

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF

MENTORING AND LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES

FOR YOUTH AT RISK

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW



DET KRIMINAL
PRÆVENTIVE RÅD

TrygFonden

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Summary

Community-based mentoring and leisure-time activities for youth at risk of offending can have promising effects for a variety of outcomes such as deviant behaviour, violence and delinquency – even when the young people's negative behaviour is group-related.

To begin with, the focus of research was prevention efforts addressing group-related violence alone, but a broader focus became more meaningful, considering many different factors concerning links between different kinds of crime and prevention, the available research, the characteristics of youth groups and the local challenges faced in Denmark.

Troublesome youth groups are not always violent, and, if they are, violence is only one kind of crime among and linked to various others, which argues for a broader crime focus.

Furthermore, the youth groups known in Denmark are mostly unstable with informal membership – they appear and disappear and rather have the shape of dynamic networks. The fact that young people gather in groups is a normal phenomenon, and youth groups are often based on friendship and common interests. Therefore, groups *per se* are not a fixed phenomenon to combat – rather their potentially deviant behaviour.

Initial analyses also found that effect studies on gang prevention are often lacking or of a poor quality, which make them difficult to learn from. In addition, gang prevention and intervention projects mostly deal with adults and organized crime, whereas the aim of the review was promising prevention programmes and projects for youth at risk.

An overview of various types of prevention efforts and their effects on this target group revealed that mentoring and leisure-time activities are applied to both general and group-related crime among young people. Community-based efforts within these two kinds of prevention were found to be the most well documented and promising ones and dealing with both deviant, delinquent and violent behaviour – also group-related. These kinds of interventions became the focus of the review.

Mentoring and leisure-time activities are already applied in many Danish settings. A systematic review of effectiveness can qualify and guide practitioners dealing with actual problems ranging from mild and general to serious and group-related crime.

After all, crime prevention is defined not by intentions to prevent, but by results, and since many risk and protective factors overlap, prevention efforts can possibly handle more than one problem. Whether they do must be examined thoroughly.

This systematic review is based on structured and multi-disciplinary literature searches in articles published from 1980 to the end of 2011 in five international research databases, besides internet and reference searches. The literature has been screened systematically according to explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria. Among other things, the effect of the given prevention projects and programmes should be measured in terms of crime or mediating factors for crime, and the participating youth should include some 12-17-year-olds and at least 50 % boys, since they are at greater risk.

Data has been extracted from each included full-text study in relation to many standardised categories describing, for instance, the given intervention, its target group, setting, organisation, effect etc., and, furthermore, many characteristics of the procedures of the study itself. Each study has undergone quality assessment, and overall low quality studies have been excluded.

The findings of the systematic review are organised according to the type of intervention handled. The analyses have dealt with mentoring, leisure-time activities and the combination of mentoring and leisure-time activities. Mentoring and leisure-time activities often overlap and contain some of the same elements.

The included prevention programmes and projects are categorised according to the following definitions:

Mentoring is defined as an organised relationship with a specific and supporting older person or adult. The relationship often lasts for a longer period of time. Besides this, the characteristics of mentoring vary, and the mentor can be both paid, professional, or a volunteer.

Leisure-time activities are defined as organised activities and/or time spent with other young people and adults at least on a monthly basis. They span clubs, excursions, sport, crafts, arts, outreach work and school support, to mention some variants, and often the intervention efforts included in the review apply more than one element.

Results show that all the included effect studies on mentoring for youth at risk have at least one positive effect, and mentoring interventions are indeed promising.

High-quality studies report positive effects within various measures of crime, behaviour, attitude, psyche, alcohol and drugs, school and relationships to e.g. friends and family.

The effects can vary, though, according to different subgroups, and all the effect measures examined by the included studies are not always found in each case. The most solid data on effect concerns mediating factors for crime – not crime itself – and none of the included studies study long-term effects. The most positive effects in the included studies are found among 11-14-year-old boys and girls living in urban contexts with various socioeconomic problems, and these young people are at less risk and not already committing crime.

It is important to consider that relationships lasting for less than 3 month can have a deteriorating effect on the mentee's self-worth. The mentoring project or programme should be intense with weekly meetings lasting several hours and involving a supporting, trusting and emotional relationship for a period of at least a year, if the effort should have the best chances of success. Furthermore, especially volunteer mentoring should include professional staff to screen, match, train, support and supervise the mentors.

Leisure-time activities have more ambiguous results. The most solid documentation of effects shows positive changes within crime, school, behaviour, psyche, alcohol and drugs and relationships, but the results only occur in some cases and with diverging implications for different participants. The positive effects found in the included studies of high quality are not measured in the form of crime, and improvements in psyche and behaviour are seen mostly among youth who are almost not at risk. However, less solid studies find improvements, but also no effect, on crime, drugs, social skills, positive peers or involvement in gangs. Some interventions, though, show an increase – along with positive effects – in negative peer company mostly in the case of older youth, and the given activities can have difficulties handling and including youth with troublesome behaviour. There is no evidence of long-term impacts in the included studies of the review.

Leisure-time activities have shown positive effects for 10-16 year-olds who are lightly – but also at higher – risk of crime, even group-related. These youngsters have been studied in cities and bigger towns with higher levels of poverty and crime, and activities should last a year, and the staff should be stable and well-trained and emphasize social and emotional skill development.

Combined mentoring and leisure-time activities for youth at risk document some trustworthy and positive improvements within crime – also violence – deviant behaviour, psyche, drugs and alcohol, school and relationships, but, across the same high-quality studies, effects within behaviour, psyche, school and drugs and alcohol are not found. Two thirds of the included studies do show some crime or behaviour improvements, though. Long-term effects have been examined, but results are ambiguous and insecure.

These combined interventions seem more fruitful for 11-14-year-olds only ‘at risk’, and – like most community-based interventions – the studies have been conducted in urban neighbourhoods with low SES. Interventions lasting at least a year with weekly contact, committed adults and skill-based activities seem to have a greater effect.

Both mentoring and leisure-time activities are promising for youth at risk. The studies show some positive and well-documented effects within many different categories which are crucial to the young people’s lives and well-being. Generally, good results are mostly seen, if the interventions are long-lasting, intense and include a personal and committed relationship with an adult, and, furthermore, deliberately stress the young people’s positive psycho-social development.

However, in some cases, mentoring and leisure-time activities can have certain deteriorating effects in the form of lower self-worth or negative peer influence. Therefore, it is crucial to focus on *how* the most effective interventions are actually done and tailored, and *who* the most fruitful target groups for the interventions are.

In addition, if mentoring and leisure-time activities are combined, they can reach and possibly influence and enrich several spheres of the young people’s lives both as individuals and as parts of peer groups. The elements can mutually strengthen an intervention and expand its ways of attracting and continuously engaging youth intensively and for a longer period of time, which, in itself, seem to contribute to a better impact. In an orchestrated and parent-involving effort, the combination can increase chances of success even further.

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Introduction

Introduction to the review

This chapter provides detailed background to the systematic review of the effect of mentoring and leisure-time activities for at-risk youth.

It defines the scope of a systematic review, its focus and aims, why it is needed, and why mentoring and leisure-time activities are particularly interesting from a youth crime-prevention perspective – also with a view to preventing crime committed by troublesome youth groups and serious crime such as violence.

This is followed by a presentation and an explanation of the central themes covered by the review, thus providing a platform for the subsequent chapters dealing with the review methodology and approach, the predictive power of the review, a general characterisation of the studies that form the basis of the review, and finally, in-depth analyses of the effects and challenges of mentoring and/or leisure-time activities. Subsequently, summaries of each individual study in the review are presented including programme descriptions and results. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary and perspectives.

What do you want to know?

The review report is aimed at a wide group of professionals, researchers and interest groups. Volunteers and professionals in positions of authority can also use its inspiration and concrete knowledge to help them in their daily work or to set the direction for development plans.

Those whose main need is research-based knowledge on the effect of mentoring and leisure-time activities for young people as a general practice guideline can proceed directly to Chapter 5 while also referring to the summary in Chapter 7. With its summaries and results of the specific programmes in the review, Chapter 6 offers a nuanced and comprehensive impression of the field for professionals and supervisors in particular. The summaries are included in the actual report, as they provide valuable information and a detailed understanding of practice. These can be easily read on an interest basis.

Those looking for a more thorough background and understanding of prevention through mentoring and leisure-time activities and want to know the foundation for Chapters 5 to 7 on the effects and challenges of the programmes should begin by reading Chapter 4, which provides a general characterisation of the studies of the review.

Finally, those interested in the methodology and parties with an interest or a need to understand some of the underlying approaches, premises and rationales of systematic reviews, impact research and quality assessment can proceed to Chapters 2 and 3, which focus on method and approach as well as the predictive power of the studies.

Systematic reviews and evidence-based research

A systematic review is a study of other studies and thus comes under the heading of secondary research. Secondary research distinguishes itself from primary research, which consists of empirical studies that collect direct data from and examine aspects of reality.

A systematic review provides a structured, transparent overview of the studies conducted on a given topic or question so that this can be elucidated on the basis of the available knowledge in the field. The idea is that the combined insights contained in the numerous studies can better identify a growing body of experience and trends than stand-alone studies, which may be limited in context, methodology and conclusions.

By comparing studies, it also becomes possible to weigh their burden of proof against each other so that a single, seemingly effective or ineffective programme does not go unchallenged, but is contextualised by knowledge of other comparable programmes.

In other words, creating a systematic review is a means of extracting knowledge that otherwise often exists in a hidden, unexploited or fragmented form. At the same time it is a means of concentrating desired knowledge about a given focus area using explicit, targeted inclusion and exclusion criteria that dictate the scope of the study. Methodology and openness must also enable replication or reproducibility.

In recent years there has been a concerted effort to identify 'what works'. This stems from two main arguments. First, that investing in effective prevention – including crime prevention – can significantly reduce public expenditure. Second, that initiatives in the criminal system may be flawed (MHB 2003:76).

While systematic reviews do not necessarily address specific intervention programmes and their effect, the focus of the international organisations – The Cochrane Collaboration and The Campbell Collaboration – is to produce systematic reviews on the effects of social intervention programmes and health care, respectively. Another body, The Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI) also carries out systematic reviews and is part of the Social Science Research Unit at the Institute of Education, University of London. The work of all three institutions is targeted at decision-makers and takes the form of evidence-based research. Here the best methods for identifying the effects of an intervention programme are presented in a so-called 'hierarchy of evidence' that ranks a study's design and methodology.

The present study assumes this systematic approach based on the stringent gathering and review of impact studies – albeit drawing on different resources from those used by EPPI and Campbell. The study also takes into greater account a wider reader target group and nuances that are relevant to the repetition and practice of such interventions.

For further information on this review we refer to Chapter 2, Review methodology and approach, and Chapter 3, The predictive power of the review, for a closer look at the criteria for reliable research into the effectiveness of the intervention programmes and the ability to reproduce them in practice.

Focus and aims

The focus of this review is the prevention of violence, other crime and delinquent behaviour – both youth group-related and individual – in at-risk youth through mentoring and leisure-time activities.

The aim is to determine whether mentoring and leisure-time activities can have a positive crime prevention effect, direct or otherwise, for youth participants. The goal of the review is thus to contribute guidance and support on good practice – and a basis for testing promising initiatives in various contexts that will impart exceptional, new, context-specific knowledge.

More specifically this means as far as possible trying to determine the effect – the who, how, when, how long, where and why – of mentoring and/or leisure-time activities.

Such information is hard to come by. The reasons for this are threefold: there are relatively few impact studies on mentoring and leisure-time activities; the quality of such studies is, when all is said and done, relatively uncertain; and finally the existing systematic reviews and analyses in the field are so general and generalising in nature as to hamper further specification and programme replication. It remains to be seen whether the primary studies covered by this systematic review will generate further data and provide indications for the future.

Background for mentoring and leisure-time focus

The project was based on a desire to prevent youth group violence. The goal was to identify the available programmes and whether they had a documented effect. As it will become clear in the following, knowledge of 'the Danish reality', the nature of juvenile crime and youth group intervention programmes has demanded a broader focus on promising prevention initiatives aimed at youth group violence, delinquent behaviour and other crime – including those initiatives not specifically aimed at 'groups'.

Juvenile life and problematic behaviour

Friend and peer groups play a central role in the development and daily life of all young people. Young people are orientated towards each other¹, learn from each other and share a common life experience at school, in their spare time and in the public sphere. In light of this, it is not surprising that juvenile crime is most often committed by groups of youth, and that the exposure of young people to youth with problematic or criminal behaviour actually increases their risk of committing crime².

While one body of research points out that placing problematic youth together in a prevention or treatment programme is risky and potentially counterproductive, another body of research seeks to exploit young people's natural, reciprocal influence in group contexts to bring about positive change.³

Whether youth group behaviour is seen as a problem depends on perspective, and teachers, youth workers, the police, shop owners, etc, and the juveniles in question should be consulted in order to gain their perspective⁴.

Problematic group behaviour exists in several urban contexts in Denmark and is typically characterised by a lack of organisation, hierarchy or formalised membership. Rather, these three elements are fluid and situation-dependent, with youth forming part of a dynamic

¹ (Leleur & Pedersen 1996:16)

² (Wolfe & Shoemaker 1999; Barnes et al. 2006; Maschi & Bradley 2008)

³ (Brendtro et al. 2007:201)

⁴ (White 2002:6-7)

network whose origin is not crime-related⁵. Groups of youth can number anywhere from 5 to 20, and they can create fear in town centres and neighbourhoods – either by their mere presence or, for example, as a result of threats, theft, vandalism or in certain cases robbery and violence. This behaviour is mainly prevalent in 15 to 17-year-olds, but groups may also include young people of many ages and a wide age span, with the youngest members usually being boys.⁶

The above characteristics closely correspond to the definition of 'street gangs or troublesome youth groups' developed by the Eurogang research network. The definition includes the following: *A minimum of three people, mostly teenagers, who share a common identity – also in relation to illegal activity. They hang out in public areas in a group, which, independently of the stability of the group's individual members, continues to exist for a minimum three months*⁷.

As the term 'gangs' in Denmark is often associated with organised crime committed by adults⁸, the term 'troublesome youth groups' should instead be used in Danish contexts.

The international research often referred to in this systematic review, however, uses the term gang (as in 'street' or 'youth gang'), which is why the term remains *untranslated* in the Danish version of the report in order to be true to the respective sources and at the same time *emphasise* the conflicting and confusing use of the term that sometimes occurs. However, for the benefit of Danish readers, who would tend to associate the word 'gang' with adult gangs, it should be explained that the term is used throughout the English translation of the report to indicate youth or street gangs, unless otherwise specified.

Following along from this, so-called 'hangarounds' or helpers of organised adult gangs are also an important prevention focus group. Hangarounds may be youths – even children – who perform tasks such as acting as lookouts for adult gangs or people in their network and, as with troublesome youth groups, hangarounds are loosely organised teenagers⁹.

Taken as a whole, youth behaviour in group contexts does not have to be problematic, but it *can* become so, though rarely involving the same youth or in a well-planned or continuous manner. Involvement in organised adult gang activity, however, significantly increases the seriousness of the problem.

From youth group violence to crime in general

How serious is the problem of youth group violence? The development in juvenile crime in Denmark over the last 10 years or so reveals several trends, depending on which figures you look at.

Overall registered juvenile crime, ie, criminal sentences handed down to youth aged 15 to 17, shows an increase between 2001 and 2005, after which there is a fall until 2010, calculated per 1,000 youth of the age in question. In 2010 the number of criminal sentences was lower per 1,000 youth than in any of the preceding years.

⁵ (PLS Rambøll Management 2002:69)

⁶ (LG Insight 2010)

⁷ (Weerman et al. 2009:19-20)

⁸ (The Danish Commission on Juvenile Crime 2009:65)

⁹ (LG Insight 2010:19)

In relation to registered violence – including threatened violence – we see an increase from 2001 to 2006. In 2010, however, the number of *assault* cases involving youth once again stagnated and fell so that, compared with 2001, the figure for 2010 is only 6% higher when the size of the year-cohort in question is taken into account. Most cases are *simple assault*. In relation to the age group size, there are 21% fewer cases of *aggravated assault* in 2010 than in 2001. Thus we also see a variation in the type and level of the crime as well as variations from year to year. In recent years, however, there has been a tendency towards a reduction in violent crime.

Robbery remained stable between 2003 and 2008, after which we see an increase so that the figure is 23% higher in 2010 than in 2001. If we compare this with 18-20-year-old adults, we see a sharp increase of no less than 65%¹⁰. Furthermore, the level of violence for 18-20-year-olds in 2010 is a whole 21% higher than in 2001 when the size of the year-cohorts in question are considered. In other words, the development for older youth or adults is more negative, and it should be pointed out that the same person having committed different crimes can appear in the figures several times.

The above figures, however, only relate to *convicted* crime. *Self-reported studies* of 16- to 74-year-olds in Denmark who were the victims of violence and threatened violence in the last year show no increase from 1995/96 to 2005/10. The difference between the self-reported studies and registered crime may reflect a growing trend in the population to report crime¹¹ – and not necessarily an increase in crime itself. The self-reported figures show no evidence of violence committed by youth specifically.

The risk of being attacked was less in 2009 and 2010 than in 2008. In contrast, serious violent offences resulting in grievous bodily harm showed a sudden increase during the latter half of the first decade of the new millennium compared with 1995/96, while 2010 is leaning towards a fall in serious violent crime. In contrast there seems to be a rise in violence committed by troublesome youth groups when we look at the incidence of the type of violence suffered by victims in 1995/96 and 2005/10 respectively. Of particular note is the increase in violent offences involving four or more offenders.¹²

With specific regard to the number of *juvenile* offenders reported per violent crime, we see a fall from the 1980s up to 2005. This figure may be low, however, as certain offenders often go free, and data are less up to date than was previously the case. By comparison, the number of juvenile offenders per burglary remains stable and higher than that for violent offences.

Finally, we see a fall in the number of *A&E* cases resulting from violence in the first six months of 2010 compared with the same period in 2011¹³.

Thus the development in the actual level of crime, including violence and number of juvenile offenders remains ambiguous or unclear, depending on the type of crime and knowledge source. In particular, violence committed by a single offender and burglary or violence involving three or more offenders seem to pose a potential challenge in relation to youth under 18¹⁴.

¹⁰ (The Danish Ministry of Justice, Research and Documentation Unit 2011:3-6)

¹¹ (The Danish Commission on Juvenile Crime 2009:264; Balvig & Kyvsgaard 2011:4,5)

¹² (Balvig & Kyvsgaard 2011:6,7,45)

¹³ (Helweg & the Danish Crime Prevention Council 2012)

¹⁴ (The Danish Commission on Juvenile Crime 2009:270-271)

Thus troublesome youth groups and violence do not constitute separate or unequivocal focus areas in relation to the work of crime prevention in Denmark. But they are *nonetheless* relevant.

Furthermore, both Danish and international experience indicates that troublesome youth group activity spans as many different forms of delinquent behaviour and crime as violence itself¹⁵ – possibly even more. Such forms may co-exist, alternate with and give rise to each other.

Even without special focus on groups, international studies argue that violence prevention benefits from a broader focus on crime than violence¹⁶.

When it comes to gangs, prevention programmes seem to achieve the best results by targeting *potential* rather than existing gang members¹⁷. Many gangs originate among non-threatening, *ordinary* youth groups and friends sharing a common interest in music, games or other special interests¹⁸. Preventing the development of gangs thus becomes a question of targeting those individuals and groups of at-risk youth that have not yet developed ‘inappropriate behaviour’.

Understanding and *preventing* ‘youth group-related violence’ therefore demands a broader focus than simply ‘troublesome youth groups’ and ‘violence’. A broader focus also means that the results of the review will prove more useful and relevant to various players at local level and for varying degrees of crime risk and severity.

Ineffective gang prevention and uniform trends

Criminal associates and membership of a troublesome youth group or gang present a major risk of violence, but few effective programmes have been developed to combat¹⁹ or assess this problem²⁰.

On the basis of the three major compilations of Danish and international crime prevention programmes²¹, we have prepared an overview of the secondary intervention programmes targeted at young teenagers at risk of committing crime (or who have committed crime but have not been convicted). See Diagram I in Appendix 1. The overview shows that assessments of programmes aimed at existing gangs or recruitment to gangs is either poorly represented in the overall prevention effort or of relatively poor research quality, which is why it is problematic to offer advice and guidance on the basis of these assessments. Furthermore, the literature indicates that the programmes are often aimed at already convicted adult offenders rather than at-risk youth *per se*, while addressing fewer risk factors than other secondary youth intervention programmes²². Thus a purely gang-prevention perspective will fail to target the at-risk youth who are the focus of this review.

Similarly, the lack of good impact assessments of gang intervention programmes has prompted a Eurogang researcher to develop special gang intervention programmes based on

¹⁵ (The National Social Appeals Board, Research and Analysis Unit 2000:19; Klein 2001:10-11; EPPI centre 2009)

¹⁶ (The Office of the Surgeon General 2001)

¹⁷ (Gordon in White 2007:31)

¹⁸ (Hagedorn in Klein 2001:18; Bjørgo in White 2007:12)

¹⁹ (The Office of the Surgeon General 2001)

²⁰ (Totten 2008:6)

²¹ (Sherman et al. 1997:47,51; Thornton et al. 2002; The Danish Commission on Juvenile Crime 2009)

²² (Sherman et al. 1997:47,51)

evidence-based programmes that originally had a wider criminal scope²³. In the same way, Baker and his research colleagues stated:

*'These social problems – crime, violence, delinquency, gang behavior, and substance abuse – are so highly inter-correlated that, for many purposes, they can be treated as a single phenomenon [...] A program that successfully addresses one will address them all.'*²⁴ An intervention programme that addresses one problem can potentially prevent the other.

Researchers have identified a common series of highly inter-correlated youth risk factors for all these problems and also identified common characteristics for successful programmes across all these intervention areas (Dryfoos in Baker et al. 1995). Spergel and his colleagues have reviewed gang prevention literature and found similar characteristics in effective gang intervention programmes (Spergel in Baker et al. 1995:64). Thus researchers studying the effect of intervention programmes should collect several sources of information rather than focusing on one specific effect out of several possible – such as violence, theft, gang affiliation, circle of friends, family relationship, pro-social behaviour, schooling and self-esteem to name but a few.

A broader focus on programmes aimed at dealing with problematic behaviour, violence and other crime both within and outside the group context would seem to offer a meaningful perspective in the present review.

Promising intervention programmes for several category types

In Diagram II in Appendix 1 we have integrated gang intervention programmes for at-risk youth into the other existing columns and general focus areas. The former have been shown to cover the same focus areas and forms used in the prevention of juvenile crime in general.

The diagram also shows that the main 'local community' category contains numerous programmes and positive results achieved through *mentoring and leisure-time programmes*. These programmes stand out inasmuch as they are *promising* in their effect and relatively *well-researched* – in relation both to the number of studies and particularly to their quality. This increases the likelihood of credible conclusions that can form the basis of reliable best-practice recommendations.

These forms of prevention are also very much in line with several initiatives that have actively sought to prevent gangs in Copenhagen by means of a 'bonus pater' or clubs and positive leisure-time activities²⁵. This allows us to ascertain whether current approaches may have an effect and whether they require special conditions in order to make a *positive* difference (duration, frequency, personnel training, participant composition, etc).

Mentoring schemes, for example, may contain certain counterproductive implications as shown in Diagram II, despite being predominantly positive and recommended by the Danish Commission on Juvenile Crime²⁶. Similarly, the Commission points to organised youth activity as a source of meaningful lifestyle influences and to the fact that children and youth who

²³ Thornberry, Terry (2010) 'A Strategy for Developing Evidence-based Gang Intervention Programs', Eurogang X Workshop, Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, June 14-June 17

²⁴ (Baker et al. 1995:64)

²⁵ (Stevns in Klein 2001; City of Copenhagen 2011; SSP Copenhagen 2009)

²⁶ (The Danish Danish Commission on Juvenile Crime 2009:4,75)

commit the majority of crime are those who spend most of their time hanging out on the streets after school with their friends²⁷.

The conclusion of the preliminary analyses

Due to a variety of elements – i.e. the nature of youth and group behaviour, the present crime situation, the lack of well-documented gang intervention and similar cause-related trends and trends in gang-related and general juvenile crime intervention programmes – it is urgent to examine the approaches and effects of mentoring and after-school programmes in order to prevent delinquent behaviour, violence and other crime in at-risk youth – both gang-related and that of a more general nature. With the help of well-documented, effective prevention methods we hope to help young people with difficult odds to overcome their challenges and succeed in life.

Central concepts and themes

Secondary interventions and risks

Secondary interventions are the focus of this review. According to Brantingham & Faust's categorisation from 1976, these interventions include an '*early identification of and intervention on behalf of those living in conditions that can lead to crime*'. These interventions lie midway between primary interventions, generally aimed at entire school classroom situations, and tertiary interventions, aimed at identified offenders.

A prevention project or programme, however, may include participants that overlap the above categories. This happens, for example, when youth guilty of committing a crime are not charged with it. For this reason it is not always possible to place a given programme unequivocally in one category or another. Rather we are dealing with a continuum of intervention programmes that both address relatively high-risk offenders and seek to prevent crime from occurring in the first place²⁸.

The review mainly uses participant status, ie, whether participants are convicted or not, as a dividing line, but if any of the intervention participants merely fall into the at-risk group – alongside others who are convicted – we will take a closer look at the intervention programme in question.

'At risk' is a general term that covers a multitude of meanings. According to the researcher Kazdin (1993), 'at-risk' refers to '*increased likelihood over base rates in the population that a particular outcome will occur*'. The reasons for the increased likelihood of a particular outcome occurring can stem from – and be directed towards – several different phenomena. Among other things, Kazdin defines 'risk behaviour' as youth activities that increase the likelihood of different psychological, social and health-related consequences. While a person may fall into the at-risk category because of a given activity, for example, certain situations and environmental surroundings may also determine whether a person is at risk. As illustrated by this review, such factors typically include poverty, dangerous neighbourhoods, dysfunctional families, etc.

²⁷ (The Danish Commission on Juvenile Crime 2009:66,72)

²⁸ (Nichols 2004:179-180)

Risk can stem from numerous phenomena at different levels, which in turn can influence one another. This review places special focus on the risk of different forms of crime and delinquent behaviour.

Risk and protective factors associated with crime

Crime is often viewed as acquired behaviour caused by prolonged exposure to numerous *risk factors* that may be related to problems with *the individual, family, friends, school and the local community*. The theory known as '*the social developmental model*' originates from the work of researchers Catalano & Hawkins (1996). It combines elements of social control and social learning theory. Examples of factors that increase the risk of crime are inadequate parents who hand out severe or inconsistent discipline, marital conflict or a lack of parental supervision, and having siblings, other family and not least friends who are involved in crime and problematic behaviour – including substance abuse. A negative school environment, truancy and personal traits such as impulsiveness and hyperactivity are all associated with crime²⁹.

Risk accumulates with the presence of numerous, simultaneous risk factors that interact with one another, their combined effect increasing the overall risk of serious and continuous crime³⁰. The theory is that the greater the number of risk factors faced by children and youth, the greater the risk of developing problematic behaviours.

In contrast, *protective factors* reduce the risk, protecting children and youth from getting into serious trouble. These factors are generally found in those who do not commit crime. In respect of children, various researchers have identified protective factors such as intellectual and social *skills* or the acquisition of conventional *values*³¹. In respect of youth, protective factors include close, supportive *relations* with parents and other influential adults, significant *academic interest and performance* and the ability to plan for the *future*³². Other important protective factors are consistent parental upbringing and *supervision*³³.

On an individual level, a strong temperament and pro-social orientation are also examples of protective factors. An outgoing personality, the feeling of being valued and appreciated, and being involved in one's surroundings also protect against risks – also those that fall outside the narrow scope of crime.

The social development model emphasises the importance of positive role models in numerous areas and specifies that *pro-social* family ties, pro-social friends, school and local community protect against behavioural problems³⁴.

The list is not exhaustive and different research may point to different factors, just as all prevention is not based on this general approach. That said, this is the most common approach used in juvenile crime.

However, it is worth pointing out that *risk can vary over time* and only indicates a *possible tendency* – not a predetermined outcome³⁵. This is not dissimilar to 13–15-year-olds who have

²⁹ (Catalano & Hawkins, Kumpfer and Howell in Hanlon et al. 2002:460; Farrington in MHB 2003)

³⁰ (Howell in Hanlon et al. 2002; MHB 2003)

³¹ (Rutter and Dunst & Trivette in Hanlon et al. 2002)

³² (Werner & Smith in Hanlon et al. 2002)

³³ (Utting in MHB 2003:60)

³⁴ (Catalano & Hawkins in Crank et al. 2003)

³⁵ (Ejrnæs in Langager & Skov 2004:27)

a tendency to become involved in crime, but where the majority 'grow out of it' in time. Even without crime preventive intervention, criminal activity decreases with age³⁶.

According to some researchers risk factors can help to *identify* those youth who may be in need of support and a prevention programme, while protective factors can provide the *basis* for prevention initiatives. Thus protective factors do not merely mirror risk factors and vice versa³⁷.

Youth groups and prevention

What particular 'group' characteristics may be associated with youth, delinquent behaviour and crime? It appears that alienated or marginalised youth are more readily drawn to groups of like-minded youth who display and reinforce anti-social behaviour while simultaneously weakening their ties with conventional society.

In serious cases, as seen in the USA, gang-related problems are particularly violent, complex and protracted. Gang involvement is associated with crime, including violence, murder, victimisation and the use of alcohol and drugs. On the other hand, gangs offer members protection, power, status and identity when, for example, such needs are not met by the family or other social fora³⁸. Young people seek to join gangs precisely because they are searching for father figures, substitute families, friends, a sense of community and excitement. They can remain within the group framework if they enjoy its friendship, lack alternative outlets or fear loss of protection and sanctions from the group. Sometimes youngsters feel they have no future prospects anyway, while others long for a normal life and grow out of their gang affiliation³⁹.

Risk factors specifically associated with gang-related crime include frequent relocation, living in large housing complexes and exposure to unemployment and racism with access to firearms and drugs⁴⁰. Other factors include parental behaviour, lack of involvement and poor performance at school, affiliations with like-minded youth with problematic behaviour and individual characteristics such as hyperactivity and a lack of self-control. Thus many of the risks are similar to those listed above under juvenile crime in general.

However, some researchers are more cautious in their assessment of risk exposure, which they deem too generalising, and are unable to explain how different risks interact in individual cases or in the social processes that lead to the formation of gangs and gang behaviour. Researchers also warn against reducing pervasive social problems to individual inadequacies or responsibility⁴¹. This relates back to the constructive applications and reservations of a risk-based approach that have already been discussed.

How to deal with troublesome youth groups? Different approaches are tested. The aim of gang interventions is to help those already involved in gangs to leave. According to the theorist Friedman, this is hampered by the fact that youth gang members are already used to challenging authority, family and social norms, which is why they are far removed from legitimate forms of support. The young gang members exert a strong influence over one another, making it potentially difficult for outside players to make a difference. The perceived

³⁶ (MHB 2003; The Danish Commission on Juvenile Crime 2009:310)

³⁷ (Bynner in Bowey & McGlaughlin 2006:269)

³⁸ (Fagan, Huff in Derezotes 1995:34,35)

³⁹ (White 2007:13-14)

⁴⁰ (Spergel in Derezotes 1995)

⁴¹ (Cunneen & White in White 2007:10)

threat of gang members being hurt by outsiders can increase authority and solidarity within the group, while hurting others can lead to respect, power and self-esteem⁴².

The aim of gang prevention on the other hand is to prevent youth from ever developing gang affiliations. Prevention is a difficult area in that there is a lack of empirical research that shows which approaches – if any – are successful⁴³. As early as the 1920s, the gang researcher Trasher warned that there was no universal means to solving gang-related problems and associated crime⁴⁴. Following on from this, youth gang violence has since been seen as a symptom of other, deeper social problems such as lack of financial opportunity and decaying social structures⁴⁵.

According to the Australian researcher Rob White, gang prevention and intervention strategies can be classified into:

- 1) *Enforcement strategies*, which include legislation, police intervention and sanctions
- 2) *Educational strategies*, which try to improve the opportunities and conditions of young people⁴⁶.

The gang researcher Spergel has put forward four different strategies for dealing with youth gang crime.

The first is *police-instigated suppression*, which involves suppressing gangs by means of arrests, police surveillance and ties with individual gang members, and finally, by preventing peripheral gang members from engaging in criminal activities. This strategy often involves special legislation, task forces and special police units. However, some researchers, including Huff back in the 1990s, believe that such approaches can backfire. Peripheral members targeted by the police are at risk of being formally identified as members and consequently becoming more deeply entrenched in deviant behaviour. Furthermore, a strategy aimed at removing gang leaders can leave a vacuum and result in unpredictable retaliation by those who would fill the void. Similarly, the researcher Hagedorn has urged caution in using this approach, an assertion that he bases on a criticism that people perceive gangs as static and uniform and thus fail to consider variations within the gangs, such as developments in age range.

The second is *social interventions*, which were commonplace in social work as early as the 1950s and 1960s. Outreach social workers operated at street level in targeted neighbourhoods to help gang members and at-risk youth find a viable alternative to gang membership. Since then outreach casework has included temporary drop-in centres, activity centres and drug abuse programmes for youth from a low-income background.

The third category is *community organisation programmes*, which aim to bring about change in or between gangs or organisations in relation to local problems and social needs. For example, renovating neighbourhoods if the residents feel that the physical surroundings lead to gang behaviour. This is easiest to mobilise in areas where the negative activity is not inherent or areas where residents have not lost faith in their own ability to take action.

⁴² (Hritz & Gabow 1997:259)

⁴³ (Howell in Thurman et al. 1996:280)

⁴⁴ (Trasher in Thurman et al. 1996:281)

⁴⁵ (Rittel & Webber in Thurman et al. 1996:282)

⁴⁶ (White 2007:4)

Last, but not least, is the *provision of opportunities* to the individuals involved. The model presupposes that education, training and employment can help change the lifestyle of young people. Many gang members lack an alternative, legal means to obtain material goods.

In the USA, police suppression is the most common approach, while social interventions account for about one-third of the overall picture. Furthermore, the researcher Huff points out that both youth at risk of ending up in gangs and those already involved in gang activity must be targeted in order for programmes to have a meaningful impact on gangs⁴⁷.

Overall, certain highly vulnerable youngsters may find some of their needs met in an otherwise negative gang context. Different approaches have been developed to tackle such inappropriate gang behaviour.

Among these are mentoring and after-school programmes, which fall into the educational category. As such they come under social interventions and interventions that include community-based elements and provide opportunities. As many local social circumstances such as poverty and lack of organisation are risk factors for gang involvement, local processes that take place in the same local forum are seen as a potentially suitable means of tackling and transforming such problems and gangs.

Such local processes include outreach social work at local level, supervised recreational activities and after-school programmes for resident youth. Like-minded mentors from the same youth environment are also seen as a potential resource⁴⁸.

Community-based programmes

Community-based programmes may vary and there is no single, unequivocal definition. Some directly target youth while others may take the form of strategies that benefit the local community in a more general sense. Some will revitalise the neighbourhood, some will involve civil society and change attitudes while other more direct and limited programmes reach out to youngsters on the ground by building trust and offering recreational opportunities⁴⁹.

In Chapter 4, Characteristics of the reviewed programmes, under the subsection Locations for Prevention, we will take a closer look at the different ways in which the mentoring and after-school programmes in the review relate to the local community.

Within evidence-based crime prevention, mentoring and after-school programmes have shown themselves to be effective precisely because they are community-based⁵⁰. Presumably the advantages of these programmes is that they often have a broader focus than the targeted individuals and their families alone. Risk factors should be reduced and protective factors bolstered not only in individual youth and their families – but preferably also in the environment in which these young people live and the circles in which they move. Often community-based programmes involve developing more positive and mutually supportive relations between different members of the local community⁵¹, as typically seen in the reviewed mentoring programmes, which use local volunteer mentors.

⁴⁷ (Thurman et al. 1996:280,281)

⁴⁸ (White 2007:37-38,50)

⁴⁹ (White 2007:37)

⁵⁰ (Welsh 2007:3)

⁵¹ (Spergel in Derezotes 1995; Botvin in Hanlon et al. 2009)

Another reason to highlight community-based programmes is that they often keep youth rooted in their local community and in this way ensure continuity with family and other social, supportive relations. At the same time they are often less costly and in certain forms they can also prevent the youngsters concerned from becoming stigmatised or marked for life⁵².

For at-risk older youth in particular, community-based programmes offer a viable alternative to school-based projects, for example. On the other hand programmes that are short-term and one-dimensional have previously proved limited in effect⁵³, whereas more comprehensive programmes employing several simultaneous approaches increase the likelihood of positive effects⁵⁴.

Regardless of the type of programme used, challenges remain in the shape of recruiting and retaining participants, identifying target group needs, specifying of suitable change goals and recruiting, training and retaining qualified staff. Added to this is the question of successful programme implementation, and in general, the ability to tailor a programme to special groups and needs. Other types of programmes often pose exactly the same challenges⁵⁵.

Mentoring programmes

What is a mentor? Many see the ability to offer guidance as a key part of the mentoring role, and, according to the definition offered by the researcher Roberts in the late 1990s, a mentor is a person who can: '*teach, guide, be a role model, coach, counsel, empower, nurture, provide friendship, encourage or display enthusiasm*'⁵⁶. In other words a mentor can act as a role model and/or friend who motivates and is caring and supportive of the young person.

Exactly what defines a mentoring relationship? In the words of the theorist Bronfenbrenner: "*a one-to-one relationship between a pair of unrelated individuals, usually of different ages, and is developmental in nature [...] a mentor is an older, more experienced person who seeks to develop the character and competence of a younger person*"⁵⁷. In this description the mentor is typically – but as we will see not always – involved in a one-to-one relationship (dyad) with a younger and less experienced person in order to develop the personality and competencies of this person.

Furthermore, mentors fall into two different categories, namely *natural* mentors and *planned* mentors. A natural mentoring programme takes place through friends, family, neighbours or school, for example. However, over time traditional social institutions have changed, limiting the possibility for natural mentoring. Many families have only one breadwinner, neighbourhood networks are on the decline and schools have many more pupils per teacher⁵⁸.

Planned mentoring programmes on the other hand are structured programmes in which children and adults are selected and matched through formal processes. The programmes are designed to give at-risk youth help and guidance so they can become responsible adults and compensate for their presumed lack of natural mentors⁵⁹.

⁵² (Rapp-Paglicci et al. 2011:112).

⁵³ (Benard; Florin & Chavis; Hawkins in Baker et al. 1995)

⁵⁴ (Baker et al. 1995:63)

⁵⁵ (Cross et al. 2010:370-371)

⁵⁶ (Roberts in Rogers 2011:160-162)

⁵⁷ (Bronfenbrenner in Freedman in Thompson & Kelly-Vance 2001:229)

⁵⁸ (Floyd in Thompson & Kelly-Vance 2001:229)

⁵⁹ (Freedman in Thompson & Kelly-Vance 2001:229)

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s and up to the present day, mentoring programmes have increasingly been seen as a means of targeting at-risk youth who are exposed to a range of different problems – eg, unemployment and crime in the surrounding environment, substance abuse, low self-esteem or low academic performance and aspirations as well as the risk of dropping out and committing crime. But as early as 1902, Big Brothers, a formal mentoring programme using volunteer mentors, was introduced in the USA to target youngsters in single-parent families⁶⁰.

Despite its long history, there is a general lack of research documenting the effect of mentoring programmes. Studies have focused more on the actual process and relationship development than the outcome of the programme⁶¹.

In the late 1990s, an increasing number of studies on adult mentors supported the theory that mentoring can be an effective way to reduce juvenile crime and violent behaviour⁶².

However, assessments frequently lack a description of actual programme content, activity structure, dosage or intensity, and implementation as well as mentor training. This makes it difficult to say anything about why the programmes may be beneficial. This is further compounded by the difficulty of documenting voluntary activities.

However, several authors cite the importance of a strong, personal bond between mentor and mentee in order to positively influence juvenile crime.⁶³

Leisure-time activities

Leisure-time activities are thought to influence and reduce crime through simple diversion. The idea is that while participants are involved in the programme they do not have time to commit crime⁶⁴. Particularly in the past, the argument was that sport helps to educate participants.

Now the main argument put forward, particularly in the USA, is that the hours after school when many children and youngsters are alone and unsupervised pose a particularly high risk, as this is the peak time of day for youth arrests⁶⁵.

Criminological research suggests that the lack of after-school supervision increases the likelihood of young people becoming involved in deviant and other high-risk behaviour compared with young people who become involved in constructive activities under responsible adult supervision⁶⁶.

By comparison, victim studies in Denmark show that violence with a non-specific youth focus occurs most frequently on Fridays and Saturdays and between the hours of midnight and 3 am. However, in recent years there has been a tendency towards a slight increase in violence on weekdays (Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays) between 12 noon and 5, 6 and 7 pm⁶⁷.

The aim of programmes after school, commonly referred to as after-school programmes (ASP), is to improve children and youth learning, including cognitive competencies, give them new positive role models and provide shelter in vulnerable areas⁶⁸. The programmes seek to

⁶⁰ (Royse 1998:145; Thompson & Kelly-Vance 2001; de Anda 2001:97-98)

⁶¹ (Thompson & Kelly-Vance 2001:227,230; Royse 1998:157)

⁶² (Grossman & Gerry in Flewelling & Paschal 1999:1)

⁶³ (DuBois et al. 2002 samt Rhodes et al. 2006 in Tolan et al. 2008:8)

⁶⁴ (Nichols 2004:178)

⁶⁵ (Cross et al. 2010:370; Zief et al. 2006:12)

⁶⁶ (Chaiken in Hanlon et al. 2009)

⁶⁷ (Balvig & Kyvsgaard 2011:49,50)

⁶⁸ (Cross et al. 2010:370)

replace the high-risk, after-school environments young people otherwise inhabit so that the time spent in secure environments under responsible adult supervision and potentially structured activities is increased. ASPs often forge more positive bonds with peers and seek to increase parental involvement in home and school activities⁶⁹.

Similarly, the positive benefit of sports programmes is attributed to a direct, derivative effect, the fact that it addresses the youngsters' need for excitement and contributes to personal fitness, which in turn promotes improved mental health – not to mention increased self-esteem, the feeling of control over your own life and increased employment opportunities⁷⁰.

However, ASPs often seem only to service the needs of low-risk youth, which may explain their poor effect on crime. According to the theory of the increased opportunity for crime during unsupervised periods, ASPs will not have a crime prevention effect if they merely replace other kinds of structured activity or harmless unstructured activity such as TV viewing.⁷¹

The evidence to support the crime prevention effects of sports programmes⁷² is far from clear, but in the last 20 years the number of ASPs in the USA has exploded as a result of parental pressure⁷³. In the worst case scenario, unstructured after-school programmes may increase anti-social behaviour given that friends reinforce deviant attitudes and behaviour, and some ASPs have not demonstrated any measurable effect whatsoever⁷⁴. Generally speaking, the volume of research to date has been too small and too methodologically weak to provide decisive conclusions about the effect of the given programme type⁷⁵.

When all is said and done, community-based mentoring and leisure-time activities are a promising resource for youth at risk of committing juvenile crime – including youth group crime. However, up until now there has been a lack of overview and sufficiently rigorous research to confirm or dismiss these assumptions.

⁶⁹ (Zief et al. 2006:12)

⁷⁰ (Nichols 2004:178)

⁷¹ (Cross et al. 2009)

⁷² (Utting i Nichols 2004:178)

⁷³ (Hanlon et al. 2009)

⁷⁴ (Rorie et al. 2011:105-106).

⁷⁵ (Gottfredson et al. 2004:256)

Review methodology and approach

Phases of the systematic review

The present systematic review has several phases. First, the subject field is examined and analysed to enable us to make an informed and professional judgement as regards the specific focus area and aim of the review. Among other things, the methodology consists of an open, consistent and targeted approach aimed at identifying the explicit characteristics that determine the focus of the review. These, in turn, determine the review criteria.

Therefore, the systematic process would have to be interrupted and revised were changes to the focus areas and criteria made as we went along. The preliminary analyses and arguments discussed in the preceding chapter have served to clarify this point.

The next phases consist of a structured literature search for impact studies, which are then systematically screened according to fixed, predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria that correspond to the aim and focus of the review.

This is followed by data extraction or re-descriptions of the studies that meet the established criteria and therefore form part of the systematic review itself. Re-description consists of as loyal and detailed a description as possible of the included studies' propositions and information in relation to predetermined review categories whose content we wish to know about. This is done in order to identify the preventive programmes, their target groups and effects as well as to permit a quality assessment of the individual studies.

For screening and re-description, established review institutions employ specifically designed computer programs. In this case, Excel has been used for re-descriptions, with separate rows focusing on the different studies whose countless characteristics have been collected and grouped column by column across the page. The relatively data-intensive review sheet has subsequently, where necessary, been split up and marked into various groups or categories for further analysis.

When all the included studies have been separately re-described, they can be reviewed in an overall context. This process provides a general study characterisation and summary based on the selected focus areas in order to identify the general characteristics of the studies and their content.

This is followed by in-depth, cross-analyses of the reviewed studies to determine the extent to which mentoring and after-school programmes for at-risk youth have an effect, including the more specific trends that can be inferred from the studies reviewed.

Among other things, The Campbell Collaboration is known for its meta-analyses, which employ a quantitative approach using fixed uniform impact data across the studies of a review. The aim of such analyses is to provide a more accurate basis for evaluating the given effect of a programme type. Without stringent, numerous, comparable quantitative data, meta-analyses are no longer appropriate and impossible to carry out. In such cases a 'narrative synthesis' may be adopted.

The latter is the case in this present systematic review. We have neither the expertise, the funds, nor the required data to carry out a quantitative meta-analysis. Furthermore, this reflects our express, conscious decision to meet the need to identify more context-specific qualitative characteristics relating to the effect of the programme types. These characteristics, which lack in meta-analyses, will direct our attention to practice, rendering the conclusions of the in-depth analyses more manageable and applicable in specific prevention efforts targeting at-risk youth.

Structured literature search

The structured literature search has been carried out in several different subject-specific databases that have been specially selected to enable – and ensure – an interdisciplinary understanding of and insight into the focus area. The selected scientific databases are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Interdisciplinary database selection

Description of the selected scientific databases	
ERIC	Major international <i>educational</i> database
psychINFO	Leading international <i>psychological</i> database
SocINDEX	Comprehensive international <i>sociological</i> database
Criminal Justice Abstracts	Major international <i>criminological</i> database
PubMed (MEDLINE included)	Major international <i>scientific</i> database

The search words used in the literature searches have sought to both broaden and limit the search scope. On the one hand we have sought to include as many useful texts as possible by searching for similar endings and synonyms for the same word. On the other hand we have sought to limit the literature search to accurately target the focus area. To this end search tests were carried out.

The search included a specification of the problem (crime, gang, risk, etc), target group (youth, teenagers, students etc), prevention programme (programme, project, etc, and also mentor, leisure, club, counsellor, trip, ASP, etc) and effect (evaluation, outcome, assessment, result, etc) in order to target the literature search and at the same time enable hits of many potentially relevant constellations for further consideration.

Depending on the databases, the same long search thread has produced a broader or narrower search focus. Thus in certain cases search tests have prompted special de-selection criteria such as children and partner-related subjects, as these have triggered the inclusion of other types of programmes – eg, programmes targeting child sex abuse or partner-related violence, neither of which is the focus of this review.

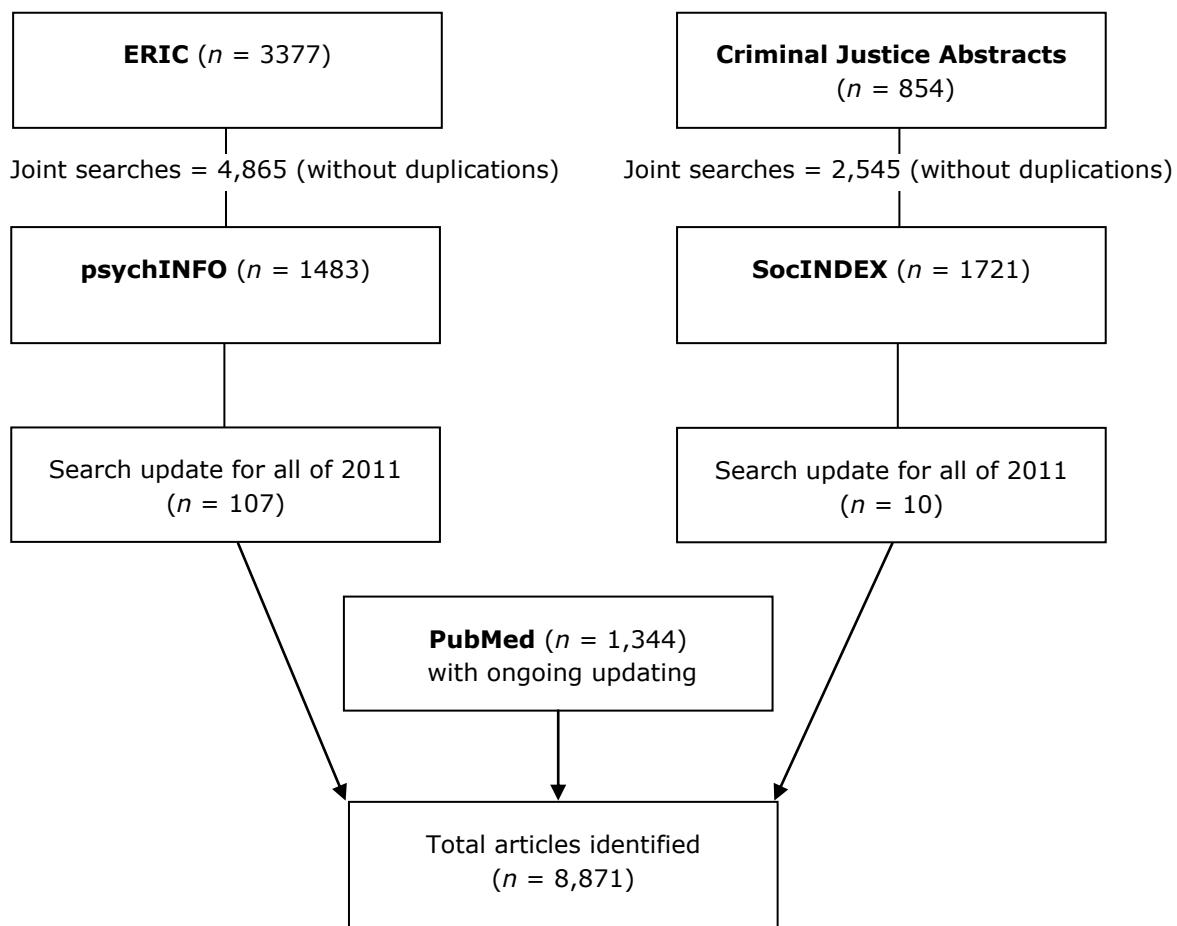
The search period is from 1980 to 2011 inclusive, and searches have also been carried out in journal articles.

Searches were carried out in the ERIC, psychINFO and SocINDEX databases as well as in Criminal Justice Abstracts for studies relevant to the review. While joint searches were carried out in larger databases that included both, a separate search was conducted in the PubMed database.

Below is a diagram of the literature searches for the review that have resulted in many titles or hits. These searches were mainly conducted in late summer 2011 with an update at the start of 2012 to include all texts published in 2011.

The structured element in the literature search phase comes from the fact that we have deliberately and transparently used selected databases, search words, search threads and search specifications with a view to pinpointing the focus and aim of the review in a suitably detailed and clear manner.

Figure 1. Systematic literature search showing number of hits from 1980-2011



Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Special, explicit criteria have been used in the screening phase of the above-mentioned studies found in the five databases. The criteria were established in accordance with the results of the preliminary background analysis and the focus and aims of the review. They were formulated in advance and in accordance with the search threads in the literature search and, just as with the literature search itself, they help to pinpoint the focus areas of the review.

In screening the resulting texts, we first look at the given title, then the given abstract, and finally, if the abstract fulfils the inclusion criteria – or cannot provide the basis for an assessment on its own – a screening of the full text.

Table 2 lists the inclusion criteria for this systematic review. Most have already been discussed in the introduction. However, the time limit is based on a discretionary assessment of scope and comparability. Programmes implemented many years ago may be influenced by the conditions of the period and social trends so fundamentally disparate from newer perspectives that they cannot offer guidance for existing programmes. At the same time the volume of literature must be manageable.

The criterion of boys being among programme participants has been selected because men figure most frequently in crime statistics – not least for violent crime, where almost 9 out of 10 offenders are men⁷⁶. Here particular emphasis is on prevention, which seems to pose the biggest challenge.

Furthermore, some of the studies are based on the same parent studies but have a different focus and analyse the data differently. At the same time it is important that prevention programmes can be sufficiently defined so we can learn *what* makes a given difference – and how this can be repeated.

If the mentoring or leisure-time element is only a part of a far broader programme, the effect of the element must be isolated. Otherwise the given study cannot provide stringent evidence of the effect of the types of programme we are examining.

In Chapter 3, moreover, in the section dealing with the assessment of overall study quality, we have presented the quality assessment criteria for a review study.

To fully exploit the knowledge available, we have nonetheless included solid, stringent studies that neither directly nor indirectly measure crime *per se*, have a more varied target group or examine a programme that is otherwise included and fulfils the criteria.

⁷⁶ (Balvig & Kyvsgaard 2011:46)

Table 2. Inclusion criteria used for screening studies

Category	Review inclusion criteria
Text	Empirical research/primary studies and systematic reviews
Text	A study appears only once in the review unless it contains new analyses
Time	The study was published and completed between 1980 and 2011 (included)
Programme	The study examines the effect of a programme
Programme	The programme can be further defined
Programme	The programme mainly includes mentoring and/or after-school elements , or the effect of these is separated from other programme elements in the analysis
Effect	The study measures delinquent behaviour, crime or mediating factors for this
Participant	The programme target group falls mainly into the 12 to 17-year-old category defined as 'youth'
Participant	The programme target group is mainly those at risk of committing crime – as opposed to those who have been convicted
Participant	Boys figure among programme participants – as a minimum on an equal footing with girls
Place	The programme is rooted in the youngsters' local community in different ways
Quality	The study is of medium to high quality based on an overall quality assessment

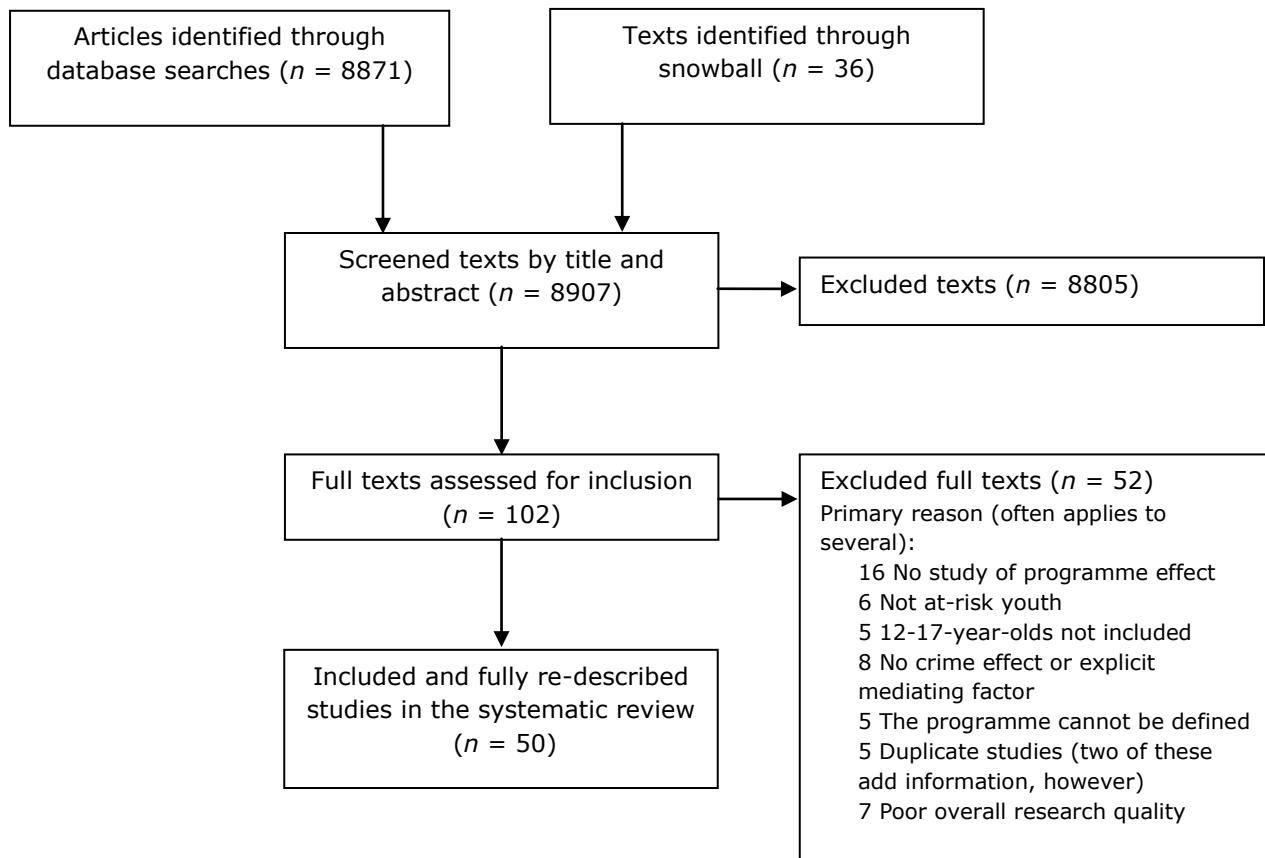
Screening phases and review categories

Finally, on the following page, Figure 2 gives an overall picture of the screening phases.

Here we also see that, in addition to the structured literature search in scientific databases, snowball searches have been carried out. Snowball searches are internet-based searches for relevant programme types, names and references from other studies, for example, that match the focus and aims of the review.

Excluded texts are texts that for one reason or another do not meet the inclusion criteria. The primary reason is given at the full text level of the screening phase. This indicates that most of the many texts that were otherwise subject-relevant were eventually excluded because they failed to focus on 'effect' - mainly because of a lack of focus on a given programme effect (rather than process, for example), but second-most because of a lack of interest in the crime prevention effect. In several cases, the implemented programme types had other aims and were examined for other effects than those being examined in this review.

Figure 2. Flow of studies through the screening phases



For the purpose of the review and in-depth analyses, the included studies have been data extracted in detail in accordance with the relevant categories listed in Appendix 3.

The studies included

Source and text format

The studies finally included in the review possess certain initial characteristics in relation to their search form, origin, type and time, which we will examine in the following.

As shown in Table 3, almost as many studies were found through the internet as through the structured and comprehensive database searches and screenings.

Table 3. The search form of the studies included

Search form	No. of studies	As %
Systematic database search	27	54%
Snowball via the internet on programme, reference, etc.*	23	46%
Total	50	100%

* Including two specific requests to a specific author and a local authority

This seems to suggest that much of the available subject literature is not published in scientific journals, but conversely often in connection with specific consultant services that end in a report on the given programme or project. During the literature search process the decision was made to expand the search to include internet-based searches. This has significantly increased the volume of well-focused material.

However, as you might expect, this also means that a slightly larger proportion of the studies that form the basis of this review originate from public authorities or consultancy houses rather than from university-based research, for example. See Table 4 below. However, all these are of medium or high quality.

Table 4. Study source in relation to the applied search form

Search form	Percentage* (whole figures)	Study source	
		University/educational institution (<i>n</i> = 38)	Consultancy/organisation/authority (<i>n</i> = 12)
Scientific databases (27)		68% (26)	8% (1)
Snowball primarily via the internet (23)		32% (12)	92% (11)

* Rounded up/down to nearest whole figure

Finally, Table 5 below shows which text types are covered by the studies of the review.

Table 5. Reviewed studies according to text type

Text type	No. of studies	As %
Articles	33	66%
Reports	17	34%

Country and year of publication

The studies contained in the review, moreover, are characterised by mainly originating in the USA, but mainly through the use of snowball searches it has been possible to target programmes from other countries – including Denmark. See Table 6 on the next page.

Table 6. Reviewed studies by country of origin

Study country	No. of studies
USA	36*
UK (mostly England & Wales)	7
Denmark	6
Ireland	1

* A study is a systematic review including the USA/English-speaking countries

In relation to the publication year of the studies included in the review, Table 7 below shows an interesting development over the years and up to the present day.

This development can be interpreted in numerous ways using several, potentially decisive factors. Perhaps it reflects more research in general or the spread of same. Perhaps it is an indication of increased funding, use and/or assessment of mentoring and after-school programmes or a growing tendency to carry out solid impact studies and focus on evidence or special crime-related results. We have no sure way of knowing.

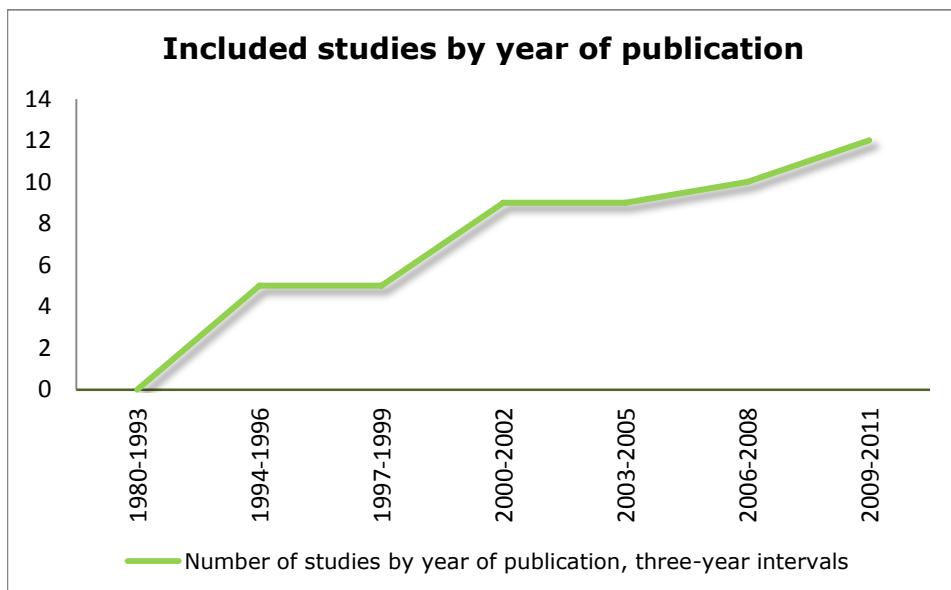
Table 7. Reviewed studies according to year of publication

Period	No. of studies*	As %
1980-1993	0	0
1994-1996	5	10%
1997-1999	5	10%
2000-2002	9	18%
2003-2005	9	18%
2006-2008	10	20%
2009-2011	12	24%

* Some studies have been re-described using several sources – eg, in follow-up reports. Here the publication year serves as the main source of re-description. Furthermore, a text from 2000 is a reissue of a publication from 1995.

The growing trend illustrated in Figure 3 below is certainly pronounced. According to the background information contained in the introductory chapter of the report, an increasing tendency to conduct research into the effect of mentoring programmes in particular appears to be a likely contributing factor.

Figure 3. Development in the number of included studies from 1980 to 2011



Reflections on approach

In addition to an assessment of the predictive power of the review, which is dealt with in the following chapter, the genesis of the systematic review itself should also be considered briefly.

The review's reliability is relatively high because the same person has continuously and consistently managed the inclusion and exclusion criteria in the screening phases and re-described and thus uniformly coded the studies according to the same standard and understanding. Major systematic reviews often suffer from the problem of so-called 'inter-rater reliability'. There is always the risk that different researchers may understand and apply the same criteria in different ways⁷⁷. This may result in instability in the final product.

At the same time, information about all the deliberations, steps and individual studies included in the review is gathered in one place, whereas in other reviews the division of labour may mean that different players are responsible for the development of inclusion and exclusion criteria, literature searches, screening, re-description, review and narrative analysis. Thus valuable information, reservations or understanding may be lost because of the different process elements. The review validity is strengthened by the step-by-step progress as a result of detailed re-descriptions, an overall characterisation of the included studies and the stringent cross-analysis subsequently carried out on this basis. A set of contemporary and consistent interpretations presented by several analysts separately and independently, as is often done, would have further strengthened the validity of this review.

⁷⁷ (Welsh 2007:17)

Methodology and point of departure in brief

The methodology of the review has now been clearly explained. Compared with systematic reviews carried out by major research institutions our methodology has certain strengths – but also certain limitations. The review draws on numerous studies found through targeted searches for specific programmes and references. The majority stem from the USA, and there has been a steady increase in the number of identified mentoring and after-school programmes since the start of the 1990s and up to the present day. A possible criticism of this systematic review is perhaps that it, too, is the result of this trend.

The predictive power of the review

Key elements of the studies reviewed

From an examination of the methodology and inclusion criteria of the studies of the review, it is now time to focus on how the included studies examine the testing of mentoring and after-school programmes in practice. This directly influences the findings of the review and whether, in the final analysis, such findings are reliable.

Following on from this, the aim of this chapter is to go through important design elements of the included studies in order to assess whether it is reasonable and justifiable to draw conclusions on the basis of these studies. It is necessary to consider whether the systematic review can aptly answer the question of whether mentoring and/or after-school programmes for at risk youth work; and, if so, preferably also explain how they are working.

It is not possible to examine everything at the same time. What degree of uncertainty then lies in what is not examined? And what is examined can be emphasised or de-emphasised – or even affirmed – differently depending on the methodology and research designs chosen. Thus most studies necessarily have certain reservations and must be taken with certain reservations.

In the following, for the sake of clarity, we have marked those research elements that provide the most detailed information about given programme's *effect* – and how it is executed in *practice* – in green.

Time perspective

The time perspective of the studies is crucial in determining what we can learn from them.

In Table 8 on the following page, the studies of the review have been classified according to whether they give a snapshot view of the programme, a retrospective view after the programme has been implemented or a prospective view in relation to future implementation. Often the studies include several different views. In this case they are classified according to the potentially most informative, ie, the prospective – as long as the perspective is used methodically. Seen from this perspective it becomes possible for researchers to monitor the programme as it progresses, examine its conditions and reactions from the ground up and ascertain how it is implemented. In the retrospective view, the programme personnel's own documentation, for example, can be used as a substitute, but such documentation may be flawed, uneven and subjective in nature. The majority of the studies reviewed are prospective and thus afford a potentially rich knowledge base.

Table 8. Time perspective of the studies reviewed

Time perspective	No. of studies	I%
Cross-sectional	1	2%
Retrospective	8	16%
Prospective*	41	82%

* Including the included systematic reviews and studies that comprise prospective and retrospective elements

Similarly, it is important to look at when data are methodically measured or collected, in particular whether the studies can and do take into account the situation of the youngsters immediately prior to the start of the programme – corresponding to a baseline measurement.

If you do not know what the youngsters' situation and level was/is on a given scale here, you cannot interpret a subsequent measurement from a development perspective. You would not know whether the youngsters were already doing well or badly in relation to selected parameters *prior to* the programme and thus you would be unable to register a given positive or negative change. Pre- and post-measurement of a given programme is therefore essential.

Not least, it is interesting to see whether a proven change continues *after* the programme has ceased – something that can be determined using a so-called follow-up measurement.

Maintaining the effect is undoubtedly a source of concern for all fixed-duration programmes (Rose & Jones 2007:8). Table 9 shows that only three of the studies in the review can provide information about a long-term effect. However, over half the studies examine conditions before and after the given mentoring and/or after-school programme, thus making it possible to indicate changes over time.

Table 9. Time of measurement of the studies reviewed

Time of measurement	No. of studies	As %*
Not dated or with cross-section	11	22%
Only at end of programme	5	10%
Before and after programme (pre + post)	32	64%
Before and after programme with follow-up	4	8%

* Percentage of the total number of included studies ($n = 50$) as some studies are based on several varying measurements, the total sum of percentages exceeds 100%.

Methodology

The choice of methodology greatly determines the examination scope and types of information that can be derived from the studies.

We have therefore examined the methodology used in the studies contained in the review – whether they employ qualitative or quantitative methods or a mix of both types.

Table 10. Methodology of the studies reviewed*

Methodology	No. of studies	As %
Qualitative method	7	14%
Quantitative method (incl. systematic reviews)	29	58%
Qualitative and quantitative methods	14	28%

* In relation to the part of the study included in the review. A single study distinguishes between the effects of an after-school programme and other programmes only in the qualitative part. Shown here as qualitative.

Quantitative methods refer to quantifiable elements and can be used to gain an overview of extremely vast amounts of data. Large groups of people, for example, can be measured according to predefined parameters, which can then be rigorously applied more easily in other places and at other times so the results are comparable. Quantitative studies examine the prevalence of a given phenomenon, and questions typically take the form of how many, how much or how often. Here it is also possible to repeat measurements of a systematic element over time so that changes become clearer and more standardised, and a given result can be identified.

Quantitative methods are therefore suitable for examining measurable effects, if – as discussed above – measurements are taken before and after. Preferably a long time after, as some changes can take a long time to make themselves felt.

At the same time, such studies benefit from having a control group – or a comparison group similar to the one taking part in the programme. The purpose of the control group is to determine whether the programme makes a difference to participants or whether the change in the youngsters is caused by something else. Many young people grow out of criminal behaviour by themselves, for example. Such a tendency would be measurable in the control group.

Qualitative methods on the other hand are suitable for determining relationships, differences, duality, dynamics and processes involving a high degree of detail, which otherwise may be difficult to obtain, eg, through fixed-answer categories. Such information may take the form of opinions, thoughts, feelings, experienced behaviour and non-disclosures that require greater trust before people share them with others. Qualitative methods are broadly characterised as being methods that can pinpoint intimate, specific, situation- and context-based information. Qualitative methods typically provide answers to how and why questions.

Implementation

When it comes to testing a programme and proving its worth, the most informative approach is to examine several aspects at once in order to answer the questions: 'How much does it help?' and 'How does it help?'

In other words this means examining whether the programme helps to bring about a desired change – an 'effect': 'What does it bring about?' and 'To what extent?' This partly refers to how the programme shows itself to work in practice in a particular target group under the specific circumstances applying there: Does the programme work in certain cases but not in others? What factors may account for a difference? It thus becomes possible to show whether the programme is tangible and realisable, and whether the programme plan was actually implemented in practice as intended – with greater or less success in relation to particular challenges. At the same time it may reveal the challenges that the programme aims to address in future (Maxfield et al. 2003:12). Implementation differences may provide one explanation as to why programmes do not work, but implementation quality is rarely used to explain why a programme works as it does. Similarly, the lack of an evidence-based approach is rarely used to explain a programme's results (Dusenbury et al. in Crank et al. 2010:371).

Together quantitative and qualitative methods can, at best, demonstrate a programme effect and provide an explanation as to how the effect is achieved so that it can be repeated elsewhere. Programmes should therefore be assessed in relation to both their effect and their implementation (Flaxman 1992 i Thompson and Kelly-Vance 2001:230).

Table 11 below shows the percentage share of the studies of the review that explore the implementation of the assessed programme to different degrees:

Table 11. Reviewed studies that explore implementation

Programme implementation	Number of studies	As %
Unexamined	13	26%
Partially examined (e.g. actual attendance, time consumption, etc)	24	48%
Examined* (actual fulfilment of project activities, etc)	13	26%

* Given that the aim of the review is to determine whether the programmes have an effect, studies that only examine process will not be included.

Twenty-six percent of the studies only give information about how the programme was intended to have been implemented in practice while a similar percentage examine the project activities as they are actually put into practice. The majority, however, only take a partial look at implementation. This leaves a lot of unanswered questions about what actually took place and the nature of the specific effect on the programme participants. As a result, the studies may come to a general conclusion about whether this type of programme works, but they rarely go into detail about their impact.

Practicability and quality assessment of the studies

The examination of the studies' times of measurement, methodology and implementation awareness leads to a more general assessment of whether the studies are reliable and can be seen as credible in relation to the aims of the present systematic review. This varies from study to study.

All the studies reviewed are assessed in two ways: they have been rated on a scale that evaluates the applicability of the individual study in contributing to the review focus on the effects of mentoring and after-school programmes for at-risk youth using the Scientific Methods Scale, and they have been assessed more holistically in terms of overall quality: low, medium or high.

Assessment of the studies according to the Scientific Methods Scale

The Scientific Methods Scale (SMS) was devised by Sherman and his colleagues (1997) on the basis of Cook & Campbell's (1979) work and aims to provide a simple tool for communicating findings to researchers, practitioners and politicians. The studies are placed on a scale of 1-5 according to whether they objectively and rigorously measure any effect. The higher the score, the higher the so-called internal validity⁷⁸. Internal validity comes into force when a causal relation – eg, between a prevention programme and the number of criminal acts – can be satisfactorily demonstrated. This implies that the effect occurs after the cause, that there is a correlation between the cause and effect, that they vary in relation to one another, and that alternative explanations (than the tested programme, for example) of a demonstrated change or lack of such can be excluded as much as possible.

In other words, a research review such as this, which deals with the effects of prevention programmes, must take into account the extent to which the included studies can validate positive, negative or no change over time based on their methodology and design. The studies are listed according to the scale whose criteria are shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12. Scientific Methods Scale and the five assessment levels in brief

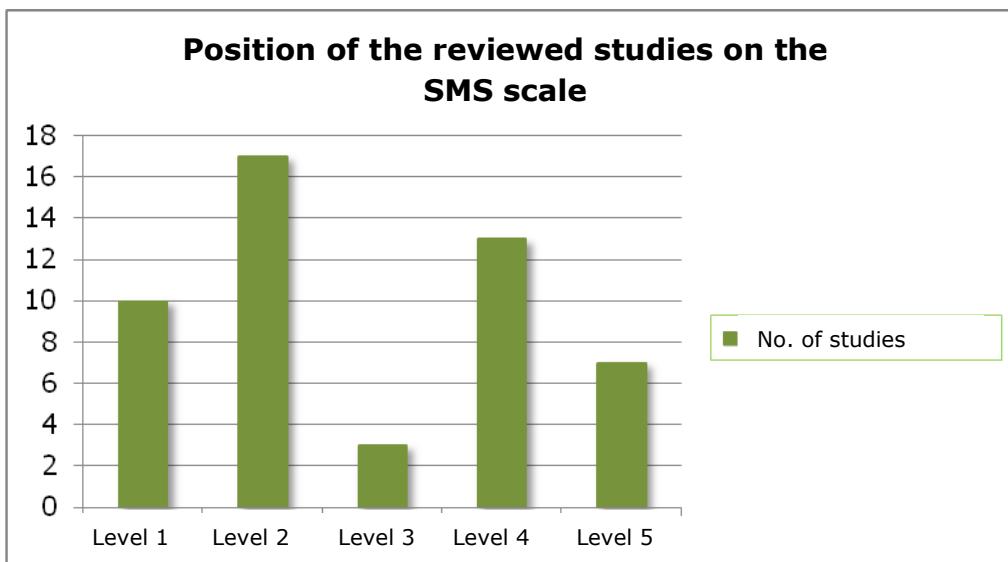
Level	Criteria for Scientific Methods Scale
1	Measures the correlation between a programme and an effect measure at a given time
2	Measures conditions before and after the programme
3	Measures conditions before and after the programme and compares them with a control group not participating in the programme
4	Measures conditions before and after the programme, compares them with a control group and examines (tests) other phenomena that might have bearing on the effects
5	Measures conditions before and after the programme using randomly selected participants and control group

Source: Sherman et al. 1997 in Welsh (2007). *Evidence-Based Crime Prevention: Scientific Basis, Trends, Results and Implications for Canada*, National Crime Prevention Centre, Public Safety Canada

⁷⁸ (Sherman et al. 1997 in Welsh 2007: 12-13)

In analysing the effect of mentoring and after-school programmes, the studies ranked higher on the scale (3, 4 and 5), are given the most weight, as they – particularly when taken as a whole – point more reliably to programmes that work. The lower-ranked (1 and 2) merely point to promising trends. In accordance with this model, the studies of the review are distributed as follows*:

Figure 4. Distribution of the reviewed studies on the SMS scale



* Some studies can be ranked differently on the scale depending on the constituent part being assessed. This table shows the relevant studies' highest and closest ranking. Usually it is 1+2 or a 4+5. They would therefore be ranked as 2 and 5.

Overall, the included studies have an average SMS level of more than 2 – closer to 3. Thus they only just border on what Cook & Campbell (1979) found acceptable, as levels 1 and 2, according to them, were too uncertain and interpretable⁷⁹. This gives a general picture of a field of research where the focus on effect and design is not a consistent element. The geographic-time distribution varies in relation to the SMS scale. Geographically, level 5 contains studies that all originate from the USA. However, the USA accounts for just as many studies in level 1. This also attests to the fact that the majority of the studies of the review stem from the USA, a major player in the research world. The level 4 studies also stem from the USA – a single exception being a study from the UK. Often studies with a high SMS ranking are more cost-intensive, a factor that also limits their prevalence.

The Danish studies included are found on levels 1 and 2. To date, Denmark has no tradition of crime prevention studies of mentoring and leisure-time activities that emphasise a solid research design specifically aimed at impact measurement. A closer look at the studies reveals several reasons for this. First, the evaluator is often involved too late, when a given programme is already underway (Leleur & Pedersen 1996). As previously mentioned in the section dealing with the time perspective of the reviewed studies, a programme's point of departure must be known before it can be tested to subsequently demonstrate a change. However, it is possible to measure the effect of a programme according to types of data

⁷⁹ (Cook & Campbell in Welsh 2007:13). The book Welsh is referring to is *Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings*, 1979.

regularly recorded independently by other parties – the police or schools, for example. However, this opens the door to new discussions about whether these data have been consistently collected and on what basis.

Second, many of the Danish studies focus more specifically on the achievement of a given programme's particular aims. These may involve some kind of measurable effect in the form of a reduction in crime or inappropriate behaviour, stable education or recreational interests – but often it is equally a question of determining whether and how processes work. For example, a study may seek to ascertain whether a given programme establishes contact with the youngsters, whether they can be retained in a programme or whether a particular group of youngsters can be integrated into clubs. Questions like these can also be answered using a more qualitative approach, found at the start of the SMS scale – in much the same way as previously explained in the section on the choice of methodology of the studies of the review.

Over time there is a tendency towards a slightly higher ranking on the SMS scale – ie, towards a slightly more rigorous impact research design – from 2000 and on if we compare the average in the studies reviewed in the latter half of the 1990s (level 2) with those from the early and last years of the first decade of the new millennium (approx. level 3).

The SMS scale must be viewed with the single reservation that it only assesses 'internal validity'. Other forms of 'validity' are rooted in other premises, all of which have the same general aim of ensuring that a study actually examines the purpose for which it is designed. Here, for example, it may prove useful to address the particular form of validity known as external validity. This type of validity refers to how well the effects of a given programme can be generalised or repeated under different conditions, for different people and in different environments. There are also types of validity that deal with the ability to define and measure the effects appropriately using the given measurement tools⁸⁰.

All in all, a closer examination of the ranking of the reviewed studies on the SMS scale indicates that different research traditions apply over time and place in respect of mentoring and leisure-time programmes for at-risk youth. Taken as a whole, the studies of the review are, on average, broadly ranked in the middle of the scale, ie, they provide neither the weakest nor the strongest basis for making predictions about the effect of crime prevention programmes.

Overall assessment of study quality

An assessment is always dependent on the particular assessment criteria used. The Scientific Methods Scale is based on a quantitative, effect-based approach that many of the included studies do not strive for *per se*. Other assessment criteria can therefore rightly be included in order to gain a better overall assessment of the research quality of the reviewed studies relative to their own aims and premises.

For this reason the studies included in the review have also been subjected to a *craftsmanship*, *contextualised* and *relevance-based* assessment in relation to the review focus. Together they provide a holistic assessment and study ranking based on a low, medium and high quality rating. The study may be of a high quality in certain contexts, but in light of its components and the overall aims of the systematic review, it may be ranked low, medium or high quality.

⁸⁰ (Welsh 2007:9-10)

Studies of low quality are excluded from the review and account for seven of the 50 included. As these are not sufficiently transparent and thorough, contain too many uncertainties in relation to their conclusion basis and/or have an aim that conflicts with the focus of the review, they cannot contribute positively to the question of whether and how mentoring and after school programmes for at-risk youth work.

From a *craftsmanship* perspective, credible research should generally live up to the criteria of transparency and credibility. There should be clear reporting of aims, sample/informants, selection of same, methodology, analysis and results corresponding to some of the categories into which all of the studies of the review have been re-described. The author should reflect on the possible strengths and weaknesses – including the reliability and validity – of the selected approaches. This entails taking into consideration different reliability and validity criteria within different research traditions. In other words: Can the approach be described, justified and fulfil the aims of the study, and do the authors form a reliable conclusion on this basis?

The assessment becomes *contextualised* when seen in specific relation to the particular premises of the given study – in terms of both its framework and its specific content. This results in variable, relative assessment criteria that take into account the given possibilities and limitations of the study and its representation. Here, for example, we ask questions relating to the study: in what connection is it being conducted, for and by whom, under whose auspices and with what time and resources means at its disposal. These data, too, have been extracted from the studies of the review.

For example, a short research article cannot provide the same level of detail as a long report. On the other hand, we cannot expect an assessment report designed for a target group or level other than the research world – or whose primary goal perhaps has been to present findings – to explain to the same degree background theories, analysis and comparative aspects in relation to other research, for example.

A study assessment should also be *relevance-based* to ensure that the review is sufficiently clear with regard to its chosen field of focus. We therefore examine the relevance and applicability of the studies' content. This applies to the relevance of the programme type (secondary mentoring and/or leisure-time programmes), location (based in the local community and preferably in a context that is comparable with Danish conditions), target group (at-risk 12-17-year-olds) and not least, its measurement of and ability to measure effect (violence, other crime, delinquent behaviour or a factor that has been shown to influence these factors).

From a general perspective, this means that the three above-mentioned parameters jointly form the basis for an overall quality assessment in which deficiencies in one area can be compensated for by strengths in another. A rare study – perhaps in a Danish, group-related study where the assessment conditions have not been optimal – may still qualify for a medium rating despite its poor impact research design if, for example, it clearly states its reservations in its reporting. On the other hand, a study with a slightly deviant target group can compensate for this by virtue of a rigorous approach and reliable results.

The aim is to bring the useful knowledge that *can be* extracted to light while simultaneously remaining true to the focus and aims of the review. Thus relevant and reasonable studies are assessed as medium (M), which is a minimum requirement for inclusion and for forming the basis of narrative synthesis knowledge. Studies of a high quality (H), on the other hand, give the best possible indication of which mentoring and after-school programmes in the review work.

Table 13 provides an overview of the quality and predictive power of the studies of the review.

Table 13. Overall quality assessment of the reviewed studies *

Quality and predictive power	No. of studies	As %
Low (L) (excluded)	7	-
Medium (M) (included in the review)	40	80%
High (H) (included in the review)	10	20%

* Information about the ranking of the individual studies, the reason for this ranking and any further subclassification can be obtained from The Danish Crime Prevention Council/the author.

The medium (M) category contains by far the most studies. For the purposes of gaining an overview, the three-way classification works well, but the medium category could be further subdivided here, as we are more dealing with a quality continuum rather than individual points.

Twenty percent of the included studies of the review are of high (H) quality and thus have a significant, reliable predictive power in relation to the aims and focus of the review. This is a substantial proportion in relation to research in general into crime prevention through mentoring and after-school programmes. Having said this, it is clear that the majority of the studies are merely of reasonable and acceptable quality.

The aim of the review to determine the effects of mentoring and after-school programmes for at-risk youth is reflected in the fact that all 10 (H) studies are ranked as 4 or 5 on the previously mentioned Scientific Methods Scale, which seeks to ensure that reliable conclusions about a given programme's effect can be drawn.

In addition to having a solid impact research design, the 10 studies also possess several key quality-related characteristics. Several triangulate their data sources or data collection methods. This means that the studies draw on data from several sources simultaneously – eg, the youngsters, their parents, programme staff, teachers and school and crime registers. It thus becomes possible to explore whether or not all the data sources share the same view or document the same development.

Similarly, different methods of collecting data uncover aspects which a stand-alone method would not uncover by itself. A mentor can state that he/she has good relations with the youngster in question, while direct participant observation might point to the contrary. A club member of staff, for example, might say something different in private from in an in-depth interview outside the workplace – or complete an anonymous questionnaire differently from the way he/she would in a focus group context together with colleagues.

Furthermore, some of the highest-ranked studies actually examined programme implementation and programme effect at the same time. This makes it possible to view the two in relation to each other, a rare advantage when we consider that studies in the area often have either an *effect* or a *process* focus.

Finally, they are extremely thorough, transparent and self-reflective while examining alternative explanations of the research findings.

All in all, these factors serve to clarify the findings of the studies and strengthen their credibility. Thus they are a more reliable indicator in the search for tangible proof of the effect of mentoring and after-school programmes.

Given the review of time perspective, methodology, impact design and the holistic assessment, the studies of the review can generally be said to give a qualified answer to the review question.

Chapter 4

Characteristics of the reviewed programmes

We will now take a closer look at the overall focus of the reviewed studies, listing their general characteristics in order to clarify their relevance and significance in relation to the specific focus, goals and conclusions of our review. They determine the topics that our review can address and the observations it can make. The studies provide the framework for selecting data on which a subsequent analysis of effective mentoring and after-school programmes is based.

The next chapter will deal with more detailed aspects such as the specific theories behind prevention methods and approaches, how they are thought to work, and how they actually do work in practice under specific conditions. The chapter includes in-depth analyses of the various programme approaches considered separately as mentoring, after-school and combined mentoring & after-school programmes. Chapter 5 looks in detail at any conspicuous trends revealed by our review *within* the specific programme types, the aim being to clarify, *whether* the programmes work and, if so, *for whom, where, when, how long, how and why*.

Initially, the aim is to determine in which form and to what extent the studies in this review generally address:

- **Prevention programmes** (goals, types of programme, programme elements and the use of volunteers)
- **Young people** (gender, age, degree of risk) and their **change or outcomes** (measured effects)
- **Location** (rural or urban, local community, sites)

Prevention programmes

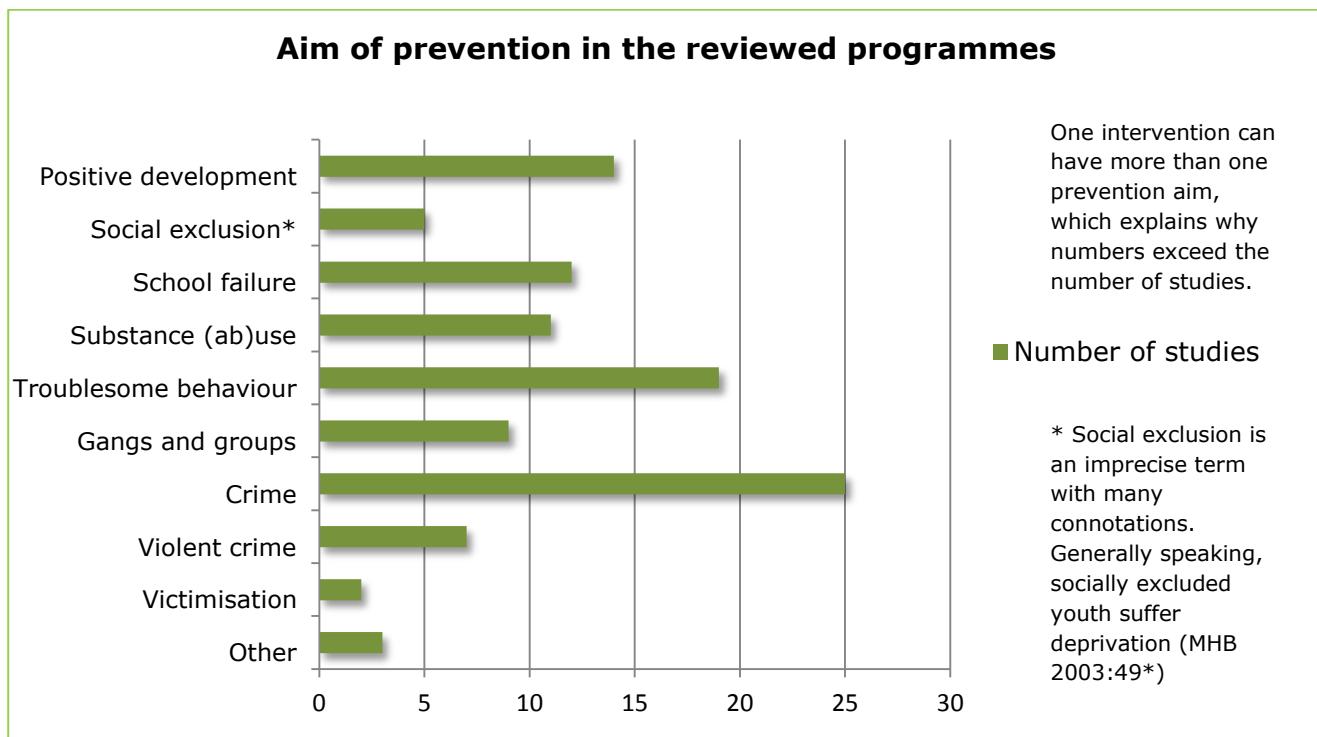
Prevention goals

First, we need to identify the prevention goals mentioned in the reviewed studies, and the extent to which the different goals are relevant in the various programmes.

For this purpose, we have collected data from all mentoring and after-school studies and illustrated the occurrence of such goals in Figure 5 below. The figure shows the goals in the form of the prevention of violence, crime, gangs or gang-related behaviour, delinquent behaviour, social exclusion, school dropout, substance abuse and victimisation. Finally, some of the programmes are aimed at positive youth development rather than the prevention of a specific problem.

As will be seen, the reviewed mentoring and/or leisure-time programmes often turn out to have several concurrent goals.

Figure 5. Prevention goals in the reviewed programmes



The category 'troublesome behaviour' also covers the terms 'deviant', 'disturbing', 'negative', 'problem', 'risky', 'unacceptable' and 'anti-social' behaviour. 'Substance' covers drugs and alcohol. 'School failure' is a collective term defining poor performance, academic problems, dropping out or being expelled from school. 'Other' covers various phenomena not found generally in other studies, such as the prevention of unemployment, self-harm, family problems or problems in the local community, and one study that did not specify 'risk' in more detail.

We emphasise that Figure 5 refers to the prevention goals stated in the studies themselves and the particular risks attaching to the target groups defined in the prevention programmes. The categories thus simply summarise the goals stated in the studies. If the study authors or programme staff were to list all the factors they felt might help to prevent risks, the list would probably be much longer. By way of example, some programmes are designed to prevent gangs – but this often implies a wish to seek to prevent or reduce crime or drug use, etc. Likewise, an initiative designed to prevent social exclusion may in the long run also prevent a young person from succumbing to crime.

Following on from this, the mentoring and after-school programmes referred to in the reviewed studies target slightly more than two prevention goals on average. Some programmes include as many as four prevention goals – eg, the extensive Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) (OJJPD 1998), which includes a wide variety of mentoring projects. It aims at preventing crime, violence, gangs and school dropout. It suggests that prevention takes place on a continuum and that a single initiative can encompass – and transform – several problems.

As the review shifted its focus from initiatives that prevent violence to initiatives embracing a variety of other, broader problems, this multi-problem approach to prevention strategies

became clearer – not least because: '*Crime prevention is defined not by intentions or methods, but by results*', as Lawrence W. Sherman once wrote⁸¹.

Alongside its problem- and risk-oriented prevention focus, the JUMP programme also embraces a *positive youth development focus*. 'Positive youth development' is a recurring theme in slightly more than a fourth of the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes. A typical feature of such programmes is the emphasis on 'protective factors', rather than a mere focus on 'risk factors'. Positive youth development seeks to '*increase the competency of all youth to meet the challenges of growing up*' (Witt & Crompton in Nichols 2004:178). The primary focus is on strengthening the good or positive attributes of youth rather than on reducing their flaws or shortcomings. According to the rationale of the programmes, the former will, however, also lead to the latter, and the types of initiatives using this approach span from pure leisure-time or mentoring programmes to a combination of both (Allen et al. 2011; Apsler et al. 2006; Higginbotham et al. 2006; Brady et al. 2005; Tierney et al. 2000; Baker et al. 1995).

Generally speaking, the vast majority of programmes build on prevention approaches based on a combination of protective factors and risk factors – whether or not they specifically refer to positive youth development as a concept. Prevention programmes often seek to bolster social, emotional, academic and personal skills (Cross et al. 2010; Stewart et al. 2009; Berry et al. 2009; Sørensen 2008; CRG 2006; Crank et al. 2003; Brady et al. 2005; de Anda 2001).

On the whole, it is clear that mentoring and leisure-time programmes can be used for a variety of purposes, including preventing or intervening in deviant behaviour by gangs or reducing violence or substance abuse. However, mentoring and leisure-time programmes are also more generally targeted at including youth who are losing touch with their peers or the school system.

Nonetheless, most of the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes are designed to prevent crime and delinquent behaviour in children and young adults. Many programmes are also characterised by a positive youth development approach that seeks to promote such youths' potential and resources rather than necessarily desiring to define or focus on which particular potential problems the programme is attempting to prevent.

Programme types – mentoring and/or leisure time activities

The criterion for the studies included in our review is that they must deal with mentoring and/or leisure-time activities. However, neither the authors nor the programmes they study seem to use a consistent or standard definition of a mentoring or a leisure-time programme.

To create an overview of the types of programmes included in our review, the various programmes have been categorised as either a mentoring or a leisure-time programme or a combination of the two. Defining the various programmes as a mentoring, a leisure-time or a combined programme has been an iterative process that is a prerequisite for any consistent categorisation. Typically a study focuses on either a mentoring or a leisure-time approach. Occasionally, however, such programmes are simple referred to by their programme or project names. On the other hand, an initiative called a mentoring programme may in practice very well embrace both group activities and excursions with adults and young people other than the mentor and mentee (youth in mentoring scheme). Mentoring frequently takes place after

⁸¹ (Sherman et al. 1997)

school during the youth's leisure-time – and if the programme includes more than a one-on-one approach, the 'mentoring' and 'leisure-time' concepts merge.

After a scrutiny of the components of the reviewed mentoring and/or leisure-time programmes and the classic programme definitions used in research, such programmes may be split up into three broad definitions of organised efforts:

Mentoring: A relationship, often longer-term, with a specific and supportive adult or older person

Leisure-time activities: Recurring activities/presence with young people and/or adults during leisure⁸²

Mentoring & leisure-time: Embraces elements of both mentoring and leisure-time programmes

This categorisation is also based on the theoretical rationales of the various programmes – is their focus for instance on creating a relationship with a *specific* adult? Or is the emphasis on the processes and activities in which young people are involved in their spare time? The definition into three categories streamlines the grouping of the reviewed programmes, provides an overview and enables navigation in the versatility and comparability identified in the mentoring and leisure-time initiatives included in our review.

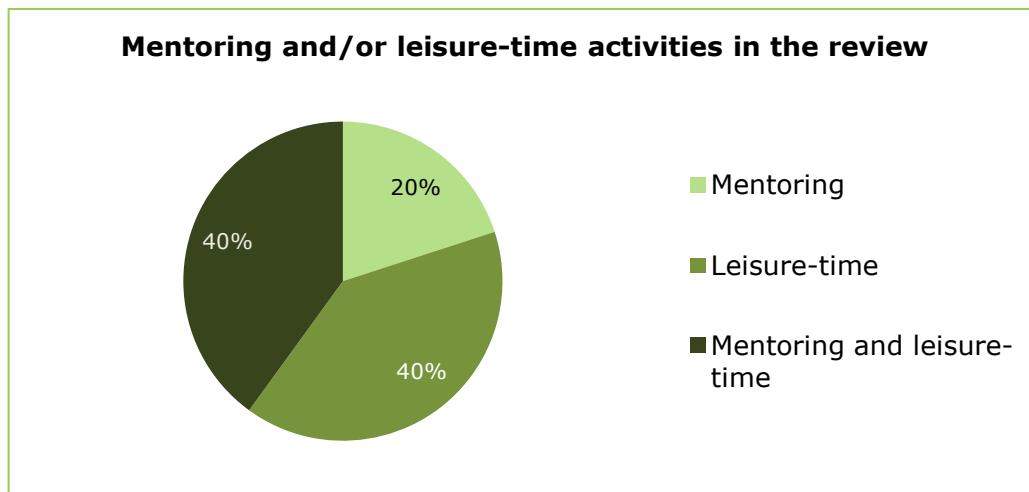
By way of example, a mentoring scheme is usually a one-on-one relationship, but the programmes studied pinpoint a good many programmes using supportive and motivating adults attached to a group of young people. However, it is crucial to emphasise the regular, special mentoring relationship between specific persons – because relationship and confidence building is at the very core of leisure-time initiatives, for instance in clubs. However, club-based relationships do not have the same predefined 'exclusivity'. There are also mentoring programmes where other older youth act as mentors, i.e., there is an alternative to the 'adult' mentor.

If a mentor, 'bonus pater', support contact person or even a group therapist (many players can have the *role* of mentor if not the name) and the young person(s) with whom he or she is purposely working act in a forum involving activities with others (such as mentors, young people, programme staff), or share a special leisure-time activity, such programmes will also be characterised as leisure-time activities.

This categorisation and approach show that many programmes and projects do in fact use a combination of both elements – even if they do not actually mention this. Forty percent of the studies included are leisure-time programmes, 40% are combined mentoring and leisure-time programmes, and 20% are mentoring programmes without any other leisure time activities than those pursued by the mentee and mentor when they meet. See the figure below.

⁸² At least once a month. A few of the reviewed mentoring programmes embrace planned group activities with mentors and mentees meeting only every other month or once every three months. This is thought to be too infrequent to be defined as a 'leisure-time programme', and, in some cases, such activities are not implemented (Brady 2005).

Figure 6. Percentage of mentoring and/or leisure-time programmes included in the review



In our in-depth analysis of the reviewed programmes and their effectiveness, we will focus on the three types of initiatives: mentoring, leisure-time and combined mentoring & leisure-time programmes. Programmes often resemble each other or overlap, and they may also mutually expand the space in which action and understanding can take place, as seen in Chapter 5.

Programme elements – individual or combined

The next step in a description of the mentoring and leisure-time programmes for the youth at risk identified by our systematic review is to provide an outline of the elements embraced by the particular programmes – and the scope of such elements.

Most programmes do not involve one, single youth approach, but, as mentioned above, a combination of the elements included in mentoring and leisure-time programmes. The initiatives will be further classified by sorting according to the types of elements embodied in the various programmes.

As with the categorisation of programme types, we have been through a similar dynamic process of constructing a meaningful and reliable overview of the elements contained in the reviewed programmes. Which elements can be included in one category – and how do we avoid overlaps? Several elements may coexist meaningfully or may mutually replace each other – but need not do so. If they coexist, they are shown as two separate elements to ensure that all elements are properly included.

By way of example, a club can offer – and often does offer – special activities, but it may also just be a place where young people hang out. Participants can receive some form of tutoring in their spare time without this necessarily being help with homework. Or they can join a leisure-time activity without it necessarily being a sport activity – music or drawing, for instance – or involving them in an excursion for one or more days. As part of its initiatives, a club may be involved in an active outreach programme for recruiting youth on the street, etc, but an active outreach initiative may not necessarily be part of the particular programme and so forth.

However, we emphasise that any leisure-time activity that a mentor and mentee always pursue together in some form will *not* be noted separately as a 'leisure-time activity' – unless,

as mentioned previously, such activity is a recurring separate leisure-time activity pursued by the mentor and his or her mentee (the dyad) *together* with other young people.

In the process, the following programme elements have been identified as goal-oriented elements employed in their own right – even if, as will be seen in Table 14 below, they will often coexist with other elements and may resemble each other:

Table 14. Identified, central elements in the reviewed prevention programmes

Identified programme elements		
Mentoring (mentor)	Sports (sport)	Club/drop-in centres (club)
Excursion (1 day) (excur.)	Spare time activity (excl. sport) (activ.)	Tutoring/ thematic discussions (tutor)
Stay (2 or more days)	Outreach (outreach)	Homework/academic support (acad.)
Job guidance (job)	Community service (comm.)	Parental involvement (parent)

A further explanation of some elements may be required. Spare time activities are activities other than sports – such as drama, music, computer games or creative pursuits. An element with an explicit learning-oriented goal will be classified both as 'activity' and as 'tutoring' (such as teaching a creative subject or solving a conflict in an outdoor activity). This includes group sessions and workshops dealing with subjects such as manhood, drug use or education. After School Programs, ASPs, which are American programmes for youth after school, have clear tutoring elements including offers of creative activities. Homework or academic support is specifically targeted at the participant's academic performance. Outreach or recruitment is used as a way to attract youth to a programme which might be in a club or some other form of initiatives. It is also used to reach youth at risk.

Finally, a programme may include parental involvement, which may cover several elements – parent-teacher conferences, evening arrangements with mentees, programme staff and parents or excursions with mentors and mentees with parents assisting as volunteers.

An () in Table 15 indicates a planned programme element that was not implemented in practice. This may in fact also apply to some of the other X's, and a focus on actual implementation should therefore be essential.

To get an impression of the versatility of the studied and reviewed programmes, there must be an indication of the elements used by the various programmes either individually or combined⁸³. Consequently, all the reviewed and studied programmes are shown in Table 15. The table is a clear – and complex – illustration that a programme is not just 'one' programme. After-school and/or mentoring programmes may include many varied initiatives without any fixed form or content, but with a palette of recurring elements of which a particular programme may use one or more.

Practitioners in this field know about and probably use many of these elements. In Chapter 5, we will consider in more detail the difference a mentoring and/or leisure-time programme may have on the youth it serves.

⁸³ See Chapter 6 for an overview of individually reviewed programmes. Some are dealt with by two or more authors.

Table 15. Overview of programme elements included in this review

Primary author	Mentor	Sport	Club	Excur.	Activ.	Tutor	Stay	Outreach	Acad.	Comm.	Job	Parent
Allen		X			X	X	X					
Anderson-B.		X	X		X							
Apsler	X					X						
Arbreton		X	X		X	(X)		X	X		X	
Baker	X	X	X	X	X	(X)		X			(X)	
Berry	X	X					X	X				
Bowey					X	X	X					X
Brady	X											
Tolan	X											
Zief		X			X	X			X			
Crank		X			X							
CRG		X		X	X	X			X		X	
Cross 2009		X			X	X				X		
Cross 2010		X		X	X	X				X		
Davis				X	X	X						
de Anda	X	X		X	X							
DeCarlo	X				X	X						
Korte Snor	X											X
Derezotes	X	X				X						
Durlak			X			X						
Flewelling	X			X		X	X	X		X		X
Gottfredson		X			X	X			X			
Grossman	X											
Hanlon 2009	X			X		X		X	X			X
Hanlon 2002	X			X		X			X			X
Harris		X			X	X						
Herrera	X				X							
Higginboth.	X	X	X	X	X	X						X
Hritz	X					X						
Keating	X			X	X	X				X		
Langager		X	X		X							
Leleur	X	X		X	X	X	X	X				
Maxfield	X	X		X	X	(X)				(X)		
Mehlbye	X		X	X	X				X			
MHB		X			X	X			X			
Nichols		X							X			
OJJDP	X											
Rapp-Pagl.	X				X	X						
Respress	X				X	X						
Rogers	X	X				X						
Rorie		X			X	X			X			
Rose	X											
Royse	X			X	X							
Schinke		X		X	X	X			X			X
Stewart	X				X	X						
Sørensen T		X	X	X	X		X		X			X
Sørensen TH	X	X	X	X	X		X					X
Thompson	X											
Thurman		X	X		X						X	
Tierney	X											
Total	30	26	10	17	32	32	7	8	11	3	4	9

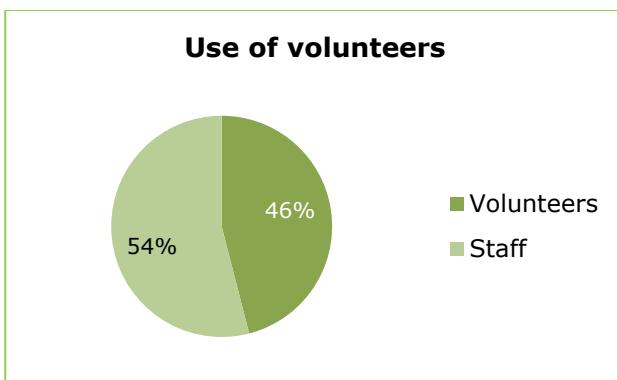
Manpower – use of volunteers

A final and general characteristic of the mentoring and leisure-time programmes included in this review is their various use of volunteers, who are involved in almost half the programmes in some form or other. In the most cases, volunteers are used in connection with mentoring or combined mentoring and leisure-time initiatives. The global mentoring programme Big Brothers Big Sisters, which relies heavily on volunteer mentors, boosts the percentage as five of the reviewed studies have a BBBS programme as their focus.

Table 16. Percentage of reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes using volunteers

Volunteers	No. of programmes	As %
Yes	23	46 %
No	27	54 %

Figure 7. Use of volunteers in the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes



In other words, we definitely need to consider the implications of involving volunteers if similar programmes are to be launched in future. According to our findings, the use of volunteers may have benefits as well as drawbacks. Some of these benefits and drawbacks apply to both mentoring and leisure-time programmes – whereas other benefits and drawbacks only apply to one or other type of programme. Chapter 5 reviews the most relevant experience gained from the studies.

Youth and their changes

Youth – gender, age and degree of risk

We will now define the target groups of the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes.

Successful prevention programmes modify and match a particular initiative according to the needs of the targeted youth (McGuire in Brady et al. 2009). In the following, we will show whether the reviewed studies did indeed reach the target group intended according to the

inclusion criteria, and shed light on the groups of youth about which the review can actually make observations.

Our review focuses primarily on boys as they weigh more heavily in juvenile crime statistics and because our findings suggest that there are different paths to prevention for girls and for boys. When screening the reviewed mentoring and after-school studies, we have therefore only included programmes representing boys to the same extent as or more than girls.

Table 17 below shows the distribution by gender in the programmes included in our review. Most studies describe gender distribution as realised in the programme – rather than planned.

Table 17. Target groups in the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes by gender

Gender	No.	As %
Boys (or almost exclusively)	12	24 %
Boys and girls	38	76 %

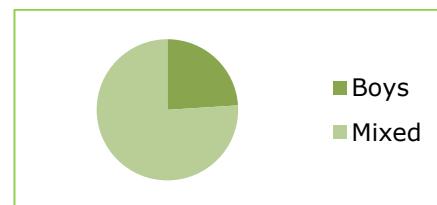


Figure 8. Breakdown by gender

The above table reveals that a criterion of solely targeting boys would have precluded most of the studies in our review, and the assumption is therefore that mentoring and leisure-time programmes for youth at risk are aimed generally at both boys and girls.

Four of the 12 programmes for boys state that most of their participants are boys. Seven studies do not specify gender, the assumption here being that both boys and girls may participate. Finally, and interestingly, there is a Big Brothers Big Sisters Ireland programme where most mentors are assigned to girls, 49, although the need for a mentor was clearly higher for boys. The Irish programme only matched 12 pairs, because it proved harder to find male volunteers than female volunteers. Mentoring programmes in general seek to match pairs by gender (Brady et al. 2005:35).

Overall, the reviewed programmes aimed only at boys are characterised by having a mentoring element.

The primarily mixed gender distribution in the mentoring and leisure-time programmes means that our review includes information on programme effects also aimed at girls. Apart from the 12 targeted studies, how much we can conclude specifically about boys depends on the degree to which the studies differentiate between boys and girls in their approach, analysis and findings.

Basically, our review has concentrated on programmes for youth from 12 to 17 years. By extracting data from the studies about age, we see that the mentoring and leisure-time programmes have a large number of age intervals. As far as possible data are collected on the basis of the actual age of the participants when they were involved in the programme, which may vary from the age groups originally intended.

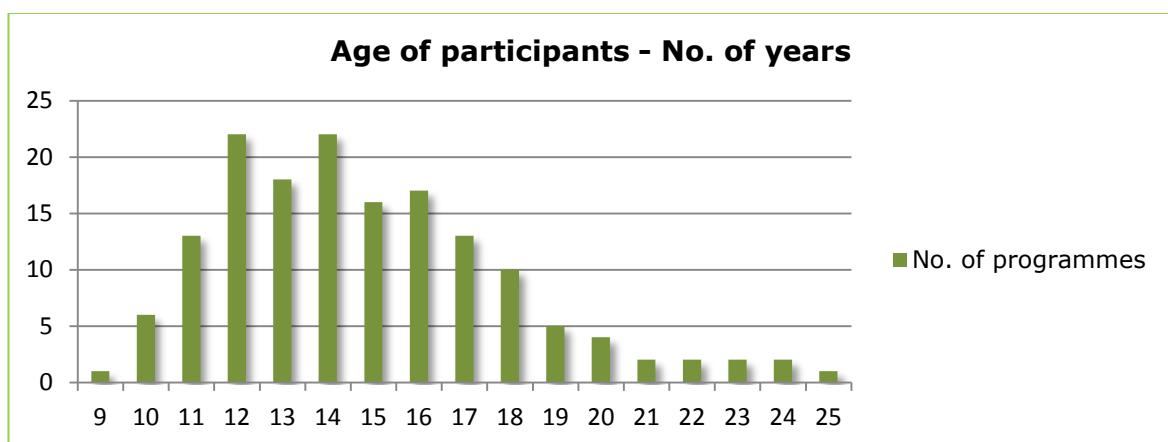
Table 18 clearly illustrates that the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes show no distinct tendency to address a specific age group of youth. On the contrary, the review has registered as many as 30 different target groups in terms of age.

Table 18. Age spans in the target groups of the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes

Age intervals for participants in the reviewed programmes					
5-18	9-17	10-16	11-12	13-20	14-16
5-22	10-25	10-14	12	13-18	14-24
8-19	10-19	10-12	12-18	13-16	15-18
9-14	10-18	11-15	12-16	13-15	15-17
9-16	10-17	11-14	13	14-17	16-20

In addition to the age span of participants, the studies frequently identify the age of *most* participants – or their average age. This provides a more realistic picture of the group on which the programmes were tested, whereas Table 18 to a higher degree shows the age groups the programmes were thought to include generally.

Figure 9. Participants' primary age in the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes



The overview above reflects the average ages of programme participants. If this information was not available, we have stated an interval – eg, the originally intended age interval for the participants in the particular programme – with one registration for each age level in the particular interval.

The figures show that most participants in the mentoring and leisure-time programmes are generally aged 12 to 14, but most programmes are in fact aimed at 12 to 16 year-olds. This group matches the youth group that we have wanted to focus on in our review. Although most participants are in the intended age interval, the above age table shows that many initiatives seek to embrace a larger age interval (10-18 years), with some programmes targeting a younger interval (10-14 years) and some an older interval (15-18 years).

As a final element concerning the characteristics of the youth involved, we will take a closer look at the degree of 'risk', the aim being to examine whether the target groups in the reviewed programmes indeed match both the particular youth groups at risk and the secondary prevention approach about which our review essentially wanted to gather information.

Like the other sub-elements of the studies reviewed, in this context also we can only consider the aspects about which the particular studies have gathered information and/or which their authors have chosen to describe or not.

In the studies, the term 'risk' is not used consistently nor does it deal with the same aspects, and it can be hard to pinpoint what an author means by youth 'at risk' or 'at great risk' compared with similar terms used by other authors to describe youth and their situation. Some authors do not use the term 'at risk' (hyphenated when used in front of a noun) at all, but describe some young people who are 'at risk' given their behaviour or environment, if the definitions of risk are put together and used across the studies.

The authors' characterisation of youth was extracted from the studies in the re-description phase of our review in terms of any 'risk' designation used as well as the underlying explanations and characteristics. On this basis, we have constructed a broad classification model comprising ways of considering the participants in the reviewed mentoring and after-school programmes. If participants belong to two or more risk categories, they are registered under all such categories.

We emphasise that this classification is viewed from the researchers' or the professionals' point of view and is not necessarily a view shared by the young participants themselves. We therefore need to consider how youth in a target group are or are not to be comprised or represented by this categorisation (Sørensen & Dam 2000). More recent Danish initiatives such as the mentoring and leisure-time programme HardWork uses a goal-oriented narrative approach to rewrite the history of participants in positive terms while seeking to make mentees and their surroundings – and even the programme staff – believe that change is possible (Sørensen 2008:19). In other words, there seems to be a potential 'risk' in the mere way we talk about youth.

Generally speaking, 'at-risk' youth are on a *continuum* spanning from:

All youth (presumably law-abiding) including youth who have **certain characteristics** (risks) personally or in their environment, which are worrying to themselves or others, and those who are **involved in crime** and who might possibly end up being **convicted of various crimes**.

Participants in the reviewed studies are grouped as follows:

Table 19. Grouping of programme participants on a 'risk' continuum

Participants' degree of risk	No. of studies	As %
All youth (without special focus)	1	2 %
Youth 'at risk' (delinquent behaviour personally or in their environment)	50	100 %
Youth with criminal behaviour	19	38 %
Youth convicted of crime	5	10 %

To clarify what is meant by the term 'risk' in the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes, we provide some definitions and examples below.

Youth 'at risk'

May be defined as '*Young people in need of extra support or whose behaviour or social environment are cause for concern for themselves or others*' (Brady et al. 2005:29).

In a broader definition, risk may be explained as '*a person facing special challenges that make him or her vulnerable to adversity in life*' (Crank et al. 2003:342).

A juvenile delinquency version of 'risk' is:

'*At-risk is defined as the presence of individual or ecological characteristics that increase the probability of delinquency in later adolescence or adulthood*' (Tolan et al. 2008:4).

'Risk' can be used about everything from living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood to performing poorly at school or behaving in a particular way such as drinking alcohol, having sex prematurely or using drugs.

Common terms used in the reviewed studies about the characteristics of youth and their environment that increase the risk of succumbing to crime are:

Individual characteristics

- Social, personal or emotional problems – including low self-esteem
- Delinquent behaviour, drug use and vandalism

The young person's environment – family, school, friends and local community

- Family with alcohol abuse, violence, single-parent family (female), death, divorce, abuse
- Difficulties at school failure, poor grades, truancy, dropping out or being expelled
- Friends with delinquent behaviour and street lifestyle
- Urban areas with crime, unemployment or low income

As our review focuses on community-based programmes⁸⁴, it naturally includes many studies where the risk is thought to be inherent in the environment.

The presence of one or more of the above characteristics as mentioned in the introduction is *not tantamount to saying that crime will be committed, but indicates that probabilities exist. The more factors coincide, the higher the probability is thought to be* (Brady et al. 2005:22). Protective factors and the resilience of the particular youth can counteract the risks.

Figure 10 below illustrates the risk continuum. It shows that mentoring and leisure-time programmes often target a broader and more comprehensive group than just youth at risk. However, it also shows that, as intended, the screening process included studies that all targeted youth at risk.

The figure includes studies of interventions that reach further than just the initial degree of risk and involve criminal behaviour and convictions. Indeed, it reveals that more than one-third of the mentoring and after-school interventions include youth who actually do succumb to crime in one form or another.

In almost half the instances in which both youth at risk and youth who have succumbed to crime are the intended target groups, the intervention is aimed specifically at a special group

⁸⁴ See related descriptions in the introductory section on community-based programmes.

of youth or gangs, or its efficacy is measured in terms of gangs, or the intervention programme takes place in neighbourhoods with problem youth. Almost 50% is a high proportion compared with the handful of the reviewed studies that actually do specifically target gangs or groups of young people.

The explanation may be that some of the American programmes approach special initiatives from two different perspectives, one aimed at youth at risk of joining a gang (prevention), and the other at those who are already gang members (intervention) and thus should be coaxed out of gangs.

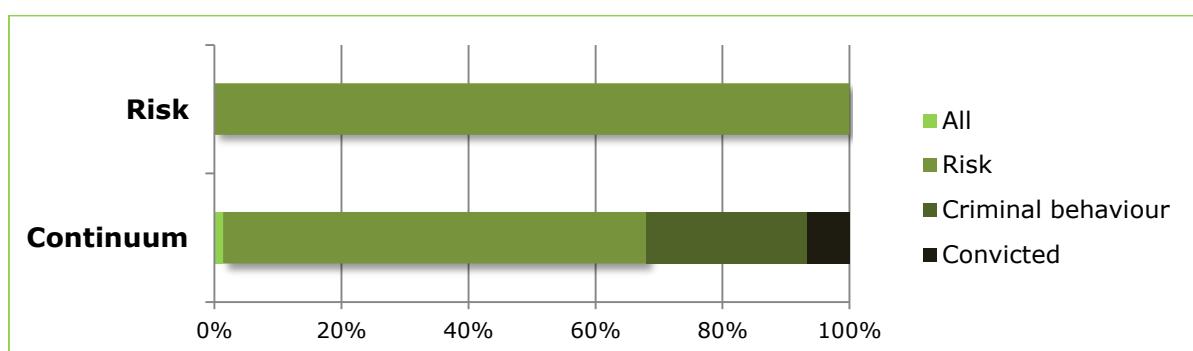
This applies, for instance, to the club organisation Boys and Girls Clubs of America's special initiatives 'Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach' (GPTTO) and 'Gang Intervention Through Targeted Outreach' (GITTO) (Arbreton & McClanahan 2002). In brief, the programmes attempt to attract youth through recreational pursuits and to support them in their interests and needs through education and career development, etc.

The goal of prevention is to avoid labelling the young people while attempting to mainstream them so that they can be part of normal club activities. Intervention targeting gang members is often more intense and is carried out away from daily club activities and outside normal club hours in close collaboration with other practitioners such as police and school staff (Arbreton & McClalahan 2002). Another similar leisure-time initiative, 'The Neutral Zone', also has both gang prevention and intervention as its goal and reaches out to at-risk youth and current gang members (Thurman et al. 1996).

The Danish 'Dogsled Project' with a gang-like group from Amager also operates with both youth at risk and young offenders (Leleur & Pedersen 1996). This may reflect a need to work with young offenders and their friends, because having friends who have committed crimes is a risk factor in itself. Finally, it may also simply be a question of analytical differentiation since it can be impossible to know a young person's actions, especially from an outsider's viewpoint. A young person's position on the spectrum is not fixed anyway, and is likely to shift backwards and forwards; hence researchers' problems of defining 'when a person is no longer criminal'.

The tenth of the reviewed secondary programmes embracing youth who have been convicted of crime all come from the USA, as do most of the reviewed studies. The USA does indeed have far more serious crime and much more crime than Denmark, for instance. Generally, the offences are not specified by type or severity, but many of the programmes characteristically take place in urban neighbourhoods with high crime rates and/or poverty.

Figure 10. Continuum of ongoing youth risks in the reviewed studies



Overall, participants in the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes are thought to have special risk factors in their local community that increase their likelihood of ending up in crime. They are often both boys and girls generally between the ages of 12 and 17.

Effects – measured change

Having considered the young participants' position on the risk spectrum when joining the mentoring and leisure-time initiatives, we now need to clarify the change or outcome that the studies aim to measure. The two are interconnected. First, the situations the participants are in and the needs they are thought to have, and, second, a prevention programme that matches such situations and needs. Our review will therefore consider which types of programme match which types of youth. We will now focus on how to deduce the effects of the various programmes. The examined changes may be seen as the characteristics that the community, the programme staff, researchers, etc, find it relevant to study or deem desirable for the young people or for others.

It is important to bear in mind that the effects determine the scope of knowledge gained. We cannot really know about any other changes than those focused on in a particular study. Therefore, changes may exist – or may not. As in Chapter 3 on the predictive power of the review, we emphasise that investigating a given effect is one thing, but whether the design and approach of the study enables this to be done reliably is quite another. Consequently, we need to review and assess the design, method and general quality of a study before any studied changes can generate progress in terms of accumulating knowledge.

To form an overview of the effects in focus in the reviewed studies, we have grouped the effects in common categories shown in table 20. Creating categories that embrace all aspects while retaining their characteristics has been another iterative process. As was the case with programme content, several effect categories may apply. We can only address the effects that the studies describe, even if they fail to do so uniformly.

Drug use is an example of a common category. Depending on the particular study drug use may be a theme in itself, but it may also imply crime, for instance, if use of the particular drug is illegal in the country in question, or in the case of possession with intent to supply.

'Behaviour' might also be affected by drugs, but need not be so. These categories are shown separately as they need not be interlinked.

Generally speaking, many of the sorts of changes or outcomes measured are reflected in many of the mentoring and leisure-time programmes. Table 21 illustrates the effect focus of the various programmes. The studies may have looked into other aspects than effect – e.g. implementation processes. Chapter 5 deals with any major problems or solutions pinpointed.

Table 20. Categorisation of effect measures in the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time studies

Categories of effect measures	
Attitude (attitude, value, knowledge, skills)	Behaviour (deviant, externalised, etc)
Mental well-being (self-esteem, self-confidence, etc)	Relations (family, friends, mentor, etc)
Employment/job (including after-school jobs)	School (performance, attendance, passing exams, etc)
Activities (during spare time)	Substance (use, opinion etc)
Crime (reported differently)	Short-term goal:
<i>Satisfaction with programme</i>	<i>Attracting/retaining youth</i>

Table 21. Overview of effects measured in the reviewed mentor and leisure-time studies

Primary author	Att.	Behav.	Ment.	Relat.	Job	School	Activ.	Subst.	Crim.	Satisfy	Attract
Allen	X									X	
Anderson-B.						X		X		X	
Apsler	X	X				X		X		X	
Arbreton		X				X			X		X
Baker			X	X	X	X		X	X		
Berry		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		
Bowey	X	X	X			X		X			
Brady			X	X						X	
Tolan		X				X		X	X		
Zief	X	X	X	X		X			X		
Crank		X	X	X		X					
CRG	X	X	X		X	X			X		
Cross 2009								X	X		
Cross 2010										X	
Davis	X	X	X	X					X		
de Anda	X	X		X	X	X				X	
DeCarlo	X							X		X	
Korte Snor		X		X	X	X	X		X		
Derezotes				X						X	
Durlak		X	X			X		X			
Flewelling	X	X								X	
Gottfredson		X		X				X	X		
Grossman		X	X	X		X		X			
Hanlon 2009		X		X		X					
Hanlon 2002								X	X		
Harris					X	X				X	
Herrera		X	X	X		X					
Higginboth.	X			X		X					
Hritz		X		X	X	X			X		
Keating		X	X						X		
Langager	X								X		X
Leleur					X	X			X		
Maxfield	X					X		X	X		
Mehlbye		X			X	X	X				
MHB					X	X			X	X	
Nichols	X										
OJJDP										X	
Rapp-Pagl.		X	X	X		X					
Respress		X	X			X					
Rogers		X	X						X		
Rorie		X		X					X		
Rose		X		X		X					
Royse			X			X		X			
Schinke						X					
Stewart		X	X	X				X	X		
Sørensen T		X			X	X			X		
Sørensen TH						X	X		X		X
Thompson						X					
Thurman									X		
Tierney		X	X	X		X		X			
Total	10	31	18	20	11	32	3	16	23	12	3

Notice, that some of the studies are different analyses of the same programme or study. Furthermore, this review only reflects effects respecting mentoring or leisure-time initiatives.

To ensure consistency in the categorisation of the various effects included in the studies, we have considered the effect categories of the studies individually. 'Stealing' for instance has been recorded under 'crime' together with other types of offences such as violence. Some studies, however, divide 'behaviour' into different crime-related sub-categories. The above table conceives 'behaviour' as actions or behaviour that is not actually 'criminal'. It may be externalising or problem behaviour – behaviour that is milder than crime on the risk continuum scale.

The categorisation also includes the short-term, but probably essential 'goals' – satisfaction and attracting/retaining – where these are stated as goals. If youth are not attracted or cannot be retained in a programme, and if they are not happy with the programme activities, this will be a stumbling block for some of the other intended and more real goals for long-term change. We have included these categories as a subject for discussion, as they may be considered process goals: Are attracting, retaining and youth satisfaction goals as such?

In the studies of mentoring and leisure-time programmes, these themes themselves tend to be a recurring challenge and are often regarded as a victory. Youth doing something they find pleasant and not hanging on street corners is perhaps positive both for them and for others. In studies where the young people involved have been asked for their opinion, they are usually positive about the programme. Their problem is generally limited opening hours or that the programme – whether mentoring or after school – ends at a given time, which the participants generally find disappointing.

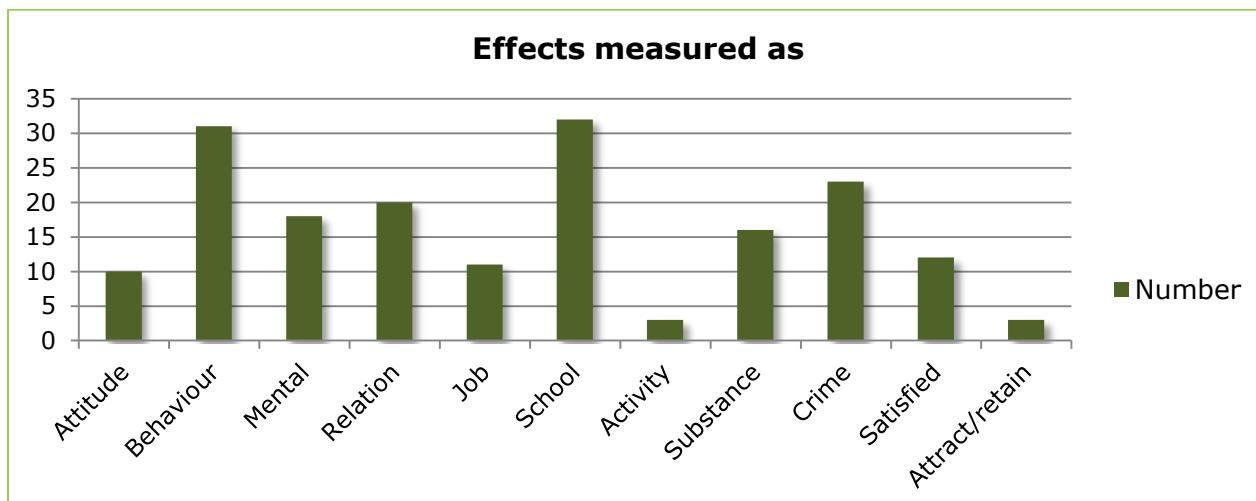
From a crime prevention perspective, youth activities in an after-school recreational pursuit may be considered as 'diverting' their attention or 'keeping them away' from less positive pursuits as long as they are engaged in the activity. However, such activities frequently only take place a few times a week, and occasionally trouble or crime breaks out once a prevention project closes down. Any crime prevention impact is limited in time and does not last.

Knowing how long any change will last is, however, often impossible since almost no studies conduct follow-up surveys a long time after a prevention programme has ended. Some research does suggest, though, that some positive changes do not become clear until several years after participation in a programme. In this connection, some mentoring and leisure-time interventions consciously seek to help mentees move on – also outside club opening hours and premises, etc. Such efforts may take the form of academic support, help with finding a job, working on friend or family relations or supporting their self-esteem.

Figure 11 on the following page shows how many and to what extent the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes focus on change in the various categories.

The effects of mentoring and leisure-time programmes are measured in a variety of ways, with each study considering slightly over three different effects on average. These effects are either directly crime-related and reflect crimes reported by the youth themselves or by the police, etc, or they have a mediating role. This means that the programmes can attempt to boost their focus on protective factors (self-esteem or self-worth, positive skills, relations, academic performance, etc) and diminish the risk factors (problem behaviour, drug use, etc) thereby preventing crime.

Figure 11. Breakdown by effect categories in the reviewed studies



School and behaviour are the categories in which most of the mentoring and leisure-time programmes in this review are interested. The third parameter is crime. In terms of positive changes or outcomes, it means improved – or passed – school or education (marks, retention, motivation, etc), improved behaviour (such as less aggressiveness) and the reduction or complete elimination of criminal behaviour.

Mentoring and leisure-time programmes seem to focus fairly equally on the different effect measures. However, studies of mentoring programmes tend to focus more on relationships (family, friends, school, local community and mentor) than leisure-time programmes do. This concurs with the fact that relationship building in a mentoring scheme is presumed to affect not just the mentor-mentee relationship, but also the mentee's relations with other people in his or her life (Grossman & Rhodes 2002).

However, a few mentoring studies do examine crime directly. For instance, the Big Brothers Big Sisters programme, which is represented several times in our review, concentrates first and foremost on youth generally at risk who live in single-parent families. As far as this group is concerned, measuring mediating factors other than 'crime' makes sense.

Generally speaking, the studies measure various factors that they seek to confirm or disprove based on the capabilities that a particular programme is thought to have. Chapter 5 will analyse effects and challenges, but first we need to look at the locations of prevention programmes.

Locations for prevention

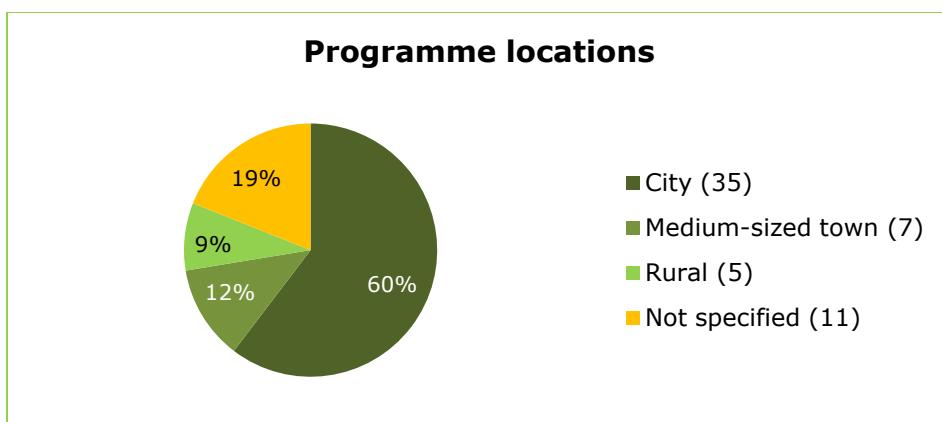
Locality – urban or rural

The reviewed mentoring and leisure-time studies are most often implemented in an urban setting. This may tell us something about where these types of programmes are usually initiated or investigated, and may also suggest where such programmes are needed and where capacity is available. On closer analysis, as with the programme characteristics mentioned earlier, specifying setting may also help clarify whether these programmes are efficacious in particular locations in connection with other factors.

The studies frequently refer to the location simply as 'urban', without further explaining the nature of the urban area. The definition of urban areas varies from one country to another and implies population density as well as number of inhabitants. Other studies merely mention the city name, and we have therefore sought information on the number of inhabitants as a guide to show whether a given programme was implemented in a city, a medium-sized town or a rural setting. Figure 12 shows the urban contexts for the implementation of the studied programmes. As far as possible we use the terminology of the studies, and medium-sized towns are classified as areas with a maximum of 90,000 inhabitants with the number of inhabitants decreasing as the location changes from an urban to a rural setting⁸⁵. The limit for medium-sized towns is estimated on the basis of the distribution of the reviewed studies and the possibility of comparison with Danish urban neighbourhoods, where a 'medium-sized' town is fairly large – but significantly smaller than the urban settings in the countries where the studies originated and which are included in our review.

Several of the studies deal with programmes launched in several different urban contexts in the same period, and all locations have been entered in our review.

Figure 12. Locations of reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes



The figure illustrates the importance of the urban context on mentoring and leisure-time programmes. A fairly large number of studies provide no information about the setting of the particular programme; in one explicit case, however, this information is disguised on ethical grounds to ensure the anonymity of programme participants (Nichols 2004).

Examination of the three different types of programme – mentoring, leisure-time and combined mentoring and leisure-time programmes – reveals two distinctive characteristics in terms of most frequent urban context. First of all, in the reviewed studies the location of a combined mentoring and leisure-time programme is most likely to be a city. Second, leisure-time programmes are more likely to have a rural or an urban setting in a medium-sized town than either mentoring or combined mentoring and leisure-time programmes.

Mentoring programmes are typically more intensive and require greater human and financial resources. Even with volunteer mentors, recruiting, screening, matching and supervising such volunteers, etc, takes some organisation, which might be one explanation for the geographic

⁸⁵ The definition of rural varies across countries and our review simply uses the term 'rural' applied in the studies as indicator. Statistics Denmark defines an urban neighbourhood as a coherent building estate with at least 200 residents (www.dst.dk), with the gap between buildings not exceeding 200 metres.

locations of the various types of programme. Another explanation might be that crime-related problems can be more severe in the city, which is why leisure-time programmes are often combined with other, more intensive initiatives to provide more support for the participants. Finally, it may simply reflect the preference or practical circumstances of the researcher or consultancy agency. Our review can only deal with documented and efficacy-measured programmes, although numerous mentoring and leisure-time initiatives have been and will continue to be carried out without any of the experience gained from such initiatives being collected or communicated. The issue of evaluation is distinctly linked to resources.

The local community – the cause and the solution

Having examined the general urban context of mentoring and leisure-time programmes, we will now assess the extent to which they are community-based.

The local community plays several roles in the prevention programmes included in our review. The local community is the point of departure in terms of organisation, youth identification processes and volunteer recruitment. The local community is also contextually involved and therefore key to programme implementation. Consequently, the local community and its day-to-day players may be said to be both the cause of and the driving force behind such programmes – the problem-solver. This feature is common to all the studies included in our review, either individually or in various combinations.

The local community is the very pillar of prevention programmes – its members **organise the programme** and set it in motion with the assistance of various local agencies. Often a programme is launched as a collaboration between police, housing-related social workers, youth workers and school staff (Bowey & McGlaughlin 2006; Langager & Skov 2004; Baker et al. 1995) via for instance locally organised clubs or after-school initiatives that are set up individually (Thurman et al. 1996).

Sometimes such programmes spring from a voluntary initiative started by youth and adults in the area (Baker et al. 1995). Occasionally programmes are the result of large nationwide organisations such as Boys and Girls Clubs of America (Arbreton & McClanahan 2002; Schinke et al. 2000). They may be mentoring schemes based on existing local projects (Brady et al. 2005), or schemes that are funded by and are affiliates of large national programmes such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (Tierney & Grossman 2000). In a Danish context, programmes are often rooted in local authorities (Mehlbye & Hjelmar 2009; Langager & Skov 2004; Leleur & Pedersen 1996).

Generally, young **programme participants are identified** or recruited for the prevention initiative in their local community, for instance, at school or in the residential area or street environment.

In many of the mentoring and leisure-time programmes, participants are picked out by their teachers, educational counsellors or other school staff (Allen et al. 2011; Rogers 2011; Herrera et al. 2008; Crank et al. 2003; Royse 1998) or even by their parents (DeCarlo & Hockman 2003; Higginbotham et al. 2006), child and youth initiatives (Keating et al. 2002; Hanlon et al. 2002) or social authorities (Sørensen 2008; Sørensen & Dam 2000).

In the UK, for instance, so-called Youth Offending Teams, which operate locally, are sometimes entrusted with identifying youth in need of support (MHB 2003; Nichols 2004; CRG Research 2006). Youth are also recruited and identified in public places by programme staff (Baker et al.

1995; Arbreton & McClanahan 2002), and occasionally the young people themselves join open initiatives in their residential neighbourhood without being identified in advance (Rogers 2011).

Volunteers are most often recruited in the neighbourhood where the leisure-time and mentoring initiatives are based. In some cases, they are students from local universities, graduates or – in one programme – high-school students who act as mentors, role models, tutors or basketball coaches for the participants (Hanlon et al. 2009; Higginbotham et al. 2006; Keating et al. 2002; Baker et al. 1995; Derezotes 1995; Herrera et al. 2008).

In other cases, they are people working in the community – such as fire service staff (de Anda 2001) – who act as tutors and/or mentors for programme youth (Berry et al. 2009; Rapp-Pagliucci et al. 2011; Royse 1998; Davis et al. 1995).

Finally, many volunteers simply reside in the local community with no special attachment to a university or the labour market, and they typically act as mentors or have an assisting role in connection with group excursions (Brady et al. 2005; Keating et al. 2002; Higginbotham et al. 2006; Hanlon et al. 2002). They also include people who have become enrolled in volunteer work through their religious associations (Higginbotham et al. 2006) or other local organisations. The same programme often recruits volunteers in many different ways.

The above three components – organising, identifying and recruiting volunteers – are each crucial stepping stones in many of the mentoring and leisure-time programmes reviewed.

Moreover, the local community is also typically used as an argument in favour of implementing a programme in this particular community rather than any other. The **specific conditions** of a given community in the form of disadvantaged residential areas, schools and city centres are used as arguments to advocate a particular programme.

Most participants in mentoring and leisure-time programmes live in large residential estates, public or **council housing** (Anderson-Butcher et al. 2003; Apsler et al. 2006; Schinke et al. 2000). Some areas are negatively labelled – such as 'Empowerment Zone Neighborhoods' (USA) or placed in negative categories such as 'DETR's 1998 Index of Local Deprivation' (England and Wales), with 33 indicators across six domains of deprivation – and are characterised by their high risk of unemployment, crime, vacant buildings, low educational or low income levels and poor housing conditions (Allen et al. 2011:17; MHB 2003:43,50; Baker et al. 1995; Davis et al. 1995).

Programmes are often found in **under-resourced and socially disadvantaged** neighbourhoods (Rogers 2011; Rose & Jones 2007), and the fact that most school pupils receive price-reduced or free school lunches is the poverty indicator used in many American mentoring and leisure-time programmes (Cross et al. 2009; Arbreton et al. 2002; Flewelling & Paschal 1999; OJJDP 1998; Harris & Wheeler 1997).

Schools and school districts typically have **poorly performing pupils** and a high percentage of dropouts compared with other neighbourhoods and the particular national level (Maxfield et al. 2003; Cross et al. 2010; Zief et al. 2006). Moreover, many studies report neighbourhood problems involving **drug abuse** (Hanlon et al. 2009; Tierney & Grossman 2000) or high **housing mobility** (Rorie et al. 2011).

Neighbourhoods where programmes are launched are also often associated with a dramatic increase in or a high level of **crime** and gangs (Gottfredson et al. 2004; Derezotes 1995), such as Project R.E.S.C.U.E. (Reaching Each Student's Capacity Utilizing Education), a combined

mentoring and leisure-time project with local firemen acting as mentors in a large American city near Los Angeles. At the time of the research, the neighbourhood had high youth crime and violence rates with 31 active youth gangs with over 7000 members (de Anda 2001:97-98).

Moreover, the programmes GPTTO (Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach) and GITTO (Gang Intervention Through Targeted Outreach) Targeted Outreach: Boys and Girls Clubs of America's Approach to Gang Prevention and Intervention, both attached to Boys and Girls Clubs of America and covering most of the USA, are located in the neighbourhoods with the highest gang activity. However, these clubs are set up in different locations depending on whether their goal is prevention or intervention.

Half the prevention GPTTO clubs are in the most intense gang areas in the local communities, one-fourth are located in areas bordering the gang areas, and the remaining fourth is in the same local community or neighbourhood, but some distance away from the most intense gang areas. Intervention clubs on the other hand, which seek to coax youth away from the gangs, are located in the toughest neighbourhoods (Arbreton & McClanahan 2002:14).

The comprehensive English and Welsh spare time programme Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) is also found in a high crime level context. A Youth Justice Board survey from 2003 (MORI, Youth Survey) showed that 25% of youth aged 10 to 17 had succumbed to some form of crime in the past year and that more than one-third of boys and one-third of girls had committed their first offence before the age of 11.

Back in the 1990s, a leisure-time programme and drop-in centre, The Neutral Zone, was opened in the state of Washington, also a result of increasing numbers of youth arrests from the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s (Thurman et al. 1996). A similar rise in crime, especially gang-related crime, was seen in Denver, and was the reason for the implementation of the mentoring and leisure-time programme GRASP (Denver's Gang Rescue and Support Project) (Hritz & Gabow 1997). This development reflected a trend across the USA at the time. Again, local context was linked with major trends in society and should be understood in this light – and vice versa.

A more recent study of the Coaching for Communities (CfC) (the 'Youth at Risk' organisation version) mentoring programme also emphasises the **broader context**, with authors pointing to the rise in anti-social behaviour in many western countries – including the UK, where the CfC is located. In the UK, more youth are given a behavioural diagnosis, and many young people are repeatedly caught by the police, although crime – particularly non-violent crime – is falling (Berry et al. 2009).

Overall, these four features are interrelated in varying degrees and ways. They are of course intertwined with the other programme characteristics such as degree of risk and prevention goals in such a way that ensures a match between programme, needs and context.

Sites – everyday, future or out of town

We will now look at the sites of mentoring and leisure-time programmes included in this review. They are often set in the participants' local communities and in their everyday environment.

Table 22. Sites of the reviewed mentoring and leisure-time programmes

Programme sites	No.
Schools (participants' own)	10
Universities	4
Local 'centres' or city centre	4
Residential area and/or local clubs	9
Out of town (excursions or tours)	14
Not mentioned (but all community-based)	19

Site information in the studies

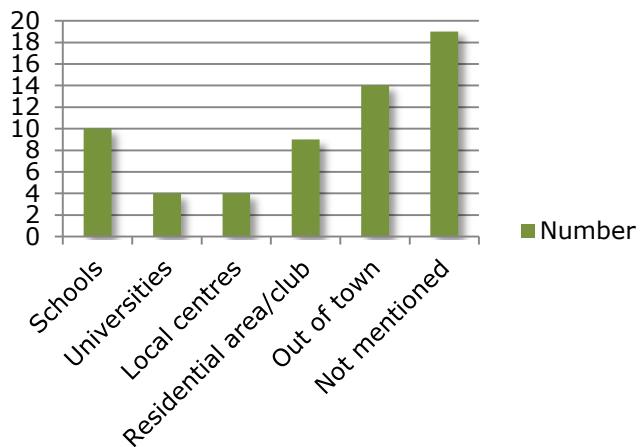


Figure 13. Breakdown by programme site

The above table and figure show the categories and number of sites where the programmes included in our review take place. The numbers were inductively based on the information provided in the studies. Often a study merely mentions that a programme is set in the local community, and all the programmes do so in one or more of the four respects mentioned in the section above. If a study specifies the site in more detail, the particular programme will be included in all its delivery site categories.

Schools are usually the setting for programmes carried out *after school* in the participants' spare time (typically called 'out of school' or 'after-school' programmes). The exception is the secondary group counselling element of a single programme called The CASPAR Youth Services Student Assistance Program, where selected youth participate during school hours (Apsler et al. 2006). In these programmes, participants remain in a well-known context and are recruited and retained in a place where they normally spend their days.

Universities may represent just a single visit offered by a programme to urge young people to consider going to university in future, or may provide the setting for more educational components included in leisure-time programmes.

Initiatives based on local 'community centres' or in centrally located premises in the town are usually also leisure-time programmes, as are initiatives such as clubs, which are often located in residential neighbourhoods and/or areas where youth congregate.

Finally, the figure and table above also show programmes or programme component that may take place outside town. The number is high because most mentoring, leisure-time and combination programmes include excursions. For many programmes, going out of town is tantamount to showing participants something new, giving them new perspectives, a breathing space and things that they might otherwise not experience.

The overview of more specific sites is intended to illustrate the variety of places where programmes are implemented rather than just the mere number. Too many places have not been specified or are not specifiable for the figure to indicate any particular trend. In connection with broad comprehensive programmes with multiple programme components and a variety of implemented programme versions, a detailed specification of the settings is not

possible. Nor is this possible in reviews of many different programmes whose common feature is generally programme type, but which in reality cover several projects and programmes as well as sites. The question of whether site impacts a programme's effectiveness will be examined more specifically in the next chapter for each of the three types of programme – mentoring, leisure-time or combined mentoring and leisure-time programmes.

Finally, programmes involving a mentoring element typically offer mentor and mentee great flexibility in choice of meetings and activities, making a definition of specific sites impossible. However, such programmes usually take place locally and vary according to interest and possibilities in terms of time, funding and transport. What is remarkable is that there is no mention of mentor and mentee spending time together at each other's home, whereas suggested activities in public places such as cafes or cinemas or the local library are generally mentioned as activity options and sites in the programme descriptions. So despite that fact that the primary sites of mentoring initiatives are not seen in the columns, they are a premise depending on the type of programme. Basically, sites are located in the local community, but this has not been specified in detail.

The figure also highlights the difficulty of recreating certain mentoring and leisure-time programmes due to lack of specific data. This may also be a reason that pinpointing exactly what works in a mentoring relationship is so difficult. The following chapter will focus on this aspect.

To summarise locations for prevention initiatives: In short, leisure-time and mentoring programmes are characterised by great versatility in terms of site, but they are first and foremost found in socially and financially deprived urban neighbourhoods. Programmes are linked with the local communities that they serve in various ways, and their specific settings or sites depend on the programme type and its elements.

Generally speaking, the screening criteria in our review have been satisfied and show great mutual coherence.

In-depth analyses of effects and challenges

Having outlined an overview of the distinctive features of the reviewed studies that significantly affect the basis of the systematic review, we must now determine whether the mentoring and/or leisure-time programmes have any direct or indirect crime prevention impact on at-risk youth. – **Do the programmes work?** Are they merely **promising** without any tangible evidence? Do they have **no effect** – or is their effect **uncertain**?⁸⁶

The in-depth analyses are described individually for each type of programme: mentoring programmes, leisure-time programmes and combined mentoring and leisure-time programmes. This is followed by a brief overall discussion of the three types of intervention, which, as will be seen, frequently have the same methodology, features and underlying theories.

The analyses are 'in-depth' in nature because they take into consideration that prevention programmes may work well for some youth in certain circumstances and relative to certain results (Roberts in Brady et al. 2005:24). Therefore, the studies are combed for any details that can reveal the effects of the programmes in terms of whom, how, when, how long and why. This approach allows us to assess whether the study outcomes are reliable enough for safe conclusions to be drawn.

It is important to keep two aspects in mind in this connection:

- 1) **Bias:** Studies with a positive impact may be more likely to be published than those that show no effect or even a counterproductive one⁸⁷. Therefore, studies may exist that have not been analysed because they lie beyond the framework defined for the literature search, and this may lead to a bias that glorifies effects.
- 2) **No guarantee of reproducibility:** That an intervention programme has produced positive effects once in a single location is no guarantee that it will have the same effect in another environment in future⁸⁸.

The specific time and place are contextual factors that will inevitably colour all the studies reviewed. The greater the detail in which these can be described, the greater the probability of finding comparable contexts in which one can assume the same effect will be produced – or conversely the effect can be avoided if the distinctive features seem unsuitable for the progress and effect of the intervention.

Despite the two reservations above, the clear objective of the analyses is to present the best possible volume of knowledge available about the impact of mentoring and leisure-time programmes on youth at risk and the challenges involved.

Insight into the effects and challenges of a variety of programme types will serve as inspiration for the preventive programmes practised in local communities and allow them to become knowledge-based – and in turn, practical experience will continuously and reciprocally inspire and provide input to the knowledge produced.

⁸⁶ The way to present impact is inspired by Sherman et al. (1997) and the so-called Maryland Report.

⁸⁷ (Hodgkinson et al. 2009:17)

⁸⁸ (Petrosino et al. 2004: 11)

Potentially, the ongoing dialogue between research and practice may ultimately aid in offering young people the most efficient programmes to help them achieve success in life.

Mentoring programmes

General impact and duration

The reviewed mentoring programmes are promising and all have one or several positive effects, direct or indirect, on juvenile crime. There may, however, be diverse effects for varying subgroups of participants, and the interventions may not always result in all the types of impact measured, which means that mentoring programmes remedy some issues – but not all.

The most reliable studies emphasise a variety of positive changes in the impact categories of crime, behaviour, attitude, mental health, substance abuse, school and relations, illustrating that mentoring programmes may be said to span a wide area of potential impact.

According to this report, the mentoring programmes are merely ‘promising’ in relation to crime prevention – rather than manifestly effective. This is because the high-quality studies (H) reviewed that are generally most meticulous (Tierney & Grossman 2000; Grossman & Rhodes 2002) in themselves provide direct evidence not of impact on crime but rather on related factors like substance use, violent behaviour or truancy. At the same time, these positive results should be seen against the background of a lack of indicators showing impact on studied phenomena like theft and fighting.

The second-most reliable studies either focus on academic achievement rather than impact on crime achievement (Thompson & Kelly-Vance 2001), or fail to investigate the implementation of programmes or check for factors that may bias the study. Like the study referred to above, they may also comprise contradictory experience from mentoring programmes – such as that they reduce delinquent behaviour but not crime. Or not crime for certain, because self-reported crime remains unchanged in one case, while official statistics of arrests and charges show a decline (Berry et al. 2009). The otherwise promising programmes may even be counterproductive at times (Tolan et al. 2008). Thus, it is not possible to say generally that mentoring programmes directly prevent crime and have been proved to be so.

Even though slightly more than half the mentoring programmes are generally studied with an acceptable impact design that involves control groups, four of the studies still do not compare participants to similar youth who have no mentor. The absence of a comparison makes it harder to surmise what would have happened to the youth had they not had a mentor. In addition, two studies do not register the intervention over time and therefore cannot consistently say anything about changes. They relate primarily to the mentors, the youth or the views of the staff.

None of the 10 studies says anything about the long-term effects of the programmes – for which reason they provide no conclusions regarding whether the effects are maintained after the mentoring relationship has ended.

All in all, however, the reviewed mentoring programmes demonstrate many positive effects, such as improved self-esteem, academic skills, peer and parent relationships and lower rates

of truancy, aggression, substance abuse, and violent behaviour, even though not all studies show clear or uniform results within these and other phenomena, and even though the results will only potentially impact later criminal offences, a behaviour it may truly be hoped will never materialise.

Interestingly, these studies show that volunteer mentoring programmes aimed primarily at building up a supportive friendship between a young person at risk and a committed adult can improve aspects not included among the direct targets of the programmes. Consistently and continuously supporting a young person over a year or more to assist his or her development and potential apparently also enhances the young person's academic skills, relations, behaviour, etc, even without this being the intentional agenda (Thompson et al. 2001; Tierney et al. 2000; OJJDP 1998).

Effects for whom – age, risk and groups

In the studies, the positive effects have been distinct for youth, both girls and boys, primarily aged 11–14 years. In other words it is, at best, mainly for this age group that similar results can be achieved.

Younger and older children and youth have also – though in smaller numbers – been among the participants in some mentoring programmes or, in principle, in the target group of a mentoring programme. Whether these age groups might also produce similar results must depend on further research.

A single study has participants aged 15–18 years, but the authors conclude that youth aged 12–15 years with milder risk, such as initial social exclusion, would have been better (Berry et al. 2009). The Tight Leash project actually offers a contact person to youth up to age 17, but from a preventive perspective the intervention is offered to young people aged 10–14 (The Tight Leash 2010).

In fact the motives for introducing the programmes include a variety of preventive perspectives. Just under half have an explicit crime prevention focus, and thus participants at particular risk of criminal behaviour and/or involved in crime already (Berry et al. 2009; The Tight Leash 2010; Tolan et al. 2008; OJJDP 1998). These youth are usually slightly older than those participating on the basis of the more general and varied risks, such as living in single-parent families, poverty, difficulties at school, etc, that characterise all the Big Brothers Big Sisters programmes, the secondary and group-based part of the CYS CAP programme and an unnamed volunteer mentoring programme (Rose et al. 2007).

Logically enough, the studies focus to a higher degree on directly crime-related phenomena in the programmes whose participants are at special risk or already involved in criminal behaviour. For the youth at risk more generally, the studies frequently focus on changes in self-esteem, schooling and relationships. Thus, it cannot be known if the programmes have a direct effect on crime prevention, because this would require studies aimed at measuring many different types of effect – including crime and delinquent behaviour – and not least in a *longer-term* perspective. For example, certain pre-school programmes have made measurements several decades afterwards to check the participants' later involvement in crime, etc. The participants are, admittedly, moulded by influence from other factors over the years and their own actions as well as from programmes, but a long-term study would be far more capable of

demonstrating potential differences and be better suited to show differences in criminal behaviour in the broad-risk youth who have a mentor.

As regards group-related issues, none of the reviewed mentoring programmes focused specifically on problematic, existing groups and, according to the descriptions provided, none of the programmes took place in a context of special group conflicts. However, gang prevention is one of many objectives of the American JUMP mentoring programme, where only 3% of the participants were said to be exposed to a gang involvement risk, while interaction with anti-social friends and peers is the focus of The Tight Leash intervention in Denmark and the Coaching for Communities (CfC) programme in the UK.

All three programmes are naturally among those that have an explicit crime preventing focus with a target group at special risk of criminal behaviour, and all three seem to have an enhancing effect on the participants' circles of friends.

CfC resulted in significantly fewer anti-social peers (Berry et al. 2009) while, after the intervention, Tight Leash participants had friendships that 'did not support general social integration' in only half as many cases. The number of those with friends who support general social integration to some or a satisfactory extent increased distinctly at the same time (the Tight Leash 2010). In the case of the JUMP mentoring programme, the mentors and mentees did not agree, but 44% of the mentors and nearly 70% of the mentees found the mentoring programme helpful 'to a high degree' in relation to staying out of gangs. At the same time, 34% of mentors and about 50% of mentees found the programme 'very useful' in relation to avoiding friends who instigate trouble (OJJDP 1998).

This suggests that having a kind of mentor may help strengthen the youth's pro-social peer relationships and reduce their involvement in gangs – both with volunteer and planned mentoring. Whether the other seven intervention programmes had this implication has not been checked.

Effects where

The various positive effects of mentoring programmes have been shown by studies carried out in the USA (6), Ireland (1), the UK (2) and Denmark – there by the Tight Leash programme (2010). As regards urban context, half are carried out in cities exclusively. Three programmes cannot be specified, while two mentoring programmes may take place in rural areas, including one also in medium-sized towns.

The existing knowledge about the positive effects of having a mentor is, however, greatest and most reliable in urban contexts. The two studies that may include rural intervention have a weak impact research design. In addition, the comprehensive and widely used JUMP programme also operates local initiatives located in medium-sized towns, but the results do not distinguish between potential variations in the outcome at different locations.

That a mentor can usefully support a young person in rural areas and medium-sized towns is probable but confirmation will require more studies, while we know from the Big Brothers Big Sisters programme in Ireland that transport difficulties and the limited number of activities available to the mentor match make programme participation difficult in a rural setting (Brady et al. 2005). Presumably, the BBBS programmes' organisation in mainly urban contexts is the reason that no more mentoring programmes for at-risk youth have been tried and evaluated elsewhere than in cities.

Regardless of the urban context of the mentoring programmes, in all the cases where they are reported, the socio-economic contexts in the communities are similar, with poverty prevailing and frequently also family problems such as substance abuse, divorce, violence and mental illness.

Overall, it is seen that mentoring initiatives can have a positive impact on both sides of the Atlantic, at any rate in urban contexts that pose special socio-economic challenges.

Effects when

To see if the timing that will make mentoring interventions effective can be identified, we now consider their duration and frequency.

In general, the mentoring programmes are of about one year's duration. The mentor will meet the mentee three or four times a month for a couple of hours each time. For example, the Big Brothers Big Sisters programme with volunteer mentors, which is represented in the review several times with various testing locations, has a set of national standards that require mentor and mentee to commit to the programme two to four times a month for at least a year. Local BBBS offices may have local standards requiring weekly meetings between mentor and mentee (Tierney et al. 2000). Weekly meetings are recommended across the BBBS programmes, however.

The time use varies considerably among the studies, however, where the programme elements and the voluntary nature of the mentoring function versus professionalism prove to play a role.

The group element of American CYS CAP in particular differs from the rest by being a secondary element of a larger, universal and tertiary programme implemented under the auspices of a school for 10 consecutive weeks, with 45-minutes weekly sessions with a qualified counsellor (Apsler et al. 2006). The Danish contact person programme also uses employed and qualified staff who are available to the given young person for 15 hours a week for a minimum of seven months – the most time-intensive programme of the reviewed mentoring programmes, but then it is aimed at youth at more serious risk of criminal behaviour (the Tight Leash 2010).

All the other mentoring programmes in the review involve volunteer mentors and are set to run for a year – according to plan and where it can be defined⁸⁹. One programme lasted nine months, however. Even so, certain matches may split up unintentionally in the process due to conflict, moving, etc.

The frequency of the meetings between mentor and mentee is weekly or involves contact three times a month for at least one hour, but often two to four hours each time. In one volunteer mentoring programme, CfC, which was only scheduled to last nine months, the mentor and mentee were, however, obliged to keep in contact three times a week (Berry et al. 2009).

Against that background, mentoring programmes using volunteer mentors seem capable of creating a variety of positive effects for the youth involved, if they are of a certain duration and intensity, preferably a full year and longer, and preferably with weekly or almost weekly contact for several hours at the time.

⁸⁹ It cannot be done in the systematic Campbell review or for the huge JUMP programme. The latter has, however, 6.5 months at its median and may extend from three months to five years (OJJDP 1998).

Since none of the programmes is shorter or less intense as such – perhaps due to experience – it is impossible to say with certainty if a different timing structure for a mentoring programme might have different effects. And yet, a single high-quality study with a solid research design indicates that programmes of less than a half year may be harmful (Grossman & Rhodes 2002). Another volunteer mentoring programme, which was initially intended to last only six months, also reported that it was not appropriate or considerate to many of the participants to offer them a programme of only six months (Rose & Jones 2007).

From ongoing measurements during the course of a one-year BBBS mentoring programme using volunteer mentors, it is seen that interventions that expire before six months cause an upsurge in the young persons' alcohol use. It also appears from the authors' analyses that a youth's self-esteem and his own perception of achievement at school may drop significantly if the mentoring relationship is shorter than three months (Grossman & Rhodes 2002). These outcomes will probably be related to a feeling of neglect and the ending of support.

No matter what, the participation criteria for all mentoring programmes are that the youth are at some degree of risk due to problems in their family, at school or in the local community, low self-esteem, negative influence from their peers, etc. In other words, they may have a strong preconception of being rejected, and it is therefore essential to avoid any breach of trust and inform the – in this case often volunteer – mentors of the negative consequences of opting out before a year has passed. At times, the volunteer mentors point out spontaneously that the transition to something else when the match runs out is inadequate (Brady et al. 2005).

However, the results improve in step with the mentoring relationship's duration, and in the BBBS mentoring programme mentioned above in the context of the counterproductive consequences of short mentoring intervention, it is seen that by far the most significant and positive effects are achieved after a mentoring relationship of as long as twelve months. Here, the analyses show reduced substance abuse, less truancy and an improved perception of social acceptance and academic skills (Grossman & Rhodes 2002).

Continuity versus time limitation in volunteer mentoring programmes is a dilemma because volunteers want the certainty of the structure provided by the programme, while at the same time most of the youth feel disappointed when the programme ends. Most will miss the relationship and the dialogue, and mutual friendly relationships may have developed, even if the mentoring programme is not intended to be a friendship programme (Rose & Jones 2007). In fact many mentor matches continue spontaneously beyond the compulsory period of time (Thompson et al. 2001).

Consistent mentor-mentee contact is important, as pinpointed by several of the mentoring studies that openly discuss the timing aspect (Thompson et al. 2001).

A single study with several programme elements found that the number of weekly meetings between mentee and volunteer mentor had little impact on the results. The programme in question already requires contact three times a week, so the study might suggest that contact even more frequent than once a week would not generate better results. The authors fail to give details about or investigate the duration of the mentoring relationship overall. They do, however, pinpoint the importance of the frequency of the youths' participation in another programme element, ie, themed monthly meetings where professional staff and volunteer mentors work together on one of the mentees' declared goals (Berry et al. 2009).

Frequency may thus have a variety of crucial impacts. In the last case it is suggested that the real difference depends on whether the youth take part in such meetings at all. Programmes operated less frequently than on a monthly basis may be believed to have a poor influence.

Overall, for mentoring programmes involving only a volunteer mentor and a mentee, continuity for at least one year combined with a contact frequency and consistency of three-four times a month for several hours seems to be crucial to positive changes.

Effects how – important and problematic

What shape should a mentoring programme take to be capable of generating positive development?

A study of the reviewed programmes leaves the impression that certain fixed, consistent features should be part of volunteer mentoring programmes to ensure that mentors have a high probability of achieving some of the many different positive effects for the young mentees referred to above.

First, most of the mentoring programmes are *tailored to local conditions and the mentees' needs* (Brady et al. 2005; OJJDP 1998; Tierney et al. 2000).

In addition, the programmes accommodate the *preferences of both mentee, the responsible adult/parent and the volunteer mentor* (Tierney et al. 2000; Thompson et al. 2001; Rose & Jones 2007) when matching mentor and mentee and selecting subsequent activities for them to engage together. The matching should moreover be aimed specifically at bringing together a *youth and a mentor with the same interests* together, as this may extend the duration of the mentoring relationship (Grossman & Rhodes 2002).

Second, the reviewed studies show that an essential component of the volunteer mentoring programmes is that the *professionals* are available to thoroughly *screen volunteers and youth, train mentors, match mentors and mentees, provide support and ensure ongoing supervision of the match* and that the *expectations of all parties are clearly defined* (Tierney et al. 2000; Brady et al. 2005; Thompson et al. 2001; OJJDP 1998; Rose & Jones 2007).

Third, the trend in the reviewed mentoring programmes – of which only two did not involve volunteers – is that *a sustained, supportive and long-term friendship and emotional relationship with an adult who has no specific change intentions for the mentee or does not represent a formal institution* are among the greatest determinants of the diverse, positive outcomes (Rose & Jones 2007; OJJDP 1998; Tolan et al. 2008; Thompson et al. 2001; Tierney et al. 2000; Brady et al. 2005; Grossman & Rhodes 2002).

In the group element of the American CYS SAP with a professional counsellor, a caring supportive adult relationship is also considered – and used – as the key to sound youth development (Apsler et al. 2006). Unlike this programme, the English mentoring programme, Coaching for Communities, has an initial course element and monthly themes such as drugs, sexual health, responsibility, teamwork, etc, where volunteer mentors collaborate with professionals. However, despite this mentoring programme's targeted element there is no significant impact in the areas of substance use or crime (Berry et al. 2009). Perhaps the combination of teaching and the more informal mentor relationship are incompatible, or perhaps the course element, etc, is not intense enough. No one can tell.

But where might the difficulties in creating benefit for at-risk youth arise in mentoring programmes for this youth group?

The reviewed mentoring programmes point to several distinct challenges and dilemmas in the relationships between volunteer mentors and mentees. However, these challenges are far from exhaustive, especially because one of the review's inclusion criteria is that the study must examine effects, and, unfortunately, studies continue to examine both effect and process relatively rarely.

First, as regards the youth, it is frequently *the most vulnerable youth who are likely to break off their mentor relationships*.

As is the case with several of the Big Brothers Big Sisters participants in the major American cities, they may have experienced physical, psychological or sexual abuse while also being among those most adversely affected by a prematurely ended mentor relationship.

At the same time, *matches with 13–16-year-old youth are far more likely to be disrupted than matches involving 10–12-year-old participants* (Grossman & Rhodes 2002).

Second, as regards volunteer mentors, matches with mentors who are less well off will probably continue for a shorter time than those involving more well-to-do volunteer mentors, and *mentors who are 26–30 years old are less likely to disrupt a mentoring relationship* than those who are 18–25 years old (Grossman & Rhodes 2002).

It is *difficult to recruit male volunteer mentors*, so boys are on waiting lists for mentors for months (Brady et al. 2005; Tierney et al. 2000) because gender matches are often preferred.

At the same time, it may be difficult to identify *the implications of gender and ethnicity for the success of a match*. One study points out that only adult mentors think, in some cases, that a match across gender and ethnicity is less useful, while this is not indicated by the mentees. Boys feel as fully understood by a female mentor. However, the study shows greater improvement for boys with male mentors when it comes to avoiding substance use and gangs – but the study calls for more manifest research in this area (OJJDP 1998).

Thus, particularly local, tailored mentoring programmes with friendly supportive volunteer mentors may help the mentees in a surprisingly wide range of ways provided that they, the youth and their families receive solid professional backing, and provided that the match is continuous and reflects their needs and interests. The young mentees without special psychological problems gain the greatest benefit.

After these recommendations as to what is important and difficult when mentoring programmes are carried out in practice, we will lastly look at the primary reasons given by the mentoring programmes for why they work.

Effects why

The mentoring programmes reviewed comprise many of the same features. Most generally, they seek to avert risk factors and strengthen protective factors – preferably with focus on positive development for the young persons in ways that bring out their strong points.

The programme that stands out most from the other mentoring interventions is the one that takes place in a group context with a 'counsellor' – the group element of CYS CAP. In this respect, despite its similarities, it also differs from the other programmes in terms of underlying idea. For one thing, the intervention works through an adult whom the youth must

trust and who supports them – a classic feature of mentoring programmes generally. For another, it has a strict focus on helping participants by encouraging their critical thinking, supporting their social skills and ability to take control of their own lives and improving their ability to make well-informed decisions. Through social influence the participants in the group must strengthen these competencies as well as their staying power (Apsler et al. 2006).

Big Brothers Big Sisters Ireland takes this approach, based on theories of social capital and social control, which seeks to forge links between youth and pro-social adults and prevent the youth from starting a criminal or similarly negative career, since this might cost them the relationship with their mentor, who supports their social and emotional development and gives them positive perceptions and values (Brady et al. 2005). Coaching for Communities in the UK is aimed correspondingly at introducing youth to pro-social networks and working towards pro-social aspirations (Berry et al. 2009).

The same encouraging approach, with its focus on positive attributes and opportunities, is discernible in the Tight Leash, which has an appreciative and solution-focused approach. It also focuses on changing the narrative about youths, allowing them and their environment to tell new positive stories and thus redefining them in a positive light (the Tight Leash 2010).

Finally, a single volunteer mentoring programme touches on the benefits to be gained from having an adult to talk with and discuss ideas, thoughts and impressions as an objective in itself, while two BBBS mentoring programmes pinpoint the mentor as a positive role model for the mentees. An adult who can both offer the attention the youth are believed to miss and get them to regain confidence in other relations by being successful themselves (Thompson et al. 2001; Tierney et al. 2000).

Thus, the programmes that prioritise the person-to-person relationship also emphasise that the human relationship is of importance to the at-risk youth, and that it is precisely by using that importance as a more or less deliberate and theorised element that the youth can be helped onto the right track. A requirement, however, is an established and confident relationship – and focus on the positive attributes of both the youth and their community and opportunities.

Mentoring programmes in brief

Mentoring programmes – both with professionally backed volunteers and employed staff – for young mentees of about 11 to 14 years at a moderate rate of risk in urban, socio-economically distressed contexts, may apparently bring positive effects in many areas such as behaviour, self-perception, schooling, friends, family and substance abuse, and they seem promising in relation to crime if continued for one year with frequent and intense mentoring contact.

Leisure-time activities

General effects and their duration

The reviewed leisure-time activities show promising, ineffective, uncertain and in some cases decidedly counterproductive trends in relation to crime, either directly or indirectly. The same study may even point to positive, absent and counterproductive effects in a variety of effect types and different subgroups of participants. This means that leisure-time programmes seem generally to have a greater number of ambiguous consequences and only some positive impacts, in some types of effect and for some participants.

The most reliable studies from an effect perspective⁹⁰ emphasise positive changes in varying ways in the categories of crime, school, behaviour, mental health, substance use and relations. In addition to the four studies, equally substantial studies are emerging that find no proof of the impact of their respective leisure-time programmes on crime and substance abuse.

On the basis of this present review, leisure-time activities may merely be said to be potentially *promising* in relation to crime prevention. This is because the studies in this review that are otherwise most thorough and of the highest overall quality find positive effects in the areas of behaviour, psychological development and schooling, but not directly in the 'crime' area. Pro-social behaviour is enhanced while delinquent behaviour is seen to be inhibited in one study (Durlak et al. 2010). However, these two studies are characterised by being targeted at a group on the border of the focus of the review. The effects are seen for 'early youth' of mainly 10–14 years of age (Schinke et al. 2000), while the distinctly improved psychological and behavioural implications were proved primarily in a mixed group of young people, the majority of whom were at no risk (Durlak et al. 2010).

Three of the four studies of second-highest quality show positive effects, however, especially in the areas of crime (theft, arrests, criminal behaviour) (Gottfredson et al. 2004; Arbreton et al. 2002; MHB 2003), and one of them also showed positive findings for substance abuse, relations with family and friends and school-related effects (Arbreton & McClanahan 2002). These four studies are reliable, using control groups and bearing programme implementation in mind, and they also check for certain confounding factors. However, in various ways three of these four studies also demonstrate a *lack of effects* on crime, substance abuse, social skills, positive friendships or involvement in gangs.

In two studies, the experience from the delivered leisure-time activities is directly *counter-productive*, and, despite other concurrent promising outcomes, they seem to reduce positive association with peers and increase interaction with *negative friends* (Arbreton & McClanahan 2002; Zief et al. 2006). In the gang prevention programme GPTTO, this adverse trend in choice of friends is, however, registered only among the older youth aged 16–18 years. The outcome is positive in the younger participants.

One leisure-time programme targeted by one of the four studies shows no effect on delinquent or criminal behaviour at all, and the authors question whether the activities offered under the programme are sufficiently attractive to the participants, who engage in other activities as well (Cross et al. 2009).

All of the above-mentioned thorough impact assessments are characterised by comprising comprehensive programmes and a single review. Thus, leisure-time programmes take place in

⁹⁰ That is, ranked as 4 or 5 on the Scientific Methods Scale. See the section on the review's predictive power.

many different locations, making it more difficult to ensure uniform implementation. Spot-checks are often carried out, for instance by observation and interviews in selected locations (Arbreton & McClanahan 2002), but at times – quite frequently in fact – the researchers have to admit that the programme has not been fully realised, perhaps not even in a single of the many prevention locations (Gottfredson et al. 2004).

Thereby, there are variations in what actually happens and what is known to happen in the leisure-time programmes, which means that their generally promising effects can be said to be based on general conclusions drawn against the background of a certain unknown variation.

More than half the leisure-time studies in the review have a research design from which effects cannot be strictly established. The standard is lower than for the mentoring programmes described in the section above when viewed from the perspective of an interest in effect issues. Approximately equal numbers of the remaining studies show either no effects or promising improvements from the respective leisure-time programmes studied.

In addition to similar – less documented – effects of the types already described (crime, substance abuse, school factors, etc), the effects shown by the remaining studies include in particular improved self-esteem and a willingness on the part of youth to be attracted to the programme and be satisfied with it. Here, the focus is rather on personal, emotional and social phenomena, and in many view studies the youth speak enthusiastically about the programme as being fun and stimulating, improving and creating new relationships and increasing their feeling of confidence, self-assurance, self-esteem and success (Allen et al. 2011; Davis et al. 1995; Thurman et al. 1996; CRG Research Limited 2006; Crank et al. 2003).

It is impossible to say anything in general about the long-term effects of leisure-time programmes for at-risk youth. Only two short-term programmes have looked into it more closely. One is a ½ - 2-day outdoor course, while the other is a six-day video project that includes a weekend excursion. The video project had short-term positive results but after six months only improved self-esteem remained (Bowey & McGlaughlin 2006). The effect of the outdoor course was also measured six months later. Although this showed more aggression, there was significant improvement in self-reported confidence, success, self-esteem, concerns, etc. There was no effect in relation to crime and no cross-check with other groups of players (Davis et al. 1995).

The long-term effects of short-term programmes may already be dubious, and few studies exist of the implications that after-school programmes may or may not have for at-risk youth in the long term. The participants usually have fun while it lasts, but are they better equipped for their future?

The systematic review indicates that leisure-time programmes may, overall, be both promising and non-effective and on some points harmful for positive development in youth at risk. As regards the effect types of crime, behaviour, relationships, mental health, school, substance abuse and attitude, some leisure-time programmes have been shown to have good experience, but some of the results are offset by similar studies that show no effect at all.

Leisure-time programmes have a built-in risk of leading to negative company for the youth involved. However, the participants seem both to be attracted to leisure-time programmes and happy with them. They may gain good experiences, skills and self-insight.

Knowledge about the long-term effects of leisure-time programmes for youth at risk is out of sight, however.

Effects for whom – age, risk and groups

The mixed effects of the leisure-time programmes in the review apply to participants ranging all the way from five to 25 years. The main group is around 11–15 years, however, so the results referred to in the sections above relate primarily to this age segment.

At the same time, the results apply to both boys and girls since most programmes include both genders. Even though in four cases the participants in after-school programmes consist of mostly boys or boys only, both the studies and their results are too uncertain to allow any indication of special trends for boys alone. This means that the changes created by after-school programmes have been registered in girls and boys of 11–15 years – and for that reason can be expected to be most reproducible in that group.

The studies of the highest quality that found positive effects exclusively, namely school-related, behavioural, psychological and substance abuse improvements, were centred mainly around 11–12-year-old children with some above and some below (Durlak et al. 2010; Schinke et al. 2000).

The four second-most reliable studies show, as a whole, improvements in the age range from 10 to 16 years (MHB 2003; Gottfredson 2004; Arbreton & McClanahan 2002). One, however, did not show any influence on the participants aged 12 years on average and who, because of inefficient implementation, might perhaps have been left unsupervised by the programme staff – or, according to the authors, may have had better options than taking part in the programme (Cross et al. 2009). It was the gang prevention programme GPTTO that showed deteriorating impact for the 16 -18 year old participants, while the gang prevention programme GPTTO and the intervention for youth already involved in gangs, GITTO (Arbreton & McClanahan 2002) showed positive results overall for the 10–15-year-olds.

Judged from the best knowledge available, the clearest signs are that leisure-time programmes for 10–16-year-old children, especially those in the middle of this range, may make a positive difference for youth at risk.

By far the largest number of the youth who took part in the leisure-time programmes covered by the review was only at a slight risk, and the risk was frequently only estimated on the basis of the neighbourhood in which they lived, typically characterised by high poverty.

However, at times the risk was assessed on the basis of there being a high proportion of people with a minority or crime background. Some youth were simply selected because they went to a poorly performing school, and some programmes even comprised young persons in general (Durlak et al. 2010).

Six of the twenty reviewed leisure-time programmes are intended for youth who are at particularly high risk and are already engaged in delinquent and/or criminal behaviour – also including gang-related behaviour. These young persons were slightly older than those in the programmes targeted at milder rates of risk, whose participants are primarily aged between 13 and 18 years.

This is the case, particularly in the four following intervention programmes:

The Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP), in which 40% had previously been arrested⁹¹ (MHB 2003), The Neutral Zone, in which half had previously been arrested (Thurman et al. 1996), the Commuter Project in which the youth had been involved in unrest, brawls or crime

⁹¹ In phase 1 of the programme among the top50 sought out because they were at the greatest risk of crime in a neighbourhood.

(Sørensen & Dam 2000) and GPTTO and GITTO, Gang Prevention or Gang Intervention Through Targeted Outreach. To illustrate, several GPTTO programme participants had carried weapons, 25% had been picked up by the police, more than half had beaten someone, while slightly less than half had committed an offence with gang members. Almost half of the GITTO programme participants had carried weapons and been picked up by the police. Four out of five said they had committed an offence with gang members, and 67% were, according to their own accounts, already part of gangs at the time they joined the club (Arbreton & McClanahan 2002). The last three intervention programmes comprised both gang and group issues.

But can a leisure-time programme make a difference to these young persons who are burdened with bigger problems?

Two studies with a reliable impact research design show positive results for crime and schooling (MHB 2003; Arbreton & McClanahan 2002), although not for youth who had already reached 16–18 years, as shown above in the programme also aimed at gangs.

In other words, leisure-time programmes are seen to potentially lead to positive changes both for youth at a slight risk and youth who have special problems with crime already.

Even if the programmes do not prove to have any effect – or any demonstrable effect – on crime or other factors, then, at any rate, the youth usually *enjoy* the measures taken on their behalf and with them (Thurman et al. 1996; Sørensen & Dam 2000).

Whether this is prioritised is up to others.

Thus, on the basis of the available review data, it may be reported that leisure-time programmes have the potential to influence young persons between 10 and 16 years who are at a moderate risk and, more specifically, at a severe risk of crime – including gang crime – in a positive direction.

Effects where

The places where positive outcomes from leisure-time programmes can be recorded in at-risk youth are the USA and the UK. Neither of the two leisure-time intervention studies from Denmark – the Commuter Project (2000) and Club 21 (2004) – has had a purpose, focus or research design aimed at impact. Therefore, the benefit from leisure-time programmes in a direct crime prevention perspective in this part of the world has not been identified.

The urban contexts of the leisure-time programmes reviewed comprise rural areas, medium-sized towns and urban metropolitan environments. More than half the programmes of the review are aimed at urban youth. One-fourth now also target medium-sized towns – some of them simultaneously. Both big cities and medium-sized towns are represented by studies, and the results are so substantial and positive that it may reasonably be claimed that good experience has been and can potentially be gained from leisure-time programmes in these locations.

As regards programmes for youth in rural districts, the review comprises only slightly fewer programmes than in medium-sized towns. The difference is that the studies are not strong enough to pinpoint positive or negative trends in rural contexts⁹².

⁹² These are pre-post studies without any control group, rating '2' on the SMS scale.

Spotting trends in rural contexts is made more difficult by the fact that two out of the four programmes that can certainly take place in the country are also offered in a city, and the authors have made no distinction when presenting their results. We cannot know if this is because no difference can be identified, or because the authors have taken no interest in it. Finally, the programme elements may vary with the urban context and this may be decisive for their possible impact. All the aspects reviewed in the in-depth analyses are interrelated. The distinction is made on an analytical basis, which has its strengths and weaknesses.

One programme for rural youth is an outdoor course lasting up to two days at most, but even with the short duration it seems to provide long-term benefits – albeit on an uncertain basis – in the form of the participants' increased self-esteem (Davis et al. 1995). The other programme that consists of involving participants in a variety of existing sports activities not deliberately targeted primarily at youth at risk appears to enrol some young people who gain no benefit from the intervention – mainly because they were already motivated to join recreational activities (Nichols 2004). Thus, there may be 'good reasons', so to speak, for the absence of any measurable effect, but this does not change the fact that these studies' approach is not well-suited to proving changes over time.

Regardless of urban location, in by far the majority of cases the distressed contexts in the respective local communities are very similar. Usually, this is where the assessment of youth at risk originates. The communities are marked by poverty, crime, minority populations, council housing and run-down schools.

Overall, the reviewed interventions seem to indicate that leisure-time programmes have proved to have tangible impact for youth in big cities and medium-sized towns in the USA and in particularly deprived local communities in the UK where poverty and crime are frequently among the prevailing problems.

Effects when

The leisure-time programmes turn out to be of highly varying duration, ranging from a half day to more than two years. Some are one-off events with a special course, excursion or short stay, whereas other interventions are continuing leisure-time programmes or club or sports initiatives.

A special feature of leisure-time programmes is, however, that they often seek – especially those in the USA – to 'fill' the children's spare time.

The idea is that youth can incite each other to deviant behaviour if they are without any supervision (Rorie et al. 2011; Crank et al. 2003). This is consistent with the routine activities theory, which emphasises the presence of an opportunity without any vigilance from others as well as a motivated perpetrator and a suitable target (Cohen & Felson in Cross et al. 2009).

In an American context, most arrests are said to take place in the hours after school, so it would be extra dangerous to leave youth unsupervised in that period of time (Cross et al. 2010). The Neutral Zone, a club-like programme, was operated along the same principle in the 1990s, but only covered the hours from 10 pm to 2 am on Friday and Saturday nights. Most of the programmes reviewed – including the Neutral Zone – which are aimed deliberately at replacing unsupervised with supervised time cannot demonstrate any consistent effect. Either they have an unsuitable design or their results do not in themselves show that the intervention has any impact.

Many of the leisure-time programmes reviewed do have higher and deeper aims than providing a here-and-now alternative to possible troublemaking, though. For instance, they focus on the given youth's psychosocial development (Anderson-Butcher et al. 2003).

The interventions that have shown reliable, positive effects on the participating youth are typically one-year programmes. Their duration ranges between a school year, 116 programme days – scheduled a few times a week – 'less than a year' with no further specification, one year and up to 2½ years.

Thus, on the face of it, the preferable duration of leisure-time programmes seems to be a minimum of up to a year, if they are to produce tangible improvements in at-risk youth. It is not known, however, whether they produce long-term positive changes – the reviewed studies only demonstrate what it takes to ensure short-term results at the conclusion of the intervention.

Effects how – important and problematic

Can the studies say anything about the predominantly beneficial ways of running leisure-time activities? What characterises the effective programmes?

The more elements a preventive intervention has, the harder it is to isolate the particularly useful parts. Leisure-time programmes typically combine several elements.

In particular in the USA, such programmes have distinct academic objectives, with targeted teaching elements and help with homework, alongside the traditional elements of sports, other recreational activities, a place to hang out and excursions, which are common in Denmark. Therefore, it is not easy to say anything about the elements individually. This has not been the goal of the studies; they have rather sought to uncover the positive effects of the programmes by virtue of all of their components.

Three programmes stand out, however, in being short-term and removing young people from their normal daily environment. The measures range from therapeutic, outdoor courses lasting a half to two days (Davis et al. 1995) and a one-week attitude-moderating video project (Bowey & McGlaughlin 2006) to a two-week summer camp with activities aimed to foster pro-social skills (Allen et al. 2011). They are all characterised by having no visible impact on the youths' anti-social attitudes, specific *behaviour* or actual criminal offences, even if they can improve the young persons' *knowledge* about pro-social skills to a modest degree right after the intervention (Allen et al. 2011). Moreover, the attitude changes – for example, towards the police, crime and, in one case, school – that the programmes seek to stimulate seem *not* to be permanent (Bowey & MacGlaughlin 2006).

The design of these three studies is too weak to permit an impact examination, and the same applies to PRIDE, a week-long programme that takes place on a university campus in summer (Harris Wheeler 1997). However, considering the participants' own response and experience, the short-term programmes that take place away from their local base have not positively affected the ways they act.

Some leisure-time programme studies focus on *what makes them work well* and thereby translates them into successful programmes. Two reviewed studies focus exclusively on this aspect (Rorie et al. 2011; Cross et al. 2010), and, together with other studies that highlight particular issues, they will now be used to illustrate approaches that may be important for after-school programmes for youth at risk who are, in the given studies, about *12 years old*.

The two studies that focus more on process and implementation underscore that *well-educated, well-trained and stable staff* seem to have better skills for working with the children. This probably promotes a positive social climate and appealing, stimulating programme content. In addition, high-quality staff is presumed to be better at implementing the intervention as planned, for which reason its impact is improved (Cross et al. 2010).

Moreover, it seems that *structured activities* contribute to less deviant behaviour, and the youth have a greater tendency to moderate each other's behaviour. At the same time, the authors point out that *the staff should respond adequately to counter-normative behaviour*, but they find that adult staff often refrain from responding to indecent behaviour (Rorie et al. 2011). The researcher Gottfredson also pinpoints structure as a potentially important driver of a good leisure-time programme.

Whether more structure and better behaviour in leisure-time programmes themselves lead to behavioural improvements outside the programmes and after their conclusion cannot be inferred from the studies in question.

Furthermore, two high-quality studies highlight a *focus on personal and social skills* as a particularly fruitful approach in leisure-time programmes (Gottfredson et al. 2004; Durlak et al. 2010). These highly promising interventions specifically enhanced social and emotional skills under the acronym SEL (Social and Emotional Learning). In Durlak's systematic review delinquent behaviour was reduced, while positive social behaviour, the young person's perception of himself, school bonding, level of academic performance and grades improved significantly. Many of the youth were, however, not necessarily at any special 'risk'.

Within these approaches, Durlak & Co. showed that programmes with special SAFE elements are the only ones that strengthen the pupils' school attendance and attitude to substances. SAFE stands for Sequenced, Active, Focused and Explicit, with the learning taking place *stepwise, through active learning forms with focused time and attention with clearly defined objectives*. These approaches are used by clubs, local centres and initiatives, etc, in the USA (*ibid.* 2010).

The considerate focus of Boys and Girls Clubs of America on juvenile psychosocial development also seems to help the young people *personally* feel that they enjoy school and want to make a greater effort to achieve better grades – even if the club programme does not specifically focus on structure or academic elements (Anderson-Butcher et al. 2003). Whether it makes a real difference, the study cannot demonstrate as such.

Finally, *the young persons' active involvement and frequent participation* is necessary to ensure that the leisure-time programmes can make a positive difference for them (Arbreton & McLanahan 2002; MHB 2003).

It may also be necessary to *engage the youth again and again* (MHB 2003), notably young persons who are especially vulnerable to adversity in life. They may have difficulties with motivation and must be sought out repeatedly.

Furthermore, this type of intervention does not use volunteers to any major extent. Only four programmes – the night facility The Neutral Zone (Thurman et al. 1996), the educational enhancement programme offered by the BGCA clubs (Schinke et al. 2000) and the brief outdoor course referred to above (Davis et al. 1995) use volunteers in addition to professional, employed staff. Next, there is a description of collaboration between Club 21 in Copenhagen and the volunteer initiative, the Night Owls.

Finally, in a single case, volunteer professionals such as teachers, etc, assist programmes as teams of volunteers (Early Intervention Action Teams, EIA) (Crank et al. 2003). Many leisure-time programmes for at-risk youth around Denmark involve volunteers, but there is a lack of studies to illustrate their role and how they contribute to projects.

The challenges of working with youth at various types of risk are numerous.

For one thing, *accommodating youth with delinquent behaviour* rather than creating separate external initiatives exclusively for them is a constant problem.

Another recurring challenge is *attracting the youth who join voluntarily* – they must find the programme worthwhile going to (Sørensen & Dam 2000; Langager & Skov 2004).

Conversely, the initiatives should not be viewed as a regular reward of anti-social behaviour (Langager & Skov 2004).

At the same time, it is often difficult for leisure-time interventions to *capture and engage the right groups of youth* – those who are left most to themselves and may need a programme most (Gottfredson et al. 2004; Nichols 2004).

Cooperation is crucial to ensuring that a sufficient number of young people can be steered towards the programme (CRG 2006), and the leisure-time interventions show that teachers at school, parents, peers, outreach staff and case workers, police, etc, all cooperate on involving youth. Mentors may also fulfil this role. However, even with cooperative partners it is uncertain if there is enough awareness of all young persons at special risk – and projects may have inadequate resources to make the many attempts required (MHB 2003).

At the same time, the activities must frequently match the lifestyle and daily rhythm of young people, and programmes must offer different activities to different age groups if they want to retain them (CRG 2006). Also when young people take part in an intervention the challenge is *not to stigmatise them* (Sørensen & Dam 2000), which an *inclusive initiative*, for instance, might seek to counteract (Langager & Skov 2004).

Working with existing groups of friends together might moreover, in some cases, tend to *aggravate their group-oriented behaviour*, which also frustrates the programme (Sørensen & Dam 2000; Bowey & McGlaughlin 2006).

A similar trend can be seen in leisure-time programmes that bring maladjusted youth together. This involves the risk of *increasing their association with negative friends* (Arbreton & McClanahan 2002) and thus their risk of criminal behaviour or the like. Here, initiatives offering a place to stay or similar facilities for youth at a severe risk of crime may even lead to *violent incidents and clashes* at the facility (Thurman et al. 1996).

Finally, it is difficult to assess what can be done to achieve a long-term positive effect. There is, quite simply, a lack of greater focus on long-term goals and the studies that investigate them. At-risk youth must be given help to help themselves instead of being made system-dependent.

Effects why

Leisure-time programmes offer a variety of explanations for why they have positive effects.

For one thing, there is the rationale that unsupervised spare time increases the risk of youth acting recklessly, as stated above (Rorie et al. 2011). In that vein, it is important to intervene at the times when the young people are believed likely to act contrary to the law and/or spend

time in negative company. It may also be at times when other citizens feel insecure about their presence in the streets.

It may be problematic that initiatives referring to the risk factor of lack of supervision may require youth to be constantly engaged in a voluntary programme that covers so many hours that they have no time for inappropriate behaviour. Viewed in isolation, this approach offers no answers to how the youth could cope in future, nor does it contemplate ways of giving them the strength to withstand the other risks they have encountered or may encounter in future.

Most of the reviewed leisure-time programmes focus chiefly on recognising and developing the young persons' *skills* – including their emotional, social and cognitive skills (CRG 2006; Davis et al. 1995; Allen et al. 2011; Zief et al. 2006; Cross et al. 2010).

By enhancing these skills the programmes are assumed to be able to reduce the participants' delinquent and criminal behaviour, substance abuse, etc (Gottfredson et al. 2004).

In addition, the contact and bond with *supportive adults* and participation in meaningful and challenging activities with other youth may help young people to develop and use some of their skills and talents (Sørensen & Dam 2000; Anderson-Butcher et al. 2003; Durlak et al. 2010). In several cases, the adults may be viewed as role models for youth (Crank et al. 2003), and some leisure-time programmes have a specific focus on tolerance, inclusiveness and openness to cultural differences when the club has a diverse target group (Langager & Skov 2004) – and on inclusion (MHB 2003).

Some short-term programmes strive mainly to achieve attitudinal changes in youth (Bowey & McGlaughlin 2006), while one programme targeting gang-related crime deliberately seeks to emulate the benefits that youth may otherwise obtain from a gang, viz. support, somewhere to belong to, and challenging activities (Spergel in Arbreton & McClanahan 2002).

Leisure-time activities in brief

Leisure-time programmes of at least one year's duration with regular participation may have a positive effect on crime, schooling, behaviour, mental health, substance abuse and relationships in 10–16-year-old youth at both mild, more serious and gang-related risk in particularly distressed neighbourhoods in medium-sized and big cities, provided that they strengthen psychosocial skills and can divert the youth from anti-social company.

Mentoring and leisure-time activities

General programme impact and duration

The programmes that combine mentoring and leisure-time interventions show promising as well as ineffective and uncertain trends and even deterioration, both directly in relation to crime and indirectly through mediators, that is, protective factors or risks that are turned on and off and thereby may possibly influence criminal behaviour.

A programme may comprise positive, absent and, in a few cases, even adverse consequences at the same time. Significant setbacks were seen in two of the 20 studies. In other words, mentoring/leisure-time programmes may have many consequences, and the results vary with different subcategories of participants and the locations in which they are implemented (Baker et al. 1995; Hanlon et al. 2002; Stewart et al. 2009; Maxfield et al. 2003).

When viewed in relation to the question of effect, seven of the eight most reliable impact studies showed various positive and significant *changes* in the categories crime (including violence), behaviour, psychological consequences, substance abuse, schooling and relations. However, none of the eight studies found any significant *impact* on some of the same phenomena simultaneously analysed – including crime, behaviour, psychological consequences, schooling and substance abuse.

Two studies showed counterproductive consequences in two areas; substance abuse and crime. However, in one case, the effect was merely a less dismissive attitude to drugs (Royse 1998), which the author found was a natural development with age. In another case, the use of alcohol and controlled drugs increased significantly, but this rise was shown in only one of several evaluation forms (Maxfield et al. 2003).

In addition, the latter programme, the Quantum Opportunity Program, appeared to have the most adverse development in relation to crime as an impact category. Two years after the conclusion of the programme, the youth were significantly more likely to have been arrested or charged than the control group. The programme in question had, however, not been carried out as intensively in practice as intended, a fact pinpointed as a possible reason for its absent and even counterproductive result (Maxfield et al. 2003)⁹³.

Combined mentoring and leisure-time programmes are, again according to the studies reviewed, only *potentially promising* in relation to crime prevention. Out of as many as six studies that achieved the assessment 'high overall research quality' (H), two show a significant reduction in the youth's self-reported crime – both the frequency, the number of different types and the categories of violent and non-violent crime (Baker et al. 1995; Hanlon et al. 2002). At the same time, the South Baltimore Youth Center showed no improvement in pro-social behaviour (Baker et al. 1995), while individual counselling, group mentoring and remedial education showed no decline in the frequency with which youth were in contact with law enforcement authorities (Hanlon et al. 2002).

However, two high-quality studies show no significant impact of their combined mentoring/leisure-time programmes on criminal behaviour (Keating et al. 2002; Maxfield et al. 2003). On the other hand, one shows positive improvements in externalising behaviour at

⁹³ In a follow-up study about two years later, the former participants were significantly more likely to have been arrested or charged after the programme had concluded than the control group: Schirm A, Stuart E, McKie A. (2006). *The Quantum Opportunity Program Demonstration: Final Impacts*. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research

home and at school (Keating et al. 2002). The last two most thorough studies of mentoring/leisure-time measure various forms of delinquent behaviour rather than crime directly (Royse 1998; Herrera et al. 2008). The first finds no significant effect, while the second does, but only when the volunteer mentors in the programme are adults rather than young persons.

This is how the fairly *complex* change picture previously seen emerges – in this case through the benefit of the mentoring/leisure-time programmes relative to crime. Positive crime or behavioural improvements were nevertheless registered in as many as two-thirds of the stringent studies. However, these results exist alongside other less certain or absent, related changes. Again, it is seen that although this programme type cannot remedy everything, it can remedy some things.

If each study had investigated more impact categories, a more balanced picture might have emerged. The picture varies, however, depending on time, place, youth, the programme, the measuring instruments, the analyses, etc.

Mentoring/leisure-time studies of average quality that are just within the limits of measures that may be likely to claim effect⁹⁴ find no significant effects on criminal behaviour (Sørensen 2008) or violence specifically (Respress & Lufti 2006), but report significantly better grades at school and greater self-esteem (Respress & Lufti 2006).

Finally, the reported results include several not statistically significant improvements, both in the studies above and in the remaining 10.

These 10 studies, ie, 50% of the mentoring/leisure-time programme studies, have such a weak design when assessed against the yardstick applied that they cannot reliably pinpoint changes over time. Now, all 10 studies report at least one positive feature of the mentoring/leisure-time programmes examined. Two studies show positive and significant improvements in school performance, behaviour, psychological development and relations (Higginbotham et al. 2006; Rapp-Paglicci et al. 2011).

In the other cases, the results are mainly more qualitative reports concerning psychological characteristics (self-esteem) or social relations (new friends, a mentor, family) (de Anda 2001; Rogers 2011). It is also reported whether the youth themselves enjoy the programme (Derezotes 1995; Flewelling & Paschal 1999). In addition, a few point to less trouble, violence and gang involvement and greater employment and education as programme outcomes (Hritz & Gabow 1997; Leleur & Pedersen 1996).

The approaches of the 10 studies make it impossible, however, to gain any tangible knowledge of impact but, overall, the research quality of the mentoring/leisure-time programmes is far more solid than that of the leisure-time programme studies – also several of higher general quality than the mentoring programme studies.

Four studies investigate the long-term impact of mentoring/leisure-time programmes for youth at risk to some degree. In one, criminal behaviour declined significantly – mainly in the younger participants (Hanlon et al. 2002) – while another study of the same high research quality found only a brief effect in high school retention at the end of the programme (Maxfield et al. 2003), and a few years later it could no longer be shown. However, as mentioned before, there is a significantly higher probability of being arrested or charged among those who took part in the programme. In addition, two Danish studies from Copenhagen show some results,

⁹⁴ A rating on the SMS Scale equal to '3' – with measurement pre and post the programme and use of a control group.

with one being evaluated late in the process, allowing information about the youth to be collected six months later – without a control group, however (Leleur & Pedersen 1996). Most of these boys did not commit new crime after the programme ended, and the troublesome youth group they were part of before joining the programme seemed to have been split up (*ibid.*). Finally, the latest HardWork evaluation follows up on participants one year after their participation. This showed no statistical significance but some promising trends (Sørensen 2008).

All in all, each of the combined mentoring/leisure-time programmes has, in largely all cases, shown one of several promising outcomes. At the same time, however, the studies find non-provable, absent or, in a single case, harmful impact on at-risk youth.

Sometimes they have a positive impact on something.

In the impact categories of behaviour, crime (even violence), mental health, substance abuse, school and relations the studies have found solid signs of improvement. In the same substantial studies, the results now also evidence absence of any significant effect in the adjacent categories studied – also in the areas of crime, behaviour, mental health, substance abuse or school.

Stringent conclusions cannot be drawn as to whether the beneficial effects are sustained. A few studies conducted follow-up, and in those cases the outcomes were diverse.

Effects for whom – age, risk and groups

In most cases, the young participants in mentoring/leisure-time programmes are around 14 years old. However, they range all the way from five years to 24 years.

The studies that use control groups – and thus present more reliable, positive effects – comprise 11–12-, 9–15- and 11–14-year-old participants, respectively, for school-related improvements (Hanlon et al. 2009; Herrera et al. 2008; Respress & Lufti 2006), and primarily 13-year-old youth for reductions in crime (Hanlon et al. 2002) and delinquent behaviour (Keating et al. 2002).

The slightly older youth, generally aged around 15–16 years and above, seem to be studied in higher numbers for – and show – relational and emotional results, even though the outcomes are frequently less reliable due to the research designs applied (de Anda 2001; Derezotes 1995; Rapp-Paglicci et al. 2011; Stewart et al. 2009). This also applies, but to a smaller degree, to the age range from 10 to 19 years (Higginbotham et al. 2006; Rogers 2011).

Roughly speaking, in terms of age, mentoring/leisure-time programmes thus show indicators of positive outcomes, especially for 11–14-year-old youth in relation to crime, behaviour, and academic success, while beneficial personal and social skills only are indicated for slightly older youth.

There is a lack of substantial studies of the effects for boys viewed separately. The review comprises eight studies of programmes for boys or male adolescents exclusively or primarily, and six of them are also aimed at youth at more serious risk. Boys are traditionally more involved in crime than girls so this grouping makes sense and corresponds to the review's original primary target group. Conversely, it is a shame that only two studies are stringent enough to identify change in principle and that both found no significant change at all (Sørensen 2008; Royse 1998).

When it comes to the degree of risk to which the participating youth are reported to be exposed, half the programmes deal with youth at moderate risk, while the other half deal with a category of youth who already show criminal behaviour in various ways – but alongside other youth who are (still only) at moderate risk. The youth at moderate risk are typically assessed to be so because of widespread poverty and crime in their urban neighbourhoods (Hanlon et al. 2009; Baker et al. 2009), but some have also been enrolled specifically because of poor academic performance at school, for example. They play truant or show behavioural or emotional problems (Keating et al. 2002). The youth at serious risk have already been involved in criminal behaviour, joined gangs, carried weapons, sold drugs, been violent, been arrested or received some form of conviction or the like.

The positive impact of the mentoring/leisure-time programmes is represented most extensively among youth with a *milder* degree of risk. Solid studies in the review can, for example, demonstrate particular impact for boys and male adolescents in the areas of crime and violence. The positive effects decline with age in the South Baltimore Youth Center (Baker et al. 1995). In addition, academic performance improved significantly in an After-school Program Targeting Urban African American Youth (Hanlon et al. 2009), as well as in a Big Brothers/Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring programme, where behaviour was even more pro-social (Herrera et al. 2008), while internalising and externalising behaviour was reduced in an intensive mentoring program (Keating et al. 2002). Two studies of good quality, however, showed no significant or lasting positive effects (Maxfield et al. 2003; Royse 1998).

Only two of the studies that are stringent enough from an impact research perspective dealt with youth at more serious risk. One, a fine arts programme, was essentially targeted directly at youth who had been convicted and had psychological problems. As well as being far beyond the centre point on the risk continuum, the programme showed no significant effect in the area of crime. However, it showed improvements in family functioning and psychological symptoms such as suicidal and depressive tendencies, with the greatest effect being for girls (Stewart et al. 2009). They are, however, not the primary preventive focus here.

The other study showed a significant improvement in criminal behaviour in the form of lower frequency and a reduced range of crime types, for both violent and other crime. Two-thirds of the participants had previously been arrested and 18% been permanently expelled from school, and the older boys, who had previously been in trouble with the law and shown delinquent behaviour at school, still had considerable contact with the law courts at the post-programme follow-up measurement. Younger youth, who were less involved in crime, however, seemed to have experienced better programme outcomes than the older group. In fact, the authors state that the programme failed in terms of engaging older youth of about 15–17 years who were already increasingly involved in deviant behaviour. A negative correlation was shown to exist between their participation and deviant behaviour – including criminal activity and marijuana use (Hanlon et al. 2002).

In light of the knowledge available, this means that youth at moderate risk are probably most likely to gain full benefit from similar programmes. Proving whether youth at more severe risk may benefit will require more testing and evaluation.

Finally, almost half of the studies of combined mentoring/leisure-time programmes – nine to be precise – focus on groups in various ways. They may aim at gang prevention (Hritz & Gabow 1997; de Anda 2001; Derezotes 1995) or may problematise and involve existing youth groups in the programmes to varying degrees, as seen in some Danish studies (Sørensen 2008; Leleur & Pedersen 1996; Mehlbye & Hjelmar 2009) or define risk and measure effects

relating to gangs (Stewart et al. 2009; Maxfield et al. 2003; Respress & Lufti 2006). Unfortunately, tangible indicators of beneficial effects are also absent here, especially in relation to crime. Fairly reliable improvements are only seen in terms of family relationships and mentality in one study which has, however, a borderline target group as previously mentioned (Stewart et al. 2009), while two less reliable studies report improved self-esteem and grade point average, respectively (Respress & Lufti 2006) and no significant effect other than softer effect descriptions for education and employment, etc (Sørensen 2008). This pinpoints the fact that solid studies of group-related crime are few and far between and calls for future studies of whether these intervention types are beneficial in respect of these problems.

Thus, based on this knowledge, the mentoring/leisure-time programmes seem chiefly to have crime preventive potential for boys and girls at mild risk aged between 11 and 14 years. Older youth who have already started a negative career may in certain cases experience deterioration after participating in a mentoring/leisure-time programme.

Effects where

Where has the effect of mentoring/leisure-time programmes been proved to date?

Geographically, by far the majority of the studied mentoring/leisure-time programmes have been carried out and evaluated in the USA (16), which is, moreover, the only country in the review that presents studies of high overall research quality (H) and suitable impact measurement approaches (4 or 5 on the SMS Scale).

One programme is from the UK, while as many as three evaluations of programmes with mentoring and leisure-time elements are from Denmark: the Dogsled Project (1996), HardWork (2008) and Street Team (2009). Despite their often promising trends, the Danish studies have not been checked stringently enough to demonstrate substantial results relating to the effect of mentoring/leisure-time intervention in a Danish context. This would require more in-depth long-term studies going forward, and no knowledge is currently available.

The urban contexts of the mentoring/leisure-time programmes are, in the large majority of cases, urban city contexts. They are the location of as many as 18 of the 20 studies and these are also the contexts in which the most reliably documented improvements are shown (Hanlon et al. 2002; Baker et al. 1995 Herrera et al. 2008).

According to the review, medium-sized towns and rural districts show no particular indication of the effects of this type of intervention. Only in three cases do rural youth participate alongside urban youth, and either the research approach is not solid enough or the results are not categorised according to participants from the two contexts. Finally, rural youth show significantly better effects than their urban peers, with improved family relationships after a fine arts programme, which was, however, designed for youth with pronounced risk in a programme which showed no significant effect on crime either (Stewart et al. 2009). Two studies took place in medium-sized towns, but one is not sufficiently well-suited for impact purposes to provide stringent proof of effect (Mehlbye & Hjelmar 2009), while the other makes no distinction between participants from big cities and medium-sized towns (Herrera et al. 2008).

In other words, no studies address the implications of the urban context for the impact of a programme.

Based on the knowledge available, the urban context is thus most likely to generate similar positive results from a mentoring/leisure-time programme.

The communities in which the mentoring/leisure-time programmes are implemented are badly affected by poverty and crime – including gang-related crime in some cases (de Anda 2001; Derezotes 1995; Hritz & Gabow 1997). In addition, the contexts in which young people grow up are often characterised by unemployment, abuse, schools with high dropout rates and often a weak parent background, with the mother frequently being a single parent (Leleur & Pedersen 1996; Royse 1998).

All in all, a characteristic feature of the reviewed mentoring/leisure-time programmes is their demonstration of positive results for youth in the USA living in big city neighbourhoods with poverty, crime, unemployment, substance abuse, single-parent families and/or weak schools and other related problems.

Effects when

The duration of the mentoring/leisure-time programmes spans from six weeks to four years and varies with the programme elements involved – and, of course, the commitment of the youth and mentors.

The shortest programmes are characterised by having a target group at special risk. This is seen in the only six-week programme, Rap Therapy, which consists of weekly group therapy based on the young people's own culture. Here, some of the youth were already violent offenders, but having committed violent crime was not a requirement (DeCarlo & Hockman 2003). The eight-week Prodigy art programmes have a target group of participants with mental health problems who are often referred via the justice system (Stewart et al. 2009; Rapp-Paglicci et al. 2011). The research design of these studies is not too solid either, and only one checked improvement in criminal behaviour, but without finding any difference (Stewart et al. 2009). Family functioning and mental symptoms were alleviated significantly, for example (*ibid.*), although it may in fact be difficult to document this finding without follow-up measurements after the conclusion of the programmes.

At the other end of the spectrum are some three-year programmes, such as drop-in centres that the youth can attend after school, over weekends and during holidays (Baker 1995), and group mentoring programmes involving common activities (Leleur & Pedersen 1996). In the multifaceted after-school Quantum Opportunity Program participants who have not passed high school may remain with the programme for up to four years (Maxfield et al. 2003). The first – very reliable – study shows a significant effect on crime, while the second shows a promising effect six months later, but without using the research tools required. The latter study shows no general effect on crime or similar, but the explanation may be that *intensity* as well as *duration* alone may be important for the effect of the intervention. The programme strived to ensure 750 hours of participation a year, a goal that was not achieved at all (*ibid.*).

Initiatives offering both duration and intensity tend to result in some of the more demonstrably effective mentoring/leisure-time programmes, while programmes that end prematurely have obviously proved inadequate in achieving a sustained positive effect (Sørensen 2008).

Mentoring/leisure-time programmes that are intense and sustained – in other words, programmes offering at least one weekly one-hour meeting between mentor and youth for a minimum period of one school year – show solid effects for pro-social behaviour and school-

related effects (Herrera et al. 2008), externalising and internalising behaviour (Keating et al. 2002) and criminal behaviour (Hanlon et al. 2002).

The well-researched initiative, The Brothers Project based on male volunteer mentors, suggests, however, that there is no significant effect of a 15-month mentor-mentee match. Longer, more regular mentor-mentee meetings may possibly have given results. Unfortunately, many mentors did not report how much time they spent every month with their mentee (Royse 1998).

Thus, overall, it seems that mentoring/leisure-time programmes are more beneficial if they are intense, offer frequent meetings, and last a minimum of one year.

Effects how – important and problematic

Can certain trends be identified regarding how the content of mentoring/leisure-time programmes has made them particularly useful for the participating youth and their benefit from them?

The sheer number and diversity of the programmes, with their varying durations and differing sub-elements, make generalisation difficult. It is also difficult to distinguish which elements lead to which results, or whether the elements in reality only have a positive effect when they interact. However, a distinctive characteristic of all the programmes is that they combine a mentoring function with some form of common peer activities. This in itself gives the programme greater scope for the young participants' change processes compared with previous programme types.

Here, the focus is primarily on the programmes that show the most solidly documented and positive effects of mentoring/leisure-time programmes, along with studies that have simultaneously focused on effect and process.

Above all, it is important that *the content of a programme can change and evolve to match the participants' needs*, and that it addresses the needs identified by the youth themselves (Baker et al. 1995).

The programme must be designed to provide *a haven from the surrounding risk environment and offer a more positive social context* than the alternative, for example the street (Baker et al. 1995).

The greatest effect will be achieved if programmes offer *skills-based activities* that enhance social, emotional and/or cognitive skills. A range of arts may also be a way for young people to express themselves, and variation in *the activities can attract* participants (Baker et al. 1995:72). The common competence-building activities offered are also an important step for the youth towards establishing a new identity and behaviour (Sørensen 2008:4).

It has proved beneficial, for example – also in a high-impact crime reduction programme – to *offer help with homework and other school help* as required and otherwise *seek to counteract the youth's association with delinquent friends* (Hanlon et al. 2002:460).

Varied activities may make it easier to attract and capture the youth's interest, and at the same time, many cannot hold their concentration on the same activity. Engaging in diverse activities means the youth will reveal both their weaknesses and their strengths, information that the mentor can use to work with the particular mentee's role and position in a group based on other criteria than crime on the street, for example. The contemplated activity may

be announced as a surprise to avoid anyone opting out because of expectations of fear, boredom, lack of skills, etc. When youth opt out of activities this seems to be due to events and trends in their own life. The activities end up being pushed into the background while the mentor's company becomes most important (Leleur & Pedersen 1996).

Programme staff must possess *good interpersonal skills and be there for the youth* (Baker et al. 1995:71). In Danish evaluations, the personal bonds with a committed and capable adult also appear to be important for success. The young person tries not to betray the mentor's trust. Their relationship and the activities open the path to personal attitude coaching (Leleur & Pedersen 1996). Mentors may contribute *social support* and, via the youth's *identification with suitable role models in their local environment*, help to prevent youth from developing criminal behaviour (Keating et al. 2002:718).

The combination of a mentoring function and recreational activity and interaction will provide many advantages. For instance, the possibility of *interacting with other mentor matches* in shared activities and fellowship may give mentors important input on the youth's social skills and potential problems when interacting with peers. Usually the mentor can only assess such insight during his own relationship with the mentee, which is often one-on-one. Being with older mentors may also serve as a support for young mentors in particular, while bolstering their commitment to the programme.

Both mentors and mentees may be liable, however, to be distracted by any other people present, but the meeting setting is not associated with the quality of the mentoring relationship, nor with its degree of closeness. When mentors themselves are only slightly older than their mentees, the match will last longer if they complete these common activities. At the same time mentor training is particularly important to younger mentors (Herrera et al. 2008:20), as are the other key mentoring factors at play, as we saw in the section on mentoring in the first part of this chapter.

In extension of this, a recent evaluation of the Danish programme HardWork *highlights the combination of group work and individual relationship work*. This combination offers more opportunities to work on adjusting the mentee's behaviour and enhancing his skills.

In the case of HardWork, the mentor role is filled by employed, supportive key persons. The group is used for multiple purposes:

1. An attractive after-school alternative to life on the street for young people.
2. The staff member observes the mentee in a social context with other young people.
3. The staff member can deal with specific conflicts and situations as they arise.
4. The young people can practise a changed behaviour in a secure group.
5. The youth people mutually discuss and reflect on what good behaviour is.
6. The young people can serve as role models for each other, offering support for positive change.
7. The young people can experience success in a group context.
8. The mentee can strengthen his skills through interaction and activity in the group.

A range of methods should probably in order to make different groups work. (Sørensen 2008).

Dealing with youth in groups takes into account that young people orient themselves in relation to peers. A programme working with an existing group to give it a collective boost will signal respect for the positive aspects of the relationships (Leleur & Pedersen 1996:16). The group may, however, have both a positive and a negative influence on its individual members. Involving already existing groups will help prevent friends from outside the programme from

persuading a young person not to join or from drawing him in a different direction, and efforts can be made to move all the members together.

Good group work will frequently split the group up – rather than keep it together – as the youth gain insight and wish to adjust their behaviour. The youth will become integrated in other group contexts at their schools, in sports clubs or the like (Sørensen 2008).

It is absolutely essential that both *the relation and the activity have a clearly identified goal of positive development* (Sørensen 2008:18).

Finally, programmes that *enlist parents* seem particularly effective (Hanlon et al. 2002). This is also seen in more process-oriented evaluations from Denmark, which stress the need to involve the family in parallel with the youth focus in the process of creating positive change in behaviour and daily life. Involving the family promotes better communication and understanding between the young people and their parents and reduces conflicts at home. If clear agreements are in place, neither the young person nor staff feel that their mutual trust or relationship has been compromised. Contact persons and youth case workers must be trained and encouraged to work more with the family (Sørensen 2008:3,15).

However, the mentoring/leisure-time activities have proved to have the following difficulties:

The strong personal bond between mentor and mentee may get too demanding and make the mentor opt out. In particular, programmes that do not include supervision are problematic (Leleur & Pedersen 1996). In addition, there may be difficulties associated with having to be available constantly. This is limited by the mentor's private life and overtime rules (Maxfield et al. 2003:7).

Activities and learning may be too abstract and irrelevant to the participants' life, their interests and their problems and may therefore not appeal (Leleur & Pedersen 1996).

Extravagant and extreme activities are not always beneficial. On the one hand, activities may motivate mentors and mentees to participate. On the other, they may be disproportionately costly and ill-suited to developing or showing skills. Destinations in the wild are popular, but the capacities of both youth and social workers are typically restricted in these environments, and the physical challenges may be too extreme or tough. What is more, the tests and sanctions – usually physical – on such excursions may tip the balance between harsh and affable consequences as well as between good and bad masculine values. *The group of youth engaged in an activity may moreover influence each participant in both positive and negative ways.* (Leleur & Pedersen 1996).

The follow-up and conclusion of mentoring/leisure-time programmes are frequently inadequate. At the same time, the personal bonds between the participants and their mentors may be too strong to be transferred directly. Projects may leave a vacuum (Leleur & Pedersen 1996).

Recruiting mentors for volunteer programmes is often difficult, leaving the demand for volunteers unmet. Some mentees may find that their mentor suddenly moves out of town, etc, which disrupts the match. If a replacement cannot be found, the young person cannot continue the programme. In addition, *volunteers may find it hard to meet the requirements for reporting the time spent with the young person, no matter the medium – e-mail, telephone, diary, postcards* (Royse 1998:156) – and reporting can be an important part of ensuring correct programme implementation.

The special characteristics of mentoring and the mentoring match may be a challenge. Young mentors may cancel appointments with their mentees more often than older ones. In respect of gender, volunteer mentors are most frequently women. Young mentees matched with young mentors may at times feel closer to a same-gender mentor, while mentees with adult mentors may report greater closeness when the mentor is of the opposite gender (boys matched with adult women). Young volunteer mentors who are given special privileges for participating – for example, points at school – are slightly more likely to end the relationship once they have completed the minimum commitment, especially if they are facing a major personal change such as a new education programme. However, volunteers who take part without any special rewards will typically continue the relationship beyond the required year. Finally, volunteers simultaneously involved in lots of other volunteer activity may often opt out more frequently (Herrera et al. 2008:8).

Overall, local agencies may find it *difficult to implement intense and more complex and comprehensive programmes* than they have been used to (Maxfield et al. 2003).

Effects why

The evidence for why mentoring/leisure-time programmes may create positive changes is fairly similar to the findings of the other two programme types. The young persons' own skills are found to be strengthened, facilitated and improved by supportive adults, with whom they forge confident and informal bonds (Baker et al. 1995:81-82). The mentee's identification with a suitable role model and the mentor's efforts to prevent the mentee's association with deviant friends are also a typical rationale (Keating et al. 2002:718; Hanlon et al. 2002) – in addition to the impact of the skills-based activities.

Mentoring and leisure-time programmes in brief

In a city community with many social and financial risk factors, mentoring/leisure-time programmes that stress skills-based activities carried out together with other youth plus a relationship with a committed and continuously supportive adult may positively impact 11-14-year-old children at a moderate rate of risk in the areas of crime, behaviour, mental health, substance abuse, schooling and relations, provided that the programme duration is at least one year with weekly contact.

Across mentoring and leisure-time activities

Similarities

The change theories of mentoring, leisure-time and combined mentoring and leisure-time programmes are similar in many respects, viz. *'the narrative of how the activities offered under a project will produce the intended effects'*⁹⁵.

These theories all emphasise that the adults engaged in a given programme should acknowledge and foster the positive attributes, strengths and emotional, cognitive and social skills of the adolescents, for instance, by involving them in challenging and meaningful activities.

The adult must be a person whom the youth can trust and with whom they can develop confidential and preferably informal bonds⁹⁶. The adult is a constant support to the youth and can also serve as a positive role model⁹⁷.

Reservations

Certain reservations exist, however, as regards mentoring and leisure-time programmes, respectively.

Mentoring programmes that do not comprise regular, consistent mentor-mentee meetings will reduce the likelihood of the intervention attaining the desired results,⁹⁸ and unstable mentoring relationships may, in fact, frequently be worse than nothing for a child's self-confidence⁹⁹. Duration and quality are alpha and omega.

In addition, although mentoring programmes may indeed have a positive impact on youth, there is no guarantee that this impact will be reflected in crime reduction or prevention, because the mentoring programmes either rarely address this problem in itself¹⁰⁰, or else they investigate impact on all potential, beneficial parameters.

In the same vein simply spending time in a club or on sports and other activities is not enough. It is improbable that these pursuits would reduce criminal behaviour in itself and, in addition, short, non-intense programmes cannot be expected to provide any noticeable change¹⁰¹. In fact, after-school programmes may become risky if young criminals or 'high risk youth' gain negative influence on other participants at lower risk¹⁰².

In extension of this point the young people who take advantage of clubs and other after-school initiatives may not always be the 'right' ones – those who turn up are not necessarily those in genuine need of a remedial programme¹⁰³.

⁹⁵ (Connel & Kubisch in MHB 2003:25)

⁹⁶ (Baker et al. 1995:81-82)

⁹⁷ (Keating et al. 2002:718; Hanlon et al. 2002)

⁹⁸ (Royse 1998)

⁹⁹ (Karcher in Herrera et al. 2008:18).

¹⁰⁰ (Shiner in Bowey & McGlaughlin 2006:271)

¹⁰¹ (Hirschi in Gottfredson et al. 2004:254; Sandford in Rogers 2011:161)

¹⁰² (Gottfredson in Crank et al. 2003:345)

¹⁰³ (Langager & Skov 2004:31)

Finally, it has been evidenced that those who can benefit from leisure-time and mentoring programmes¹⁰⁴ are the younger youth who have not started criminal or other delinquent behaviour.

Potential

Mentoring and leisure-time programmes have many potential benefits in combination.

Attractive activities carried out together with friends may, especially to start with, appeal to and commit participants – or conversely, a mentor may inspire a mentee to take part in activities. It can work both ways. Even unfocused activities may have a more focused objective and may alternate from receiving youth ‘passively’ to offering them various challenges. In addition, youth may gain benefits, especially when group activities are linked to important elements from the young persons’ daily life and experiences¹⁰⁵. Moreover, the programme and the sequencing of its elements should be adjusted to the individual participants’ needs and progressive development¹⁰⁶.

Leisure-time activities often offer a safe and secure place to be, while mentors or staff can act as positive role models. Both the mentoring role and activities may foster and mutually strengthen the participants’ social and personal development, and a staff member working both individually as a mentor and with group activities may use the group’s social dynamics to help drive the participants’ reflective processes and improvement.

At the same time, programmes often work best if they also enlist parents and the support of the community¹⁰⁷. In some cases parents provide volunteer assistance on excursions, or get involved on an ongoing basis in the young person’s activity and development via the adults who run the specific programme.

Relationships, both among the youth themselves and between youth, staff, parents and other players in their community – for instance, volunteer mentors from the local area – help to integrate the youth’s broader social context in a multifaceted programme. Programmes like this may be particularly promising because they have the potential to strengthen many simultaneous protective factors and thus develop a young person’s skills.

Thus, combined leisure-time and mentoring programmes and parental involvement will extend the support given to young people through various social arenas in which positive development processes can evolve and be mutually assistive.

This is consistent with Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory¹⁰⁸ and the hypotheses of other researchers that multimodal crime prevention using several simultaneous methods, elements and social players is more effective¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁴ (Hanlon et al. 2002)

¹⁰⁵ (MHB 2003:8, 81; DeCarlo & Hockman 2003:50-51)

¹⁰⁶ (Nichols 2004:179)

¹⁰⁷ (Hanlon et al. 2009)

¹⁰⁸ (Higginbotham et al. 2006)

¹⁰⁹ (Gottfredson et al. 2004:255-256;

Chapter 6

Individual summaries of the studies reviewed

This chapter provides individual overview of the studies reviewed and their programmes, making it easy for the reader to study each of them in detail according to interest and need.

For the sake of clarity, the studies are organised according to their programme type:

Mentoring, Leisure-time activities and combined **Mentoring & leisure-time activities**.

The studies are first and foremost identified and listed using the title of the programme they address or the name assigned to them by the authors.

In systematic reviews, the studies reviewed are traditionally organised by author, with a deliberate focus on aims, study design, sample, methodology and analysis. As this publication targets a wider target group of professionals, interest groups and other key players within the broad field of prevention, the overview is angled so as to provide as detailed, specific and tangible a programme description as possible – including theory, target group, location, results and essential experiences. This is then followed by a brief outline of the study's design and methodology. In principle, this allows the reader to focus on his areas of interest.

The reference list provides the information source for each study in the event that the reader requires further information regarding analysis and sample size, for example.

The idea is for the summaries to make it unnecessary to refer to the main study and to provide such a precise picture of the prevention programme and its context that it is possible for the reader to assess whether he faces similar challenges – and can gain useful inspiration and knowledge from the study.

Deliberate weight has been given to providing as authentic and nuanced a description of the programmes and their implementation as possible in relation to studies' presentation. The reasons for this are twofold: first it is useful for professionals planning a similar programme, and second it better complies with the research standards for transparency and validity.

Thus the study summaries are open to individual examination, assessment and criticism by professionals and researchers.

Among other things, variations in programme implementation and comments relating to particular challenges during the process route are outlined under 'Programme description' and 'Findings'.

As the studies do not offer the same amounts of information, the summaries vary in length.

On the next page is a list of all the included programmes, stating the country in which they take place, the year the study was published and the summary page number so that the interested reader can easily find his way to the relevant programme(s).

Mentoring

Programme title and year of publication	Country	Page
Big Brothers Big Sisters (2000 (1995))	USA	100
Big Brothers Big Sisters (2002)	USA	101
Big Brothers Big Sisters Ireland (2005)	Ireland	102
Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands (2001)	USA	103
Coaching for Communities (CfC) (2009)	England	104
Den Korte Snor (The Tight Leash) (2010)	Denmark	105
Mentoring Interventions to Affect Juvenile Delinquency and Associated Problems (2008)	USA	106
The Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) (1998)	USA	107
The psycho-educational small-group component of CYS SAP (2006)	USA	108
Volunteer mentoring scheme (2007)	England	109

Leisure-time activities

Programme title and year of publication	Country	Page
An Educational enhancement program offered by the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (2000)	USA	111
ASP (enhanced after-school program) (2011)	USA	112
After-School Programs (2006)	USA	113
After-School Program with 'All Stars' (2010)	USA	114
ASPs that enhance youth's personal and social skills (2010)	USA	115
Boys and Girls Clubs of America (2003)	USA	116
Enhanced after-school program (2009)	USA	117
Gang Prevention/Gang Intervention Through Targeted Outreach (2002)	USA	118
Klub 21 (Club 21) (2004)	Denmark	120
Maryland's After School Community Grant Program (MASC GP) (2004)	USA	122
Pendlerprojektet (The Commuter Project) (2000)	Denmark	123
Personal Responsibility In Developing Excellence (PRIDE) program (1997)	USA	125
Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) (2006)	UK	126
Ropes Course Training (1995)	USA	128
Summer Leadership Camp 2008 (2011)	USA	129
The Ada Sheriffs Youth Foundation (SYF) (2003)	USA	130
The Neutral Zone (1996)	USA	131
The Summit project (2004)	UK	132
The Youth Crime Reduction Video Project (2006)	England	133
The Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) (2003 + 2008)	UK	134

Mentoring & leisure-time activities

Programme title and year of publication	Country	Page
An After-school Program Targeting Urban African American Youth (2009)	USA	136
An intensive mentoring program (2002)	USA	137
Big Brothers/Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring (2008)	USA	138
Diversionary activities (2011)	England	141
GRASP (Denver's Gang Rescue and Support Project) (1997)	USA	143
HardWork (2009)	Denmark	144
4-H/Mentoring: Youth and Families with Promise (YFP) (2006)	USA	148
Hundeslædeprojektet (The Dogsled Project) (1996)	Denmark	150
Individual counseling, group mentoring and remedial education (2002)	USA	152
Late Nite Basketball Project/Program (1995)	USA	153
Project R.E.S.C.U.E. (Reaching Each Student's Capacity Utilizing Education) (2001)	USA	154
RAP Therapy (2003)	USA	155
ROP, Rites of Passage (included in SAGE) (1999)	USA	157
Street Team – outreach work contact person scheme and club (2009)	Denmark	159
The Brothers Project (1998)	USA	160
The HEARTS program (Health, Education in the Arts, Refining Talented Students) (2006)	USA	161
The Prodigy Program (2011)	USA	163
The Prodigy Cultural Arts Program (2009)	USA	164
The Quantum Opportunity Program (2003)	USA	165
The South Baltimore Youth Center (1995)	USA	166

Mentoring programmes

Title: Big Brothers Big Sisters

Authors and year of publication: Tierney, J. et Grossman, J. – with Nancy Resch (2000 (1995))

Programme description: A volunteer mentoring programme with a high level of contact that aims to pair young people with a caring, adult friend. The role of the mentor is to support the young person in his/her daily activities and development as a whole person rather than changing the person's behaviour or character. The adult volunteers and the youngsters are matched and commit themselves to meeting two to four times a month for approx. four hours per meeting for at least one year. BBBS staff screen, match, provide support and maintain supervision throughout the programme according to national Big Brothers Big Sisters of America standards that are tailored to the local conditions. In the above context, tailoring covers philosophy, geography, budget and the needs of the youth participants. The following standards must always apply in BBBS programmes: 1. The volunteer mentors are screened so that youngsters are protected from those posing a potential threat, those unable to honour the time commitment or those unable to forge positive youth relations. The screening procedures are rigorous and time-consuming. 2. The youth are screened by means of a written application, interviews with the parent and the child and an assessment of the home situation. Usually the youth participants come from a single-parent family, live in the agency's area and, at the very least, have a minimum of social skills. The youth participants and their provider must also undertake to comply with the programme rules. 3. Generally speaking, the training of the volunteer mentors consists of informing them about the programme's duties and rules. Many places also offer training in identifying and reporting sexual abuse. Further, intensive training is recommended but not mandatory. Further training often includes presentations on youth development phases, communication, the ability to set boundaries, tips on relationship building and recommendations on how best to interact with the youngsters (a so-called 'Little Brother' or 'Little Sister'). 4. BBBUSA recommends that local BBBS programmes match on the basis of the volunteer's ability to meet the needs of the specific youth. Practicalities such as gender, geographical proximity and accessibility are taken into consideration by the local BBBS agencies. At the same time, the youth, mentor and parent are asked to state their preferences. 5. To ensure a good match, supervision is emphasised. Contact must be established with the parent, the youth and the mentor within two weeks of the match taking place. During the first year, monthly phone contact with the volunteer mentor must be maintained, just as there must be monthly contact with the youth and/or the parent. The youth must be contacted directly at least four times in the course of the first year. After the first year, contact with programme staff is reduced to once every three months. Programme staff also support the match by offering guidance when problems arise in the mentoring/mentee relationship. In practice, matches meet on average about three times a month for approx. four hours per meeting for almost 12 months. Match supervision and support costs about USD 1,000 per match.

Theory: A successful relationship between the mentor and the mentee can help the youngsters to develop trusting relationships with others, express their anger more constructively and generally relate better to others. By providing youth with positive role models, helping them to deal with peer pressure, getting the youngsters to think about the consequences of their actions and getting them involved in socially acceptable activities, the volunteer mentors prevent youth participants from embarking on the road to alcohol or drug abuse and criminal behaviour.

Target group: While programme participants are aged between 10 and 16, the average mentee age is 12. Having said this, the BBBS programme covers the 5 to 18 age range based on national standards. Ninety percent of the children live in single-parent families and over half of the remainder live with their grandparents. Many are from low-income households and 40% also have a history of substance abuse. Over a quarter have a history of violence or have been the victims of physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Some have seen their parents go through separation or divorce.

Location: Major cities in the USA – Philadelphia, Rochester (New York), Minneapolis, Columbus (Ohio), Wichita (Kansas), Houston, San Antonio and Phoenix.

Findings: The programme has achieved good results in several areas, with differing degrees of improvement for different sub groups of participants. The programme reduces the likelihood of youngsters striking someone within the last 12 months, the onset of drug abuse (minority youth), drinking alcohol or playing truant from school – and there is a slight improvement in grade averages (especially among minority girls) and attitudes toward homework. Relations with peers (mostly minority boys) and the youths' parents in general (especially white boys) improve – also in relation to the control group. However, there is no significant improvement in the youngsters' self-image or the number of social and cultural activities in which they take part. The authors believe that the relationship with the mentor and the support given to the programme match are important criteria for success. In contrast to the control group, however, there is no significant effect in relation to the number of times youth have cheated in tests, been involved in fights, been sent to the school principal's office, committed risky acts, smoked tobacco, destroyed property or committed theft. Male volunteer mentors are more difficult to recruit, which is why boys find themselves waiting longer for a mentor.

Study design: Pre-post-design with randomly selected control and programme group. Questionnaires are given to the youngsters regarding demographic information, effect measures and the mentor relationship, while their parents/providers answer questions about the mentor relationship and provide general background information on the youngsters. In addition, BBBS programme staff complete forms in which they assess mentor performance, describe any potential match problems, give reasons for terminating a match and ask questions about match length and frequency. Senior staff at each agency also answer questions about the individual programme's practices and provide information about the type of youngsters they serve.

Study rating: High

Title: Big Brothers Big Sisters

Authors and year of publication: Grossman, J. & Rhodes, J. (2002)

with analysis of data from Tierney & Grossman's (2000) above-mentioned study, which is why *programme description, theory, target group and location are not repeated*.

Findings: Most of the significant positive effects are seen after 12 months in the programme – as opposed to only 0-6 or 6-12 months. After 12 months of mentoring, there is a reduced incidence of substance abuse, truancy and an increased perception of school abilities and social acceptance among youth participants. Programmes of less than a six-month duration result in an increase in the alcohol consumption among programme youth. Another calculation, which does not allow for possible bias, also shows that a match lasting less than three months can have a negative impact on self-esteem and perception of school abilities. Overall, the significant positive effects increase with the duration of the mentor/mentee relationship, which is why sufficient resources for screening, training and supporting the matches are important.

As an indicator of the increased likelihood of a breakdown in the mentoring relationship or mentoring duration, the authors point to matches with youth that have been referred to educational or psychological programmes or have experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Unfortunately these youngsters are also the most likely to expect rejection and experience the negative consequences of a short-term relationship. Furthermore, matches with 13-16-year-olds have a higher probability of breaking down than those with 10-12-year-olds. Matches with volunteer mentors with a higher income last longer than those involving low-income mentors. Compared with the 26-30-year-olds, 18-25-year-old volunteers are more likely to terminate a match.

Matches between women/girls ended slightly more often than matches between men/boys. Matches between minorities ended slightly earlier than matches with Caucasians. However, this does not apply to

minority relationships where race was an explicit match criterion. Cross-race matches end more often than Caucasian matches, but this does not apply to matches where the youngster's interests and those of the volunteer mentor have been the primary match criterion.

Study design: An analysis based on Tierney & Grossman (2000) regarding the impact of the duration of the mentor relationship and the characteristics of a long-term match for the volunteer mentors, youth and the matches themselves.

Study rating: High

Title: Big Brothers Big Sisters Ireland

Authors and year of publication: Brady, B. et al. (2005)

Programme description: The original American BBBS programme has been adapted to the Irish context and aims to make a positive difference to the lives of young people through a professionally supported, one-on-one relationship with a caring, adult volunteer. The volunteers, Big Brothers or Big Sisters, are friends, mentors and positive role models who help the youngsters to realise their specific potential. The actual programme varies according to the unique match. The programme, which comprises several elements and a programme manual, focuses on strengths and takes into account the youngsters' personal, family and local community contexts. First, the volunteer mentors are screened in order to eliminate those unable to undertake a serious time commitment, forge a caring relationship or perhaps those capable of inflicting physical or emotional harm. Volunteer mentors are recruited with the help of posters and campaigns, etc, and are screened using an application form, references, criminal record checks, home visits and an interview. Assessed according to their suitability and the best possible youth match, mentors receive training and information and are required to sign a one-year contract. The youngsters are referred to the programme by local professionals, and programme staff visit the family and the youth in question to get to know them and ensure parental consent. Information may also be obtained from schools and the youth is asked to sign a contract before being matched. Youth who do not sign a contract, whose social skills are too poor or whose problems are too serious are declared unsuitable for the programme. Careful consideration is given to matches, which are based on the youngster's needs, the mentor's abilities and the parents' preferences. The mentor and mentee engage in jointly agreed activities at least one hour a week – go for a walk, go to the cinema, do homework, cook meals, play games, football, etc. Supervision is ensured through contact with the parent, the youth and volunteer mentors within two weeks after match start-up. This is followed by monthly telephone contact or planned meetings involving the mentor, the parent and the youth for the full duration of the match during the first year and in-depth interviews every three months with each of the parties alone to evaluate the programme. In addition, the programme ensures regular informal contact between the programme staff and the parties involved as well as activities that bring together all matches in an informal social gathering every three months. The programme concludes with an interview involving a detailed review of the match. Here, staff assess whether the programme goals have been realised. A final letter is sent to all the parties, who are invited to take part in a concluding activity organised by the programme staff. Case activities are documented throughout the programme.

Theory: A positive relationship between a young person and an older mentor will prevent future problems or support youngsters in difficulty. Having a caring friend can help to develop positive values/traits and make a difference to the young person's social and emotional development. The programme takes into account the needs and competencies of the youth participants. The mentor relationship can help to foster a commitment to learning, the individual's positive perception of him- or herself and the future, positive values such as caring, social justice, honesty and responsibility as well as the social skills needed to make friends, plan, make decisions and resist negative behaviour. Social capital and social control theories underpin the programme.

Target group: The target group is 11-14-year-olds whose behaviour or social conditions give cause for concern. Some are refugees and many come from single-parent families and/or a background marred by poverty, abuse or violence. Having said this, the programme is targeted at 10-18-year-olds in general. Most of the participants are girls, as male mentors are hard to recruit.

Location: Medium-sized cities and rural areas of Ireland.

Findings: Most of the mentors find that the youngsters have benefited from the programme, but over a quarter are unsure. Some feel that the programme has improved the self-confidence, the communication skills and positive attitude of the youth participants. BBBS staff find that the majority of matches have achieved positive results. Most of the youngsters feel that the relationship focuses on their needs and are 'extremely satisfied' with their mentor, whom they describe as being emotionally committed. However, some youngsters are bored, do not feel they can trust their mentor, experience a clash of interests with their mentor, experience cancellations or feel guilty about cancelling meetings themselves. Mentors point to a lack of transition once the match is over. It has also proved difficult to recruit male mentors.

Study design: Qualitative and quantitative data collection. Questionnaires for mentors and youth participants at one time, focus groups with mentors, interviews with key people and document study of match files and quarterly assessments.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Midlands

Authors and year of publication: Thompson, L. & Kelly-Vance, L. (2001)

Programme description: A mentoring programme employing volunteer mentors where the national BB/BS office sets out the framework for screening and matching procedures and standards for volunteer mentors and youth programme participants and their supervision. The volunteer mentors are screened by the local BB/BS agency using a minimum of three personal references, background checks (police checks, child abuse records check), individual interview and home visits. The mentors commit to a one-year programme, but the majority continue beyond the first year. The volunteer mentors and the families are trained by programme staff. The youth participants are screened by means of an interview with the parent/provider, an interview with the child, school records and home visits. Once the match has been established, the mentor and mentee meet once a week and on an ongoing basis in an amicable relationship, engaging in activities in which they share a common interest and which are jointly agreed with the youth's parent – eg, cinema outings, games, homework, speaking on the phone and other activities in which friends engage. The BB/BS agency also sponsors activities that are jointly attended by the mentor and the mentee: Such activities include mini golf, watching baseball, bowling, a visit to a planetarium or watching a play. The recommended norm is two to four hours of weekly contact between mentor and mentee, with three to four meetings a month being a criterion for programme participation. The match is supervised to ensure adherence with mandatory programme elements. Supervision is achieved through contact with the parent, the youth and the volunteer mentor within two weeks of the match and monthly contact thereafter during the first year of the match. After this, contact between all the parties is maintained on a quarterly basis.

Theory: The mentor is a positive role model who provides the extra individual attention that at-risk youth are missing. This reduces some of the risk factors facing at-risk youth. Mentoring programmes can reduce some of the academic risks, and this results in improved academic performance at school.

Target group: The target group is 9-16-year-olds, although the average age is 12. Programme participants are youth who come from homes with a single provider and face an added risk factor in the form of poverty, placement outside the home, hanging out with criminal peers, substance abuse, a history of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or a family history of domestic violence, physical disability, involvement in the juvenile justice system, academic problems and frequent school absence, staying

behind after school or expulsion. The study only tests boys, as they were the only ones on the waiting list – used for the control group – for more than two months.

Location: The Midlands in the USA

Findings: The academic performance of the boy participants in mathematics and reading was significantly better than that of the control group overall – the only exception being spelling. It is particularly interesting in light of the fact that improved academic performance is not a specific aim of the programme, whose main focus is to provide general support and friendship. It is possible, however, that the mentees were encouraged to do their homework by their mentors. The authors point to the voluntary screening, training and match standards and procedures as important success criteria. Furthermore, the programme benefited from clearly defined expectations from all the parties, ongoing supervision, consistent contact between adult mentors and youth participants, and the programme staff to implement and supervise the programme.

Study design: Pre- and post-design with control group. The use of standardised youth tests on school performance and intelligence. Parents and youth participants are also asked about the actual time spent together with their mentor.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Coaching for Communities (CfC) in the 'Youth at Risk' organisation's version

Authors and year of publication: Berry, V. et al. (2009)

Programme description: The CfC mentoring programme consists of an initial residential experience that offers young people the chance to explore the possible causes of their problems. This is then followed by a nine-month period during which programme participants work with a voluntary adult mentor from the local community who helps them address their problems and achieve the goals they have set for themselves during the residential stay. A mentor may come from a local company that can help youth identify new opportunities. Involvement in the local community is a key focus of the programme and all the volunteer mentors and local programme staff come from areas close to the local community in which the youngsters live. The residential component consists of an intensive five-day course combining classroom exercises with physical activity. The course aims to teach the youngsters how to distinguish. Here the course tutor explores a structured series of topics – eg, attitudes to rules, the importance of keeping promises, learning from what you already know, how the past influences the present, distinguishing fact from interpretation, creating a breakthrough, managing failure and learning the meaning of responsibility. At the end of the course, each participant is assigned a mentor who is in direct or indirect contact with them at least three times a week. Once a month for nine months, programme staff and volunteer mentors work on a thematised goal. The themes are selected and developed by the local programme organisers and include building relationships, personal preferences and goals, knowledge of drugs, sexual health, local community insight and teamwork, car theft, driving lessons, professional skills and self-expression. The youngsters who complete the programme attend a one-day, follow-up session.

Theory: Develops protective factors in young people's lives by introducing them, for example, to new, pro-social networks and working toward pro-social outcomes. A combination of the participant's decision to commit to the programme and programme content promotes self-confidence, aspirations, a more positive outlook and reduces impulsiveness, involvement in anti-social peer networks and negative influences. This in turn leads to improved emotional well-being and behaviour, which again results in reduced criminal behaviour and alcohol and drug abuse – and increased or renewed commitment to education, learning or work.

Target group: The target group is at-risk 15-18-year-olds who display initial signs of anti-social behaviour in several areas of their lives – behavioural problems at school, at home, crime in the local

community etc. The authors, however, point out that the programme would be more suitable for a low-risk group comprising 12-15-year-olds in danger of social exclusion, for example.

Location: Local urban community in the UK

Findings: The youngsters' self-worth, emotional well-being and behaviour are significantly improved and their social circle becomes more positive. A greater number are in jobs or in education than those from the control group. However, there are no unequivocal or statistically significant results with regard to self-reported crime and drug use.

Study design: The youngsters are randomly divided into a programme group and control group and measured before, during and after the programme using self-completion forms. Certain data stem from interviews with and questionnaires from parents/providers. Meeting registration and voluntary registration are used for this purpose.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Den Korte Snor (The Tight Leash)

Author and year of publication: Den Korte Snor/City of Copenhagen (2010)

Programme description: Den Korte Snor/The Tight Leash is an intensive mentoring programme that employs a family counsellor and contact person framework, combining family interviews at which both the counsellor and the contact person are present with intensive contact person involvement. The family counsellors and contact persons handle only a few cases so they can act quickly, and receive weekly supervision in teams. The programme formulates an action plan and negotiates other agreements with the youth participants and their families. The contact person then follows up on the above in his/her capacity as a social worker. Family interviews take place at least twice a month over the phone or at family meetings as required. Contact between the youth and the contact person takes the form of joint activities or contact over the phone three-five times a week with the contact person, who devotes 15 hours to relationship building with the individual youngster. At the same time programme staff organise network meetings with schools, after-school activities and family networks, and the programme coordinator and school coordinator are able to organise special school and recreational activities. The work of the contact persons in particular focuses on making youngsters aware of the consequences their choice of friends can have on their future. The youngsters are given support so they can resist the negative impact of other youth. The main task of the contact person is to create and share meaningful life experiences with the youngster in question. The contact person addresses problems that stand in the way of a successful school and recreational life and the development of positive relationships with family and friends. The contact person may be responsible for morning wake-up calls or assume the role of sidekick or ice-breaker, for example, until the youngster has developed stable routines. The contact person is always available to handle any crisis that may arise. The family counsellor develops the family's capacity to manage the youngster's daily life using such tools as network meetings, 'Signs of Safety' and solution-focused discussions. The programme runs for a minimum of seven months.

Theory: Narrative, appreciative and solution-focused approach. The assumption is that youngsters must be firmly anchored in a meaningful and varied after-school programme and have a supportive family network that can play an active role in order to deter delinquent, violent and criminal behaviour and affiliation with undesirable groups. Otherwise the youngsters seek out young family surrogates in groups with a negative social influence because their own families find it difficult to support them in their development.

Target group: Crime-prone children and youth aged between 10 and 17 who display threatening or delinquent behaviour. The programme aims to have more of a preventive effect on the 10-14-year-olds. The older youth may have already committed specific acts of violence or been engaged in threatening behaviour. The youngsters are socially vulnerable and face significant personal and social problems. Over

80% have been involved in violence against the person/violent crime. A third have displayed delinquent behaviour. Most of the programme participants are boys and a small 20% are immigrants who moved to Denmark shortly after birth.

Location: Within the Copenhagen area – in Nørrebro, Amager and in Valby – and in Brønshøj-Husum in the youngsters' homes and where the youngster and the contact person meet.

Findings: More youngsters attend school and participate in organised after-school activities, while crime, risk and conflicts appear to be reduced. Criminal reports and criminal charges fall, on average, by approx. two-thirds. Typically, some youth turn their back on crime completely while others continue to commit crime but to a lesser degree. The percentage of at-risk and high-risk youth falls, as does the percentage of youth not in school education or who are inactive in school education. Many of those who are inactive or not in school education appear to move into specialised school care. The percentage of youth in after-school programmes increases. This applies to supported after-school programmes in particular, but a slight increase is also seen in non-supported after-school programmes. The percentage of youth in after-school jobs more than doubles. Some youth participate in after-school programmes specifically tailored to the needs of The Tight Leash target group. The level of conflict in high-conflict families is slightly reduced, and following the programme, friendship relationships focus slightly more on general social integration. A slightly larger percentage focus on pursuing positive goals (to a certain or acceptable degree).

Study design: Pre- and post-design with registration of the total number of charges, reports from professionals such as teachers, social workers and psychologists, and professional assessments of youth risk by programme staff. Questionnaires are prepared by Rambøll in collaboration with The Tight Leash programme and are completed by family counsellors and contact persons at the four local centres, which focus on: school/education, recreation, youth development, and family life. The programme also measures youth involvement in crime and delinquent/violent behaviour.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Mentoring Interventions to Affect Juvenile Delinquency and Associated Problems (several programmes)

Authors and year of publication: Tolan, P. et al./Campbell Collaboration (2008)

Programme description: A total of 39 programme studies, all of which included the following four mentoring characteristics: 1) interaction between two individuals over an extended period of time, 2) inequality of experience, knowledge, or power between the mentor and mentee (recipient), with the mentor possessing the greater share, 3) the mentee is in a position to imitate and benefit from the knowledge, skill, ability, or experience of the mentor, 4) the absence of the role inequality that typifies other helping relationships and is marked by professional training, certification, or predetermined status differences such as parent-child or teacher-student relationships. The interventions focused on prevention for those at-risk (selective interventions) and treatment (indicated interventions) that included mentoring as the intervention or one component of the intervention. Beyond this, programmes vary and few generalisations are possible. The programmes last between three months and five years. Many are non-specific. The majority, however, run for one year or a minimum of one year.

Theory: Varies from programme to programme.

Target group: Varies from programme to programme. Five- to twenty-two-year-olds but the majority of the programmes focus on 13-14-year-olds who were at risk for juvenile delinquency behaviour or currently involved in delinquent behaviour. The individual programmes target different groups: youth in low-income areas, youth with academic and behavioural problems, etc. Both boys and girls – the majority, however, are targeted solely at boys.

Location: Varied. Limited to the USA and predominantly English-speaking countries. Take place in the local community and schools.

Findings: Mentors can be a valuable resource for at-risk criminal youth or criminal youth. The average effect sizes are significant and positive. Effects were largest (still moderate by Cohen's differentiation) for delinquency and aggression. Few studies show a negative effect. However, these categories also showed the most heterogeneity across studies. Moderator analyses found stronger effects for studies where emotional support was a key process involved in mentoring, and where professional development was a motivation for mentors. Given the lack of detail surrounding the individual programmes it is difficult to say which aspects of mentoring work.

Study design: A systematic review involving 39 studies and meta-analyses. Inclusion criteria: Research design must either be RCT or quasi-experimental and the intervention must focus on prevention or treatment and consist of a mentoring programme where the effect of at least one relevant study outcome is examined. Studies in which the intervention was explicitly psychotherapeutic, behaviour modification, or cognitive behavioural training were not included and the review was limited to studies conducted in the USA or another predominantly English-speaking country and to studies reported between 1970 and 2005.

Study rating: Medium

Title: The Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP)

Author and year of publication: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1998)

Programme description: Varied, one-in-one mentoring projects financed by grants under the auspices of the broad mentoring JUMP programme, with over 150 projects in 2000 specifically developed to address the needs of local communities and youth. Volunteer adult mentors forge supportive relationships with at-risk youth to help them successfully negotiate childhood and youth. According to JUMP guidelines from 1994, the projects must fulfil the following criteria: 1. Thorough background checks of all volunteer mentors to ensure a safe mentee environment – including occupation, education and motivation for becoming a mentor. 2. Thorough assessment of youth and the volunteer mentors to establish a suitable match in order to maximise a successful outcome. 3. Mentoring and project activities that are designed to enrich and improve youth opportunities and experiences. 4. Procedures for routinely collecting and reporting programme data in order to support internal self-evaluation and a national JUMP assessment. 5. Establishing projects in schools and/or in the local community where at least 60% of youth are entitled to free or subsidised lunch. In addition, the projects must identify: 1. A need in the local community. 2. A plan for training and retaining volunteer mentors. 3. The target group of at-risk youth. 4. Clearly established guidelines for the frequency, duration and nature of mentor/youth meetings. 5. A project implementation plan. The average length of a completed match is 6½ months, with the match often terminating at the end of a school year. As the projects vary a great deal it is impossible to make any conclusive observations about duration and frequency.

Theory: The mentor can support the positive development of the young person through such protective factors as supervision, guidance, teaching skills, cultural and career enrichment, knowledge about values, self-esteem as well as aspirations and goals for the future. A caring, responsible adult role model can have a lasting positive effect and help a young person to overcome difficult challenges.

Target group: The overall target group is the 4 to 24 age range, but the majority are aged between 12 and 14 and are at-risk criminal youth or youth who are at risk of dropping out of school. Over half of youth live alone with their mother, have family problems (including drug abuse in the home) and attain poor academic grades at school. Two-fifths of youth have behavioural problems at school, one-tenth have problems with truancy and the youngsters often have criminal friends. A small number of the enrolled boys are at risk from gang-related crime and approx. one-fifth have problems with crime-related activities.

Location: Mostly in large cities – 76% urban, 16% suburban and 18% rural projects. The projects are established in areas or schools suffering from overwhelming poverty.

Findings: The majority of the youngsters and their mentors report having had a positive experience and according to the mentors and youngsters themselves, youth benefit in particular from staying away from alcohol and drugs, avoiding fights and friends who make trouble, keeping away from gangs and not using knives. About 90% say they like or really like their mentor, get on well with their mentor and have an understanding and helpful mentor. Only 3% of youth report having had a negative mentoring experience. This said, youth tend to respond more positively to questions than their mentors – a possible self-representation bias.

Mentors seem to feel that matches that cross gender and ethnicity/race are less useful, while youth responses do not deviate significantly regarding gender and race matches. Boys like female mentors just as much as male mentors and feel equally understood. However, boys matched with male mentors report greater benefits in certain areas than those matched with female mentors. In particular, this relates to avoiding drugs and gangs. There is also a marginal difference in relation to avoiding guns and alcohol. However, the authors point out that such findings must be borne out by further research. Many of the nine case study projects report difficulty in recruiting enough mentors – particularly male mentors and mentors from a minority background.

Study design: Cross-study and views study using qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative and quantitative methodology. Data mainly stem from the JUMP programme's management information system (MIS) with registration of participants and mentors as well as nine case studies. More specifically, data used to assess mentor/mentee perception of the mentoring relationship and its usefulness stem from a standardised questionnaire.

Study rating: Medium

Title: The psycho-educational small-group component of 'the CASPAR Youth Services Student Assistance Program' (CYS SAP)

Author and year of publication: Brady, B. et al. (2006)

Programme description: Psycho-educational meetings in small groups that make up one-third of the CYS programme, of which participants have already completed the universal component. A group of between 8 and 10 pupils participate in 10, weekly 6th grade meetings lasting 45 minutes, and two 10-week meeting sessions in the 7th grade. The group meetings take place during school hours and participation is mandatory for the pupils in the programme. The programme begins with an introduction of the participants, a proclamation of the group's aims, an explanation of appropriate behaviour and an activity that aims to build rapport (relationships) among the youth and youth and the counsellor. The groups employ a curriculum as a guiding tool to achieve the programme goal of positive youth development. The curriculum seeks to involve youth in discussions on a range of topics that includes alcohol, drugs, tobacco, sexual identity, violence prevention, etc. Counsellors also use situations that occur in the local community in their counselling work. Certain games and video presentations are used to promote interest and discussion. The group meetings end with a brief comment from the counsellor about the day's topic and the group process. An implementation manual is included with the programme. The counsellor expresses an interest in each participant's life, acts on the person's behalf, supporting their culture, experience and abilities in order to foster a trusting environment and the young person's belief that the counsellor supports and appreciates them. To improve social skills and critical thinking, the counsellor defines steps for sensible decisions, which are then demonstrated by using them in situations that arise in the group sessions. The counsellor creates a positive overview to increase the youngsters' sense of control over their own lives, helping them to assess advantages and disadvantages associated with different risks and pointing out the responsibility of and consequences for the youngster. The

participants are given help to transform limitations into possibilities and think in new alternative ways to achieve their goals.

Theory: The programme seeks to create an environment in which youth participants feel an adult whom they trust appreciates and supports them, as caring supportive adult relations are crucial to healthy youth development. The programme must develop the youngsters' social skills and the ability to think critically. This in turn impedes subsequent substance abuse and strengthens the pupils' ability to gain control over their own lives and influence their environment. The techniques are based on social influence.

Target group: The target group is 11-12-year-olds who are assessed to be at risk by professionals. Many come from low-income families.

Location: At two schools in a large urban area close to Boston in the USA.

Findings: Small to medium effect size on the youngsters' self-reported behaviour and attitudes.

Study design: Two cohorts of pupils are randomly placed in a control group and a programme group, and complete a questionnaire immediately after the conclusion of the programme (post-test).

Study rating: Medium

Title: Volunteer mentoring scheme (no formal name)

Author and year of publication: Rose, R. et Jones, K. (2007)

Programme description: A mentoring programme employing volunteer mentors who are trained to understand the procedures necessary for the programme to work. The volunteer mentors are also given information about the difficulties experienced by some youth and how to work with the youngsters and their families in an appropriate manner. Once they have been trained, the mentors are assigned to a young person and the first meeting is arranged. Both the mentor and the mentee must give their consent to the mentoring relationship. The young person is not required to participate in the programme and the volunteer mentor may choose not to work with a specific individual – with no questions asked. The volunteer mentors are supported by a programme manager, who maintains ongoing contact with mentors and the youngsters through regular phone calls and face-to-face meetings. All volunteer mentors receive a weekly allowance to cover small expenses in connection with their meetings with the youngsters – eg, a trip to the cinema, a meal at a cafe, taking part in an activity or travelling to a special event. The mentors provide the youngsters with a whole range of experiences – eg, horse riding, climbing trips, skating excursions, cinema outings etc. The activities are agreed between the mentor and the mentee, and despite often reflecting the interests of the mentee, the experiences are a chance for the young person to try something new.

The programme was initially set up to run for 6 months but was later extended to run for up to one year.

Theory: The youngsters are supported and trained by an adult who is not linked to a formal institution of any kind. The aim is for youngsters to have the chance to explore their own needs, to have someone to talk to about their personal challenges and ideas and to have the opportunity to assess their attitudes about and expectations of school and their local community.

Target group: The target group is 11–14-year-olds with social, emotional and behavioural problems. These youngsters are assessed to be in need of further support in their local community and at risk of dropping out of school or becoming disillusioned with school or disillusioned with family relationships and the local community.

Location: Areas with a low socio-economic status in England.

Findings: The programme has resulted in an improvement in youth school attendance, a more positive school attitude resulting in fewer expulsions, and the reduced use of sanctions – which is attributed to

the mentoring programme. Having said this, it is difficult to say anything definitive as some youngsters have taken part in other programmes. The mentoring programme develops meaningful relationships and parents report that their child has become calmer. The programme is a positive contribution, but it is unlikely that volunteer mentor programmes alone can meet the varying needs of at-risk youth. However, they have a part to play as part of a holistic package.

Study design: Views study and pre- and post-design. The programme employs semi-structured interviews with mentors, parents/providers, youth, teachers and project managers. Quantitative pre- and post-data are collected from schools and local authorities with regard to school attendance and expulsions etc.

Study rating: Medium

Leisure-time activities

Title: An educational enhancement programme offered by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Author and year: Schinke, S. et al. (2000)

Programme description: Educational enhancement programme with tutoring and learning activities that include discussions with adults, writing activities, leisure reading, homework, helping others as well as games utilising cognitive skills. There are weekly structured activities: 1. Four to five hours of discussions with knowledgeable adults. 2. One to two hours of creative writing activities. 3. Four to five hours of leisure reading. 4. Five to six hours of homework and study. 5. Two to three hours of helping other youth with their homework, projects and acquiring skills. 6. Four to five hours of board games and other recreational activities that train cognitive skills and talents that can be applied in school.

Furthermore, excursions, special privileges in the local Boys & Girls Club (BGC), school supplies and extra computer time serve as incentives to the youth. The staff seeks to motivate parents to get involved in selected educational activities, such as doing homework, reading, discussing current affairs, playing board games and participating in other activities that reinforce skills. At an information meeting, parents are invited to be volunteers or audience at cultural events performed by the programme participants at each programme site.

The programme is evaluated over 30 months, ie, 2.5 years.

Theory: The programme aims to enhance the educational achievement of youth from low-income and public housing environments through education and learning activities.

Target group: Youth aged 10 to 14 with age 12 on average who are at early risk. They live in public housing neighbourhoods in subsidised low-income environments.

Location: Low-income environments in the USA with public housing in medium-sized and big cities where the clubs are located in the local communities.

Geographically: NY City; Tampa, Florida; Cleveland, Ohio; Oakland, California; Edinburgh, Texas.

Findings: The study shows good school-related results by offering after-school educational enhancement programmes to at-risk youth. Data from teachers, the youth and school records show significant improvements after 30 months' participation compared to non-participating youth. The programme participants show nothing but positive results for enjoyment and/or engagement in reading, writing, verbal skills, geography and tutoring. Teacher reports place programme youth and BGC comparison youth significantly higher than non-BGC comparison youth with respect to reading skills, writing skills, games skills, overall school performance, and interest in class material. Programme youth score higher grades than BGC comparison youth and non-BGC comparison youth in reading, spelling, history, science and social studies. The overall grade point average is higher for programme youth than for BGC comparison youth and non-BGC comparison youth, and they also have better attendance.

Measurement periods and targets vary. The data reported by the youth themselves show falling trends, but still higher than for BGC comparison youth.

Study design: Pre-post with both a control group participating in other ASPs than BGCA programmes - but without an educational component - and a comparison group participating in similar BGCA programmes which do not offer the educational enhancement programme. Data are collected from schools, teacher class evaluation reports and from questionnaires administered to the youth.

Study rating: High

Title: ASP*¹¹⁰ (an enhanced after-school programme)

Authors and year of publication: Rorie, M. et al. (2011)

Programme description: A school-based after-school programme (ASP) which combines structured programme components with less structured activities. It incorporates three elements:

- 1) A research-based life skills curriculum, All Stars and All Stars Plus
- 2) Academic assistance (primarily homework help)
- 3) An attendance incentive component (points given for attendance).

In all other respects it is an ordinary ASP offering sports, crafts, etc.

The All Stars curriculum is a 14-session programme that attempts to instil beliefs inconsistent with substance use and other risky behaviour while teaching skills necessary for healthy decision-making. Teaching techniques are highly interactive and require a higher level of group leader involvement. Parents are encouraged to participate. The All Stars Plus programme includes 13 lessons in which the youth also participate. The programme is designed to reinforce the changes in behaviour and attitudes realised through All Stars (the core programme above) as well as teach youth additional developmental skills.

Academic assistance involves homework help, workbook activities and free reading time, with adult guidance. School and programme attendance is rewarded with points in an attendance incentive system.

The programme was operated for three hours per day, three days per week, for 96 days during the 2006–2007 school year at each of the five schools, which also followed the same daily schedule with a 30-minute snack break while staff handled administrative tasks. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, it is followed by an hour and a half block consisting of 45 minutes of All Stars sessions and 45 minutes of homework help, etc. The group leaders typically divide the students into two groups which alternate between the activities.

The last hour of the day is spent on leisure activities such as sports, board games, films, computer games or crafts. Usually, at least two activities are offered, and students can choose which to attend. On Thursdays, the entire three hours are dedicated to leisure activities, with students usually choosing which activities to attend.

All activities are supervised by at least one adult, and some activities are compulsory, such as All Stars and homework help, while the pure leisure activities are nearly all elective.

Theory: The ASP is based on the idea that unstructured after-school time with peers without adult supervision may lead to deviant behaviour, for which reason it is important to involve the youth in structured activities after school so that they avoid involvement in dangerous or harmful behaviour. The different components of the programme have different functions. Clear plans for how youth must spend their time are built into the All Stars components and homework help, etc, while the leisure activities are intended to be more relaxing and youth-directed.

Target group: The participants are 12 years on average, and youth at risk of behavioural or academic problems are encouraged to register. Those who register live predominantly in homes with a single parent (63%), low income (subsidised meals at school), a minority background and high housing mobility.

Location: Urban areas in the USA.

Findings: Higher levels of structure in the ASP activity generally seem to reduce violence and counter-normative behaviour during the programme process. During time without any – or with only casual – structure or instruction, deviant behaviour increases.

The staff members who are group leaders often show no response to the youth's deviant behaviour, some more often than others. Peer response to deviant behaviour is often primarily positive. There is a connection between structure and deviation insofar as there is a positive correlation between structure

¹¹⁰ The programme is mentioned several times. See *

and sanctioning response to counter-normative behaviour. This indicates that an increase in structure might increase the probability that the youth will sanction the deviant behaviour of their peers.

Peer responses to counter-normative talk and to overall counter-normative behaviour differ significantly by activity type. Peers are more neutral towards counter-normative talk in academic activities such as homework help than they are in creative recreational activities. Adult staff response has a similar pattern. Response to *violence* does not vary significantly by activity structure, for neither peers nor staff. The authors conclude that it is partly the case that positive reinforcement of deviance occurs more often during unstructured activities.

However, violent mocking, counter-normative talk and counter-normative behaviour are not significantly related to *within*-activity structure. There is a significant connection between within-activity structure (recorded by observation within certain intervals of time instead of by activity type) and violent behaviour. Violent behaviour and overall violent incidents occur less in more-structured than in less-structured activities. Finally, the probability of counter-normative incidents decreases as the structure of the overall activity increases from ambiguous to high structure.

When structure increases in both elective and compulsory activities, overall violence and violent behaviour decreases, and the correlation is stronger in compulsory activities.

With respect to participant motivation, 54% withdraw from the programme before its completion at the end of the year, and students attend an average of only 36 of the possible 96 programme sessions.

The study: Quantitative observational study with 389 observations.

Rating: Medium

Title: After-School Programmes (ASPs) (several different)

Authors and year of publication: Zief et al./Campbell Collaboration (2006)

Programme description: After-school programmes which combine recreational activities and/or youth development programmes with some form of academic support. They operate on a regular basis after school during the school year. Three out of five studies are designed primarily to reduce negative behaviour (here in the form of criminal behaviour, substance use, etc) and all five programmes include activities to promote positive outcomes for the youth, such as academic abilities and enriching activities in a safe environment.

Theory: The programmes are based on the theory that youth who participate in enriching, engaging activities in ASPs will have less opportunity to engage in risk behaviour and receive recognition of and develop their behavioural, social, emotional and academic skills and talents. The authors refer to different objectives and rationales for the programmes in the review. For example: 1. School attendance: If students become committed to their ASP and want to participate, they will also generally attend school more. 2. Television: If students participate in ASPs, they watch less television – television affects them negatively, exposing them to violence, etc. 3. Future aspirations and bonds with peers and parents are improved through a supportive environment with caring adults and peers. 4. Academic achievement: ASPs are regarded as a way to improve school results, in particular for poor at-risk students in poor-performing schools. The process of change is influenced continuously by a context of student characteristics, prior academic achievement, family background, and school and community characteristics.

Target group: Primarily participants from 9 to 14 in fact, but the youth may range from 5 to 19, according to the inclusion criteria for the review. They are enrolled at regular public or private K-12 schools, and the ASPs may not be targeted specifically at youth with special needs such as learning disabilities, physical disabilities, emotional problems or behavioural problems. Most are low-income students with a minority background.

Location: USA. Most programmes are school-based, but operate in different settings - in schools, religious institutions, local community centres, etc. Three studies are from urban environments, none are rural, while one is suburban and one is from multiple contexts.

Findings: With respect to school attendance, average grades, social skills, criminal behaviour or attitude, there is no significant effect. In one of the studies, the ASP participants have higher college aspirations than non-participants. The participants of three of the studies have significantly *less* interaction with positive peers, while the participants of three studies spend less time unsupervised and alone than the control group. Thus, the evaluated programmes place different emphasis on factors promoting positive behaviour and factors reducing negative behaviour. However, none of them is more effective than the others, nor do they change students' contexts such as peer associations or parent involvement.

Most of all, the systematic review serves to identify areas where knowledge is lacking. There is a need for better, longer-term studies and studies conducted in a similar manner in different locations. That would make meta-analysis more useful. At the same time, several other outcomes should be measured – for example parents – and study reporting should be improved. Finally, the authors promote complementary process evaluations and examinations of implementation processes, which may be helpful to the interpretation process.

Study design: A systematic review with five included studies and meta-analysis. According to the inclusion criteria, the studies must be well-implemented experimental design studies and have been published after 1982 (up to 2002). Furthermore, the study reports must provide a reasonable description of the methodology, programme goals and programme activities and meet study quality requirements.

Study rating: Medium

Title: After-School Program with 'All Stars'* (enhanced after-school programme)

Authors and year of publication: Cross, A. et al. (2010)

Programme description: An extended (or enhanced) after-school programme which incorporates an element of substance-abuse and violence prevention, 'All Stars'. The programme is offered after school on school premises three days a week for three hours on normal school days. One-and-a-half hours a week are dedicated to the All Stars curriculum, consisting of two 45-minute sessions. Twenty-seven different lessons are available, and each can be divided into two sessions. Employees from each ASP school participate in a three-day training course taught by the developer of the All Stars project. The programme further includes an attendance incentive system, giving students weekly points for school and ASP attendance. The points can be exchanged for various rewards. The programme also offers homework help or other academic support for 1.5 hours per week (initially the intention was to offer one-on-one help, but this was not implemented). The programme also offers leisure activities such as fitness, arts and crafts, board games, excursions, computer projects, computer leisure time, workplace skills and the celebration of special days, etc. However, the leisure activities are offered primarily within the areas of fitness, computer time and board games. The programme operates for a school year.

Theory: After-school programmes are generally said to potentially strengthen positive youth development and outcomes, for instance by enhancing social and personal skills and providing positive adult role models and youth supervision at a 'dangerous' time during after-school hours, which is when most youth arrests seem to occur.

The All Stars curriculum aims to postpone the commencement of or prevent substance abuse and other risky behaviour. It addresses mediating factors known to be associated with substance abuse, such as attachment to school, beliefs about drugs, etc. Since it is difficult to recruit and retain youth in voluntary ASPs, an incentive point system is used to increase attendance based on a token economy where the youth receive points for attendance. The points can be exchanged for rewards.

Target group: Youth 12 years old on average at poor-performing schools. Youth at risk are particularly encouraged to enrol.

Location: Urban school district on the US East Coast where half or most of the youth have a minority background and between 64% and 67% receive free or subsidised meals in school.

Findings: Together the quantitative and the qualitative parts of the study suggest that staff quality may be the most important factor for programme success, since this aspect seems to affect the other implementation aspects. This means that staff who are well-educated, well-trained and have been long-term employed are better equipped to work with the youth. They are most likely better at management and creating a positive social climate and interesting, engaging activities.

The implementation dimensions (programme attendance, programme engagement, staff factors, atmosphere, etc) vary across the five sites running the programme, and the better the implementation, the better the overall programme effects. Many of the examined implementation elements relate to and co-vary with the quality of the students' experience. Programme management, social climate and student engagement in particular are essential to the positive development of the youth. The combination of good staff training and education also seems to be correlated to some extent with the youth's experience of high quality. Staff stability can also make a positive difference – but a single site with only medium stability nevertheless performed well. Only programme dosage, ie, how many days the youth have participated/attended, seems unimportant.

A positive, emotional climate of popular, effective and good-humoured staff who easily create emotional bonds with and are trusted by the youth seems to be a main component in the success experienced by two of the sites. In one site the activity programme is clearly announced from the start and there is a schedule for every day to allow the youth to choose between various activities. Sites with unengaged, non-homogeneous youth and an unstructured daily schedule perform poorly. High staff turnover is part of the problem, as are apathetic staff members who hang out with each other more than with the young people.

Study design: Pre-post without a control group (not used in their analysis) with questionnaires administered to the youth and observations. The process data were collected by a web-based system operated by the firm implementing the programme, and the study also includes staff-reported data.

Study rating: Medium

Title: ASPs that enhance youth's personal and social skills (several programmes)

Authors and year of publication: Durlak, J. et al. (2010)

Programme description: After-school programmes are defined as 'Structured programmes that offer one or more activities that operate during at least part of the school year, take place outside normal school hours and are supervised by adults'. What is special about these ASPs is that they focus on developing personal and social skills and promote social and emotional learning (SEL). Their goal is to improve one or more skills such as problem-solving, conflict resolution, self-control, leadership, responsible decision-making or skills related to self-efficacy or self-esteem. The authors expect the highest outcomes from programmes that incorporate the various elements abbreviated as 'SAFE' (Sequenced, Active, Focused and Explicit) at the same time. This means that learning is achieved through sequenced sets of activities with focus on active forms of learning, so that new skills are practised, with specific focus on the devotion of time and attention, and defining explicitly the specific skills to be learned. The programmes span from community learning centres over clubs (Boys and Girls as well as 4-H) to a number of local initiatives. The duration varies, but most operate for less than a year.

Theory: Development research shows that having the opportunity to bond with a supportive adult and participate in meaningful and challenging activities in structured after-school programmes together with peers can help youth develop and use new skills and personal talents. Many authors also recommend that

programme staff use the 'SAFE' elements (Sequenced, Active, Focused and Explicit). The hypothesis behind the SAFE-elements: 1. Sequence: It takes time to develop new skills. New behaviour and complex skills must be broken down into small steps that connect the learning activities. 2. Active forms of learning: many educational and psychosocial interventions suggest that the most effective teaching strategy for many youth is an active form of learning. They learn best by doing and by getting feedback on their performance. This cycle of practice and feedback can continue until the behavioural change, etc. has occurred. 3. Focus: Sufficient time and attention must be devoted for learning to occur. 'Dosage and duration' may vary depending on the skill sought to be learned. 4. Explicit: clearly defined and specific learning objectives are important – the youth must know what is expected of them.

Target group: Students aged 5 to 18, with more than half being only 11 years old or younger. Only seven of the reviewed studies are directed at children and youth who display problem behaviour. The vast majority of them are universal interventions. The socio-economic status of the participants is not reported in 46% of the studies. While 25% of the studies examine low-income groups, 19% look at both low-income and middle-income groups.

Location: Unspecified locations in the USA where clubs and community centres, etc., are located in the local communities.

Findings: The participants show significant improvement in self-perceptions and attachment to school, positive social behaviour, improvement in school grades and level of academic performance, while problem behaviour is reduced. There is no significant change in substance use and school attendance. The authors conclude that ASPs ought to contain elements to develop social and personal skills, because the youth can utilise these in many different ways. SAFE programmes show significant effect in *all* the analysed categories – also school attendance and substance use, which did not otherwise figure significantly in the general results. Thus, programmes using these special approaches seem to be the most effective.

At the same time there is a lack of research indicating programme characteristics which may help define why some are more effective than others. Also, there is too little information at follow-up to allow the authors to draw any conclusions about the durability of the effect.

Study design: Systematic review and meta-analysis of ASP studies from 1 January 1980 till 31 December 2007.

Study rating: High

Title: Boys and Girls Clubs of America

Authors and year of publication: Anderson-Butcher, D. et al. (2003)

Programme description: This is a club programme where the youth use the club during after-school hours as a drop-in centre, to play games, do sports or to participate in unstructured leisure activities. Most go to the play room or join arts and crafts as well as special prevention programmes.

Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) is a community-based non-profit organisation with more than 2850 clubs in the USA, whose goal is to strengthen the youth's positive development in programme focus areas such as crime, substance abuse, pregnancy and other prevention, career exploration, etc. The BGCA also offer less structured athletics and recreational programmes. Costs are low – down to USD 5 per year.

Theory: The programme seeks to improve the youth's psychosocial development and inspire them to become productive and attentive citizens. Important elements provided by the clubs are the opportunity get in touch and bond with adults. Good treatment by staff improves emotional and behavioural characteristics. Youth also become part of pro-social peer groups. Furthermore, the youth's active involvement, ownership and interest have previously proved important in connection with clubs, and enjoyment in the club has been associated with increased self-confidence.

Target group: Youth aged 10 to 17 with age 12 on average, who are approached in their club and in a residential area which uses the club. They live in public housing, and more than half live with a single parent.

Location: An urban local community in the western part of the USA.

Findings: Overall monthly club attendance – mostly consisting of games (game room), arts and crafts, sports and recreation – is significantly correlated with improved self-reported school grades, school enjoyment and school performance, while club attendance is negatively correlated with cigarette use and to it being 'OK to cheat'. Going to a club is correlated with less truancy. However, the study does not measure long-term development.

Also, increasing age is correlated with poorer grades, increased use of alcohol, less school enjoyment and poorer school performance. Club participation seems to be able to prevent or protect the youth from risk and problem behaviour, which is otherwise associated with increasing age. Motivation for club participation stems from parent decisions and peers who are also in the club.

Study design: A quantitative cross-sectional study with research into correlations based on data from a self-reporting questionnaire with 90 questions administered to the youth.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Enhanced after-school program*

Authors and year of publication: Cross, A. et al. (2009)

Programme description: A programme operated during after-school hours on school grounds for three hours, three days a week. It consists of leisure activities (sports, games, computer, arts) along with homework help, social skills training and drug prevention education. All students who attend the relevant school may register for the programme.

Theory: The approach is the 'routine activities theory' (Cohen & Felson, 1979), which asserts that crime will happen if there is a person motivated to commit it, a suitable target and no presence of supervision or watchfulness. In other words, unsupervised leisure time when youth motivate each other to engage in deviant behaviour may, for example, cause delinquency.

Target group: Youth aged 12 on average at a high risk of engaging in problematic behaviour because of a relatively high share of minority and low-income youth.

Location: Schools in a city school district in the USA with 47-99% of minority youth and over 50% of youth who due to poverty receive free or subsidised meals in school. They perform poorly compared to the rest of the country and the state.

Findings: The effect of the programme is weaker than expected and may not be the most efficient way of reducing time spent by youth and their peers without adult supervision. The programme is expensive and seems to attract youth who are only at low risk and are already able to participate in pro-social activities.

The after-school programme does not reduce the participants' problematic behaviour – such as drug use and delinquency – although it does reduce unsupervised socialising by the participants, but only by half a day per week (while the programme itself operates over three days a week). The authors conclude that the effect of unsupervised socialising must be insufficient to result in a smaller degree of problematic behaviour. The youth in both the control group and the ASP group already participate in about four different activities on average and have no special need for more, and are not unsupervised to any significant extent. The activities offered are perhaps not more attractive than unstructured socialising for the youth who are at risk of antisocial development.

Study design: Pre-post with random placement in control and experimental groups of voluntarily participating students from schools that have not been selected randomly. Questionnaires administered to the youth and controls for confounding factors.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach & Gang Intervention Through Targeted Outreach

Authors and year of publication: Arbreton, A. & McClanahan, W. (2002)

Programme description: The programme consists of club initiatives - GPTTO, a programme designed to prevent at-risk youth from getting involved with gangs, and GITTO, a programme designed to help youth who are already involved with gangs to get out of them. The initiatives were developed by Boys and Girls Clubs of America and 33 local clubs throughout the USA in keeping with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)'s so-called Comprehensive Community-Wide Model, and they incorporate four components:

- 1) Community mobilisation of resources to combat gang problems.
- 2) Recruitment of 50 and 35 at-risk youth in the local community for GPTTO and GITTO, respectively.
- 3) Promoting positive developmental experiences for these youth by developing interest-based programmes that also address the youth's specific needs and mainstreaming them into the clubs.
- 4) Providing individualised casework across family, school, club and the juvenile justice system to decrease contact with the justice system and increase school attendance and improve academic outcomes.

GPTTO and GITTO seek to learn about the youth's interests and then build on those interests to develop strong one-on-one relationships between staff and youth. Interest-based activities are meant to attract the youth, while staff incorporate components that address the youth's needs, such as a basketball activity with an integrated conflict resolution component. (However, this is not fully integrated in practice.)

A programme plan must be completed for all youth brought into a club. This plan identifies their interests and addresses their needs, such as tattoo removal so as not to repel employers, recreational activities during evening and night hours, etc. Once a youth has been drawn in, the clubs try to wrap up the youth in services and support, such as abuse services, training in how to complete schooling, and job skill development and job training.

The implementation strategies for the components are different for prevention and for intervention. Each club designs its own programme in keeping with these four components, and the strategy used to implement GPTTO and GITTO depends on the community's specific gang problems, resources and infrastructure. Each club identifies: 1. Target groups, 2. The community's collaborators/enterprises (family, school (teachers, counsellors), police, drug treatment agencies, prison and probation services, etc.), 3. Programme activities – all addressing the needs of the youth. Focus is on drawing in youth who are not typically involved in constructive after-school activities. They are recruited into the clubs through referrals from their collaborators – school, police, etc – and through street-level outreach work. Some of the clubs collect a membership fee.

In GPTTO, the club staff try to avoid labelling the youth. On the contrary, they try to mainstream them into the club activities.

GITTO, the initiative for already gang-involved youth, is operated in addition to the general club programmes at a different time and place and requires special case management. Here the club staff have more individual time with the youth and are available at all times of the day, take the youth to court appointments, take them to job interviews, meet with their families, etc. It breaks the club habit of only dealing with prevention, and the programme is more intensive with much more collaboration with other agencies and focus on the special needs of the individual youth.

In respect of administration, the programmes require that clubs complete monthly tracking forms with follow-up documentation of the youth's progress in the club and with respect to school, justice system and family. They must also complete an intake form stating the method used to recruit the youth and information about parent contact, school contact, known gang risk factors, legal information, interests and needs, etc.

Theory: The initiatives are based on the idea that the things that the youth are said to look for in gangs are offered by the club, which serves as an alternative to gang involvement by providing 1. Supportive adults, 2. Challenging activities and 3. A place to belong. - See Irving Spergel (1995), who writes that 'gangs provide a certain degree of physical protection, social support, solidarity, cultural identification and moral education as well as opportunities for self-esteem, honour, and sometimes economic gain'. The youth are mainstreamed into the clubs, which can provide positive development support to youth at risk.

Target group: GPTTO users are primarily 10 to 12 years old, the second-biggest group being 13 to 15 years, but they range from 9 to 18 years. This initiative is for youth at high risk of involvement in gangs assessed on the basis of their involvement with negative peers, poor school achievement and previous involvement in criminal activities. One-fifth of them have carried weapons, one-fourth have been picked up by the police, more than half have hit someone, approximately one-third report being gang members, and slightly less than half report that they have committed a crime together with gang members. More than half of them participate in more than one activity other than the club. One-third have/have had family involved in gangs.

Most of the participants of GITTO for youth who are already involved in gangs are aged 16 to 18, the second-biggest group from 13 to 15, but the programme includes youth as young as 10 years. They already display gang behaviour or are involved in gangs. Almost half of these youth have carried weapons and more than half have been picked up by the police. Well over half of them have hit someone, and approximately four-fifths report having committed at least one crime with a gang member. At the time when they join a club, 67% of the youth report membership of a gang. However, 55% are involved in more than one activity other than the club, and 41% have a 'regular' job at least once a week. 83% have been suspended from school at least once. 65% report that they have family members who are current or previous gang members. In both groups, the participants consist primarily of boys and have moved home within the last two years – 59% of GITTO participants and 64% of GPTTO youth. They have grown up in poverty – more than 70% qualify for free or subsidised meals in school.

Location: Low-income communities in cities and medium-sized towns in the USA. About one-fourth of the youth are from public housing environments. Half of the clubs are located in the most intense gangland of the local community, one-fourth are on the boundary to those, and one-fourth are in the same local community or neighbourhood, but some distance away from the most intense gangland. The GITTO clubs for youth who are already involved in gangs are all located in the worst gangland in their local community.

Geographically, GPTTO is located in Buffalo, New York; Brighton, Massachusetts; Columbia, Missouri; Albany, Georgia; Biloxi, Texas; Clute, Texas; El Dorado, Arkansas; San Francisco, California; San Dieguito, California; Springfield, Massachusetts; New York City, New York; Bradenton, Florida; Palmetto, Florida; Louisville, Kentucky; Killeen, Texas; Tustin, California and Garden Grove, California. GITTO is in St. Paul, Minnesota; Fort Worth, Texas and Ventura, California.

Findings: Frequent club attendance among GPTTO youth is associated with: 1. Delayed commencement of gang behaviour (for example clothing). 2. Less contact with the juvenile justice system. 3. Less criminal behaviour (steal less, less likely to start smoking pot). 4. Improved school performance (higher grades, greater enjoyment of doing well at school). 5. More positive social relationships and constructive use of out-of-school time (engage in more positive after-school activities and increased levels of positive peer and family relations).

Frequent attendance among GITTO youth is associated with: 1. Disengagement from gang-associated behaviours and peers (for example less stealing with gang members, wearing gang signals, hanging out

in the same place as gang members, being a victim of a gang attack and having fewer negative peers). 2. Less contact with the juvenile justice system (a lower incidence of being sent away by the court). 3. More positive school engagement (greater expectations of graduating from high school or receiving a general educational development test).

The majority of youth are both drawn in and retained for a year, and youth who attend frequently often experience positive results. 73% of prevention youth are still attending clubs after a year, while 68% of intervention youth are still attending the clubs. 96% of prevention youth and 86% of intervention youth reported that they had received adult support and guidance from at least one club staff, and 79% and 53%, respectively, reported that two or more staff provided support. 64% of prevention youth and 56% of intervention youth reported that they agree or strongly agree that they feel a sense of belonging to the club. 59% of prevention youth and 35% of intervention youth feel that the club activities are interesting and challenging (p. iv). Perception of the club as 'safe': 86% of prevention youth and 70% of intervention youth rated the club at 8 or higher on a scale from 1 to 10, whereas 64% and 43%, respectively, rated their school as safe. This means that the club offers an opportunity to feel safe, which they might have been looking for in a gang.

GPTTO and GITTO youth perform better than the control groups during the programme with respect to school performance and relationship objectives. A significant feature in prevention youth is that they are less truant, more likely to ask for adult help with homework, increase their after-school activities, but are sent home from school more often. GITTO youth are less truant, spend more time on homework and have increased positive family relationships compared to the control group over a year.

Results by age: Frequent club attendance viewed in relation to the age of GPTTO youth shows the following: Youth aged 16 to 18 show increased levels of adult support and increased self-confidence in school, but also show an increase over the year in their association with negative peers. For youth aged 13 to 15, frequent club attendance is associated with better school grades. For GITTO youth aged 10 to 13, frequent attendance is associated with positive effects: 1. Less substance use with gang members. 2. Less criminal behaviour in general. 3. Higher enjoyment of school. 4. Spending more time on homework. 5. More positive family relationships. For youth aged 14 to 18, more frequent attendance has no effect on the researchers' targets.

With respect to gang membership, club attending youth are not more likely than the youth in the control groups to join or leave gangs, no matter how frequently they attend.

Study design: Pre-post design with control groups and controls. The study uses both qualitative and quantitative methods with questionnaires administered to the youth and collection of casework records. Questionnaires are also administered to club leaders in order to understand the implementation strategies applied in each club. Interviews, focus groups and observation data are collected from three clubs as well as club documentation of the number of recruited youth and use of a 'Gang Risk Profile' to be filled in at the intake of a youth.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Club 21 (including the after-school club and the youth club (only boys' clubs referred to here))

Authors and year of publication: Langager, S. & Skov, S. (2004)

Programme description: The club at Lundtoftegade is a combined after-school club and youth club with a total capacity of 105 youth. The after-school club is for all youth (boys and girls) of 10 to 13 years, and non-members may also attend. Daily club activities are mainly computer games, table tennis, football, music production and similar activities. Club 21 covers three floors with a common club area on the ground floor. The common area contains a table tennis table, table football and a television corner, and this is where people meet on their way in and out. In the basement there is a computer café which seats 25, and is central to both the youth club and the after-school club. One computer is for the staff, so that one staff member is always present, and the basement also features a sound studio operated by a

competent, semi-professional youth worker/sound technician. Thus, the youth can compose and record their own music. The youth acknowledge each other in the youth club – and usually shake hands at the entrance.

Special characteristics of the club are: 1. No membership fee and 2. Employment of former 'roughs', ie, club members who are too old to attend or young persons who are familiar with the local area. They usually grew up in the neighbourhood. In the youth club the youth workers must act as role models. They get involved and take part in the activities of the club and are not expected to resolve conflicts. Their task is to create and restore a positive atmosphere between club members and staff. At the same time, this is an opportunity for the former 'roughs' to feel appreciated. However, the youth workers must be 'on the right track' and truly interested in working at the club. Ideally, they should be neither too strong nor too weak in the group, but well-functioning members of the middle group, preferably a couple of them at a time. The expectations they must fulfil must be clearly defined.

Theory: The professional objective is to be a multicultural club initiative which does not favour one culture over another and keeps an open mind to the cultural differences among the youth in its target group. The goal is to be inclusive and accommodate all youth rather than offering separate external initiatives to the 'worst troublemakers'. Tolerance instead of principles of consistency. Next, a practice-oriented approach is applied, making realistic assessments of the youth's behaviours, wishes and expectations in everyday life. It must be attractive to the youth - who must want to come, which is why the programme recognises their requirements and wishes for the club.

The club is 'the common third', both in the form of activities such as the sound studio, but also through the employed youth workers from the local environment. The common third creates the relationship between youth and club staff, and the youth worker connects the professional culture and the youth's culture.

The professional concept and practice can be exemplified in two ways:

1. No membership fee: The club is open to all youth - whether or not their parents acknowledge their child's need to go there and want to pay for participation, etc. This allows a more inclusive approach.
2. The employment of youth workers who are former club members or other young persons familiar with the neighbourhood is aimed to strengthen the relationship between the youth and the staff. At the same time, it is a way of using the intercultural logic and respecting the multi-ethnic and multicultural local community in action. The youth workers must act as role models and are respected because they grew up in the neighbourhood. This can boost their own self-esteem. The sound studio is also a means to increase the youth's self-esteem and creative skills and foster new relationships.

Target group: Overall, boys between 10 and 25 years. The after-school club is for 10 to 13 year-old boys, while the youth club is for youth aged 14 to 25. They are among the most delinquent youth in Copenhagen and from distressed neighbourhoods. Many club members were born and grew up in the neighbourhood, and everyone knows everyone else. They get their identity from the neighbourhood.

Location: Urban local community in Copenhagen – the area surrounding Lundtoftegade in outer Nørrebro – where the club is located.

Findings: A success from the perspective of the youth, the staff and the neighbourhood. Inclusion has been successful, and extremely ill-adjusted youth have been included in a way which benefits them, the club and the local area. However, success is a relative concept in a socially deprived area, and social, ethnic and cultural conflicts remain between groups of youth internally and between the youth and some of the residents in the area. From time to time there are incidents of vandalism. Overall, however, the level of unrest is far lower than it used to be.

However, the change process must be seen in light of adjustments in the staff group, changed financial circumstances, new signals from players in the local area, and the fact that the group of youth is changing – and as the result of successful and mutually rewarding cross-sectoral cooperation.

Important factors have been: 1. Employment of former roughs, 2. No membership fee, 3. Investment in a well-equipped computer café as well as the atmosphere of 'expectations rather than demands' and the use of a situation-sensitive and intercultural approach.

A clear decline in crime rates and local vandalism was a distinct trend over three years (2001-2004), and the vandalism account for the building Lundtoftegade 21 & 43 (the combined centre) experienced a dive between 2000 and 2001, but with a subsequent increase again - although the authors attribute the last increase in 2003 to a single, expensive incident. The vandalism account of the housing association AKB-Lundtoftegade dropped between 2000 and 2001, and continued to fall until 2003 when the amount increased considerably again, but to nowhere near the pre-2000 level.

Attraction of youth is a success, and the number of new members in the after-school club has more than tripled in less than three years.

Study design: Qualitative field work and interviews with young club users, staff, social workers, representatives of local residents, and a police officer. Furthermore, a cross-sectional study of opinions by means of questionnaires administered to the youth and pre-post data from vandalism accounts.

Study rating: Medium

Title: [Maryland's After School Community Grant Program](#) (MASC GP) (evaluation of 14 ASP programmes)

Authors and year of publication: Gottfredson, D. et al. (2004)

Programme description: The study includes 14 different after-school programmes, but their funding was obtained subject to compliance with certain programme criteria (such as objectives, standards, structure, number of youth and programme intensity and duration). The ASPs must include academic tutoring, social skills, personal development and recreational leisure activities. This description focuses on the five programmes offered to the older, middle-school students of the study.

The programmes serve between 22 and 45 students, and they must operate three days a week three hours a day on average for an expected 90 programme days. In practice, the programmes operate an average of 116 days, while the students only participate in 71% of them (64 days). 77% of the students participated in more than 30 days.

In practice, recreational and leisure activities are offered most days, and individual academic development plans are drawn up for the youth. In a typical programme, middle-school students received approximately 1.7 hours of educational services per week and 2.4 hours of social skills or character development training. In addition, most social skills and character development training lessons address special emotional, cognitive and behavioural skills - such as ability to identify, describe and express feelings, assess the strength of feelings, conduct an 'internal dialogue', manage yourself, use problem-solving and decision-making tools, and communicate effectively.

Participation in some programmes is free, others cost up to USD 20 a week. In order to retain the youth in the programmes, they are offered homework help, social skills lessons and recreational or enriching activities. These consist mostly of sports, arts and crafts, but special activities such as entrepreneurship, sailing, karate or football are offered as well.

Theory: ASP programmes are believed to be capable of enhancing academic achievement, social competencies and beliefs that support conventional norms - which have all been related to varying forms of problematic behaviour. If they can do so, they may perhaps also reduce criminal behaviour and substance abuse.

Target group: Youth aged 11 to 14 years - 12 years on average - who live in high crime rate neighbourhoods.

Location: The socio-spatial context of the programmes is areas with high crime rates in Maryland, USA, more precisely at the youth's schools or in the local community. Nine of the evaluated programmes are operated in public schools, five in local community centres.

Findings: The study indicates that participation in ASPs significantly reduced criminal behaviour among middle-school students. Positive peer relationships, for instance, have a positive, mediating effect on criminal behaviour. It seems in particular that structured programmes which focus on social skills or developing personal competencies are effective. Participation in these was associated with a significant decline in delinquency.

However, programme participation does not significantly affect social skills or positive peer relationships.

The effect of ASP participation on delinquency was mediated by increasing 'intentions not to take drugs' and 'positive peer associations'. Nothing in the study indicates that ASPs reduce criminal behaviour by reducing unsupervised time, and the ASP programmes were not implemented perfectly, which means the youth may have been unsupervised for a considerable time. ASPs in the study significantly increased youth involvement in positive activities, but the study suggests that involvement in conventional activities actually increases criminal behaviour. Participation in ASPs showed a significant increase of involvement in constructive activities only for girls, but not for boys.

The programme does not succeed in capturing those who are most left to their own devices without supervision. The youth who are captured are also those who drop out of the programmes most quickly.

Study design: Pre-post design with control groups and control for existing differences between control group and programme group. Questionnaires are administered to the participating youth.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Pendlerprojektet (The Commuter Project)

Authors and year of publication: Sørensen, T. & Dam, H. (2000)

Programme description: The project is an experimental crime prevention programme with a group-oriented approach operated in 10 school districts. Youth who cannot be included in existing club programmes get a club of their own. Some of them already know each other, while others do not. The Commuter Project was established on the basis of the successful creation and retention of contact with the youth during the months up to project start-up. The programme staff depended on the youth's agreement to participate in the project and their finding that the activities offered were worth their while. At the beginning of the project, the staff members made home visits to get to know the parents and get their acceptance and written consent to the youth's participation.

Three to four staff members meet the youth or have appointments with them every Monday around 5.30 pm when they start by shaking hands, usually eat together and do some kind of activity. The activities include rappelling, climbing, eating a burger in town, going to the cinema, visits to an amusement park, paintball and go-cart, etc. They also go on weekend trips to a summer cottage to strengthen the bond between adults and youth. They have their own club premises ('The Club'/'The Base') with a conference table, chairs and a computer, PlayStation and television, where they eat, hold planning meetings, talk about activity preferences, conflicts and other issues. Ideally, they take formal turns to speak. During breaks the youth hang out in a room with two sofas and a chair. They are told that the goal of the meeting and the club is to teach them to behave in a club and start contributing. The staff teach youth the difference between right and wrong on the basis of a personal relationship. The youth participate about once a week for up to two years.

As in ordinary youth clubs, the framework is a physical meeting place and a specific weekly time for the activities. But everything is paid for, including meals and the activities chosen by the youth themselves, with bigger/more expensive excursions than usual. Sometimes the youth themselves take turns preparing meals.

Over time, the activities are toned down, and homework help with two student teachers is introduced. The family is involved at a family night at some point when the project experiences a crisis, and football nights and trips with the youth and their families are also organised.

Theory: Social educational approach with ideals such as care, conscience, empathy and equality.

The educational principle is a relationship approach, meeting the youth on their own terms with the subsequent establishment of personal relationships. This paradigm of social education characterised all work with disadvantaged youth throughout the 1990s. It seeks to integrate youth who do not fit in at the existing after-school centres by letting the programmes come to them on their own terms. Programmes are established to fit the youth's background and readiness for development. A relationship is developed by 1. establishing contact, 2. building up a personal relationship, and 3. maintaining a qualified relationship which underpins the true educational work to change delinquent behaviour through mutual obligations, accountability and increased self-control. In the resulting relationships, the persons involved appear to be unique.

Relationship approaches also rely on the concept of 'the common third', meaning that the relationship between the staff and the youth goes through the common third – ie, the activities they do together and their basis of action and association, which affect them both. The youth's and the staff's interests coincide in the common third, where the youth participate voluntarily, usually in 'worthwhile' activities such as museums, nature, etc. The paradigm regards force and use of force by the staff as wrong.

Target group: Boys aged 15 to 18 of immigrant background who have displayed delinquent behaviour such as criminal activity, transgressive and alarming behaviour, disorder, fighting, vandalism and shoplifting. However, several participants have a clean criminal record. They attract attention rather than being truly criminal. They are noisy, poorly adjusted and violent in groups. They are not attached to one locality, but move to wherever something is going on – 'commute' (hence the name 'the Commuter Group'). Their behaviour is mostly for fun and not an expression of aggressiveness. They are often polite, contact-seeking and forthcoming. They are primarily of Turkish origin – some are Kurds – and used to hierarchy and ranking, while at the same time they are culturally proximity-oriented, showing courtesy by 'entering' physical and mental spaces and carrying on conversations with strangers.

Location: In Denmark in southern Aarhus, a local area of 10 school districts and youth clubs. Programming takes place on excursions and in their newly established club in the neighbourhood, where the situation became critical in 1999 and required action.

Findings: Neither success nor failure. The youth will not be returning to the existing clubs, which several of them have been forbidden to attend. However, according to local players, their transgressive behaviour – often when in groups – has generally become more appropriate, even if clashes still occur between youth and programme staff. Delinquency is decreasing and fewer criminal offences are registered. This may be due to other factors, for example, that some of the youth were away on vacation. Only two of the 12 youth did not have a job or take training in late summer 2000. Homework help is believed to have assisted their development, although most of the youth were also taking training before the project started. The authors recommend a culture- and resource-based approach with family involvement, more authoritative staff, use of 'protection of honour', consistency, employment of staff from an immigrant background, constructive use of the youth's values and morals, clear project objectives and a more individual-oriented programme with systematic method development.

Furthermore, the authors point to two paradoxes. First, that the youth are offered action-oriented activities although they are looking for learning and homework help rather than more action. Second, that a group-oriented programme is used when the youth's group lifestyle is part of their delinquent behaviour.

At first, staff make no demands but play along with the youth's chat, etc. However, the tactics change to a more rule-bound approach. The parents ask for more consistency, which may possibly be due to Turkish culture traits, but the staff do not control the boys, who seem to be used to being controlled, though. In addition, the staff are concerned that more consistency will make the youth stay away and not

come back. In the authors' opinion, the staff have undermined their own status by placing themselves on an equal footing with the youth, while the question is not to teach the youth the difference between right and wrong - they already display knowledge of standards and values in relation to their parents.

The youth do not all see themselves as crime prone and do not understand the connection between their criminal behaviour and being offered activities; they thought it was homework help or because there were no places left at the old club. 'The common third', which the staff attempts to create, is misunderstood by the youth. After several times, the youth themselves begin to point out that 'they might as well go on an outing in the woods and chat'. When the young people make too many demands, the staff point out that they 'have to contribute', but they never clarify exactly what this means. The objective is not clear, and the staff's and the youth's understandings differ. The youth regard 'support' as equivalent to personal loyalty on the part of the adults – and against other groups or agencies such as the police or parents – rather than 'advice and dialogue'. One problem is that the programme has no clear educational objectives, another is that the relationship is the only aspect being developed methodically, almost irrespective of where it leads. The youth's social, familial and cultural background should be a resource in the process of change to a much higher degree, and parents should be involved more.

The group approach causes difficulties - the youth become more delinquent when they are together, whereas they show emotions and are easier to approach in a one-on-one situation. The authors see it as part of a customary social education approach, which is reproduced even though it would be possible to prevent the reinforcement of group-oriented behaviour by working with and strengthening the youth's ability to act and behave more as individuals. The authors believe it is a problem that the staff role contains inner contradictions. They are 'chummy' and show feelings, while they provide care and establish boundaries as adults, and regard the youth as victims of their circumstances. They are in conflict with the youth's cultural basis of understanding and may create dependency. The contradictions create conflict.

Study design: Qualitative field work with observations and group interviews with the youth and programme staff, and review of written sources.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Personal Responsibility In Developing Excellence (PRIDE) programme

Authors and year of publication: Harris, M. & Wheeler, M. (1997)

Programme description: The programme consists of a one-week summer stay on a university campus. The children take part in classroom activity and enriching projects centred on themes such as arts, photography, film shooting and drama. In addition to daily recreation, the youth experience the challenges of outdoor life like river rafting, hiking, climbing, canoeing and team building. The youth are also advised about how to apply for university enrolment – when and how, etc, and they take part in discussion of topics like the price of tuition and receive information about the forms of financial support for which they can apply.

(From 1996 to 1997 the PRIDE programme included a further element: 'Super Saturdays', in which the youth of the study did not take part, however). 7th-10th grade children may take part in any of these one-day programmes, which deal with issues like conflict resolution or enriching activities. These sessions may also focus on internet use, etc. Each session is concluded with lunch at a local grill restaurant, where the youth can meet PRIDE friends from other schools in the same school district. The youth who take part in the PRIDE programme evaluate it at its conclusion every year.

(University students are also mentioned as mentors, but this element cannot be inferred from the description of the programme's elements or effects.)

Theory: The objective of PRIDE is to motivate youth in big city centres to pass high school and encourage their interest in going to university. The programme strengthens self-esteem, builds positive attitudes to learning and encourages the youth to improve their academic performance.

Target Group: 11-13 year old children at a high risk of school dropout. They live in inner cities and are characterised as urban and poor. 65% of the school district's youth can receive free or subsidised lunch and 41% of the children in the district between 5 and 17 years live below the poverty line.

Location: Pennsylvania, USA, where the youth are from an urban school district but spend a week at Bloomsbury University as part of the programme.

Findings: 16 of 18 students pass high school, ie, 89%, while 14 (77%) continue in the higher education system. This seems to be a slight increase compared with a prior year before the programme, but the study has no control group. One was placed with a Job Corps Training Programme and one obtained a job. Of the two who did not pass high school one joined the Job Corps, while the other went to prison.

The youth explain that they act in new ways, accept people who are different and have got to know themselves better. They develop personally. Many report that they have made lifetime friendships. In addition, the participants indicate that the programme has taught them about university life, inter-personal skills, finances and career. Several say they know what they want from their lives – further education above all.

Their parents think the children learn to be more independent and get along with others. The programme gives them opportunities to experience part of the university and motivates them for it.

Study design: A cross-section study without a control group with questionnaires administered to the PRIDE participants and their parents and records from their school district. Comparison is made with school district statistics from 1990-1991.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP)

Author and year of publication: CRG Research Limited (2006)

Programme description: The youth are offered a range of positive, diverting, entertaining and developing activities on school-free days and after school all year round. The activities include sports, visual arts, anger management, bowling, go-cart, outdoor exercise, exhibitions, film shooting, rap, excursions into the country/city, dance, mountain climbing and skills programmes. The participation of 'key workers' distinguishes the programme from previous summer activity programmes. The youth are involved by the key workers, who have to obtain the consent of their parents and supervise and document the youth's development. They give the youth one-on-one support to get engaged in education, training or employment and ensure that each has a personal development plan, which is reviewed regularly. They also offer relevant information and guidance on drugs, etc. Key worker support must be targeted at an agreed number of those who are at the greatest risk of getting involved in crime at the given location. Key workers must collaborate with others working with the target group – mentors for instance – to seek continuous support and achieve positive effect. Key worker support is gradually withdrawn to ease the transition away from PAYP. The youth are later tracked to follow up and monitor possible development since the conclusion of the programme.

Most of the youth do sports and, later, educational activities followed by recreation with excursions, art, multimedia and health.

Theory: The intention is that, after participating in the programme, the youth will feel encouraged to take part in mainstream activity not funded by PAYP. The programme gives the youth opportunities for personal development that will boost their self-discipline, self-respect and self-confidence and promote life skills, such as the ability to cooperate and communicate better. The programme is intended to divert

youth from involvement in crime and prevent social exclusion while encouraging education and active citizenship.

Target group: Youth of 13-17 years primarily but participants are generally between 8 and 19 years old. They are at risk of social exclusion, committing crimes or becoming victims of crime. About 85% of participants appear to be in this category, including some who have already committed crimes, most of them boys.

Location: England and Wales in rural and urban contexts. How PAYP is executed locally in practice may vary, and the various programme elements may be offered at school, at home, in the local football club, etc.

Findings: 84% of PAYPS participants seem to have benefited from the programme despite its extensive deficiencies in impact registration, which exist for less than half the participants. (Other simultaneous prevention programmes or conditions may have contributed to the results, since there is no control group in the study.) The great majority of the youth enjoyed the programme, and many showed improvement in areas such as relationships, self-esteem and new skills.

Conversely, about 4% of the registered youth experienced negative effects, while 11% had none.

The players involved see PAYP as a successful programme, however, because its young participants have achieved several positive outcomes like reduced criminal and anti-social behaviour, a path back into education and an opportunity for personal development.

The evaluator emphasises the key workers' important role in achieving change for the youth.

Despite the dropout among the youth interviewed, which could have a highly distortive effect, 95% enjoyed their PAYP activities. Sports are particularly popular, providing an opportunity to move the youth into permanent activities. In one case, more than 30% switched to mainstream sports activity after PAYP. 65% get on better with adults, 62% were more self-assured, 59% felt better about themselves, 72% had made new friends – while initially, they had often felt isolated or had only few friends – and 75% had learned new skills.

The evaluator criticises PAYP's goals – for instance, 30 hours of weekly engagement and focus on outcomes – because preparing the target group to start working towards a goal in itself requires great effort. The target group is difficult and more expensive to commit – chaotic lifestyle, substance use, etc, – which requires more supervision and support. PAYP depends on good collaboration to secure a sufficient number of referrals of youth from external partners. Groups of peers or young mentors are good recruiters of new PAYP participants. A key worker will seek out the referred youth together with a person already participating in the programme.

A broad age group requires diverse activities to retain the youth who at times fail to turn up if they have to take part with much younger children or youth.

The activities must match the lifestyle of the youth, so activities should not be scheduled in the morning. In big cities the programmes must take account of gang borders – activities must be either on neutral ground or within the youth's own borders.

Sustainability might be ensured via a connection between PAYP and existing organisations, sports clubs, etc, so the youth could continue after the conclusion of the programme. The key workers are happy with their flexibility as to where they meet the youth, how much they work, control of their own limited budget, etc. At the same time, their role differs from that of other youth workers with focus on compulsory measures, punishment or crime reduction. Their focus is young people and their development, which helps youth relate more easily to the key workers and feel confident. Case studies demonstrate the benefit of using key workers.

Study design: Pre-post with questionnaires administered to youth, observations of activities and interviews with the youth and programme staff plus statistical material and database input from PAYP's own system.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Ropes Course Training

Authors and year of publication: Davis, D. et al. (1995)

Programme description: A structured, therapeutic adventure outdoor course with ropes.

Initially, the participants are given communication and relationship training, after which they engage in group problem-solving to help them cope with the physical challenges of an outdoor course. Finally, they debrief and discuss the experience with a view to applying it in real life. An example of a training course:

1. Name game with toy-toss, in which children and adults (their teacher participates here) say their name and the name of the person who tossed the toy to them. Next, the Full Value Contract is explained to them, and they sign their name, committing themselves to work towards the goals of their group and their own development 'because I care about myself and my group'. The children are asked to explain what the contract means to them. Finally, they are asked to explain briefly how they feel, as a way of checking their physical and mental well-being.
2. Course activities such as 'the spider web': The group must get all of its members through a section of the web without touching the edge. The group leader stresses the importance of being honest if they touch the edge rather than achieving success dishonestly.
3. Debriefing: Participants explain what they think about the day. Emphasis of trust, respect and honest feedback is a general feature. Parental consent to the children's participation is required, while the children's own participation is voluntary. The programme lasts a half to two days.

Theory: A positive experience will enhance life skills and reduce or prevent juvenile crime. The project aims to counteract the cumulative effects of isolation, abuse and poverty. The programme focus is prevention and enhancement by building up self-esteem, confidence and teamwork – or whatever is most important to a specific group of participants. According to the authors impact is achieved from:

1. A simple but elegant philosophy (honesty and care for oneself and others), 2. Achievable performance,
3. Help to generalise results in relation to other situations (outside the course).

The importance of the programme is greater when it is tailored to the participants' age and idiom and uses concepts and situations that are real and relevant to the group (self-experienced dilemmas, etc.).

Target group: Children 12 years old on average from a rural environment with high unemployment, alcohol problems, isolation and low income and at risk due to these circumstances. The total target group is 10 to 18 years old, however. Of 266 participants, 52 have been charged. 40% live with both parents, and two-thirds are from a middle-income family, according to their own estimate.

Location: A rural context in a mountainous western state in the northern part of the USA with high unemployment, alcohol problems, isolation and low income. The three rural areas have 18% Native Americans in two different reserves. One of the counties has the lowest income per capita in the state (less than USD 12,000) and an unemployment rate of 16.9%. Their parents are unemployed, having lost their jobs in the mining industry, for instance, and school children and youth have poor job prospects due to remote location and absence of social services.

Findings: The youth's self-reported results and statements made by group leaders (teachers, scout leaders, etc) are positive in the majority of cases.

On the whole, the participants seem to have had fun, but the effects are not great. Compared to registered crime and relapse (being charged) there is no significant difference and the feeling of anger is aggravated. For 10 out of 12 factors improvement is significant, however, in the areas of confidence, success, self-esteem, family relationships, accusation, worries, attitudes to school, depression and bonds with others. Anti-social attitudes and behaviour and 'other feelings' are, however, not significantly different.

Group leaders see no negative outcomes of the youth's participation. Moderate- to high-risk youth benefit most from the programme in terms of confidence level. Self-confidence, self-esteem, and acceptance of friends/peers are also individual, positive changes.

Study design: Pre-post without any control group, but using check statistics from the courts. Qualitative and quantitative method with case studies, statements from participants, group leaders in the local community (teachers, girl scout leaders, etc), the youth's self-reported questionnaires and statements from organisations in the community.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Summer Leadership Camp 2008 (An intensive two-week character education summer camp)

Authors and year of publication: Allen, K. et al. (2011)

Programme description: The programme consists of a two-week summer camp with adult role models and a curriculum that promotes pro-social behaviour. Through a fun and interactive learning environment, the children are taught important life skills such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, reliability, problem solving, leadership, trust, respect, teamwork as well as personal enhancement and empowerment.

The families of the selected youth are contacted by mail and the youth are enrolled by their parents. An information meeting is held for the child and a parent or carer in the week before the camp. At the camp, the youth attend morning classes focusing on standardised tests under the Virginia Standards of Learning' (SOL). In addition, the youth have to answer personality-based questions in teams, using the knowledge about sitting tests they acquired during the morning classes (SOL strategies). These could be '50/50' with the most obviously wrong answers being removed. One question might be: 'You help your friend through a labyrinth quickly and safely. Your friend is blindfolded [...] Which of the following skills are most important for helping your friend get through [...]?' a. Contact building, b. Honesty, c. Communication, d. Integrity. The afternoons offer workshops with experimental learning and group discussion activities aimed to enhance teamwork, trust and problem solving. For instance the participants play 'minefield', where objects are placed on the floor and tables and chairs positioned so as to form a labyrinth. Two children cooperate, one guiding the other, who is blindfolded, through the field towards a special object. The experimental learning is followed by group discussions about solutions to a variety of issues, such as what to do if another participant is seen cheating. The participants also visit a university for two hours and are told that pro-social skills will improve their chances of going to university. Admission counsellors give presentations, and students show the participants around, answering questions. The camp includes an experimental learning activity in the form of an excursion to the Challenge Discovery Outdoor Adventure Program for Team Building, where the children meet a climbing challenge, each having to climb, jump, swing and balance on ropes while the other participants cheer them on. The aim is to develop their self-esteem, personal and team leadership skills, strengthen their endurance and resilience and teach them to set and achieve goals. The camp also offers sports activities such as flag football and kickball, during which the camp guides tell the youth about the importance of team spirit and communication for success.

Theory: The programme seeks to enhance youth abilities to tackle personal and environmental challenges in life.

The activities are intended to strengthen pro-social skills (behaviour that will benefit others primarily) like empathy and social responsibility. The youth are encouraged to take initiative, run risks and develop competencies that support multidimensional growth. The programme has a socio-cognitive approach in which interaction with community factors like family, teachers and classmates is believed to influence the youth's behaviour. Pro-social skills will improve their relations with teachers and peers and thereby strengthen their school attachment.

Target group: The participants are 11–14-year-old – mainly 12 years old – urban youth at risk of involvement in deviant behaviour. 70% can be characterised as living in poverty. Their schools have identified them as being at risk of poor academic performance and having three or more disciplinary warnings in the past year. Most live in council housing or special zones with a high risk of redundancy, crime, empty buildings and low levels of education.

Location: An urban school district in south-east USA in a special risk area.

Findings: Pro-social skills with questions about 16 situations show, overall, that the programme group has significantly more knowledge about pro-social skills after the intervention with moderate impact scores. Only two questions show significance separately, however: helpful and caring and own anger management. In addition, more than 90% of participants enjoyed the programme, and most wanted to take part again. They all stated that they had learnt to respect others, and most participants felt they had got better at taking care of themselves and coping under pressure. The authors want to expand the programme to four weeks, however, in order to exert longer-term influence on the young people and to transform more of its components into experimental learning.

Study design: Pre-post design with self-completed questionnaires administered to the participating youth.

Study rating: Medium

Title: The Ada Sheriffs Youth Foundation (SYF) (coordinator of Early Intervention Action Teams (EIA))

Authors and year of publication: Crank, J. et al. (2003)

Programme description: Enriching activities after school or at weekends carried out mainly by volunteers of Early Intervention Action teams consisting of the school principal, teachers, social workers, interested parents and organisations, etc, at a local school. The EIA team at each school identifies the youth who may need the programme, and the youth decide which activities they wish to join, based on their personal interests. SYF pays the expenses of all local activities. The youth participate with a variety of other youth not covered by the programme. At the time of publication, 34 recreational and after-school programmes were in operation, ranging from (Christian) scouts (YMCA), music teaching, riding, karate and physical exercise to swimming lessons, etc.

The EIA team contacts teachers at their school, which recommends a youth. The EIA team gains the consent of the youth's parents to his/her participation in the programme. The teacher fills in a risk factor checklist and meets the EIA team to explain why the pupil should participate. The EIA team votes on whether to include the young person in the programme. If the votes are in favour of inclusion, the youth is interviewed by a team member to find out which activities he/she would like to join. The youth makes the decision. EIA scouts the area to find out if the youth's favourite activity is available and arranges for transport (frequently the hardest part). The youth can then join the programme.

The teacher fills in the risk factor checklist again when the school year ends or when the youth leaves the programme. Then the EIA team meets with school administrators, etc, to evaluate the programme. Decentralisation and the use of volunteers make it impossible to control the daily activities of programme top-down, and the schools vary greatly in the way they approach and implement the programme.

Theory: Particularly vulnerable youth are identified and helped to develop protective factors. In the SYF programme, the protective factor consists of letting the youth participate in self-chosen programmes after school, which are designed to build pro-social bonds of attachment and commitment to conventional society in a positive recreational or social environment at times when the youth might otherwise get into trouble, thus keeping them away from delinquent peers. At the same time the programme gives the youth an adult role model and, lastly, it aims to prevent stigmatisation because the young people do not take part in an activity labelled as being for 'risk youth' only.

Target group: 10–12-year-old children who are particularly vulnerable to adversity in life such as dropping out of school.

Location: Presumably including both rural and big city contexts (based on a search by school names) in the USA, where youth from three different schools join local activity programmes in various locations.

Findings: The programme is promising but other factors may also play a role. The evaluation showed improvement on many of the youth's risk scores. Overall, for the at-risk pupils from all three schools, 75% showed improved risk scores, while 10% were unchanged and 15% showed actual *deterioration*. Family relations improved significantly for pupils from all three schools. Friends were improved for two schools. School was improved for two and local community factors were improved for pupils from two schools as well. Personal behaviour improved at two schools and self-image also improved at two of the three schools. It is remarkable that family and local community scores can improve even though this is not a programme aim.

Study design: Quantitative pre-post study with risk factor checklists filled in by teachers or social workers at the schools of the youth.

Study rating: Medium

Title: The Neutral Zone

Authors and year of publication: Thurman, Q. et al. (1996)

Programme description: Programme with recreational activities and social intervention that seek to improve the youth's job skills and general socialisation with appropriate adult role models. The location is intended to be one in which at-risk youth will gather voluntarily in the course of the periods and on the weekdays that coincide with high rates of criminal activity in most local communities. The programme offers the youth a range of activities like basketball, volleyball, music and movies as well as free food, counselling and other services such as job preparation. Around 8.30 pm on Fridays and Saturdays the staff start to prepare the evening's activities. Staff and volunteers organise activities, tables and chairs and cook food. Later, the staff meet for a 10-minute briefing before opening the doors to the youth. The head of the Neutral Zone project is in charge of the briefing, which may focus on discussing problem youth and recent or expected assaults, plans for the evening ahead and the staff composition to be agreed for the evening. The programme participants already start gathering in front of the school building at around 9 pm. It opens at 10, and a staff member and a local police officer conduct a body search of all participants as they enter. Pockets, bags and rucksacks are searched and anything unacceptable (weapons, potential weapons, gang wear, graffiti accessories, etc.) is confiscated or kept at the door. The youth go in and wait for more friends, socialise with other youth and staff or start an activity.

The activities include pool, watching films, playing video games, working on a programme newsletter or an upcoming talent show, playing soccer, volley ball, basketball, socialising with peers or taking part in various education programmes (none were registered during the observations, but a variety such as quitting smoking, anger management, Drug Addicts Anonymous, Pathways to Women and HIV/AIDS prophylaxis have been claimed to be held). At midnight, a meal is served, the programme's main attraction. There are 15-minute smoking breaks at 11 and 12.30 pm.

Theory: One of the goals of the Neutral Zone is to prevent gang involvement and to intervene by offering a safe and attractive alternative way to spend time. Its aim is to reduce the number of youth on the streets between 10 pm and 2 am when crime rates seem to be high. The philosophy is that it should be a non-punitive programme that addresses the problems facing youth in the neighbourhood because traditional methods of crime control (police intervention) do not work.

Target group: 13–20-year-old youth who are at risk of joining gangs or are already members of gangs. They are at a high risk of getting involved in criminal activity. More than half the youth in the focus groups report that they have been arrested or convicted.

Location: USA, Washington State, a medium-sized town, where the programme is based in a local school for younger children in a residential neighbourhood. The number of juvenile arrests rose by 63% from 1988 to 1992.

Findings: The programme may perhaps help reduce the crime rate during the hours it is open, but the results are uncertain. More calls to the police are expected on Friday and Saturday nights, but while the programme is in operation there is no statistically significant increase. The authors claim that this lack of increase may be due to the programme.

In addition, the youth themselves say that many of them would be getting into trouble on the streets if they did not visit the Neutral Zone. There is a statistically significant difference between the average number of calls per weekend when the Neutral Zone is closed versus open, 77 when it is closed versus 55 when it is open, ie, a rise of almost 30%. However, other programmes in the town may also have an influence. The authors admit that it is hard to assess whether the possible absence of an increase in calls to the police on Friday and Saturday nights is an effect of the Neutral Zone or of something else.

A few youth find that the Neutral Zone does not deal with gang pressure. It tends rather to be ignored during opening hours. Violent incidents were otherwise seen when the programme started, but troublemakers no longer frequent the location due to massive staff presence.

Staff believe that the most important crime reduction features of the Neutral Zone are offering a safe place to be without violence, treating all gang members with respect and building up positive relations between youth and staff. However, 25% of the staff find that this goal is only achieved to a limited extent.

According to the youth the most positive aspects of the Neutral Zone are the facilities offered by the place, the recreational activities, the food and the educational programmes. Many participants mention that they have learnt to deal with people from many different walks of life. Some mention that they have trained good sports skills. Others say it has taught them to control their temper or their alcohol use.

Study design: Field work and viewpoint study with observation, focus group interviews and official data by way of 'weekend calls-for-service' from the police.

Study rating: Medium

Title: The Summit Project (fictitious name; programme, participants and location anonymised)

Authors and year of publication: Nichols, G. (2004)

Programme description: Sports project, for which the participants are referred by YOT (Youth Offending Teams) and allocated to a sports staff member. The programme is divided into levels, with bronze, silver and gold prizes being awarded at the end of each. Bronze requires five hours of satisfactorily completed programme activity, while the silver prize requires 10 hours, which normally takes ten weeks. Another 10 hours of activity with greater responsibility and proven commitment are required to win the gold prize – for instance, the participant organises some of the activities alone. For example, a participant may complete the programme by organising a mountain bike excursion for four staff members and another youth. Another participant may take a climbing course to reach the gold level, taking extra responsibility by travelling back and forth without any escort. The sports leader and the youth agree on the next step after silver and up to gold. Participation is voluntary, and the YOT staff member who refers the youth may not see the youth after he has started taking the programme. It may happen, however, that they follow up with a couple of home visits. For example, the first meeting between the YOT worker and the youth may take place at a cafe where the staff member clarifies whether the youth wants to take part in the project. Later, the first lesson starts – in diving, for instance. The programme also offers golf, indoor climbing, badminton, mountain biking, squash, canoeing and soccer contests, etc. The programme duration is about one hour a week for up to 25 weeks.

Theory: Diversionary activities and something to look forward to may reduce crime if a programme leads to long-term independent pursuit of sports that constitute an alternative to criminal activity. The gold prize is intended to encourage autonomous and independent participation and it seems that prizes promote self-esteem by rewarding achievement. The sports staff argue that youth gain greater self-confidence and discover that they can do things unaided – rather than having things done for them. YOT workers point out that the programme goal is long-term involvement in sports rather than in crime. The author investigates whether value-driven personal development is achieved.

Target group: 14–17-year-old boys at moderate risk. They may have made trouble, done ‘wrong things’, committed vandalism or not gone to school – without having done anything else.

Location: Takes place in the UK in various locations depending on the chosen sports activity. May be rural. The locations have been anonymised.

Findings: The potential for crime reduction is limited according to YOT interviewees. Sports leaders can show no probable link between sports and crime either. Some participants do not continue an activity after the programme and those who do continue may have carried on anyway, even if they had been Summit participants, because they were strongly motivated from the start and several were already into sports, independently of the programme. For these youth, Summit merely offered extra opportunities. Although the programme embodies features that contribute to value-oriented personal development, it also lacks some. The activities are attractive, and the participants and their parents think there was a good range of choice. This choice can be used to match the young persons’ interests and steer them toward other interests where independent participation is practical.

However, the young people do not use the sports activities as a springboard for a more general personal development process. The programme’s main, sole focus is their continued participation. The youth do not feel that bronze, silver and gold prizes enhance their self-esteem either. Rather, it seems that sport in itself gives the youth a sense of achievement. Finally, the youth receive no support after the conclusion of the programme mainly due to lack of time resources. Pro-social peers are limited. The relationship between the sports leaders and youth is excellent – as is the relationship between the sports leader and the participants’ parents. However, it is questioned whether the relationship transitions into a mentoring or role model relationship. The relationship will probably be more important to some youth with special parental circumstances (absence, poor relations) than to others.

Study design: Case studies with individualised programmes, viewpoint study with qualitative interviews with participants, some of their parents, sports leaders and YOT staff. In addition, programme records with individual action plans and pre-post with questionnaires administered to the participating youth.

Study rating: Medium

Title: The Youth Crime Reduction Video Project

Authors and year of publication: Bowey, L. & McGlaughlin, A. (2006)

Project description: The pilot project is designed to improve attitudes to crime and the police, reduce exclusion and strengthen self-esteem via a six-day intervention, which comprises a weekend outdoors and four days held at the National Centre for Citizenship and the Law. It focuses primarily on crime primarily and the goal is for each group – one from each school – to produce a video. The youth are involved in developing stories, characters, etc, and they play most roles themselves. Each participant receives a copy of the video four months after the programme when the film is shown at a presentation night with family.

Theory: The intervention aims to change attitudes. It is intended to make youth improve their attitude to crime and the police, reduce exclusion and develop self-esteem.

Target group: 13-year-old children at risk of criminal behaviour or being expelled from school. The youth have poor social or educational commitment.

Location: East Midlands, UK, where the programme is held at the National Centre for Citizenship and the Law, with one weekend spent out of town. No further specification.

Findings: The programme has short-term positive results in the form of improved self-esteem, better attitudes to crime, police, school and education, but six months after the intervention no other change than better self-esteem can be recorded. The authors believe the programme was neither extensive nor intense enough, nor did it aim at enough aspects of young people's lives.

The elements preferred by the youth were the weekend out of town and the opportunity to contribute to a film. They felt they had acquired team-building and acting skills, formed relationships with others, and had developed a sense of pride and greater confidence as a consequence of their involvement. However, they would have liked to be more involved in the script and the characters, which presumably would also have given them better ownership of the project. One of the 'adults' of the programme was actually a police woman who had previously arrested several of the participants and relatives. This created a distance from the start. However, the programme's target group should also have had a better composition, because the youth spanned a broad range. At the same time, it was not expedient that the participants were a group of youth who were already friends. At times, their group commitment to the programme slumped.

Study design: Pre-post with follow-up after six months. Qualitative and quantitative data collection with questionnaires, individual and focus group interviews with the participants.

Study rating: Medium

Title: The Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) (phase 1+2)

Author and years of publication: Morgan Harris Burrows (MHB) (2003) (2008)

Programme description: The programme was introduced by the Youth Justice Board and in 2003 consisted of 70 Youth Inclusion Projects with a host of sub-programmes. Youth take part voluntarily in constructive activities. The focus is on identifying and engaging young people at greatest risk in a given neighbourhood, and working with them to reduce crime.

The project areas are selected, crime rates are assessed and 50 youth who are most at risk in the neighbourhoods are identified by the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and other players. They then work together to assess the risk factors in each individual young person they know in the area. Data are entered into a matrix, whose scores are checked by the local steering group. The process aims to identify not only those who commit crimes but also those at future risk of criminal behaviour or social and educational exclusion. The process of identifying high-risk youth should be repeated every six months.

The programme seeks to encourage the participation of a broader section of youth in the area in addition to the 50 young people, because it is designed to work with the peers and siblings of the 'top 50' in order to reintegrate them into mainstream society.

The programme includes YIPMIS, the YIP Management Information System, and documentation is a continuous requirement. The local projects identify suitable intervention through a planning process. National programme support provides general counselling on the programme.

The youth must be offered a dynamic, locally embedded and integrated activity package. The intervention frequently consists of sports, both individual and team sports. Later, more intensive activities are added, like language support to minorities, computer courses, instruction in the three Rs, employment support and clubs. Other elements like art and media, group work and some outreach work are also incorporated. Mentoring plans with young persons as mentors account for a small proportion of the YIP programme content, but are not specifically or separately mentioned. The intervention under YIP must be capable of engaging the youth and addressing their risk factors, but the types of such measures are not centrally dictated. In addition, repeated efforts must be made to commit the youth, regardless of

any challenging behaviour on their part. Strong staff relations and the ability to work at the level of the individual are at the core of the programme.

Theory: Constructive activities are intended to prevent the youth from committing crime. The wording of the YIP mission statement is: 'to ensure that the most at risk young people are included in mainstream activities by offering support to them to overcome a variety of social problems'.

Youth inclusion is the programme's underlying logic, and the mainstreaming activity may be education and employment. Risk factors are the basis on which the 50 high-risk youth are identified for the programme. It must offer them intervention that is tailored to them, addressing the factors and preventing future criminal behaviour.

Target group: Primarily 13–16-year-old youth, who are either among the 50 youth at the greatest risk in the given area or from the broader group of youth from the neighbourhood, both those who commit crime and those at risk of future criminal behaviour or social or educational exclusion. In phase 1 40% of the 'top 50' youth have been arrested for crimes previously and according to the guidelines for the programme, at least 30% of this core group must have an arrest in their past.

Location: England and Wales in distressed areas that typically have high crime rates and appear to be in both medium-sized towns and big cities.

Findings: Generally, the number of arrests is reduced for the 50 youth at the greatest risk.

PHASE 1: Most top 50 youth are arrested to a lesser extent – 65% fewer for those who are actively involved in and committed to YIP – and for less serious crimes. At the same time, the study shows a decline in expulsion from school, even though the data are incomplete, and approved and non-approved absence rises. At area level, there is a trend towards less crime in some areas but not at the general level.

PHASE 2: The participating core 50 youth are arrested less than non-participants. The following results say nothing about the complexity of the problems facing the youth or the quality of their relationships with and support from the programme's dedicated and professional staff. However, the authors think the programme is a 'convincing case' given the youth's chaotic and challenging life, the efforts of the staff and because YIP gets the right youth involved, which is crucial to the programme's success. For the core youth who are most at risk the average number of arrests is reduced by 66.5%, but the results may reflect certain variations, for example similar youth who are not involved in YIP have rates of arrest that also decline by 55.6%. Analyses show that YIP participation does not reduce the likelihood of getting arrested *per se*, but it seems that those who do get arrested, are arrested less frequently. 59% of the core group of youth who are most at risk in the given neighbourhoods are engaged in work, education, etc.

It is questioned whether local players have records of risk youth and whether the projects have enough resources to contact each person in the 'top 50' identified. Nine attempts are on average required to engage a young person from the 'top 50', but the figure varies between 1 and 30. Otherwise, programmes of this magnitude have experienced considerable 'drift' in their implementation.

Study design: Quantitative and qualitative cross-sectional study, pre-post and pre-post with a control group (arrests). Phase 1: Regional evaluators contribute case studies and quarterly data. Arrest statistics are obtained primarily from YOTs and area statistics from the police, while data on truancy and expulsion from school are obtained at schools in the YIP project areas. Phase 2: Questionnaire about how YIP conducts assessments of the youth. Certain participants were also interviewed.

Study rating: Medium

Mentoring & leisure-time activities

Title: An After-school Program Targeting Urban African American Youth

Authors and year of publication: Hanlon, T. et al. (2009)

Programme description: An integrated after-school, violence-prevention programme consisting primarily of a structured group mentoring approach that emphasises remedial education and African-American cultural heritage to promote school bonding, social skills development and academic achievement. On a daily basis the programme's group mentoring element focuses on such topics as African-American culture and heritage, shared experiences and ways of handling negative environmental influences. In addition, the programme consists of parental support and empowerment as well as community outreach work. The pupils follow the programme on most weekdays after school, have scheduled family gatherings and go on organised trips.

The details of the programme are as follows:

The structured group mentoring element involves two adult role models who work with groups of approx. 20 students. They come from the local community and give the pupils educational assistance and guidance as well as offer companionship and emotional support during group sessions. They offer remedial instruction (including assistance with homework assignments and study skills exercises), discussion of self-control topics (problem-solving, coping with stress, conflict resolution and anger management), career counselling, a higher appreciation of African-American cultural heritage and social and recreational activities. Additional discussions, presentations and didactic interactive activities involve providing information on topics such as health promotion and strategies to reduce the risks involved in using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, premature sexual activity, violence and similar behaviours. There is a clear focus throughout the programme on the importance of education in reaching one's life goals.

Parents are engaged in the programme on a voluntary basis depending on their lifestyle, work and family support needs. Scheduled parental involvement takes the form of: 1. Family gatherings that enable families to get together and network with each other about common issues and give programme staff a better chance to assess the families' needs and wishes. Parents can forge bonds with teachers, staff and school administrators, and obtain guidance and information from programme staff about their children. 2. Teleconferences in the form of mentor feedback regarding the students' participation in programme activities. 3. Community outreach work to strengthen relationships between youth, parents and the rest of the community by engaging local volunteers in the programme and encouraging the young people and their parents to get involved in activities as well as use community resources and services. This element also includes supplementary programme activities such as recreational and educational field trips. These field trips are targeted at mentors, students, their parents and other volunteers. Parents are also informed about programme activities through monthly newsletters and calendars handed out to parents, students and school and project staff.

Theory: The aim is to increase school bonding and develop social, academic and creative skills while seeking to prevent substance use, violent behaviour and premature sexual activity. The programme is intended to have a positive influence on the young people's general outlook on life and inclination to learn. The approach is inspired by the social development model that explains how risk and protective factors impact the emergence of deviant behaviour.

Culturally sensitive principles and methods are used. For example, in its group mentoring element, the programme draws on the group affiliation and ethnic identity generally found in African-American communities. The importance of the support of extended families, networks and communities in helping parents to raise positive-minded, healthy children is highlighted. As well as providing the young people with cultural enrichment opportunities, the field trips are intended to strengthen mentor-mentee relations while giving mentors opportunities to be role models for appropriate behaviour.

Target group: 11–12-year-olds living in high-risk areas. Most participants reported at baseline that they have not been involved in serious forms of deviant behaviour. 43% have been involved in minor misdemeanours or bad behaviour at school, often resulting in temporary suspension. Some of the children have friends with deviant behaviour. 14% have friends that have been expelled from school. 26% have friends that have engaged in shoplifting, while 19% have friends that have been arrested for criminal activity. 83% have been raised by their biological mothers, while 65% report that their biological father has also been a primary caregiver for most of their lives. Despite a high rate of parental separations, few children are in foster care.

Location: Urban districts in the USA with disproportionately high rates of poverty, violence, crime and substance abuse.

Findings: The participants experienced a significant improvement in their average grades (Grade Point Average) and teacher-reported cognitive problems. Otherwise the programme has shown no demonstrable effect, including no impact on parentally reported criminal activity.

Greater parental involvement in the programme is correlates positively with the improvement in pupils' grades. No changes in negative behaviour or deviant activity are observed. Low levels of deviant activity continued to characterise students at follow-up, with slight increases occurring only in association with deviant friends and problem behaviour at school. Over the duration of the study, there was little or no initiation of or increased involvement in substance use or risky sexual behaviour. The students seemed to maintain a general interest in school and expressed appreciation of the importance of avoiding drug use. After the programme 90% of the students were optimistic about achieving their personal goals in the future.

The authors point out that the results regarding grade point average reflect the educational aims of the programme. They cannot determine whether the positive development in average grades is due merely to the supplementary teaching or to the increased motivation engendered by the positive atmosphere in group mentoring sessions.

Study design: Pre-post with a control group and control for confounding factors. Questionnaires administered to the young people, their caregivers and teachers.

Study rating: Medium

Title: An intensive mentoring program

Authors and year of publication: Keating, L. et al. (2002)

Programme description: An intensive mentoring programme with joint group activities and an educational component. The programme used two types of mentors: adult volunteer mentors (Senior Friends) from the community (community matches) and students from the local university (university matches). The difference between the two was that community matches with the older mentors had to last at least one year, while the university matches only had to last at least six months. The mentors received training. The youth (Junior Friends) are referred to the programme and are initially put on a waiting list. Matching them with an adult can take anywhere between two weeks and two years. While on the waiting list, the young people take part in a monthly group activity with other youth on the list until they are matched with an adult according to gender, ethnicity, age and geographical location, as well as to their common interests and preferences in the categories mentioned above. Once a young person and an adult have been matched, they both commit themselves to their friendship for the required period of time. They spend at least three hours a week together on activities such as going to the park, the cinema or a sports event. Most relationships last longer than the obligatory 6 or 12 months, but the involvement of programme administrators is minimal once the required time commitment has ended. During the commitment period, the administrators follow the matched mentors and mentees closely.

The mentoring programme also includes sponsored group activities such as recreational excursions, community service projects and educational or other learning experiences. Social interaction skills are

emphasised in these group activities as well as in the relationship between the young person and the mentor.

Finally the programme provides monthly seminars on life skills training. Local professionals teach the young people about such topics as child abuse prevention, drug and alcohol abuse, cross-cultural awareness, health, nutrition and school problems.

Theory: The purpose of the intervention programme is to prevent the onset of a criminal lifestyle or mental illness. The mentor can offer social support and be a role model – in the youth environment – with which the young people can identify, which in turn leads to more socially acceptable behaviour and less criminal behaviour. According to the literature on resiliency, the children who are most likely to survive an abusive and neglectful upbringing are those who seek healthier relationships outside the home. This could be a relationship with a mentor.

Target group: The participants were youth from the community aged between 10 and 17, with 13 being the average, and assessed to be at risk of becoming criminal or developing mental illness. Reasons for referral include fighting and other behaviour problems at school or in the community, emotional problems, poor grades or school attendance, theft, vandalism or other minor crimes. Young people involved in serious crime were referred to other programmes.

Location: Western USA.

Findings: The programme seems to reduce problematic externalising¹¹¹ behaviour and withdrawn behaviour. The participants' withdrawn behaviour at school and at home dropped significantly with medium effect size, and their externalising behaviour fell significantly with a large effect size at school and a medium effect size at home. However, the participants do not report a change in feelings of hopelessness, delinquency or self-esteem. 54% of the participants do not mention their mentor as a social support. They reported no more support than the control group.

The programme seems to prevent young people with initial signs of behavioural and emotional problems from developing worse symptoms, but it is uncertain which elements contribute to the effect and how. It may be that the mentor's support and guidance or the pro-social activities with the mentor and the other young people in the group activities promote a healthier lifestyle. The skills training seminars that teach youth to handle problems and show them they are not the only ones with problems may have a similar effect.

African-Americans achieve different results from Latinos and Caucasians. It is possible that mentoring programmes like this one should be culturally sensitive.

Study design: Pre-post with control group, control of confounding factors and use of questionnaires administered to the participants, their parents and teachers.

Study rating: High

Title: Big Brothers/Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring (older students as mentors)

Authors and year of publication: Herrera, C. et al. (2008)

Programme description: Volunteers from the community in high school ('Bigs') develop relations with students ('Littles'), usually 'elementary school' students or slightly older students in 'middle school'. The volunteers meet the Littles at the children's school during or after school about once a week during the course of a school year. In their activities they focus on a range of social and academic activities, and most meet in the presence of other mentor matches in a large space, such as the school gym. Their interaction is typically supervised by BBBS staff, but on occasion by school staff.

¹¹¹ Externalising behaviors are directed toward others and entail observable acts that indicate aggression and delinquency (Achenbach & Edelbrock 1991 in Keating et al. 2002:721).

The volunteers are asked to commit themselves to the programme for an entire school year, but are encouraged to stay with the programme for as long as possible. Mentor and mentee meet for about an hour a week during the school year. They also meet both in school time and after school – some programmes only provided for meetings during school hours. In the study the student mentor-based mentoring programme is compared with a similar BB/BS programme involving adult volunteer mentors. The high school mentors are asked to meet their mentees slightly more often – at least four times a month – than many of the adult mentors are requested to.

Supervision and support from BBBS staff can take many forms. For example, staff checked mentors individually outside match meetings to see what progress they were making. In many cases staff were also present during match meetings, organised activities and ensured that the meetings were going well. Staff were more often present for high school mentor meetings than for adult volunteer meetings.

The programmes included in the study vary substantially in their structure and activities, and in the amount and type of support they give to mentor matches. BBBS of America has a set of guidelines for its school-based monitoring programmes, which are generally the same for both high school student and adult mentoring programmes. However, there are certain differences, for example, in the frequency with which matches are asked to meet and their amount of choice when selecting activities. However, this is not a typical means of distinguishing high school mentoring programmes from adult mentoring programmes.

Theory: Volunteer high school mentors can have several strengths that set them apart from adult volunteers. For the mentee they may become a friend who is closer in age and easier to relate to. A young mentor may also have a better understanding of what interests the mentee, and possibly also boost the young student's social status among his or her peers.

Meetings that offer an opportunity for interaction with other matches can give mentors valuable information about the Little's social skills and potential difficulties when interacting with peers. The presence of other volunteers may also provide mentors with support and camaraderie that help them feel more committed to the programme.

However, the presence of other volunteers could also distract both mentees and mentors from developing their own relationship.

Target group: 9-14-year-olds, usually referred by their schools¹¹².

Location: Cities and medium-sized towns in the USA, where the programme is conducted on the students' school premises or after school, often in a school gym where several matches are present at the same time.

The specific geographic locations of the programmes are Central Ohio in Columbus, Colorado in Denver, Eastern Maine in Ellsworth, Eastern Missouri in St. Louis, Greater Cleveland in Cleveland, Island County in Oak Harbor, North Texas in Dallas, Northwestern Arizona in Show Low, Northwest Georgia Mountains in Dalton & The Bridge in Wilkes-Barre (PA).

Findings: The effects for young people matched with volunteer high school mentors were far fewer and smaller than for those who had volunteer adult mentors. Youth with high school mentors only did significantly better than those with adult mentors in their ability to relate socially in two outcomes: social acceptance and assertiveness. For example, assertiveness covers leadership abilities, not being withdrawn and defending personal points of view.

Young programme participants with high school mentors only improved significantly on one outcome compared with non-mentored youth: social acceptance seen from their teacher's point of view. However, the young participants themselves reported no effect at all.

¹¹² More detailed information is not provided, but BBBS' general criteria for mentees are probably used, like the other BB/BS programmes reviewed. Information from Grossman et al. 2012 about the same background study (Herrera et al. 2007) shows that 59.6% receive a free or subsidised lunch at school, ie, they come from a poor home (*ibid.* 2012:46).

However, *overall* as regards all BBBS participants with both volunteer adult and school-aged mentors, Littles showed impacts for 9 of the 31 outcomes tested relative to non-mentored children and young people. All these impacts are in school-related areas such as teacher-reported improvement in general academic performance, number of in-class assignments and homework handed in, performance in single subjects, truancy and so-called 'serious school infractions' (including fighting, suspension and being sent to the school principal's office).

For 12 out of 31 outcomes, youth with volunteer *adult* mentors performed significantly better than non-mentored youth. The difference is apparent in such areas as improved academic performance, school and pro-social behaviour and school attendance. Conversely, there was no significant effect for misbehaviour *outside* school. The Littles self-reported the programme benefits in the form of academic abilities and less truancy. However, Littles who left the programme after a school year did not seem to maintain the effects.

The basic programme guidelines may improve the benefits that young people get from their high school mentors, but the young mentors themselves have personal development needs and a desire to be with their peers, which are sometimes met at the expense of their Littles/mentees, for example, when they are seen together with other matches. The authors believe that to be successful, young volunteer mentors may need very different types of training, support and structure than normally provided by BBBS programmes.

The authors recommend considering how to use the possible strengths of high school mentors. High school mentor programmes focus less on structured activities pre-determined by the school or the BBBS agency and more on unstructured activities that the matches could select themselves. High school Bigs engage in casual conversations with young Littles more often than adult mentors, as well as in conversations about social themes such as race, poverty, current events and the Littles' social lives. They also spend more time doing various recreational activities, including games and sport, creative activities, and attending school and BBBS events. They involve their Littles in decisions more often than adult mentors, and focus more strongly on their social relationships than adult mentors do, who put more focus academic activities. The programmes should take advantage of these strengths, even though they may simply be products of the young mentors' age and status.

Later it is essential that the young volunteers understand the importance of consistency. This must be emphasised in their training, since young mentors are more likely than adult mentors to miss match meetings. High school mentors receive at least two hours' training before being matched, while ongoing training improves the likelihood of longer-term matches as well as higher-quality and closer relationships with mentees. This also gives the high school student the necessary skills, attitudes and knowledge to be a mentor. The support of staff and communication with young mentors is also important – the stronger the support, the longer the match.

Some high school mentors received points at school for volunteering, but the awarding of points should be contingent on their attending match meetings and may restrict their voluntary involvement once the obligatory mentoring period is over. Mentors should also be involved until their final high school year, as they rarely continue once they have passed their exams. Finally, it can be productive to mix high school and adult mentoring programmes. Young mentors remained with the programmes for longer when they also included adult mentors. Adult mentors tend to show more regularity and consistency and could perhaps act as role models for younger mentors.

As regards the characteristics of mentors, both adult volunteers and young mentors are usually woman and usually Caucasian. Young mentees matched with high school mentors report closer relationships with same-sex mentors, while mentees with adult mentors report closer relationships with opposite-sex mentors (boys matched with adult women). Cross-race matches showed the same relationship quality for both types of match.

Young mentors who meet with other matches in the same large space, eg, the gym, report the numerous advantages of this structure, and matches taking place in these environments last longer than those where mentor and mentee meet independently. However, the young mentors tend to focus slightly less

on their Littles. They could forget the Littles' needs once they were together with mentors of their own age. The difference is not significant, though. On the other hand, the levels of youth focus are statistically significantly higher when the Littles meet separately with their high school mentors. This suggests that group context can also negatively impact the relationship.

Study design: Pre-post with randomly selected control group and comparison groups (young people with high school mentors versus young people without mentors or with adult mentors). The study was controlled for confounding factors. The data derive from a larger impact study, '*BBBS SBM (School-Based Mentoring) Impact Study*' (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, McMaken & Jucovy 2007). The study uses questionnaires administered to young people, their mentors, teachers and BBBS staff, interviews with school staff and conversations with BBBS staff. Database information about BBBS matches was also included.

Study rating: High

Title: Diversionary activities (informal mentoring by football coaches)

Author and year of publication: Rogers, R. (2011)

Programme description: The programme concerns diversionary sports activities with young male coaches who also acted as informal coaches for the young participants.

The primary activity provided was football, but the programme provides other activities in order to attract a broader group of young people. These include netball, basketball, fishing, dancing, informal and bespoke mentoring, information about teenage pregnancy and contributing to the schools' instruction called Personal, Social and Health Education teaching (PSHE). In practice, the sessions took place in two schools that the young people attend and 16 housing estates where they live.

The sessions in the housing estates were very informal and held in the early evening, and consisted of a football game refereed by the young coaches. The precise content of the evening depended on the number and abilities of the young people who turned up. Some would arrive at the start, some later, still others would leave early, all meaning that the composition of the football teams changes frequently. As a rule there are three teams, with two playing against each other while the third team waits on the side-line until they have a turn playing against the winning team. This enables the coaches to interact personally, one-on-one with the young people on the bench. They talk to them about their interests and provide the young people with advice and support about any day-to-day concerns they may have. The sessions on housing estates are highly community-based, very flexible and adaptable to the various challenges of the young people's home environments.

Conversely, the school sessions are longer and more formalised. They start with a fitness session including stretching exercises and practice games. Later there is a workshop, also time-limited, which consists of a programme of PSHE-related subjects exploring such themes as healthy lifestyle and social issues such as bullying, peer pressure and effects of drug abuse. The final session is a football game.

The programme is offered once a week. The estate-based sessions are held in the early evening as two-hour football games or a mini-tournament. The school-based sessions last two to three hours, with 50 minutes of fitness, a 50-minute workshop and a 50-minute football game.

The coaches, who are all relatively young and enthusiastic, give the young people emotional support and personal encouragement. Many come from the local area and joke and chat with the youngsters about football and the community as well as offer advice about school, work, football skills and personal relationships. In their own words, they do not often tell the young people off, but advise them and develop friendships with them.

The interventions vary greatly from situation to situation and from one young person to another. In certain special cases schools or community social workers ask coaches to offer one-on-one support to youth with anger management problems, for example, at a meeting before school, to help the young

person get through the school day. In others cases coaches offer group work support to special youth groups, for example, children who have been bullied, whose families are experiencing financial problems, who are about to become fathers or who follow alternative curriculum programmes.

Some coaches accompany the boys home from training to protect them from threatening peers or to break up fights. Sometimes they are also themselves physically attacked by youth or verbally abused by neighbours. They also assist the police in avoiding major fights between rival groups.

Furthermore, on the housing estates the coaches occasionally give particularly talented boys advanced coaching; in other cases they kick a ball around with them very informally, and the coaches' main aim is to create a sense of security, supervise the recreational activity, show an interest in the boys and entertain them with jokes and stories.

Theory: The purpose was to divert the young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour, enhance their self-esteem and raise their aspirations by providing them with positive male role models and informal mentoring relationships. The author relies on research suggesting that mentoring schemes that go beyond traditional teacher-pupil learning situations can be important for developing a sense of self-worth and give the young people psychosocial support. This type of mentor focuses on emotional and support functions rather than on more traditional career-focused support.

Target group: Primarily boys aged 10-19 years, but on the housing estates they can be as young as 5 or as old as 22. The youth live in severely deprived areas with a high level of anti-social activity. The young people are regarded as having behavioural problems, low self-esteem or problems at home.

Location: Severely socially and economically deprived urban areas with a high number of anti-social activities in the south of England. These are areas of high unemployment, high social poverty and low income.

Findings: The coaches develop strong bonds of trust and respectful friendships with the youth, who appreciate the coaches' personal investment in them. Precisely because the sessions vary and the coaches are flexible in their roles towards the young people as football coach and/or mentor, it is extremely difficult to quantify the coaching intervention and to measure the impact of the programme. Complex factors influence the young people's school attendance and anti-social behaviour, etc, and realistically, a short-term, less intensive programme like this scheme must be subject to certain limitations, for example, duration of impact.

Since the football coaches are not trained counsellors, the programme is *not* a substitute for the young people's access to structured, formal professional support. However, the young people self-report the social and health benefits of the programme, and professionals close to them agree that the regular presence and attention of the coaches give the youth personal and social benefits in the form of greater motivation, self-esteem and consideration for others. This seems to contribute to the reduction in crime in the community.

The young people self-report that they are less likely get into trouble, have made new friendships, have started eating more healthily and getting regular exercise. Some of the older boys have stopped or are cutting down on smoking.

The coaches, local police and school staff highlight the fact that the programme has improved the participants' self-esteem and belief in their own abilities, even though this is impossible to quantify, and the level of impact is not the same for all the youngsters. The young boys feel valued – that the coach is investing personally in them. The teachers report that the pupils are more self-assured and motivated to learn at school, more thoughtful about their schoolwork and think more carefully about how their behaviour can affect others.

One coach reports that programme participants initially showed signs of rebellion, but this changed over time and they now actually queue up to be selected for the teams. It is suggested that crime rates in the community have fallen because the young people have regained belief in themselves and are more motivated. From having nothing, they now have jobs, girlfriends and a measure of pride in themselves.

Although almost all the professionals interviewed comment on the positive elements of the programme, a few are doubtful that the programme in itself can have a significant – or lasting – impact. The various players involved point to the importance of a holistic approach to addressing the range of challenges facing youth rather than seeking to measure the impact of the programme in isolation. It is only one of several programmes offered to young people.

According to the young people, without the programme most of them – regardless of age and season – would play on the streets rather than stay at home in the evening. They would typically go into town or play 'manhunt' (a form of hide-and-seek), and some would go looking for trouble.

According to teachers and coaches, the young coaches/mentors/role models can rapidly gain the informal respect and trust of the young people by virtue of their young age. The young people listen, look up to and open up to the coaches rather than the teachers, whom they find old and boring.

Study design: Ethnographic study consisting of qualitative interviews with the football coaches, school staff, Police Community Support Officers, senior management, youth workers, community wardens, parents and community, and on-site observations of the programme.

Study rating: Medium

Title: GRASP (Denver's Gang Rescue and Support Project)

Authors and year of publication: Hritz, S. & Gabow, P. (1997)

Programme description: A peer-driven intervention based on group sessions and an individual-oriented mentoring element. First, the young people get together for a short meeting where the youth who is to run the group is selected. This is followed by a moment of silence in remembrance of the victims of gang violence. This reminds everyone of why they are meeting and what GRASP is about. The gathering later breaks up into smaller groups.

Each group is led by a youth who has left the gang lifestyle and has embarked on a more positive lifestyle. The small groups discuss common themes such as gang violence, drugs, personal relationships, victimisation and education. The peers confront each other's thoughts, gang norms and values, and they are helped to embrace new values and attitudes. Steering the youth through the conflict gives them an opportunity to practise problem-solving, impulse control and anger management. They explore empathy by discussing the consequences of various behaviours on their family and others. Individuals role-play real-life and potential situations to help them understand their personal reactions to pain, violence or loss. After each member of the smaller group has discussed his or her past week, the meeting is concluded.

Although a youth formerly involved in gang activity (core member) governs the direction GRASP takes, the group is helped by an Adult Advisory Group consisting of adult volunteers who provide support and crisis management, and refer the youth to sources of legal, job and educational assistance.

The young core members also hold talks in the community about gangs and awareness of gang activity, and support new members of GRASP between the meetings.

New GRASP members are allocated to a young mentor who has experienced street gang life and the problems and emotions associated with changing this lifestyle. The mentors offer personal advice and guidance as required. GRASP members can become mentors as they disengage from their gang involvement. The youth take part in the programme voluntarily, without any specific referral from schools, healthcare authorities or the legal systems. Group sessions are held weekly.

Theory: The goal of the programme is to encourage youth to adopt positive lifestyle changes (better school attendance, employment, family relationships, etc) and to lead them out of their involvement in gangs or relieve the pressure to become affiliated with gangs. The project is based on encouraging youth to openly share their experiences and help others. Through youth groups, the following factors are brought into play: 1. Peers share similar experiences and validate each other's reality. 2. Their sense of

self-worth is enhanced as peers feel useful to other group members. 3. Through honest confrontation in a supportive atmosphere, peers can challenge behavioural responses based on shared circumstances and support the assimilation of new behaviours. 4. During the process a sense of acceptance and togetherness develops. These factors are universal and exist regardless of type of peer group intervention. The participants' norms and values are thus challenged by other young people, who help to create new values and attitudes in their peers.

Target group: Young people involved in gangs and young people who feel pressure to become affiliated with them¹¹³.

Location: City area with gang crime in the USA. As in many other city areas in the USA, in Denver the frequency of youth violence and gang involvement and the related fatalities had risen at the time of the study. In 1994 there were 17 gang-related murders, against only two in 1988.

Findings: The programme is a promising intervention for young people seeking alternatives to the violent gang sub-culture. The youth's self-reported findings show an apparent increase in school attendance/involvement while gang membership, number of arrests and violence-related injuries are reduced. 74% report that they stay out of trouble once they join GRASP.

However, these findings do not apply to all those questioned.

Study design: Pre-post without control group with questionnaires administered to young programme participants.

Study rating: Medium

Title: HardWork

Author and year of publication: Sørensen, T. H. (2009)

Programme description: HardWork is an activity- and relationship-based intervention programme involving a combination of group, personal relationship and family work.

The young people take part in weekly group events and activities with other youth, and are attached to an individual contact person with whom they can talk and do activities. The contact person involves other people, such as the young person's circle of friends, and targets activities to strengthen the youth's personal and academic skills. The family is also involved through family interviews, home visits and events. The programme is coordinated with the young person's professional network (school, club, social worker and police). Premises are provided by the 'Copenhagen Team' – the same preventive institution that is also in charge of managing project staff. The methods focus on solutions, and scale questions, and 'signs of safety' are also used. Rather than simply focusing on deficiencies and problems, the intervention highlights the young person's abilities and how to build on them. Another important method is to create new stories and perceptions about the young person among the community, family and professionals. A key step towards bringing about change is to convince the youth and his or her parents that change is possible and to persuade professionals to believe in, see and support the youth's every small success and step of progress. The project has made a point of stressing that it is not for juvenile delinquents, but for young people who want to give up crime.

The work with families consists of various tasks, and staff have different degrees and forms of contact with the families. For example, they establish contact with the family; listen; show care for and support the parents in their role; inform and coordinate other parties such as school and police; provide advice and guidance about rules in the home, upbringing, daily structure and conflict resolution; and offer practical help and relief – for example, morning wake-up calls to the young person. They have

¹¹³ The 14-24 age group is stated on the programme website, where participation criteria include being gang-involved, including being personally associated with a gang or having a family history of gang involvement, substance abuse problems, family dysfunction or families with substance abuse problems (source: www.graspyouth.org [eg, 16/3/12])

conversations with the family and make home visits. Staff also act as an information channel between the young person and the parents, and as a mediator who fosters mutual understanding. They can also attempt to correct behaviour through rewards and punishment in order to change inappropriate behaviour on the part of the parents.

The programme lasts one year, is open one or two evenings a week and offers trips, activities and a contact person as necessary.

Various themes are addressed in the course of a HardWork year as follows:

February-March: 'Good manners' and start-up of cookbook project. Discussions about behaviour, how others perceive you and how you would like to be perceived, trips, presentation of awards to Best Boy of the month, cookbook project where each youth cooks a dish, perhaps with the family. The dish is photographed and will be included in a cookbook at the end of the year.

April-May: 'Keep your cool' and physical activities. Scale questions for the group focusing on 'How good are you at keeping your temper?' At the start and end of the period, the young person rates himself according to the scale. Interviews about specific conflict situations that the young person handles well in order to give him conflict management tools. Thoughtful conversations with each individual about action strategies for avoiding conflict situations. Participation in rough activities, such as American football, where keeping your temper is important. Presenting monthly awards to the person the group feels has done best. Kung Fu with professional external coach.

July-August: 'Summer programme' of various summer activities such as beach trips, paintballing, speedboating and barbecue parties.

September-October-November: 'Integration' and two ongoing activities: 'Car building' and 'Film project'. The youth must join such pursuits as club activities and recreational interests, etc. The young person's integration in a local football club and an American football team is supported. A weight training team is started. Participation in a joint football tournament with other youth/clubs in the Copenhagen district of Nørrebro. Activities to clarify job opportunities (eg, job centre interviews). Preparation of new action plan. Identifying and transferring the young person to a potential new contact person or social worker. The car-building project involves the unsupervised assembly of radio-controlled cars, which the youngsters can later drive outside. The film project gives the boys an opportunity to manage the entire film-making process from idea to scriptwriting, acting and shooting the film, with a member of staff on the sideline¹¹⁴.

The use of treats such as cinema visits help keep the young people in the programme. However, cinema visits can also have in-built teaching opportunities, eg, training behaviour in public spaces, or using special film themes as a way of starting relevant discussions.

Some contact persons stay in touch with the young person after the project ends to improve the chance that his development will continue. Two social centres have implemented the HardWork concept¹¹⁵.

Theory: The project aim is to influence young people's delinquent behaviour and give them behavioural skills meaningful for school attendance, recreational activities and integration with family and community. Another goal is to engage families and encourage them to assume greater responsibility. Personal contact via the contact person's relationship work is vital to the project, and the group work and joint competency-enhancing activities are key to the process of building the young person's new identity and behaviour. The project takes an appreciative, solution-oriented and systemic approach focusing on a range of activities to strengthen the young person's personal and academic competencies. The project

¹¹⁴ The source of the themes is HardWork's own publication about the project: 'HardWork – udsatte unge på vej mod nye mål' (2008) written by a journalist and based on interviews with the youth, parents and staff as well as the evaluation.

¹¹⁵ Two mini HardWork projects have continued in the Nørrebro and Brønshøj-Husum districts of Copenhagen. Cremen Af Nørrebro (CAN) successfully ran four groups in 2008, and a new one is said to have started in 2009. In Brønshøj-Husum a HardWork programme for 15-17-year-olds has been planned for about five to seven people, to be part of the local Familiehus facility.

also draws on the narrative method to create new, positive stories about the young person in the context of family, community and professionals. The methods and approaches mentioned above have proved insufficient on their own, and for this reason have been combined with more psychodynamic theories and methods (development psychology, social bonding theories and more traditional relationship work) as well as more cognitive methods (behavioural correction, reward and punishment).

Target group: Boys primarily aged 12-16, generally from non-Danish ethnic backgrounds. HardWork is targeted at children and youth with delinquent or crime-prone behaviour. Their home problems on referral to the programme vary greatly from participant to participant and between participant cohort years. For 2006-2008 an average of 29% were affected by financial problems, 19% by housing problems, 36% by violence, 16% by abuse, 10% by mental illness, 26% by health issues, 42% by divorce, 29% by traumatic experiences and 26% by marital crises.

Location: An urban district of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Findings: The youth who took part in the HardWork programme tend to do better than the comparable group that was not involved. However, the evaluator reports that the difference is not statistically significant. Fewer HardWork youth were in care a year after the programme than members of the comparable group, but the difference is not significant.

Changes in the participants' delinquent behaviour, school attendance, behaviour and personal qualities vary greatly from year to year (2006-2008) and from participant to participant, both at the conclusion of the programme and at follow-ups one year after the first two year-cohorts.

The evaluator presents the findings as overall percentages¹¹⁶. As regards delinquency, an average of 23% stop being delinquent, 37% reduce their delinquency, 13% show no change in delinquent behaviour, 17% increase their delinquent behaviour to a certain extent, 3% significantly increase their delinquent behaviour, while the result for 7% is unknown.

On average, 60% had stable school attendance at the end of the programme, 60% had improved their academic level, and 50% had improved their social behaviour at school. The school findings are among those most evenly spread across the three years. It may be that they were more consistently reported or are easier to assess uniformly.

Improvements in behaviour and personal qualities at the end of the programme vary greatly. As a whole, average improvements for 2006-2008 for over 50% of participants encompass behaviour in public spaces, social behaviour in the group and ability to obey adults. On average half of the youth or less have improved their ability to listen, sit still, avoid conflicts, set boundaries, develop special talents, acquire language or leadership qualities and improve their personal hygiene.

A year after the programme ended for participants from 2006 and 2007, respectively, 52% were doing well overall, and 61% had taken part in stable job and occupational schemes. 35% had not had delinquent behaviour, while 30% had a small degree of delinquent behaviour, and 35% continued to show serious criminal behaviour, including convictions and prison sentences. 52% had a contact person or similar support.

Viewed overall the project has met the objectives to:

1. Forge contact between the young people and their families.
2. Keep the young people in the programme.
3. Describe the young people and their needs.
4. Introduce most of the young people to a stable daily life with school attendance and recreational activities.
5. Reduce the delinquent activity of most of the young people.

In addition, care placements were avoided, as most of the youth were at risk of being put in care when the programme started, but were able to stay in the community with their families.

According to programme staff, the programme evaluation requirement for focus on findings, outcome measurement and 'what does the system get for its money' means it has over-focused on eliminating

¹¹⁶ Without an explicit measurement basis, estimate of pre-programme level or comparable group.

juvenile delinquency and avoiding care placements to the detriment of other positive processes and changes that have occurred between youth and families. The staff request for closer evaluation throughout the year has not been met.

Furthermore, the one-year duration proved not to be sufficient for all participants. Some needed follow-up and a continued relationship with a contact person to avoid relapsing to their former delinquent behaviour. For others, however, a year was enough. Any further support must have a clearly defined purpose and be reviewed regularly so the young person does not become permanently dependent on the social system.

The combination of group work and individual relationship work provides several intervention opportunities for changing a young person's behaviour and strengthening his competencies. Personal contact is decisive, while the joint competency-enhancing activities are a key element of the young person's identity and behavioural changes.

Without a good relationship with the young person, it is difficult for the programme to make much progress. Conversely, the group setting offers an opportunity to observe the youth in a social context and address issues as they arise spontaneously in the group. Relationship work also further underpins the use of contact to bring about positive change. Both the contact with the young people and the activities must have a clearly defined goal for desired change, eg, strengthening personal or academic competencies. The activities must be fun enough to attract the young people and educationally aimed at creating positive change and strengthening their academic and personal competences.

The following are examples of the application of group and joint activities:

1. An attractive after-school alternative to street life for the young.
2. The staff member observes the individual youth in a social context with other young people.
3. The staff member can deal with specific conflicts and situations as they arise.
4. The young person can practise a changed behaviour in a secure group.
5. The young people can mutually discuss and reflect on what good behaviour is.
6. The young people can serve as role models for each other and support one another to make positive changes.
7. The young person can experience success in a group context.
8. The young person can strengthen his competencies through social activities and other group activities.

The balance between individual work with a young person and group work varies, and the amount of individual contact young people need differs depending on their situation. At the same time the group dynamic varied for the different groups, partly because of the uneven age distribution among the groups. Flexibility is needed, not only in the extent to which staff alternate between elements, but also in the staff member's roles and methods; for example, which methods are most suitable for achieving good group dynamics.

The HardWork concept can be used for 12–14-year-olds and 15–17-year-olds, but different methods may be required to get the group to function. The young people can support each other in a positive direction, but can also drag each other down towards negative delinquent behaviour.

The existence of already established groups of friends enables staff to prevent friends outside the group from pulling the young person in a different direction and to influence the group as a whole. Staff find it important to point out that good group work often splits the group rather than keeping it united as the young people gradually gain insight and wish to change their behaviour. The 2007 group members are no longer an assimilated group but are integrated in other group contexts at their schools, sports clubs and so on.

Compared with traditional contact person and street work with the target group, family work has proved especially useful in creating positive change. Both parents and youth are satisfied with the family involvement. Families appreciate the contact with staff, who help them in terms of improving understanding and communication between young people and parents and reducing conflicts in the home. Families should be involved alongside the youth work, and contact persons and youth staff should be trained and supported to work more extensively with families. Several staff felt they were unprepared professionally and were concerned that working with the families would damage the trust and relationship built with the young people, or that it would be hard to gain the authority, acceptance

and respect of ethnic minority parents required for them to act as support persons and conversation partners. In conclusion, however, it is agreed that the family element is both important and necessary to intervention programmes such as this one.

It can be beneficial for the contact person to have an expanded role and cooperate closely with the young person's school, case worker and other professionals, the young person's group of friends and family. However, rapid management action across administrative units has not worked in practice, although specific individual-related cooperation has been good. Cooperation affords a sense of pulling together and can re-energise staff. The young person knows everyone is in communication with each other; everyone knows what is going on and agrees on the planning.

Targeted activities that strengthen the young person's personal and academic competencies are recommended, and the importance of creating new stories and perceptions of youth among the family and community professionals has been confirmed. An appreciative approach and solution-oriented methods have proved practical and easy to use. Signs of safety, scale questions, networking meetings and goal-setting have been well-suited to this project. Some of the methods used were new and at times uncomfortable for staff.

Embedding the project in the existing Copenhagen Team was an advantage because its knowledge and local professional network could be shared with the new people hired for the programme, but this also gave management an extra project, with the associated increase in workload without compensation. It is possible that the central administration would have had more focus on the project if it had involved more employees, users and project funds, or if it had not become clear halfway through the project that it was to be discontinued.

Furthermore the evaluator points out that it might be necessary to simultaneously survey and launch youth-targeted action programmes. Advance information about the young people and their background was inadequate. A full 'section 50 examination' had not been carried out. This presents a dilemma since a local authority has to conduct a section 50 examination before referring a young person to an intervention programme. Young people's circumstances can change fast, so quick action can be vital in preventing them from starting a life of crime. It is proposed that the young people start the project while staff spend the first few months examining the young people and their families' situations. The relationship that the contact person establishes also enables the study to be made, but can be hard for case workers to achieve.

The diversity of the staff group can be a strength. The ethnic minority background of the staff made it easier to establish contact with the youth and their families and gain their confidence. As well as having professional and personal competencies, staff were familiar with the environment – ie, had 'street credit', and thus could bolster the families' trust in the project and get a sense of what was going on. They also acted as role models for both youth and parents. Conversely, other types of staff with greater theoretical and practical experience, knowledge of the system and planning experience have undoubtedly been major methodological and project development drivers. Diversity was an advantage but also made internal cohesion among project professionals difficult.

Study design: Views study and field work including observation work and interviews as well as a text study of evaluation notes, status and annual reports.

Study rating: Medium

Title: 4-H/Mentoring: Youth and Families with Promise (YFP)

Authors and year of publication: Higginbotham, B. et al. (2006)

Programme description: The integration of one-on-one mentoring with club activities (4-H, which stands for Head, Heart, Hands and Health) and evening activities with the family. Each programme component is intended to target the programme objectives while reinforcing the other programme components. For example, the mentor must encourage the youth to take part in club activities.

In the mentoring component, each youth is matched with a volunteer mentor. During their time together, the mentors work directly with youth to build academic and social skills. They also engage in cultural, athletic and recreational activities together. Mentors are given a curriculum of activities that focus on building developmental values and assets. The mentor can adapt the activities to fit the talents, interests and skills of his or her assigned youth. The values and skills focused on include school engagement, planning and decision-making ability, interpersonal skills, resistance and peaceful conflict resolution.

The 4-H clubs offer a range of projects with varying meeting frequencies. As a rule, there are 6-10 adolescents per adult. Youth in the clubs elect their own officers, plan their own programmes and take part in a variety of activities. The activities are intended to foster innovation and shared learning. They provide youth and adults with an opportunity to work together, and young people develop friendships with peers of their own age and feel a sense of belonging. The club affords young people opportunities to assume leadership roles and develop competencies through a learning-by-doing approach under the supervision of supportive adult leaders. All 4-H -club projects include real-life experiences that give youth new knowledge and skills.

The family activities (Family Night Out) are group activities for young people, their mentors and parents as well as the YFP site coordinator. The entire family can engage together in activities that are fun and educational. Each activity is followed by a short debriefing of the experience. The activities are built around themes such as building trust, kindness, positive communication and cooperation.

Mentors meet their mentees for one to two hours weekly throughout the school year. The 4-H Clubs have at least 10-12 meetings a year, depending on the project (varying). Family Nights Out are organised once a month.

Theory: The youth development approach is inspired by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which focuses on developing young individuals who influence and are influenced by the environment, and addresses the multiple contexts and interrelationships in which the developing individuals interact. For YFP participants, these include the individual, family, school, community and friends. Roles, relationships and activities are key elements of the development process. The programme seeks to improve academic performance, enhance social competencies and strengthen family bonds. Each YFP component targets at least one programme objective while simultaneously reinforcing the efforts of the other programme components.

With support and supervision from adults other than their parents, the adolescents are encouraged to accept new roles, build new relationships and engage in new activities that give them new skills. Club activities help youth make positive social attachments with other youth, while club, mentoring and family activities are designed to develop new skills and self-confidence. The aim of the family activities is to strengthen family bonds and communication between youth and their parents.

From an ecological perspective, the addition of a mentoring element should in theory enrich a traditional prevention programme. It enriches the context in which the young person is supported and encouraged by non-parental adults to develop competencies, assume leadership responsibility and become integrated into positive peer groups.

Target group: At-risk 10–14-year-olds. The clubs themselves cater for youth aged between 5 and 18.

Location: Utah in the USA, where 4-H clubs are found locally in both rural and urban locations.

Findings: YFP is a promising way to reach at-risk youth, and the programme significantly strengthens the academic performance, social competence and family bonds of young people. However, the authors cannot pinpoint the mechanism by which the programme elements mutually strengthen each other, nor do they know whether one element affects the findings more than another.

Study design: Retrospective pre-test and post-test with questionnaires administered to young people and their parents.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Hundeslædeprojektet (The Dogsled Project)

Authors and year of publication: Leleur, A. & Pedersen, F. (1996)

Programme description: A programme offering attractive options to an entire group of adolescent friends in their own environment, while also making certain demands of them. The young people are assigned a 'bonus pater' (a type of father figure) as a support person in their day-to-day lives. He engages with five to seven youths in fixed activity groups. There are six groups of boys altogether.

As a motivation for the boys to stay with the programme, they are promised a dogsled trip to Greenland if they:

1. Follow their training programme/school/work. 2. Stay out of crime. 3. Show responsibility for and commitment to the project. The group of boys and their bonus pater go on excursions together. These excursions include both exciting and physically demanding activities as well as lower-key activities such as cinema visits and communal eating. Activities include bowling, laser action, motocross, go-carting, abseiling, climbing and canoeing, as well as visits to the Tivoli amusement park, the Experimentarium adventure centre, the Planetarium, fast-food eateries, etc. Their parents receive occasional newsletters about these activities.

The programme activities test the boys' own limits and incorporate competitive and teamwork elements.

An element of surprise has also deliberately been integrated into the programme, as the activities are not announced until the actual evening of the event to avoid the boys' staying away because of a preconceived notion that the activity will be boring. The surprise element is also meant to add a thrill and show that the bonus pater is the group leader, that he sets the agenda. Programme participation is voluntary, but the boys must give reasons for absence or withdrawal. At the start of the programme, each boy and his parents sign statements of consent.

A policeman and the future bonus pater recruit youth by paying home visits to young people who are peripheral gang members. They are persuaded to sign up for the programme, and the hardcore gang members then sign up, more or less of their own accord.

The programme comprises the following stages:

1) Introductory period with activities twice a week and weekend trips. The boys get to know each other, they learn to trust the bonus pater, and work on moderating their attitudes starts. 2) Training period, at the start of which the boys sign a project consent form. They learn the necessary skills for the trip to Greenland, for instance, by completing a survival trip to the island of Bornholm. 3) The trip to Greenland, which serves as an exam. 4) Follow-up. 5) Evaluation.

The project lasts three years, during which time some boys join while others drop out of the programme. Any inappropriate or criminal behaviour is immediately reported to the bonus pater, who has a serious talk with the boy concerned. Criminal behaviour leads to exclusion from the project or from the Greenland trip. The bonus pater is bound by confidentiality, and the boys often admit to their criminal activity. Finally, the project addresses such topics as general good behaviour, politeness, consideration, tolerance, queue behaviour, solidarity and helpfulness. If a boy cannot attend a certain activity or communal meal, he is required to show the other participants and the organisers the courtesy of letting them know.

Theory: The programme should match the experience youth gain in their present situation – excitement, sense of fellowship, identity and security. The programme focuses on reinforcing rather than deconstructing the social and cultural fields that the boys build up. The process seeks to influence the boys' attitudes and later change their norms and values by establishing strong personal bonds with a caring adult who can challenge them. For example, the bonus pater has to outcompete the group leader, and among other things, the boys have to learn that positive activities can give them exciting experiences. They must feel they are taken seriously and understand that the project is an agreement between themselves, the bonus pater and project, and that they stand to gain from their commitment. Consequence-based teaching methods are used – in other words, the boys learn that their actions have

consequences. Delinquent actions are believed to jeopardise the individual's relationship of trust with the bonus pater, a relationship that is meaningful to the young boy.

Target group: 13–18-year-old criminally inclined boys in an anti-social group, where only a few have a non-Danish ethnic background. They have been involved in violence, threatened violence or the use of weapons, fights, theft, robbery, stolen goods, vandalism, blackmail and substance abuse, including alcohol and marijuana and occasionally more hardcore drugs. Fourteen of those over 15 have records with 10 or more involvements in crime, six with one and the rest with two to eight. The younger boys have also been involved in crime to some extent, but have no criminal record. The group dates back to the 1980s, has extrovert energy and is fairly impulsive.

It has a loose membership and spontaneous, unstructured leadership with no fixed chain of command or membership affiliations. However, when up against individuals or rival groups, its imposing core of extremely criminal members can summon reinforcements of up to 200 people. These core members instil fear in their peers. The group members have an inflated self-image, and their menacing and domineering behaviour makes them a difficult group to place in existing youth clubs and recreational activities. Their criminal activity is rarely well-planned, but arises spontaneously in chaotic situations. They are a tightly knit group of friends who get together socially and engage in hip-hop, music, dance and graffiti activities.

Location: The group is based in the urban area of the Holmbladsgade-Frankrigsgade quarter on the island of Amager in Copenhagen, Denmark. As well as organising trips and outings, the programme also operates in the young people's own local environment.

Findings: Of the eight most criminal youth belonging to the core group, five completed the programme. Three were sent home from during the Greenland trip, three were excluded from the programme prior to the Greenland trip and one withdrew. Six months later, four of the original core group members had full-time work, two were at school, while one was not in education, employment or training (NEET) and another died in a traffic accident. Local crime rates dropped during the duration of the project, but other factors could have played a role in this decline.

Of the 47 youth who have been in contact with the project, at the time of evaluation 34 were in work, at school or apprenticed, while eight were NEET, and the fate of five is unknown. Of these 47 youth, who participated in the programme for varying lengths of time, 15 have since been charged with criminal offences. The gang structure seems to have been dissolved.

Youth dependence on group acceptance is integrated as a positive factor in the programme. The wide variety of activities reveals both the boys' strengths and weaknesses, information that the bonus pater can use to influence the hierarchy in the group and the roles and positions of its individual members. The group approach seems right, because young people take their cues from their peers.

The activities must have worked because the programme attracted youth that the system had otherwise given up. However, using training to build skills is not possible, because this group of youth does not tolerate defeat.

The youth enjoy exciting activities, but the activities become secondary while the relationship with the bonus pater assumes prime importance. The opportunity to forge a personal bond with a genuine person who does not set appointments and is not a case worker makes the bonus pater a key vehicle for reaching youth. The boys gain close, confidential contact with their bonus pater, identifying with him in a way that means they will not betray his trust. However, the programme is personally demanding for the bonus pater, and a supervisory system has mistakenly never been established.

The evaluation of the process shows that phase 1 went as expected. During phase 2 it was hard to motivate the boys to learn about Greenland. They found the subject matter irrelevant, and it was difficult to nudge them towards responsibility, qualifications, learning and tests. The bonus pater's switch from a parental role in phase 1 to a teaching role in phase 2 was problematic. Personal job and educational follow-up for each individual went well. The Greenland trip is a matter of cost, and its crime preventive effect is dubious. The project could have been carried out without the Greenland trip, but not without the

survival trip to Bornholm, which was instructive. The physical demands of both Bornholm and Greenland are currently too extreme.

Criticism has been levelled at the way the project concluded. A closing meeting was never held, so the young people had no chance to say goodbye. The participants were to transfer to a youth centre, but this never happened. The personal bonds between mentor and youth are too strong to be transferred easily. The relationship with the mentor could have been gradually phased out, but lack of personal resources means many of them recede into the background or discontinue in the role. The project has left a vacuum and should not have had a definitive endpoint (the Greenland trip).

The study: Pre-post relative to offence data, but largely a cross-sectional survey and a views study with interviews carried out after the programme with participants, bonus paters, two parents, project managers, Police Youth Club (PUK) coordinator, SSP representative (representative of the cooperation between schools, social services and police) manager and educator from the Ungeherset youth club, head of the Sundby Nord Social Centre and a police station. In addition written source materials such as project reports, minutes of meetings, press cuttings and video recordings from Bornholm and Greenland were used.

Rating: Medium

Title: Individual counseling, group mentoring and remedial education

Authors and year of publication: Hanlon, T. et al. (2002)

Programme description: The programme contains several elements: individual counselling, group mentoring with both individual support and structured teaching, field trips and less formal parental discussions. A local youth clinic offers individual counselling to youth with problematic behaviour. In addition, they take part in a structured group mentoring approach involving local young African-American university students as mentors and role models. Two mentors work together with groups of about 20 young people in each session, which takes place after school.

First, the group mentoring sessions provide regular, scheduled structured activities and presentations of varied topics such as social and life coping skills, conflict resolution, appreciation of cultural heritage, promotion of self-esteem, information about HIV epidemics and how to use community health and recreational resources. However, in the second year part-time teachers take over the formal educational activities. Next, youth are given individual help with school-based problems, homework, developing basic learning and study skills, etc.

The group mentoring part of the programme also involves particular activities on special occasions and holidays as well as outings with the assistance of parent and community volunteers. Destinations could include the aquarium, wax museum and skating rink. As well as being recreational, these events have an educational emphasis that provides new knowledge and learning. Ideally the intervention process should involve parents; foster bonds between youth, their parents and the school; offer academic support as needed; and seek to counteract the children's association with deviant peers.

Some of these points are reviewed in practice. Regular sessions with parents are cancelled due to poor attendance at the less formal discussions and the social events sponsored by the programme for parents and children. Throughout the programme, staff are in touch with most of the parents – for example, to deal with problems and needs that emerged during the process and encourage greater interaction with their children, or through informal contact at the clinic. Parents receive newsletters about current activities.

The group mentoring sessions are held four to five days a week after school, and occasionally at weekends.

Theory: The authors base their study on the social development model, which integrates social control and social learning theories. Here, crime and substance use are perceived as acquired behaviours

developed through constant exposure to multiple risk factors associated with problems or deficiencies in the individual, family, friends, school and community. Ideally the intervention involves parents in the process; fosters bonds between youth, their parents and the school; and seeks to improve school attendance and counteract the children's association with deviant friends.

Target group: Youth aged 13 years on average, but the participants are aged between 9 and 17. They are referred for delinquent or other problematic behaviour at school or in the community, and are considered at risk of adopting or further developing a deviant lifestyle. A total of 43% of participants and members of the control group report that they have been involved in crime-related deviant activity. Of these, two-thirds have been arrested. 29% have carried weapons, 3% have shot someone. 44% are referred to the programme for school and behavioural problems. Some have problems with teachers, play truant, fail exams or receive special education. Many have been temporarily suspended from school; quite a few permanently. 29% are referred because of conflicts in the family and 10% via the juvenile court. Less than 10% have taken drugs. About half also come from families receiving welfare benefits. 59% have parents who have never lived together or are separated, and three-quarters are being raised by their biological mother. 26% of the fathers and 8% of the mothers have been incarcerated or released on parole. In over half of the cases, the youth's close friends have been suspended from school, and about half of them have been arrested. About a quarter have been to prison.

Location: Inner-city district in Baltimore, USA. The area has social problems and high rates of substance abuse, poverty, welfare benefits and teenage pregnancies. The youth clinics are centrally located.

Findings: The programme has significant impact with regard to reduced criminal behaviour, both in terms of number of incidents and number of different types of crime. The average number of incidents among participants is 3.05 against 11.06 in the control group, which did not take part in the programme, and the impact applies both to violent and non-violent crime. The impact is greater for younger intervention participants.

The intervention participants also show a significant decrease in alcohol use – greater for the younger participants. The older the participant and the higher the substance abuse at the start of the programme, the higher the levels of both alcohol and marijuana use observed at follow-up. Lack of protective factors and deviant behaviour by friends and family are also related to higher use. Problematic school behaviour is related to higher marijuana use. The impact on alcohol use indicates a better impact for the younger intervention participants. There is no programme impact for sexual activity.

The programme is not introduced early enough. It is less than satisfactory in engaging older youth, who are already increasingly involved in deviant behaviour. In fact there is a negative correlation between their participation and deviant behaviour, including criminal activity, use of marijuana, etc.

Study design: Pre-post with control group, controls and questionnaires administered to young programme participants.

Study rating: High

Title: Late Nite Basketball Project/Program (both terms are used)

Author and year of publication: Derezotes, D. (1995)

Programme description: A recreational programme intended to divert youth from gang involvement. Late Nite is a league modelled on the National Basketball Association. Before each season about ten teams are selected for pre-season workouts, exhibition games, weekly practices, seven regulation games, playoff and all-star games, slam dunk and three-point competitions and a prize award banquet.

Volunteer businessmen from the sponsoring companies and volunteer basketball players (from the Utah Jazz and a university) are mentors and role models. After each game, the participants attend a compulsory workshop where they are given information and discuss topics such as education, substance abuse and job opportunities.

Theory: The programme goals are to: 1. Re-direct the young people's energy in more positive directions. 2. Enhance the quality of the young people's lives. 3. Improve the young people's discipline and character and prepare them for future possibilities. In retrospect the author calls it a relationship formation programme – a programme that has immediate recreational benefits as well as longer-term advantages for the personal development, education and career direction of its participants. Friendships are established among youth and between individual youth and staff. Relationship formation can offer many benefits for high-risk youth.

Target group: 16–20-year-old young men at risk. According to the author the young men are already members of gangs. Youth are hand-picked for the programme by the police department, the court and educational systems and other local agencies.

Location: Salt Lake City, Utah. City with gangs in the USA.

Findings: The young people's reported benefits included the fun of playing basketball, job opportunities, help with finding jobs, scholarships and skill-building workshops. They also mentioned reduction of inter-gang violence and the formation of new relationships with other youth and adults. 96% of the young men would like to expand the programme, and enjoy it most when they are on court and winning games. Above all, the programme is fun, and the youth establish good relationships, particularly with the coach. However, they do not believe it can solve the gang problem.

At the same time the mentoring element of the programme seems to have failed – even the police officers are more popular. Most youth seem never to have been assigned a mentor – they do not know who their mentor is. Most feel secure at the games, but many – youth, relatives and staff alike – do not feel safe, particularly in the car parks.

A tenth report that they feel that neither the post-game workshops nor the rules worked. Suggested improvements included more parental involvement, expansion of the programme, better PR and recruitment, better mentor training and recruitment and more police officers at games.

Project staff are generally positive about the programme, while participants and their parents are less so. They suggest changing the game rules, training times, practice sessions and programme organisation. The programme does not break up gangs, but has a good influence on both youth and community. Staff are more positive about mentors and police officers than the participants and their relatives. Personally they learn to be more sympathetic towards gang issues.

Study design: Qualitative views study with in-depth interviews of gang members, parents and staff.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Project R.E.S.C.U.E. (Reaching Each Student's Capacity Utilizing Education)

Author and year of publication: de Anda, D. (2001)

Programme description: Relationship development is key to the programme. High school students and firemen have a one-on-one mentor/mentee relationship. They are encouraged to meet weekly, but every dyad has different schedules depending on their individual needs and options. The dyads take part in both group and individual activities, ranging from simply talking together and helping with education and career to activities in which both mentor and mentee are interested. Many of the group activities are organised by the local agency sponsoring the mentoring project in cooperation with the fire station. The activities span from evening sports events and water rafting trips to events such as 'Peace, Love, and Unity Breakfast' or 'Peace Night out'. The programme administrators that match the mentors and mentees take into account the personalities, interests and personal backgrounds of the individuals. Administrators are also on hand if the mentor has problems, and they have an easier time than mentors finding sponsors for joint excursions and organising larger-scale events.

The programme ran for the length of a school year, and mentor and mentee met when it suited their personal schedules and as needed, but they were encouraged to meet weekly.

Theory: The aim of the mentor relationship is to offer a supportive, adult role model who will encourage and stimulate the young person's social and emotional development, help to improve his or her academic and career motivation and achievement, broaden the young person's life experience, re-direct risk behaviours and enhance self-esteem. The benefits of cultivating relationships between adults and youth outside a professional or therapeutic context are also emphasised.

Target group: High school students between 15 and 18 years old – mainly 18-year-olds – identified through their participation in a violence prevention programme for high school youth as being at special risk. One participant was involved in a gang, while the others were considered at risk of becoming involved in criminal behaviour and/or victimisation because of circumstances in their immediate environment. Many active gangs are in the city, and a huge number of young people in the school district have been suspended, some permanently. Weapons have on occasion been confiscated from school premises and the young people find school difficult. Some of them come from families that include gang members, have an absent father or an alcoholic mother or spend time with gang members. Conversely, other participants are quiet, unnoticed young people who have no goals in life and lack a more constructive attitude to conflict resolution, school attendance, etc.

Location: A low-income urban environment in Los Angeles County, USA, with a high crime rate and 31 active youth gangs numbering over 7,000 members. There have been numerous gang-related incidents in 1997 alone, with over 300 involving weapons. In the period 1997-98 homicide rates rose from 24 to 35 and there were numerous incidents of assault. The community also appears to be ethnically split, with little interaction between Latinos and African-Americans.

Findings: Most of the young people have very positive things to say about the programme and develop valuable relationships with their mentors, as well as benefiting in tangible ways such as employment, higher academic achievement and reaping interpersonal and emotional benefits. With the exception of one person, all the participants report positive changes as a result of the programme, for example, trust, an adult friend to talk to, a positive change in behaviour away from earlier negative or violent behaviour, a new purpose to life, a chance to get off the streets, better school experience, changed values, better understanding of others and the acquisition of special skills or experiences such as communication skills or a job. Other participants say that in general they like the programme. Mentors experience benefits in the form of personal development, relationships of trust and new insight. However, it is problematic that mentors and mentees have difficulty spending enough time together because of their other activities.

At the end of the school year the participants are in education – either continuing at high school or going on to college programmes. A third have found jobs, while most are completing job preparation courses.

Study design: Pre-post with open interviews with the young participants at the start of the year via standard, open questions. The same questions are repeated in questionnaire form at the end of the year. Certain mentors are also questioned, and two local prevention agencies are interviewed.

Study rating: Medium

Title: RAP Therapy

Authors and year of publication: DeCarlo, A. & Hockman, E. (2003)

Programme description: Adolescents take part in both traditional group therapy (psycho-educational), and a special form of therapy, RAP therapy, based on elements from their own youth culture. The main focus was, however, on RAP therapy.

RAP therapy has some minimum standards on which its success depends. There are standards for group structure: 1. Definition of its purpose: Development of pro-social skills. 2. Conceptual instruction; Coaching of group members in pro-social skills in the context of topics selected for the specific group, for example, impulse control, morality and anger management. 3. Establish guidelines: Set up communication procedures for feedback and exchange, particularly if the group members have

communication difficulties. 4. Group organisation: Schedule sessions, select a venue, decide on duration and select members.

There are also standards for key skills that the group facilitator should master: 1. Trustworthiness 2. Authoritative enforcement 3. Interactive style 4. Cultural competence.

The adolescents take part in a normal group therapy session at the beginning of the week and a RAP therapy session at the end.

1. Psycho-educational therapy: Either the participants select discussion topics extemporaneously or the group facilitator chooses a topic (substance abuse, for example) and gets the group's response.

2. RAP therapy: The participants write down the names of five of their favourite RAP musicians, and CDs are made available during the group sessions. Each participant can select some songs with unrestricted choice of artist. In practice the young group participants have to analyse the lyrics of various types of RAP music (a verse at a time), for example, gangster rap, political/protest rap, positive rap and spiritual rap. They do these analyses in connection with various topics for discussion. Before each session these topics and concepts are defined and illustrated, and each participant is tested orally to make sure he has understood the topic. Each group member is given a sheet of A4 paper with a concept written on it (female gender abuse, anger management, impulse control, reasoning, morality, responsibility, identity, decision-making or everyday situation).

At the start of the session the adolescents are told that they are all going to listen to one song without interruption. Subsequently each individual has to identify and explain his theme in the context of the song. If a participant cannot explain his topic in relation to the song lyrics, others can help if they raise their hands. The group facilitator must expect to be tested by the adolescents, and possibly directly rejected by some. These are normal group dynamics for young people. The group facilitator can seek to handle the behaviour with an ice-breaker session in which he or she sets ground rules, etc, while the adolescents use the session as an outlet for their nervous energy. The programme consists of hourly sessions twice a week for six weeks.

Theory: The RAP approach brings in elements of the urban African-American adolescents' own culture to develop pro-social skills in a group work context. Pro-social skills are defined as 'the ability to initiate and sustain conventional interpersonal relationships that are both adaptive and culturally aligned'. Rap music is a cultural manifestation that communicates the world picture of many urban American adolescents. The music can be used as a channel to improve a young person's analytical skills and change irrational thoughts and behaviours that lead to inappropriate behaviour. At the same time music can be a channel for difficult emotions.

The group facilitator's special skills – trustworthiness, authoritative enforcement, interactive style and cultural competence – activate an interpersonal learning process among the participants. The group facilitator must build trust, and for this reason it is important that he/she is trustworthy and believes in the group's ability to engender positive energy for growth and healing as well as develop a sense of mastery and competence. The setting must be safe enough for the group participants to admit to weakness, fear, hopes and dreams, etc, while the group facilitator must be authoritative by virtue of his or her knowledge and ability to reinforce norms. The group facilitator must match the group's needs and be active/inactive to varying degrees in keeping with those needs. In his/her interaction, he/she must be able to offer guidelines and advance the adolescents' own thought processes. At the same time the facilitator must be able to understand and analyse his/her own culture and how ethnicity, language, beliefs, behaviour and the related power status can operate in his/her own life and the adolescents' lives.

Target group: 13–15-year-old boys with African-American background who are at risk because they live in a city. Some have been convicted of violence (homicide in some cases). The group includes high school students with no criminal history, violent offenders and adolescents released on parole after committing offences illegal for youth (breaking alcohol laws, etc) or in relation to an issue in which motive is not a factor for consideration. The participants' socio-economic status ranges from upper-middle to low.

Location: An urban area in Midwest USA with upper-middle to low socio-economic status. The programme site was a school in a risk environment.

Findings: Regardless of their whether they are unconvicted or have been convicted for violence, all the adolescents prefer RAP therapy to more traditional psycho-educational group therapy. Culturally specific approaches are emphasised as important, and it is shown that learning pro-social skills can be fun. The adolescents can see RAP therapy as a leisure activity rather than an obligation.

RAP therapy is preferred in 17 of the total of 18 different issues examined. The adolescents unequivocally enjoy the RAP therapy sessions, prefer them to traditional therapy and believe their schoolmates would do the same. They also learn about social relationships and that RAP therapy is related to everyday situations. Decision-making and learning how to avoid criminal behaviour also show pronounced results, along with moral development and impulse control. RAP therapy appears to have no effect on substance abuse.

Differences between the groups convicted of violence or other crime and the non-convicted students proved not statistically significant in terms of impact, preference and/or pro-social skills.

Study design: Cross-section study, post-test with questionnaires administered to participants and preliminary questions for parents and adolescents about their demographic characteristics.

Study rating: Medium

Title: ROP, Rites of Passage (element of SAGE intervention: Supporting Adolescents with Guidance and Employment)

Author and year: Flewelling, R. et al. (1999)

Programme description: An Afrocentric guidance, educational and mentoring programme, one of several elements of a multifaceted violence prevention programme. Instructors used the Rites of Passage curriculum, which combines didactic and interactional methods so that youth can be active participants in the learning process. This covers such topics as conflict resolution, African-American history, sexuality, abuse, economics, science and mathematics, good mental health, test-taking, urban survival skills and manhood training.

On alternate weeks the young person ('initiate') spends time with a male African-American mentor, who receives a small sum to cover recreational activities. Prospective mentors are encouraged to attend a training session on a Saturday before start-up. The training session revolves around the expectations of the mentors in the ROP programme, as well as how to relate to teenagers and their parents. Mentors are also encouraged to accompany the initiate to the 14 ROP seminar sessions and on occasional field trips. In practice their activities include playing sport together, watching a film, shopping, visiting the initiate's family, eating a meal together, going to church, going to poetry readings, ROP or tutoring, driving around, going to the library and making telephone calls. The programme administrators give academic guidance to initiates with academic problems while outreach work is directed at families of young people who are uninterested or only attend the seminars sporadically.

Instruction sessions (ROP sessions) are held on Sunday afternoons (with the exception of holidays) every other week for eight months. Each session lasts about two hours, and in the off weeks, the young person spends time with his mentor. Parents' meetings are held once a month with a volunteer parent as facilitator. A variety of themes are taken up at these meetings.

The initiates are invited on day trips to the local court house, the Museum of Life and Science, an African American-owned business and a weekend field trip to learn about civil rights and African-American history. The participants also have to complete a written assignment and a period of community service in order to pass the ROP. Most carry out their community service at the local police department, soup kitchen or local rescue services. Their mentors can also participate in and supervise the initiate's

activities. The youths who do not attend can help out at the camping trip that ends the programme, and in this way meet the pass requirement.

The ROP ends with an overnight camping trip attended by both the young people and their mentors. The weekend's activities consist of workshops on orienteering, leadership, map reading and first aid. Value clarification discussions are integrated into most activities. Other activities include a manhood profile, activities promoting group unity, interviews with elders to assess the youths' readiness to assume manhood and finally a manhood ritual. During the camping trip there is a strict focus on military discipline, requiring the initiates to progress through the activities in a coordinated and orderly manner. Mentors and facilitators with military experience discipline young people who behave inappropriately by ordering them to do push-ups or other physical exercises. The weekend culminates with a private African-American manhood ritual – rites of passage – followed by a ceremony for those successfully completing the programme. Their families, mentors and the larger community are invited.

Each youth has to give a two-minute talk about his ROP experience to the invited audience. The community then responds with encouragement and respect. A traditional African dance is performed at the end of the ceremony, after which a buffet is served for the community.

Theory: The purpose of the ROP programme is to promote a sense of cultural pride and ethnic identity in the initiates as well as responsibility towards the community, their peers and themselves. The programme is intended to foster self-esteem and positive attitudes and to avoid a number of risk behaviours. The success of the programme is based on the premise that the young person takes part in ROP sessions and develops a close relationship with his mentor.

Target group: 12–16-year-old African-American boys, 14 years old on average. A large proportion of the participants are at high risk of developing problem behaviours, and some have already been involved in such behaviours. Some are also referred to the programme by school guidance and juvenile counsellors, which indicates the existence of special needs. In the year preceding their participation, 67% of participants had been involved in physical fights, 29% had carried a gun, 40% a knife, and 12% had used a knife or gun to injure someone. 11% had been treated for an intentional injury. 13% had sold illegal drugs, 21% had taken drugs, 12% had had five or more alcoholic drinks in the same day, 64% had engaged in sexual intercourse and 41% had damaged property. About half are so poor that they receive a free or subsidised school lunch, and slightly over half do not live with a father or father figure.

Location: The sessions are held in the Hayti Heritage Center in downtown Durham, a natural meeting centre for African-Americans in North Carolina, USA.

Findings: The qualitative data suggest that the greatest effect of the programme as a whole stems from this section, the ROP. Youth report that they have more respect for their elders, a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and a sense of responsibility for giving something back to society. Several mention better study habits, better grades, more respect for their parents and others and better manners.

However, the effects are not statistically significant. Nonetheless, the authors believe that the ROP programme may have an effect in combination with other interventions. Roughly speaking, risk behaviours seem to decline between the start of the programme and the follow-up for ROP participants, but risk behaviours then seem to increase once more. In other words, the potential efficacy is not sustained.

The young people are generally satisfied with the ROP sessions and their mentors. However, certain ROP topics are considered more useful than others. Youth appreciate a supportive and active mentor whom they respect and like.

Several parents mention the relationship with the mentor as an essential ingredient of the positive changes made by the young people. Parental support for the programme helps the young people benefit from the programme. Interviews with parents suggest that the young person's experience is strengthened if the young man, his mentor and parents have a good relationship with each other.

ROP took longer than the mentors had envisaged, and they had not received enough information about how to deal with apathetic parents or youths. Some mentors continue the relationship after the young people have completed the programme. The mentors envisage a warm, reciprocal relationship, but some are frustrated by the young person's lack of interest or motivation or acting-out behaviour. Conversely, the young people occasionally find their mentors boring or mismatched, or they have transport problems. This leads to dropout among youth and mentors. The attendance of the volunteer mentors is sometimes sporadic and suddenly ceases entirely.

The mentoring element should incorporate training to help mentors develop realistic expectations, point out the damage that early dropout can cause to the young person as well as provide tools and social support mechanisms for handling frustration. The conclusion of the mentoring programme was unsatisfactory. The programme lacked a 'withdrawal' period away from the regular mentoring activities and ROP sessions. This is important – especially for young men who have suffered from broken bonds with other significant men in their lives. The authors also suggest granting a small sum of money to cover expenses for activities for a period after the formal conclusion of the programme.

Study design: Qualitative views study with focus groups, interviews, program reviews, observations, participation record review, other document reviews and tracking of dropouts.

Study rating: Medium

Title: Street Team – outreach work, contact person scheme and club

Authors and year of publication: Mehlbye, J. & Hjelmar, U. (2009)

Programme description: The Street Team programme comprises outreach street work and a contact person scheme, and is organisationally located under the Family Centre. The outreach work is done by a team that patrols areas popular with young people, sometimes on foot and sometimes by bicycle. The contact person scheme is run by the Family Centre, which matches a team member to a young person according to his or her needs. The team members wear special Street Team jackets that make them easy to spot wherever they go, and they often visit the club. The purpose of Street Team is to build a bridge between young people and the activities offered by the local authority, clubs and associations. The visibility of the team members is intended to make it easy for children and young people to approach them¹¹⁷.

Theory: The success of the programme pivots on the fact that the street team members know the young people and build up relationships of trust with them. This enables them to intervene and advise them before any problems can develop. The aim is to prevent young people from getting involved in more serious crime.

Target group: Boys aged 15-17 years are the prime group at risk, but other than that age is not specifically mentioned. The authors refer to 'youth in the border zone' who are apathetic and have no interest in school, or have difficulties at school. The young people have recreational activities but have stopped because of boredom. They hang out in the housing estate or shopping centre, also with other groups that habitually hang out in these places. They have no wishes other than help to get an after-school job, and they rarely spend time at their friends' homes because of lack of space, problems at home or the desire for a private life without their parents. They want a place where they can be themselves, play computer games and have fun. 'Young people in the zone' have always had social and academic problems at school, where they follow special programmes. They spend most of their time outside the home, have no recreational interests, start hanging out in the town centre at age 15-17 and belong to a more or less fixed group involved in crime to some extent – by their own account, mainly the theft of goods for personal use. They would like help to get an after-school job and may engage in mild substance abuse (marijuana). Other youth are afraid of them, and they have a deep-seated distrust of

¹¹⁷ Further information about the programme has been found via www.ishoj.dk/dagsorden/12164_Pixi.doc

the adults around them. These are the young people who, according to the authors, are in particular need of a local authority programme and activities. (These are two of a total of five profiles created by the authors on the basis of interviews with young people in Ishøj.) In addition, local authority staff are of the general opinion that young people in particular housing districts are the main cause of problems. Most of the problems in the local authority area are attributable to a core group of 20-25 young people.

Location: Ishøj local authority in Denmark, where a number of adult residents have a general sense of insecurity, and about one-quarter – especially youth aged 19-29 years – feel insecure living and moving around. There has been an increase in violent crime.

Findings: Twenty of 35 staff assess that the outreach work of the Street Team programme has had an effect, while eight conversely believe it has had little or no effect. Seven do not know. Sixteen believe that the efforts of the Street Team support contact persons have had a great or some effect, while four disagree and 13 did not answer.

Young people in the border zone need both 1) after-school activities and 2) educational programmes. However, the young people's only request seems to be help to find an after-school job, but they do not engage in recreational activities. Furthermore, the initiatives targeted at youth in the town centre – the 'hang-outs' that annoy centre business proprietors – should be holistic and community-based. It is also essential to involve the young people throughout the process. Most staff find that the local authority activities offered to 15-18-year-olds are poor. Although opinions on activities for the 10-14-year group are divided, staff feel generally that enough activities are provided. On the other hand, many think that children and young people are not sufficiently aware of the range of activities available.

The Street Team organisers would like to be able to plan work more flexibly according to specific needs. Too much time spent on street work may leave less time for the support contact person schemes and the most vulnerable youth. Gaining the young people's trust is also an issue for support contact staff as they have to observe them and write day reports about them for case workers.

The clubs have problems with the older group as well as with the most vulnerable youth, because integrating them into the club's activities is difficult. Because of their criminal activities, these young people want to keep a certain distance to club personnel, and they deter better-adjusted youth from going to the club. Special activities are therefore needed for the hard-core youth group, a moped workshop, for example. The club manager and staff suggest a place that youth aged 16 and over can use in the evening. In general staff would like better options for support contact persons as well as meeting places not under club auspices for children and young people at weekends. The clubs would like more flexible evening opening hours on weekdays and at weekends. Better coordination and communication between the clubs is also needed. Finally, the authors believe that the citizens of Ishøj should receive more information and be involved to a greater extent in the work of crime prevention. They both represent a resource and can counteract the sense of insecurity in the area.

Study design: Cross-sectional and views study using qualitative and quantitative methods in the form of questionnaires administered to the local police, school heads, Street Team staff and others; self-evaluation days for Street Team staff and club representatives. The authors also compared crime statistics for Ishøj and Denmark as a whole.

Study rating: Medium

Title: The Brothers Project

Author and year of publication: Royse, D. (1998)

Programme description: A mentoring project developed specifically for African-American teenagers. Male volunteer mentors living in the same area as the young people are matched with an African-American teenager. Project staff organise monthly recreational excursions for the whole group, where mentors can compare themselves with other mentors, get support and relax in an undemanding, fun

setting organised by others. The adolescents also get an opportunity to broaden their horizons, get away from their neighbourhood and develop new friendships.

Theory: It is hoped that healthy adult role models can help these adolescents do well at school, avoid substance use and getting into trouble with the law, and become productive, self-sustaining members of society.

Target group: 14–16-year-old at-risk African-American boys, with 14 being the average age, living in a female-managed household with an income at or below the federal poverty limit. They have a low academic achievement level in reading, maths and the sciences.

Location: Urban district in the USA, in Lexington, Kentucky.

Findings: No significant differences are found in the measurements between project participants and control group, and thus no quantitative proof that the project has a beneficial effect on the impact measures studied – self-esteem, attitudes about drugs and alcohol, average grades, school absence, and breaches of discipline.

This may be because the duration of the match (approx. 15 months) or the length or frequency of the meetings was insufficient or not intense enough. The length of time mentors and mentees spent together was often not reported.

Nevertheless, there was a small significant difference in changes over time within the project participant group: at the fourth measurement, participants were less ‘anti-drug’ in their attitudes towards alcohol and drugs. However, this could have been due to the maturing process, that is, a typical development in attitudes towards substances with age.

Difficulty in recruiting mentors resulted in a smaller group and fewer mentor-mentee pairs than intended and desired. Had it been easier to recruit mentors, it would have been possible to replace those who moved out of town or dropped out because of work or family commitments, and the programme could have continued for some of the teenagers.

Mentors were required to report the monthly number of hours spent with the teenager. However, despite the array of reporting methods – e-mail, telephone, diary, postcards – only a handful reported back. Finally, the project shows that paying study participants does not prevent dropouts. Even though the participants were paid a sum of money, lack of data and dropout were a consistent problem. The author raises the question of the age at which young people are most receptive to mentoring.

Study design: Pre-post using randomly selected intervention and control group, questionnaires administered to the young people and collecting of school records.

Study rating: High

Title: The HEARTS programme (The Health, Education, in the Arts, Refining Talented Students Family Life Center)

Authors and year of publication: Respress, T. & Lutfi, G. (2006)

Programme description: An after-school fine arts programme based on the principles of brain-based learning and mentoring elements. The HEARTS curriculum is designed to reflect an integrative approach to teaching and learning. Instruction and activities are planned and conducted with a strong focus on facilitating experiences and experiential learning in four fine arts areas: art, drama, music and dance. Pupils are allocated to the modules based on their personal interests indicated in a survey.

The modules are:
1. Art: Opportunities for working with water colours, oil painting, drawing, photography, collages, pottery, handicrafts, printing and sculpture.

2. Drama: Activities such as acting, sketches, creative writing, poetry, storytelling and stage setting. Pupils interested in becoming professional actors take part in this module while learning how drama can be a lifelong career aspiration. They also learn about elements of technical theatre through lectures, demonstrations and participation. Pupils spend an average of two hours a week working with stagecraft, stage management, sound, scenic design, theatre history and lighting.

3. Dance: Activities such as modern and urban dance and step. Pupils learn to achieve a high level of self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence, discipline and community and cultural pride through African-Caribbean dance. They attend classes every other week and receive instruction in choreography to increase their knowledge of African-Caribbean dance techniques, styles, vocabulary and history.

4. Music: Pupils receive musical and vocal instruction in various genres such as jazz, blues, positive hip-hop, classical and Caribbean drumming. They attend music classes based on their areas of interest. Those who want to pursue a professional career in music also learn about all the facets of music production.

Additionally, each module incorporates opportunities for pupils to improve their basic skills in reading, writing and maths, while taking part in the fine arts activities. Pupils develop academically through activities such as computer-assisted learning, creative writing, Superstar reading programmes, reading support and one-on-one learning assistance.

The programme also employs other intervention strategies such as individual and group mentoring, service learning opportunities and a youth advisory council. The individual mentoring programme gives pupils academic help, time management and goal-setting skills, career exploration activities, extra attention, encouragement and friendship. The group mentoring programme is provided by local organisations that meet regularly with pupils to reinforce the programme curriculum. Discussion topics include violence prevention techniques such as stress management, conflict resolution, anger management and peer mediation. The service learning project involves pupils in art projects that supplement, reinforce and support the school's educational goals. Pupils learn life skills that are integrated into the traditional classroom environment. Additionally, pupils contact local community groups, public bodies and parks and recreational offices to identify possible areas that need development. They work with members of the community to carry out the project, which teaches them skills such as developing goals, creating action plans, obtaining necessary resources and determining methods for demonstrating the success of the project achievements. Finally, the HEARTS programme uses a youth advisory council, which meets regularly and provides the administration with feedback on programme delivery. The council may offer suggestions for improvements.

Theory: The fine arts are a way of reaching challenged pupils using the principles of brain-based learning. Creativity and reasoning come together when the whole of the brain is used – using both the right and left halves of the brain maximises learning. Research indicates that pupils who receive instruction in the fine arts are less prone to develop social, emotional and behaviour problems and tend to perform better academically. They also participate in after-school activities, develop lasting friendships and become self-motivating. The programme safeguards the positive changes made by the young people by focusing on their individual resources such as talents, interests, skills and competencies. The purpose is to enhance the participants academic performance and reduce the risk of future violence.

Target group: 11–14-year-old African-Americans at risk of academic and social failure. They are at risk for violence and gangs during the hours not spent at school. They display special problem behaviour, poor school grades and school attendance, have family problems and problems in the local community, and come from a deprived socio-economic background.

Location: Florida, USA, where the project takes place at a university, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. The programme is intended to be a link between school and community.

Findings: The programme participants scored significantly higher for the impact measures self-esteem and grades (both grade average and specifically for reading) compared with the control group. However,

there is no significant connection with the violence risk index, maths grades, high violence risk or attitude to school.

Study design: Pre-post with control group, collection of school data and questionnaires administered to the young people.

Study rating: Medium

Title: The Prodigy Program

Author and year: Rapp-Paglicci, L. et al. (2011)

Programme description: A crime prevention programme that combines cultural arts with self-regulation skills and is taught by local artists in the mentor role. Instruction is given in the visual, performing, musical, media and theatre arts. During the programme, three types of self-regulation skills are modelled, learnt and practised, including social skills, anger management and problem-solving skills.

The instructors are artists from the local community who develop positive and supportive mentor relationships with young people. The programme lasts eight weeks. The instructors are trained in teaching styles, curriculum development, youth development and skill-building. In the course of the programme trained personnel monitor programme implementation, curricula and skills delivery.

Theory: Cultural arts are believed to offer an appropriate means of addressing self-regulation issues and engendering improvements that benefit the individual and increase public safety. The approach includes both early crime prevention measures and relapse reductions through local interventions that focus on preventing youth from embarking on a life of crime early on and at subsequent intervals.

Target group: Young people aged from 12-18, with the average age being 15 years. They are at-risk youth from the local community or youth who have been convicted by the justice system. 89% have been convicted by Florida's juvenile court. As well as mental and family problems, problems at school also seem to affect these young people, increasing the risk of crime. The authors themselves refer to the fact that the programme would be beneficial for non-violent youth.

Location: The Tampa Bay region in southern Florida, USA, which has extensive poverty and housing mobility. Almost 20% of the urban population are Hispanic.

Findings: At the end of the programme, significant and positive changes are found in externalising behaviour, internalising behaviour, faith in personal academic ability and for family functioning. It is interesting to note that there is a general improvement in family functioning although the programme does not include a family element.

However, there are significant changes in academic achievement, even though positive tendencies are shown for school attendance and grades as well as a reduction in the number of disciplinary cases brought before the court.

All in all, the authors hope that the growing numbers of Hispanic youth who come in contact with the judicial system can be reduced in this way rather than through incarceration and placements.

Study design: Pre-post without control group, using a quantitative method in the form of questionnaires administered to the young participants. Parents provide quality control by assessing the accuracy of the numerous questions regarding current and recent behaviour and activities. School information is additionally collected in the school districts.

Study rating: Medium

Title: The Prodigy Cultural Arts Program

Authors and year of publication: Stewart, C. et al. (2009)

Programme description: A cultural arts programme consisting of lessons in art with a skills curriculum.

The lessons cover the visual, performing, musical, media and theatre arts. Before the programme starts, the instructors, who are local artists, receive thorough training in teaching styles, curricula, skill-building and youth development. These arts instructors develop positive and supportive mentor relationships with the young people. Instruction is given in three specific skills which are modelled and practised through role play in the course of the curriculum: communication, anger management and problem-solving skills.

Trained personnel monitor and observe the implementation of the programme, which lasts eight weeks. Participants attend for three hours a week, corresponding to two months.

Theory: Art is used as a way of building pro-social skills in young people, and the programme is based on the Positive Youth Development model, which focuses on building values and resilience in young people (Butts et al. 2005). The programme is designed to facilitate health development, prevent harmful behaviour, offer opportunities for pro-social involvement, promote skills development, facilitate supportive relationships, provide an adequate structure and reinforce pro-social norms.

Target group: 10–18-year-old children and youth, with the average age being 16 years. The group includes both convicted and non-convicted youth at risk. 76% have been referred because of involvement with the State Juvenile Justice System. 24% of the participants are young people from the local community. The programme is targeted particularly at youth with mental problems.

Location: The programme operates in the local community and is tested in both rural and urban districts in the USA.

Findings: All scales demonstrate average changes in a positive direction from pre- to post-programme, but not all are significant, crime being one.

In particular, the functioning of the young person's family improved significantly overall, as well as individual dimensions such as problem-solving, behavioural control, communication and affective response with small to moderate effect sizes, even though the programme as such does not focus on the family. The skills that young people learned through the programme may be one reason for the improvement in family relationships. The Prodigy programme seems effective in reducing family problems for both urban and rural youth, rural especially.

The mental health symptoms of the young people are improved to a certain extent, with significant results for depression, somatic illness and suicidal thoughts. Girls showed the best improvement.

The convicted, age and ethnic status of the participants has no connection with the measured variables, either pre- or post-test. However, the Prodigy programme's location (urban/rural) and gender have an influence on the measured variables pre-test *before* the programme. Location (urban/rural) is significantly linked to family-functioning scales and certain crime-related issues such as gangs, smoking cigarettes, drinking, drugs, carrying a knife, stealing from cars. In these respects, all the measurements are higher for rural youth, who also do less well pre-test in relation to mental symptoms and family functioning. Conversely, after the programme, there are no significant differences between the sub-groups. Gender also has significance for mental health. Girls have significantly more mental symptoms before the programme than boys, and depression/loneliness and somatic/upset stomach are significantly different at post-test with regard to gender.

Study design: Pre-post-design, in which an urban location is compared with a rural location, with both locations receiving the programme. Data are collected via questionnaires administered to youth and their parents.

Study rating: Medium

Title: The Quantum Opportunity Program (QOP)

Author and year of publication: Maxfield, M. et al. (2003)

Programme description: An after-school programme consisting primarily of case management combined with a mentoring programme, tutoring, developmental activities and community service activities as well as practical support and financial incentives.

Acting as mentor, the case worker (case manager) develops a personal and caring relationship with the young person (aged between 15 and 25). He or she addresses a broad range of challenges facing the participating youth. Case management work is intensive and the young person can contact the case workers in emergencies arising after working hours.

Youth remain enrolled in the programme regardless of whether they drop out of school, are incarcerated, are inactive in QOP over a longer period of time or move to a different school. The programme is comprehensive, and the case worker/mentor addresses various obstacles encountered by the young person, for example, by offering transport or referring the adolescent to a rehabilitation programme. The case worker also helps youth aged at least 16 to find a summer job.

The educational activities are based on an assessment of each young person's academic level, after which a customised education plan is designed for each individual. The plans include one-on-one teaching and computer-assisted instruction in specific subjects such as basic reading and maths. The education component also includes visits to nearby universities and other activities intended to heighten the young person's knowledge about university and other further education programmes, and encourage them to plan for post-secondary education. The activities are intended to improve their academic achievement and help them to pass high school and continue in the education system.

The developmental activities include recreational activities and are designed to reduce risk behaviours and heighten cultural awareness. Community service activities such as visits to a local nursing home or volunteer work in the local community are designed to help young people develop a sense of responsibility for other people in the neighbourhood. Practical support takes many forms, from snacks to transport, referrals to healthcare services, summer job programmes, housing assistance, income support, childcare, etc.

Lastly a financial incentive of USD 1.25 an hour is given for participation in developmental, recreational and community service activities. The same amount is deposited in an account and promised to the young person when he or she completes high school or earns a general educational diploma (GED) and enrolls in a university or apprenticeship programme, the army or similar. Case workers also receive a bonus based on their participants' attendance at programme activities. If a participant passes high school, they only continue to receive mentor support and assistance to enrol in a programme of further education.

In practice the education and community service components were not particularly successful. However, most sites implement the mentoring component as set out in the QOP model. All sites implement the development component, but with greater focus on the recreational activities than suggested by the model. Few young people are screened or referred for reasons of mental or physical health.

Theory: The prime purpose is to encourage students to pass high school and embark on post-secondary education or training. The secondary goal is to improve the grades and test scores achieved at high school and reduce risk behaviours (substance use, crime, teenage parenthood) and the risk of later unemployment and dependence on welfare benefits. The programme philosophy states that those who are least motivated are those who can potentially derive most benefit from the programme. For this reason, all young people are enrolled, regardless of their active participation or motivation, and remain enrolled regardless of whether they become incarcerated, inactive in the programme or similar.

Target group: Young people aged approx. 14 with low grades who start high school with a high dropout rate. They are at risk of not completing high school and failing to go on to post-secondary education, and

therefore at risk of low achievement at high school and risk behaviours (substance use, crime, teenage parenthood).

Location: Primarily urban districts in areas where schools have a high dropout rate. One test site is rurally located. Cleveland, Fort Worth, Houston, Memphis and Washington D.C., Philadelphia and Yakima in the USA.

Findings: Risk behaviours, including crime, gang activities and becoming teenage parents are not reduced. However, QOP appears to positively affect the young people's completion of high school and increase the likelihood of their pursuing a further education or training programme, but the magnitude and significance of the effect varies depending on how the effect is measured and estimated. The authors consider these effects in relation to the generally successfully implemented mentoring/case management component, which specifically seeks to support the young people in completing and continuing their education.

According to an evaluation form, use of alcohol and illegal drugs rises significantly 'in the last 30 days', which is a counter-productive programme tendency. The authors propose the hypotheses that the young people may use the money they receive for participating on alcohol, or that by bringing youth together, the programme has contributed to negative peer influence and spread the use of alcohol and drugs.

There is no improvement in the young people's high school performance – right from grades achieved to test scores for reading and maths and suspensions or expulsions. The authors explain the lack of impact by the lack of or insufficient implementation of the programme component including computer-assisted and teaching and academic help. There is no positive effect on the young people's view of the future and themselves or on their attitude to crime or dropping out of school.

Follow-up impact evaluations made later in 2002 and 2004, about two years after the conclusion of the programme, show no effect on passing high school. At the same time there is a counter-productive effect. Former participants are significantly more likely to have been arrested or charged in the past two years than members of the control group¹¹⁸. It is hard to say which component leads to what.

The programme shows the best results as a form of prevention rather than as a way of treating those youth already experiencing the consequences of risk behaviour. Implementation of the components does not alleviate mental health issues, substance abuse, etc.

The need for case workers/mentors to be continuously available poses another difficulty. Case workers' availability is restricted by factors such as their private lives, logistical problems with youth who have moved far away and overtime laws. Most sites emphasise the recreational activities of the development activity component more than the planned life skills. However, the young people find the recreational activities fun, and the mentors believe the activities are a good way of encouraging programme participation.

Study design: Pre-post with randomly selected control group. Implementation is studied qualitatively through annual site visits, programme conferences and information provided by case workers about programme costs and enrolee participation. Impact evaluation based on questionnaires and telephone interviews with the young people, maths and reading tests and grade records.

Study rating: High

Title: The South Baltimore Youth Center

Authors and year of publication: Baker, K. et al. (1995)

Programme description: An after-school youth centre with an informal structure where youth can spend time, take part in positive social activities and play a decision-making role in the organisation. For

¹¹⁸ Schirm A, Stuart E, McKie A. (2006). *The Quantum Opportunity Program Demonstration: Final Impacts*. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

example, they have a majority representation on the centre board, thus playing a central role in the hiring of new staff. All youth centre activities must be planned and executed by the young people themselves. If the activities fail, the adults do not intervene to alleviate the problems. The young people arrange everything from bus trips to visits to a theme park, a tree planting day and a local newspaper. At the centre, the adolescents can play pool, watch TV, work on computers or interact with the adult staff. The staff see their role as a support for whatever the young people want to do – whether this is a youth centre activity or an issue in their personal lives.

The centre also offers mentoring, with both staff and volunteer students organising the mentoring activities. Street workers and community outreach work are used to recruit youth to the centre. Youth are also referred by schools, the police and other bodies. The centre develops collaborative relationships with other community agencies, and the local community is involved in development activities for the young people. Finally youth are taught academic skills.

Originally the centre was to have provided job training via computers and individual case management to meet individual youth needs, but this was abandoned because of lack of interest from the young people and, as regards case management, also from the staff. Youth empowerment, mentoring activities and the trust and support of adults thus make up the primary programme components, which are developed throughout the programme's three-year duration.

The centre's user rules are reduced over the years, with the following established as fixed rules after two years: (1) If something needs doing, do it. (2) No drugs. (3) No fighting. (4) No shoes on the furniture. (5) The young people must make sure the rules are followed. The centre is open six hours a day after school throughout the academic year, at weekends and during school holidays.

Theory: The young people's personal strengths for handling a difficult socio-economic context in the local community are facilitated by supportive adults with whom they develop informal, trusting bonds. The youth centre fills the gap left by dysfunctional families and lack of school resources. These adults give youth the advice they should be given but fail to get from family and school. According to the centre philosophy, its users are young people who need additional adult guidance for growing up. The programme is intended to reduce the risk factors for violence, crime and substance abuse by providing a haven where the young people can take part in positive social activities and become empowered through decision-making. This is done by giving them authority, for example, a seat on the centre's board, and demanding that they plan and carry out activities themselves.

The failure of any given activity is not important in itself, and staff do not intervene, because the young people are expected to take responsibility themselves. What is important is not the excursions, etc, themselves but the informal process that unites youth and adults in a common activity.

The programme is designed to be an informal agent of socialisation, and the goal is to be an informal social organisation in the same way as a family, neighbourhood, local community or friends. In this context, there are adults on hand to give developmental help and advice, support that the young people do not get by hanging out informally with other youth who may also have an unfortunate influence on each other.

All participants in a society must master the social skills required to take part in both informal and formal activities. As the young people's informal environment – family, neighbourhood and so on – embodies a host of risk factors, it is considered doubtful that formalised programmes would provide a solution.

Target group: Young people at risk of crime, violence and substance abuse, assessed on the basis of local community characteristics. Some of the participants are involved in delinquent behaviour, but some youth who are not programme participants are more involved in crime.

Location: Baltimore, Maryland in the USA in an urban community with poverty, employment and lack of future prospects. The youth centre is housed in a basement in a building near the local community centre, and the project started out as an initiative by local residents.

Findings: The programme has a positive effect in terms of the authors' process and impact evaluations. There is a positive effect on high-risk behaviour, and the size of these effects appears to increase over time. The programme also seems to cause a reduction in substance use, violence and crime.

As a result of the programme, the participants scored significantly better for 73% of the effects measured. Compared with the group not using the youth centre, the participants' scores were significantly better for 86% of the 15 outcome measures. The study results show that both groups' scores decreased in some cases, but to a lesser extent in the group of programme participants. Sometimes both groups improved, but the participant group improved more, and finally the participant group improved in cases where the control group showed no change.

Serious delinquent behaviour drops for the young people taking part in the programme, but generally not at all for the control group, which initially had a lower score. Male participants show the greatest reduction, and as they grow older, they commit less crime. The frequency of minor delinquent or anti-social acts drops in both groups, but most for the programme participants. However, pro-social behaviour does not improve significantly.

Use of alcohol increases for both groups, but the greatest increase is seen in the control group, who do not use the centre. Substance use drops among the participants whereas it rises for the control group. Substance use varies with age and peer environment. After taking into account the control group's age and peers, substance use drops in both groups, but participants' use drops most.

The programme participants' risk environment and active cognitive coping also improve significantly. Employment and education do not appear to change.

The centre deals directly and indirectly with the young people's multiple problems by: 1. Acknowledging that it is addressing multiple problems. 2. Having faith that resiliency is best developed through a multi-method approach. Solutions are facilitated by the fact that the programme is informal, unbureaucratic and ready to do what the adolescent needs with no restrictions. This means swift action can be taken to address the risk environment or build up the resilience of young people with socially unacceptable behaviour.

Study design: Qualitative method for the process evaluation and quantitative method for the impact evaluation, carried out via questionnaires administered to the programme and control groups. The study is long term, and confounding factors are controlled for.

Study rating: High

Summary and perspectives

The review and detailed analyses of the effect of mentoring and leisure-time programmes indicate that their effects are promising, both in the individual programme types and in combination, even though the effects are neither unequivocal nor consistent and vary from study to study.

In-depth analyses based on solid impact studies show that mentoring and leisure-time activities can generate positive changes in a wide variety of areas. Improvements can be seen in youth crime rates, the pro-social and delinquent behaviour of young people, their mental health, substance use, relationships with family and friends and school.

The programmes showing good, reliable results share some distinct characteristics in terms of content, duration, frequency, participants and context. They enlist the help of supportive, constantly committed adults and focus on strengthening the adolescents' social, emotional and cognitive skills. They also last at least one year and involve regular and intense weekly participation and contact.

Generally, the participants are aged around 11–14 and are at a mild degree of risk, while certain leisure-time programmes have also showed positive changes in the group of slightly older youth at greater risk. However, in the latter case, efforts must be made to counteract any potential negative influence among the participants. Moreover, effects have been largely demonstrated in deprived city areas. Short-term initiatives focusing on young people with no particular crime risk cannot be expected to have any demonstrable effect¹¹⁹.

However, our conclusions have been drawn solely from the information available on issues related to the review. For example, an examination of the potential effect of the programmes on other youth groups in other urban contexts, etc, would require re-testing the programmes in new contexts with well-documented process and impact studies.

A prevention initiative that caters for local needs in one location may not necessarily meet the needs of other locations¹²⁰, and as most of the reviewed programmes derive from the USA, the question of comparability with Denmark, for example, must be specifically addressed on a case-by-case basis¹²¹. Each programme must be based on a thorough study of local conditions¹²².

Some researchers claim that the diversity of locations and populations means that *some* mentoring and leisure-time programmes will inevitably show *some* good effects for *some* people under *some* conditions¹²³. Deeper investigation into which groups and under which conditions the programmes offer potential would facilitate an assessment of whether similar processes and outcomes are conceivable in Danish contexts.

¹¹⁹ (The Danish Commission on Juvenile Crime 2009:339)

¹²⁰ (Goldstein & Huff i Derezotes 1995:36)

¹²¹ (Bowey & McGlaughlin 2006:270)

¹²² (White 2007:9)

¹²³ (Rhodes & Ryan Lowe in Rogers 2011:167)

Indeed, the reasons for youth problems are often so complex that integrated multi-dimensional programmes that consider the importance of family, friends, school and local community from an early stage seem to afford the most benefit¹²⁴.

The review analyses show that the *combined* mentoring and leisure-time programmes manage to reach into more areas of young people's lives. With a supportive adult, stimulating recreational activities with other youth and the involvement of the young person's parents, a programme can touch and improve many aspects of young people's lives. The mentoring role can also serve to maintain contact with the school, and the mentor can be a member of the young person's own local community.

All in all, mentoring and leisure-time programmes, particularly in combination, are a highly promising way of preventing crime – especially when it comes to intermediary factors such as relationships with friends and family, school commitment and attendance, mental well-being and alcohol and drug use.

However, the programmes should not be used to compensate for inadequacies in other areas, and they work best in connection with integrative approaches¹²⁵.

Literature about the effect of mentoring and leisure-time programmes is sparse, which has made it difficult for practitioners to find inspiration from initiatives with documented effect and use them to guide their own work. This report has been able to meet this need on the basis of the knowledge available, but new studies of the long-term effect of mentoring and leisure-time programmes are needed to show whether the results remain good in the long term¹²⁶.

In addition, the prevention programmes that focus on several impact measures simultaneously need to be evaluated more rigorously, as these programmes have been shown to affect an array of factors. Researchers should use several different data sources and methodological approaches; study the participants before, during and after the programme; employ a control group; as well as monitor which alternative interventions the control group receives along the way. Finally, researchers must investigate programme implementation to identify exactly what effect is being measured. This process will also generate valuable knowledge for use the next time a programme is possibly implemented.

Under any circumstances, however, it is hard to achieve definitively 'evidence-based knowledge' about the effect of these secondary initiatives on crime prevention. The earlier on the risk continuum that the programme participants are positioned and the less a given programme or initiative directly and chiefly targets crime, the harder a reduction in crime becomes to measure¹²⁷.

At present, this systematic review of the effect of mentoring and leisure-time programmes on at-risk youth offers the best possible indicators for useful practice. In several respects, the programmes appear promising as regards preventing violence, other crime and delinquent behaviour, both gang-related and in a broader sense.

Future tests and studies of programmes in local contexts will be able to generate more specific knowledge about how they can create positives changes and help young people to overcome their challenges and succeed in life.

¹²⁴ (Botvin in Hanlon et al. 2009; Mahoney et al. in Durlak et al. 2010:306)

¹²⁵ (Rogers 2011:167)

¹²⁶ (Durlak et al. 2010:305; Maxfield et al. 2003:10)

¹²⁷ (Coalter in Nichols 2004:193)

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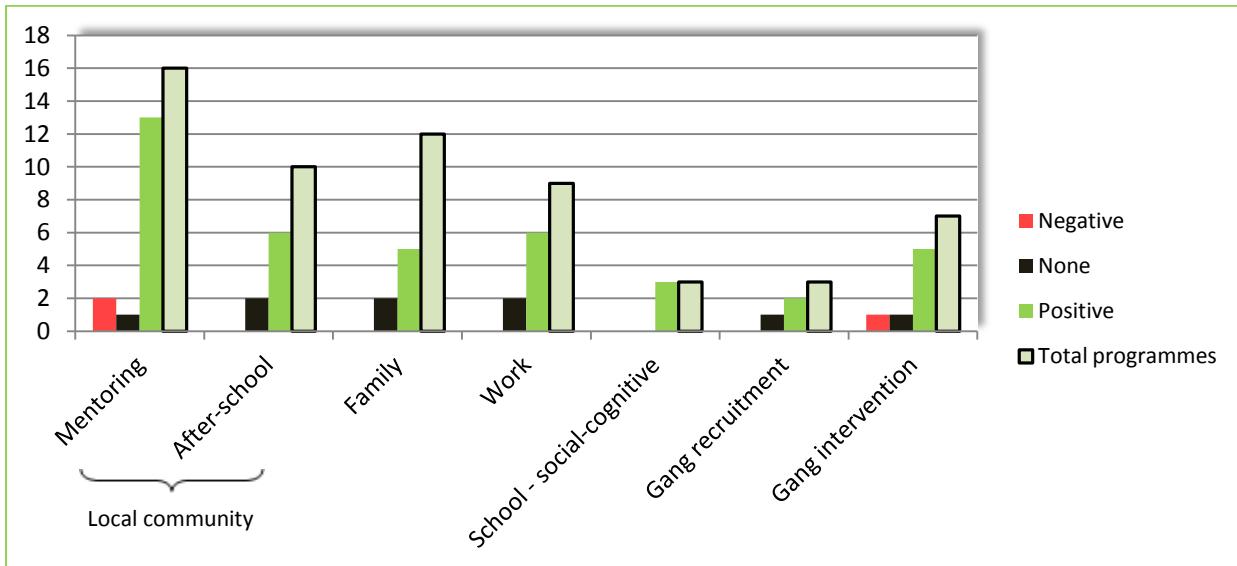
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Appendix 1

Diagram I. Intervention areas, number of studies and effects – groups separately

Based on a review of three publications summarising prevention programmes (Sherman et al. 1997; Thornton et al. 2000; The Commission on Juvenile Crime 2009) selected to correspond to the target group of at-risk youth between 12 and 17 years old. The existence of even one single effect leads to the classification of an intervention as 'positive'. The number of programmes exceeds the number of various effects, as some of these have not been evaluated.



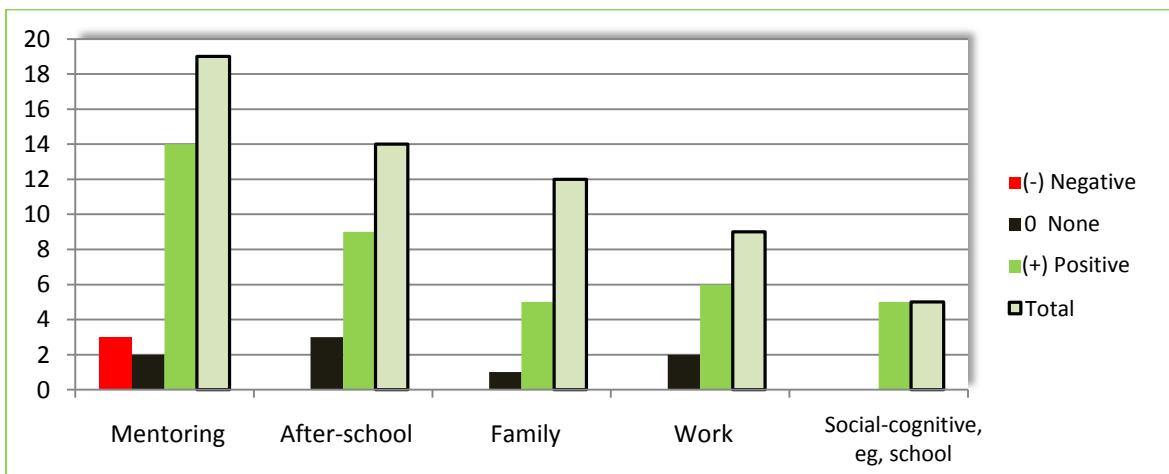
Study quality in the categories represented by the column diagram:

Based among others on the Maryland Report's assessment scale from 1-5, where five are RCT studies and most reliable in relation to specification of effect.

1. **In the local community:** **Mentoring:** Good. Several scoring '5'.
After-school: Up to '4' – ranging from lack of evaluations to poor or reasonably good quality.
2. **Family:** Evaluations missing. A couple do, however, score '5'.
3. **Work:** From lack of evaluations to uncertain, better and good quality. '4-5'.
4. **School – social-cognitive:** Uncertain quality.
5. **Gang recruitment:** Poor. '2' – including without control.
6. **Gang intervention:** Uncertain. Up to '3'.

Diagram II. Intervention areas, number of studies and effects – group programmes integrated

Programmes repeated in both gang and other categories in Diagram I count as a single programme in this diagram.



Appendix 2

Search terms and search threads used in the structured literature search

Example in the form of an article search in ERIC and psychINFO:

- Simultaneous search in Pro-Quest, which automatically eliminates duplicates
- Abstract search
- Limited to the period 'From January 01 1980 to August 11 2011' with subsequent search update and new screening of hits on 9 February 2012 for the period from August 2011 to February 2012.
- Limited to scholarly journals)
- Search thread:
AB(crime* or criminal* or gang* or violen* or delinquen* or antisocial or "anti-social" or troublesome or "at-risk" or "high-risk" or devian*) and AB(youth* or adolescen* or young* or teen* or juvenile or student*) and AB(prevent* or intervent* or program* or project* or experiment* or test* or trial* or activit* or deterrence) and AB(mentor* or counsel* or adviser or advisor or guide or coach or mediator or support* or outreach* or detached* or helper or brother* or sister* or buddy or club* or recreation* or enrichment or activit* or sport* or game* or center* or centre* or drop-in* or leisure* or ASP* or afterschool or "after-school" or "after school" or excursion* or wilderness or trip* or camp* or event* or shelter or summer or vacation or holiday* or music or drama or dance or art* or performance* or hous*) and AB(effect* or evaluat* or impact or assess* or outcome* or output or caus* or result* or evidenc* or reduc*) not AB(woman or women or child* or female* or girl* or sex or intimate or dating)
- The content in parentheses is designed to break down and target the search relative to the review's inclusion and exclusion criteria. If, for example, the search words prevention, intervention or effect, etc, are not used, the search will return a huge number of hits which, although related to youth and crime, may have other goals than impact evaluations.
- * opens up numerous possible word endings, which ensures that the word is captured in all its forms.
- Searches for synonyms for 'youth', etc, ensure a broad range of similar meanings, in the same way as mentor, for example, can be expanded to include counsellor, mediator, coach, etc. Leisure is not only leisure time, but after-school activities in all possible senses of the word – a trip, a holiday, a drop-in centre, etc.
- Double quotation marks are entered around specified terms such as "after-school", "high-risk", "at-risk", etc, to prevent the search being polluted by other terms using one or more of the words in other connections.
- A limit was set relative to women, children, dating, etc, as several of the hits returned by a trial search had themes such as partner-related violence or violence towards children, which lie beyond the scope of the project focus.
- The intervention types have been integrated, as the search elements cannot be 'nested' in each other – thus 'mentor or club or [...]'
- 'Kid*' was not used in the search as first attempted, because the term proved after all too narrow in terms of age.

Appendix 3

Data-extracted categories in the systematic review

Individual searches and assessments were made for each study included in the review as regards the following categories:

1) Text characteristics:

1. Author
2. Publication year
3. Title
4. Text type
5. Journal or printer
6. Research institution
7. Number of pages
8. Country
9. Screening date
10. Database
11. Primary study? –
Prospective/retrospective

4) Effect:

1. Measured by
2. Effect result – quantitative
3. Effect duration
4. Further assessments – qualitative/process

5) Study characteristics and further information:

1. Design
2. Scientific Methods Scale placement (1-5)
3. Method
4. Analysis
5. Control for confounding factors
6. Validity, reliability, self-reflection, etc, of study.
7. Overall quality assessment (L, M, H)
8. Measured directly/indirectly by crime
9. Has the study been replicated?
10. Cost-effective
11. Other comments
12. Special quotations
13. Effect colour code – works, promising, no effect, counterproductive
14. Ethics

2) Programme target group:

1. Called/characterised by
2. Age
3. Ethnicity
4. Sex
5. Group focus? – Description
6. Programme participants – selection/number
7. Study participants – intended
8. Study participants – actual/dropout
9. Study participants – selection
10. Context – social, economic, historic, etc.

3) Programme:

1. Programme type (mentoring/leisure-time)
2. Programme title
3. Commissioning agency
4. Where
5. Urban context
6. Programme manager/personnel
7. How – programme content
8. When and how long
9. Why – rationale/theory
10. Implementation – studied?



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