

JUVENILE CRIME AND TREATMENT OF SERIOUS AND VIOLENT JUVENILE DELINQUENTS IN THAILAND

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I. OVERVIEW OF JUVENILE DELIQUENCY

Owing to its history and position, Thailand is a leading partner in Southeast Asian trade and politics. As a result of socio-economic development, political change and globalization in recent last decades, Thai society has been transformed from a completely agricultural country to a semi-industrial country. While globalization has provided some groups in society with new opportunities for social mobility, it has also created new sources of inequality and insecurity for others. Moreover, urbanization and industrialization have created complicated communities that have a variety of competing cultures, thus breaking down previous tradition and more cohesive patterns of values. Subsequently, crime rates, including deviance and crime among children and youth, have increased.

According to the Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection's statistics, the number of juvenile delinquents (7 to 18 years old) who were arrested by the police and sent to the Juvenile Observation and Protection Centers across the country increased from 29,915 in 2003 to 51,128 in 2007, an increase of 70.91 % in the space of 10 years. (Table 1)

Table 1: The Number of Juveniles in 2003-2007, Classified by Gender

Year	Number of Children and Youths		
	Male	Female	Total
2003	27,174	2,741	29,915
2004	30,368	2,940	33,308
2005	32,756	3,324	36,080
2006	44,161	4,057	48,218
2007	46,593	4,535	51,128

Source: The Juvenile Observation and Protection Department, Ministry of Justice, 2008.

However, the number of juvenile offenders in 2007 (51,128) is only 0.45% of the total national juvenile population of 11,233,070 in 2008 (Department of Provincial Administration, 2008).

In Table 2, the number of juveniles, whose age range is from 7 to 18 years, has increased substantially. The age distribution of juveniles is shown in Table 2. More specific demographics of juveniles in 2003 to 2007 are shown in Tables 2 to 5.

Table 2: The Number of Juveniles in 2003- 2007, Classified by Age

Age	Number of Children and Youths/Year				
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
7-14 years old	4,313	5,177	5,872	8,078	8,888
15-18 years old	25,602	28,131	30,208	40,140	42,240
Total	29,915	33,308	36,080	48,218	51,128

Source: The Juvenile Observation and Protection Department, Ministry of Justice, 2008.

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Table 3: The Number of Juveniles in 2003-2007, Classified by Level of Education

Education	Number of Children and Youths/Year				
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Non-education-Below G1	498	586	1,024	2,333	2,235
Grades 1-6	10,305	11,001	11,951	14,522	15,350
Grades 7-9	12,433	13,836	15,050	19,197	20,434
Grades 10-12 or higher	5,420	5,885	6,381	9,521	10,019
Others	1,259	2,000	1,674	2,645	3,090
Total	29,915	33,308	36,080	48,218	51,128

Source: The Juvenile Observation and Protection Department, Ministry of Justice, 2008.

Table 4: The Number of Juveniles in 2003-2007, Classified by Residence

Residence	Number of Children and Youths/Year				
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Together with Parents	14,495	16,196	17,981	24,175	24,950
Separated family	15,420	17,112	18,099	24,043	26,178
Homeless	495	481	308	142	128
Single parent	8,374	9,296	9,688	12,369	13,192
Stays with others	5,810	6,476	7,233	10,724	11,995
Stays alone	741	859	870	808	836
Total	29,915	33,308	36,080	48,218	51,128

Source: The Juvenile Observation and Protection Department, Ministry of Justice, 2008.

Table 5: The Number of Juveniles in 2003-2007, Classified by Causes of Offence

Causes of Offence	Number of Children and Youths/Year				
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Mental disorder	-	-	-	135	79
Quarrel and fight	-	-	-	2,515	2,432
Economic status	2,400	2,381	2,510	3,375	3,505
Induced / forced	-	-	-	1,849	1,870
Family condition	3,220	2,760	3,129	3,867	3,060
Peer group	15,310	17,213	19,035	19,374	20,215
Unawareness	4,484	4,735	4,853	5,722	5,539
Impetuosity	-	-	-	5,566	7,839
Indictment on charge	4,501	6,219	6,553	5,815	6,589
Total	29,915	33,308	36,080	48,218	51,128

Source: The Juvenile Observation and Protection Department, Ministry of Justice, 2008.

The tables show that most of the juvenile offenders are 15 to 18 years old. Most of them have an education that ended between the seventh and ninth grades. A large number of them are from separated families and lived with their single parents. Most juveniles reported that they committed the offence because of peer group influence. The interrelationship of these factors is, on the surface, self-evident. Economic pressures create problematic situations in the family and these situations impact family relations, which can result in pushing juveniles under the influence of their peer groups. Peer groups then create their own subculture, which can have positive or negative influences on the juveniles. Unfortunately, most of the peer groups' influence is assumed negative. In addition, the juveniles might be tempted by the changing materialistic values concomitant with economic development. While this is speculation based on many Western criminological assertions, from a practical perspective policies are approached on these assumptions. However, the approach of the juvenile system in Thailand assumes that no single factor alone can be identified as responsible for the causation of juvenile delinquency and that the above factors are conditions to be considered.

There are research findings which affirm that most juveniles, who were found guilty by the Central Juvenile and Family Court and were sentenced to attend a programme at a training school for boys, finished elementary school, were involved with drugs, and came from broken families (Prinya, 2001). Another other study found that the juvenile’s marital status, level of education, job, deviant behaviour, neighbourhood, family income, and debt and criminal record of family members do not have any relationship with the crime they committed but associated friends and associated victims do have a relationship with the incident (Puttidej, 1999).

Table 6: The Number of Juveniles in 2003-2007, Classified by the Offences

Offences	Number of Children and Youths/Year				
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Against property	8,886	10,496	10,733	14,314	14,764
Homicide & bodily injury	4,843	5,969	6,112	8,284	7,784
Sexual offence	1,735	2,416	2,680	3,652	2,154
Public peace & security	1,016	1,149	1,271	1,731	3,247
Drug abuse	5,897	5,310	6,542	8,803	10,279
Weapons & explosives	1,957	2,031	2,404	3,414	3,650
Other offences	5,581	5,937	6,338	8,020	9,250
Total	29,915	33,308	36,080	48,218	51,128

Source: The Juvenile Observation and Protection Department, Ministry of Justice, 2008.

From Table 6, the largest group of juvenile delinquents was committed to the centres for property offences. Significantly, the number of juveniles who committed homicide and bodily injury offences increased from 4,843 cases in 2003 to 8,284 cases in 2006 and dropped slightly in 2007. In the last two decades, heroin was the major drug problem among both adults and juveniles, but since 1996 methamphetamines have played a significant role, followed by various kinds of volatile substances such as glue, thinner, lacquer, etc.

The findings of Chulalongkorn University’s Faculty of Education research interviews with drug users aged between 17 and 23 stated that the most common characteristics of drug abusers were that they come from broken families and suffer from low self-esteem. Youths took methamphetamines so they could feel more relaxed and relieved of their troubles. They sought instant gratification, to escape from hard work and academic difficulties. Most abusers resort to stealing and end up trading in methamphetamines due to the easy profits to be made (Rojanaphruk, 2001). Similarly, research organized by the Foundation for Child Development found that some school students used drugs and had to find money to afford the drugs they used. Moreover, children were also introduced to the business by adults who saw a loophole in the law because of the light punishment for children who commit such offences (Tulyawasinpong, 2002).

Besides drug abuse offences, offences against property as well as bodily injury and homicide cases are serious problems, especially in the big cities. The Metropolitan Police Bureau 9 declared that in the first five months of 2003 five hundred children were arrested for crimes ranging from robbery, pick-pocketing and bag-snatching to extortion. The number of youth gang offenders held in police stations had more than doubled during the two-month school holidays. Most of them were aged from 9 to 15. They robbed victims and used the money to buy drugs, play video games and go out. Youths were committing more serious crimes and at younger ages. The victims are also young and sometimes young offenders get to know their victims through the Internet (Hanpanyapichit and Somsin, 2003).

The other concern for teenagers is the battleground between rival student gangs. The main culprits in the street fights are vocational students, who are typically aged 16 to 18. Formerly, students used their school equipment, such as T-squares, iron rulers, cutters, and their belts as weapons, and the fighting rarely caused death. Nowadays teen gangs, including students, use guns to shoot students from the rival institutes without knowing those students personally. In addition, the events always occur in public places such as on buses, in shopping malls, etc. Thus, students who joined gangs, normal students, and bystanders are easily injured or killed in violence between teenagers. Students attest to the level of violence that has been used in nearly 2,000 attacks recorded by police in the capital during 10 months in 2004. Recently, fighting that culminated in running battles involving nearly 100 students left nine injured, and the education ministry ordered two

schools shut for a chance to bring their students into line or face permanent closure. In addition, a total of 12 schools have been placed on a government watch list because of violent behaviour (Chaisatien, 2003).

Many reasons and theories are suggested to explain juvenile offences. Some officials in charge of juvenile cases say that fighting gives some students their only role in life. The students who lead the battle want society to accept them, so they do something to draw people's attention and fighting is the best way to get attention rather than winning scholarships, which benefits only a few people. The police claim that problems have been compounded by the failure of schools to try to solve the problem by denying their involvement and often stating that troublemakers had already been expelled or left. Moreover, psychologists indicated that contributing factors to teen deviance also include the media, peer pressure, and biological disorders (Chaisatien, 2003). Additionally, young people are becoming increasingly violent and blaming society and their own families for their behaviour. In a student forum, students stated that they resorted to violence as a means to solve every problem. They brawl because they cannot win against one another and they are all feeling the pressure of strict school rules and the decrees of their parents and society, so they are releasing their stress through violence. Some accepted that they absorbed violent behaviour from violent computer games. However, most students agreed that resorting to corporal punishment will not solve the problem (Na Mahachai, 2003). Nevertheless, from a larger societal perspective, juvenile delinquents are a reflection of the failure of the family unit, curriculum and school administration, and poor criminal justice procedure and rehabilitation. The Thai Farmer Research Center's survey on children in the capital found that children in Bangkok were living under pressure due to family, love, and financial problems. Sixty percent of the 920 children interviewed said they had family problems, while 69% said their schools and colleges were not drug-free. In addition, most juvenile delinquents came from broken families, families which failed to inculcate morals in their children, or families where parents often used violence to solve problems and failed to act as role models (Bunnag, 2001).

Looking at the family, the researchers suggest that parents of delinquents are often struggling to reach higher living standards and ignore their relationships with their children. The education system is also given some responsibility for the problems, and critics argue that the system has produced virtually nothing except selfish individuals who strive solely for upper social status or wealth. Poor school management also has been criticized for failing to protect students from social problems (Chaisatien, 2003). The criminal justice system is also considered culpable for its failure in crime prevention, correction, and rehabilitation. About 15% of juveniles released from detention are later rearrested. This reflects the practice of merely warehousing them at detention centres where many learn to commit more serious crimes, and for responding to the problems with only punishment (Roujanavong, 2001). Thus, criminal justice officials and legal experts are searching for alternative and innovative approaches to delinquent corrections and juvenile justice reformation.

II. THE THAI JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

A. Juvenile Justice System

The Thai juvenile justice system has been based on the assumption that young offenders are not considered to be criminally responsible for their actions and that they should not be treated the same as adults. Children aged ten and younger are not punishable under Thai law, and the criminal code does not allow for any kind of punishment to be levied upon any person below 14 years of age. It had been the practice to send juvenile delinquents to a vocational school under the Primary Education Act of 1935 or to a reformation school under the Act on Instruction and Training of Certain Classes of Children of 1936 for treatment after trial rather than having them imprisoned. However, under these provisions, treatment of the juvenile was available only after the court's order and there were no special provisions made for juveniles before adjudication. Juveniles were, therefore, detained in the same detention facilities as adult criminals and they were required to undergo the same court procedures as adults. In 1952 the Central Juvenile Court and the Observation and Protection Center were established under the Juvenile Courts and the Juvenile Court Procedure Act of 1951, which was later revised as the Juvenile and Family Courts Act of 1991. The Act embraces the principle of the "best interests of the child" with respect to the protection of children and their families. A child who has committed a violation of the law shall not be regarded as an offender, considering that he or she is under-aged and victimized by a corrupted environment and that his or her wrongdoing is not committed out of malice. The child can repent and express willingness to undergo correction and rehabilitation under adult care and supervision.

B. Guidelines for the Treatment of Juvenile Offenders

Guidelines relating to the treatment of juvenile offenders are stipulated in Articles 32 to 57 of the Juvenile and Family Court and its Procedural Code Act of 1991, which distinguish juvenile justice from the general administration of justice in seven major ways:

1. The consideration of a juvenile case is undertaken in confidentiality and in a room separate from adult cases.
2. Some flexibility may be exercised when considering cases involving juveniles.
3. An investigation will be conducted into a juvenile's social background and his or her behaviour. The findings of the investigation will be submitted to the juvenile and family court when it considers the case.
4. Juveniles under investigation or awaiting trial are kept in a detention facility that is separate from that of adults.
5. Juvenile offenders will receive both physical and psychological examinations.
6. The Juvenile and Family Court may change the final verdict if it deems it appropriate to do so.

The Juvenile and Family Court can consider cases involving family members (Economic and Social Council, 1996).

III. JUVENILE CRIMINAL CASE PROCEDURE

A. Arrest

Arrests of the accused child are prohibited unless he or she committed a flagrant offence, an injured person identified him or her and insisted on the arrest, or a warrant for arrest is made under the criminal procedure code. After apprehension, the police officer is required by law to notify the director of the Observation and Protection Center (OPC) and the juvenile's parents, guardians or a person with whom he or she is residing.

B. Inquiry and Investigation

During this process, it is required that a counsellor or legal adviser is provided for the juvenile. In addition, the presence of a public prosecutor, psychologist or social worker and the juvenile's parents is compulsory during interrogation and is an essential element to protect the juvenile. The inquiry must be completed within 24 hours from the time of arrival at the office of the inquiry official. After the inquiry, the juvenile shall be sent to the OPC and the file of inquiry will be sent to the public prosecutor.

C. Detention and Provisional Release on Bail

In general, the juvenile may be detained during the investigation at the remand home of the OPC. The director of the OPC may keep the juvenile in custody. A request for provisional release on bail of the arrestee shall be made to the custodial authorities (Ukris, 2002).

D. Criminal Prosecution and Deferred Prosecution

The government is represented in both criminal and civil matters by public prosecutors stationed throughout the country. The public prosecutor has to enter a charge in the JFC within 13 days from the time the juvenile was arrested. In a case where the alleged juvenile offender escapes from custody while the case is being conducted, the time during the escape shall not be included in the period of charging. In case of necessity, when the charge against the offender cannot be filed within the mentioned period, the police officer or public prosecutor shall apply by motion to the court for a deferment (extension). In case of an offence where the minimum imprisonment is five years or more, the court may grant a longer deferment.

E. Trial

The court trial is the fact-finding process in which the truth of the guilt stated in any claim is ascertained and used as a tool in deciding the case. The JFC has the authority to transfer an accused juvenile to the Criminal Court for trial and adjudication after the JFC considers the juvenile's physique, intelligence, health, and habits. The JFC has the discretion to determine that the accused juvenile has the same status as a person who is 18 years old or older. Correspondingly, the Criminal Court may transfer any accused person who, when the offence was committed, was not over 20 years old to the JFC when the Criminal Court exercises its discretion that that person should be treated as a juvenile. The JFC procedure will be informal

and simplified in the interest of the juvenile. The trial is held in private. The persons present at the trial are the accused, parents, guardians, attorney, witnesses, prosecutor, members of the court and other persons permitted by the court. Photographs and reports on facts presented at the proceedings are not to be released to the public (Central Juvenile and Family Court, 1996).

F. Adjudication

The judgment process is based on two stages: the adjudication of guilt and sentencing. An adjudication of guilt means that the court gives a judgment on whether or not an accused is guilty in accordance with the charge. If the judge considers all the evidence and is uncertain that the accused has committed the offence, regardless of whether the accused pleads guilty or not, he or she will dismiss the charge. On the contrary, if the judge is certain that the accused committed the offence he or she will convict the accused and then decide a punishment. However, after the trial is completed, prior to a judgment or an order being given, the court will review the social investigation report submitted by the OPC. In addition, Section 75 of the Thai Penal Code provides that whenever any person over 14 years but not yet over 17 years of age commits any act provided by the law to be an offence, the court shall take into account the sense of responsibility and all other things concerning him or her in order to come to a decision as to whether or not it is appropriate to pass judgment by inflicting punishment on him or her. If the court does not deem it appropriate to pass judgment inflicting punishment, it shall adopt other correctional measures short of punishment. If the court deems it appropriate to pass judgment inflicting punishment, it shall reduce the scale of punishment provided for such offence by one half. Section 76 of the same Code also states that whenever any person over 17 years but not yet over 20 years of age commits any act provided by the law to be an offence, the court may, if it thinks fit, reduce the scale of the punishment provided for such offence by one third or one half.

IV. TREATMENT OF SERIOUS AND VIOLENT JUVENILE OFFENDERS

Serious juvenile offenders are those who commit the following felony offences: larceny or theft, burglary or breaking and entering, extortion, arson, and drug trafficking or other controlled dangerous substance violations. Violent juvenile offenders are those who commit the following felony offences: non-negligent manslaughter, homicide, rape or other felony sex offences, mayhem, kidnapping, robbery, or aggravated assault.

There are three principal organizations dealing with juvenile delinquents, Juvenile and Family Courts, the Juvenile Observation and Protection Department, and the Department of Probation.

A. The Juvenile and Family Courts (JFC)

The JFC has jurisdiction in any criminal case involving children aged 10 to 14 years old and youths aged 15 to 18 years of age, and also handles civil actions involving any minor (under 20 years old) under the Civil and Commercial Code. A trial in the JFC is adjudicated by two professional judges and two lay judges, where at least one of the four must be a female. An appeal against a judgment or order of the JFC is heard by the Courts of Appeal. The JFC consists of the Central Juvenile and Family Court, 10 Provincial Juvenile and Family Courts, and 31 Divisions of Juvenile and Family Court in the Provincial Courts. Thailand is divided into 76 provinces; therefore, in those provinces where the JFC or the juvenile and family section do not exist, accused juveniles must be dealt with in adult courts. Definitely, the JFCs are authorized to transfer serious and violent juvenile delinquents to criminal court or place them in adult prisons but this only happens in a few cases. The reason is that the courts have to hear the Juvenile Protection Committee's resolution before they exercise this authority. Additionally, all or most authorities, including the court, consider that treating juvenile delinquents in the vein of adult criminals is actually more likely to lead to recidivism and retention in the juvenile justice system. In addition, their recidivism rates as well as the severity of their offences appear to increase after they are released from prison. Therefore, the great majority, or all, of the juveniles who are found guilty as charged are placed under the responsibility of the Juvenile Observation and Protection Department, the institutional rehabilitation organization, and the Department of Probation, the non-institutional rehabilitation organization.

B. The Juvenile Observation and Protection Department (JOPD)

The JOPD is the institution that provides care, protection, and training to juvenile offenders in the institutions. The mandate and responsibilities of the Department include keeping juveniles under investigation and those awaiting trial under detention, preparing the social investigation report, and

supervising remand homes and training schools. The JOPD consists of the Administration Divisions, the Bangkok Observation and Protection Center, the Provincial Observation and Protection Centers, and Juvenile Training Centers. At present, there are 76 Observation and Protection Centers nationwide.

Normally, both serious, violent offenders and non serious, non-violent offenders have to participate in the same basic treatment programmes. However, serious, violent juvenile offenders will be classified by a classification form and will be placed on some proper programmes. The rehabilitation programmes in OPCs are run by teachers, social workers, psychiatrists and doctors. Programmes include non-formal education, instruction in moral values, art, music, and sport activities. Institutional treatments are divided into three types: the training school, the vocational training school, and the therapeutic community centre.

1. Training Schools

There are 17 training schools throughout the country. Since juveniles are admitted to the training schools for “reformatory treatment” and are still at the stage of character formation, educational programmes are conducted. The OPCs and school programmes aim to develop adjustment skills and life skills of inmates through regular guidance, vocational training, education, moral and religious instruction, and recreational activities. While most of these activities help instill specific disciplines, general discipline is encouraged by granting or revoking rewards and privileges such as home visits, pre-release, participation in special activities, etc. The conduct of a juvenile staying in the institutes is evaluated by means of ascertaining his or her performance at training school in regard to study, vocational training, work, personal appearance, language, behaviour, respect for authority, care of property, and co-operation. The director of the OPCs is empowered to send an incorrigible juvenile who is a source of danger to other juveniles for detention in a prison.

2. Vocational Training Schools

The vocational training school under the JOPD has a capacity of 200 persons. The salient features emphasize positive working attitudes as well as helping juveniles to acquire work-related skills, and arrangements for juveniles to undergo a test of the Trade Standard Testing Committee, of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. The school conducts treatment and operates eight vocational training courses. However, the enrollment schedule and number of juveniles are fixed because of the limited capacity of the institute.

3. The Drug Addict Treatment Center

The Drug Addict Treatment Center, the Ayudthaya Therapeutic Community Center, provides compulsory treatment and rehabilitation programmes for juvenile addicts. The programmes are intended to restore physical health, uproot psychological and emotional dependence on drugs, and apply the therapeutic community models and techniques (Ukris, 2002).

C. The Department of Probation (DOP)

Prior to 2003, the Department of Probation’s main duties were to conduct pre-sentence investigation, supervision, and rehabilitation only for adult probationers ordered by adult courts. Six years ago, the department was reorganized in accordance with the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of 2001, which has authorized the Department of Probation to be the principal organization of community-based corrections for all types of offenders in communities, including juvenile probationers and juvenile parolees shifted from the JOPD, and adult parolees shifted from the Correctional Department. Moreover, the other new missions of the department include the co-ordination of reintegration efforts of medical and social agencies and Drug Rehabilitation Centers in accordance with the Drug Rehabilitation Act of 2002, and also to provide aftercare services for offenders in communities.

The DOP consists of six technical and support units in the central administration of the department; 76 provincial probation offices nationwide; 14 leaders/or representatives of the provincial groups; and one Drug Rehabilitation Center.

The Drug Rehabilitation Center, the other initiative of the Department of Probation starting in 2003, has been organizing compulsory treatment for drug users under the Drug Rehabilitation Act of 2002. The major concept is to provide arrestees who used or processed small quantities of any illicit drug and did not commit other offences to undergo treatment like a patient instead of prosecuting them as a criminal. If the

arrestees are willing to receive treatment and relinquish their drug habits, the prosecutors will drop the charges and the arrestees will have no criminal record and will be assisted in continuing their daily lives in the community as ordinary people. A benefit of the compulsory treatment system is that it can provide an opportunity to divert offenders from the general criminal justice procedure, and especially to reduce the number of suspects in courts and thereby to reduce the number held in jails and juvenile detention centres. To ensure success, the Department of Probation, in its capacity as the co-ordinator of the programmes, has worked closely with many government and non-government agencies as well as communities all over the country. It is believed that by concentrating seriously on rehabilitation and prevention, the compulsory drug treatment system will be an effective strategy for curbing crime committed by drug abusers (Kittayarak, 2003; Kalyanasuta, 2002).

Probation for juveniles is commonly used for first offenders who commit a relatively minor offence. Therefore, serious, violent juveniles come to the probation office by parole assessment. Parole is a measure for juveniles who have been conditionally released from the training school by the decree of the JFC. The term of parole supervision is usually up to the remaining term of his or her sentence, with early discharge in cases of serving one quarter of the period of training with good behaviour. Screening of inmates for release on parole requires conditions such as good results in treatment and rehabilitation programmes, and a good home environment. Supervision of the parole process is the same as the process of supervision of probationers, starting with a court's prescription of supervision conditions for juveniles, such as forbidding them to: enter any place or locality which might corrupt them; leave their residences at night except in cases of necessity; associate with any person who is deemed undesirable by the court; and do any act which might corrupt them. The court may also order them to present themselves from time to time to the court or to the probation officer or social worker who was assigned by the director of the OPC, and order them to pursue an education or substantial occupation.

In practice, a probation officer is to provide supervision and personal guidance or individual counselling to juveniles through interviewing the juvenile and visiting his/her home regularly. Moreover, the probation officer also provides group counselling, family counselling, religious training, skill-oriented programmes, and multiple services, combinations of services or treatments that involve several different approaches, such as community service, life and occupational training, restorative justice processes, and compulsory treatment programmes for drug addicts. Therefore, the probation officer is to exercise professional skill and knowledge of local resources to meet the juvenile's needs and, where necessary, provide the family members with financial assistance, employment, etc.

In addition, the DOP has operated a volunteer scheme for probationers which aims at providing greater community involvement in the rehabilitation of offenders. Under this scheme, selected volunteers provide probationers with personal and moral support and help juveniles develop meaningful hobbies and habits, cultivate healthy pursuits, find jobs, and provide tuition for them. Besides, the community justice network was implemented within certain communities around the country in 2004 with the DOP's support and under the policy of the Ministry of Justice. These networks will assist in persuading drug users to receive voluntary treatment without the necessity of arresting them, and will also support the treatment and aftercare of drug addicts in the compulsory system. The networks will collaborate closely with the volunteer probation officers in the aftercare and the follow-up of drug users within the community. If they perform well, the networks' responsibilities will be extended to other functions such as the prevention of crime, community mediation, etc. (Kittayarak, 2003).

Regarding the success rate of the juvenile rehabilitation programmes of the DOP, 76 per cent of juveniles are fully discharged from probation with no violations of conditions or rearrests. Less than 7 per cent become recidivist offenders after release from probation supervision. For JOPD's services, there is a study indicating that juvenile delinquents who participated in group counselling showed a significantly greater increase in self-concept than the juvenile delinquents who did not. (Kanchana, 1992). Additionally, the results of a study found that juvenile delinquent recidivists had an average age of 17.1 years, graduated from the sixth grade and largely committed drug and narcotics offences. Environmental factors after release from the juvenile centres, such as associating with their peer groups, financial status and types of delinquency, were significantly related to recidivism. However, factors of family relationship, residential location and training in Central Observation and Protection Centers had no relation to recidivism (Ruangchai, 2000).

Both institutional and non-institutional rehabilitation organizations are faced with the same difficulties in providing more effective intervention or treatments for serious, violent juveniles. The major difficulties are legal measures which are not suitable for rehabilitation of juveniles in conflict with the law to reintegrate into society (Suphansa, 2004); lack of juvenile rehabilitation administration personnel such as counsellors, psychologists, criminologists, or sociologists (which are not in proportion to the number of juveniles in the criminal justice system); and lack of advanced skill for implementing special programmes focusing on matters such as interpersonal skills, social interactional skills, aggression replacement training, etc.

V. CONCLUSION

Crime rates seem to parallel the growth of industrialization, urbanization, and globalization, especially when the economy is unstable. Along with this growth, juvenile delinquency, especially serious, violent juvenile delinquency, increases. In addition, more serious crimes are being committed by ever-younger children. Therefore, effective treatments play an essential role in any strategy designed to diminish the rates of juvenile delinquency. Currently, the Thai criminal justice system, including juvenile justice, is in the process of reorganization and performance redesign. Additionally, many innovations are being created and adopted; many national laws and practices dealing with juveniles are being raised to international standards for the administration of juvenile justice and to break the cycle of youth crime. Nonetheless, reforming the criminal justice system alone will never solve crime and the juvenile delinquent problem because, in one way or another, crime is a symptom of social disorganization. As such, other social issues, especially the gap between urban and rural living standards and disparities in income distribution, must be addressed by the government.

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