's safety and prevent trouble.

Why do you think they do that?

So people won't be getting in trouble. (Male, 13 years)

Why do you think they – the Guards – come down here?

I don't know. They're just checking on us ... Sometimes they're alright, sometimes they're playing a game with us, like. (Male, 13 years)

Whenever they were going away, when they went to Galway, he [community Garda] went and when they went outdoor pursuits, he went as well. He's, like, very dedicated to the Project.

Why do you think he was involved in the Project?

For safety reasons, really, and for him to get activities as well, like, 'cause he joins in the activities as well. (Female, 14 years)

Yeah, the community Guard. They come down to the clubs, they come down just to make sure everything goes okay and there's no trouble and stuff. The band is on – they come down to the band sometimes as well.

Why do you think they do that?

I'd say just to get more involved and learn, to get to know people better and the stuff around the community. (Female, 17 years)

[We] play soccer up there against the Guards.

Who do you play with?

We have a team every week, my brother and a few other lads. The Guards are good, like, I thought they'd be, you know, useless at first but they're good.

Are they alright to play with – would you get on well with them?

Yeah, just play the match and shake hands at the end of the match until the next week. (Male, 13 years)

For one 16-year-old male, his only interaction with the Guards through the Project was through the Gardaí providing transportation for their outdoor activity; however, his attitude towards this was not favourable. The Gardaí were not participating in the activities on these occasions, and any interaction was prevented as a result of a screen in the Garda van used for transportation. This issue was raised when this respondent was asked what he disliked about the Project.

Going with the Guards down to [activity/outdoor place].

Why did you not like that?

Had to go down in a paddy wagon.

Was it a police van?

Yeah. It was coming down to your door, taking you away.

Do you think it was a good thing that they were taking you to these places?

No.

Would you talk to them when you were in the bus – like, did they talk to you?

There was a screen thing, couldn't talk.

Why do you think they were getting involved and bringing you on trips?

'Cause the bus they brought us down in cost nothing. (Male, 16 years)

It was attempted to gauge the young people's *reaction* to this involvement. In the two sites that the Gardaí were most active at a Project level, through their physical presence, joining in on trips, activities and discussions, the reaction was generally a positive one.

Why do you think they come down here, giving their time to get involved and giving talks?

Just so I think it's 'cause people, boys and girls, won't think that there's anything wrong with them, they're just doing their job, a normal person.

Do you think that this is a good thing, that the Guards are getting involved?

Yeah, like most people say, 'Ah Guards are dopes' and all, 'they're pigs', say, 'all they want to do is arrest people'. Like, because people, you'd be hearing people saying all that and you'd think, like, I'm never talking to guard but if they really come in, like, they're dead-on, like, they're just doing their job. (Female, 16 years)

Yeah, I think, like everyone just thinks the Guards are bad ... like well, you know, young people on the streets don't have anything to do ... if they start going on trips with them, realise that they're just normal people, just have their job to do. (Male, 15 years)

Make them more sensible, learn how to deal with peer pressure, sit and talk make you think about what's happening, that [area] had a bad name. (Female, 17 years)

Good for them to come in and talk 'cause, like, in [area] drugs is a big problem, you know – ecstasy and hash and that – big problem in the estate, and just to talk to young people like us, see why we are taking them, just ruining ourselves.

So do you think that then young people would listen to them?

Yeah. (Male, 16 years)

Kids would think the Guards are bad because, well in my opinion anyway, 'cause they take people away and arrest people, they don't see the other side of the Guards, that's why I think they should know them more, get to know the Guards more. (Female, 16 years)

Yeah, to get to know the Guards and then not to get into so much trouble. (Male, 17 years)

Yeah, it is 'cause it humanises Guards, like, to so many of the kids, like, that mostly see or hear their big brother saying they're scum or whatever, and then when they come down they realise, 'Ah he's alright, he's not a Guard, he's a person as well.' (Male, 19 years)

Yeah, they get to know us and we get to know them ... we just slag them and have a laugh with them. (Female, 17 years)

For some of the young people quoted above, their first interaction with the Gardaí in the area was through the Projects. It is significant, then, that, through their interaction, their attitudes are positive towards them. However, there were those who had reservations and serious difficulties with the involvement of the Gardaí, and these need to be taken into consideration.

A 14-year-old male felt extremely negative towards the Gardaí and their involvement in the Project. This appeared to be as a result of occurrences in the community and his peer group. This highlights the complexities,

and indicates the existence of other factors feeding into young people's attitudes towards the Gardaí (this is discussed again in the next section).

We'd prefer not to have them here, none of them like them down here, no-one likes them, not even people around [area] like them.

Why is that?

You don't know what they do to us all.

What kinds of things?

They pull up beside you when you're on your own and if there's a big gang then they drive past; if you're walking on your own, they get out of the car, two or three of them, and they kill you ... It never happened to me but I know boys it happened to. That's why people turn against them.

I got more slagging for being down here, I get an awful slagging, I do, over working with the Guards.

Who gives you an awful slagging?

The boys from [area].

Why are they slagging you?

'Cause we're rats for working with the Guards. See, none of them like the Guards down there, like d'ya know.

How do your friends know the Guards are here?

'Cause they know, everyone knows that they're the community Guards and everyone knows that they're working here. (Male, 14 years)

The next two comments from two other male participants illustrate similar issues which impinge on their attitudes towards the Gardaí in general.

Do any of the Gardaí get involved in the [Project] here with the groups?

There is one community Guard ... he just talks to the leader, you know [co-ordinator] and sometimes we have crack with us.

So he would talk to the young people as well?

Yeah, most of us don't like him, I don't like him.

Why don't you like him?

'Cause he's two-faced; one day he'll be all nice and then if drinking on the street – not even drinking on the street, just walking – he'd lift you to the station. (Male, 16 years)

The times they (Gardaí) went on trips with you, what was that like?

They're alright, like. When you meet them on the streets, they're dick-heads; go away with them when they're off duty and all, they're alright.

What do you mean, when you meet them on the street?

If you're sitting on the street and you're drinking, or something, they come up and arrest you for drinking or something, then when you go away with them, they're alright, have good craic with them. (Male, 16 years)

Overall, there appeared to be variation between Projects in terms of the extent of the Garda involvement. Two sites appeared to have more of an involvement, in terms of the presence of Gardaí at Project premises and their interaction with young people, through Project activities, group discussions and informal chats. In the three other sites, there appeared to be less of a visible involvement, and this is reflected in what the young people relayed. In these sites, the young people appeared to identify the Garda role as more on a management basis, in terms of funding or decision making, and more operational functions, like provision of transportation, rather than the participative or interactive functions. There were others who perceived that the co-ordinators and Gardaí operated together to resolve issues with the young people. Generally, where there was a high level of Garda involvement through Project activities, the perception was that this was positive. Many could see the benefits to themselves and other young people interacting with the Gardaí in this way. However, this was not without reservation and difficulties, as revealed by some of the young people.

6.6.2 Attitudes toward the Gardaí in general

The young people were asked about how they related to the Gardaí in general, and were presented with scenarios to gauge their attitude/predisposition towards the them (e.g. 'Would you listen to the advice of a Garda?', 'Do you feel that you could talk to the Gardaí?' and so on.). Their answers were coded according to whether their responses were positive, negative, mixed or indifferent. Table 6.25 below illustrates the frequency of each coded response

Table 6.25: Young people's general attitude towards the Gardaí

<i>Attitude towards the Gardaí</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Positive	18	35.3%
Negative	25	49.0%
Indifferent	4	7.8%
Mixed	4	7.8%

Almost half (49.0%) of the young people interviewed portrayed a negative attitude towards the Guards. For many, these were difficult questions to answer, particularly those which aimed to seek an explanation for their particular attitude. Initially, many found it difficult to explain themselves. A somewhat typical reaction to the question was:

I just don't like them, I never got on with them ... I dunno ... I just don't like them.

However, after a certain amount of probing, there appeared to be a number of possibilities which explained their attitudes. For a number of young people, it appeared that their negative attitude related directly to their own personal experience of previous involvement with the Gardaí (including some who had been arrested/charged/cautioned or received informal warnings, were searched or simply asked to move on). Others who had no prior interaction with the Gardaí related negative attitudes to the experiences of others with the Gardaí, including friends, siblings, neighbours, or others in the community.

Is there a reason why you don't like them?

They always come down to us and start harassing us and all.

So would this be when you're hanging around on the streets?

Hanging around the street, they start moving us and kicking us. (Male, 15 years)

They shouldn't be stopping you when you're on the road ... if you're in a gang you'll get stopped and searched. (Male, 15 years)

Just don't like them ... things happened with brothers. (Male, 16 years)

I don't like them ... 'cause they got my brother into trouble. (Female, 15 years)

Yeah, some people get arrested for nothing. (Female, 13 years)

A 16-year-old male had a negative attitude towards the Gardaí, but he reported interacting with them on the Project.

If they came in here, some of the Guards, to talk to some of the young people, do you think you could talk to them?

Ah we'd have a game of snooker, it wouldn't be, like, telling them stuff and all, you wouldn't sit down and have a conversation with them, just play snooker. (Male, 16 years)

A 19-year-old male who had been in court a few times previously had a very negative attitude which he related directly to prior experiences of encounters with the Gardaí on the streets.

They're scumbags.

Why do you think that?

They just come around and fucking tell you to move on and start throwing bleedin' slaps at ya, you do fuck all and they come over to you.

Has this happened to you?

Yeah, not as if you've done anything on them. (Male, 18 years)

There were some who had no previous involvement with the Gardaí but yet had negative attitudes towards them.

Here they're battering people up for nothing, like, if someone keeps something to themselves, doesn't squeal on anyone else. (Male, 13 years)

Across all five sites, an issue that emerged was that of young people 'getting hassled' or approached on the street for 'hanging around'. This was also reported by young people who had not previously got into any trouble with the Gardaí.

People don't mind them driving up and down but sometimes even just me, me and me friends be sitting on wall listening to the radio and the Garda come down and say, 'Where do you live? What's your address? Go around to your house, get off that wall, don't be sitting there' and all. (Female, 14 years)

Most Guards I don't really get on with.

Why is that?

'Cause most of them are scumbags.

Why do you say that?

They [young people] have a hang out place down there, they come up and they lift you just for no reason, sitting there doing nothing, minding your own business. (Male, 16 years)

I don't like them ... one Guard always comes up, comes up and searches ya. Calls you a scumbag and all that. (Male, 16 years)

What do you think of the Guards?

Grand, some of them, some of them are bad.

Why do you say that?

They're just narky, they'd be staring at you, ya know, if you were walking down the road with your friends and all that, They pull you over, say, 'Why you throw stones?' and all that, when you didn't.

Has this ever happened to you?

Yeah. We were up there sitting on the wall and they passed, and they came back again saying, 'Why are you throwing stones?' 'Who threw them?' and all that.

Why do you think they were doing that – were there others doing that?

No, d'ya know if they've nothing to do, they'd pick on anyone. (Male, 14 years)

Just ... they can be alright and they can be dick-heads altogether.

Like what?

*Lifting ya off the streets and moving you, if you're being noisy or anything, 'Come on, lads, move away.'
They come over and make a show of you in the middle of the street, searching you for drugs and all, and you haven't a thing on ya.*

Have they done that before?

Aye yeah, loads of times, just come over for the craic, make sure, have nothing on ya. Come over and search ya, socks and all. (Male, 16 years)

In examining the participants' attitudes towards the Gardaí, it became clear that some of the young people created definite distinctions between the community Gardaí and the local Gardaí.

How do you think you get along with the Guards?

Not too well, I don't know. I just don't like them ... they're [community Guards] alright ... 'cause they're different.

How are they different?

I don't know ... see about [two community Guards] if they came on road and if you were messing, they'd come over to and just say, 'Go home,' you know. If any other Guards came along, say 'What are you doing?' and arrest you and bring you to a cell and bate you. (Male, 13 years)

What do you think of the Guards?

The community ones are alright. Ones from [town Garda station] now, they'd come up and give you a hard time, standing around corners if you weren't in before 11 o'clock.

Do you think that you could talk to the Guards?

With community Guards, yes, but with other Guards, no. (Male, 17 years)

Still don't get on with them.

Why is that?

It's too hard to get on with Guards, too hard to get on with them, don't like them, there's one or two blues that are alright – the two community Guards, they're grand.

And why are they alright and not the others?

I got to know them, I don't know the others.

[Speaking about the regular Gardaí later on in interview]. Just don't like them, just the way they are treating people, the way they treated me.

What way have they treated you?

If they catch you doing something, you're killed. Just walking down the road, for no reason just got thrown over the wall and got killed, thrown in the van. (Male, 17 years)

Others seemed to distinguish individual Gardaí who they considered to be different from the others. A ten-year-old boy felt that he could talk to the Gardaí with the exception of one.

One that does be called Flick eye.

You wouldn't talk to him, why not?

He never talks, and he'd put you in jail for nothing, so he would. (Male, 10 years)

They're scumbags ... some of them aren't. You can get an odd copper that's nice.

How is that Garda different from the others?

'Cause ... like, the coppers hit ya and all, like, say if you're on the street and there's a robbed car or something ... and you're after watching it or something, the coppers would drag you away from it; some of the coppers wouldn't, they just ask you nicely to move. (Female, 14 years)

I don't know their names but there's a few of them that are real nice.

And why are they nicer than the others – what do they do?

'Cause they're not like, they don't kick you and all. (Female, 15 years)

It is important to note that, despite the negative attitudes, there were a substantial number (35.3%) of positive attitudes amongst the young people. Generally, these participants reported having respect for the Gardaí and perceiving their job as important for the community. A 16-year-old female, who had been hanging around the streets with a gang of about 20 boys and girls, described their routine as: 'Used to sit up street, used to drink, smoke and sit there and be loud, radio and all'. However this participant indicated that, after receiving advice from the community Garda, this behaviour changed.

Would you listen to the advice of a Garda?

Yeah, I was given advice before from [community Guard]. It was friendship advice to keep off streets for me own good and I took that advice.

When did he give you that advice?

A good few months back, could be a year ago ... like used to go up every night and sit up there till all hours but I stopped that now, it took a while. (Female, 16 years)

Not really thought much about Guards but since I knew [community Guard] when I started, he started a few months later [on the Project] so that I got to know him and got to know Guards, so he wasn't bad. (Female, 16 years)

Would you listen to the advice of a Garda?

It depends, like ya know if you're sitting on a wall, alright, you're not supposed to be or anything, if you were asked to move, like, I wouldn't give them any stick, but most of the people I know would. I'd be afraid to, you know, Me oul' fella would kick the shit out of me if he found out I was messing with the Guards anyway. I respect them, like, they're doing their job so. (Male, 16 years)

Yeah, because, like, listening to other people you'd say, like, 'No I wouldn't go near them, I wouldn't talk to them or anything,' like. When you really talk to them, they're just like a normal man, they're just doing their job, it's just a simple job. (Female, 16 years)

Think they're good for the community. (Female, 14 years)

I started talking to [Guard] one of the Guards who put my brother through hell, and through [co-ordinator] I found out that he's not a pig, him or most of them over there. (Female 18+ years)

Some had an indifferent attitude, neither negative nor positive.

I don't have anything against them at all. (Female, 17 years)

I don't mind them; once they're not bothering me, I don't bother them. (Male, 16 years)

I've nothing against them anyway. (Male, 15 years, 4101)

In exploring the young people's attitudes towards the Gardaí, it was evident that just under half had negative attitudes, whereas a third had positive attitudes. The remainder of participants portrayed either a mixed or indifferent attitude towards the Gardaí. There appeared to be a number of reasons behind the young people's negative attitudes. In general, they were either one or a combination of the following factors:

- Young person previously arrested, charged or cautioned by the Gardaí;
- Young person searched or approached by Gardaí on the streets;
- Young person's siblings, friends or significant others having negative experiences with the Gardaí.

Some of the young people who expressed negative attitudes drew very clear distinctions between types of Gardaí. They held the community Garda in a more positive light. Crucially, while the young people report positively about the experiences they have through interacting with the Gardaí, it is evident that this does not necessarily translate into a shift in young people's attitudes. It is assumed by the key promoters of the GSPs, especially senior Garda management, that the interaction afforded by the Projects offers an opportunity for young people to change attitudes towards Gardaí as a whole. It is evident from our field research that there are issues

contributing to young people's attitudes towards the Gardaí over which Projects, and indeed even the community Gardaí, have little control.

6.7 Summary

The 51 young people interviewed were sampled using a range of criteria in terms of age, gender, source of referral, length of involvement and type of involvement, ensuring that the data reflected validly the experiences of the young people involved in the Garda Special Projects. The interviews yielded large amounts of detailed information; however, the following points are viewed as crucial in relation to the evaluation of the Projects.

- Across all five sites, the young people reported positively on their experiences of the Project, in that they were providing alternative activities for young people to engage in.
- The majority of young people reported a variety of positive learning outcomes which appeared to be facilitating their personal and social development.
- Over half of the young people reported a positive change in either their behaviour and/or attitude.
- The Projects appeared to be having an impact on offending and anti-social behaviour. This is supported by both qualitative reports and quantitative results.
- All of the young people reported positive relationships with staff. This appeared to be crucial in contributing to their positive experiences of the Project. It is evident that the Projects provide an environment which is conducive to the young people creating positive relationships with adults who can offer support and advice to them.
- There appeared to be variation amongst the Projects in the extent to which the Gardaí were involved. In two of the Projects, there was a pronounced visible involvement; in the other three Projects, this was less so. However, the majority of young people had an awareness that the Gardaí were involved.
- Almost half the young people portrayed negative attitudes towards the Gardaí, a third were positive, and the remainder were mixed and indifferent. It did not necessarily follow on that interaction with the Gardaí through the Projects resulted in positive attitudes. This appears to be as a result of the fact that some of the young people appeared to draw very clear distinctions between the community Gardaí and the regular Gardaí, but also negative experiences seemed to be more influential in shaping their attitudes.

7 RESPONSES FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN FIVE SITES

7.1 Rationale

Individual interviews were conducted with a small selected sample of local residents from each of the five areas chosen. Community residents were interviewed in order to gain information on perceptions of safety and crime within the community, Garda community relations and knowledge and attitudes towards the Projects.

The two key questions to be addressed were:

- (a) whether awareness of Project actions in the community would promote subjective feelings of security in individual residents which, in turn, made them feel safer;
- (b) whether the knowledge that the Gardaí are key players in the GSP will instil confidence and credibility in An Garda Síochána as a legitimate and credible agency in the community.

7.2 Method and approach

7.2.1 Community respondents

Individual interviews were conducted with 37 residents across the five sites. Community participants were defined as those that:

- (a) lived in the Project area (i.e. within the Project boundaries);
- (b) knew of the existence of the Project but were not directly involved in the Project programme;
- (c) were actively involved in the community in some way (i.e. through residents' associations and other community bodies, agencies and committees).

7.2.2 Selection and recruitment

The researchers utilised the process deployed at the first of the five sites as a pilot for recruiting local people. Four local residents were recruited at this site, independently from the Project staff, through a combination of contacts made at the Community Development Project (CDP), home school liaison teacher and drop-in centres at primary schools. In the four remaining Project sites, a variety of procedures were adopted to recruit residents.

In general, the recruitment of respondents was carried out by the researcher independently of the Project. In some cases, however, the co-ordinator or youth worker suggested possible respondents through their knowledge of people who were actively involved in the community. The recruitment was conducted through contacting the local community centre, CDP, and other local facilities or agencies, such as crèches, schools, drop-in centres, residents' groups, women's groups, employment services, and so on. As anticipated, there was a snowballing effect, as those interviewed usually suggested other potential participants. The researcher tried to ensure an overall balance of males and females, different age groups, and residents from different estates within the Project area. By recruiting prospective respondents who were rooted in their own communities, it was assumed insights would be provided into the general views of residents with whom they were linked. This was particularly true where people were recruited from residents' associations or estate management groups, where they acted as a representative of their estate and a representative of the views of other residents in that estate.

7.2.3 Interview schedule

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed to obtain information on respondents' experiences of living in the area, specifically in relation to: safety and crime; attitudes towards the Gardaí; and attitudes towards the Projects. The main sections of the interview schedule include: family composition, socio-demographics (employment and housing), safety, experiences of crime, attitudes towards the Gardaí, and knowledge of the Garda Special Projects. A sample interview schedule is included in Appendix 6.

The interviews took place in a variety of settings. Out of the 37 interviews, eleven were conducted at a community centre, seven at the Project premises, eight in the participant's own home, five at the school premises, four at the Community Development Project premises, one at a crèche and one at a Local Employment Service.

7.2.4 Data collection and analysis

Extensive notes were taken throughout the interview. The duration of interviews ranged between thirty and fifty minutes. Handwritten notes were typewritten for each interview conducted. Interviews were analysed thematically so as to address the key questions outlined above. The results are presented by aggregated numbers and direct quotes from the residents interviewed. Throughout there has been an effort to maintain a balance of quotes from each of the five sites.

7.3 Profile of the community respondents

Overall, 37 community residents from the five sites were interviewed. On average, seven residents from each site were interviewed.

Table 7.1: Numbers of residents interviewed across the five sites

<i>Project Site</i>	<i>Number of local residents interviewed</i>
Site 1	4
Site 2	7
Site 3	8
Site 4	9
Site 5	9
Total interviewed	37

Out of the 37 interviews, 14 were conducted with male respondents and 23 with female respondents. The majority of both male and female participants were in the age categories 30-39 and 40-49 (see Table 7.2 below).

Table 7.2: Numbers and age ranges of male and female respondents

<i>Age bracket</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
18-29	0	2	2
30-39	4	9	13
40-49	6	8	14
50-59	4	3	7
60-69	0	1	1

The majority of respondents were married (72.97%), four were single, three divorced or separated, two were living with their partner and one was widowed.

Table 7.3: The marital status of respondents

<i>Family/marital status</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Single	4	10.81%
Living with partner	2	5.41%
Married	27	72.97%
Divorced/separated	3	8.11%
Widowed	1	2.7%

Only one respondent did not have children. Thirty community respondents had between one and four children, and six community respondents had over five children.

Table 7.4: Number of children in community respondents' families

<i>Number of children</i>	<i>Number</i>
1-2 children	10
3-4 children	20
5-6 children	3
7 + children	3

Over half (59.46%) of the community respondents were either employed full-time, part-time or on a training scheme. Fourteen respondents (37.84%) were unemployed, 2.7% retired and 2.7% in a vocation.

Table 7.5: Employment status of community respondents

<i>Employment status</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Employed full-time	15	40.54%
Employed part-time	1	2.7%
Training (FÁS/CE scheme)	6	16.22%
Unemployed	14	37.84%
Retired	1	2.7%

Over half of the community respondents owned or were buying their houses. Of the total, fourteen (37.84%) were renting from the local authority, and 5.41% living with others.

Table 7.6: Housing status of community respondents

<i>Type of housing</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Owner	21	56.76%
Renting from local authority/council/corporation	14	37.84%
Living with others	2	5.41%

7.4 Community perceptions of GSPs

7.4.1 Overview

This section of the interview focused on how people in the community are made aware of the Project, the knowledge they have about their objectives, attitudes towards the Project and, more specifically, their perceptions of the impact of the Project on the community in terms of preventing crime and promoting feelings of security and safety.

In general, the community respondents reported that they learnt about the establishment and/or existence of the Project through various community groups they were involved with, through other active community workers in the area, and other community residents. A typical response from a community respondent is illustrated below.

How long have you known about the GSP and how did you find about it?

Well, before it was set up, I heard it through people who managed groups ... [worker in CDP] reported it at a meeting.

Others reported that they learnt of the Project through the local newsletter, Project staff and the community Garda. Table 7.7 reveals the different sources reported.

Table 7.7: Source of learning about the Project

<i>Sources</i>	<i>Rank order</i>
Various community groups (e.g. CDP, community association)	1st
Other community residents	2nd
Youth service/group/organisation	3rd
Project staff	
Local newsletter	
Family members	
Young people in the area	4th
Invited to the Project launch	
Community Garda	

The community respondents were also asked about how people in the wider community (i.e. those not necessarily involved in community groups) are made aware of the Project. Many (29.73%) reported that local people who are not involved in community groups, or that do not have children involved in the Project, would not have an awareness or knowledge of the Project. In one site, all the residents reported that they believed that the community in general were unaware of the Project; however, this was also mentioned by some community respondents in two other sites. In one of these sites, the community respondents perceived that the general lack of awareness of the Project was mainly due to the Project's lack of physical premises in the community.

They're not ... I don't know anybody who knows about it.

I wouldn't say they're made aware, most people wouldn't have a clue about it unless they were involved in youth activities or clubs.

Don't think it's overly advertised because of its nature; not given such a high profile because of its target group, I suppose.

Wouldn't think so, just people on it ... community people [i.e. people who are actively involved in the community] would know. The public in general – if they do – may not know exactly what it is.

Others reported that local people were informed of the Project through local newsletters (32.42%), community groups (5.41%), the youth service in the area (10.81%), and through Project staff (5.41%). The Projects that were more established and operating for more than one year were more likely to be known in the area; this was also the case for those Projects that were linked directly with a youth service.

Kids themselves all know [the co-ordinator]. [The co-ordinator] is a figure-head very respected in the community.

The highest number of community respondents (32.42%) reported that the local people were informed through a local newsletter or leaflets in the area. This was the case in three sites in which Project activities were advertised in the local newsletter on a regular basis.

The newsletter, local one, goes out monthly to every household, on occasions there's a write up on [Project]. I don't know of other ways. Other people involved know ... don't know if the wider community know, my guess is they don't.

Have a magazine here [X] done from the community centre. [CDP worker] puts in an article. Anyone that's doing anything in the area is put in. It's sent to every house. With the band, enrolment day for the band is open to everyone, everyone is informed.

Word of mouth – down in the clinic and crèches there are notices, and the [local newsletter] once a month.

7.4.2 Knowledge of Project objectives and activities

The majority of community respondents appeared to have an understanding of the objectives of the Projects. Across the five sites, there appeared to be an awareness that the Projects were targeted somewhat in their selection of participants and, in most cases, there was the perception that this targeting process was directed at young people 'at risk'. It was evident, however, that there was large variation amongst the community respondents in terms of the extent of their knowledge of Project objectives and activities. This knowledge ranged from those who knew a minimum about the Project to those who knew extensively about the purpose and content of Project activities. Those respondents who attended the Project launch, shared Project premises or linked with Project staff, appeared to have a clearer understanding of the Project and its objectives.

Across all five sites, there was evidence that people were perceiving the Project as a crime prevention initiative, and that the Project was a way of keeping young people out of trouble or diverting those already in trouble. From the comments below, there appears to be an understanding of the role of the Projects in terms of offending and crime.

In the end, they prevent children that could be leading into crime. It's showing them by example. I don't know about the activities or what the Project does exactly.

Probably to help the kids before they fall into crime, if they're after failing in school, may not be capable of going to school, dysfunctional families picked up.

It helps all the communities, in the beginning I thought it was all about joyriding and vandalism and to link in with residents to get help. Getting them into clubs ... they put on an awful lot for the different kids.

Trying to get at children before get at that stage, kids borderline in trouble.

Knew [Project] was Justice sponsored ... by trying to turn kids around.

Many believed that the Project was a way of offsetting the problem of large groups of young people congregating on the streets in the community.

Resource to intercede with young people drag them from street culture.

[Community rep on GSP advisory group] told us it was for wayward kids. A lot of them in that Project were ones we had to put out of the [youth club] because they were uncontrollable ... It keeps the kids off the street, don't know what it does.

About taking kids off street and empowering them to do other things than what they were doing on street. They themselves organise and be models themselves. Run by young people [leaders], all young so the young people are able to relate to them.

What I see trying to bring young fellas off road, stay out of trouble so not breaking windows.

Other community respondents believed that the Projects were dealing with more specific issues around drug use, truancy and early school leaving. Some perceived the objective of the Project as solely to provide the young people who participate with constructive activities.

Kids who've problems at school ... truancy ... social welfare, Guards, prevent them at an early stage.

It's a drug issue anyway, to get kids at risk on the right road.

Action for youth, bring them away, few field trips with youth, difficulties at home, people on the verge of crime.

Help those in trouble with drugs, help prevent, recognise early signs, make kids aware.

It appeared that many knew very little about what the Project actually does in terms of its activities, structure or content. They perceived the Project as providing young people with activities, leisure and education in orientation which are enjoyable and rewarding for the young people to engage in. Some of those interviewed were more aware of specific groups within the Project such as the drop-ins or 'regular attenders' groups.

What I think I know ... young people who are dabbling in some sort of crime or at risk of it, take them off the street for some time and giving them something else to do, within the groups, working on personal development without them being aware of it. Stuff they do in normal clubs with the young people.

Young offenders, training for young offenders with a social club element.

By keeping them active and getting them involved, involved in sport.

Suppose help children or adolescents that are at risk ... deal with borderline cases ... those getting into trouble ... Do different activities – cookery, surfing, bodyboarding – that kind of stuff. Don't know exactly if kids are out of school.

I put it down to youth clubs, line of youth clubs, not 100%.

Essentially alternative youth club.

7.4.3 Attitudes towards Project, Project activities, and Project participants

The majority of responses indicate that the community respondents believe the Project has positive benefits for the young people who take part. Generally the community respondents viewed the Project as providing meaningful and constructive activities for the young people and, as a result, prevent young people from engaging in unacceptable behaviour. Generally the perceived benefits for participants as reported by the community respondents are in the following categories:

Personal development

Encouraging responsibility and promoting respect for authority and property

Educational

Receiving support, guidance and help

Sense of belonging and participating in the community

There was a general perception that taking part in the GSP would benefit the young people in terms of facilitating their *personal development*. Community respondents reported a variety of potential outcomes, including increases in self-esteem, confidence building, development of self-worth and identity formation. Others mentioned that those who participated in the Project went through a process of socialisation in which they acquired positive social skills and established positive relationships with their peers and authority figures.

A number of community respondents reported that the Project was impacting on the young people in terms of their attitude towards their own behaviour and the community in general. Some mentioned the acquisition of positive attributes such as *responsibility* and respect for property and authority figures. Others referred more generally to changes in their attitude and their outlook on life, believing that the Project offered the opportunity for young people to engage in a process of self-reflection about their choices and opportunities in life. Others specifically mentioned that young people would become more aware of the consequences and dangers of offending and drug taking.

Most of the community respondents believed that engaging in the Project resulted in a variety of learning outcomes for the young people, including self-awareness and concrete skills training/development, especially for those engaged in regular attender programmes. Some believed that the Project programme had strong *educational* elements particularly for those who may have left school at an early age.

Across all sites there was a general perception that the Project was acting as a resource which could respond to young people's needs, and that, generally, young people who had got in trouble with the law, or who were from 'troubled' families, or who had left school, would be able to *receive support, guidance and help* as

appropriate to their needs. The Project staff were seen as figures who were there to advise, support, understand and guide these young people.

As a result of these young people participating in positive, constructive activities as opposed to 'hanging around' the area, there was a perception that the young people were now contributing to the community in a positive way. Community respondents mentioned those that were taking part in events and activities that were viewed in a positive light by all the community (e.g. band, parades, exhibitions).

Sense of belonging, sense of community, whole. Learning how to get on with people in a social element.

Boxing. Learn about self-respect, huge amount of learning and discipline. Band leaders qualities.

Increase in self-confidence. Being in a structure is good.

Helps them in many ways – outlet of energy – get to know one another better and bind in the community better.

Only two community informants perceived the impact of the Project as negative. Both believed that it was 'troublemakers' who were engaged in the Project activities, and that they were merely getting rewarded for bad behaviour as opposed to this behaviour being challenged. They did not see that the Project could impact on their behaviour.

7.4.4 Attitudes towards the Project in the wider community

Apart from their own personal views, the community respondents were asked, through their contacts with other residents, about how people in the community generally perceived the Project. For those who indicated earlier that people in the community were not aware of the Project's existence, this was something that they could not comment on. Amongst the remainder, however, there emerged a number of different issues. Responses were grouped into those that were *positive, mixed and negative*. A significant number reported positive attitudes towards the Project, and generally related this to the positive gains and benefits for the young people who participated, and the impact of the Project on the community. There were those that related the positive gains to preventing young people from engaging in 'troublesome' behaviour.

Those that know about it think it's excellent. They're there for kids, getting them at a younger age, preventing them going into remand centres like St. Pat's.

Others who viewed the Project as positive perceived the Project as an important resource and facility in the area. A common attitude that emerged across the five sites was that any initiative or Project in the area that offers help to children and young people could only be viewed positively.

Very happy about its presence. [The community] don't have an awareness.

Nothing but good ... people have the utmost respect for [youth worker], same with [co-ordinator].

The majority of respondents reported that there were predominantly positive attitudes; however, there were reservations by others, mainly in relation to the selection of young people and the targeting process. This mainly stemmed from a perception that it was those young people who were getting into trouble or causing problems in the area that were being selected. Following on from this assumption, some believed that the Project was rewarding these young people and their behaviour by taking them out on trips and various activities. This argument was raised in all five sites as an issue that community respondents had come across through their contact with other residents. The criticism was more pronounced if people perceived that the Project was not open to others, i.e. those young people in the area who don't engage in troublesome behaviours.

The other thing is looking around at all these preventative things for kids that go down the road of trouble, see them getting the rewards, it's a constant source of annoyance. Those that behaved badly are rewarded again and again. Look at what it's saying – the signals it's giving. As a parent of children I wouldn't be relying on the community to provide activities.

Some were saying different things. Some said kids that are bad are took by the hand, they get everything.

Taking kids off streets, especially early school leavers, kids potential trouble makers. I've a thing about that, the kids who never get into trouble or leave school are left aside. They will feel unless they're getting into villainy they won't get anything ... One or two says it's great getting them off street and helping ... why not the others who go to school and are good.

Think – if you get into trouble you can come in, if you don't, don't come in. That's what it was like, the kids borderline of trouble, saying it was alright to drop out of school and get into trouble. It was like penalising them [good kids] if not in trouble.

In some cases there was criticism about specific groups within the Project, mainly the small targeted groups (e.g. the regular attenders). In addition, one community respondent believed that the same groups of young people remained in the Project for too long and, as a result, others couldn't feed into the Project.

I think [Project] is brilliant but – this is not criticism – one set of kids too long and not letting new ones ... my feeling is that they're there too long, one set of names all the time.

People I know think it's a great idea, might get one or two might hate it.

Community respondents who were aware of this criticism defended the Project in terms of their selection and activities, indicating that there will always be some residents who will criticise initiatives and Projects, and that a Project such as the GSP can never 'be all things to all people'.

Those who portrayed a predominantly negative attitude towards the Project were in the minority. The argument provided for this was around similar issues indicated above, mainly the selection of participants.

There's a lot of resentment ... [regular attender programme] is not very popular, very bad vibes even from people well involved [in the community] ... the attitude is: why throw money at them? Not going to do good ... everybody knows their [participants] faces as current mob ... shit-stirrers, drinking and all.

Other criticisms that emerged related, firstly, to the dissemination of information and, secondly, around the selection of community members on the advisory group. One community participant believed that, as a result of the perception that those selected onto the GSP are those involved in offending in the area, she would not allow her own children attend the Project.

Generally speaking, all positives as regards activities, probably a bit of frustration around the mechanism for local people feeding into Guards. One of our reps would be seeing it as very positive but then have gone with complaints to be told, 'Our hands are tied'. I feel the community people are not being listened to but with activities I'm quite happy.

They're [Gardaí] up in the [Project] making sure the club doesn't get wrecked. I wouldn't allow mine above in the [Project] all the scumbags go there. Can't send a decent child, have to be a troublemaker.

The way it's set up genuine families won't let their kids in 'cause kids [in Project are] involved in crime.

Some believed that those in the wider community were generally unaware of Project activities, and that people had a right to know about the Project programme, management, involvement of Gardaí, selection process, and activities. In addition, a small number mentioned the selection of community representatives on the advisory committee as a source of criticism. This was in situations where there was no apparent process for how people are selected, i.e. no formal process of election or nominations by the local community.

Another criticism was not directly related to the Project *per se*, but was more a criticism that the funding had been allocated without Project premises, and that, without premises, the Project was limited in its possible impact.

Department spending more and wasting money 'cause, one, they don't have a building.

7.5 Community safety

The Projects aim to improve the quality of life in Project areas. As a result of interviews with senior Garda personnel, in the first stage of this research, it emerged that it was necessary to interpret 'quality of life' as meaning 'feelings of safety'. This narrower definition is required, as there are infinite numbers of changes in the local context that might impact upon the quality of life experienced by residents. Therefore, a specific indicator was necessary to link it specifically with crime prevention. Hence, in relation to community respondents, the key line of inquiry in this evaluation was whether awareness of Project actions in the community would promote subjective feelings of security in individual residents which, in turn, would make them feel safer. The main research question has been, 'Do people feel safer as a result of their knowledge that a Garda Special Project exists in their area?'

The majority of community respondents (83.78%) reported that, in terms of safety, they feel no different as a result of their knowledge of the existence of the GSP in their area. In general, respondents indicated that they generally would not perceive any connection between the Project and feelings of safety. It appears that the assumption that awareness of Project actions in the community will promote subjective feelings of security in the individual residents does not hold up.

Only six community respondents (16.22%) indicated that their awareness of the Project did make them feel safer. One community respondent outlined precisely the mechanism through which the Project was promoting feelings of safety: a number of incidents in a specific estate in the Project area were creating difficulties with neighbours and the young people, which resulted in a number of residents feeling unsafe. The residents were able to contact Project staff and, through their 'streetwork', Project staff successfully engaged those who were causing problems and creating difficulties for residents in this area. The issue was resolved and feelings of safety were restored.

When there were problems in the area [estate], I was able to tell [youth worker] that they were doing drugs on the corner. They [co-ordinator and youth worker] started foot patrols in the area then and a good few of the kids joined down with the Project.

What difference do you think the Project makes to the local community?

I think, when we were having trouble at night [in the estate], we knew we could go to someone, even for advice ... could talk to [youth worker] and [co-ordinator] or that they could refer others on. Remember, when trouble was going on [in the estate] and when [co-ordinator] and [youth worker] were doing foot patrols, I felt safer. When one of us [neighbours] goes out, they jeer us. The kids know [co-ordinator and youth worker] and that they're not there to give out.

Out of these six community respondents, there is mention of a system/mechanism in place through the Project, which facilitates local people raising issues about specific people causing problems or difficulties in the area and, in turn, impacting on people's feelings of safety.

In summary the majority of community respondents did not associate the existence and operation of the Project in their area with feelings of safety, while six (16.22%) reported that the Project did make them feel safer in their neighbourhood. This was mainly as a result of a perception that the Project had a process for dealing with specific nuisance/troublesome behaviours in the community.

7.6 Potential for impacting on crime

As the Projects aim to prevent crime and promote community safety, community informants were asked whether they perceive the Project as having an impact on crime levels in the area.

Table 7.8: Potential of Project to impact on crime levels in the area, as reported by community respondents

<i>Impact on Crime</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	12	32.43%
Possibly (in the future)	16	43.24%
No	3	8.11%
Unsure	6	16.22%

Generally, the results are positive in that 28 (75.68%) believe that the Project is either currently affecting crime levels in the area (i.e. decreasing them) or, possibly in the future, could have an impact on crime levels. Only three (8.11%) believed that the Projects were not or would not affect crime levels as in Table 7.8 above.

Six (16.22%) reported that they were unsure. Those that were unsure generally knew only a minimum about the Project.

Those who reported that the Project was affecting crime levels in the area believed that this was due to the Project providing alternatives for young people to engage in, whilst educating them in terms of responsibilities and consequences of crime.

Do you think the Project affects crime levels in this area?

I think it's bound to, it's educating them [young people], maybe in some ways teaching them about responsibility for their own actions, it's bound to have an effect. Even house break ins – I don't hear about them.

Many believed that the Project was dealing with the issue of large groups of young people congregating on the streets. Similarly, others reported that, if the Project terminated, crime levels would escalate in the area.

I'm sure if it wasn't there, more kids would've drifted into crime.

If it stopped, it would go up. Nowhere to go, only place for them would be back to the streets.

Would hope eventually it will give them a sense of something else to do ... early days yet. Less numbers hanging around corners ... play down Guards and criminal involvement. Has to go down ... they've somewhere to go, better ways of getting on and communicating.

Affect crime levels further down the road.

7.7 Garda/community relations

7.7.1 Overview

The Garda Special Projects (GSPs) aim to support and improve Garda/community relations. As pointed out earlier in this report, the Garda Special Projects emerged initially in situations where relations with the community needed to be improved, and the legitimacy of the Gardai either instilled or restored. The key question arising from this is

whether the knowledge that the Gardaí are key players in the GSP will instil confidence and credibility in An Garda Síochána as a legitimate and credible agency in the community. There is an assumption that Garda involvement leads to the enhancement of relations between the Gardaí and residents in the area.

7.7.2 Interaction with Gardaí in the area

Information was obtained on the contact that community respondents had with Gardaí in their area. All respondents interviewed knew or had known previously at least one Garda in their area. The majority knew Gardaí currently operating in their area, and indicated that their interaction was through their involvement in community groups and associations, such as residents' association, estate management groups, CDP, parents' association, youth clubs, and more general community events. There was variation amongst those interviewed, in terms of the extent of their contact with Gardaí in the area. Some had extensive contact, such as monthly meetings, while others had minimal contact through events in the area.

In three sites, those that reported knowing Gardaí in the area referred mainly to the community Gardaí, who appeared to be widely known. Similarly, people had contact with community and other Gardaí through tenants' and youth groups in the area. In these three sites, some reported that the community Gardaí are active in turning up for meetings (e.g. residents' association and Neighbourhood Watch) and participating in various community events and activities.

Do you know the Gardaí in the area?

Yes, quite a few.

Do you have contact with them?

Through the school ... the parents' association, they have supported us on sports day and sometimes they come up and talk to the kids. When we had the street party they came up and checked in.

A few of them. I would know two very well. Know one through work and the other I live beside.

Everyone knows them, the community Guard [name] he makes it his business.

Yes, most of them. Informal mostly, they're nice lads here in the community centre and then down at the [Project].

An important point to consider is that those who were interviewed had contact with the Gardaí as a result of their active involvement in the community, irrespective of the Project. Without involvement, they may not have had this contact with the Gardaí and, consequently, may not be as aware of their work and input into the community.

Do you know the Gardaí in the area?

[I] know only 'cause I'm on estate management forum. If I wasn't ... was an ordinary resident, I wouldn't know the two community Guards and the sergeant. The forum was set up, statutory agencies are all represented and anyone who inputs in [area], residents are fairly active. The Guards always turn up ... very active. Meeting once every five or six weeks.

Contact through the residents estate management group, we asked them for help a few times. There was a spate of fighting outside the pub last summer. We had a meeting with the pub owners and the Guards to explain our side, know the pubs are trying to make a living but that we were living here. The Guards patrolled the area more often after that – we worked together.

Some of them from working here [community centre]. Community contact, new community Guard, last guy [x] came to meetings and would've popped in here.

7.7.3 Awareness of Garda involvement in the Project

The majority of community respondents (89% as in Table 7.9 below) were aware of the involvement of the Gardaí in the Projects; however, many were not sure exactly how or to what extent they were involved. Many became aware of this involvement through receptions or Project launch, leaflets, or other people relaying information to them. The majority perceived their involvement as solely through the funding; however, others did see additional purpose to their involvement in terms of support and advice, and interaction with the young people through Project activities.

Table 7.9: Community respondents' awareness of Garda involvement in the GSPs

	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Aware of involvement	33	89.19%
Unaware	3	8.11%

How did you know that there was Garda involvement in the Projects?

I suppose by seeing them in here with [co-ordinator]. I used to hear the name 'JLO' and then asked what it was. Suppose seeing them here and having chats with others.

Know the idea came from the task force report. My understanding is that they're there to hear from the community – any problems. It's a mechanism for local people to feed into the Garda and for the Gardaí to say how they perceive it, so that they are aware of issues in the area.

Through the launch, finding out and talking to local Guard. I would've seen their involvement as being supportive and advisory.

In some areas, their involvement was more widely known. This was particularly true for three of the sites. In one of these sites, there was a visibility around their involvement through the use of the Garda community bus and their active involvement in various Project activities which was highlighted in the area.

Through [community Garda] and through the minibus, it's obvious.

Others believed that the Garda involvement was not feeding through to the wider community and believed that it should.

In recent times, understand more, didn't know it was managed by them, knew clubs were Garda pro-active and play a very positive role. I knew the Gardaí were serious actors with school. There isn't publicity around it ...

Didn't know ... knew the community Guard had some involvement.

They don't promote Garda involvement.

7.7.4 Attitudes towards the Gardaí in general

Community respondents were asked generally about their attitude towards the Gardaí in the area. This was used as a way of exploring the assumption that knowing Gardaí are involved in the GSPs will result in an enhancement of relations between the Gardaí and local residents. Their responses were categorised according to whether their response was positive, negative or mixed.

Table 7.10: Community participants' general attitude towards the Gardaí

<i>Attitude</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Positive	11	29.73%
Negative	8	21.62%
Mixed	18	48.65%

Eleven (29.73%) indicated a positive attitude towards the Gardaí and, in general, this stemmed from those who had knowledge and experience of the work they were doing in the area.

I've no problems with them.

I'd say they have a very difficult job working in difficult circumstances, there's a definite effort to work with community.

This was particularly so in one area, in which there appeared to have been a lot of co-operation between the Gardaí and the community to resolve a number of issues, such as lighting, security cameras, antisocial behaviour of residents, and so on. As a result of having worked together, they perceived that they had now established a good working relationship with the Gardaí, which they see as continuing into the future.

I think they're doing a fantastic job, not everyone will say that – not so, they are always around.

There was time when I said that there was not enough involvement of Garda in the area. With the advent of the cameras, we have more Garda activity than ever, there are two sides to the camera. One picks up the criminals and if squad cars meant to be there it will, more policing, Garda response is instant. There's no delay, they're there fast, immediately. People are in partnership with Gardaí – no longer in awe of them, see them as protector and friend.

I think they're doing a great job, [we'd be] lost without them.

Some indicated that they may have more of a positive attitude than other local residents as they themselves were more aware or informed of Gardaí activities in the area.

I think they're doing good work but need to be seen to do more. I would know from being involved in things, but a lot of people don't see the work they're doing.

I'd be very supportive, think it's getting harder and harder for them.

Generally, those who have been categorised as having a 'mixed' attitude said positive things about the Gardai, but raised issues or had certain reservations about policing in the area. The views indicated a level of respect and praise; however, poor response time, lack of visibility in the area and perceived inaction on certain incidents were raised as negative issues. An issue that was raised across all five sites, which gave rise to negative comments, was in relation to direct personal experiences of inaction after contacting the Gardai, and respondents outlined times where there was no response or a very delayed response.

Praise for them in what they're doing or at least what they are trying to do. It's not enough ... It can be very annoying when you ring and they don't come. One time I phoned the Guards ... the Guards never came down. Another time I phoned about a car that was parked outside [own house], they wouldn't come down to move it as they said it wasn't obstructing anything and 'cause it was taxed and insured. Eventually the kids got into it and wrecked it, they tried to start it and then they were sent up.

Sometimes when you ring, they'll say they've no cars. It's only if you start dropping names [inspectors' names] that they'll bother.

Other concerns raised were around there not being sufficient community Gardai and general inaccessibility of other Gardai.

I think they've a difficult job. The job is made more difficult by the design in the area, by the housing. It's not your average street [plenty of laneways and getaways]. The Guards that are known in the area are respected, the ones that come in contact with the schools are respected, the ones that are not known have names called and are shouted at. Sometimes I feel, yeah, they're very good, other times I feel they wipe their hands of other things, like if there is a stolen car in the area, they may not come down. Also, they know people involved [in the crimes] but don't harass them. There needs to be more community Guards based here. A seen presence. Drug pushers are always there openly selling. The design of the area – it's not easy, but they should make it more difficult for them, need to act as a deterrent. One time there was 'Mothers Against Drugs' in the area, the Guards worked with them and were constantly in patrol, it made a big difference and quietened it down, it made people feel secure to have them here.

I think ... hear a lot giving out about only one person [community Guard] doing an impossible job ... should be more than one. Response time is not good – that's feedback from others. There is only one, can only do so much. Lot of the time, their hands are tied. Feel the Guards say 'why bother?'

One community respondent believed that the Gardai had established a very good relationship and co-operation with a number of community groups in the area; however, she believed that this co-operation was not feeding through at an individual level.

I think the Guards – here it's kind of irony – they seem to have a very good relationship with community groups but individuals don't feel the same, individuals whose house is broke into [have] no confidence.

There were others who believed that areas with public housing get a different policing response than more affluent areas.

Bottom line is they can't be everywhere all time. Then attitude because it's [area] it doesn't fucking matter ... public housing get a different response.

I respect them but I think they pick where they want, they decide if they answer call. [Area] is a dumping area for all antisocial elements, more or less 'Let's leave it to them' ... that's their attitude.

Others believed that the Gardai were selective in their work and were failing to tackle the more problematic issues in the area.

I think they're great. They do have their faults, they go for the wrong people – like a child throwing a stone, they go for that quicker than a joyrider or someone doing punishment beatings.

Others mentioned the attitude of the Gardai in dealing with local residents as a source of annoyance.

Part of me understands that their hands are tied in certain situations. Some have a very bad attitude to local people. When you do ring and they don't respond quickly enough.

Those who expressed a negative attitude towards the Gardai explained this as a result of a number of factors similar to those above, including the perceived attitude of Gardai towards the local residents, poor response time, inaction on problems in the area, and lack of interaction with community members.

What they're doing is nothing ... people don't have a confidentiality in Gardai, this is a breakdown, they've never been proactive.

I think they're very flippant, obnoxious attitude – could do with a dose of PR ... decent ones. Treat kids like dirt, treat them disgraceful. There are one or two that try.

They're doing nothing.

I don't think the public housing area gets the same response as private areas. The problems encountered – a lot of Guards called out to incidents. Treat everyone in here the same. If I make a complaint it's like ... 'Ah sure, he's living in [area]'. They've lost their way, I'm afraid, not just in [the area]. Generally lot of good Guards but a lot don't care.

Shouldn't be one community Guard. I've seen how they operate, you've got to be out there, meeting people ... people like to see it ... I despair, I have given up.

There's a new community Guard, one isn't enough with time off.

Thirty-two (86.49%) of the community respondents indicated that they would co-operate with the Gardaí in the area if there was an inquiry or investigation in their locality. Out of the remaining five, one would not and four believed they would either decide in terms of who was involved (what parties) and what incident the Gardaí were investigating.

It all depends. I'd be careful what I'd say to anyone. I'd be conscious ... just myself, I don't like to get involved, don't like to have anyone around the door.

As my conscience would let – I would pick and choose.

7.7.5 Confidence in the Gardaí

Table 7.11: Community respondents' answer to the question: 'Do you feel confident with what the Gardaí in the area are doing?'

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	20	54.05%
No	14	37.84%
Mixed/Unsure	3	8.11%

Twenty (54.05%) reported having confidence in what the Gardaí are doing in the area, and any shortcomings mentioned were related to under-resourcing and lack of manpower.

Yes, but they could do more. Maybe they don't have the manpower and the funding so it's not the Garda on the beat. If you pick up the phone they'll come, it may not be for 20 minutes, but they'll come.

Some of those who did have confidence in the Gardaí mentioned or were aware of certain mechanisms in which Gardaí and local community people could interact and work together, to resolve certain situations, or deal with general local issues (e.g. residents' association, estate management groups, Neighbourhood Watch).

Yes, they're trying their best. During the summer the sergeant was up walking in the road, talking to the kids. They do try and you can see the work that they're doing. Half of the time they don't get support, people don't want to know. People see them as a Guard and not as an individual person. Now there is little or no vandalism on our road. At one time, the road was split about kids playing football on the roads [as to whether they should be allowed to play on the road or somewhere else and if so where]. Reached a compromise after an afternoon in the police station. The police gave the law on it, the cans and can'ts and helped get a compromise where before there had been an awful lot of friction.

I do be, but there could be more foot patrols so they could be seen themselves. I feel they are understaffed.

Very confident, there at all times, community centre or [GSP], bound to see them, always around, after tea time they're around, see them quite regularly.

Yes, they're accessible, easy to talk to, no longer afraid to walk up to them, they're considered one of the community. One drawback is, when one is on leave, they're not replaced, can't expect that on a full-time basis.

I would, without knowing too much. They have a better relationship and through security, and aware of the system is there for community, the relationship is better, everyone is happier.

It would appear that, as a result of contact with Gardaí, there is more likelihood of residents being exposed to their work. This, in turn, may result in them being more predisposed to report positively.

Yes, they're there, know they're there and very obliging. If I told them or asked them anything, it's done immediately. Maybe a bit different for other people, I do know them.

I suppose I do. If I wasn't on the forum [estate management], I wouldn't know what they're doing. Have sorted out issues ... lighting, more cameras, and so on ...

There was a strong emphasis emerging, from those who were confident in the policing in the area, on the importance of co-operation and a good relationship between the community and the Gardaí. Many argued that the Gardaí could not serve the community effectively without the support and confidence of the community.

It's improving. Their resources are limited. We've called for more Garda [that's] vital. If Garda presence, need community presence and Garda and community co-operation. Could have 100 Guards on the street and no one reporting to them, ten of them and community co-operation have effective policy.

Yeah, I know they're trying. I know from experience. We started up Neighbourhood Watch. We had trouble getting people to come, cancelled a lot – eventually got the numbers. There's always been a Guard there at the meeting. Anything we've approached them with, they've helped. Haven't come up against anything bad.

Yes [x] new community Guard is very approachable ... wouldn't have a problem. I'd go to them if I had a problem, have been in a few times. They need a few more Guards.

Yes, if particular problem with certain family it gets sorted, most are very helpful ... put you wide. The time it takes is the frustrating part.

Three community respondents (8.11%) were unsure or had serious reservations about the Gardaí.

Feel there's room for improvement on a one-to-one scale. Very confident in their community work, definitely people do not feel they have a right to ring the Guards if home is broke into.

Fourteen (37.84%) reported that they did not have confidence in the Gardaí and the policing in their area; this was as a result of similar issues raised above, including attitude, response time, lack of presence and visibility.

Outright no, under no circumstances ...

Some respondents believed that the attitude of the Gardaí towards local people was not conducive to good community relations, so much so that one particular respondent believed that the message the Gardaí were giving was that they, the community people, are not worthy of a policing service.

Do you feel confident with what the Gardaí in the area are doing?

No. Constantly tell you, 'don't have a car available' ... First, of all lack of manpower; secondly, the attitude that people aren't worthy of a good police service ... not all of them.

Their attitude is too flippant, their response time is crap ... After we have meeting, it's fabulous but then it reverts back ...

They're doing nothing, not where break-ins or joyriders are concerned – pick up a wee child stealing sweets quicker. I've seen it happen loads of times, seen some joyriding, fighting, carrying weapons, getting away with everything. Get wee petty things.

Very low response rate, never see them on the beat.

Simply haven't enough bodies for 39 hours. We have one community Guard half-time. He has paperwork – haven't seen him in [estate] in months, not on the ground, not a job for one man.

No. How could we? Don't have barracks, [nearby station] closes at six, [main station] that's for everyone. Their hands are tied – no power and can't push.

Response rate is very slow, lack of manpower and facilities.

Person faith has gone very low, presence on street is weak.

No. Through my own personal experience and from hearing things from others, need to be out meeting people. The only contact if person has problem or crime committed against them, should be meeting them before then [before that happens].

It follows on, then, that their suggestions to change or improve confidence in policing in the area were directly related to the concerns they had raised. Generally, this relates to a stronger presence in the area, better response time and linking (i.e. interacting and co-operating) more effectively with local community residents.

I'd like to see that they are more visible even driving around the area.

If possible quick responses to things like stolen cars and drugs. Community Guards could work a lot more with kids in the senior school, it's really there where the breakdown occurs. The younger ones at school are more interested in the Guards, the kids in senior school start to form their own opinions, and start to dislike them, more activities that are community based.

Guards are people. [They] should come more into community so that they're seen as people, so that they would be more amenable and helpful to them – not enough, not open long enough – need to be out there.

It goes back to attitude, some sort of training [needed] bringing them up fresh from country they haven't dealt with anything like this before. They come here, they're walking in with an attitude that it's an awful place, going with the thought, 'I have the power and you don't'.

Need to make their presence known and seen – not just once off, a constant presence is a deterrent.

More foot patrol, go up in car and tun around, need more of a presence. Walking around might deter.

Have one community Guard – that's not enough. Other Guards up there – no presence.

Be more visible in the areas, more on foot than in cars.

Community respondents viewed foot patrols as being advantageous, in that they would act as a deterrent for potential offenders in the area, but also that the foot patrols were a way for the Gardaí to become familiar with the community. Some related episodes where Gardaí had been patrolling areas and how problems had dissipated.

Yes, I see it in a lot of ways, a deterrent but also being friendly.

Foot patrols most important, regular driving around ... is a deterrent in itself, visible presence at shops and through estates gives people confidence – probably most important thing.

Yes. We asked for foot patrols loads of times. It never happened, I never seen them.

For one community respondent, the presence of Gardaí in the area would enable her to feel safe in sending her child out to the shops.

Yes more, if I knew Guards were up there, I'd send my child to the chip shop.

Would like to see them. We sporadically get foot patrols for one week and then vanish for six months.

Only approach should be on ground. There is a pool of goodwill – that pool has to be looked at – relationship with good people in Gardaí if that could be going somewhere – has to be regular contact. Lot of people afraid to call ... would not lift the phone ... afraid people cop on it was them later.

The predisposition of respondents and their confidence levels in the Gardaí appear to be influenced by an accumulation of factors. Interacting with the community through involvement in Projects and initiatives such as the GSP does not necessarily result in positive attitudes and good community relations *per se* but rather, along with a number of other factors, it may contribute to better and improved Garda community relations. Other factors which take precedence, as indicated overwhelmingly by the majority of community participants interviewed, include:

- Visibility, presence and accessibility of Gardaí;
- Improved response time;
- Gardaí tackling the problematic issues in the area;
- Having a positive attitude towards local people, particularly in terms of encouraging people to report crime.

7.7.6 Perception of Gardaí interacting and dealing with youth in the area

The majority of community respondents believed that, in some way, the Gardaí were interacting with the young people in the area, but, generally, they reported that the extent of this was not enough. Some believed that the Gardaí did interact with the youth to some extent, but generally this was seen as selective and not extensive throughout the area, e.g. with certain school programmes, or GSP. Others mentioned interaction with general youth groups, summer programmes or simply stopping and chatting to young people on the street in the community. Many mentioned positive outcomes to this interaction.

In one site, all respondents viewed the Gardaí interacting with the youth in the area; this was mainly with reference to the community Garda.

Table 7.12: Perception of Gardaí interacting with young people in the area

<i>Gardaí interact with youth</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	29	78.38%
No	6	16.22%
Unsure	2	5.40%

With the younger ones in the summer, not the teenagers. It's a good thing for the younger kids, the kids can learn to respect them as people and not to be afraid of the uniform.

There are definitely those who try specifically, Guards going into the schools, some of the clubs involved. [I] wouldn't have first hand knowledge. I'm not involved in anything with young people. Imagine they have an allocation of community Guards [for that].

Selective, [GSP] is a point, [GSP] is perceived to work, the problems in [area] not going to be solved by targeting the selective.

Think the community Guard has a good rapport – involved in local boxing club, keep in contact with local kids.

Makes a difference, in sense, presence of Guards gives them more of a picture of what's going on in area. I think it would. One community Guard used to go into gangs, making themselves known, knew what was going on

The community Guards, they make a great effort try to get them parties, treats, clubs.

7.8 Summary and conclusion to Chapter 7

Community respondents reported that they were made aware of Project actions through various community groups they were involved in and other community residents. They believed that other community members learnt of the Project through local newsletters, community groups and youth groups. Some did not believe that there was an awareness of the Project in the wider community.

Having an awareness of Project actions did not result in feelings of security. The majority of community respondents did not make a connection between the Project and feelings of safety. The majority of community respondents, however, did see positive benefits to having the Project in the area.

The majority of community respondents were aware of the involvement of the Gardaí in the Projects; however, many were unsure of the nature of their involvement. In some areas, their involvement was more widely known; this was particularly true for three of the sites. Many believe that the knowledge of Gardaí involvement was not feeding through to the wider community.

This knowledge did not result in community respondents being more positively disposed to the Gardaí. Although community respondents may see the involvement of the Gardaí as beneficial, there appear to be too many other overriding issues which determine people's predisposition towards the Gardaí.

Garda involvement in the Projects in itself does not lead to the enhancement of relations between the Gardaí and residents in the area, but may, along with other factors, contribute to this.

The majority of community respondents have positive attitudes towards the Project, in that they could see positive benefits for the young people and the community in general.

PART THREE

CONCLUSIONS

8 CONCLUSION: KEY POLICY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS⁴¹

8.1 Introduction: Main areas of positive impact

This final chapter of the report highlights issues in relation to the effectiveness of Projects, and outlines elements of the work of the GSPs that need to be strengthened. These largely pertain to the monitoring, evaluation and support infrastructure built around the Projects, on the assumption that, if the work of the Projects is to develop in a strategic and co-ordinated fashion, such an infrastructure is required to sustain their impact at local level. Section 8.2 below deals with the effectiveness of the GSPs in achieving diversion outcomes. Section 8.3 examines the nature and effectiveness of multi-agency co-operation in the Projects and section 8.4 summarises the findings and issues in relation to impacting/improving the quality of life in Project areas and supporting Garda/community relations. Recommendations are made at the end of each section and are summarised together at the end of this chapter in section 8.5 below.

Data from the survey of 14 Projects indicated the *ad hoc* nature of how the Projects have evolved (see section 4.2 above). The study of Projects in five sites, as presented in the case studies in Chapter 5 of this report, highlights the various innovations and responses made by Projects in dealing with youth crime, disorder and offending in their areas. Interviews with 51 young people indicated the positive lifestyle and behavioural changes the participants made. Moreover, based on the results of a self-report behaviour checklist, the Projects have been found to have a positive impact in reducing offending and socially unacceptable behaviours.

Arising from the findings of the research, as outlined in the previous chapters of this report, the following summary points can be made in relation to the positive impact of the Garda Special Projects:

- The multi-agency nature of the Projects creates the basic infrastructure for development towards a locally based youth crime prevention programme;
- In conjunction with youth service providers in particular, the Gardaí have established a positive system for diverting young people from offending;
- In some locations, the Projects have acted as a positive resource to the Garda Youth Diversion Programme, by accepting referrals from, and working in tandem with, the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer;
- The Projects have attracted participation of a significant number of young people and engaged them in worthwhile and beneficial activities;
- The Projects have been effective, through youth work interventions, in persuading young people to desist from crime and unacceptable behaviours in their areas;
- On the basis of the research, a key factor in how Projects manage to influence young people appears to be the nature of the relationship that the young people have with the Project staff, the commitment they make to and the bond they form with the Project itself;
- The Garda Special Projects have, in most cases, developed mechanisms for allowing positive exchanges between individual Gardaí, young people, their families and communities.

8.2 Effectiveness of the Projects in achieving diversion outcomes

8.2.1 Introduction

The evaluation research set out with questions in relation to how Project mechanisms contributed to reductions in self reported behavioural change. We utilised a variety of approaches to establish this, but we relied mainly upon semi-structured interviews with 51 Project participants. Through this we sought to:

- reveal whether there was a reducing pattern in offending behaviour; and
- access *their* perceptions of the project specific mechanisms that contributed to any behavioural changes.

In addition, we sought to clarify how participants were chosen, and the range of practices and procedures used for this purpose. This was necessary as a way of identifying the routes into the GSPs and clarifying the criminal justice or police status of the participants. Overall, the purpose of our evaluation research in relation to the diversion role of the GSPs was to establish the nature and extent of diversion outcomes. In examining this issue, this section of the report deals first with the processes for targeting, recruitment and progression, and second with 'diversion from crime' by summarising the mechanisms deployed by Projects and the reported outcomes. Our intention here is to clarify, for the purposes of informing policy, the appropriate *focus* for youth crime diversion projects.

⁴¹ This final chapter discusses the key findings of the evaluative research and takes account of issues arising from interviews with stakeholders in the first stage of the evaluation.

8.2.2 Evaluation findings in relation to targeting and Recruitment

The evaluative research reveals that there are a variety of methods used for identifying programme participants, and a range of practice styles used in order to make contact and gain a commitment to participation. Targeting of participants is problematic for the Projects, in that they largely are left to their own devices to develop the specific criteria. In this regard, it can be assumed that there are 14 ways in which Projects engage in targeting. The findings of our research are summarised in Box 9 below.

Box 9: Findings – ‘Identification and recruitment of participants’

The referral processes in place

- The survey revealed that all 14 Projects had received referrals from a variety of sources including justice, youth workers, educational and community sources. Self-referral is also a significant source.
- The study of five Projects revealed that all had some process for receiving referrals both formally and informally and that there was considerable variation across Projects in terms of how developed or underdeveloped their referral processes were.

Identification and selection of participants

- There are a number of methods used to identify prospective participants. In some cases, where a young person has not committed an offence, it is unclear what criteria are used.
- Those who have offended are identified mostly by the Garda JLO.
- In two Projects studied, the co-ordinator engages in a further screening process once a referral has been made, where the criteria include whether the co-ordinator can make a clear judgement that the Project can work effectively with the young person, and whether the person referred can be clustered with a natural group of his/her peers.
- Not all Projects lay down an expectation of behavioural change as a pre-requisite condition to those recruited. In two of the five Projects studied closely, this expectation was more prominent whereas, in the case of the remaining three, a behavioural change requirement was less pronounced.
- In *unstructured programmes* involving leisure, youth club or ‘drop-in’ activities, there is no pre-condition laid down on behavioural change or progression. In this context, there is no evidence from our research that tracking of progress or behaviour outside of the Project occurs.
- In relation to *structured programmes* there is an expectation of behavioural change along with regular attendance, commitment to the Project and to other participants. Mechanisms deployed for tracking and monitoring progress in these programmes remain unclear, except in the case of Wooddale, where referrers and Project/youth work staff operate formal exchange mechanisms for monitoring how participants respond to the programme.

8.2.3 Discussion of issues in relation to targeting

Need to clarify and restate purpose of the GSPs

It appears, on the basis of the findings as summarised above, that, while the Projects have been innovative and flexible in targeting and recruitment, the procedures and processes are well developed in some Projects, but underdeveloped or non-existent in others. In addition, it appears that this may be drawing attention to a more significant issue – that the purpose of the Projects is not at all clear. While some Projects are exemplary in how they clarify their roles, identify how they are distinct from more generic youth work interventions and target their client group accordingly, others have been *laissez faire*, and moreover, do not lay down any requirement for behavioural change as a condition of participation. Overall, there is perhaps a need to restate the purpose of the Projects in clearer crime prevention/diversion terms.

Referrals and procedures

In relation to referrals, the general picture resulting from an in-depth study in five sites is that, with one exception – Wooddale, the Projects have largely set up informal procedures for receiving referrals. While there are arrangements to accept referrals between Project co-ordinators, schools and the JLOs, the procedures and structures built up around them remain underdeveloped. The Wooddale Project, because it has decided to focus on quality interventions with small numbers, has developed an elaborate set of procedures and structures to support their programme participants. In this way, it has ensured that, when a referral is made, the referrer becomes a stakeholder in the progression of the client through the Project’s programme.

The need for clear guidelines in relation to targeting appropriate participants

The evaluation research has found that there is a need for greater clarity in terms of who is targeted and on what basis they are identified as suitable participants. This is quite problematic. Assuming that the purpose of the Projects is to recruit those engaged in offending or socially unacceptable behaviours in the area and divert them from this, then this should be the primary target group. This does not always square with recruitment practices. In one case, the Project involves young children referred from schools, where the only criterion is that they have low self-esteem while, in others, the primary means of identification is through the JLO scheme. In the latter instance, the young person has already a status which defines their suitability. The Garda HQ circular gives some, albeit basic, guidelines in this regard:

Projects should focus on crime prevention and the target group should be young people 'at risk'. The selection of the target group should receive careful consideration and be seen to be consistent with, and supportive of, the overall aims of the Project.

The HQ circular defines the difference between 'intervention' and 'prevention'. Intervention programmes are defined as follows:

Intervention Programmes, i.e. programmes designed for the needs of specific groups. A small manageable group is selected and a high level of interaction and participation takes place. A forum is created where attitudes are challenged in the hope of changing behavioural patterns. The target group should be:

- (a) young people who have offended and are likely to re-offend. Referrals to these programmes should generally be made by Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers, local Gardaí and Probation and Welfare Officers, and,
- (b) young people who have not yet offended but because of their lifestyle and vulnerability are considered to be 'at risk'. Referrals should generally be made by local Gardaí, the Project Co-ordinator, advisory or management committee, home-school liaison officers, etc. (1998: 3)

These are reasonably clear terms, in that they define those with whom the Projects should engage, but it is in relation to point (b) that they become more problematic as guidelines, in that the meaning of 'at risk' is so broad as to make this group unidentifiable. Some Projects actually consider all young people living in their areas to fit this category by virtue of residence. Moreover, the Projects need to consider in these cases if *needs* should be prioritised over relative *risks* and to then make appropriate referrals to other agencies more suited to helping the young person deal with their needs where these referral options exist.

Secondly, the HQ circular defines 'prevention':

Prevention Programmes, i.e. broad based programmes directed at all young people within the target group. These should generally be information driven programmes where forums such as schools, youth clubs etc. within the target area are utilised to disseminate information ... The focus should be on larger groups with minimal interaction (*ibid.*).

The guidelines then go on to say that, with the exception of Wooddale, the Projects should balance intervention with prevention. Prevention programmes are widely targeted within the Project area and at young people where the risk of offending is either minimal or non-existent. The evaluation research interviewed young people in five Project sites. What appears to be a key factor in the success of Projects in encouraging young people to desist from crime and other behaviours is the intensity of the relationship that they have with the staff and with the programme itself. In this sense, the Projects are challenged to consider the efficacy of the so-called 'prevention' programmes.

The guidelines create a division between 'prevention' and 'intervention' which, apart from being tautologous or contradictory, may result in some confusion in relation to targeting and programme design. The Projects are intended to be engaged in youth crime *prevention*. By definition, all actions are *interventions* but only vary on the basis of targeting and their relative intensity. Moreover, if the intended impact is to prevent crime, then 'prevention' *qua* programme type becomes confused with 'prevention' *qua* desired outcome. This might best be clarified if there was a clearer understanding between primary prevention (aimed generally and not specifically targeted), and secondary prevention (specifically targeted at those who have offended, where the aim is to prevent re-offending).

Some of these ambiguities may lead Projects into using a wide range of criteria for identifying participants. This could be addressed by defining a narrower focus for the Projects in terms of who is recruited from what sources of referral and for what purpose. In fact, the Wooddale Project (see chapter 5 above) is a model of exemplary practice in this regard. The promise held out by this approach is that it demonstrates what can be achieved where there is a clear and direct link between the Projects and the Garda JLO insofar as it adds value to the Garda Youth Diversion Programme.

8.2.4 Implications in relation to targeting and recruitment

The above discussion draws attention to the need for the GSPs to have a more deliberate and focused role in relation to diverting young people who are specifically identified as offenders. This is not to say that only offenders should be recruited, but that, in drawing up guidelines to aid programme development, it should be clear that it has a specific primary target group. Otherwise, the GSPs are not clearly distinguished from generic youth work provision.

Diversion programmes are internationally criticised for their tendency to engage in *net-widening*. This refers to the idea that diversion which operates on police discretion brings young people into contact with the justice agencies prior to having any official status within the justice system (Lundman, 1994; Muncie, 1998; Cohen, 1985). In this context, the Garda Special Projects need to consider the ethics of involving young people who have 'needs' and no youth justice, police or criminal justice status. Apart from the ethics of this, it does not seem to make sense that children and young people who have never committed a crime should be recruited into a programme which aims to 'divert them from crime and anti-social behaviour'. It would appear, then, that it is appropriate to shift from the current situation where Projects can recruit children and young people universally, regardless of status, to one where they have, in the very least, been referred by an arresting Garda to the Youth Diversion Programme and further referred to the GSP. In order to remain successful at achieving diversion outcomes, the Projects have to be focused in recruitment of the core of participants.

While noting the issues raised above, it would be equally undesirable to adopt recruitment strategies which would result in labelling or stigmatising the participants any further. It would appear that this issue could be dealt with where recruitment was primarily targeted at those who have offended, and counter-balanced by the Project through recruiting non-offenders where the goal is:

- to form or work within 'natural' groups of peers who may be of mixed status in relation to offending; and/or
- to provide leadership opportunities to non-offending young people.

8.2.5 Evaluation findings on diversion mechanisms, impact and outcomes

While Projects have been afforded the flexibility to respond to local conditions, it appears from the research findings, summarised in Box 10 below, that the range of mechanisms deployed varies from a high emphasis on intervention and progression on one hand, to the provision of leisure with no offending or behavioural pre-conditions on the other.

Box 10: Findings: The key mechanisms of diversion in the GSPs

- Based on an analysis of the five sites, there appears to be three domains of diversion:
- Creation of alternative progression/development routes;
- Challenging young people's offending and other unacceptable behaviour through personal development or through one-to-one interventions;
- Providing leisure and recreational activities.
- Three of the five Project sites studied are identified as operating within these three domains simultaneously, albeit there are differences between them in terms of the degree of intensity and emphasis.
- Two of the five Projects studied have focused, in the main, on the provision of leisure and recreational activities.
- The study of five sites reveals that, in the four youth service managed sites, the parent youth organisation itself acts as the 'prime-mover' in terms of deciding upon the rationale and content of the Project programmes.
- There is no uniform meaning between Projects (or, for that matter, between agencies involved within Projects) attributed to 'progress' or 'progression'. In this context, it is difficult to discern any pattern of progression or to identify the progression routes. However, it is clear that Projects are active in making outward referrals in the area of employment, training and further education and, as such, are achieving some level of referral output. Notwithstanding this, it is evident that the emphasis has, in the main, focused on *diversion from crime* and less on *diversion to* alternative systems of education, training or employment.

It is clear from the findings above that a wide range of practices is utilised to deliver on the goal of diverting young people from crime. While Projects deploy a range of practices, it is not possible to evaluate the relative

performance of the various models at this point.⁴² Nevertheless, as identified in data from interviews with participants as presented in chapter 6 of this report, the Projects have in an overall sense achieved clear diversion outcomes as summarised in Box 11 below. These positive findings should not be overstated or read out of context. We would caution that these findings should be tempered, given the limitations of our research design. Our sample is drawn from known and existing participants. We were not in a position in our sampling to access participants who had left or were dismissed from a Project. Equally, we were not in a position to establish whether Projects targeted and recruited the most needy clients (in terms of their law breaking status) in all cases. A prospective research design would enable subsequent research to identify a sample of new recruits, and both establish and examine shifts in their offending status.

Box 11: Findings: Achieving a diversionary impact

Reported changes in behaviour and lifestyle of the participants

- Participants across the five Project sites studied in-depth indicated that they made changes in behaviour, attitude and lifestyle.
- The participants reported decreases in their offending and unacceptable behaviours as a result of their involvement with the Project.
- Positive changes and learning outcomes were also reported by them including:
 - Development and acquisition of personal skills and abilities;
 - Changes in lifestyles, outlook and socialising patterns.

To what features of the Projects do the participants attribute these changes?

Interviews with 51 Project participants suggest the following key explanations for personal change from their own understanding:

- *Positive Relationships with Project Staff* – for the young people, the Projects have facilitated the creation of positive, trusting and supportive relationships with adults;
- *Awareness of Boundaries and Rules* – participants believe that they have to abide by rules or codes of behaviour in order to stay involved in the Project. This is more effective in structured groups where there is an apparent pre-condition of compliance to codes of behaviour, both inside and outside the Project. Conversely, this is less effective in activities of a casual or ‘drop-in’ nature or other unstructured Project actions where the same pre-condition is not enforced.
- *Creation of Positive Alternatives by the Project* – all the young people reported positively about their experiences of the Project in that they perceived that the Projects were providing them with alternative leisure, creative and developmental opportunities.
- These mechanisms in turn contribute to a sense of attachment and commitment to the Projects. The majority of young people reported having an input into programme content, which further reinforces their commitment to the Project and their adherence to codes of behaviour. The latter is especially true where there is a sense that the participant has had a direct input into the formulation of agreed boundaries.

Finding a clear focus

While the results of the evaluation are very positive, the clear lesson arising from the findings presented above is that GSPs need to be *focused*. The young people have identified three clear outputs that make the Projects work:

- that they have established *sound and positive relationships* with youth work staff;
- that they are made *aware of boundaries* both outside and within the Project itself;
- that the Project affords them *alternatives* in terms of lifestyles, development opportunities and leisure.

It is clear that good practice in youth diversion projects must mobilise interventions to guarantee these three outputs. From our research, it appears that structured and focused interventions are more likely to have a greater impact particularly where there is a clear commitment assured from participants to working within agreed behavioural boundaries.

Progression and diversion to alternatives

While some Projects make great efforts to refer young people to employment, training, further education and other youth work programmes, it is clear that, where this takes place, it is on the voluntary initiative of individual

⁴² Sample sizes across the five sites where participants were interviewed are too small for reliable comparison.

Projects. In this sense, GSPs tend to focus more on promoting the personal and social skills of the young people involved as the key mechanism of diverting young people from crime. Thus, this does not involve, in any planned or strategic way, the diversion of young people to other systems, either in education or training.

Assessing need and monitoring outcomes

It is evident from our findings, as summarised in Box 12 below, that the key to success of the Projects is the process of acquiring skills and positive social attributes. In this sense, it is possible for the young people to be engaged in a process of identifying their needs and working with staff to realise these. This is perhaps true for most of the Projects studied, but it is evident also that this too is rather *laissez faire*, given that there is little recording and monitoring of outcomes or methods used to help the participants meet their needs. Of the five Projects studied, only one had any procedure for monitoring progress, but this was not needs-based, in that it focused on the risk of re-offending.

Box 12: Findings: Personal Development and Civic Responsibility

Individual needs assessment?⁴³

- Across the five Projects studied closely, there was no evidence of a mechanism for individual needs assessment from the outset. Juvenile Liaison Officers referring young people to the Projects would have conducted their own assessment within the guidelines of the Garda Diversion Programme. The Woodale Project conducts an individual risk assessment procedure with the referring JLOs to determine the risk of re-offending of those identified as prospective participants.

Participants' learning outcomes, their social networks and life decisions

- Participants interviewed in five Project sites reported positively on learning outcomes in the following categories:
- Learned to be aware and gained insights into own attitudes and behaviours;
- Undertook new activities and gained new experiences including the development of practical skills in computing and woodwork, literacy and numeracy skills;
- Acquired positive social attributes including responsibility, self-confidence and leadership.
- Through their involvement with the Project, the young people have, *de facto*, been linked to a new social network. It is not clear whether there are qualitative changes in their social networks as a result of Project interventions. However, it is clear that there are changes in their social activities.
- The majority of young people interviewed reported that they had aspirations to future employment, training or further education, whereas only a small minority were unsure of their futures.
- There is evidence of the young people becoming involved and participating more widely in the community through taking part in other groups, projects and events in their areas.

8.2.6 Targeting and achieving diversion: Summary and recommendation

The first recommendation arising from this report is made taking account of the following issues:

- The practice of providing generic youth activities, whilst it may present as a legitimate need in a local area, might not be the most appropriate mode of intervention in a programme which has the goal of diverting young people from crime.
- Diversion is distinct from universal youth crime prevention,⁴⁴ insofar as the target group is specific to known offenders.
- It might be assumed that the key differentiating factor between the generic work of youth services and the role they play within the Garda Special Projects is that the latter has a specific target group. It appears, though, that this is problematic, because some Projects recruit regardless of the prospective participant's police or justice status, and the guidelines could, by implication, be reinforcing this. Thus, in some cases, there is no specificity in the group that eventually participates.
- That Projects can decide and continue to set their own focus and programme emphasis, without discussing this and having it regularly appraised, should be a matter for immediate consideration. In this regard, that

⁴³ This was a key evaluation question in that the researchers tried to establish how the Projects ensured that each participant made change or met their needs through the Project and how and if this was monitored.

⁴⁴ The term 'universal youth crime prevention' refers to actions and programmes which are targeted at all young people, regardless of whether they have offended or are deemed to be at risk of offending.

Projects can decide to invest their funding in entirely leisure-based programmes, without any reference to the impact of this in relation to crime prevention outcomes, is a matter of concern. Equally, they could decide to focus on intervention programmes with children who have never offended and who are unlikely to ever acquire a criminal justice status.

- In terms of the future development of the GSPs arising from the role of youth diversion as outlined in the National Development Plan (as achieving ‘employability’), there is a need for a clearer and more deliberate strategy of opening up progression routes as complementary to the engagement of the young people in a crime diversion project.

RECOMMENDATION: TOWARDS AN OUTCOME FOCUS

The *primary focus* of Projects at local level should be to engage in youth work interventions directly with those who have offended and primarily those who have come to the attention of the local Garda JLO. The intention of ‘diversion’ is to redirect those who have already offended and the purpose of intervention is to prevent re-offending. Projects have, to date, emphasised *diversion from involvement in crime* and the juvenile justice system. They should equally focus on *diverting to alternative systems* such as training, education, employment, and further personal or creative development. In this context, local Projects should develop clear progression strategies by building on the positive work that they have already undertaken in this area.

8.3 Effectiveness of the multi-agency arrangements

8.3.1 Key evaluation research findings

In setting out to conduct the evaluation, the researchers tried to seek clarification to the most basic of questions. The purpose of this form of inquiry was to gain an understanding of the essential character of the GSPs, acquire insights into the roles of the various agencies involved, and the role and form of local community participation. Thus the aim of the evaluation in this regard has been to clarify the mechanisms of multi-agency work at local and national level. An outline of our clarifications of multi-agency arrangements and community level co-operation is summarised in Box 13 below. The evaluation also considered the appropriateness and efficacy of these structures in the light of any expansion of the Projects as signalled in the National Development Plan.

Box 13: Findings: The nature of ‘multi-agency and community co-operation’

- Multi-agency linkages operate at local level as there are no structures above this level;
- The principal mechanisms of multi-agency co-operation are:
 - Project Management or Advisory Groups;
 - Networking and support work with other agencies and community based initiatives – the survey of 14 Projects revealed that Projects generally do make networking and support linkages with agencies other than justice or youth work related agencies;
 - Sharing resources with community groups/projects;
 - Referrals between Projects and the agencies, where relevant;
 - Co-funding of programmes in a small number of cases.
- It is evident that all Projects have been active in networking and collaborating with other agencies. They have all established support systems by linking with the agencies at advisory and management level.
- It is less clear how collaboration and linking may result in the effective co-ordination of the work of the agencies engaged in these processes. There are examples where this has worked, and others where it is not clear that any effective change has taken place.
- Community members are engaged in the advisory and management committees. Advisory committee community members give advice and support to the promoting youth service.
- In general, the community does not engage with local Gardaí through the Projects for responding to broader crime prevention issues. The GRAFT Project is an exception to this, in that the committee acts as a mechanism which allows local representatives to identify and raise issues with the Gardaí.
- Processes and procedures for selecting community representatives are not in place to any great degree.

8.3.2 Issues in relation to multi-agency and community co-operation

Existing local structures

The key mechanisms for engaging parties to co-operation are either through the management or advisory committees. Advisory committees, by definition, offer advice to the promoting youth service in relation to

programme matters and to the Gardaí in terms of how Garda funding is spent. There are some anomalies in relation to these committees. As with all *advice*, it may or may not be acted upon by the final decision-makers. Advisory committees also seem to hold some management responsibilities, given that they have *treasurers* who act, *de facto*, in a financial management capacity within the Projects. Given this, and the fact that youth service organisations, in most cases, employ the Project co-ordinator, and are in general the prime movers in relation to the Project's core youth work interventions, there appears to be an imbalance in terms of decision-making powers within the Projects. Effectively, managerial powers and responsibilities are subdivided between the promoting youth service and the Gardaí. Other agencies and the community have a consultative role by invitation and are, by definition, less powerful in the set of arrangements. Hence, it is necessary, for the purposes of clarity, to characterise the GSPs (based on most cases) as a management partnership between these two agencies.

While the evaluation research only focused upon one exceptional case where the Project was self-managed, it too was criticised locally for not having inclusive structures within which the community has an equal role. Interestingly, two Projects have interpreted 'community representation' in a restricted sense by including 'parents' representatives' on either advisory or management committees. This is not to suggest that Projects should not include parents in some capacity, but they do not substitute for developing adequate forms of expression of the aggregated interests of the local community in general.

In the case of GRAFT, while allowing local residents to articulate concerns was welcomed by the community representatives, it has proved to be confined to the Gardaí retorting with their operational policies which, in turn, the community representatives have to communicate back to their organisations. There was some disappointment here that issues which have a wider import in relation to how the area was policed were not transferred into a higher level policy-making arena. While it is evident that a positive channel of communication has been opened, it terminates at the local level and, as such, achieves little in the way of impacting upon Garda policy.

The case of the Woodale Project raises a question as to the efficacy of the advisory structures as an adequate management mechanism where they operate in isolation. That the Project established an inter-agency management group at senior level, arising out of a requirement to deal with the needs of the Project, is an example of good practice in multi-agency co-operation. Moreover, at the operations level, the cross-agency issues in relation to referral and review of individual participants needed another mechanism.

In a somewhat different context, the CCYDG Project in Moyross operates as a limited company and yet it appears that this is quite enabling as a device for incorporating multi-agency arrangements, and is broadly satisfactory to the various interests involved there. In addition, this structure has proven effective in drawing together the collective contributions of agencies in the formulation of procedures and policies in relation to focused intervention programmes with the target group.

Role of the Probation and Welfare Service

The role of the PWS in the Projects remains unclear. Individual officers have played a positive role in relation to providing advice and, to a limited extent, they have made referrals. Officers reported that they are often relied upon for professional advice in relation to some Project level affairs. Some officers have interpreted that they have a monitoring role in an official capacity, although it is unclear if this was ever a matter of Department of JELR policy.

Ownership

The survey of the 14 Projects highlighted the extent to which Projects were accruing assets. Related to this there is the issue as to which of the parties has legal title in respect of the equipment purchased by Project funds. In theory, at least, they may belong to the Gardaí, as the funding from the Department is not grant-in-aid to the advisory committees. It is unlikely that they belong legally to the Project or the promoting youth service either, as they are not the final beneficiary of the funding, save in relation to employee-related expenditure. This issue raises a more general question as to the identity of the advisory committees and whether they are an adequate arrangement in regard to the holding of assets.

Responsibilities, liability and protection in the multi-agency context

Projects generally work within the code of practice as set down by the promoting youth service. As outlined in chapter five of this report, in the case of the CCYDG, which is not a subsidiary of a youth service provider, the Limerick Youth Service facilitated the development of practice guidelines. The Garda HQ Circular sets out the administrative rules for the Projects and it places the onus for adhering to good practice in relation to 'safety, health and welfare' of participants on the youth service organisation or the management committee of an independent Project. The HQ Circular does not deal with the specifics of good youth work practice. More

recently, youth service organisations have been in discussions in relation to agreeing sets of practice guidelines and procedures for safe-guarding the interests and needs of staff and participants in this regard. The publication of the national guidelines on the reporting of child abuse deals also with the procedures to be followed in relation to the responsibilities of employers where an allegation of abuse is made against an employee.⁴⁵

Notwithstanding these procedures, there is a need to formulate a coherent set of guidelines in relation to the specifics of youth work practice, to ensure that the staff and volunteers are not engaged in areas of specialised practice for which they are not qualified, and therefore not covered by professional indemnity. Based on her internal evaluation of one of the GSPs, Hurley (1999)⁴⁶ suggests that practice guidelines are required in this area to ensure that Projects and agencies are not involved in inappropriate interventions with children and young people. This applies especially in situations where Projects engage in what is euphemistically described as ‘one-to-one’ work, but might equally be construed as meaning ‘counselling’. Unless Project staff are specifically qualified and employed as counsellors, they run the risk of being exposed and exposing their employing agency to liability. Unless there is some agreement as to the appropriate forms of intervention, practices which are beyond the scope of generic youth work will continue to operate in a grey area. It is unclear which party within the present multi-agency arrangements, as presently arranged, will take ultimate responsibility in the case of a conflict, claim or dispute that arises. The same could be said to apply to the ownership of assets and to whom they revert if a decision is taken to close a Project.

Role of the local community and selection processes

The study of mechanisms in five areas indicated that the principal work of the GSPs is in relation to its core focus on youth work and, as such, the Projects have not been active in engaging local people in their areas in relation to crime prevention. In general, engagement with the community through the establishment of participative or consultative processes has not been a feature of the Projects. Instead, advisory committees tend to recruit key local people to become members at the committee’s invitation.

The five case studies in chapter five indicated that there are two exceptions:

- The GRAFT Project committee has linked into the local community development association as its source of community representation. This body is an umbrella organisation of tenants’ and residents’ associations in the area. This body, in turn, consults with a wider range of members in order to identify and seek responses to policing issues.
- The second exception is the TEAM Project which, primarily because it is confined to one distinct neighbourhood, has been able to develop an informal system of communication between the Project and local organisations, parents’ and local representatives who, in turn, are local residents and also key community development leaders. While the Project takes a professional stance in relation to client confidentiality, the public behaviour of young people easily becomes public knowledge and, as such, acts as an informal social control mechanism.

Community representation in the Projects is quite problematic. In the absence of established processes and procedures for aggregating the interests of the community, and for the selection of members to represent those interests, the Projects operate without a mandate from the local community. Where these processes exist, there is at least some mechanism for delivering credibility to the Project from the community. The present guidelines laid out in the administrative rules for Projects do not deal adequately with this issue, as they state only that the Projects must have local residents on whatever committee is established. A challenge for the individual members of advisory and management groups is to be in a position to both *aggregate* and *articulate* community interests at committee level. In the absence of support structures, community members on committees are exposed within their own areas, as they do not have the organisational or institutional bases that other parties in the multi-agency arrangements can call on in the event of a crisis or conflict.

Qualifying criteria, Project establishment and development

The present system for establishing a Project is that a senior Garda, at district officer or superintendent level, has to officially identify a need for a Project and make a submission to the Garda Community Relations Section (GCRS) containing a number of specified criteria, as set out in the Garda HQ Circular 209/98.⁴⁷ The process for reviewing,

⁴⁵ Ireland, Department of Health and Children (1999), *Children First, the National Child Protection Guidelines*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

⁴⁶ Personal communication with the researcher.

⁴⁷ Interestingly, the HQ Circular is, by definition, not available to the public, in that it is a direct written communication to Garda stations from Headquarters and signed by an Assistant Commissioner.

appraising and the bases upon which Projects are either approved or refused are unclear at present. That duplication should be avoided and co-ordination achieved is implied by the Garda HQ circular:

Where possible, Projects should work with other groups or bodies providing a similar service on the ground in order to maximise the co-ordination and delivery of services and to maximise the return on investment in the area. (1998: 1)

This is not always adhered to, as there is evidence that, in one particular case where two youth service providers exist, the approval of one of the youth services as the promoter of the GSP was the result of a lack of co-ordination, both at local and central level.⁴⁸ That this was allowed to happen is of concern to those involved in the Projects, as it appears to raise issues in relation to the transparency of the consultative processes in setting up a Project, and draws attention to the need to have clear guidelines, and support for a Project development phase where stricter guidelines apply. In keeping with the spirit of the existing guidelines, the establishment of Projects should follow strategic considerations and not be, or be seen to be, a way of favouring or awarding one youth service organisation over another.

The survey of 14 Projects revealed the wide variations in the time period between the submission of a proposal and the final approval by the Department. In one case, the CODY Project was approved within a month, whilst the TEAM Project had to wait for two years. This again draws attention to the need for some clear and transparent criteria for Project approvals. In addition, the survey revealed the inconsistencies there are in Project development, in that there was considerable variation in the time taken to establish structures and commence programmes. This draws attention again to the need for a Project development phase in advance of start-up.

The changing context: Crime diversion and the implications of the National Development Plan

During the course of the evaluation, the number of GSPs more than doubled from 14 to 29 Projects in less than 12 months. Moreover, there has been a shift towards utilising the European Social Fund (ESF) as a source of Project finance, bringing with it new funding regulations and reporting arrangements, and, arguably, new evaluation criteria, given the distinct purpose, aims and rules governing ESF spending in member states of the EU. Also during the course of the evaluation, the Government launched the National Development Plan 2000 to 2006, in which it outlines a commitment to crime prevention and diversion projects as part of a range of social inclusion measures. Moreover, there has been a shift from the practice of locating in large urban areas towards including rural towns (i.e. urban areas with largely rural hinterlands) and medium-sized urban centres.

It is likely that there may well be a further increase in demand for inclusion in any new programme of measures to emerge. In this regard, it appears that the current rate of growth and any increase in the quantity of Projects will be unsustainable without accompanying support, training and other capacity building measures to underpin that growth. The increasing demand for Projects may also require that the application process for establishing a programme be set out in more detail. In this regard, a form of appraisal is required which links the budget size that is to be accessed to the level of need in the areas concerned, given that the range of local contexts will be more varied in terms of population, the levels of relative deprivation, the manifestations of crime and public order problems, and the organisational capacities of both the community and the agencies to respond to these issues. This raises the need for a more strategic approach to Project appraisal and, indeed, a more equitable and balanced distribution of resources.

8.3.3 Summary and recommendation: Promoting and supporting a more integrated and strategic approach

- The research has found that the Garda Special Projects have emerged in a very ad hoc fashion. Moreover, the original context as documented in Chapter 2 of the report may well have changed and could itself be the focus of future sociological and criminological research in Ireland.
- The basis of multi-agency co-operation through the GSPs is primarily confined to Project level activity-programme delivery. That a mechanism does not exist to transfer Project level experiences to higher level policy-making arenas is a clear indication of this. Thus, the form of the multi-agency arrangements achieves horizontal and not vertical integration.
- Project development has been uneven, with some of the 14 Projects surveyed being well resourced, while others rely on only very basic equipment and premises. The range of practices in operation is a feature to be encouraged, insofar as it allows for flexibility to respond to local circumstances. To date, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and indeed the Gardaí, have operated largely a 'hands off' strategy in this regard. A disadvantage of this approach is that good practice in a small number of sites could lead to the

⁴⁸ The local level co-ordination issues in this case have since been addressed by the respective youth service organisations.

retention of Projects where practice is out of keeping with the aims of the GSPs or is not targeted appropriately.

- While this evaluation focused on one strand of state responses to youth crime, it is nevertheless suggested that, in the context of the proposed provisions outlined in the Children Bill 1999, and the many other developments designed to support families, youth and to address youth crime, there is a need to:
 - support and develop good practice in multi-agency youth crime prevention and diversion;
 - create appropriate processes for informing public policy;
 - initiate and support strategically managed responses to the general issue of youth crime.
- To act effectively to meet these needs, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and An Garda Síochána need to consider the appropriate structures and processes required for this more integrated approach. Such an integrated approach should take cognisance of the forthcoming National Youth Work Development Plan currently being prepared by the National Youth Work Advisory Committee/Department of Education and Science, Youth Affairs.

RECOMMENDATION: TOWARDS THE PROMOTION OF PLANNED AND STRATEGIC APPROACHES A National Advisory Committee

This report recommends the establishment of a National Advisory Committee comprising senior personnel from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Gardaí, the Probation and Welfare Service, the Department of Education and Science Youth Affairs Section, the youth service provider organisations and representatives of the local Projects. It is envisaged that FÁS will play a greater role in future, given that some newer Projects are utilising European funding under the ESF, where the focus is on promoting 'employability'. In this context, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment should also be represented in this Advisory Group.

It is proposed that this Committee advise the Department as well as the Chief Superintendent of Garda Community Relations Section (GCRS) in relation to policy and practice issues concerning the development of the local Projects. In addition, it is proposed that the Committee will make recommendations in relation to the content of a set of guidelines for the local Projects.

Support Unit

A support unit is required to sustain the existing Projects and to develop new ones. It is proposed that present support functions provided through the GCRS be augmented. This could be implemented through contracting arrangements with development and support consultancy agencies, such as those utilised by the Community Development Programme operated under the aegis of the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs.

Priority areas and local Project Committees

The Department should designate youth crime priority areas in consultation with the Garda Community Relations Section. It is recommended also that the existing local advisory committees be reconstituted as Local Project Committees. It is proposed that the local committees:

- be responsible for all matters relating to the management of a Project in their area within the guidelines for Projects;
- account for the expenditure of funds;
- develop a youth crime prevention and diversion plan in consultation with all other relevant agencies providing services for young people in their areas.

Strategic and planned approaches

- In keeping with good practice in other jurisdictions, a more strategic approach to youth crime prevention and diversion is required. In this context, the following is recommended:
- Newly designated Project areas should first be funded for a project development phase prior to full approval. The purpose of the project development phase will be to resource the prospective Local Project Committee to undertake the following actions:
 - research and analyse the need for intervention;
 - develop a clear and strategic focus for that intervention;
 - engage in capacity building actions to bring forward local community participation;
 - clarify the role and contribution of the various agencies to be involved.

- Existing Projects should be encouraged to move towards developing strategic youth crime prevention plans for their areas within a specified timeframe to be agreed.
- Accompanying a more strategic approach at local Project level, the Department should develop an ongoing evaluation process that would include a longitudinal research element.

Youth crime prevention and diversion guidelines

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should, in consultation with appropriate agencies under its aegis, develop a set of comprehensive guidelines. The guidelines should set out, *inter alia*, the aims and scope of youth crime prevention and diversion, the implementation structures required in Project areas, the role of the various agencies involved, and the range of appropriate fundable actions. The guidelines should be commended to the Department by the National Advisory Committee.

8.4 The effectiveness of the GSPs in improving quality of life and supporting Garda/community relations

8.4.1 Research findings and issues raised

Community safety and security

In the preliminary stages of the evaluation, key stakeholders were asked to identify the desired changes that the Projects were established to achieve. The connection between Project interventions and community safety is complex, but senior Gardaí interviewed suggested that knowledge that the Gardaí have engaged in crime prevention measures is itself a way of restoring confidence in the Gardaí more generally. This, it was held, is because the knowledge that a process for dealing with youth crime and disorder was in operation meant that local people could feel secure, knowing that the Gardaí had the ‘matter in hand’, so to speak. In the aggregate, individual feelings of security would lead to a greater sense of safety at community level. These assumptions lead to what we will refer to as an ‘appearance and visibility strategy’ for the time being. Thirty-seven people in five areas were interviewed to explore this issue. Our two key findings of this exploration are summarised in Box 14 below.

Box 14: Findings: Improving community safety

- Interviews with 37 community respondents reveal that, while they were aware that the Projects were intended to deal with young people who were offending, this did not result (for a majority of the interviewees) in them feeling any safer or more secure living in their areas.
- Community respondents reported positively that they could see the benefits of the Projects – in that they provide an extra resource for young people in the area and that they neutralise any negative impact of groups of young people “hanging around” – but this does not translate into any greater feelings of safety or security. Security and safety, it seems, are influenced by so many other factors (see Chapter 7).

Arising from our findings, it is unlikely that just simply knowing about the existence of a Project, even among those who have a high level of knowledge and understanding of its actions, results in members of the local community feeling any safer living in their areas. It seems that other issues – such as response time and the treatment afforded to citizens by the Gardaí in general – play a greater role in promoting security and improving Garda/community relations. In this context, the GSPs are likely to play only a residual role. This is also consistent with our findings in relation to the impact of the Projects in improving Garda/community relations as outlined and discussed below.

Supporting and improving Garda/community relations

The evaluation research sought to gain an understanding and insight into the key mechanisms used for improving and supporting Garda/community relations. The findings of our inquiry in this area are summarised in Box 15 below. The purpose of this exercise was to identify the existing mechanisms for improving Garda relations, and to clarify what role the GSPs played in this process, both directly and indirectly.

Box 15: Findings: Supporting and improving Garda/community relations

- Of the five sites studied, only GRAFT had any precise mechanism for enabling exchanges between the local community and the Gardaí. The GRAFT committee reserves an item on the agenda for each meeting whereby local representatives raise general crime prevention issues.
- Again, only in the case of GRAFT do local tenants’ and residents’ associations channel crime prevention

issues through the community representatives on the GRAFT committee.

- The advisory committee as a focus for this exchange is limited where the local community members are invited at the committee's invitation' and their capacity to deliver on Garda/community relations is restricted by the obvious limitations of their mandate.
- Although the majority of the 37 local community respondents interviewed perceived the involvement of Gardaí in the Projects as beneficial, there appeared to be too many other overriding issues determining their predispositions towards the Gardaí. Predisposition appears to be influenced by an accumulation of factors such as presence of Gardaí, visibility and accessibility. Most of these factors are generally outside the scope of the Projects. The idea that the existence of a GSP improves Garda/community relations is not supported by this finding.

Establishing networks and systems for co-ordination and crime prevention

Projects have been effective in establishing both formal and informal links with a range of agencies to underpin their work. However, this has not necessarily been focused on crime prevention measures in their respective communities but the thrust of the work of the Projects in this regard has been to establish networks to promote and support the youth work interventions. From our observations, this is partly a function of the fact that, in most cases, the community policing units have established their own mechanisms and networks for community crime prevention and, in this regard, the Garda Special Projects play a secondary role.

A dilemma for the GSPs

Two key issues summarised below illustrate how the Projects are operating to a large degree within a policy vacuum.

- (i) The five GSPs studied were all quite self-effacing in that they all suggested that they needed to do more to promote awareness of the work of the Project in the local area. There has been use made of local community newsletters to highlight the work of the Projects. Despite their best efforts, some of the Projects come under criticism from people in the local area for appearing to be rewarding bad behaviour. Projects interpret this as being the result of a lack of information, both about what the Project is engaged in, and also about other activities that children who have not offended have available to them. While, on the one hand, the Projects appear to be perceived positively in the local community, on the other hand they run the risk of losing community support by appearing to be engaging with and using up resources on the 'bad kids'. In turn, this could be counterproductive in terms of improving Garda/community relations. This matter is related to the capacity of local representatives to deliver the support of the community and to act as effective mediators of community interest.
- (ii) Some Projects engage in giving small grants to local voluntary and sporting groups as a means of informing local people of the involvement of Gardaí and as a means of promoting Garda/community relations. The Department has recently stipulated that this should not add up to any more than ten percent of the overall funding allocated by the Department. It is unclear what connection this type of action has to the current core work of the Projects or indeed if it has any impact on Garda/community relations. Arising from the interviews with community respondents, it appears that overall improvements in the quality of policing services seemed to be of significance in influencing their attitudes and dispositions toward the Gardaí, as opposed to the actions taken under the aegis of a GSP. The Woodale Project has a policy of not issuing small grants. This is partly connected to the fact that the local Garda station raises its own small grant funds through the organisation of golf tournaments and other fundraising events to which officers make voluntary contributions.

In relation to (i) above, whether or not it is a true and objective reflection of the state of generic youth service provision in local communities at this time, it is clear from the views expressed by a variety of sources consulted during this evaluation that people in the various communities feel that non-offending children and young people do not have equal access to youth services or youth work programmes. This is a serious dilemma for the Projects because if they recruit too widely they lose focus and, in an attempt to protect themselves by recruiting widely, they run the risk of smoothing over gaps in generic youth provision. Also, in relation to (ii) above, it would appear that the practice of small grant giving occurs in the context of the absence of a local level Garda public relations budget.

Hence, Projects need to be freed from any implied public relations function they appear to have in filling gaps in generic youth service provision, and in the provision of improved and more responsive policing services, to enable them to focus on the areas in which they are likely to have a diversionary impact.

Impact on attitudes of young people

In responses to questions in relation to the desired impact of the Projects posed in the preliminary stages of the evaluation, senior Gardaí in particular identified the desired changes at individual level to be about ensuring that young people would change their attitudes to the law, and towards the Gardaí in particular. In five areas, 51 young people were interviewed about their attitudes (see Chapter 6). Three key findings are summarised in Box 16 below.

Box 16: Findings: Young people's attitudes towards the Gardaí

- Almost half of the 51 young people interviewed indicated that they had generally negative attitudes towards the Gardaí, one third were positive and the remainder were either indifferent or gave more nuanced answers.
- In Projects where Gardaí play a role at programme level, the response of the young people was quite positive towards this involvement. However, this did not result, in the majority of cases, in shifts in attitude toward the Gardaí as a whole.
- Generally the young people drew very clear distinctions between community Gardaí and regular Garda officers. In addition, their attitudes appeared to be shaped by other factors such as their own previous experiences of the Gardaí and those of their families and peers. So, although the majority had positive attitudes towards the community Gardaí, this did not translate into positive attitudes towards the regular Gardaí.

Interviews with Project participants highlighted that, while they are prepared to shift negative attitudes towards particular Gardaí, especially those they had most contact with through the Projects, including community Gardaí and the JLOs, this shift was not necessarily transferable to Gardaí in general. In this sense, Projects have not been successful in promoting positive Garda/community relations. The kinds of changes required for overall shifts in attitudes seem to be beyond the capacity of Garda Special Projects as currently structured. The involvement of individual Gardaí in certain activities at Project level did seem to impact upon the young people positively.

8.4.2 Summary and recommendations

- The 'appearance and visibility strategy' implied in the assumptions for Garda involvement, as articulated in earlier stages of the research, are not supported by our research findings.
- Local people involved in Project advisory and management committees operate, in most cases, without a clear mandate and, in this sense, are unable to articulate the interests of the community generally. It would appear that there is a need to find ways of linking the Projects more deliberately to existing community structures, if these are available. In addition, the local people involved in the advisory committees can have no influence on either Garda policy or on local policing practices.
- Youth service providers and other agencies too are not in a position to influence Garda policy.
- Garda involvement in Projects does not, of itself, alter the attitudes and predispositions of either local people in the area or young people participating, as these are largely influenced by other (often negative) experiences that they have in their contact with the Gardaí. Young people did report, however, that they were positively disposed to the involvement of Gardaí in the activity programmes of Projects.
- Projects need to be freed from the dilemma they face in relation to providing generic youth service activities and the role they appear to have in filling any gap created by the absence of a local budget for community policing actions.

RECOMMENDATION: DEVELOPING GARDA INVOLVEMENT AND CREATING NETWORKS TO ENSURE COMMUNITY SAFETY

Promoting Garda involvement at local level

The Projects should maintain and intensify the involvement of Gardaí and should, where appropriate and desirable, include Gardaí in aspects of activity programme delivery. It is recommended that supporting and improving Garda/community relations be regarded as a positive spin-off from effective practice, rather than as a primary aim as is currently the case.

Promoting community safety

This report recommends that the local Project committees should develop strategies for linking positively with other general initiatives for promoting community safety, such as estate management groups, Community Development Projects, community policing fora and victim support services.

8.5 Summary schedule of recommendations

Towards an outcome focus

The primary focus of Projects at local level should be to engage in youth work interventions directly with those who have offended and primarily those who have come to the attention of the local Garda JLO. The intention of 'diversion' is to redirect those who have already offended, and the purpose of intervention is to prevent re-offending. Projects have, to date, emphasised *diversion from involvement in crime* and the juvenile justice system. They should equally focus on *diverting to alternative systems* such as training, education, employment and further personal or creative development. In this context, local projects should develop clear progression strategies by building on the positive work that they have already undertaken in this area.

Towards the promotion of planned and strategic approaches

A National Advisory Committee

This report recommends the establishment of a National Advisory Committee comprised of senior personnel from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Gardaí, the Probation and Welfare Service, the Department of Education and Science Youth Affairs Section, the youth service provider organisations and representatives of the local Projects. It is envisaged that FÁS will play a greater role in future, given that some newer Projects are utilising European funding under the ESF, where the focus is on promoting 'employability'. In this context, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment should also be represented in this Advisory Group.

It is proposed that this Committee advise the Department as well as the Chief Superintendent of Garda Community Relations Section (GCRS) in relation to policy and practice issues concerning the development of the local Projects. In addition, it is proposed that the Committee will make recommendations in relation to the content of a set of guidelines for the local Projects.

Support Unit

A support unit is required to sustain the existing Projects and to develop new ones. It is proposed that present support functions provided through the GCRS be augmented. This could be implemented through contracting arrangements with development and support consultancy agencies, such as those utilised by the Community Development Programme operated under the aegis of the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs.

Priority areas and local Project Committees

The Department should designate youth crime priority areas in consultation with the Garda Community Relations Section. It is recommended also that the existing local advisory committees be reconstituted as Local Project Committees. It is proposed that the local committees:

- be responsible for all matters relating to the management of a Project in their area within the guidelines for Projects;
- account for the expenditure of funds;
- develop a youth crime prevention and diversion plan in consultation with all other relevant agencies providing services for young people in their areas.

Strategic and planned approaches

In keeping with good practice in other jurisdictions, a more strategic approach to youth crime prevention and diversion is required. In this context, the following is recommended:

- Newly designated Project areas should first be funded for a Project development phase prior to full approval. The purpose of the Project development phase will be to resource the prospective Local Project Committee to undertake the following actions:
 - research and analyse the need for intervention;
 - develop a clear and strategic focus for that intervention;
 - engage in capacity building actions to bring forward local community participation;
 - clarify the role and contribution of the various agencies to be involved.
- Existing Projects should be encouraged to move towards developing strategic youth crime prevention plans for their areas within a specified timeframe to be agreed.

- Accompanying a more strategic approach at local Project level, the Department should develop an ongoing evaluation process that would include a longitudinal research element.

Youth crime prevention and diversion guidelines

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should develop, in consultation with appropriate agencies under its aegis, a set of comprehensive guidelines. The guidelines should set out, *inter alia*, the aims and scope of youth crime prevention and diversion, the implementation structures required in Project areas, the role of the various agencies involved and the range of appropriate fundable actions. The guidelines should be commended to the Department by the National Advisory Committee.

Developing Garda involvement and creating networks to ensure community safety

Promoting Garda involvement at local level

The Projects should maintain and intensify the involvement of Gardaí and should, where appropriate and desirable, include Gardaí in aspects of activity programme delivery. It is recommended that supporting and improving Garda/community relations be regarded as a positive spin-off from effective practice rather than as a primary aim, as is currently the case.

Promoting community safety

This report recommends that the Local Project Committees should develop strategies for linking positively with other general initiatives for promoting community safety, such as estate management groups, Community Development Projects, community policing fora and victim support services.