

UNITED NATIONS



GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



Distr.  
LIMITED

A/CONF.6/C.3/L.1  
19 July 1955

ENGLISH ONLY

FIRST UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION  
OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

Geneva, 22 August - 3 September 1955

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit herewith the text of a report on "The Educational Aspects of Juvenile Delinquency" which was prepared for the Congress by the Secretariat of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

THE EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Report submitted by the Secretariat of UNESCO

1. The Social Importance of the School:

In the developed countries, the school is the sole social agency in contact with all children from the age of six or thereabouts to at least fourteen - from middle childhood to late adolescence. In many countries and for a considerable proportion of children, this contact begins earlier, at the age of two or three, with the nursery school, and continues later with extended education to the threshold of adulthood. Next to the home, the school probably exerts the most powerful psychological influence, not only on the development and training of the intelligence, but upon the whole structure of personality.

Thus in any series of concerted measures to prevent or to treat juvenile delinquency, the possibilities of action through the school and its staff should be given particular attention; nor should we fail to consider those causes of delinquency for which the school may perhaps be held responsible or which it may aggravate.

In countries where education is still in course of development, the part played by the school, and the nature and causes of delinquency themselves, may be different. The very fact that schooling is not universal or compulsory leaves many children open to harmful influences or in relatively unsupervised idleness. Rapid industrialisation, the breakdown of tribal life and customs, the uprooting of families and many other factors of the sort contribute to bring about a social malaise, one symptom of which is an increase in delinquencies of all kinds - many of them delinquencies only in the legal sense, that is to say acts which the adolescent, and the social group to which he belongs, do not know or recognize to be wrong.

Thus in itself an extension of compulsory schooling, coupled with wise social measures, may be expected to do something to diminish delinquency, especially if the accent is put, not solely upon preventive measures, but also upon a constructive attempt to help children and adolescents to adjust themselves to the new conditions under which they are growing up. (1)

---

(1) This is not a matter for the so-called under-developed countries alone. See for example Rugg, H: The Teacher of Teachers, New York, Harper Bros, 1952 and Wall, W.D.: Education and Mental Health, Unesco, Paris, 1955, Chapter XI.

## 2. Causes of Delinquency as they affect the School:

It would be inappropriate in this paper to enter into a full discussion of the causes of adolescent delinquency, the more so because the relative importance of the various circumstances differ, probably very markedly, according to local conditions. Few thorough studies with an adequate statistical and experimental framework exist<sup>2</sup> and most touch only upon conditions in developed countries. It does, however, seem to be clear that "in well over one third of all the cases but in rather less than one half, some deep constitutional failing proves the primary source of misconduct ..... At the same time ..... there still remains a large balance of offenders - between 60 and 65 per cent of the total - whose lawless actions have been precipitated primarily by the difficulties of their environment or by the events of their own past life. Thus the part played by heredity or endowment is, in a majority of cases, that of a minor predisposing cause. Heredity appears to operate, not directly through the transmission of a criminal disposition as such, but rather indirectly, through such constitutional conditions as a dull or defective intelligence, an excitable and unbalanced temperament, or an over-development of some single primitive instinct. Of environmental conditions, those obtaining outside the home are far less important than those obtaining within it; and within it, material conditions such as poverty are far less important than moral conditions such as ill-discipline, vice and, most of all, the child's relations with his parents. Physical defects have barely half the weight of psychological and environmental. Psychological factors, whether due to heredity or environment are supreme both in number and strength over all the rest. Intellectual conditions are more serious than bodily; and emotional than intellectual ....."<sup>3</sup>

2. Burt, C. The Young Delinquent, London, University of London Press, 4th Ed. 1944. Saunders, C., Mannheim, C., and Rhodes, E.C.: Young Offenders, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1942. The first is a study based upon the statistical analysis of cases and of adequate control groups and the second, as well as a control group study, is an attempt to bring together and evaluate the evidence of an exact kind available in the field. Most other studies are either partial and refer to a particular group (like Healey's studies of recidivists), attack the problem from a particular point of view (e.g. Bowlby, J.: Forty Juvenile Thieves, Aichhorn, A.: Wayward Youth) or lack an adequate experimental and statistical basis (Stott, D.H.: Delinquency and Human Nature, Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, 1950). This does not mean that such works are of no value but that they do not bear upon the problems of the relative importance and extensiveness of various causal factors. See 'Delinquency' Educational Review Vol. 3, No. 1, 1950.

3. Burt, C. op. cit. pp. 605-7. See also: Veillard, M. "La prévention de la délinquance juvenile". Revue Pénitentiaire du Droit Pénal. Vol. 78. Nos. 1-3. 1954

It might be argued that, in the face of this analysis, the rôle of the school is relatively small, that it is only one factor in the environment, whilst the real causes, and consequently the main targets for preventive work lie elsewhere. Up to a point this is true of schools as they are. But from the nursery stage on to late adolescence, whether it seeks to do so or not, the school influences the emotional as well as the intellectual growth of its pupils. If the teacher has the training and insight, he can through the experiences, satisfactions and personal contacts which he arranges for his pupils, do much to compensate for temperamental difficulties, help to correct distortions of psychological growth and supplement some at least of the deficiencies in the out of school environment. More than any other person in the community, the teacher is in a position to know each of his pupils objectively and, because of a wide acquaintance with children in general, to detect anomalies of intellectual, emotional and social development. When it is necessary, he can be the bridge between the family and the specialised psychological and social services of the community. At numerous stages in each child's career, the teacher comes in contact with the parents and the home spontaneously - during the pre-school and infant period, at the moment of transfer to the primary school or from the primary to the secondary school, whenever a choice of studies has to be made, and finally when the moment comes for the pupil to choose a job. Through these individual contacts or by means of a good parent-teacher association, a teacher may be in a position to disseminate information on child development and family relations in a form which parents can accept. Finally, during the child's last years at school and through evening and extension classes or other means of continued informal education, the educator can contribute to the moulding of the new generation of parents.

Few teachers trained in the old ways are equipped to do all or many of these things. Some schools and school systems still consider their task as one of purely intellectual training, to be dispensed without reference to the individual circumstances of their pupils. Nevertheless, the trend of current reforms in teacher-training and in educational method is towards acceptance of the idea that education should more and more become a positive process

spreading beyond the class-room situation and contributing to the full development of the pupils' personalities. It will be in this way ultimately that the school will make its most effective contribution to the prevention, not only of delinquency, but of all forms of social maladjustment.

3. The Teacher and the detection of pre-delinquent tendencies:

Most delinquencies spring from maladjustment in the emotional lives of pupils, whether these are due to environmental stresses of a kind that few children or adolescents could resist, or to some weakness or disturbance in the individual which an otherwise innocuous environment causes to become manifest. As such, the delinquent act is no different from other maladjusted responses which because they do not involve conflict with the law, are not considered delinquent. Moreover the delinquent act itself is rarely an isolated phenomenon. In the case histories of children brought before the juvenile courts will be found many prior difficulties of emotional development and behaviour - difficulties in learning perhaps, or petty thefts, violent outbursts of anger or aggression, lack of social contacts, truancy, undue silence or withdrawal, marked aberrations in sexual development and the like - all of them signs that something is amiss.

In the course of their growth, all children meet with strain; and all, or most, shew some signs of psychological disturbance or "abnormality". We know little about the distribution among normal children of such abnormalities<sup>4</sup>. We do, however, know that in many such cases difficulties tend to clear up spontaneously in the course of maturation and without special help. We know also that certain periods of life - for example first entry to school, change of school, the onset of adolescence - are particularly liable to disturbance

---

4. Almost the sole studies are those by Cummings, J.S.: "The Incidence of Emotional Symptoms in School Children". British Journal of Educational Psychology Vol. XIV, Pt. 3, 1944 and "A Follow-up Study of Emotional Symptoms in School Children" British Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. XVI, Pt. 3, Nov. 1946. Emotional Maladjustment in New Zealand School Children, New Zealand Educational Institute. See also Valentine, C.W.: Abnormalities in Normal Children, National Children's Home and Orphanage, 1951.

and particularly likely to precipitate emotional and behaviour problems. Where school and teacher are understanding and where the child's previous development has been normal, signs of stress at these particular periods rapidly disappear and the pupil makes a satisfactory adjustment. If, however, disturbances persist, then clearly the school should seek the skilled advice of the psychologist.

The capacity to detect the strains to which children may be subjected in school and to understand their reactions to their environment is not to be gained by the mere light of nature or even by routine experience. Modern trends in the initial training of teachers<sup>5</sup> tend more and more to stress that the young teacher needs an adequate basis of child study and educational psychology to enable him to understand the children in his care and to adapt both the method and the content of education to individual differences among children. Many countries<sup>6</sup> carry the matter much further; and by providing full-time or part-time courses of training in child psychology for experienced teachers are endeavouring to build up a body of men and women who can adequately detect children whose development is sufficiently abnormal to warrant more expert and thorough study.

Such detection, subsequent examination and, if necessary, remedial action is the more likely to succeed in preventing major personality difficulties if it comes early in the child's career, before maladjustments have had time to take root. Thus, the nursery school teachers and their colleagues in the infant departments and in the first years of primary school are in the forefront of this work of screening out cases of anomalies of psychological growth. They are also peculiarly well placed to undertake remedial action with difficult children and, through contact with parents, to influence the upbringing not only of their immediate charges but of younger brothers and sisters below school-age. Indeed the nursery school and

- 
5. XVIth International Conference on Public Education - Proceedings and Recommendations, Geneva and Paris, B.I.E. Unesco, 1954. Mental Hygiene in the Nursery School, Unesco, Paris 1951.
  6. For example Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States.

the kindergarten, with their free atmosphere, their relatively small classes and their staff concentrated more upon the needs of children than upon formal learning, provide almost ideal circumstances within which to observe the growth of children, to detect difficulties and to undertake remedial action. Few children at this age, even among the most difficult, are in need of formal psychotherapy; fewer still are psychotic; for most it is a question of aid to the parents in their handling, of slight environmental modifications, and of a skilful use by the teacher herself of the opportunities for play, for emotional outlet and for social training that the school provides<sup>7</sup>.

4. Educational Maladjustments:

(a) Retardation: - In the primary classes, difficulties are particularly likely to be precipitated by learning to read, write and calculate, and to lead to educational failure. Studies of school populations in Belgium, France, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere<sup>8</sup>, have shown that a considerable proportion of children become backward in the formal educational skills, not because of lack of innate ability, but for reasons which are often outside the immediate knowledge or control of the school. Others, although their attainments may be equal to those of the average of their age-group, are nevertheless retarded and fail to show the high level of attainment which their inborn capacity would permit. Not all such children are maladjusted, pre-delinquent or delinquent. Nevertheless, school failure is a sign that something is awry;

---

7. Bovet, L. (Psychiatric Aspects of Juvenile Delinquency, Geneva, World Health Organization, 1951) states that not more than 10 - 12% of cases which come before the juvenile courts present troubles which require psychiatric examination. Similar figures are characteristic of the child guidance services in the U.K. (see Burt, C. "Symposium on Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Child Guidance Service - VII Conclusion" British Journal of Educational Psychology Vol. XXIII, Pt. I., esp. pp. 13 - 14.

8. See Wall, W.D. Education and Mental Health, Paris, Unesco, 1955, Chapter V.

and the correlation between poor educational progress and subsequent delinquency is relatively high<sup>9</sup>.

Studies of such children have revealed a variety of causative factors and have shown the close connection between adjustment or maladjustment to school and other aspects of the child's social and emotional growth<sup>10</sup>. In a number of countries - Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States for example - remedial or opportunity groups under the care of specially trained teachers or Remedial Education Centres and specialised Educational Clinics have been established with excellent results both in securing better personal and educational adjustment and ultimately, it seems, in the prevention of delinquency<sup>11</sup>. In many if not the majority of such cases, it seems that, although educational failure may be a symptom of deeper-lying disturbance, remedial education carried out by a skilled teacher under the supervision of a psychologist, coupled with careful guiding of the parents, will enable pupils not merely to adjust themselves to school but to achieve a more harmonious all-round development.

(b) Doubling classes: In certain European countries, where syllabuses are laid down by central authority and where more or less arbitrary standards of attainment are fixed, which children have to reach before they pass into the next higher class, concern is being felt at the number of children who repeat

---

9. Of the delinquent group studied by Burt, 56.8% were backward - that is, had attainments less than 85% of those of the average child of the same chronological age - as compared with 15.7% of his non-delinquent control group; in only 27.9% of his delinquent cases was the backwardness to be ascribed to natural dullness. op. cit. p. 299.

10. See for example Burt, C.: The Backward Child, London, University of London Press Ltd., 1937; Schonell, F.J.: Backwardness in the Basic Subjects, Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, 1946; Kellmer-Pringle, M.L.: "Social Maturity and Social Competence", Educational Review, Vol. II, Pt. 3, 1951; Wall, W.D.: "Les facteurs sociaux et affectifs dans le retard scolaire", Enfance, 7e année, No. 2, 1954 - pp. 113-118. Gérin, E. "Echec scolaire et milieu familial" Pédagogie Vol. 9, Pt. 8, 1952.

11. Schonell, F.J. and Wall, W.D.: "The Remedial Education Centre", Educational Review Vol. II, No. 1, 1949; Jadouille, A.: Le laboratoire pédagogique au travail Paris, Les Editions du Scarabée, 1951.



one or more classes. It has been suggested, for example, that the programme of the French primary school exacts over five years a rate of progress which the majority of children can barely achieve in six<sup>12</sup>. A study made in Belgian schools<sup>13</sup> shews that some 40% of children repeat at least one class in the primary schools, with the major amount of failure occurring in the first year. A similar state of affairs is found with a greater or lesser proportion of doublers, wherever an exact investigation is made<sup>14</sup>. Whether the failure is an artifact of a system of promotion which takes small account of the rhythms of child growth and the wide range of individual differences, or whether it reflects, as in some cases it surely does, individual maladjustments in the pupils themselves, it suggests that one child in four or five may be getting little or no satisfaction from his education. Among these, there may well be many in whose lives failure is the symptom of disturbance or the precipitating cause of personality deviation, behaviour problems or overt delinquency. Much has been done<sup>15</sup> and much more could be undertaken, through the individualisation of methods, group work, and a more realistic adjustment of standards, at least to diminish the number of failures produced by more or less arbitrary methods of promotion.

(c) The mentally subnormal: One or two per cent of children exist in the community whose innate mental ability is so low that they are strikingly unable to follow the ordinary curriculum<sup>16</sup>. As adolescents and adults, the severely

---

12. Zazzo, R. and Dabout, M.: "Répartition des écoliers parisiens dans les cours de scolarité primaire et secondaire pour l'année 1950 - 51" Enfance, Vol. 5, No. 5, Nov. - Dec. 1952.

13. Hotyat, F. et al.: "L'Instruction, l'éducation et la santé mentale des enfants et des adolescents belges" La Revue pédagogique, Bruxelles, Vol. 28, No. 3, Mars 1954.

14. See Education and Mental Health, Chapter V.

15. Notably in the Classes Nouvelles in France, in the Dalton and Decroly schools of Holland and Belgium, the Ecole du Mail and other progressive institutions in Switzerland, and the activity primary schools of the United Kingdom. The fact remains, however, that in most countries children have to be taught in large classes - often of forty, fifty and even more pupils - and are pressed towards standards of attainment which are beyond the reach of many.

16. See The Mentally Subnormal Child, Report of a joint W.H.O./I.L.O./Unesco and U.N. Expert Group. Geneva, W.H.O., Tech. Rep. Series No. 75, 1954.

subnormal are peculiarly liable to become delinquent. They are easily led astray by abler companions or, in the case of girls, into prostitution. Usually their delinquencies are clumsy and marked by stupidity, resulting more from an inability to perceive consequences than from inherent evil or viciousness<sup>17</sup>. Much however can be done to ensure that such children and adolescents grow up to be socially useful and well integrated members of the community, especially if they are detected early and given the education, training and supervision adapted to their subnormal intelligence. In the developed countries special schools or classes exist for at least a proportion of such pupils. In most, however, the accommodation is insufficient and in some, little or no educational provision is made for the most severely subnormal cases, who may be excluded altogether from the educational system, or placed in large residential institutions under medical supervision. From the point of view of delinquency, the proportionally more numerous cases of borderline subnormality - the high-grade morons and mentally deficient - present a graver problem, since their subnormality is less marked and detection, at least in the early stages, is more difficult. In the absence of adequate psychological services or of an alert teacher with some knowledge of mental testing, children with intelligence quotients of 65 to 75 frequently - particularly in the country districts - continue to struggle along in the ordinary classes or are relegated to the back row of the class as incurably lazy. It is not surprising that many such children, instead of becoming stable and socially adjusted, develop more or less severe emotional disturbances and not infrequently become aggressively anti-social.

Severely subnormal children are often discovered in the pre-school period. The detection of borderline cases and their bringing forward for examination must in the main depend upon the teacher, for it is frequently only when teaching starts that mental subnormality becomes clearly manifest. A trained

---

17. Weber, H.: "The 'Borderline Defective' Delinquent". British Journal of Delinquency, Vol. III, Pt. 3, 1953.

nursery, infant or primary school teacher who is constantly in contact with a miscellaneous group is well-situated to detect inferiorities and retardation in social and intellectual development, though usually not capable of the skilled psychological examination which alone will determine whether the causes are innate or environmental. Thus two things are necessary; adequate attention to problems of mental subnormality in teacher-training, and a psychological service which, in co-operation with the school, can carry out the necessary detailed examinations and supervise the educational treatment of the subnormal<sup>18</sup>.

(c) the dull: Marked mental subnormality is, however, relatively rare compared with the much higher proportion of children who, while not defective, are none the less markedly dull. The average mental ratio of adolescent delinquents and of adult criminals has been shewn to be below that of the population mean, and investigators have repeatedly drawn attention to the special vulnerability of that group of the school population whose intelligence quotients range between 70 and 85. Samplings of school populations indicate that between 10 and 13% of children fall within these limits; and the dependence of capacity-to-learn upon innate all-round intellectual efficiency needs no demonstration. Dull children are unable to learn at the same pace as their better-endowed contemporaries. For a time, particularly in the early year or two of the primary school, such pupils struggle on; but as failure piles upon failure, they steadily put forth less effort, until at eleven or twelve one finds them apathetic or seeking their satisfactions elsewhere; so that upon leaving school they may be severely backward educationally, markedly disturbed emotionally, and not infrequently ripe for delinquency. In most countries such children leave school in mid-adolescence, frequently for an unskilled or at best semi-skilled job;

---

18. See Duncan J.: The Education of the Ordinary Child, London, Nelson & Sons Ltd. 1942. Ingraham, C.P.: The Education of the Slow-Learning Child, London, Harrap & Co., 1936.

later, the small social and educational acquirements they had at fourteen have further dwindled<sup>19</sup>.

Few educational systems yet provide fully for the needs of this relatively numerous group; nor, in the absence of an adequate system of tests and school records, are such cases easy to discover. Experience in the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere has, however, shewn that without being separated from the ordinary life of the school, such pupils can find stimulus if they are grouped in classes with a more concrete and slower-moving curriculum. This implies educational guidance from an early stage and the provision of suitable teachers and suitable material conditions. In the Scandinavian countries and in Austria, the first of these problems is being tackled by a 'school maturity' examination undertaken by psychologists to determine each child's readiness for formal learning, and in some cases by delaying the start of compulsory education or by the provision of slower-moving groups. In the United Kingdom, the system of 'streaming' in primary and secondary modern schools goes some way to meet the problem.

5. The School as a constructive factor in mental health:

Emphasis has so far been laid on the action of the teacher, of the school and indeed of the educational system as a whole in the prevention of delinquency by providing for the special needs of children who are peculiarly likely to become maladjusted. Modern educational systems are tending

---

19. See the figures for illiteracy and backwardness in the British Army (cf. 'Backwardness in the Forces', Times Educational Supplement, May 1, 1953) and in the Belgian Army (Delys, L. 'La mesure de l'enseignement primaire - Inventaire des connaissances chez le milicien', Revue des Sciences pédagogiques, Vol. X, Pt. 44). Also Wall, W.D. "The Decay of Educational Attainments in a group of Adolescents" British Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. XIV, Pt. 1, 1944; "The Backward Adult", Journal of Army Education, Vol. XXII, No. 4, and Vol. 23 Nos. 1, 2 and 3, 'Reading Backwardness among Men in the Army', British Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. XV, Pt. 1, 1945; Vol. XVI, Pt. 3, 1946.

towards greater and greater differentiation in their provisions: to meet the almost infinitely varied nature of the growing human being. Those whose home circumstances are difficult, those who meet with continued failure, the mentally subnormal and the dull, all require help adapted to their particular problems. In most European and North American countries special classes, hostels, boarding and day schools exist for the physically handicapped, the mentally handicapped, the dull, the emotionally disturbed, the socially vulnerable and the like. No country, however, claims that it has sufficient accommodation fully to cope with all these problems. Even fewer have enough, specially-trained teachers for the task, or even an adequate scheme of special training for such teachers.

The most striking development, however, since the nineteen twenties is the gathering conviction that delinquency is only one facet of the whole problem of maladjustment in childhood and adolescence and that in this, as in other fields, prevention by all means at our disposal, including the school, is cheaper financially and in terms of social cost than is cure<sup>20</sup>. The early conceptions of delinquency as a "disease" to be treated in delinquency clinics by mainly medical and psychiatric means are giving way to a wider programme of prevention and cure based upon the whole environment in which children develop, and involving not merely the psychologist, the doctor and the social worker, but teachers, parents and other members of the community. Moreover it is coming to be recognized that apart from comparatively rare cases involving psychosis or severe pathology, the cure of delinquency is a matter of remedial education and environmental modification rather than of psycho-therapy conceived of as individual treatment in a psychiatric clinic.

The curative use of the school is strikingly illustrated in the conceptions which underly the approved schools of the United Kingdom and the

---

20. Carr, L. J. Delinquency Control, New York, Harper, 1941.  
City of Liverpool: Report of the Juvenile Delinquency Committee,  
Liverpool, Tucking, 1952. Kvarceus, W. C.: Juvenile Delinquency  
and the School, Yonkers-on-Hudson, World Book Co., 1945.

similar institutions elsewhere<sup>21</sup>. It would be inappropriate here to enter into details of these organizations, since they are doubtless fully described in other working papers. It is sufficient to insist that the main aspect of cure is that of continuous education in its widest sense and the rehabilitation of the whole personality through a school environment which utilizes the whole of a child's life for the reshaping of his personality. In the United Kingdom, classifying centres, such as those at Aycliffe and Bristol, have been set up, by means of which the delinquent child may, after a period of close psychological study, be placed in the school environment most suited to him. Similar systems of observation centres have been launched, in France and elsewhere, with a similar emphasis upon the choice of the appropriate centre of re-education where skilled educators can use educational means to bring about a cure.

The task of making the ordinary school, primary or secondary, something more than a place of merely formal instruction, is less spectacular and more difficult. The educational traditions of some countries are against putting the accent upon a full training of the personality; in others, large classes, or the inadequacy of the basic training of teachers, militate against educational reform. Nevertheless a silent revolution is taking place in the ordinary schools in favour of system which takes account of the range of individual differences between children, which insists that the school accept an increasing responsibility for those aspects of growth which homes can no longer adequately foster and which emphasises the importance of the child's social and emotional development. The work which has been done by the Ecole Nouvelle in France, by Washburne in the United States, by Ferrière and others in Switzerland, by Norvig in her experimental school in Copenhagen, to name only a few, amply demonstrates the value of a school atmosphere within which pupils are assessed and studied as individuals. In such circumstances, many children who might otherwise develop serious social, educational or personal problems are enabled to surmount their difficulties without special aid.

---

21. See Home Office (United Kingdom): Making Citizens, London HMSO, 1945. Two interesting experiments of a more advanced type are described in The Caldecott Community. Wareham, The Caldecott Community, 1944; and Wills, W.D.: The Hawkspur Experiment, London, Allen and Unwin, 1941.

The school, however, cannot confine its influence solely to the children it teaches, nor can it operate, even in adolescence, without the support and co-operation of the home. Hence progressive educators, from Froebel onwards, have insisted upon the teachers' need to know about the child's home circumstances and, by working with the parents, to ensure that the purposes of the school and the home complement each other. At least since the decade following the first world war, the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries have developed an increasingly closer, though informal, system of parent-teacher co-operation<sup>22</sup>. Skillfully used, this enables parents to understand what the school is trying to achieve and gives the teacher greater knowledge and insight into his pupils. More recently, by means of organized parent-teacher associations, the teachers themselves, the staff of Child Guidance Centres, University departments of Child Study and others, have attempted to disseminate information upon the sound upbringing of children. The movement for the education of parents is still in its early and somewhat experimental stage and many mistakes have been made, particularly by the hasty dissemination of psycho-analytic concepts, but experience is beginning to indicate some of the effective techniques and some of the value of the work done.

Here and there, particularly in Canada and the United States, more deliberate attempts have been made to foster mental health among school-children. Intensive intraining of teachers in the science of child psychology, carried out by courses and discussion groups over a five year period, was tried in the school system of Detroit with apparently excellent results<sup>23</sup>. Another method is that of 'Human relations classes' as they are sometimes called, the aim of which is to get children of primary and secondary school age to discuss their own emotional problems and gain some increased insight into themselves and others. The gifted teacher, particularly the teacher of humanities,

---

22. See the study by The World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, Parent-Teacher Co-operation, Washington, W.O.C. T.P. 1953.

23. Rankin, P.T. and Dorsey, J.M.: The Detroit School Mental Health Project, New York, National Association for Mental Health, 1953.

has often regarded the emotional education of his pupils through literature and drama as an appropriate part of his task. The aim of those, like Ojemann, Bullis<sup>24</sup> and others who have devised special textbooks and schemes of work for the purpose, is to make such teaching and discussion more general and perhaps more effective. The Forest Hill Village Project conducted by psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists and teachers of the University of Toronto, Canada, was a more ambitious and less structured attempt which brought together all aspects - the intraining of teachers, work with children, and the education of parents. Experienced teachers, specially trained in the University Department of Psychology and the Institute of Child Study, conducted for one hour each week small undirected discussion-groups at which children were able to talk quite freely about any problem they chose. A psychological service was available for those children who showed marked personality and behaviour problems; and an intensive and sustained effort of parent education was undertaken. The results of the experiment were a marked all-round improvement in the adjustment of children taking part and a striking increase in educational attainment.

6. The Extension of Education:

In the developed countries, the period of compulsory education ends in mid-adolescence. At the age of fourteen or fifteen, however, the emotional crises of adolescence may be at their height, and certainly for most adolescents, habits of control are barely established. Statistics of delinquency from most European countries show a peak between the ages of 14 and 17, at least for boys, and it is not unlikely that this phenomenon reflects partly the impact of abrupt school-leaving, and partly the generally increased psychological instability of the early 'teens.

A recognition of this has led, in most European countries and in North America, to attempts by various means to smooth the transition between school

---

24. See Promotion of Mental Health in the Primary and Secondary Schools, Kansas, G.A.P. Report No. 18, 1951.



and work, and in particular to extend some form of full or part-time education well into the second half of adolescence<sup>25</sup>. For economic reasons, few European countries have succeeded in making even part-time education or apprenticeship compulsory for all young people; but where day continuation schools, county colleges, apprenticeship training centres and the like do exist, and still more where they have adequate services of social welfare and vocational guidance associated with them, they make a marked contribution to the adjustment of young people to adult life and work. Unfortunately in most countries it is the less intelligent group of adolescents who do not or cannot take advantage of continued education; and, as has been pointed out above, it may well be that it is just this group which is the most vulnerable from the view point of delinquency.

7. The School in Relation to other Services:

It is apparent that the school is capable of doing much, both to ensure a healthy personal and social development for its pupils and to detect those who need help of a kind more specialised than the school can normally provide. But it cannot work alone, or without services of various kinds operating within the school, attached to the educational system or in close functional relationship with it.

Certain countries, for example Sweden, have developed a system of school social workers on whom devolve the contacts with parents and with outside agencies which may be concerned with the child. Others, notably Austria and France, have specialists in educational guidance or even fully trained psychologists attached to the staff of at least some of the larger schools. In certain others, for example Belgium, fully-staffed centres for the educational, psychological and vocational guidance of the pupils have been developed in a group of schools or in the large lycées. In the United Kingdom, Switzerland and in the larger towns of Norway and Denmark, services of psychological and educational guidance have been set up under the direction

---

25. See for example Ministry of Education (United Kingdom): School for Life, London, HMSO, 1947.

of educational psychologists serving a number of schools. In addition, in most countries of Europe and of course in North America, there will be found the conventional child psychiatric and child guidance clinics under medical direction, often outside the educational system.

Experience is beginning to shew that the School Psychological Service either integrated into a large school or group of schools, or serving a local educational system, is one of the more effective ways of making contemporary knowledge of child development and the results of research in education and in the educational sciences available to teachers, and of applying remedial measures in the case of problem-children. To be fully effective, such a service depends upon the skills of a psychologist who has himself been a teacher and thoroughly understands the teacher's problems. It will be concerned with the general improvement of education as well as with the difficulties of children who deviate within the normal range, with the general educational guidance of children between the various forms of education available, and with the psychological supervision of special schools and classes. It must also incorporate or be in close contact with the child psychiatric clinic needed for that small proportion of cases where psychiatric diagnosis, psychotherapy or other forms of more strictly medical treatment are required <sup>26</sup>.

It is through the school social worker, school psychologist or School Psychological Service that contact should be made or maintained with other community services which bear upon the prevention and treatment of delinquency - the juvenile court, the probation service, the mental health services for adults, family care agencies and the like. Particularly in

---

26. For an analysis of the existing structure of the various types of psychological services for children see Wall, W.D.: "Psychological Services for Children in Europe", Yearbook of Education, 1955. London, Evans Bros., 1955. A more thorough study of the problem including the recommendations of an international expert group will be found in Psychological Services for Schools and other Educational Institutions, Hamburg, Unesco Institute for Education, 1955. A discussion of the effectiveness of different types of service and of treatment will be found in the "Symposium on Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Child Guidance Service", British Journal of Educational Psychology, Vols. XXI - XXIV.

those cases where a personality or behaviour disturbance in an adolescent suggests that subsequent adjustment to work will be a matter of difficulty, the psychological service should work closely with the services for vocational guidance. It is desirable too that both an administrative and a functional link should exist between the psychological services and those concerned with the care of homeless children or with the education and rehabilitation of delinquents.

In addition to services which demonstrably have some connection with the prevention or treatment of delinquency, there are others whose action has a wide bearing upon the overall problem. Particularly in adolescence, for example, the youth is likely to belong to groups outside his family and his school. It is not suggested that the educational and the youth services should be intimately associated. Nevertheless, contacts should be such that where necessary both can work together for the good of a particular child and that young people are given the impression that the adult community is united. Similarly the police have an important preventive rôle, at least part of which can most effectively be discharged in relation to the school<sup>27</sup>. The policeman is almost the only responsible member of society who is always present in streets and other public places. Quite apart from his repressive functions, he has considerable opportunity to observe the behaviour of children and adolescents when they are out of school and can draw the attention of the teacher to many problems and difficulties in their early stages. Such work depends for its usefulness upon effective collaboration between the police and the school and upon the training of the policemen. Where it has been well developed - for example in Holland, in parts of Canada, in Liverpool, U.K. and elsewhere - it has proved strikingly successful.

---

27. See L'Action de la Police dans la Protection de la Santé Mentale des Enfants, Fédération Internationale des Fonctionnaires Supérieurs de Police, Paris; 1954. U.S. Dept. of Health Education and Welfare: Police Service for Juveniles, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office. Brennan, J. J.: 'La Police et l'enfance délinquante'. Revue Internationale de l'Enfant Vol. 18, No. 2., 1954.

8. Conclusion:

The modern approach to the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency is an educational one based upon the conception that most delinquencies are caused by a maladjustment between the child and his environment. In treatment more and more stress is being placed on the use of probation<sup>28</sup> during which period an effort can be made to bring about a better adjustment between the child, his family and the total milieu in which he lives. In this process, for children of school age or who are attending centres of apprenticeship and technical training, the educational system is closely involved. Where adequate psychological services exist within the educational system the tasks of investigation of causes, supervision of cases, modification of the total environment and the re-education of the delinquent are made more simple and effective. If in addition, the schools or apprentice centres have educators with some training and insight into problems of maladjustment, the chances of success will be immeasurably increased.

For the child who cannot be put on probation, either because his disturbance is too serious or the circumstances of his home environment such that change is unlikely, the boarding approved school or the hostel seems to be the most likely solution. Here again the emphasis is upon the re-education of the whole personality under the guidance of educators specially trained<sup>29</sup> for their task and aided by an adequate psychological service.

These, however, are only special aspects of the much broader problems of prevention. The school system is one among the agencies which should be involved in this, but as has been suggested above, it is one with much to offer

---

28. See Australian Council for Educational Research: Probation for Juvenile Delinquents, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1941. Aubrun, H.: "Où en est le problème de l'enfance délinquente ?" Cahiers du Musée Social, Nos. 5 - 6, 1951.

29. See Dublineau, J.: La formation des éducateurs pour les internats de mineurs délinquants, Paris, 1939. Joubrel, C.: L'Enfance coupable, Saint-Brieuc, Imprimerie Moderne, 1942.

and with possibilities not fully exploited as yet. These may perhaps be summarised as follows:

- (a) The school is alone among social institutions in being in contact with all children from childhood to adolescence.
- (b) By the psychological influence which it exerts, it can provide an environment and a series of relationships which will constructively foster the healthy social, emotional and intellectual growth of all children and, where necessary, compensate for deviations and difficulties arising in the child's out-of-school life.
- (c) Through contacts with parents, formal and informal, the school can disseminate information on the upbringing of children and good family relationships.
- (d) The teacher is, of all people in the community, best placed to detect anomalies of personal development in his pupils at an early stage.

In order that the school may fulfil its task in the prevention, detection and ultimately the treatment of delinquencies and other forms of maladjustment in children, certain measures are necessary:

- (i) a more adequate basis of child study and educational psychology in the training of teachers, coupled with facilities for in-service training and for post-experience training of those who wish to specialise further;
- (ii) an adequate school psychological service working closely with the ordinary schools, special schools, schools and hostels for maladjusted and delinquent children, and in co-operation with child psychiatric clinics, school medical and social services, vocational guidance and placement services, and the like.

This archiving project is a collaborative effort between United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and American Society of Criminology, Division of International Criminology. Any comments or questions should be directed to Cindy J. Smith at [CJSmithphd@comcast.net](mailto:CJSmithphd@comcast.net) or Emil Wandzilak at [emil.wandzilak@unodc.org](mailto:emil.wandzilak@unodc.org).