

Moreover, the Committee heard from Susan McCrae Vander Voet, of the Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children, that such measures are unlikely to have an inhibiting or deterrent effect on violence in the family. (78:14) Measures to reduce criminal opportunities are defensive strategies against crimes that are typically perpetrated by strangers against property.

Patti Pearcey of the B.C. Coalition for Safer Communities emphasizes that, despite their limits, these are essential individual and community initiatives because "they encourage ordinary people to join in and share responsibility with the police for crime prevention and crime fighting."³⁰

The Committee believes that opportunity reduction programs are valuable because they offer protection to potential victims of property crimes perpetrated by the occasional offender. It also believes we must also develop and support long-term measures to eradicate the root causes of crime that motivate serious, persistent offenders.

B. Social Development

Crime prevention through social development involves positive interventions in the lives of the disadvantaged and neglected in order to bring about a reduction in deviant tendencies. In other words, reducing crime and creating safer communities involves addressing the social and economic conditions which breed crime. Waller and Weiler define crime prevention through social development in the following way:

[It]...refers to interventions targeted to certain Canadians who are not only socio-economically disadvantaged but are also living through experiences that make a career of persistent crime a probability. Their predisposition to crime starts with their early childhood upbringing and is enhanced by frustration in school, employment and the community.³¹

If childhood neglect and disadvantage are not altered or interrupted, there is a strong likelihood that delinquency and crime will develop in a sequence over time. Waller and Weiler describe this process:

A history of parental mishandling, family crime, school failure and economic deprivation makes delinquency in the next three years probable. Truancy, economic deprivation, and delinquent friends in the early teenage years combine to make delinquency from ages 17 to 20 more likely. Any unstable job record and anti-establishment attitudes, combined with delinquency by age 20, makes criminal behaviour from ages 21 to 24 more likely.³²

Witnesses from across the country told the Committee that if we are serious about reducing fear and enhancing public safety, we must identify youths at-risk of offending and provide them with opportunities and an environment to reduce their motivation to become offenders, particularly repeat offenders.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Irvin Waller and Dick Weiler, *Crime Prevention Through Social Development*, Canadian Council on Social Development, 1985, p. 3.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 22.