



Alternative justice: Exploring community justice solutions for juvenile offenders in Thailand

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Article Info

Article history:

Received 26 March 2024

Revised 11 October 2024

Accepted 21 October 2024

Available online 05 February 2026

Keywords:

child,

community justice,

criminal acts,

juvenile

Abstract

This paper examines the role and effectiveness of Community Justice Centers and Damrongdhama Centers in addressing juvenile delinquency within Thailand's justice system. Through qualitative research, including interviews with community justice professionals, it explores how restorative practices align with the Rehabilitation Theory of juvenile cases. The study emphasizes the importance of community justice in offering alternatives to formal legal processes, stressing early intervention, conflict resolution, and community integration to support the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. While highlighting the strengths of community justice initiatives in diverting juveniles from the traditional formal system and promoting law-abiding communities, it also addresses challenges such as resource constraints and limited public awareness. The paper discusses theoretical foundations such as rehabilitation theory, diversion, and community empowerment, offering insights into their role in mitigating juvenile delinquency. It calls for legal and policy reforms, including a dedicated framework for community justice, clear criteria for application, prioritization of community justice in eligible juvenile cases, and increased public awareness and trust. This research advocates for a comprehensive approach to juvenile justice that prioritizes equity, efficiency, and compassion. It emphasizes the need for a responsive justice system tailored to juvenile needs, promoting reforms that create a supportive community environment for the rehabilitation and reintegration of young offenders.

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Introduction

There are certain criminal cases that may not necessarily fall under criminal justice. These instances are called community-based justice or community justice, where parties can mutually agree to resolve disputes without resorting to formal court proceedings. Specifically, in cases involving child and juvenile criminal acts, a different approach is taken compared to the traditional justice process, which usually focuses on retribution, deterrence, and incapacitation of the wrongdoer. Instead, the emphasis is placed on rehabilitation and providing opportunities for juvenile offenders to reform and reintegrate into society.

The legal framework establishes criteria for applying alternative measures instead of criminal proceedings. These measures can be implemented at various stages of the legal process, including prior to the prosecution under Article 86 of the Juvenile and Family Court and Procedure Act B.E. 2553 (2010), during the adjudication of cases under Article 90, and prior to having a verdict under Article 132. Thus, applying legal statutes in the Juvenile and Family Court and Procedure Act B.E. 2553 (2010) becomes crucial through the employment of rehabilitation and recovery plans, with the most importance placed on the victim's consent. Furthermore, community involvement in developing such plans is essential, with community representatives participating to benefit the offenders by not being socially rejected and enabling them to reintegrate into society successfully. Additionally, community involvement fosters acceptance of wrongdoers within society. It contributes to community safety, executed through the authority of the probation and court systems, operating within the broader framework of the main justice system. However, that may impose burdens on a system of main criminal justice that already handles a significant caseload, as well as involve lengthy processes that may slow down the victim's recovery and potentially result in the rejection of the wrongdoer by the community until they can prove themselves. It may also have implications for community safety. Therefore, mediating or resolving disputes through community-based justice, known as community justice, such as Justice Provincial Offices, Community Justice, Damrongdhamma Centers, or Dispute Resolution Centers in schools, can solve various issues because it is a method initiated by community members and does not require much time. If the victim consents and is satisfied, the parties can effectively mediate and adjudicate the matter within the community without resorting to the formal

justice system. Thus, this research aims to explore the appropriateness of the law and the relevant agencies involved in the community justice process to provide recommendations for enhancing its effectiveness.

Literature Review

Community justice refers to measures or strategies aimed at reducing and preventing criminal behavior through the involvement and active participation of the community. It opens opportunities for community engagement, creates spaces for restorative practices as an alternative approach to accessing justice, and promotes societal safety and community resilience (Chaiyapong et al., 2012). Community justice focuses on building strong partnerships within and between organizations with shared responsibility for public safety, fostering close relationships between communities and their members, compensating victims for the harm caused by offenses, transforming offender behavior, and promoting community safety through collaborative efforts between the community justice system and each community (Buaphuean, 2006, p. 53). There are several related concepts and theories underpinning the idea of community justice as follows:

1. **Rehabilitative Theory:** This theory aims to rehabilitate offenders, fostering self-awareness, inhibiting repeated offenses, and facilitating the reintegration of offenders into society. It involves providing sufficient training, vocational education, and education to support offenders in leading productive lives (Limprasert et al., 2019, p. 1491–1492), helping to stigmatize the offenders.

2. **Community Empowerment and Participation:** This concept assumes that when community members actively prevent crime and rebuild good relationships among their neighbors, it directly reduces crime and the fear of crime. The idea emphasizes community involvement, collaboration between the government and the community in a partnership model and understanding the public and agencies' roles in the community justice process (Kurki, 2000, p. 235–303). Additionally, it is a concept that places importance on public participation, collaboration between the government and people, and understanding the roles of people and agencies in a justice process that encourages people in the community to participate in partnership or community ownership which will create a driving force for collective surveillance and prevention of crime and create responsibility for the community (Limprasert et al., 2019, p. 1470). This leads to further cooperation between people in

the community and the government sector through providing understanding, encouragement, support for crime victims and communities to return to everyday life, including help applying for assistance from government agencies

3. Social Bonding Theory: According to Travis Hirschi, this theory emphasizes the importance of social bonds among individuals or groups. When community members feel bonded to one another and their community, they are less likely to create conflicts and increase social cohesion. In such communities, problems decrease to be infrequent (Limprasert et al., 2019, p. 1470–1471).

4. Responsibilities and Transfer of Government Responsibilities: This perspective advocates transferring the responsibility for handling criminal issues from the central government to local communities. This approach promotes cooperation and community involvement with various organizations established within the community. It encourages the community to play a significant role in new organizations that emerge (Aeoamnuay, 2020, p. 25). This concept aligns with the strategy to reduce cases entering the mainstream justice process, wherein community justice includes victims, offenders, family members, community members, and committees, such as the juveniles committee, alternative community justice committee, and neighborhood committee (Tanrungsang, 2010, p. 58). It becomes an essential approach that diminishes the state's role, increases community involvement, and serves as an alternative community justice process to divert cases and reduce the number of cases entering the conventional justice system (Jaihan, 2011, p. 41).

5. Reintegration: Reintegrating offenders into the community aims to enable individuals to lead a normal life without returning to criminal behavior.

The fundamental principles and theories of community justice align with handling cases and practices concerning children and juveniles. Both dimensions of victims and offenders are considered, given that the approach to criminal cases involving minors and juveniles differs from those involving adults. In the case of adult offenders, the law focuses on punishment, revenge, compensation, and exclusion from society. However, in the case of minors and juveniles, the law emphasizes safeguarding their dignity, protecting their future, and seeking measures that prioritize their best interests. Doing so includes utilizing social support or various alternatives instead of traditional punitive processes to administer justice. Moreover, non-formal methods, criteria, or practices may be employed, as well as implementing methods beyond court processes to support the consideration of cases involving children and juveniles (Trijudjaganya, 2018, p. 71).

Thailand has established a working model between the state and the community that emphasizes fairness and security. Currently, the responsible agencies for the operation of the community justice system in Thailand include Community Justice Centers and Damrongdhama Centers.

Community Justice Center

A Community Justice Center (CJC) is a facility established within Local Administrative Organizations (LAO). It serves as the workplace for the Community Justice Committee or performs various tasks of the community under five missions, including 1) preventing and controlling crimes in the community, 2) receiving complaints and reports, 3) managing conflicts, 4) providing support and empowerment to crime victims and community members, and 5) reintegrating good citizens into society. The staff of the Community Justice Center will be involved in various tasks related to service provision, such as receiving and mediating complaints, establishing the justice fund, and providing financial assistance to victims and detainees in criminal cases (Community Justice Centers, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, 2020, p. 4).

Regarding the role of work concerning children and juveniles in the dimension of reintegration into society, there are juvenile centers, and protection centers or training centers for juveniles who have been released or those who have undertaken the extraordinary measures to replace criminal prosecution in accordance with Article 86 of the Juvenile and Family Court and Procedure Act B.E. 2553 (2010). During the preparation stage before release, there will be target of children and juveniles, raising awareness, and developing individual follow-up plans in coordination with the network. Moreover, there will be a mechanism for monitoring, care, and assistance at the local level through the coverage of the Community Justice Center in each sub-district. After the release, there will be follow-ups, care, and summarization to find ways for further assistance, analysis of follow-up strategies, or future prevention (Community Justice Centers, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, 2020, p. 10).

Damrongdhama Center

The Damrongdhama Center has been established with various missions, including receiving complaints and reports, providing information and consultation services, accepting suggestions and feedback from the public, coordinating and mediating conflicts, and resolving community issues. The Ministry of Interior is responsible

for overseeing and facilitating the services provided by the Damrongdhama Center, which are divided into two levels: the Central Damrongdhama Center, under the Ministry of Interior, and the Damrongdhama Center, which provides the same service as provided by the Central Damrongdhama Center, Ministry of Interior. For the enterprises in the division or public enterprise, the regional Dhamrongdhama Center is divided into two levels, which are the provincial Dhamrongdhama Center and the District Dhamrongdhama Center (Inspection and Grievances & Ministry of Interior, 2023).

However, since the Damrongdhama Center operates under the Ministry of Interior, its scope and responsibilities are broad and do not specifically focus on issues related to juveniles. This situation limits the ability of the Damrongdhama Center to address matters concerning juveniles directly.

Community Justice Systems for Juveniles in Different Countries

Community justice system for juveniles in Canada

Canada has a community justice system as an alternative measure before proceeding to the formal criminal justice process. It focuses on diversion, a step before entering the regular process. There are two forms of diversion (Engler & Crowe, 2000, p. 2): police discretion and alternative measures.

1. Police Discretion: The police are not allowed to lay charges as an informal measure to avoid formal criminal proceedings. For instance, in cases where it is a juvenile's first offense or a minor offense, the police can ask juveniles to apologize to the victims, or the police may bring them back home to consult with their parents. Alternatively, the police can refer the case to community agencies for voluntary work in Canada. Giving police discretion not to proceed with criminal charges is a significant and legally accepted mechanism within the community (Crown Prosecution Service Guideline, 2014).

2. Alternative Measures: These measures are recognized under section 717 of the Canadian Criminal Code. The measures grant victims the option to choose alternative measures, and local prosecutors have the authority to consider whether a case is appropriate for alternative measures in the community justice system (Trevethan & MacKillop, 1997). Some provinces may involve senior police officers appointed by the Attorney General's Office to consider alternative measures (Crown Prosecution Service Guideline, 2014). In the process of alternative measures, consent from all parties involved is necessary.

Once deemed appropriate, a specific form of alternative measures is determined. Examples include victim-offender mediation (VOM) and family group conferencing (FGC). After the completion of the alternative measures process, an agreement or contract specifying the agreed-upon terms and actions is signed by all involved parties. If the agreement is not fulfilled, the case may be returned to the local prosecutor or representative to consider further action. Once the measures are completed, the case is considered closed and there will be no criminal record, avoiding the need for court proceedings.

Community justice system for juveniles in Scotland

Scotland has a community justice system for juveniles referred to as the Whole System Approach (WSA), which covers the process, from identifying the needs and circumstances of the children or youth involved in the offense to the court proceedings (Government of Scotland, n.d.). The community justice system in Scotland is governed by the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, which defines the principles and relevant terms (Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, Sections 1 and 2. The community justice process for juveniles in Scotland comprises effective early intervention, diversion in the community, and community-based alternatives to secure care and custody (Government of Scotland, n.d.):

1. Effective Early Intervention: When an offense occurs, and a young person is involved, effective early intervention aims to prevent further offending behavior and reduce violence or anti-social behavior. Police officers in the community can carry out early intervention measures that are flexible for young offenders. The appropriate proportion and duration of these measures should be considered, and relevant community agencies may be involved in collaboratively addressing the young person's offenses.

2. Diversion of Young People from Prosecution: Diversion is beneficial compared to custodial measures. It allows young people who commit minor offenses to avoid formal court proceedings. Within the community, diversion can occur through the discretion of local prosecutors, who can decide not to prosecute and offer young people community-based rehabilitation activities. Collaboration among various community agencies in Scotland is essential for implementing these diversion measures.

3. Community Alternatives to Secure Care and Custody: Scotland emphasizes the fundamental principles in developing these measures, which involve three essential components: service provider, workers and decision-makers.

Methodology

In this documentary research, the study focuses on relevant regulations, textbooks, legal documents, and theses. It also collects data using in-depth interviews with real practitioners, including provincial justice officials, community justice center officials, and the Damrongtham Center officials in Bangkok and Kanchanaburi, Thailand.

Participants

For the participant selection process, key informants were chosen deliberately to guarantee a thorough comprehension of how community justice is implemented for juvenile delinquency within Thailand. Patton (2014) emphasizes the significance of purposive sampling in enabling researchers to identify “information-rich cases” which provide a detailed understanding of the subject matter. The criteria for selecting participants focus on individuals possessing a minimum of five years of experience in fields related to juvenile justice, assuring that the perspectives provided are well-informed and reflective of the developments and application of community justice practices in Thailand.

Results

The findings from in-depth interviews with individuals working in organizations related to community justice reveal insightful details on the practices impacting the application of restorative practices in child and juvenile criminal acts. The interview questions delved into the beneficial aspects, strengths, considerations, and the focus on problem-solving before involving investigators.

Community Justice

The role of community justice in addressing juvenile criminal acts presents a multifaceted approach that leverages local resources, legal expertise, and community engagement to foster a supportive environment for child and youth rehabilitation and conflict resolution. The expanded analysis delves deeper into the strengths, challenges, and factors contributing to the success of community justice systems, emphasizing their potential to transform juvenile justice practices.

Strengths of Community Justice

1. Proactive Conflict Resolution: The foundational mission of Community Justice Centers is to mediate community disputes, which places them at the forefront of preventative justice. This orientation towards conflict resolution before escalation aligns perfectly with reducing juvenile delinquency through early intervention, highlighting the centers’ role in fostering a peaceful community environment.

2. Strategic Accessibility and Integration: The strategic placement of these centers within crucial community and educational institutions enhances their accessibility, making it easier for juveniles and their families to seek help. This integration into the fabric of community and school life ensures that the centers are seen as approachable resources, facilitating a more proactive approach to dispute resolution and legal education.

3. Empowered Community Representatives: Utilizing community-based personnel deeply integrated within the local context ensures that mediation processes are grounded in the community’s values and norms. These individuals, with their respected positions and understanding of regional dynamics, are ideally positioned to mediate disputes effectively and culturally sensitively.

4. Comprehensive Community Engagement: The emphasis on legal education and preventive measures undertaken by Community Justice Centers plays a pivotal role in resolving disputes and educating the community about legal rights and responsibilities. This holistic approach helps build a more informed and law-abiding society, reducing the likelihood of future offenses.

Challenges in Diverting Juvenile Criminal Acts

1. Diluted Focus Due to Delegated Responsibilities: When the responsibility of case handling is spread across agencies for which it is not a primary duty, the specialized attention required for effective mediation may be diluted. This dispersion of focus can hinder the centers’ ability to provide the targeted support needed for juvenile cases.

2. Barrier of Limited Legal Expertise: The scarcity of legal experts within the centers could limit their ability to address more complex juvenile cases that require specialized legal knowledge. Strengthening the legal expertise available within these centers is essential for ensuring that all cases are handled with the appropriate level of legal acumen.

3. Financial Limitations Impacting Effectiveness: The challenge of limited budget allocations restricts the centers' operational capacity, affecting both their preventative initiatives and their ability to respond effectively to cases. Enhanced funding would support a more robust infrastructure for dispute resolution and community education efforts.

4. Lack of Public Awareness and Trust: Lack of awareness among the public about the centers' roles and benefits influences the effectiveness of community justice. This gap in understanding can affect the utilization of these services and the overall trust in the mediation process.

5. Influence and Bias Concerns: Concerns about the influence of community leaders and potential biases they may bring into the mediation process can undermine the perceived fairness and trustworthiness of the centers. Ensuring impartiality and transparency in mediation is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the process.

Factors Contributing to Success:

1. Creation of Specialized Units: Developing units focused explicitly on restorative practices for juveniles can significantly enhance the effectiveness of dispute resolution. These specialized units, concentrating on restorative justice, can provide tailored solutions that address the unique needs of juveniles involved in disputes.

2. Continuity with Respected Personnel: The appointment of dedicated personnel who are stable and respected within the community is vital for building long-term trust and ensuring consistent application of restorative practices. This stability helps address issues of community influence and ensures that individuals with a deep understanding of local contexts conduct mediation.

3. Commitment to Adequate Funding: Ensuring sufficient financial resources are allocated to Community Justice Centers is critical to enabling a comprehensive approach to dispute resolution and preventative education. Adequate funding supports the sustainability of these centers and their capacity to make a tangible impact on reducing juvenile delinquency.

4. Enhanced Promotion and Community Integration: Promoting Community Justice Centers and making them more accessible through modern communication channels like hotlines, websites, and apps can significantly increase their visibility and use. This increased awareness, coupled with convenient access, encourages greater community engagement with the centers, leveraging their full potential to serve as pillars of support for juveniles and their families.

Through an expanded understanding of these dynamics, it becomes evident that while community justice faces significant challenges, its strengths and the key factors contributing to its success offer a promising pathway for addressing juvenile delinquency. Strengthening these aspects can further empower Community Justice Centers to serve as effective platforms for promoting restorative practices and fostering a more supportive environment for child and youth in conflict with the law.

Damrongdharma Center

The Damrongdharma Center, with its legal mandate from the National Peace and Order Announcement No. 96/2557, is a pivotal entity in Thailand's community justice landscape, especially in addressing child and juvenile criminal acts. Insights from interviews reveal a nuanced understanding of the Center's strengths, challenges, and factors contributing to its success in applying community justice practices. An expanded analysis of these aspects provides a deeper dive into the operational dynamics and the impact of the Damrongdharma Center.

Strengths of Damrongdharma Center

1. Legal Authority and Mandate: The Damrongdharma Center is empowered by national legislation to mediate and resolve disputes, including those involving juveniles. This legal backbone legitimizes its operations and ensures compliance and recognition from all stakeholders involved in community justice processes.

2. Nationwide Presence: With its widespread network across provinces, districts, and local administrative organizations, the Center boasts an expansive reach that ensures its services are accessible across a broad spectrum of the population. This geographic dispersion is crucial for the timely and efficient handling of disputes at the grassroots level.

3. Qualified Personnel: The presence of qualified professionals, including lawyers, within the Center underscores its capability to offer sound legal advice and mediation. This expertise is instrumental in navigating the complexities of child and juvenile criminal acts, ensuring that resolutions are effective and legally sound.

4. Public Relations and User Base: The Damrongdharma Center has cultivated a large user base through extensive public relations efforts, reflecting trust and reliance on its services. This broad engagement indicates the Center's success in public outreach and its role as a trusted mediator in community disputes.

Challenges Faced by Damrongdhama Center

1. Limited Reach for Certain Cases: The Center often sees fewer complaints about juvenile acts due to the prevalence of primary community justice processes. Minor offenses may be mediated through school organizations, with the Damrongdhama Center stepping in only when cases stall, highlighting a potential gap in early intervention.

2. Diverse Responsibilities: The broad spectrum of responsibilities shouldered by the Center, from legal advice to assistance in various areas, may dilute its focus on community justice roles. This multiplicity of tasks risks overshadowing its primary function in mediating and resolving disputes, possibly affecting its efficacy in specific community justice endeavors.

Factors Contributing to Success

1. Community Cohesion: The strength of community ties, particularly pronounced in rural areas, fosters a conducive environment for the Damrongdhama Center's mediation efforts. This local cohesion and trust in community members as mediators enhance the acceptability and effectiveness of the Center's interventions.

2. Expertise and Credibility of Personnel: The Center's success is significantly bolstered by its cadre of knowledgeable and credible personnel. Legal experts within the Center are pivotal in advising and facilitating mediation, contributing to a high success rate in dispute resolution.

In summary, the Damrongdhama Center plays a critical role in the community justice system in Thailand, particularly in dealing with juvenile criminal acts. While it boasts significant strengths, including legal authority and qualified personnel, it also faces challenges such as limited reach in some instances and the potential dilution of its community justice focus due to diverse responsibilities. Nonetheless, factors like solid community cohesion and the expertise of its personnel are vital contributors to its success. Addressing these challenges and leveraging its strengths can further enhance the Damrongdhama Center's effectiveness as a model for community justice application.

Discussion

Alignment with Rehabilitation Theory

The study's insights into proactive conflict resolution and comprehensive community engagement initiatives of

Community Justice Centers underscore their alignment with the Rehabilitation Theory. This theory advocates for rehabilitation and societal reintegration, focusing on transforming offenders into productive citizens (Phaibunpohnphitak, 2012). The Community Justice Center's mission-driven approach to mediating disputes mirrors the state's role in protecting juveniles' futures and facilitating their rehabilitation, adhering to the principles of safeguarding dignity and prioritizing the best interests of minors (Phaibunpohnphitak, 2012).

Efficacy of Diversion in Criminal Cases

Diversionary practices, particularly for juveniles, are strongly supported by the study's findings, highlighting the significance of early intervention and the strategic accessibility of Community Justice Centers. This approach aligns with the diversion objectives, aiming to rehabilitate rather than punish juveniles, thereby avoiding the adverse effects of formal judicial processes (Phaibunpohnphitak, 2012). The challenges faced by Damrongdhama Centers in reaching certain juvenile cases further emphasize the importance of community-based approaches for effective diversion, facilitating restorative outcomes, and preventing the stigmatization of juveniles.

Importance of Community Empowerment and Participation

The study's findings on the role of community-based personnel and local resources in Community Justice Centers underscore the importance of community empowerment and participation. This approach aligns with the concept that active community engagement directly contributes to crime reduction and supports a nurturing environment for juveniles (Limprasert et al., 2019). It suggests that empowered communities are crucial in addressing juvenile criminal acts through effective mediation and conflict resolution.

Challenges and Implications for Policy and Practice

The identified challenges, including diluted focus, limited legal expertise, financial constraints, and low public awareness, underscore the need for improvements in policy and practice (Community Justice Centers, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, 2020). Enhancing funding, increasing public education about community justice roles, and ensuring qualified personnel availability are crucial to maximizing community justice effectiveness in diverting juvenile cases and promoting rehabilitation (Inspection and Grievances & Ministry of Interior, n.d.).

Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This research bridges empirical findings with theoretical frameworks, offering insights into the practical application of community justice in addressing juvenile delinquency. The operation and impact of community justice and the Damrongdhama Centers provide a model for other jurisdictions, emphasizing the importance of rehabilitation, diversion, and community empowerment in the justice process for juveniles (Chaiyapong et al., 2012; Limprasert et al., 2019).

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study highlights the pivotal role of Community Justice Centers in mediating and resolving disputes involving juveniles, emphasizing a proactive approach to conflict resolution and the benefits of integrating these centers within the community fabric. The alignment of Community Justice practices with the Rehabilitation Theory underscores the importance of prioritizing the rehabilitation and reintegration of juvenile offenders into society, away from punitive measures. The findings indicate that such an approach supports the individual development of juveniles and contributes to the broader goal of fostering a law-abiding and cohesive community. The effectiveness of diversionary practices highlighted by this research demonstrates the significant potential of Community Justice Centers to provide juveniles with a constructive alternative to the formal justice system, steering them toward pathways of rehabilitation and reconciliation. However, the challenges identified—such as resource constraints, the necessity for heightened public awareness, and better legal expertise—point towards areas requiring policy enhancement and community education to bolster the efficacy of community justice initiatives.

Furthermore, the Damrongdhama Centers, endowed with a legal mandate and a widespread presence, emerge as a crucial component of Thailand's community justice landscape. Despite the challenges posed by their broad scope of responsibilities and their limited direct engagement with cases involving children and juveniles, these centers play a foundational role in the community justice system, offering essential mediation and support services that complement the endeavors of Community Justice Centers.

However, from the study, the researcher concluded that Community Justice Centers are more appropriate than the Damrongdhama Centers. They provide

an alternative justice process involving mutual agreements between the parties and incorporating community participation because the juveniles will return to that community. Therefore, it is necessary to be accepted by the community as well. However, the Damrongdhama Centers usually focus on conflict resolution between the parties and more community participation. Through the lens of theoretical frameworks like the Rehabilitation Theory, diversion, and community empowerment, coupled with the empirical findings of this study, a nuanced understanding of the complexities and potentials of community justice in mitigating juvenile delinquency has been developed. These theoretical insights highlight the criticality of community involvement and restorative practices, advocating for a justice system attuned to juveniles' unique needs and circumstances. Thus, the study culminates in a call for comprehensive legal and policy reforms to enhance the effectiveness of community justice in Thailand. It advocates for creating a specific legal framework for community justice, clear criteria for its application, and the establishment of specialized agencies staffed by trained personnel dedicated to juvenile cases. There is also a pressing need for policies that amplify public awareness, cultivate community trust, and ensure supportive guidance from state officials. By weaving together these recommendations, Thai lawmakers should create specific legislation to empower Community Justice Centers. This legislation should define the scope and conditions, including the procedures prior to and after the justice process, and clear legal consequences to use effectively. The study proposes a holistic approach that resonates with the principles of restorative justice and envisions a more just, efficient, and empathetic resolution of juvenile offenses. This approach is poised to significantly contribute to fostering a supportive and understanding community environment conducive to the rehabilitation and reintegration of young offenders, marking a pivotal step towards a more compassionate and cohesive society.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Fundings

College of Politics and Government, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

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