

Big brothers big sisters mentoring program research paper

[Law](#), [Justice](#)



Introduction

According to the information, which can be found at the official website of the program, Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBSS) is nation's premier volunteer-supported mentoring program for youth. (BBBS Official website, 2013).

Implementation of the program is based on the vision that all children achieve success in life. Adhering to such a vision, the program aims at providing children, who face challenges with strong professionally supported relationships, capable of changing their lives for better. Let us transfer to more specific questions, regarding activities of particular BBBS chapters, which will allow us getting more profound understanding of the way the whole program functions.

- For the analysis of the activities of particular BBBS chapter I have selected the one, which is located in New York City. For 108 years the BBBS of NYC have been creating a lasting impact on the youth they served and the entire NYC. The NYC local chapter is quite an active one, as it provides children and youth not only with traditional mentoring program, but runs variety specific programs, including community based The Brooklyn, Bronx and Queens Borough Mentoring Program, Juvenile Justice Mentoring Program, special programs for youth mothers and for kids, whose parents are incarcerated, as well as a range of education initiatives. The 2012 Annual Report " One Big. One little. Citywide impact", published by NYC local chapter, contains variety of personal stories of members of the target group, which show that the relationship, established between a teenager and adult can have a really wide-reaching impact on the lives of both the former and the latter. Despite impressiveness of the stories, mentioned in the Report, we can hardly draw a

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conclusion about effectiveness of the BBBS chapter's functioning in NYC without considering quantitative data. According to the information, presented in the Annual Report (2012), in terms of traditional mentoring program 96% of eligible Littles manage to graduate from high school; 98% of those, participating in the program for youth mothers, avoid a repeat pregnancy (whereas only 80% manage to do so in the national dimension); 98 % of participants of Juvenile Justice Mentoring Program avoid re-arrest and incarceration (whereas the relevant figure is only 47% for the whole New York State). To my mind, when taking into consideration both the significance of qualitative change, which occurred in lives of some participants of NYC local chapter's programs, relevant figures and the positive difference, which exists between the figures for NYC and other contexts, we can estimate the performance of the chapter as effective. The program can be classified both as diversion and prevention one. While performing diversion functions, it also prevents youth both from criminal and anti-social behaviour. Juvenile Justice Mentoring Program, which functions in terms of BBBC in NYC can be referred to as purely prevention programs, whereas vast majority of other programs have two-fold approach.

- As far as I have already mentioned in my answer to Question 1, NYC local chapter offers variety of programs for different target groups. For instance, traditional mentoring program targets representatives of low-income youth from single-parent households of the age between 7 and 18; Juvenile Justice Mentoring Program addresses young people, who are already involved in the court system; New American Mentoring Program is aimed at promoting integration of immigrant kids etc. Due to the fact that programs, which are

offered by BBBS target common vulnerable groups of kids, it is natural that implementation of their functions can intervene with the activities of other social services. To avoid such an intervention, joint comprehensive studies of the spheres of influence should be conducted, so that representatives of social services and BBBS supplement activities of each other instead of preventing one another from fruitful work. Conferences and round tables are to be conducted to involve all related bodies into broad discussion of youth problems and the ways to tackle them, applying mutual efforts, within the NYC context.

- The aims of BBBS and juvenile justice system are similar; however, juvenile system deals only with prevention, whereas BBBS also aims at diversion. Moreover, juvenile justice systems has different target, namely youngsters, who get involved in criminal activities, whereas BBBS targets this group of youth along with providing assistance and mentorship for young mothers, children, who face educational problems, immigrant kids etc. The goals of BBBS are also far broader as they relate to the whole future of the participating youth, whereas juvenile justice system aims at preventing youth from re-arrest and repeated incarceration with only a slight inclination to consider implications of its activities for other aspects of target's future life. In other words, prevention of re-arrest and repeated incarceration of youth is the central point of juvenile justice system activities, while for BBBS it is crucial to provide the target with practical possibility to make a change in his/her life, so that he/she can reach success in the future. To my mind, it is really good that BBBS is based on private imitative, because including it into juvenile justice system will necessarily lead to using more formal

approaches, narrowing the target and, therefore, decrease in program's efficiency.

- The program can be beneficial for kids of different age as the change of profound and systematic nature, caused by continuous interaction of the role model, can appear in the life of the kid of whatever age. When discussing program's benefits for particular type of kid, it is more important to consider his/her personality traits. First of all, the program can help kids, who have a good notion about their dream career or job and lack means and experience to make the first steps to making such a dream true. In this case good role model can be of great use for a child to help him/her define the objectives, which should be reached before the dream job becomes true job. Secondly, the program is good for children, who have inclinations towards establishing relationships not with their peers, but with elder people. Thirdly, in case the role model is quite a charismatic one, the mentorship can also help children, who lack understanding of their future career and life as a whole. The last, but not the least to mention is that considerable benefits may be offered for children, who lack necessary integration level or knowledge of the language.

- The most important trait of BBBS that makes it not only diversion, but prevention program is that it helps children find role models and create vision of their future professional and personal life and, therefore, does not allow them getting involved into any type of antisocial and criminal activities. Moreover, it empowers vulnerable groups' members, helping them to feel more confident and, therefore, less subjected to outer influences. The BBBS's only weakness I see lies in the fact that it is quite complicated to establish links with other social services, so that ideal coordination level is reached.

Conclusion

BBBS is one of not many social programs that work. According to the study of BBBS impact (2000), BBBS makes an invaluable contribution into implementing both prevention and diversion social tasks. Moreover, it targets lots of different groups of youth, elaborating on specific programs, meeting the needs of particular groups. Activities of the BBBS are widely estimated as both effective and efficient.

References

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