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Implementing Communities That Care: a UK evaluation

Communities That Care (CTC) is a socio-developmental model of community crime prevention planning. It draws on the risk and protective factor theory that arose from studies showing associations between certain conditions in a child's life and the likelihood of them later engaging in problem behaviour. The CTC model prescribes a series of assessment, training and community capacity building activities that lead to the introduction and implementation of a range of interventions that seek to influence the family, school, community or individual and friendship domains and are evidence based and chosen in consultation with experts (Toumborou 1999).

In the UK the CTC model was trialled in three areas. The evaluation focused on implementation and intermediate outcomes. Implementation of CTC failed in two of three areas. Recommendations about implementation of socio-developmental approaches to crime prevention in local communities arising from the evaluation include the necessity of:

- appropriate measures of 'community readiness'. In this case: partnership working, geography and community involvement differed across the three areas at baseline and this influenced progress over the five years. The successful community was already engaged in partnership activity when the CTC process began.
- coordination and management structures in place from the start. The engagement and involvement of all necessary partners (for early intervention the involvement of primary schools in both assessment and implementation is crucial).
- communication and consultation. This needs to occur regularly across partnerships and vertically within agencies as staff from all levels of an agency are crucial to success.
- sustained funding as this is crucial to success.
- management of staff turnover. Key project coordinators all changed during the five years. The successful area had the best process in place to manage this hence the least disruption occurred there.

This evaluation highlights the important role of implementation evaluation. Overall the authors concluded that CTC did show some overall promise in the area in which it was successfully implemented.

For more information on the Australian implementation of CTC through the Centre for Adolescent Health, see http://www.rch.org.au/cah/research/index.cfm?doc_id=1011.

References

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Toumborou JW 1999. Implementing Communities That Care in Australia: a community mobilisation approach to crime prevention. *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* no. 122. <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi122.html>