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ABSTRACT

The arts enrich the culture and individual lives immeasurably, but what impact do arts-based programs have in preventing juvenile delinquency? To address this question, the YouthARTS Development Project, with the technical assistance of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), brought together Federal agencies, national art organizations, and a consortium of local arts agencies to develop and assess arts-based prevention programs for at-risk youth. This bulletin describes the evaluation and its positive findings for YouthARTS programs in Atlanta (Georgia), Portland (Oregon), and San Antonio (Texas). The bulletin states that the lessons learned by the Art-as-Work (Atlanta), Youth Arts Public Arts (Portland), and Urban smARTS (San Antonio) programs will help other agencies to improve their arts programs, achieve project goals, and recognize the importance of evaluating arts-based programs for at-risk youth. According to the bulletin, arts-based delinquency programs have a promising future, and objective assessments such as these show that people are on the right path toward realizing that future. (BT)

The YouthARTS Development Project.

OJJDP Juvenile Justice Bulletin; May 2001

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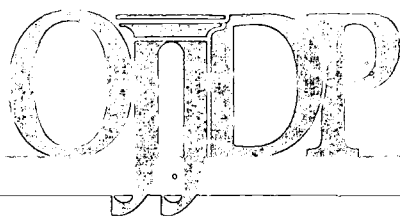
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May 2001

J U V E N I L E J U S T I C E B U L L E T I N

The YouthARTS Development Project

Heather J. Clawson and Kathleen Coolbaugh

The YouthARTS Development Project, initiated in 1995, is a collaborative effort among Federal agencies, national arts organizations, and a consortium of three local arts agencies in Atlanta, GA; Portland, OR; and San Antonio, TX, designed to identify, implement, and refine effective arts-based delinquency prevention programs. To support this purpose and, at the same time, to provide much-needed information to the broader arts community about the efficacy of such programs, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) partnered in 1995 to conduct a national evaluation of the project.

The YouthARTS Development Project was spearheaded by the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies (NALAA), now Americans for the Arts, in recognition of the expanding role of local arts agencies in using the arts to address social and community development issues. Using data from a 1995 survey of its 3,800 members, NALAA found that increasing numbers of local arts agencies were pursuing social change projects, most of which were programs for youth with the common goal of reducing problem behaviors such as school failure, drug use, delinquency, and teen pregnancy (Mulcahy, 1996).

Despite the growing interest and investment in these programs, however, little

was known about their effectiveness in actually preventing juvenile problem behaviors. In 1996, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities found that "only a handful of studies have begun to document the positive relationship between program participation and cognitive development, motivation to learn, organization, self-perception, and resiliency" (Weitz, 1996). After a comprehensive review of existing evaluation research on the impact of arts-based programs for at-risk youth, The RAND Corporation similarly concluded that "interesting arts programs abound, [but] few provide good evaluations of their outcomes" (McArthur and Law, 1996). Although these studies found some evidence to substantiate the hypothesis that arts-based programs could foster desirable participant outcomes, both the quantity and quality of existing evaluations made it difficult to verify the programs' success. According to both the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and RAND, more controlled evaluations of arts programs for at-risk youth were needed to determine whether such programs are effective and, if so, what features of the programs are most important to their success.

The YouthARTS Development Project was launched with three overarching goals: to enhance program development and capacity-building in local arts agencies, to identify effective arts-based delinquency

A Message From OJJDP

The arts enrich our culture and our lives immeasurably, but what impact do arts-based programs have in preventing juvenile delinquency? Until recently, there has been little objective evidence available to determine whether youth arts programs enhance participant skills that reduce the risk of involvement in delinquency.

To address this need, the YouthARTS Development Project brought together Federal agencies, national art organizations, and a consortium of local arts agencies to develop and assess arts-based prevention programs for at-risk youth.

OJJDP has provided technical assistance and funding in support of a national evaluation of the YouthARTS Development Project. This Bulletin describes the evaluation and its positive findings for YouthARTS programs in Atlanta, GA; Portland, OR; and San Antonio, TX.

The lessons learned by the Art-at-Work (Atlanta), Youth Arts Public Arts (Portland), and Urban smARTS (San Antonio) programs will help other agencies to improve their arts programs, achieve project goals, and recognize the importance of evaluating arts-based programs for at-risk youth.

Arts-based delinquency prevention programs have a promising future. Objective assessments, such as those featured in these pages, show that we are on the right path toward realizing that future.

prevention and intervention programs, and to disseminate information about program planning, implementation, and evaluation nationally. To accomplish these goals, three local arts agencies—the Fulton County Arts Council in Atlanta, GA; the Regional Arts and Culture Council in Portland, OR; and the San Antonio Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs in San Antonio, TX—with support from the National Endowment for the Arts and several foundations, each collaborated with local social service agencies beginning in the fall of 1996.¹ The arts agencies implemented arts-based demonstration programs for youth who were at risk of engaging in problem and delinquent behaviors. Figure 1 depicts the overall YouthARTS program model. Although all three of the YouthARTS programs—Art-at-Work in Atlanta, GA; Youth Arts Public Art in Portland, OR; and Urban smARTS in San Antonio, TX—were based on the same risk- and protection-focused approach, they served different target populations and provided different arts-based activities.

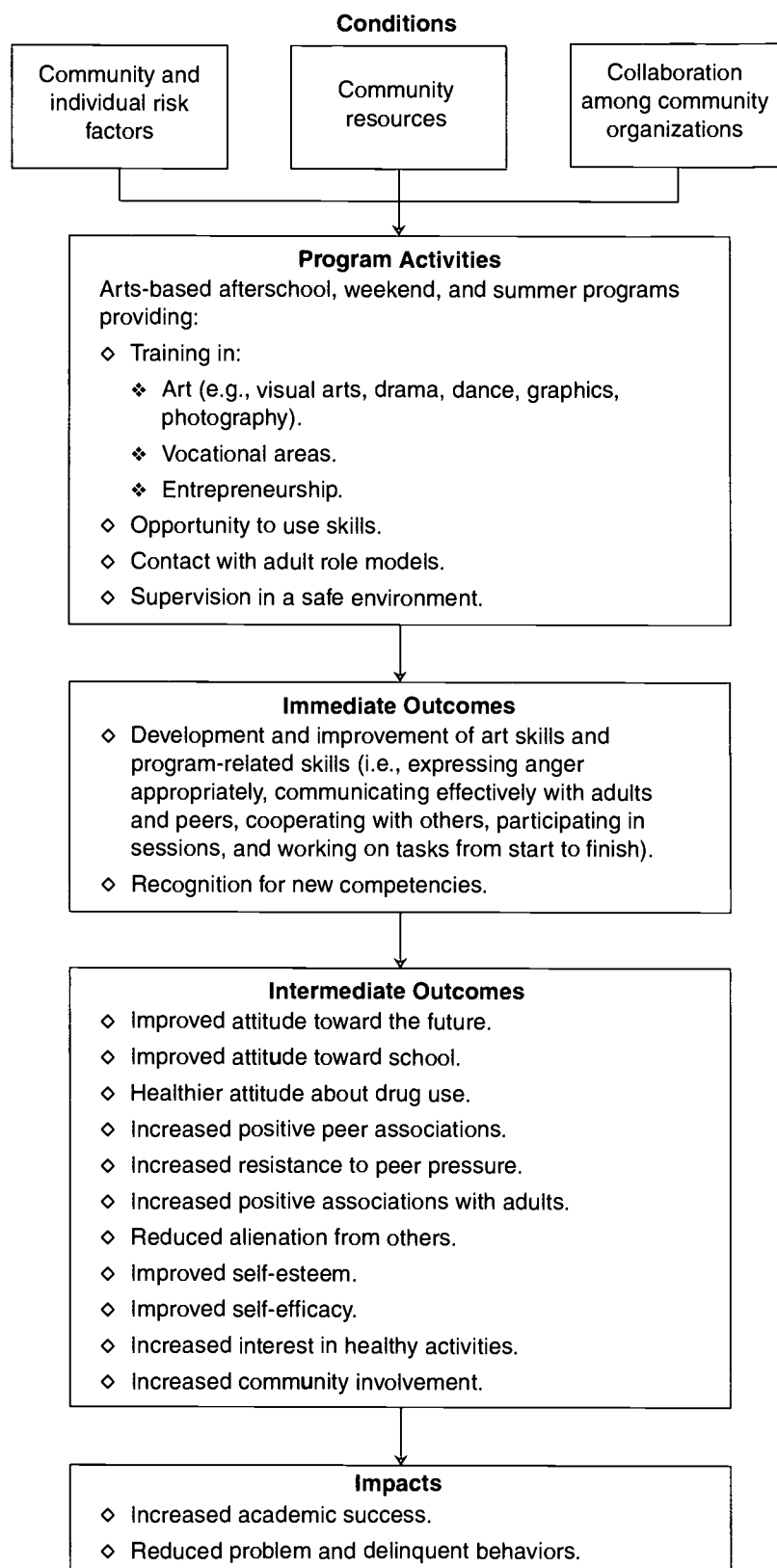
National Evaluation of the YouthARTS Development Project

The national evaluation of the YouthARTS Development Project was designed as a cross-site evaluation with both process and outcome components. The process component gathered information on program implementation and operations, and the outcome component assessed the extent to which the three YouthARTS programs had immediate and long-term positive effects on the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of program participants. To both conserve limited evaluation resources and engage local program staff in the process, the evaluation design relied heavily on local staff and local data collectors hired by the programs to assist with much of the data collection effort.

The process component of the evaluation used a qualitative approach, including a review of program documents and interviews with staff, participants, and key stakeholders, to document program operations. The outcome component of the evaluation used a quasi-experimental design, supported by qualitative data, to determine the extent to which:

- ◆ The programs achieved the desired immediate effects on participants (e.g., increased art knowledge and improved program-related skills such as communication and cooperation).

Figure 1: YouthARTS Development Project Design



- ◆ The programs had the desired intermediate effects on the attitudes and behaviors that affect delinquency and academic performance (e.g., healthier attitudes about drug use, increased positive peer and adult associations, improved self-esteem).
- ◆ The programs had the desired long-term impacts on juvenile delinquency and academic performance (i.e., decreased court referrals and increased academic achievement).

The goal of using a quasi-experimental design was to compare the attitudes and behaviors of program participants with those of matched comparison-group youth at multiple time points to attribute improvements in skills, attitudes, and behaviors, with some degree of confidence, to program participation. Implementing a quasi-experimental design with these programs proved to be a significant challenge, as described below in the evaluation site summaries and the section on evaluation lessons learned.

Although some processes and instruments were tailored for each site, the overall evaluation used a common set of data collection procedures and instruments designed by the national evaluator. For the process evaluation, all interviews were conducted by the national evaluator. For the outcome evaluation, the national evaluator provided the following seven standardized instruments for use by the local data collectors:

- ◆ **Art knowledge survey** tailored for each site.
- ◆ **Participant skills assessments** to document the artists' perceptions of participants' art and program-related skills (e.g., expressing anger appropriately, communicating effectively with adults and peers, cooperating with others, participating in sessions, working on tasks from start to finish).
- ◆ **Your Opinions Count (YOC) survey** to measure changes in participants' self-reported attitudes and behaviors (e.g., attitudes about school, drug use, and the future; self-esteem; peer pressure).
- ◆ **Participant focus group interview guide** to collect supporting qualitative data about program operations and outcomes.
- ◆ **Probation officer/caseworker feedback survey** to obtain probation officers' and caseworkers' perceptions of program outcomes.

- ◆ **Academic data form** to gather academic data for participants and comparison youth.
- ◆ **Court information form** to record basic demographic data and court information for participants and comparison youth.

The evaluation was conducted from fall 1996 through spring 1999. The overall evaluation design called for data to be collected before program participation (pretest), at the end of the program cycle (posttest), and for an identified period after the program cycle (14 months in Atlanta, 19 months in Portland, and 22 months in San Antonio).² The national evaluator provided training and detailed data collection manuals to the local staff on how to use each of these data collection instruments. The national evaluator also assisted the local sites in their selection of procedures for choosing appropriate comparison groups and obtaining data from and about them.

In fact, identifying comparison groups and relying on local data collectors posed the most formidable challenges for the outcome evaluation. Selecting appropriate comparison groups was difficult in each of the sites, primarily because of the need to identify youth similar to the program participants (because random assignment was not possible) and then to retain their involvement throughout the course of the study. Given the populations involved in the YouthARTS Development Project (i.e., system-involved or at-risk youth), this was also a time-consuming undertaking. Competing demands on staff time and attention, turnover, and lack of data collection experience and/or commitment to the evaluation process all affected the timeliness and quality of some of the data collected. These constraints, coupled with the relatively few participants served in the Atlanta and Portland programs, resulted in findings that, although promising for arts-based prevention programs, should be considered preliminary. The small sample sizes and lack of true comparison groups limit evaluators' ability to generalize the findings or attribute positive outcomes unequivocally to the arts program interventions. Nonetheless, the findings presented below for each program are encouraging and support the underlying theory that arts-based programs help contribute to reduced juvenile delinquency. In 1998, the Americans for the Arts published *The YouthARTS Tool*

Kit, containing information on program planning, staff training, evaluation, and costs and resources for arts-based prevention and intervention programs.³ The *Tool Kit* includes a section on how to evaluate arts-based programs based on what was learned from the national evaluation.

Each of the programs is described in the following sections, with a summary presented in the table. These overviews describe each program's first year of operation, including startup activities, program goals, youth served, and program activities. They also describe the evaluation process and findings for each site, followed by important lessons learned in Atlanta, Portland, and San Antonio. Other agencies may find these lessons helpful as they evaluate their own arts-based programs for at-risk youth.

Art-at-Work

Program Description

In September 1996, the Fulton County Arts Council entered into a collaborative partnership with the Fulton County Juvenile Court to implement Art-at-Work in Atlanta, GA. This program was designed to provide art instruction, job training, and literacy education to a small group of first-time status offenders, ages 14 to 16, whose most serious juvenile offense was truancy. Program participants were referred by probation officers of youth who were first-time truants on probation for 2 years, a period consistent with the length of the Art-at-Work program. The program was limited to 15 youth to allow for intensive one-on-one interaction between the artists and the youth. Art-at-Work was designed to provide participants with:

- ◆ Improved art and employment skills (e.g., goal setting, communication, sales/marketing).
- ◆ Opportunities to use their new skills to produce, exhibit, and sell their own art.
- ◆ Opportunities to display artwork and receive public recognition for their work.
- ◆ Exposure to career opportunities in the arts.
- ◆ Opportunities to develop positive relationships with adult role models and peers.
- ◆ Improved or increased self-esteem, pride, discipline, commitment,

Summary of YouthARTS Programs

Parameter	Art-at-Work Atlanta, GA	Youth Arts Public Art Portland, OR	Urban smARTS San Antonio, TX
Local collaborative partners	Fulton County Arts Council and Fulton County Juvenile Court.	Portland Regional Arts and Culture Council and Multnomah County Division of Juvenile Justice Service.	City of San Antonio Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs, Department of Community Initiatives, and San Antonio Independent School District.
Target population	Truant youth ages 14–16 referred by current probation counselors.	Adjudicated youth (except those adjudicated for sex offenses) ages 14–16 referred by current probation officers.	Nonadjudicated, at-risk youth ages 10–12 referred by teachers, principals, and self-referrals.
Capacity	15 youth per program period.	15 youth per unit per session (gang reduction unit, North unit, and Southeast unit).	60 youth at each of 7 schools.
Duration	4 sessions (8–12 weeks each) with the same group of participants.	1 session per unit (12 weeks each).	1 session (16 weeks) per school per year.
Frequency	8 hours per week during school, 25 hours per week during summer.	6 hours per week.	9 hours per week.
Staffing	Program director, project manager, lead artist/program coordinator, professional artists, and probation counselors.	Program director, project manager, professional artists, and probation officers.	Program director, project manager, teacher liaison, professional artists, and caseworkers.
Training	Two-day artist training focusing on child development, conflict resolution, problem solving, and classroom management.	Informal training of artists and probation officers focusing on program design, goals and objectives, background of participants, and rules and regulations.	Five-day cross-training of artists and caseworkers focusing on working with at-risk youth, child management, curriculum development, and school rules and regulations.

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responsibility, and attitudes about school and the future.

- ◆ Increased prosocial behavior and reduced alienation from others.

In addition, youth were expected to show increased academic, vocational, and social success and decreased truancy and other delinquent behaviors.

During the planning stages, the Arts Council worked closely with the Fulton County Juvenile Court. The newly hired project manager attended juvenile hearings, met with judges and probation officers, and shadowed probation officers to learn more about the juvenile justice

system. The chief judge assigned the director of intake to serve as the key liaison to the Art-at-Work program. Over time, court officials, including the chief judge, supported the program by publicizing its achievements, visiting classes, and attending exhibits of participants' work at the end of each program session. In addition, juvenile court probation officers who referred youth to the program periodically conferred with the lead artist to ensure that youth were participating in the program and to help the artists address behavioral problems.

Art-at-Work staff positions included a project manager, a program coordinator,

artist instructors, and a local data collector. Although Art-at-Work planned to hire a social worker to assist with the program, the position was never filled. The director of the Fulton County Arts Council served as the executive director of the program. Four full-time and three part-time artists were carefully selected by the project manager and program coordinator from a pool of qualified artists who had experience working with at-risk populations.

A week before the program started, program staff conducted an artist training session. The curriculum included topics

Summary of YouthARTS Programs—Continued

Parameter	Art-at-Work Atlanta, GA	Youth Arts Public Art Portland, OR	Urban smARTS San Antonio, TX
Approach	<p>Arts-based afterschool and summer education and job-training program designed to serve one group of youth for 2 years.</p> <p>Part of each day is spent learning art skills and producing saleable art. Projects have included furniture design and application, ceramics, mosaics, photography, drama, and computer graphics. Part of each day is spent learning entrepreneurship and planning exhibits. Students help organize exhibits at the end of each session. All proceeds support the program.</p>	<p>Arts program designed to involve youth in the production and administration of a public arts project, from design to production and public exhibition.</p> <p>Youth work with the artists twice per week during afterschool hours. Probation counselors are present at each session to help artists control problem behaviors.</p> <p>Each session focuses on a different art medium. The media include printmaking, photography, poetry, drama, and videography.</p> <p>A final exhibit or presentation designed to provide youth with recognition for their accomplishments is scheduled for the end of each session.</p>	<p>Afterschool arts education program for youth at seven schools.</p> <p>Each school is assigned three artists who design and implement the art activities (i.e., dance, visual arts, drama, creative writing, and storytelling). The program also provides educational field trips.</p> <p>Transportation home from the program and snacks during program hours are provided.</p> <p>Case management is provided by the Youth Services Division of the Community Initiatives Department. Every youth referred to the program receives a home visit from a caseworker for intake and assessment of the youth and family.</p>
Incentive	<p>Students receive \$5 per hour during school year and \$100 per week during summer vacation.</p>	<p>Participants from the North and Southeast units receive time off probation or community service hours for successful completion.</p> <p>Gang reduction unit participants are given a \$100 incentive and are required to participate.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
Intended outcome	<p>Art skills</p> <p>Vocational/entrepreneurial skills</p> <p>Life skills</p> <p>Prosocial behavior</p>	<p>Art skills</p> <p>Vocational/entrepreneurial skills</p> <p>Life skills</p> <p>Prosocial behavior</p>	<p>Art skills</p> <p>Vocational/entrepreneurial skills</p> <p>Life skills</p> <p>Prosocial behavior</p>

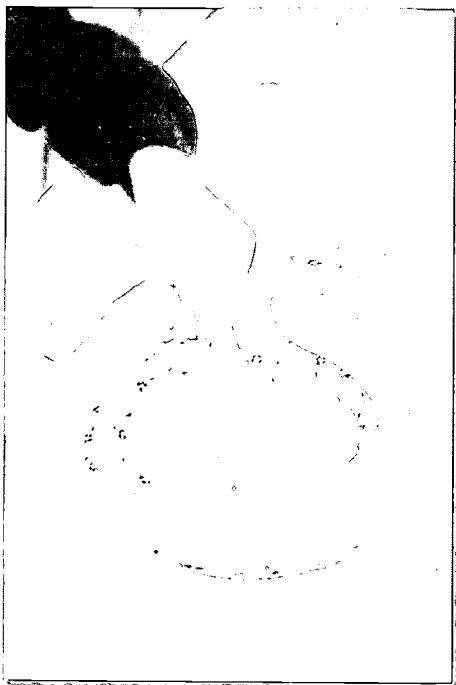
such as child development, conflict resolution, problem solving, and classroom management.

In the fall of 1996, probation officers referred 15 youth to the program, only 10 of whom were still participating regularly by December. Youth were not required to attend the program, and overall attendance was lower and more sporadic than

expected by program staff. Reasons for sporadic attendance included problems for teen mothers in finding affordable childcare, schedule conflicts with other afterschool activities, and problems with transportation. During the evaluation, analysis of the backgrounds of youth who regularly attended the program revealed that several were not first-time

status offenders but rather had committed more serious offenses before program participation.

The Arts Council allocated space within its West End Performing Arts Center—a location easily accessible by public transportation and within walking distance of many participants' homes—for program



Creating a clay sculpture in the Art-at-Work program in Atlanta, GA.

Throughout the program year, the youth were divided between two studios, each of which focused on a particular art discipline. Half of the participants were assigned to each studio, and halfway through the session, the two groups switched studios. Separating the participants into two studios decreased the apprentice-instructor ratios, and switching between studios provided youth with an opportunity to work with new media and different instructors. The art disciplines covered during the year were graphic design, drawing, painting, mosaics, sculpture, artist chairs, murals, photography, and drama. In the studios, each of the apprentices developed multiple pieces of art to display for sale at an exhibition at the end of the cycle and at least one piece that he or she could take home. Proceeds from the sale of the art helped cover the program's operating costs, including stipends. This process of producing and selling art was designed to teach the participants practical business concepts, including production goals, inventory, and marketing.

Evaluation Activities and Findings

The outcome evaluation in Atlanta was almost immediately hampered by difficulties in identifying an appropriate control group. A control group could not be formed from the 15 youth initially identified as program candidates because they all accepted the invitation to participate. Probation officers were then asked to identify another group of youth who were similar to the program participants with respect to age, sex, race, and court involvement to serve as the control group. These youth were offered a modest stipend to participate. Because only three youth accepted, evaluators decided not to include them in the evaluation. Probation officers were asked to identify another group of youth for whom academic and court data could be collected from existing school and court records; they identified 12 youth for the control group. Of the 10 core program participants, complete evaluation data were collected for 7. Thus, the participant and control groups for whom evaluation data were available included 7 and 12 youth, respectively. Moreover, only

activities. The Art-at-Work program activities included arts instruction in various art disciplines, a literacy component, and job skills training. A 12-week art session was provided during the fall-winter school term, followed by a 12-week spring session, with a break between sessions that corresponded with winter vacation for students. Each of the 12-week sessions operated for 2 hours after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays and 4 hours on Saturdays. During the summer, an intensive 8-week session met for 5 hours per day, Monday through Friday. Although not part of the original program design, an additional 8-week session, operating on the same schedule as the 12-week sessions, was added to the program in May to keep youth involved during the transition from the end of the school year until the start of the summer session. On alternate Saturdays throughout the program, visiting artists provided additional arts instruction or field trip opportunities for the participants. The field trips included visits to the Atlanta College of Art, the Nexus Press, Seven Stages and other local theaters, and art exhibits. The youth participants, who were called apprentice artists, were paid \$5 per hour during the school year and \$100 per week during the summer for participating in the classes and producing marketable art.

People underestimate the power of art and the power of youth to express themselves. Art-at-Work gives youth a voice.

—Art-at-Work Program Manager

Art gives you a way to express yourself. You can get your feelings out through your art without hurting anyone.

—Art-at-Work Participant

I think we often underestimate youth. I was surprised at how kids with no art experience could not only increase their knowledge of art concepts but apply what they learned in a critique of a mural.

—Art-at-Work Artist

I learned how to work with other people. The people skills I learned in the program have helped me. I am working and want to go to business school.

—Art-at-Work Participant

If I wasn't in the program I probably would have gotten pregnant again and dropped out of school. Now I'm still in school and doing good.

—Art-at-Work Participant

Since I started the program, I've started back to school regularly. I've started being responsible.

—Art-at-Work Participant

If you expect very little from youth, that is what you will get! We expected high-quality [art] products, and that is what the youth produced. They more than met our expectations.

—Art-at-Work Artist

archival data were collected for the control group youth; they did not complete the YOC survey. Participant survey and archival data were augmented with interview data from the art staff about the program participants and from the participants themselves.

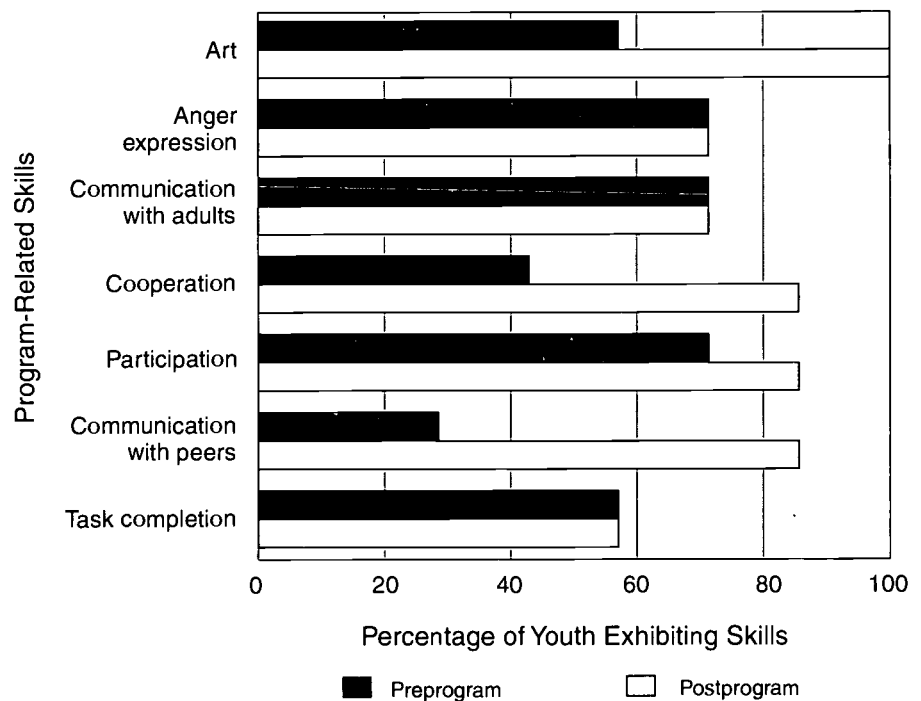
According to the end-of-program participant skills assessment, all seven of the young artists had gained the skills necessary to produce quality art, had produced art, and had received public recognition for their work. The art staff also reported remarkable improvement in the participants' enthusiasm and appreciation for art over the course of the program. As depicted in figure 2, all seven youth showed improvement in four of the program-related skills assessed by the evaluation: art skills, cooperating with others, participating, and communicating effectively with their peers.

Responses from the YOC participant survey reflect improvements in attitudes toward school, attitudes about drug use, and the frequency with which the youth engaged in delinquent behaviors. Feedback from the probation officers tends to suggest Art-at-Work had a positive impact on the attitudes and behaviors of youth. Probation officers noted that youth who participated in the program



Refurbishing a chair in the Art-at-Work program in Atlanta, GA.

Figure 2: Program-Related Skills Exhibited by Art-at-Work Participants



Note: n=7 participants.

demonstrated increased self-esteem and an increased sense of accomplishment and pride and showed improved relationships with their peers and family members. They also believed the program was valuable because, in addition to being a fun, safe, and challenging afterschool activity, it enhanced future opportunities for some of the participants by providing skills that will help them academically and vocationally. Although the limited academic data collected for the two groups preclude drawing any meaningful conclusions about academic achievement, participants indicated in interviews that their participation in the program had a positive influence on their academic performance. Two participants decided to continue their education beyond high school as a result of the arts program, with one attending business school and the other enrolling in art classes at community college.

Despite the disappointing quality and quantity of evaluation data from the Art-at-Work program, even cautious interpretation of the information provided by the youth participants and program staff

suggests the program was beneficial. Recognizing the limitations of this evaluation but still committed to arts-based prevention, Art-at-Work is continuing to evaluate its program.

Plans for the Future

After completion of the first Art-at-Work program period, the project manager held a meeting to discuss the findings from the evaluation with partners from the community, including judges and probation officers. In addition, former program participants and program staff were invited to provide input. The focus of the meeting was to reassess the program design based on lessons learned from the evaluation. As a result, the group decided to make several changes.

Greater attention to recruitment.

Although the program's original design called for provision of services to truant youth, the court data collected for the evaluation verified that, indeed, youth who participated in the Art-at-Work program were more involved with the juvenile justice system than the program

originally anticipated. Under the new program design, greater attention is given to recruitment and assessment of participants with minor delinquent offenses including status offenses such as truancy. Program staff determined that the program is not equipped to address the more serious offenders who tend to have multiple problems such as substance abuse and dependency issues.

Limited duration of the program. Rather than expecting youth to commit to a 2-year period, program staff have redesigned the program to operate for 1 year. The attrition rates suggested that a 12-month period was “long enough” for youth. The demands on youth’s time (e.g., afterschool activities, full-time work, family commitments) and changes in interest made a 2-year commitment unrealistic for most youth.

Continued evaluation. The project manager and others involved with the Art-at-Work program saw clearly how important evaluation results were for obtaining ongoing program support and funding and for improving the overall quality of the program. Recognizing many problems with the initial evaluation of Art-at-Work (e.g., missing data, lack of academic data, poor selection of comparison group), the project manager approached Caliber Associates to conduct a new evaluation to begin in late September 2000. This evaluation is in progress. Caliber is currently addressing the problems of the initial evaluation with the project manager, and plans are in place for conducting a rigorous evaluation using either random assignment or a true matched comparison design. Plans call for building the evaluation into the program’s overall design to allow for accumulation of data on more youth participants over several years, which will permit program staff to make stronger statements about the significance of the arts program in changing youth attitudes and behaviors. This approach will not compromise the ability of the artists to continue working with small numbers of youth on a one-on-one basis.

Youth Arts Public Art

Program Description

In 1996, the Portland Regional Arts and Culture Council, in collaboration with the Multnomah County Division of Juvenile Justice Services and other local arts

organizations, initiated the Youth Arts Public Art program in Portland, OR, with funding from Percent for Public Art.⁴ Youth Arts Public Art was designed to serve small groups of youth ages 14 to 16 who were on probation in the Portland juvenile justice system for any status or delinquency offense except sex offenses. The goal of the program was to achieve the following participant outcomes:

- ◆ Improved art skills.
- ◆ Increased awareness of art education and careers.
- ◆ Recognition of new skills.
- ◆ Positive relationships with adult role models and peers.
- ◆ Improved self-esteem and attitude toward the future.
- ◆ Improved social skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, empathy).

Improvement and gains in these areas were expected to enhance academic and social success and reduce involvement in delinquent behaviors.

The Regional Arts and Culture Council worked closely with the Division of Juvenile Justice Services and arts organizations to develop Youth Arts Public Art, determine its goals and objectives, and define the roles of the collaborative partners and their staff. Staff positions included a project manager, probation counselors, artist instructors, and local data collectors. The director of the Portland Regional Arts and Culture Council served as program director. The council was responsible for daily program

operations and hiring and training artists and other program staff, and it allocated Percent for Public Art funds to provide most of the art supplies (e.g., video equipment, costumes) and pay the artist instructors. The Division of Juvenile Justice Services provided probation counselors to refer youth to the program, provide case management, and assist the artists in conducting the workshops. In addition, the probation counselors often provided transportation for participants. The Division of Juvenile Justice Services also provided snacks and gift certificates as incentives for youth participation. Other local arts organizations allocated space in their facilities for program workshops, exhibits, and performances and provided video equipment and costumes for theater productions.

Artists and counselors received orientation training before the program sessions. The training focused on program design, goals and objectives, background of participants, and rules and regulations. In addition to this training, several artists attended an orientation for probation officers that was conducted by the Division of Juvenile Justice Services to help them better understand the program participants and the role of the probation counselors.

The Regional Arts and Culture Council and the Division of Juvenile Justice Services identified three probation units to participate in the program: Southeast, North, and the Gang Resource Intervention Team (GRIT). The Southeast and North units included youth from at-risk

We need to teach our youth that all behaviors have consequences, not just the bad behaviors. Youth Arts Public Art provides youth with new art skills, gives them a chance to use those skills in developing quality art, and gives youth a chance to succeed and to be rewarded for their positive behavior.

—Youth Arts Public Art Probation Officer

I learned what I can do with photography. I’m pretty good with the camera. I hope to get a job taking pictures for a newspaper or magazine.

—Youth Arts Public Art Participant

In the beginning, I wanted to be sent back to court. I didn’t want to have anything to do with this program. Now I’m very involved and consider myself a leader.

—Youth Arts Public Art Participant

A lot of people got to see my work. It made me feel very proud of what I had done, and that doesn’t happen very often.

—Youth Arts Public Art Participant



Creating monoprints in the Youth Arts Public Art project in Portland, OR.

areas in Portland who were on probation for status and delinquent offenses. The GRIT unit included youth identified as gang members or involved in gang activity. Probation officers in each unit referred 15 youth from their probation caseloads to the program, based on their term of probation (i.e., the youth had to be on probation for the duration of the program). Although 45 youth were referred (15 from each unit), a total of 37 actually participated in the sessions (12 from North, 11 from Southeast, and 14 from GRIT). Attendance was not mandatory for youth from the Southeast and North units, but once the youth agreed to participate in the program, they were expected to commit to the entire 12 weeks. To promote attendance, these units offered time off probation and/or community service hours in exchange for active participation. For the GRIT unit, attendance was mandatory, and a \$100 gift certificate was offered as an incentive for participating in the program. Despite this incentive, attendance by the GRIT unit referrals was low and sporadic.

Youth from each unit participated in a 12-week session that met for 2 hours, 3 days a week. The program sessions focused on different art forms, selected by the project manager and the supervisor of each probation unit. The North unit received instruction in photography (e.g., use of equipment, style) and poetry (e.g., presentation, forms of poetry), the Southeast unit studied videography (e.g., use of equipment, techniques, sound, editing), and the GRIT unit studied theater (e.g., set design, costumes, script writing, movement). In each session, the youth

worked with the artists and counselors in small groups to develop quality public art and to prepare for a final exhibition or performance. The North unit participants published a book of their photography and poetry that focused on aspects of their everyday lives. The Southeast unit developed a short informational video about new juvenile justice legislation affecting youth in Portland, including interviews with local politicians and judges. The GRIT unit performed a play that depicted life in a gang and that involved both music and dance.

Evaluation Activities and Findings

In January 1997, probation counselors for each of the three probation units selected youth for the comparison group from their existing caseloads. They attempted to identify youth who were similar to participants with respect to age, sex, and other important factors (e.g., court history, living in high-crime areas). Although the counselors invited 45 youth to volunteer for the study, only 22 agreed to participate. These youth were given a modest stipend for their participation.

As in Atlanta, data were not uniformly available for all youth in the two groups. Complete preprogram and postprogram data from the YOC survey were available for only 19 of the 37 core participants and 13 of the 22 comparison youth. Program-related skills assessments were available for 21 participants. Only nine program participants were available to participate in data collection for the followup evaluation. Participant survey and archival data

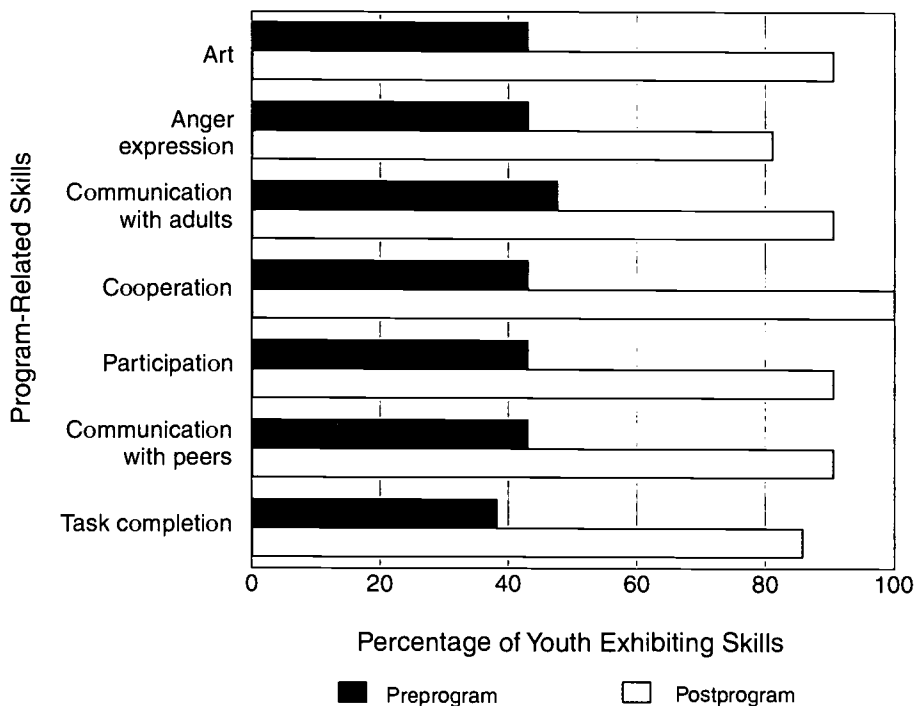
were augmented with interview data from the staff artists and with data from focus groups of the participants themselves.

Based on the end-of-program participant skills assessment, all 21 of the participants had gained the skills necessary to produce quality art, had produced art, and had received public recognition for their work. According to the program staff, the participants took great pride in their work and looked forward to the public recognition for their achievements. In fact, for the GRIT unit, it was only after the artists threatened to cancel the final production because of poor rehearsal attendance that the group became serious about their work and participation. Every youth in the GRIT unit was present for the final public performance. As shown in figure 3, most of the youth also showed improvement in all program-related skills during the program period, particularly in their ability to cooperate with others. The project manager and artists also observed improvement in the participants' ability to work as a team and form new friendships.

Findings from the YOC survey were also promising. Although the number of program participants and comparison youth who completed the survey was relatively small, there were noticeable improvements in participants' self-reported involvement in delinquent behavior during the program period. Additionally, a greater proportion of participants than comparison youth showed improvement in their attitudes toward school, resistance to peer pressure, and self-efficacy. These findings were supported by focus group data from the nine participants interviewed at the 19-month followup. These youth said the program taught them self-respect, ways to get along with others and work in a team environment, and, especially, the importance of taking responsibility for their actions. In addition, they said the program helped them recognize their talents and—most important—opened their eyes to opportunities and career options.

More sobering was the fact that, although most of the youth acknowledged that dealing and using drugs were wrong and illegal (as reflected in their survey and focus group responses), many considered these activities a necessity—for money or to escape everyday life. These youth were very open about their daily "reality," which for many involved guns, violence, poverty, homelessness, and fear. For these youth, involvement in the program was very important because, as

Figure 3: Program-Related Skills Exhibited by Youth Arts Public Art Participants



Note: n=21 participants.

one youth explained, "It gave us a safe place to spend time and it provided us with an opportunity to feel good about ourselves."

Because of difficulty in locating academic data for participant and comparison youth, especially those who did not regularly attend school or who attended alternative schools, little can be said about the impact of the program on academic achievement. Anecdotal information from participants suggests, however, that the program was successful in changing how some of the youth felt about education. As a result of their program participation, some youth reported that they are getting their priorities straight and trying to do better in school.

Although limited by the quality and quantity of evaluation data, findings for the Youth Arts Public Art program suggest the program may benefit some youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Using what has been learned about program implementation and impact, program staff are refining the program to emphasize what works and change what does not work. Additionally, reassessing which

outcomes are realistic from a 12-week arts-based program with high-risk youth has become a priority for program staff during the redevelopment phase. They acknowledge that the problems facing many of the youth involved in the program (e.g., neglect, physical abuse, homelessness) are more serious and require greater intervention than Youth Arts Public Art can offer. Staff are also reevaluating the appropriate target population to be served by the program.

Plans for the Future

The Youth Arts Public Art program used the evaluation results and lessons learned from the first year of operation to make important changes to the program.

Greater awareness of implications of art media being selected. The project manager and staff learned that they need to be more careful when selecting the art media to use with different populations of youth. For example, they discovered that the use of theater with youth in the gang unit, who are guarded and reluctant to put themselves in vulnerable situations on stage or off, was probably a poor

match. A less threatening art form, such as the videography project, might have been better suited for this group of high-risk youth.

More emphasis on recruitment and attendance. Program staff determined that attendance rates would need to improve for the program to be successful. By serving less serious offenders and targeting youth who express an interest in the arts, staff hope to have greater success at maintaining participants' interest and increasing involvement in the program.

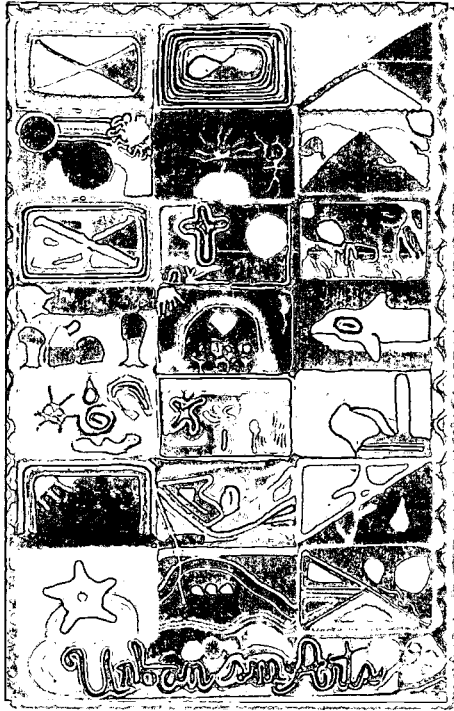
Greater collaboration across sessions. The project manager is working on the development of increased collaboration among the various youth groups involved in the different sessions, which would expose youth to more art forms without significantly increasing program cost. Additionally, the joint project would provide opportunities for youth from diverse backgrounds to work together toward a common goal.

Urban smARTS

Program Description

The City of San Antonio Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs initiated the Urban smARTS afterschool program in 1993 to prevent high-risk students, ages 10 to 12, in San Antonio, TX, neighborhoods from engaging in delinquent behaviors. The Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs joined the YouthARTS Development Project in 1995 and began operating Urban smARTS as a YouthARTS program in 1996. Teachers and counselors at each participating school from the San Antonio Independent School District referred to the program primarily sixth grade students who were experiencing academic failure, had poor school attendance, and engaged in antisocial behavior. Urban smARTS provided afterschool art workshops that were designed to achieve:

- ◆ Improved social skills (e.g., communication with peers and adults, teamwork).
- ◆ Improved academic performance and commitment to school.
- ◆ Improved art skills.
- ◆ Recognition for new skills.
- ◆ Positive relationships with adult role models and peers.
- ◆ Improved self-esteem and attitude toward the future.



Artwork from the Urban smARTS program in San Antonio, TX.

These outcomes were expected to lead to academic and social success and decreased delinquent behaviors.

Since the inception of Urban smARTS in 1993, the City of San Antonio Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs, the Department of Community Initiatives, and the San Antonio Independent School District have worked together to develop the Urban smARTS program curriculum and define the roles and responsibilities of the partnering agencies and program staff. Staff positions included a project manager, teacher liaison, caseworkers, and artist instructors. The director of the San Antonio Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs served as program director, and the department was responsible for hiring and training staff. The Department of Community Initiatives provided caseworkers for case management and for facilitation of prevention-oriented discussions during the program. The school district referred students from seven schools to the program and provided teacher liaisons to help the artists conduct the workshops, space in the schools for the art workshops and performances, transportation for participants who lived farther than walking distance from the school, and snacks during the afterschool workshops.

The program director assigned a team consisting of three artists (including one lead artist), four caseworkers, and one teacher liaison to each of the seven schools. The team was responsible for making decisions about program format, discipline, and schedules.

Before the start of the Urban smARTS program in 1996, a 5-day training session was offered to all artists and caseworkers. This training focused on issues related to working with at-risk youth (e.g., behavior management), curriculum development, and school rules and regulations. It also provided an opportunity for the artists and caseworkers to learn more about each other's disciplines and to develop strategies to integrate the art and prevention-focused curriculums.

Although more than 400 youth were referred to the program in the fall of 1996 (approximately 60 youth per school), only 112 participated regularly. Youth dropped out of the program because of lack of interest, family obligations, involvement in other programs, and/or problems in school. Although disappointing, the attrition of students from the program resulted in more one-on-one interaction between staff and the youth who did participate,

which proved helpful for the artists, caseworkers, and participants. Although somewhat inconsistent in the beginning, attendance and involvement in the workshops increased as the 112 youth became more involved in the activities and bonded with the artists and other participants.

Urban smARTS conducted 3-hour afterschool art workshops on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for 16 weeks at each of the seven schools. The primary art forms offered at each school were drama, dance, and visual arts. During the first few weeks of the program, the participants spent part of each 3-hour workshop with each of the artists to learn about the different art forms. After several weeks, the youth were divided into groups based on their level of interest in these art forms. The youth then worked with the artist to develop skills and produce their own art. All of the youth also helped prepare the final public performance and/or exhibit that concluded the 16-week session. During 13 of the program's 16 weeks, caseworkers provided weekly 30-minute sessions in a group setting in which they discussed prevention-oriented topics such as decisionmaking, conflict resolution, self-respect, and substance abuse.

Children need to experience a sense of accomplishment and be recognized for their efforts. This program enables kids to succeed at something and provides them positive feedback.

—Urban smARTS Artist

Being in the program has made me a better writer. I was never interested in writing before this program. Now I love to write.

—Urban smARTS Participant

I had never performed in front of a crowd before. It made me feel good and proud of what I had done.

—Urban smARTS Participant

Before I started the program, I was hanging out with the wrong crowd and getting into trouble. Now I do better in school and see myself as an artist.

—Urban smARTS Participant

You hear people say art saves lives. That may sound funny, but programs like Urban smARTS keep youth off the streets and away from dangerous situations, like gang activities. Our youth feel safe in our program and have positive outlooks on the future.

—Urban smARTS Executive Director

In October 1998, the Urban smARTS program joined nine other youth arts programs at the White House in being recognized with the "Coming Up Taller Award," an award given to outstanding arts and humanities programs for young people.

Evaluation Activities and Findings

Conducting the evaluation of the Urban smARTS program proved to be a significant challenge, complicated by logistical, legal, program management, and methodological issues. Of the seven participating Urban smARTS schools, only five participated in the evaluation (one lacked the case management component, and the other was excluded because it was an elementary school). Project managers excused two of these five schools from having to identify a control group, believing that, as new Urban smARTS programs, they should not be burdened with this requirement. In the three schools where control groups were identified, teacher liaisons selected sixth grade classes with teachers willing to administer the YOC survey and participate in subsequent data collection activities. Recognizing that these comparison youth were neither randomly assigned nor matched on key characteristics, project managers nonetheless believed the selected youth would be comparable to the program participants because most of the youth at each school shared similar demographic characteristics and faced similar risk factors. This proved to be true. The participant and comparison youth were similar on key factors. Ultimately, only one of the five schools participated in the followup evaluation, which included only program participants (i.e., no comparison group).

For various reasons, evaluation data for Urban smARTS were somewhat limited. Late and uneven administration of some data collection activities, combined with misplacement of many postprogram surveys by the project manager, circumscribed the analyses that could be conducted. Although complete preprogram and postprogram YOC survey data were available for all 112 regular program participants, data were provided for only 29 comparison youth. Art knowledge, academic, and skills assessment data were available for only 93, 86, and 78 participants, respectively. Followup data were available for only 22 participants from one school. Survey and archival data were augmented with interview data from the artist staff and with focus group data from program participants.

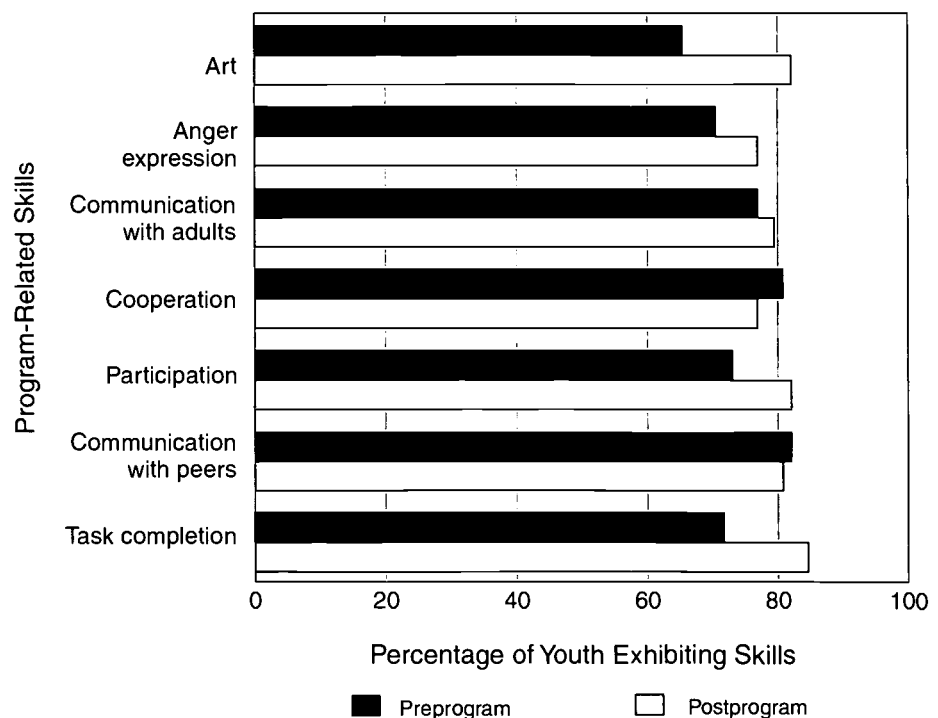
Participants' gains in art knowledge were difficult to determine because of late administration of the preprogram art knowledge survey. Testimonies from participants and art instructors suggest,

however, that the youth did learn a considerable amount about the different art forms that were taught, and, more important, youth had a greater interest in and appreciation for the arts after being involved in the program. The desire expressed by youth for the Urban smARTS program to be offered in sixth grade and ninth grade, both transitional years for most students, was evidence of their enthusiasm for the program.

Findings from the end-of-program participant skills assessment show that most participants demonstrated program-related skills throughout the program, and youth who did not demonstrate the necessary program skills at the start of the program mastered these skills by the end. As shown in figure 4, the greatest changes were reported in two skill areas, working on tasks from start to finish and demonstrating art skills necessary to produce quality artwork (i.e., skills identified by artists as essential, given the art form being taught). Many artists reported that most participants showed marked improvement in their overall social and art skills.

The results of the YOC survey support the effectiveness of the Urban smARTS program as a prevention initiative. Most participant and comparison youth reported having favorable attitudes and engaging in positive behaviors at program startup. During the program period, however, more participants than comparison youth showed improvement in their attitudes about school and in their behavior (i.e., less self-reported involvement in delinquent behavior). Additionally, participants were more likely than comparison youth to sustain their appropriate attitudes about drug use, resistance to peer pressure, and sense of self-efficacy. The fact that program participants could maintain their high scores over the course of the program better than comparison group members suggests that the program may help buffer these youth against many of the risk factors that can affect them at this age. Official court records also supported this finding. A review of the records found no court involvement before or during the program period for any of the 112 participants. Only two participants had committed an offense during the 22-month followup period (both cases of shoplifting).

Figure 4: Program-Related Skills Exhibited by Urban smARTS Participants



Note: $n=78$ participants.

Based on the survey data available from participants at one school at the 22-month evaluation followup, the youth maintained their appropriate attitudes about drug use, positive peer associations, resistance to peer pressure, frequency of delinquent behaviors, and positive relationships with adults after completing the program. These findings were echoed during focus groups with the 22 followup participants. Most of these youth reported that they felt more mature, worked harder at school, and tried to be better people as a result of being involved in Urban smARTS.

During these focus group discussions, students reiterated their enthusiasm and support for the Urban smARTS program. They enjoyed their participation and the opportunity to learn about the arts. In addition, they said the program taught them how to appreciate things around them, get along better with others, deal with emotions in a constructive way, and communicate through music and the arts. Several participants indicated the program had taught them to be more self-confident and helped them believe in themselves. Several students said that they “hung out with the wrong crowd” before participating in the program and that the program had helped them to stay out of trouble by keeping them off the streets and giving them something to do after school.

These findings suggest that the Urban smARTS program was successful in meeting its goal of keeping the youth participants engaged in positive afterschool activities and preventing their involvement in delinquent behaviors. Program caseworkers concurred, noting that during the students’ participation in the program, their behavior and attitudes improved and they became more respectful of others.

Analysis of the academic data revealed less promising findings. Average grades for participants did not change during or after the program. This was not surprising to most of the program staff, however, because the Urban smARTS program did not focus on core academic subjects such as math, science, and English. Some evidence suggests that program participation may have helped improve school attendance. Program staff are reconsidering the relationship between participation in Urban smARTS and academic achievement and hope to refine the intended academic outcomes of the program in the future.

Plans for the Future

After completing the transition of the Urban smARTS program administration from the San Antonio Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs to the Department of Community Initiatives and hiring a permanent program director, program staff examined the evaluation results and focused their attention on improving program implementation.

Expansion of the program in schools.

Based on the positive findings from the evaluation and increased local interest in the program, the Department of Community Initiatives has expanded the program into other local school districts and is considering expanding into the San Antonio high school system. Teachers, principals, and former participants have expressed interest and identified a need to expand the program into high school to provide services during ninth grade.

Redistribution of resources. Expansion of the program into more schools has already resulted in the need to redistribute resources. For example, to extend the reach of the program to more schools, one artist works in each school rather than the multiple artists who worked in each school during the evaluation period. Although the implications of this change are unknown, it was necessary given the current availability of resources.

Greater collaboration among key agencies and organizations. The program director is focusing on collaboration among the caseworkers, artists, and school personnel (i.e., teachers, principal, counselors). Improving the working relationships among the parties is expected to improve program recruitment, retention, and operation. With greater attendance and better coordination of services, youth are more likely to experience positive change.

Lessons Learned

Do arts-based programs prevent or reduce delinquent behavior among youth? This key question remains only partially answered by this evaluation. Although it produced considerable evidence to support the hypothesis that such programs can contribute to the avoidance or reduction of delinquent behavior, the evaluation suffered several problems that limited the ability to definitively answer the question. However, the lessons learned from this evaluation—about both

the programs themselves and the process of evaluating them—can be immensely valuable to the design, implementation, and evaluation of other youth-focused arts-based efforts.

Evaluation Lessons

Evaluating any social service program is challenging, especially when the program deals with populations who are at risk of becoming delinquent or already in trouble. Evaluating programs that deal with juvenile delinquency poses special challenges because they serve adolescents, a population that requires special attention to data collection protocols, such as obtaining parental permission for their children to participate in interviews or surveys and gaining the cooperation of system-wary youth. Moreover, these programs are often modestly funded, with staff stretched in many directions, working with too many youth in too little time. In order for an evaluation component to succeed, there needs to be careful attention to the design, timing, and resources. Following are the lessons learned regarding several interrelated issues—control groups, sample size, data collection, and program stability.

Control groups. Answering questions about the effectiveness of delinquency prevention and intervention programs requires the most rigorous evaluation design possible. An experimental design with random assignment of youth into participant and control groups, the design that best allows for testing whether the program “causes” changes in participants, was originally planned for this evaluation. Because of limited recruitment (i.e., not enough youth to use random assignment) and concerns among some of the program partners about the ethics of not providing services to all eligible youth, a quasi-experimental design with matched comparison groups was adopted. To enable evaluators to attribute changes in participants’ attitudes and behaviors to the program, the comparison group had to be similar to the group of participant youth from the start of the evaluation in several key factors (e.g., age, race, grade level, history of delinquency, attitudes, and behaviors). Although attempts were made to match youth on key characteristics in Atlanta and Portland, the participant and control groups had some important differences (e.g., history of delinquency). These differences and the small sample sizes

made it difficult to attribute with certainty a direct relationship between program participation and the observed outcomes. Implementing rigorous evaluation designs requires considerable planning and, equally important, commitment of time and resources to ensure that the integrity of the design is maintained throughout the course of the evaluation.

Sample size. To some extent, the small sample sizes for the evaluation of the three YouthARTS programs were due to program design and were thus unavoidable. An important feature of many arts programs, like Art-at-Work in Atlanta and Youth Arts Public Art in Portland, is the small youth-to-artist ratio. Although this allows for quality one-on-one instruction of the participants, it creates a challenge for the evaluator. Small sample sizes preclude testing for statistical significance (determining whether observed changes occur by chance or because of the intervention). Additionally, small sample sizes make it difficult to generalize the findings to the broader population of at-risk youth. Although an evaluator cannot control the size of a program, steps can be taken to avoid small sample sizes resulting from missing data. Because data were not uniformly collected for all youth at all data collection points, many youth had to be excluded from the analyses. Every effort must be made to obtain complete data for all youth involved in the program and comparison groups.

Data collection. One of the most critical aspects of any evaluation is data collection. Even the most rigorous design will not provide meaningful results without the necessary data. Every evaluation faces resource-driven tradeoffs, however, and data collection is often an area where compromises are made. The YouthARTS evaluation used program staff, supported by local data collectors hired by each site, to collect the YouthARTS evaluation data.

Even with detailed training and how-to manuals provided to assist the local staff with their data collection tasks, the data collection effort suffered. Program staff were very busy, focused primarily on program operations and service delivery. Many of the local data collectors were inexperienced and, despite guidance and manuals, were often unable to manage the challenges posed in collecting the necessary academic and court data. Fre-

quent technical assistance throughout the data collection process could help avoid such data collection problems in similar situations in the future.

Program stability. Outcome evaluations seek to answer the question, Did this program work? Implicit in answering the question is an understanding of what “this program” is. If the program itself is young and still undergoing developmental changes (as the YouthARTS programs were, especially in Atlanta and Portland), it is difficult to determine which program worked or did not work. Moreover, young programs face enormous challenges with hiring and training staff, program logistics, recruitment, and day-to-day operations. These evolving programs resulted in two key problems for the evaluation:

- ◆ First, it was difficult for project managers to oversee the evaluation, ensure compliance with data collection requirements, and deal with the day-to-day demands of program operations.
- ◆ Second, because of the first problem, both identifying the intervention itself and ensuring that the data collection instruments were measuring the appropriate outcomes—those that reasonably could be expected to occur as a result of the intervention—were difficult.

Future evaluations of arts-based programs should be done on those programs that have reached a level of stability that ensures the intervention and its desired outcomes are well defined. Also, if program staff are to be responsible for data collection, they must have the capacity and training.

Program Lessons

Many important lessons were learned about planning and implementing arts-based juvenile delinquency prevention/intervention programs. The experiences of these three YouthARTS programs provide useful insights for future program operation and evaluation. Information from both the process and outcome evaluation components helped program staff identify common factors that led to successful program implementation.

Collaboration. All of the programs incorporated some form of collaborative process. Participants noted that having a voice in establishing program rules, regulations, and workshop activities and

having frequent opportunities to produce and exhibit their art were factors that helped them engage in the program. Program staff recognized the need for improved collaboration among program partners (e.g., school district, juvenile justice agency, art agency) and the importance of identifying the roles and responsibilities of each partner. Lack of “buy in” and understanding of the program and the evaluation from the beginning resulted in unexpected complications (e.g., lack of access to data, difficulty accessing facilities, over-extension of staff). Additionally, program staff believed that the partnership needed to be broadened to include other youth-serving agencies. They quickly learned that many of the youth they were serving had problems beyond the scope of the arts program and that any impact the program may have had on improving behavior was reduced by other circumstances that affected the lives of the participants. Widening the circle of collaborative partners would have improved the program’s ability to refer youth and their families to other services in the community.

Skilled, qualified artists. Artists who had both experience in the arts and the ability to work with at-risk youth tended to excel at engaging youth in art activities, adapting activities to meet participants’ specific needs, handling problem behaviors, bonding with participants, and establishing mutual respect with the youth. YouthARTS participants gravitated to those artists who exhibited expertise in their field and communicated easily and respectfully with them.

Onsite caseworkers and probation officers or counselors. Onsite caseworkers and probation officers or counselors were invaluable assets to the programs. These individuals served as positive role models for the participants, and by collaborating closely with the artists, they helped them provide individualized art instruction to smaller groups of participants. Involvement of these key players also provided youth with an opportunity to develop positive relationships with their probation officers or counselors. Participants were more involved in the instructional activities when the probation officers tried to learn the material with them. The youth seemed more likely to take risks (e.g., reveal personal information, try new things that might embarrass them) when they saw their probation officers taking the same risks. Finally, close involvement of the caseworkers and

probation officers or counselors allowed them to handle behavioral problems during the workshops, provide referrals, and work with the youth and their families to ensure that the participants received any additional support needed to develop or maintain positive attitudes and behaviors.

Comprehensive training for all program staff. Comprehensive training covering topics such as at-risk youth, risk factors and problem behaviors, classroom management, conflict resolution education and collaborations with other youth-serving agencies was essential for all program staff. The training not only served to orient staff to the program but also provided them with an opportunity to discuss expectations, roles, and responsibilities. These discussions ensured that program staff understood the importance of collaboration to achieve common goals and that everyone shared realistic, appropriate expectations about what the program could accomplish.

Range of arts programs and services. Program staff and youth participants from all three programs recognized the need for expanded arts services in the community. Many of the youth expressed a continued interest in the arts and identified the desire to be connected with other services in the community that would allow them to pursue their art interests (e.g., additional art classes, jobs, internships, scholarships). Getting connected to the community was important for these youth, and, although each of the programs had made some progress in connecting youth to other services, most youth felt nothing was available for them once the program ended. Program staff in all three cities are working to identify ways to keep youth connected to the arts and to their communities in the future.

Transportation for participants. One of the most common reasons for poor

program attendance cited by participants and staff was lack of transportation. Youth attendance and participation is essential to a program's success. Providing reliable transportation (e.g., school buses, city transportation, volunteer-driven vehicles) makes higher attendance rates possible.

Conclusion

The future of arts-based delinquency prevention and intervention programs is promising. Through continued investment in rigorous long-term evaluations, the strengths of YouthARTS and other arts-based programs can be identified, weaknesses can be corrected, services can be adjusted to meet the growing needs of youth and communities, and effective models can be replicated across the Nation. Just as the lessons learned from the national evaluation have helped the three YouthARTS programs redesign and implement their programs, the information can benefit others in the field who are struggling with new ways to combat the problem of juvenile delinquency. The national evaluation of the YouthARTS Development Project has shown that providing youth with new skills, giving them the opportunities to use these skills, and offering them positive feedback and recognition for their hard work can potentially lead to healthier attitudes and positive behaviors.

Endnotes

1. Although the YouthARTS Development Project was initiated in 1995, programs did not begin operating until fall 1996.
2. The followup period varied by site as a result of differences in program length, availability of followup data, and other administrative issues (e.g., changes in program management) that affected the timing of the followup data collection.

3. For more information on *The YouthARTS Tool Kit*, contact Americans for the Arts at 800-321-4510 or visit their Web site at www.artsusa.org.

4. Portland's Percent for Public Art legislation requires that 1 percent of the value of all public construction projects be set aside for the installation of public art.

For Further Information

For information about the *YouthARTS Development Project Evaluation Report*, contact the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse:

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P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
800-638-8736
301-519-5212 (fax)
www.puborder.ncjrs.org (Internet)

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