

What About the Two-thirds of the Iceberg?

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Many officials believe that the answer to alleviating disaffection and preventing juvenile crime lies in new laws; educators believe that attitudes need to be reshaped. A veteran school person offers one proposal for forestalling negative behaviors.

Juvenile delinquency has reached epidemic proportions despite the expenditure of millions of dollars for increased law enforcement and major efforts by agencies concerned with youth. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention earlier this year offered \$10 million to public and private agencies for ideas on "how to keep juvenile offenders out of the juvenile justice system."¹

This approach to combating juvenile delinquency is rather like coping with the visible one-third of an iceberg. Temporary solutions may be helpful in dealing with the visible problems of young people, such as the episodic acts of law breaking that disappear as they grow older. However, the fundamental disaffection of youth is like the invisible two-thirds of the iceberg. Too many of us in education hope the problems will go away if we can keep the visible behavior under control. Current efforts at control are expensive and only temporarily effective.

Disruption and violence rise from boredom whether real or imagined. Schools are only part of the problem. Family and home life for large numbers of young people are without meaning if not detrimental to positive growth and development. There is virtually no direction or meaningful activity for hundreds of thousands of teenagers throughout the three-fourths of the day when traditional schools do not have limited control over behavior. Furthermore, "Violence is . . . taught in homes where physical assault is the method of handling conflict, disobedience, error,

anger, and frustration."² Federal officials believe the answer lies in new laws aimed at preventing juvenile crime, whereas educators believe attitudes must be reshaped.³

A task force for the Maryland State Department of Education has been studying "disrupted" youth and has concluded that dealing with the disruption and violence of these young people is a total community responsibility. This group's report notes a variety of instructional alternatives, human relations training, expanded counseling services, community diagnostic centers, and specialized teacher training as necessary ingredients of a successful program.⁴

The need extends to large-scale residential education for thousands of teenagers of both genders who are not now benefitting from contemporary educational patterns. The increase in the amount of leisure time available to youth and

¹ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, 633 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20531. Announcement entitled "Diversion of Youth from the Juvenile Justice System."

² George Henderson, editor. *Education for Peace—Focus on Mankind*. ASCD Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1973. p. 45.

³ "Violence in the Schools: Now Some Solutions." *American School Board Journal*, January 1975. p. 31.

⁴ *Education USA* 18(51); Washington, D.C.: August 16, 1976.

adults and the trend toward the shorter work week make it mandatory that today's youths learn how to utilize this leisure time for their own advantage and for satisfying experiences that will benefit all persons. The employment picture is bleak for many young people. This requires broad-based nationwide guidance and assistance to youth to provide more realistic career help.

A Proposal

What can be done to alleviate the problem? Is there really a solution? What needs to be done is to muster our national resources in the direction of our disaffected youth.

Among our national resources are numerous moth-balled military installations that have all the facilities to house and educate thousands of young people. Many of these installations currently accommodate Boy and Girl Scout activities. Some are the locus for youth activities such as those provided by the Community Service Command. This group provides a two-week summer residence program aimed at vocational exploration for high-school-age youth.

This proposal suggests utilizing these facilities on a year-round basis. The U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare could, through the several state departments of education, launch a significant program for youth development in a manner comparable to the relocation of Vietnamese refugees during the past year. Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, is an example of how 14,000 refugees were housed, fed, and educated in a crash program. Extending this concept to residential education of youth, such a plan could activate a program of personal improvement through relevant education including basic skills, career education, improvement of the environment, and personal physical fitness. These installations lend themselves to programs involving considerable physical activity in the out-of-doors similar to that of "Outward Bound." This alternative has proven to be successful with certain types of youth. One study was done to determine if an Outward Bound experience was more effective in reducing further delinquent behavior in adjudicated delinquent adolescent boys than a traditional training school experience. Based upon recidivism (return to an institution for parole violation or new offense), the results suggested

that for some delinquents the Outward Bound experience "is an effective means of promoting positive change."⁵

A residential program of at least one-year duration would make possible the initiation of a nutrition program to develop healthy minds and bodies. This would function in conjunction with a full medical and dental program. Students could be admitted on a voluntary basis or assignment through welfare control or court placement if unable to benefit from extant programs. Facilities for athletic competition would be available as well as opportunities for spiritual and moral growth through planned character development and religious instruction on a voluntary basis. Staffing needs would assist in reducing unemployment among the clergy and teaching profession. The installations, which would be activated, could be further organized by age, sex, and geography. Further benefits could be derived from appropriate planned cultural activities. Plans could also be made for monetary compensation among the older participants.

Where would the money come from to support such a program? Sources are available under ESEA including vocational education, career education, juvenile justice, nutrition and health, and guidance. Other agencies concerned with the development of youth could be called upon to assist such as the state departments of education, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Department of Defense.

There is no question about the need; now is the time to do something significant to satisfy that need.

⁵ F. J. Kelly and D. J. Baer. *Outward Bound Schools as an Alternative to Institutionalism for Adolescent Delinquent Boys*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, June 1968.



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