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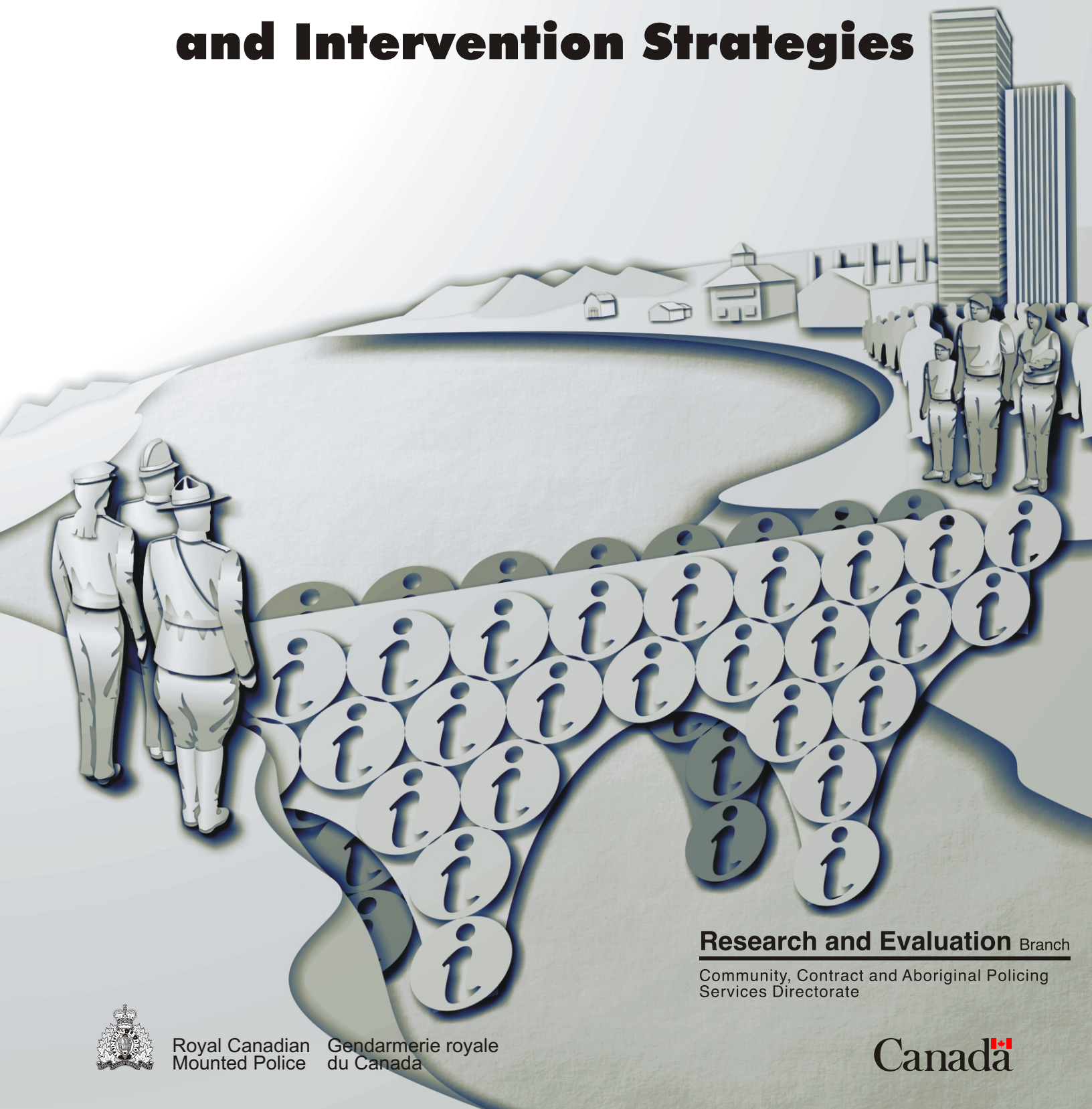
Gang Prevention

RCMP



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

and Intervention Strategies



Research and Evaluation Branch

Community, Contract and Aboriginal Policing
Services Directorate



Royal Canadian
Mounted Police

Gendarmerie royale
du Canada

Canada 

Gang Prevention and Intervention Strategies

by

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Executive Summary

Youth Gangs and Their Characteristics

The topic of youth gangs has emerged as a major issue of serious concern in many communities in Canada and almost in all other countries in the world, especially for the law enforcement community. This paper reviews the research literature available in print and published on the Internet.

Due to the diversity of gang phenomena, no universally accepted definition of “youth gang” exists in the research literature. For the purpose of the present paper, the Klein and Maxson definition seems to be the most acceptable one: "[A gang is] any denotable..... group [of adolescents and young adults] who (a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighborhood, (b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a group name), and (c) have been involved in a sufficient number of [illegal] incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighborhood residents and/or enforcement agencies."

Research indicates that the emergence and continued existence of youth gangs may be attributed to socio-economic (poverty and unemployment, actual or perceived disadvantage), family-related (dysfunctional, abusive or negligent family), school (poor academic performance and low attachment to schools) and community (disorganized, crime-prone and unsafe) factors. All of these elements contribute to marginalization of youth. Other factors include youths' needs for acceptance, love, discipline, structure, money, safety, personal protection and drugs and negative individual/biological factors (anti-social attitudes, FASD).

Available research evidence demonstrates that, although so-called youth gang members' ages range from eight to 50+ in some cases, the average age tends to be 14-16. It also shows that there are more male than female gang members, and many gang members

happen to come from socially marginalized and disadvantaged ethnic minority groups. A recent tendency of youth gangs to include older youths or young adults has also been noted. Most well established gangs tend to have codes of conduct, initiation rites and a distinct style and colour of clothing; they use graffiti, tattoos and special terminology to identify themselves as well as to mark their turfs. The price of non-compliance could be physical punishment, even death.

Gang-related crimes range from minor to serious, such as: graffiti, burglary, theft, vandalism, motor vehicle theft, arson, assault, drive-by shooting, selling crack, powder cocaine, marijuana and other drugs, home invasion, arson, intimidation, rape, robbery, shooting, and homicide. They may also engage in fraud, pirating and selling movies and music, identity theft, witness identification and intimidation, and communicating with other members of their gangs through cell phones, the Internet, and computers.

Most researchers believe that for the majority of youths who join gangs, gang membership is a transitory experience — lasting for one year or less. However, in some circumstances such as multigenerational or highly structured gangs, youths, especially the hard-core or long-term members, may find it difficult to leave. The desire to leave a gang may arise from natural maturation and wish to lead a stable, "normal" life, and/or from fear for personal safety, of incarceration, or the loss of key individuals to drug-abuse, injury or death. A strong support network and provision of life-skills are crucial for the successful re-integration of these youths into the mainstream. Researchers believe that gang membership has both short and long-term consequences for the youths and the community. Examples include risks of arrest, of incarceration, of injury and/or a violent death, and non-transition to normal adult life-style that includes legitimate employment. The impact on the community, justice system and health care system is also enormous, and sometimes not well recognized.

Prevention/Intervention/Suppression

Combating gang problems is a serious challenge faced by the law enforcement community as well as society in general. Research indicates that gang phenomena are extremely complex in their origin and functioning, in which socio-economic, psychological, family-related, personal factors, to name just a few, contribute to youths creating, joining and remaining in gangs. The basic premise for any prevention and intervention effort seems to be that programs must be targeted at providing at-risk and gang-involved youth with legitimate alternatives for fulfilling their basic needs such as love, discipline, structure, belonging, personal safety and protection. In other words, any gang-reduction or -prevention program must include support and counseling for youths and their families (especially for hard-to-reach families and communities) education and training for youth toward earning an honest livelihood, and building skills for conflict resolution. It should also provide provision of recreational opportunities (for example, after-school programs) that offer youth a healthy lifestyle alternative as well as a sense of self-worth and self-respect. Anti-bullying programs may also help in reducing reliance on physical violence for youths' protection and personal safety.

Researchers described several examples of evaluated and effective programs in the USA (but rarely in Canada), designed to combat youth gang problems. Depending on the extent and stage of the problem, primary, secondary or tertiary intervention efforts were considered necessary.

The Tri-Agency Resource Gang Enforcement Team (TARGET) was judged to be an effective program by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). It aimed at reducing gang problems by selective incarceration of identified most violent and repeat gang offenders, enforcement of probation controls (graduated sanctions and intensive supervision) on younger, less violent gang offenders, and arrests of gang leaders in “hot spots” of gang activity. Movimiento Ascendencia (Upward Movement) for female youth aged 8 to 19 in Pueblo, Colorado was an after-school prevention/intervention program that offered academic skills enhancement, recreation, and other interpersonal

skills training and mentoring to at-risk and gang-involved girls. Other effective or promising programs were: Boys and Girls Club Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach, the Detention Diversion Advocacy Project (DDAP) in San Francisco, "Operation Ceasefire" implemented by the Boston Police Department's Youth Violence Strike Force and "Gang Resistance Is Paramount (GRIP)," in Paramount, California.

A well-known preventive national program in the USA called Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) consisted of middle school-based education presented by police officers. It focused on crime and victimization, prejudice and cultural sensitivity, conflict resolution skills, drugs and neighbourhoods, personal responsibility, and setting goals. The general conclusion, based on a number of evaluations of G.R.E.A.T.; is that since youth gang problems and the related criminal activities were caused by a multitude of factors and presented a complex challenge, the solution too might need a combination of approaches such as the G.R.E.A.T. and Spergel and Curry's Comprehensive Gang Model. The Comprehensive Gang Model has been used to combat gang violence in the Little Village area of Chicago and later at five other OJJDP demonstration sites (Bloomington-Normal, Illinois; San Antonio, Texas; Mesa, Arizona; Tucson, Arizona; and Riverside, California) across the US.

Researchers pointed out that the OJJDP had engaged in an integrated approach to the youth gang problem, comprising (i) community mobilization, (ii) social intervention, including prevention and social outreach, (iii) opportunities provision, (iv) suppression/social control and (v) organizational change and development. The preliminary results seemed to be encouraging, and a planning guide to help communities apply the comprehensive approach mentioned above was available. A combination of strategies seemed to be the most efficient way of dealing with gang problems. For example, in areas where there might be risk of gang proliferation, awareness, education and training similar to the Gang Resistance, Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) might be beneficial; in areas already experiencing gang activities, intervention could be effective, and in areas where the gang problem was serious, targeted suppression (as was practised in Boston) might be necessary. This implies that a thorough and accurate

assessment of each community's gang problem should be undertaken as a first step to plan, develop and implement appropriate strategies.

Gathering and analyzing accurate information about gangs, their activities and territories is of paramount importance for combating gang problem because an analysis of gang criminal activities, and geographical analysis can guide police operations and priorities. Meeker, Parsons and Villa (2002) described a collaboration between the local police and university researchers in developing a geographic information system (GIS)-based regional gang incident tracking system (GITS) that was utilized successfully in Orange County, California.

Empirical evidence has shown that community mobilization was one of the most effective strategies in addressing the gang problem. Community mobilization and strengthening, and sharing resources at the grassroots level, need to be integrated with long-term prevention strategies in any gang-reduction program. Social intervention for youth already involved in gang activities, and targeted suppression of hard-core gang members known for their repeated serious crimes, might also be required under some circumstances. General suppression alone has not succeeded in reducing youth gang activities. Research also points out the effectiveness of a multi-faceted, multi-partner, comprehensive, and balanced strategy to prevent, reduce and combat gang problems.

Some researchers have made recommendations for a national strategy that should have the following components: early educational interventions, expansion of health and mental health services, family support programs, constructive, rehabilitative activities for offenders instead of incarceration, and drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs. In addition, attention must be given to reduction of racial inequality, poverty, inadequate services, and to better preparation of the next generation for employment. Thus, there seems to be a recurrent theme of addressing the root causes of the problem and efforts for effective re-integration of gang-involved youth who wish to leave.

Huff and Shafer (2002) suggested that frequent and regular interaction between the police and the community was likely to be effective in addressing gang problems. In Community-Oriented Policing, the police were not in the typical post-incident reactive mode. Their longitudinal research supported the superiority of the intervention and prevention approaches over the suppression approach, which was most often the way gang-related problems were managed by police. Huff (2002) presented some examples to indicate the effectiveness of an integrated, collaborative approach between the community and the police in reducing gang problems in some parts of the United States. He acknowledged some difficulties of successful community policing to deal with gang problems. Need for resources - both human and economic - might increase in the short run. Improving intelligence capacities, sharing intelligence and coming to a consensus regarding necessary actions with other community agencies might present a challenge to some police agencies. Police must also strive to sustain strong community involvement. It was believed that at present police services all over the world recognized the need to combine intervention with prevention, and the result was the development of the concept of crime prevention through social development (CPSD). The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has officially endorsed the CPSD strategy, especially as an essential part of its Youth Strategy. As well, most provincial and municipal police forces in Canada have also created programs or community partnerships.

It seems that law enforcement community has a logical role in providing leadership in efforts to reduce and prevent youth gangs. The RCMP's community policing foundation and restorative justice principles are especially consistent with playing a leadership role in this area, provided there are sufficient resources available. It should also be possible to develop an effective gang-related incident tracking system that does not rely on individual offence data currently collected in the Uniform Crime Records system. Modeling after the "Safer Sunderland Strategy" of Sunderland, UK, the RCMP has initiated a plan to develop and implement a crime reduction and prevention plan in Nunavut. This approach is not targeted specifically at combating the youth gang problem; however, it is expected to have a wider benefit for the entire community.

Based on the results of the Canadian Police Survey 2002, Mellor, MacRae, Pauls and Hornick (2005) made several recommendations towards a comprehensive and effective strategy for combating youth criminal gangs. They suggested that the strategy should be based on complete and accurate information on the types of gangs active in various Canadian jurisdictions; the causal factors for youth to get involved in such gang-related criminal activities; the extent to which the risk factors, motivation and opportunity for their involvement were present; presence of active recruitment and the places where this might take place; the possible protective factors; the nature of interactions and interconnection among gangs and known effective strategies in other countries. They believed that research involving community needs assessment, surveys of schools, of targeted high-risk youth communities, of youth detention centres, provincial and federal correctional centres and targeted evaluation of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention programs would provide the necessary knowledge to develop an effective strategy.

About one-third of agencies (35%) that participated in the 2002 Canadian Police Survey indicated having a dedicated gang unit and/or gang officers in place, or having sworn officers with gang-related duties (41%). However, very few agencies (14%) across Canada reported having established a gang prevention unit or having dedicated gang prevention officers.

Several examples of police and community partnerships or plans for such partnerships exist in the research literature. Partners might be schools, city or municipal authorities, businesses, churches, community service organizations, housing societies and criminal justice agencies. Youths from high-risk areas as well as other areas are potentially valuable partners. Canadian police have been performing prevention and law enforcement duties in several diverse roles in the community for many years. In combating gang problems in Canadian communities, it may not be a choice of one or the other approach exclusively, as research cited above has indicated that a combination of strategies tailored to the unique need of each community might be the most effective one.

Some of the recommendations made by police officers in a study by Arcand and Cullen were:

- Provide sustainable funding, not just for pilot studies with duration of one or two years
- Encourage sincere commitment by senior officers to crime prevention as real policing, and promotion as well as reward for such actions
- Offer training for building effective partnerships with other police departments and communities
- Ensure proper evaluation of programs
- Include information on social risk factors in national training programs for police.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It was clear from this report that there were not many evaluated programs for prevention, intervention and suppression of youth gangs in Canada. In view of this fact, it seems unwise to reject and not to utilize the components found in effective programs in the USA or any other country simply because they are not Canadian. In particular, the strategies that address the root causes of youth crime, and especially gang problems, need to be seriously considered, with a thorough understanding of the local circumstances and dynamics included in developing made-in-Canada strategies.

Data indicated that the risk factors for adolescent problem behaviours within gangs or outside gangs were very similar. It seems logical therefore, that providing appropriate support, guidance and services to address these root causes in the community, family and schools would be useful to combat not only gang problems but also random youth delinquency.

Any prevention/intervention strategy will need to be cognizant of possible politics of the situation and will need to strike the correct balance in its approach. In order to gain community support, it must be perceived by the community as fair and sensitive. The RCMP already emphasizes problem-oriented policing, based on observation, analysis and targeted response, in training its cadets. A complex situation such as a pervasive and ever-increasing youth gang problem, especially where racial tensions might exist, may require education and extensive training of police in more advanced and complex problem-solving and interpersonal skills.

The review of research literature suggests the following steps for developing and implementing any effective strategy to address youth gang problems:

- (1) Acknowledgment of the problem rather than denial is crucial to developing solutions.
- (2) An accurate and systematic assessment of the problem is very important. This can be achieved by involving representatives of police, schools, probation, youth agencies, former gang members, grassroots organizations, all levels of government, and other stakeholders. Another approach might be to track Internet information about gangs and their activities through exploring their websites or electronic turfs and their electronic messages and graffiti.
- (3) Set goals and objectives based on a common understanding of the key concepts and the assessment of the problem. At the same time, focus on desired changes in the affected community.
- (4) The law enforcement community is well positioned to provide leadership in gang prevention and reduction efforts, and in coordinating a multi-agency approach. It is important to establish a clear articulation with rationale, of the assignment of responsibilities to each participating agency for relevant services and activities, and to coordinate these appropriately.

5. Strategies that combine prevention, intervention, and suppression components seem to be most effective in combating the gang problem. Providing youth-at-risk, gang-involved youth and especially those who wish to leave gangs with pro-social skills training, educational and job opportunities for a healthy lifestyle must be an integral component of any prevention/intervention program.

6. Increasing awareness of gang problems toward prevention and counseling and support for effective intervention must be provided to the parents and teachers of at-risk and gang-involved youth. An effective gang-prevention/intervention/ suppression program should address all types of risk factors and try to provide the protective factors.

7. Consideration should be given to ongoing data collection through community-wide surveys, self-reports of youth and official records, monitoring and sharing of gang-related information. This would enable implementation of collaborative, interrelated strategies of formal (through strategic law enforcement and monitoring) and informal (community residents collaborating to maintain safety, order and discipline) social control.

8. Adequate resources and their proper allocation are essential for such an initiative to be effective.

9. An evaluation component must be included so that knowledge on this important social issue can increase and contribute toward developing subsequent effective programs and strategies.

Introduction

The topic of youth gangs has emerged as a major issue of serious concern in many communities in Canada, both large and small. Their impact is felt by all, and especially by the police who are called upon to respond to their activities. Given the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's (RCMP) community policing service delivery model, the issue is being pursued as a major component of the Youth Strategy. This is a multi-faceted problem and will require a multi-faceted response - in the form of close collaboration between the police and other agencies and organizations in the community as we attempt to deal both with the reactive dimensions of youth crime and with the proactive side of youth victimization and crime prevention.

This report is based on a review of research literature - published in print as well as on the Internet, primarily of youth gang-related research material that originated in the United States - because of its relative prevalence as compared to the relative paucity of Canadian research. It seeks to have a better understanding of the gang phenomenon in general, and explores possible strategies for its prevention and reduction. The report first presents an overview of a previously submitted report on Youth Gangs, and then focuses on prevention issues. Delaney (2005) says:

Youth gang intervention is a very formidable enterprise. Because we lack a clear understanding of why and how youth gangs form, preventing their formation is problematic. Gang interventions rarely are based on theoretical assumptions. This lack of knowledge impedes our efforts to disrupt existing gangs and divert youth from them. Gangs dissolve and disappear for reasons that are poorly understood. In some cities, youths who join gangs leave them within about 1 year. Yet we do not understand why. Future youth gang research must address the formation of gangs, disruptive forces, and factors that account for diversion of youths from gangs. (Howell, 2004, p.318).

Definition of the term 'Youth Gang'

Due to the diversity of gang phenomena, no universally accepted definition of “youth gang” exists in the research literature. Often, the terms “street gangs” and “youth gangs” are used interchangeably. For the purpose of the present paper, the Klein and Maxson definition seems to be the most acceptable, as it includes the most salient aspects (e.g., youth, involvement in illegal incidents and negative response of residents) of a gang as well as presents sufficient flexibility for addressing the diversity of the phenomenon in terms of law enforcement and community responses. The definition offered by Klein and Maxson (cited in Shelden, Tracy and Brown, 2004) of the term is:

[A gang is] any denotable..... group [of adolescents and young adults] who (a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighborhood, (b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a group name), and (c) have been involved in a sufficient number of [illegal] incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighborhood residents and/or enforcement agencies. (p.18).

For practical reasons, the term “youth gang” and “street gang” may be treated interchangeably in this report.

Most research evidence (Thornberry et al. 2004; The 2002 Canadian Police Survey; Shelden et al. 2004) demonstrates that youth gang members' age range is wide, from 8 to 50+ in some cases, that the average age tends to be 14 to 16, that there are more male than female gang members, and many gang members happen to come from socially marginalized and disadvantaged ethnic minority groups.

Research indicates that well-established gangs typically have codes of conduct often including initiation rites and a distinct style and colour of clothing; they use graffiti, tattoos and special terminology to identify themselves, to mark their turfs as well as to publicize their future plans/actions including threats. The price of non-compliance could

be physical punishment, even death (Knox and Papachristos, 2002; Delaney, 2005; Shelden et al. 2004).

Jankowski (1990, cited in Shelden et al., 2004) studied 37 gangs of which 27 made some money through legitimate means. They also engaged in illegal activities involving drugs, stolen guns, auto parts, and electronic equipment, providing services such as protection and demolition (e.g., by arson) of property, protecting prostitutes and their pimps, extortion, punishing delinquent borrowers of money and setting up gambling rooms. Jankowski also argued that gang members engaged in violence because gangs attracted defiant youths who wanted to prove their worth, and to increase their status among other gang members. Use of violence occurred for a variety of reasons: to cause fear among the gang's own members or among those of rival gangs, to prevent violation of gang codes, to punish people who were perceived to treat a member with disrespect or were perceived as a threat to the member's self-worth, protection of territory, rivalry over female companions, for disciplinary purposes and even personal support of another gang member (Shelden et al. 2004).

Respondents of the 2002 Canadian Police Survey in the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba reported that a large proportion of youth gang members were involved in drug- trafficking (74%), burglary or break and enter, and assault (68%) and theft of auto/exportation (55%). In these three provinces, youth gang members' association with organized crime groups was believed to be the highest with respect to drug trafficking (42%) and assault (32%). Youth gang members' involvement was considered low in criminal activities such as immigration fraud, smuggling of consumer goods and fraud (based on 95% of responses), followed by forgery/uttering and sexual assault/ rape (90% of responses), and chemical drug manufacture (88% of responses).

Risk Factors

Wyrick and Howell (2004) commented that risk factors for youth who join gangs might include characteristics of the individual, of the family (negligent, abusive, dysfunctional), poor school performance, delinquent peer groups and disorganized community conditions; and that a combination of such factors, especially from multiple domains, increased the likelihood of youths joining gangs. Individual risk factors mentioned were antisocial attitudes and behavioural tendencies, drug use, early dating, precocious sexual activity and negative life experience. Family structure, poverty, child abuse or neglect and poor parental supervision were among family characteristics predictive of gang membership. Poor school performance or dropping out of school, low academic aspirations, low commitment to learning, teachers' negative labeling as well as association with delinquent peers were found to correlate with gang involvement. Lastly, feelings that a neighbourhood is unsafe, presence of gangs in neighbourhoods, low informal social controls, poverty and a low level of attachment to neighbourhoods were community risk factors. Media attention to gangs and their activities in the form of movies, novels, television dramas and even news features, according to this report, contributed to increased publicity and glamour. The authors believed that in the 1990s 'Gangsta rap' made this worse. It should be noted that these risk factors were based on correlational observations and not demonstrated to be causal.

Some (e.g., Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2002; Moore, 1998) have observed that a normal phase of adolescence involves socializing in same-sex groups, not all of which evolve into "gangs". Moore (1998) outlined four conditions in the process of gang formation: ineffective families and schools where proper adult supervision was lacking; lack of opportunities for pro-social activities for adolescents; unavailability of good employment opportunities, and no access to a place to get together.

Researchers (e.g., Trump, 2002; Cureton, 2002) have also suggested a number of factors such as youths' needs for power, status, personal safety and security (protection),

belonging (to a surrogate family), friendship and loyalty, poverty, unemployment, alcohol or drug addiction, and failure of educational or other social institutions. Others have mentioned needs for love, structure and discipline, commitment, recognition, companionship, excitement, a sense of self-worth, acceptance, and family connections (Leese, Deen and Parker, 2005). Caputo (1999) reviewed youth gang research and prepared a report for the Public Health Agency of Canada. He confirmed that youth often join gangs for money, power, excitement, friendship, protection and belonging.

Caputo (1999) also mentioned the youths' concern about violence in schools in the form of verbal harassment, physical threats, being beaten up or robbed, and the apparent indifference of school officials to this problem. He quoted (p.13) some of the student statements as follows:

- "It doesn't matter who is fighting; everybody is egging everyone on."
- "They [gangs in general] have a circle of silence."
- "The Asian gangs are more highly organized than your average East end group of white, East Indian, and Spanish kids who just go around beating people up. The Asian gangs for some reason or another have developed a hierarchy and an organized structure."
- "It comes back to the ethnic thing with the bonding rituals. They see each other as brothers and will enact revenge if one of their brothers gets hurt. They look out for each other."

Some suggested solutions to this problem mentioned by the respondents themselves were: student involvement in school programs, especially as peer counsellors, initiatives developed by and for youth to foster more harmonious school climates, better student-teacher relationships to develop a sense of community within the school, and teachers playing a more active supervisory role in preventing school violence.

Leaving the Gang

In a detailed review of literature on leaving the gang, Decker and Lauritsen (2002) found that the reasons for youths' leaving gangs were varied: threat or fear of personal injury,

family members or friends were victims of violence, moving away from the city, concerns about jobs or families or just not known. The authors commented that in most cases, gang membership was a transitory experience for youths, but “aging out” or leaving gangs due to a more mature orientation towards life did not seem to happen in all cases. Another study reported that 15 per cent of boys were gang members at age 14, but only 4 per cent were members when they were 20. The researchers concluded, "gangs simply become a less salient feature of boys' lives as they age." (p. 829, Lizotte et al, 2000). The Canadian Training Institute (2003) suggested that a strong social support network and provision of skills were important requirements for a successful integration of ex-gang youths into the mainstream.

Caputo (1999) observed that the youth gang members themselves thought that they needed appropriate resources to get out of gangs. He quoted (p. 12) some comments of such youth (and youth workers):

- "I have a friend being pressured to join a gang. Her brother's in a gang. Her friends are in the gang. She wants to get out."
- "You just can't get out just like that. They don't want to leave. It's hard. It's all they know. What can we give them that equals what they have - they have money, drugs, friends -how can we change that and what can we offer?"
- "Employment and shelter are needed to help people out."
- "They leave and they have no money - welfare won't give you enough to move. Some of the workers don't care and won't do anything. If you come in looking like a gang member, you won't get anything."

Addressing the Gang Problem: Can youth gangs and related issues be handled without addressing possible underlying causal factors in the community, such as unstable neighbourhoods and poor academic performance?

Steve Shropshire and Michael McFarquhar (2002) of Manchester, commented,

The gang culture's impact, effect and consequences extend beyond the conventional wisdom that treats the problem as an isolated issue purely within the context of criminal activity. It is not just a crime issue it is also a social, an economic and a public health issue. Social Services, education authorities, public

health authorities, local authority housing, Connexions, schools and urban regeneration bodies all need to place a higher priority on addressing both causal and symptomatic factors and problems. (p.2).

On the basis of research literature review, Huff (2002) similarly observed,

... [G]angs are not *the* problem; they are instead a dependent variable- a symptom of more fundamental, causally prior independent variables that have numerous dysfunctional consequences for our society, one of which is gang-related crime. (p. 293).

Vigil and Yun (2002) expressed a very similar view. They suggested that enforcement alone without attention to the causal variables for gang problems is likely to be inadequate.

A United Nations Report (2003) maintains that efforts to fight gang membership that are based only on the criminal aspect of gang problems are the *most ineffective*, since the socio-economic and other factors that cause youths to join gangs are not addressed. It further argues that since the youth gang members are often afraid of mainstream society, they join the gangs for acceptance and security. It recommends community-based programs combining prevention, intervention and suppression strategies, with particular attention to the mutual relationship between the social institutions and the youth at a given time and place (for example, pre-gang or about to leave a gang), and observes,

Efforts to guide juvenile gangs towards socially acceptable avenues of behaviour are needed. At present, most rehabilitation initiatives are not working to redirect the energies or potential of gang members into socially desirable activities. One promising area of prevention work involves strengthening the position of victims by developing relevant programmes and training for them and supporting victims' associations. The problem of youth victimization is still characterized by a certain theoretical vacuum. Recent studies have shown that differentiation between offenders and victims is based not on sex and age, but on differences within each gender These and other gender-related considerations must be borne in mind in the development of prevention programmes. However, it must be acknowledged that the thoughtless expenditure of money, time or effort for spontaneous or poorly developed measures will do little to solve the problem; research and evaluation must therefore be integrated into all prevention efforts. (p. 206).

Prevention/Intervention Measures

What preventive actions might be effective in combating youth gangs: providing better education (to at-risk or involved youth and their families) and job opportunities, enhancing community resources, increasing family support (to minimize alienation) or other rehabilitative measures?

Spergel (1995) indicated that social intervention strategies applied in the 1960s and 1970s were not effective in reducing gang problems, but the lessons learned were valuable in the development of newer approaches. He recommended a more comprehensive, coordinated and wider approach at the grass-roots level that focused on providing outreach services to youth gang members. According to Spergel, "Youth workers need to operate at the grass-roots, tenant, and local agencies, public housing, and employment settings in the provision of a range of services to both older and younger gang youths. The development of new arrangements for the delivery of a greater range of more complex outreach gang services requires a higher level of coordination across professional disciplines and types of agencies, better trained and educated workers, and a strong commitment to long-term research and evaluation, to determine which social intervention arrangements and techniques are, in fact, effective." (p. 261). He further observed that in creating social opportunities for younger children at risk, it would be extremely important to restructure schools so that they become community education facilities to serve the needs of parents as well. For adolescent gang youths, a valuable step would be to create link between a well-structured learning experience and work opportunities - as a viable alternative to gang activities for survival. Similarly, for older youths and young adult gang members, it would be valuable to provide employment opportunities.

Shelden et al. (2004) described Spergel and Curry's (1990) typology of interventions in the Comprehensive Model as follows:

- 1) **community organization**, meaning a collaborative effort by various community organizations to establish a healthy community;
- 2) **social intervention**, including crisis intervention, providing positive role models for youth, inter-gang mediation, counseling, assistance to leave gangs, and drug prevention and treatment.
- 3) **Opportunities provision** refers to providing youth, especially high-risk youth, with employment, employment training and education.
- 4) **Suppression** means a variety of enforcement activities such as employing special gang units, police patrols as well as legislation and prosecution.

Spergel and Curry's research showed that community organization was ranked the highest for effectiveness, followed by opportunities provision. Social intervention was considered the third, and the least effective strategy was perceived as suppression. A more detailed description of the implementation of the Comprehensive Model in various US cities will be presented in the following section.

Howell, Moore and Eagley (2002) observed that for the past two decades, responding to youth gang problems in the United States had been characterized by a suppression policy on the part of police, and that this policy had not been effective or the long-term effects were not yet known. Many communities, they maintained, adopted more comprehensive approaches such as integration of the youth into society, and addressing the multiple problems caused by the gang membership in terms of life choices. The authors pointed out that the Office of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) had engaged in an integrated approach to the youth gang problem - comprising of (i) community mobilization, (ii) social intervention, including prevention and social outreach, (iii) opportunities provision, (iv) suppression/social control and (v) organizational change and development. The preliminary results seemed to be encouraging, and a planning guide to help communities apply the above comprehensive approach was available. A combination of strategies seemed to be the most efficient way of dealing with gang problems. For example, in areas where there might be risk of gang

proliferation, awareness, education and training similar to the Gang Resistance, Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program might be beneficial; in areas already experiencing gang activities, intervention could be effective, and in areas where the gang problem was serious, targeted suppression (as was practised in Boston) might be necessary (Esbensen, 2000; Curry and Decker, 2003; Wyrick and Howell, 2004).

The OJJDP has been recommending strengthening and mobilizing communities as an essential part of an effective strategy in dealing with juvenile delinquency and juvenile victimization for some time (OJJDP, 2002 Internet). A report stated that even a community with limited resources has been found to improve the situation with respect to drug abuse, physical environment and protection of youth, through Community Responses to Drug Abuse (CRDA) initiative. It also suggests,

Using community as a unit of analysis shifts attention from individual incidents of crime as such (the undifferentiated categories of murder, assault, drug trafficking, etc.), and generalized responses (law enforcement, gun control, drug interdiction, stiff sentences) to local dynamics, local impact, and local opportunities. [Community analysis] suggests that the fear caused by violence is as much a problem as violence itself; that local responses can successfully fight the drivers of violence (street gun and drug markets). It emphasizes the power and potential of local resources, local alliances, and local experiments in violence prevention. (p.2).

Studying the problem from the angle of gangs' involvement in illegal and informal economy, Hagedorn (2002) concluded, "filling our prisons with low-level workers in the drug economy, many of them heavy users, is a poor way to compensate for our economy to provide secure work and our government's failure to provide a realistic safety net." (p. 120). He also argued that the phenomenon of gang persistence in Milwaukee, where he conducted his field research, was not due to "community disorganization", but was a result of disadvantaged people who had to deal with permanent social and economic exclusion.

Fleisher (1998) studied the two most notorious gangs in Kansas City, MO (the Fremont Hustlers and Northeast Gangsters), and proposed a “social intervention” model. He suggested that if gang members could be provided with genuine opportunities for legitimate income and many other benefits associated with it, such as immediate access to money, food, clothes, and shelter, when they needed it, then the gang problem would be solved. He observed that in most cases, the official responses did not address the gang-involved youths' needs in a timely and appropriate manner. For example, many centralized service delivery systems were inaccessible to the youth who needed it most, because of their lack of transportation. Instead, he suggested residential centres (especially for gang girls) outside high-crime areas and near high schools, colleges and jobs - where the youth would be able to utilize the services more easily.

In Manchester, UK, some researchers (Shropshire and McFarquar, 2003) have suggested the following strategies to combat gang cultures, specifically gun violence. The present paper quotes the strategies for the value of the details:

- **Staff selection criteria:** Streetworkers should already be known and trusted by young people and parents in the community and should themselves be from the community. They should ideally be in the age range 25-35 (much younger and they will not command respect with older members of the community, and much older and they may not “connect” as well with this target group of young people). It is essential that they accept the need to work with close co-operation with *all* partner agencies including police and other criminal justice agencies and genuinely recognise the benefits thereof.
- **Proactive outreach and non-traditional hours of working:** Streetworkers should work non traditional hours including evenings and weekends and be on call 24 hours a day to talk to or meet with young people or concerned, anxious or frightened parents
- **Outreach on the streets:** Streetworkers should directly approach young people in the streets targeting unknown and unidentified young people in known problem areas as well as ensuring frequent contact with known gang involved young people. Streetworkers should provide support to other youth workers working in gang affected areas. Streetworkers should have clearly marked identifiable 'streetworker' vehicles, not unmarked cars.
- **Outreach in the schools:** Streetworkers should liaise directly with schools to identify and reach gang-involved, high-risk and marginally gang-involved

young people in order to keep them from causing problems in the class room and ensure a safe environment is maintained in the school.

- **Working with Education Welfare Officers and excluded young people:** Streetworkers should liaise with Education Welfare Officers when a young person from a gang affected area is facing exclusion to ensure appropriate alternative provisions keep the young person off the streets thus limiting exposure to gang influences.
- **Outreach in the home:** Streetworkers should make regular visits to the homes of gang-involved or high-risk young people in order identify the needs of the young person's family and link them into the appropriate service provider agencies.
- **Acting as interface between statutory agencies and young people and families:** Streetworkers should be on hand to assist Social Workers, Youth Offending Team Officers, Probation Officers, Police Officers, Education Welfare Officers and Teachers on home visits to families of gang involved young people
- **Conflict prevention, resolution and mediation:** Streetworkers intervene in crisis situations and assist police and other criminal justice agencies in cooling tensions between young people from rival factions. Streetworkers also work with school pastoral teams in order to identify signs of impending disputes and carry out timely preventive action or mediation.
- **Working with incarcerated young people:** In conjunction with Probation and Youth Offending Team officers, Streetworkers should work with young people, and, where appropriate, their families, during periods of incarceration to ensure there is a smooth transition from incarceration to life back in the community.
- **Risk assessment and supervision:** Streetworkers should liaise with criminal justice agencies to ensure detailed assessments are carried out and support YOT and Probation teams in implementing supervision orders. (p. 12).

Thornberry and his colleagues conducted a longitudinal study (from 1988 to 1997) of gang-involved and non-gang teenagers and their parents in Rochester, New York and came to the conclusion "we simply don't know what works in reducing gangs, gang membership, or gang behavior It will take time, resources and commitment" (p. 202, 2003). However, they recommended early prevention programs that were multi-faceted, culturally sensitive, girls-inclusive and had strong peer components in them. They also observed that

A general strategy for reducing youth crime also needs to be mindful of the

sizeable impact that gang membership has on serious and violent delinquency. Working directly with gangs, however, has not yet proved successful and can even be counterproductive. It may be more productive for juvenile justice practitioners to use gang membership as a marker variable and send gang members, on an individual basis, to programs for serious delinquency that are proven effective. (p.18, Thornberry et al, 2004).

Wyrick and Howell (2004) maintained that while comprehensive approaches were the best response to youth gangs, some communities might find it more expedient to use a 'strategic risk-based' response. They explained that a strategic risk-based response begins with an understanding of youth gangs, an in-depth assessment of local gang problems, combined with the community's understanding of the multitude of risk factors related to gang problems. The National Youth Gang Center of the USA developed a gang assessment instrument and tested it in 30 urban and rural sites. This instrument is designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to answer such questions as: What, where and when are the gang crimes committed? Has there been any change in the crime pattern over time? What are the characteristics of youth already involved or at-risk youth? How do the community members including the leaders perceive the problem? Wyrick and Howell suggested that communities with limited resources might adapt the instrument to their own needs by focusing on the most relevant issues. They noted that tracking gang crime was important for establishing a base line for communities and evaluating programs, and that a tracking system can be developed easily by adding a check box on incident and arrest reports, a standard operational definition for 'gang-related crime' and appropriate training of police officers.

Since research indicated that the accumulation of risk factors across domains increased the probability of gang membership and criminality, Wyrick and Howell believed that a strategic response must address these risk factors across domains. To do this, a community-wide (leaders to grassroots) comprehensive approach including prevention, intervention and suppression has been considered effective. An alternative approach might involve strategic partnerships among diverse providers of service to the same high-risk population. Strategic multiple partnerships among complementary programs found to

be effective in reducing one or some of the risk factors would be more cost-effective for communities with limited resources. Depending on the identified local needs, in some situations an intensive probation program could partner with an after-school program offering pro-social activities and tutoring, as well as with a parental counseling program. Another suggestion from these authors was to expend limited resources on those risk factors that are easily amenable, such as school performance, rather than community disorganization. In addition, these researchers recommended that both process and impact evaluation must be included in any program planning. Even a carefully-planned inexpensive monitoring would be useful, if formal evaluation was not feasible. Careful planning of the entire strategic risk-based response was essential, and not to be sacrificed to serve expediency, in their view.

Most researchers agree that a multi-agency, multi-faceted approach to gang problems would be effective. Based on the stage and intensity of the problem, this effort would need to combine community mobilization, social intervention (crisis intervention, providing positive role models for youth, inter-gang mediation, counseling, assistance to leave gangs, and drug prevention and treatment), opportunity provision (for education and employment) and lastly, targeted suppression. General suppression alone has not succeeded in reducing youth gang activities, as shown by research, and discussed in the following section as well. The following section also discusses a few recommended strategies.

Are there good youth programs in place to reduce youth gang problem? Have any of them been evaluated? What are the results? What have we learned? Are they applicable to other geographical/social/political circumstances?

There are several Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) programs in the US that have been evaluated and found to be effective or promising by researchers. Some of these programs are described below.

1. In Dallas, the Police Department engaged in a saturation patrol of gang prevalent areas and enforcement of aggressive curfews and prevention of truancy. Quasi-experimental comparisons of gang-prevalent treatment sites with matched sites, as well as of the treatment areas before and after treatment were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative. Researchers (Fritsch, Caeti, Taylor & Robert, 1999) believed that based on crime levels (including number of gang-related crimes and number of violent and property crimes) across both treatment and comparison sites before and after program implementation, the initiative had helped to reduce gang-related violence in the treatment areas.

2. Thurman, Giacomazzi, Reising, and Mueller, D. G. (1996) reported an evaluation of a gang prevention and intervention initiative. In this initiative, a variety of activities, programs and services were offered from 10 p.m to 2 a.m in a community centre called "The Neutral Zone" in Mountlake Terrace, Washington, to youth at risk of joining gangs. The objective was to provide these youth a healthy and safe alternative. Researchers examined police data for the six-month period when this program was in operation and concluded that it had reduced the calls for service significantly during the hours it was open, as compared to a six-week period that included two weeks when the facility was temporarily closed.

3. A Gang Prevention, Intervention and Suppression Program, also known as the Comprehensive Gang Model, the Comprehensive Gang Strategy, or the Spergel Model, has been utilized in combating gang violence in the Little Village area of Chicago and later at five other OJJDP demonstration sites (Bloomington-Normal, Illinois; San Antonio, Texas; Mesa, Arizona; Tucson, Arizona; and Riverside, California) across the US. Based on the social disorganization theory, the model strives to bring together community and social agencies such as law enforcement officials, social welfare agencies and grass-roots organizations and to build them into an integrated team. This approach includes as its essential components community mobilization, social intervention, provision of social opportunities, suppression, and organizational change and development of local agencies and groups.

Spergel and Grossman (1997) were involved in evaluating the Comprehensive Gang Strategy used in the Little Village Gang Reduction Project. As part of this project, the outreach workers' daily activities consisted of: working as part of a team, monitoring the gang situation in the community on an ongoing basis, providing social intervention and social opportunities, working with the community to reduce gang violence, addressing the issue of police harassment of gang members (when they occurred), and other outreach performance tasks as necessary. The quasi-experimental evaluation of the project compared a group of gang members arrested for gang-related crimes and a group consisting of gang members who were not in custody. Approximately 200 hardcore gang members from 17 to 25 years of age, from two of the largest, most violent gangs in the Chicago area were targeted. Briefly, the program aimed at targeted control of violent or potentially hardcore, violent youth gang offenders, in the form of increased supervision by probation department and suppression by the police, together with provision of a wide range of social services and opportunities for program participants. The data consisted of project participants' self-reported criminal behaviour, number of crimes reported to police, court records, probation records, number of gang-related crimes, and community feelings of fear and worry as documented in police records in affected communities. Both participants' self-reports and the official records showed decreased violent offences and other crimes among the treatment group members, as well as residents' feelings of increased safety, decreased fear of victimization, and perceived decrease in community crime levels. The researchers found that over the duration of the four year project, the target area had the lowest level of gang homicides, aggravated batteries and aggravated assaults committed by older youths, compared with six other gang-violence areas, and with four pre-project years. The project did not seem to have a similar impact on younger gang members.

Spergel and his colleagues also evaluated the application of the Comprehensive Model in the five other OJJDP demonstration sites using quasi-experimental design, where the treatment group (age 12- 21) was matched with control groups from other similar areas. Organizational surveys, interviews of program staff and participants, focus groups, field

observations, service records and arrest data were utilized in multivariate statistical analyses and in collecting qualitative data. In Riverside and Mesa, the researchers observed positive results with respect to a number of dependent variables such as arrests for serious violence, repeat drug arrests and property offences. Local crime records showed similar improvement. However, no statistically significant change was noted in the other three areas - a finding Spergel attributed to inadequate implementation and neglect of one of the five essential components of the Model.

[*The Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* (Howell, 1995) provides extensive information on the model and instructions on implementing the OJJDP Comprehensive Strategy. Technical assistance manuals that guide implementation of each of the components are available from the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse by calling 800-638-8736. The OJJDP recommends that the model and its strategies be designed on the basis of a systematic and thorough assessment of gang problems, and targeted implementation through a step-by-step process and that continuous evaluation be included. It also suggests that an overseeing committee that includes key stakeholders be responsible for providing overall direction and support for the implementation of the strategy.]

4. One of the suppression programs rated as effective by the OJJDP (Internet), was known as Operation Hardcore, launched by the Los Angeles (California) District Attorney's Office in 1979. This program focused on prosecuting hardcore gang members, both youth and adults, aged 12 to 35 years. An evaluation using an interrupted time-series design was conducted in 1981 (Dahmann, 1983) that found that hardcore gang members compared with non-hardcore groups (not in the program) received faster and more thorough prosecution and incarceration. However, due to insufficient data on the youth, the evaluation primarily dealt with adult cases. It should be noted that there are no data on the long-term effects of this program in terms of gang involvement of those who were prosecuted and incarcerated.

5. Another effective (OJJDP rating) gang prevention program primarily applied targeted suppression strategies. It was implemented in Orange County, California in 1992. The program was called The tri-Agency Resource Gang Enforcement Team (TARGET) that aimed at reduction of gang problems by selective incarceration of identified most violent and repeat gang offenders, enforcement of probation controls (graduated sanctions and intensive supervision) on younger, less violent gang offenders, and arrests of gang leaders in “hot spots” of gang activity. Each multi-jurisdictional team interacted and shared information closely and efficiently for this program, and included gang investigators (police), a probation officer, a deputy district attorney, and a district attorney investigator. The most violent offenders were prosecuted and efforts were made to obtain the lengthiest period of incarceration possible for them.

The evaluation (Kent, Donaldson, Wyrick and Smith, 2000) examined the identification and prosecution of gang offenders, collected pre-implementation and post-implementation crime data in Orange County and two other comparable communities. The results seemed to indicate that the program was associated with a reduction in gang crime in the program area as compared to other similar areas, by 11 per cent in the first year (1992). The cumulative reduction was 64 per cent the next year, 59 per cent in the following year and 47 per cent through 1997.

6. White, Fyfe, Campbell and Goldkamp (2003) evaluated a homicide prevention program called the Comprehensive Homicide program (also considered effective by OJJDP) which engaged in problem-oriented policing and focused on specific problem areas such as domestic and gun-, drug- and gang-related violence, together with more intensive investigative capabilities of police and intervention measures for at-risk youths. Thus, the program considered the role of police not only in the role of reactive enforcers after the fact (i.e., investigating homicides and arresting the perpetrators), but proactively in addressing issues that might lead to homicides. The prevention/intervention strategies included police collaboration with the community, the Richmond (California) Public Works Department and the housing authority in a plan that emphasized crime-reduction

and community pride; with the local public schools for an “adopt-an-elementary-school” program, a middle school mentoring program by police officers, and the use of the local Police Athletic League Center to provide job skills to youths and adults. The program also included collaboration with the Contra Costa County Probation Department to develop a probation-officer-on-campus program for high schools, with the juvenile justice system to develop a youth court program, and with the Battered Women's Alternatives and Rape Crisis Coalition towards reducing domestic violence. These preventive functions were coupled with intensive team enforcement plan to obtain information on high-profile homicides, to collaborate with the FBI for information on unsolved, cold homicides, with the Drug Enforcement Administration, the FBI, and the California Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement to obtain information on violence-prone members of the drug culture; assigning an evidence specialist to the local detective bureau, and improving information sharing and technology.

The researchers collected data on the victim-related, offender-related and incident-related characteristics of all homicides in Richmond from the police database and interviews with key officials. It also used an interrupted time series analysis in a quasi-experimental design to examine the frequency of homicides in Richmond. Finally, the evaluation compared the nature and frequency of homicides in Richmond with 75 other California cities with similar population size of 75,000 or more. The results showed a reduction of homicides in Richmond, especially in the areas of the initiative, by more than one homicide per month, accompanied by a reduction in non-lethal violence after the initiative. Similar reduction was noted in other California cities as well that practised problem-oriented policing.

7. Williams, Curry and Cohen (2002) evaluated a prevention/intervention program, *Movimiento Ascendencia* (Upward Movement) for female youth aged 8 to 19 in Pueblo, Colorado. This was an after school program headed by the Pueblo Youth Services Bureau that offered academic skills enhancement, recreation, and other interpersonal skills training and mentoring to at-risk and gang-involved girls. The program's outreach workers were trained in conflict resolution and mediation, as well as in recognizing signs

and symptoms of drug and alcohol abuse. Participants received information on safety and self-defense, sexuality, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

A non-equivalent-group, quasi-experimental design was used. The treatment group consisted of a random sample of program participants - 61 girls consisting of 32 non-gang members, 20 gang members, and 9 former gang members, while the control group consisted of a sample 61 girls consisting of 32 non-gang members, 13 gang members, and 16 former gang members. The data were collected during the final 12 months of the program through interview-based surveys. The program participants showed a statistically greater reduction in delinquency (various acts of vandalism, theft, running away from home, etc.) as well as higher grades than the control group members during the pre-program and post-program periods.

8. A promising (according to the OJJDP) gang prevention and intervention program is called the Boys and Girls Club Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach that tried to meet 6-18-year old at-risk and gang-involved youths' needs for belonging and supportive adults. Participants were given opportunities for challenging activities in a pro-social way through after-school recreational activities. The specific objectives of the program were to decrease target youths' gang-related behaviours and contact with the juvenile justice system, and at the same time, to increase school attendance and school performance by individualized case management. The evaluation of the program (Arbreton and McClanahan, 2002) included a large number of youths recruited to the Boys and Girls Club over the period of about 10 months. The survey sub-sample included 232 prevention and 66 intervention youths. Data came from the review of case management records, questionnaires, interviews and focus groups of youth clients and program directors. The results showed that those who participated in the program had less gang-related behaviours and contact with the juvenile justice system, and more positive social relationships, school attendance and performance.

9. Operation Ceasefire is a prevention and intervention program that has received much acclaim from the evaluation researchers (Braga, Kennedy, Waring, and Morrison, 2001) and has already been replicated in other US cities, including Minneapolis, Minnesota; St. Louis, Missouri; and Los Angeles, California. There was a rise in gun-related homicide in Boston in the early 1990s, perpetrated by loosely organized youth gangs. Operation Ceasefire was implemented by the Boston Police Department's Youth Violence Strike Force on May 15, 1996 to address this problem. The assumption behind Operation Ceasefire was that youth violence had resulted in a self-perpetuating cycle where youths resorted to guns and violent behaviour to protect themselves. The project hypothesized that a perceivable change in this scenario would work as a "firebreak" (p.273, Braga et al. 2002) and reduce youth gang violence.

The program's primary targets were high-risk youths, serious and violent juvenile offenders as well as illicit firearms traffickers who supplied youths with guns. The Operation Ceasefire program constituted only one integral component of a much wider, collaborative and comprehensive strategy. The others were the Boston Gun Project and Operation Night Light. The prevention strategy depended on meetings with both community groups and gang members, where a zero-tolerance approach and the consequences of gang violence were clearly communicated. The second element involved intervention, addressing violent activities of chronic gang members by reaching out directly to gangs and clearly communicating the zero-tolerance approach. The program's suppression component utilized every available legal recourse against violence, or "pulling every [legal] lever" (p. 272), such as serving numerous warrants and securing long sentences for chronic offenders, rigorous enforcement of probation restrictions, and full use of federal enforcement powers. Braga and Kennedy (2002) explained that "pulling levers" also meant communicating a direct message to all youth gang members that "articulated explicit cause-and-effect connections between the behavior of the target population and that of the authorities. Knowledge of what happened to others in the target population was intended to prevent further acts of violence by gangs in Boston." (p.280). The authorities broke the cycle of violence (i.e.,

violence retaliated by more violence) by immediately contacting the offending gang and thus eliminating the need for retaliation by the victimized gang. This enforcement effort was complemented by a wide range of services and assistance which probation and parole officers, churches, youth workers and community groups provided to the youth.

The evaluation of Operation Ceasefire utilized a basic one-group time-series design and a non-randomized quasi-experiment that compared youth (15 to 24 years) homicide trends in Boston with youth homicide trends in other large U.S. cities. Data on monthly youth homicide, citywide shots fired and gun assaults and citizen calls for service were collected from the Boston Police Department's Research and Analysis for the period of January 1991 to December 1997 - all inclusive. The results showed an improvement on all dependent measures: there was a 63 per cent reduction in youth homicides, a 32 per cent decrease in shots-fired calls, a 25 per cent reduction in gun assaults, and in one high-risk area, and a 44 per cent decrease in gun assaults.

10. As already mentioned, a preventive national program in the USA, called Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) consisted of middle school-based education on crime and victimization, prejudice and cultural sensitivity, conflict resolution skills, drugs and neighbourhoods, personal responsibility, and setting goals. The educational program was presented by police officers. The program has been evaluated more than once by a number of researchers, who used different methodologies. In 1999, a cross-sectional evaluation of program effectiveness involving almost 6,000 grade 8 students from 11 sites was conducted over four years. Although the results of this preliminary evaluation were inconclusive, a comparison between the program participants and control group students showed that program participants had improved on outcome measures such as attitudes towards gangs and gang membership, number of delinquent friends, commitment to pro-social activities, impulsivity, attitudes toward police and attachment to parents. According to the researchers, they also had statistically reduced levels of delinquency and gang affiliation (Esbensen and Osgood, 1999). The results also seemed to suggest that four years after they completed the program, the

program participants demonstrated more positive social attitudes and behaviours on 25 of the 29 measures (Esbensen et al, 2001).

The program was evaluated again (Esbensen, Freng, Taylor, Peterson and Osgood. 2002; Ramsey, Rust and Sobel. 2003) in an urban middle school in Tennessee. Both the treatment group and the control group consisted of Grade 8 students of the same school. The pretest-post-test measures did not show any significant difference between the two groups. However, on the basis of their national evaluation, Esbensen et al. (2002) concluded,

... [T]here may be no one 'silver bullet' program or 'best practice' for preventing gang affiliation and gang-associated violence. The youth gang problem may be best addressed through a comprehensive strategy (such as the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Comprehensive Gang Model) with a multifaceted approach that targets individual youths, as well as peer groups, family, school, and the community. G.R.E.A.T., in tandem with other programs, may prove to be one piece of a much larger solution. (p. 162).

11. The Multidisciplinary Team Home Run Program was a prevention program that targeted at-risk or first time offenders aged 17 or under. It was a wraparound program that included five coordinated teams of professionals from social services, mental health, public health, probation, social services and community volunteers located throughout San Bernardino County, California. The team holistically identified the youths' specific problems and developed possible solutions in view of the youths' family and social circumstances. Intervention measures might include counselling, group therapy as well as restorative justice elements such as victim restitution and community service.

The evaluation of this program was based on interview data from the 145 gang member and 137 non-gang member participants (mostly male and Hispanic with an average age of 15 years), the family members, probation and school officials. The results suggested that after six months of participation, a significant improvement was noted for both at-risk and gang-involved youth in grades, school attendance, reduced suspensions, family functioning, substance and alcohol abuse and subsequent delinquency (Scham and

Gaines, 2005).

12. The Philadelphia Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP) was another multi-agency, wrap-around program that included various youth-serving organizations and criminal justice agencies. It aimed to reduce homicide rates and victimization of 14-to-24 year-old youth under court supervision or in contact with probation or parole officials for violence or drug offences. The program staff consisted of members from more than 10 public and private organizations and more than 50 police officers, probation officers and street workers. The staff members were in close contact with the youth and the family through frequent visits. The police and the probation officers also worked closely with each other to ensure strict enforcement of probation. YVRP sought to assist participants towards a more productive life by providing them with increased supervision, vocational counseling, access to job skills and employment, mentoring, health care, and drug treatment. Street workers played a major role in this program, through mentoring, helping with health care and counseling, and even helping the youths' parents with job hunting, house hunting and health care to ensure a more stable family life for the youth.

The evaluation was based on homicide data for the period of January 2000 to July 2003 in the 24th and 25th Police Districts (after the program started). The researchers analyzed monthly statistics for each participant, held semi-annual interviews with street workers, police, and probation officers and collected information on the youths' daily activities by following street workers and probation officers. The homicide data from the Philadelphia Police database suggested that homicides were significantly lower in the 24th and 25th Police Districts after the YVRP was in operation, in comparison with the citywide trend (McClanahan, 2004).

13. A prevention/intervention program (OJJDP designated as “promising”) called “Gang Resistance Is Paramount (GRIP)” sought to educate students aged 6 to 17 years about the consequences of gang involvement, and their parents about the warning signs. The program was implemented in Paramount, California in 1982. It provided sessions on peer pressure, drugs, alcohol, self-esteem, family, crime, gangs and territory, and gangs and

vandalism, and recreational facilities to the participants. Older students were given opportunities to learn about and discuss topics such as drugs, alcohol, dropping out of high school, teen pregnancy, self-esteem, consequences of a criminal lifestyle, higher education and career opportunities. In addition, it provided support to the parents through neighbourhood meetings to help them eradicate gang activities in their homes and neighbourhoods. The program staff was knowledgeable about gang activities. Results of evaluation studies showed that 90 per cent of the program participants had negative attitudes toward gang involvement, both after participation and in later follow-ups (Arnette, and Walsleben. 1998). The most recent evaluation of the program showed that compared with the control group, only 6 per cent of Grade 9 GRIP participants reported being involved in gangs. The effect was seen primarily among males (Solis, Schwartz and Hinton, 2003).

14. Operation Kids CAN (Care About Neighborhoods) in Indiana was described as another successful program that encouraged youth to take responsibility for their communities through pro-social activities such as vegetable planting, crafts and painting - to reduce graffiti. The Detention Diversion Advocacy Project (DDAP) in San Francisco was another example. The DDAP strived to provide multilevel community interventions and an alternative to secure custody for youth who were or were likely to be in secure custody. This was accomplished through integration of services across a number of organizations and a continuity of care. An evaluation showed a much lower recidivism rate (34%) for the DDAP youth compared to a matched non-DDAP youth (60%) sample. The DDAP was not originally planned to deal with gang problems, but many of its clients were gang members or were at-risk. These authors also described a long-lasting gang intervention program - "so-called detached worker program" (p.246) that did not work very well. The program involved job training, family and individual counseling, recreational opportunities, tutoring as well as surveillance and psychiatric treatment. The antisocial activities of the youth were found to increase. The authors believed that some of the factors responsible were lack of program integrity and inadequately trained and overworked staff. Many other programs have not been systematically evaluated.

15. Williams, Curry and Cohen (2002) described an evaluation of a gang prevention program specifically targeted at female gangs in Pueblo, Colorado. They concluded that this project, operated by a private, nonprofit, community-based organization, had provided the most comprehensive services focusing on the risk factors. The staff was well trained, there was a minimum amount of bureaucracy and the project was led by the executive director, who was closely involved. The results of the evaluation indicated a reduction in self-reported delinquency for the participants.

16. In Redlands, California, police have utilized a new approach called "risk-focused policing". In this approach, information on adolescent problem behaviours, risk and protective factors together with existing programs are fed into and analyzed by computers to provide maps of high-risk areas by census blocks. Police can better plan the allocation of resources according to the needs of the communities identified (Rich, 1999).

17. A Community-University Model for Gang Prevention, initially developed for a small city (Racine, Wisconsin) consists of the following major steps: a genuine commitment to the youth expressed through communication, mutual trust, assistance in solving their problems; investigating and assessing the gang problem; forming a task force to network and collaboratively identify and develop solutions; identifying and collaborating with a local college, university or other community resource for studying the gang problem and providing necessary documentation in order to secure program funding; the publication of research findings, identifying funding sources, expanding network by conferences and other means, and establishing political foundations; and developing new programs and their implementation (Takota and Tyler, 1994).

Unfortunately, information on evaluated Canadian programs to combat youth gang problem is scarce. A majority (60%) of these programs were located in either urban or rural Quebec and together, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba accounted for approximately 36 per cent. Only 5 per cent of the programs were identified

in Ontario, one in Northwest Territories and in other jurisdictions, youth gangs were not considered a relevant issue (Mellor, MacRae, Pauls and Hornick - PESP, 2005).

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC) undertook a comprehensive study of programs and services against gang development and gang activities (2005). In summarizing their findings, the researchers indicated that although the list was not exhaustive, a total of 77 specific Canadian anti-youth gang programs were identified, described, and categorized by their level of prevention. Most of these programs and services were community-based, involving many partners including police, corrections, outreach workers, community health professionals, and even former gang members. The National Crime Prevention Centre had funded 69 per cent of the programs. Other public institutions' contributions and private funding were also mentioned. A majority of the programs focused on raising awareness about gangs and/or providing education. At the secondary level of prevention, programs aimed to address risk factors such as drug addictions, weak family bonds, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and difficulties in academic and employment areas. The majority of programs focused on primary or secondary level of prevention and education - aimed at keeping youths away from gangs in the first place - with only 10 per cent participating in tertiary programs, providing services to known youth gang members. A very small percentage of programs (3%) tried to implement a tri-level anti-gang strategy. Almost 60 per cent of the programs identified were in the province of Quebec, both in cities and rural area. Together, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba accounted for about 36 per cent of programs, and Ontario had only 5 per cent. The researchers described a number of projects as examples of innovative and diverse programs.

Most of these community-based programs were too recent to have been evaluated.

Mellor, MacRae, Pauls and Hornick (PESP - 2005) commented:

.... [V]ery little is known about the effectiveness of these programs. The lack of evaluation information, to a certain extent, is due to the inherent difficulties associated with evaluating primary and secondary level prevention programs (e.g., the lack of control and the inability to prove that a youth did not join a gang

because of his or her involvement with a particular program). Added to these inherent research design difficulties is the general lack of knowledge about gangs that youth are involved with and how they become involved. Despite these challenges, research concerning youth gangs is possible and essential. (p. viii).

They also indicated that numerous police organizations had special units and/or strategies to address gang problems [reactively]. Similarly, the 2002 Canadian Police Survey on Youth Gangs reported that almost half of the respondents (46%) employed some form of computerized gang intelligence database and/or had dedicated gang units (35%), but few appeared to cooperate and coordinate towards developing a broader, comprehensive preventative strategy. [This report stated that Statistics Canada has added new data elements for identifying organized crime and street gang activity to the latest version of the incident-based crime survey, UCR2 or Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005)]. However, the researchers noted that some evaluation was available for the project in Montreal titled "Inter-organizational collaboration to promote the development of best practice prevention approaches to reduce gang related activities amongst black youth". The project employed a holistic approach linking the family to a network of social, community, cultural, educational and employment supports, life skills training, recreation programs for youth, church support, after-school programs, teen leadership and cultural programs. Other resources complemented social intervention efforts by street outreach workers to assist the youths and the community as a whole.

A Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) publication (2003) titled *Keeping Our Communities Safe and Secure* described several community-based activities to solve youth crime problems, by encouraging youths at risk to stay in school and even by joining the RCMP. One such program was developed by five RCMP members in Winnipeg River Detachment that included a five-day escorted trip to the RCMP Training Academy in Regina. Several of these youths have since applied to join the RCMP. In addition to law enforcement actions against growers [of narcotics such as marijuana], drug distributors and traffickers and money launderers, the RCMP also engages in a variety of community-based drug education prevention programs. In Manitoba, an RCMP

Gang Awareness Unit is responsible for monitoring gang activities and at the same time for providing community-based gang prevention, intervention and educational programs. A tangible result of the efforts of this unit was a gang prevention handbook - produced in collaboration with other local organizations. The Edmonton Police Department has also published a resource guide (available on the Internet) on youths and gangs, to be utilized by parents of youths to prevent and/or to deal with gang involvement.

Arcand and Cullen (2005) interviewed a sample of Canadian police agencies and described 54 programs that involved crime prevention through social intervention. They cautioned that the numbers and percentages in this table do not add up to totals because some programs addressed multiple target groups and engaged in multiple activities. These programs were not designed to directly combat gang problems; however, the preventive work, especially where disadvantaged youths were targeted, benefited youth crime in general, and gang problems in particular by addressing root causes. Most of these programs received funding from the National Crime Prevention Centre and could be regarded as community mobilization strategies. Some of these programs have been evaluated. The following table from Arcand and Cullen presents the nature and percentage of police involvement in these programs:

	Number	Percent of total
1. Type of Police		
RCMP	17	31%
Municipal Police	31	57%
Provincial Police	3	6%
Tribal Police	3	6%
2. Official Police Involvement		
Program Operation	19	35%
Community policing duty	32	59%
Protocol with community agency	8	15%
Special Assignment	3	5%
Volunteer	4	7%
3. Program Targets		
Youth	38	70%
Children	27	50%
Seniors	12	22%

Aboriginal people	10	19%
Women	4	7%
Persons with disabilities	11	20%
Persons with FAS/FASD	5	9%
Immigrants or ethnic groups	8	15%
Business	4	7%
Environment	2	3%
4. Program Base Activity		
Education	37	68.5%
Recreation	14	26%
Safety	25	46%
Environment	6	11%
Community Justice	7	13%
5. Program Dynamics		
Police initiated	31	57%
Community initiated	14	26%
Police only	9	17%

Based on the results of the Canadian Police Survey 2002, Mellor, MacRae, Pauls and Hornick (2005) made several recommendations towards a comprehensive and effective strategy for combating youth criminal gangs. They suggested that the strategy should be based on complete and accurate information on the types of gangs active in various Canadian jurisdictions; the causal factors for youth to get involved in such gang-related criminal activities; the extent to which the risk factors, motivation and opportunity for their involvement were present; presence of active recruitment and the places where this might take place; the possible protective factors; the nature of interactions and interconnection among gangs and known effective strategies in other countries. They believed that research involving community needs assessment, surveys of schools, of targeted high-risk youth communities, of youth detention centres, provincial and federal correctional centres and targeted evaluation of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention programs would provide us with the necessary knowledge to develop an effective strategy.

What do we know about what works and what does not work? Are the effective factors effective in some circumstances and not in others?

Researchers (e.g., Spergel, 1995; Howell, Moore and Eagley, 2002; Shelden et al. 2004) generally maintain that suppression techniques commonly used by the police in many U.S. cities have not been effective or efficient, although systematic evaluation is scarce or not available. These techniques included street sweeps, selective arresting, saturation policing, establishing gang- and drug-free zones, anti-gang units in parks and schools, anti-graffiti units and foot and bicycle patrols in high gang-crime areas. Huff (2002) observed: "suppression is a necessary but not sufficient strategy for dealing with gang-related crime." (p. 292). Esbensen (2000), found in his research that a suppression and saturation approach often assumed that the crimes committed by youth gang members were based on a rational decision-making process; in fact, they were much more spontaneous and included fights, random assaults, and drive-by shootings.

Thornberry et al. (2004) described the results of research on the impact of arrests (i.e., suppression) as follows: "The findings of these studies are quite consistent. In general, arrest has little impact on subsequent delinquent behavior, and when it does have an impact, it is most likely an increase in future delinquent behavior. In addition, those who are arrested and incarcerated as juveniles are subsequently more likely to be incarcerated as adults." (p.12). They suggested that the use of the least restrictive sanctions safely possible, enhanced assistance for re-integration into the mainstream, monitoring and support might be more effective in preventing future delinquency.

Esbensen (2000) discussed primary, secondary and tertiary prevention efforts and argued that all three strategies were necessary in view of the recognized risk factors. Primary intervention targets the entire population at risk and aims to identify the personal, social and environmental factors that contribute to criminal behaviour. Secondary prevention efforts focus on the persons at high risk. Tertiary prevention involves actual gang-members or those who have already committed crimes. Similar to Shelden et al. (see above), Esbensen also presented Spergel's Comprehensive Gang Model consisting of five approaches, namely, (1) mobilizing and linking community resources, (2) connecting

with youth through outreach workers, (3) providing or assisting youth with educational, economic and social opportunities, (4) using suppression and holding youth accountable for their activities, and (5) helping community organizations use a problem-solving approach to deal with gang-related problems. Spergel (1995) discussed this model in detail in Chapter 11 (Planning for Youth Gang Control and Violence Reduction) of his book *The Youth Gang Problem: A Community Approach*.

Shelden, Tracy and Brown (2004) critically reviewed the work of a number of eminent researchers and summarized the components of successful programs. These were:

- (1) The community needs to acknowledge the existence of a gang problem;
- (2) Programs should focus on medium to high-risk youths and utilize a multi-faceted approach that includes social skills/values development;
- (3) Programs must provide alternatives to the criminal life style;
- (4) Programs should put special emphasis on families, schools and communities;
- (5) The staff should be appropriately trained and understand the youths' perspective and experience;
- (6) Programs should lead to legitimate employment by providing necessary job skills;
- (7) There should be a concrete goal of the programs such as a diploma or certificate; and
- (8) Key people should be aware of the possibility of a relapse and the need to provide ongoing assistance.

They provided a few examples of programs that have been effective in combating youth gang problems. Reduction of gang violence in Boston was mentioned among them. A coalition of churches, police and social service agencies was formed under the leadership of the Rev. Eugene Rivers in Boston to deal with those youth who might be helped. "Bostonians credit much of the decrease (71%) in gang-related killings and shootings in recent years to this coalition" (p. 247). A problem-solving partnership was formed between law enforcement agencies and researchers from Harvard University. The researchers carefully examined gang activities, mapped various gangs' territories, studied

the inter-relationships among gangs and identified the worst repeat offenders. The law enforcement officials developed their strategy, Ceasefire, based on this information.

The strategy combined intensive enforcement activity, enhanced collaboration among law enforcement agencies, and direct communication with gangs and gang members at the highest risk of violence. The most widely reported result of the effort was a long-term drop of 60 percent in youth homicide. At one point, Boston went two years without a juvenile homicide. The good news didn't stop with Boston. Here in California, Stockton, a mid-sized city in the Central Valley, adopted the Ceasefire approach in 1997 and used it to reduce gang-related youth homicide by more than 75 percent. Stockton's experience is all the more significant because it didn't have the luxury of a large grant or new funding stream to support a costly anti-violence initiative. The city used the financial resources and programs available to it to build a cohesive strategy based on Boston's approach. (p.1, Wakeling, 2003; California Attorney General, 2003).

Bullock and Tilley (2002) recommended adopting several elements of the Boston project in Manchester, UK: namely, (i) use of highly publicized multi-agency targeted approach against gangs known to use firearms or possessing firearms or engaging in serious assaults; (ii) fostering strong community partnerships to obtain their support, enhance informal social control and reduction of antisocial behaviour; and (iii) communicating with gang members for a consistent message about the targeted onslaught and to provide them with support services. In addition, they also suggested three steps to address local needs: (iv) developing inter-gang mediation services; (v) protecting victims; and (vi) enhancing awareness of agencies about the risks involved in participating in this approach.

In Minneapolis, Minnesota, a team consisting of a Police Executive Research Forum and researchers from Harvard University analyzed the sharp rise in youth gang problem in 1995-96, and developed a strategy of deterrence based on criminal justice intervention combined with social service and community-based intervention. The intervention included home visits, street enforcement, prosecution of gun-violence, warning the victims against retaliation, and posters describing the city's new policy against gang

violence. No formal evaluation was done, but informal observation indicated a significant reduction in the monthly counts of homicides.

A third example provided by Braga, Kennedy and Tita (2002) was from a single Los Angeles neighbourhood (Boyle Heights) that replicated some parts of the Boston model to address a very alarming rate of youth gang-related homicides. In the authors' words,

unlike the other cities where gang and group-involved violence is a rather recent phenomenon, Los Angeles represents an attempt to reduce gun violence in a "chronic gang city" with a long history of gang violence and an equally long history of gang reduction strategies. Given the social organization of violence in Boyle Heights, the multidisciplinary working group fully embraced the pulling-levers-focused deterrence strategy developed in Boston. The processes of communicating the message have also been formally adopted though to date this has been accomplished by personal contact rather than in a group setting. Police, probation, community advocates, street gang workers, a local hospital and local clergy are all passing along the message of collective accountability for gangs continuing to commit gang violence. (p. 278-279).

Informal observation indicated a reduction in the homicide rate following the intervention. The authors attributed this reduction to proactive responses based on collection and sharing of information among agencies. From the experience of these communities, it seems that the approach utilized in Boston might work in various circumstances, with some changes based on specific local needs.

Shelden et al (2002) have mentioned the recommendations for a national strategy to deal with gang problem as presented by Curry in 1989. The components of such a strategy, in Curry's opinion, should have the following components: early educational interventions, expansion of health and mental health services, family support programs, constructive, rehabilitative activities for offenders instead of incarceration, and drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs. In addition, attention must be given to reduction of racial inequality, poverty, inadequate services and better preparation of the next generation for employment. They also cited Margaret Phillips (1991), who argued that poverty and powerlessness were the two key variables causing crime and delinquency, and therefore,

needed to be addressed through programs that strive for full employment, welfare reform, raising the minimum wage, health care insurance for all, and low-income housing for the homeless.

In their article "Gangs and Community-Oriented Policing", Huff and Shafer (2002) discussed the possible role of police in dealing with the gang problem. In their view, frequent and regular interaction between the police and the community was likely to be effective in this regard. In Community-Oriented Policing, the police were not in the typical post-incident reactive mode. The authors described three models of police action: (i) suppression or active law enforcement including investigation, gathering information, and street enforcement; (ii) intervention involved programs and actions to assist gang members to leave the gang-related activities and avoid re-involvement, and (iii) prevention - or programs to help youth avoid getting involved in gangs in the first place. According to Huff and Shafer, longitudinal research supported the superiority of the intervention and prevention approaches over the suppression approach, which was most often the way gang-related problems were managed by police. They emphasized the need for identifying gang problems in a community, accurate information gathering and more importantly, sharing information and collaboration between the police, other criminal justice agencies, community service organizations and citizens for an effective way to deal with youth gang problem, or even to prevent gang-subcultures from developing.

An integrated, collaborative approach between the community and the police seemed to have been effective in reducing gang problems in some parts of the United States (Huff, 2002). Huff acknowledged some difficulties of successful community policing to deal with gang problems. Need for resources - both human and economic - might increase in the short run. Improving intelligence capacities, sharing intelligence and coming to a consensus regarding necessary actions with other community agencies might present a challenge to some police agencies. Police must also strive to sustain strong community involvement.

In five problem areas in Dallas, for example, a 57 per cent reduction in gang-related violence was reported as a result of joint activities by gang police and community policing officers, in working closely with schools. They employed saturation patrols, combating truancy and curfew enforcement.

Community policing teams worked with prosecutors and city inspectors to identify multiple-housing communities in Chicago where property damage, gang graffiti, nuisance problems and criminal code violations took place. Landlords were notified in areas of significant problem and trained to take actions. The results were impressive in reduced rate of narcotic offences and property crimes.

In Redlands, California, community-policing officers engaged in risk-focused policing, by collaborating with school officials to assess community, family, school and peer risk factors. Police, housing and recreational services then worked together to reduce the risk factors for substance abuse, delinquency and violence with a 36 per cent drop in crime over three years.

In Columbus, Ohio, a Strategic Responses Bureau was created. The community liaison officers targeted habitual offenders, collected accurate and timely gang-related information in specific neighbourhoods and passed this information to investigators and street-crime officers. The Bureau worked with federal law enforcement officials and prosecutors to effectively reduce violent crimes such as gang-related homicides.

Other projects in the US that have utilized multiple partners citywide include the Los Angeles Metropolitan Task Force, the Boston Gun Project - Operation Ceasefire, the Bureau of Justice Assistance Gang Suppression Prototype, Minnesota Statewide Task Force and Tri-agency Resource Gang Enforcement Team (TARGET).

A group of researchers (Weiler et al working on behalf of the FCM, 2002) warned against blindly applying gang intervention strategies used in the United States to Canadian

communities. They provided a few examples of gang prevention/reduction strategies applied in Canada that utilized a collaborative, balanced and comprehensive approach in their opinion.

Coquitlam, British Columbia responded to a growing concern with youth violence (not necessarily gang-related) through a number of community-based initiatives such as Active Youth Network (AYN). The AYN included representatives from the local police, the BC transit police, schools, the probation and the local Crown Counsel. The AYN aimed at consistent, regular and ongoing communication among all the representatives to discuss areas of criminal activity and surveillance, as well as possible programs and activities such as case management, participation in public forums and community education sessions.

In Calgary, the Community Resource Committee was developed together with several police-initiated programs such as Serious Habitual Offender Program (SHOP), a school liaison program and a community-wide Safer Schools Task Force. The Committee was comprised of representatives from the Calgary Police, public and separate school boards, the City of Calgary Social Services, the Parks and Recreation, the Chamber of Commerce, the Boys and Girls Club, the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society and the Calgary Association for Young Immigrants. This Committee identified potential problem areas and provided support to the community task groups or other organizations to address the relevant issues through coordinating and monitoring programs. One CRC initiative (Participating and Liaising Actively with Youth or PLAY) served at-risk youth through outreach workers and offered pro-social alternatives to criminal activities by means of educational information and supervised recreational activities. The Marlborough Mail initiative, another example, formed a community task group to address the problems of youth crime by exploring and developing alternatives for at-risk youth. The task group members were representatives from local business, community associations, parents and youth, police, social services and parks and recreation departments.

The third Canadian community mentioned by the FCM was the Ottawa-Carleton Youth and Violence Initiative launched in 1992. Representatives from youth-serving agencies, the school system, the police and other community groups coordinated and convened a conference in 1993 that resulted in a report, collection of data, identification of key issues, and ways to address the concerns. The six key issues were (i) the service system response; (ii) the youth justice response; (iii) safer schools; (iv) what are we teaching young people about violence? (v) community awareness and participation; and (vi) staff training and development. These were presented to six task groups consisting of young people, community members and youth-serving agencies to develop and implement short-term, medium-term and long-term actions. The FCM indicated that these plans were being implemented.

Some researchers have examined the issue of youth violence and criminality (including gang phenomena) from the angle of racial tension between the police and minority youth. In Brown's (2004) study of African Canadian people in greater Toronto area, some of the solutions offered for the problem of racial tension between African Canadians and the police were as follows: hire more African Canadian police officers with the caveat that just having a better representation would not reduce the tension; the police needed awareness and skill-training; create positive outlets for youth; help police bring law-breakers to justice in close collaboration with the community; don't criminalize entire communities; recognize African Canadian youth potential; know that some of us are wealthy; eliminate negative stereotyping; improve police interpersonal training; interact and communicate; recognize your own vulnerabilities; and keep youth behaviour in perspective.

Finally, some scholars have recognized the importance of communicating with youth themselves in solving the youth gang problem, and of conducting evaluation of any anti-gang strategy. For example, White (2004) in discussing possible police and community responses to youth gangs in Australia commented,

This is perhaps the key message of gang research – that police and community responses to gangs must combine several different kinds of measures, in ways that enhance the participation and social inclusion of young people generally. Another lesson to be drawn from overseas research and program implementation is the importance of evaluation. Particularly in the context of interventions that are frequently experienced by young people as racially-based and anti-youth, evaluation of any tactic or strategy is essential. (p. 6).

Researchers described several examples of effective programs in the USA and Canada, designed to combat youth gang problems. Depending on the extent and stage of the problem, primary, secondary or tertiary intervention efforts were considered necessary. These programs, together with targeted suppression, typically focused on medium to high-risk youths and utilize a multi-faceted approach including social skills/values development; they utilized clear, unambiguous and direct communication with the most serious gang members regarding consequences of violence, sought to provide youth with alternatives to criminal life style and put special emphasis on families, schools and communities. These programs utilized appropriately trained staff that understood the youths' perspective and experience. Most researchers agreed that a multi-agency, multi-faceted approach to gang problems would be effective in almost all gang-related situations. Based on the stage and intensity of the problem, this effort would need to combine the most effective components: community mobilization, social intervention (crisis intervention, providing positive role models for youth, inter-gang mediation, counseling, assistance to leave gangs, and drug prevention and treatment), opportunity provision (for education and employment) and lastly, targeted suppression. General suppression alone has not succeeded in reducing youth gang activities, as shown by research.

What strategies do police in Canada utilize now to combat youth gang activities? How well are they working?

About one-third of agencies (35%) that participated in the 2002 Canadian Police Survey indicated having a dedicated gang unit and/or gang officers in place, or having sworn officers with gang-related duties (41%). However, very few agencies (14%) across

Canada reported having established a gang prevention unit or having dedicated gang prevention officers. The researchers observed that the provinces of Saskatchewan (88%), Ontario (52%) and Quebec (50%) utilized gang intelligence databases more than the national average. British Columbia (50%), Manitoba (50%) and Ontario (40%) were reported to utilize dedicated gang units or gang officers above the national average (35%). A few other resources that were mentioned were: "Scorpion" agent planted within major gangs, dedicated youth crime unit, utilization of RCMP's DARE program, non-computerized gang intelligence files, weekly gang intelligence meetings, School Resource Officers (SROs) tasked with gang identification and prevention (several positive responses were noted) and specific youth gang policies established (several responses were noted).

However, it should be noted that a Government Accountability report in the USA (Kanof, 2003) reviewed six long-term evaluations of the DARE elementary school curriculum and concluded that there were no statistically significant long-term effects of DARE programs, and that differences in illicit drug use between students who participated in DARE in the fifth or sixth grade (the intervention group) and a control group were not significant.

A recent RCMP publication (Viau, 2006) mentioned that in 1998, "The National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) focused on crime prevention through social development (CPSD) and community capacity building, supporting communities in developing innovative, grassroots approaches to preventing crime and reducing victimization through collaboration at all levels of government and communities. It placed particular emphasis on children and youth at risk, Aboriginal peoples and the personal security of women." (p.6). She also described the RCMP's Youth Priority mandate articulated in 1999 that would strive to develop a shared understanding of youth involvement in crime, both as victims and offenders - while finding ways together with other partners to prevent and reduce it; to implement the response continuum as recommended by the new (2003) Youth Criminal Justice Act; use the strategy of crime prevention through social

development in identifying risk and protective factors in order to address the root causes, and focus on building community capacity and establishing improved police-community partnerships. The development and implementation of a Youth Outreach Worker *Program* was a part of this strategy - aimed at intervention and help for at-risk youth. As research cited above shows, these have been found to be effective components in combating youth gang problems.

Are there good partnerships between the police and others? Who are the partners and how do the partnerships work?

In November, 2005, a Toronto paper, "*Backgrounder*" published a few excerpts released by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) regarding several projects delivered by Service Canada as part of the Skills Link Program. Under the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy, the Skills Link Program targets youths who typically face barriers in getting employment. The youth could be single parents, Aboriginal youths, youths with disabilities, recent immigrants, homeless youths and youths without a high school diploma. It provides them with information and assistance to acquire necessary knowledge, experience and job skills to facilitate their access to the labour market. Although not all of the programs are directly connected to gang problems, this type of project is useful in providing disadvantaged youth an alternative to a criminal life.

The first project described under the Skills Link Program is Breaking the Cycle, and is aimed at providing assistance to Toronto area youth gang members in leaving gangs and becoming integrated into the community through life-skills training and employment skills training. The partner is the Canadian Training Institute.

The second project, Community Safety: Multi-Barriered Youth Project seeks to assist a large number of youths facing a multitude of obstacles and living in high-risk areas of Toronto to develop a broad range of educational, interpersonal and employment skills

and help them participate in the job market. In addition to workshops, youths engage in community service activities, including involvement in peer support and community safety activities. The partner is the City of Toronto, which is responsible for implementing the project in partnership with community-based agencies to support the City of Toronto Neighbourhood Action Plans and Community Safety.

The third project was being led by the Community Unity Alliance in partnership with Toronto Police Service, Canadian Tire and the RCMP. The project would provide a variety of life-skills, social skills (e.g., conflict resolution, communication) and employment skills (such as resume and job application writing) to youths facing employment barriers. These youths would learn to refurbish old bicycles for distribution to children in low-income families.

An Ontario Government press release on the Internet (Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, 2005) stated that the Ontario government was working with police and community groups to promote safe communities. The Ontario government budgeted \$37.1 million for the Safer Communities program designed to emphasize crime prevention. Five hundred of the additional 1000 police officers to be recruited under this program would be assigned to community policing duties involving street patrols, school and youth outreach and increased traffic enforcement. Other government programs mentioned in this report included (i) Safer Communities Grant program to support crime prevention partnerships between police and local organizations; (ii) Toronto Guns and Gangs Task Force that was expanded by the Attorney General in October 2005 to add 32 Crown prosecutors and 26 experienced police officers; (iii) Public Education and Crime Eradication (PEACE) project attempting to target directly the problem of gun violence in Toronto in cooperation with youth, police and community organizations; and (iv) Jobs For Youth program that helped youths from high-risk neighbourhoods get summer jobs during 2003 and 2004.

The Youth Priority strategy of the RCMP (Viau, 2006) states that between 2006 and 2011, with a view to implementing the strategy's mandate, the Youth Services will form partnerships with all stakeholders in Canadian communities. They would include governments at all levels, parliamentarians, members of provincial legislatures, members of Aboriginal governments and municipal councilors; the voluntary sector, community-based organizations, youth serving agencies and professional associations, youth and their parents, grandparents, Elders (including Aboriginal) and families, business organizations; religious, spiritual and cultural leaders, academics and researchers, school boards, teachers, health care providers, youth care workers, social workers and coaches at all levels for all age groups among youth, police and correctional workers and others who work directly with children, other professionals, and the media.

Fleming (2005) indicated that a number of well-designed evaluations demonstrated strong support for Neighbourhood Watch programs in Australia. She proposed that such programs provided the tools for effective community policing, which she described as partnerships between the police, other agencies and the community. According to Fleming, these partnerships were likely to enhance community-police relationships through greater involvement of the community in preventing and reducing crime, as well as foster improved perception of safety and security for the citizens.

Several examples of police and community partnerships or plans for such partnerships exist in the research literature. Partners might be schools, city or municipal authorities, businesses, churches, community service organizations, housing societies and criminal justice agencies. Youths from high-risk areas as well as other areas are potentially valuable partners.

Is there any perceived (by the police and the community) or actual contradiction between enforcement and preventive functions? Is it feasible for the police to engage in both types of activities in their role as police officers? How do we determine the priorities in terms of enforcement vs. preventive functions?

Canadian police have been performing prevention and law enforcement duties in several diverse roles in the community for many years. In combating gang problems in Canadian communities, it may not be a choice of one or the other exclusively, as research cited above has indicated that a combination of strategies tailored to the unique need of each community might be the most effective one.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (1994) mentioned school resource/liaison officers who not only engaged in sports events and field trips but also in developing programs such as Student Crime Stoppers, and relating with at-risk youths to provide guidance; police/youth sports leagues officers participated in sports with at-risk youths particularly in low-income neighbourhoods; specialized units such as ethnic liaison units, street crime units, gang units and youth squads attempted to address specific issues; police youth mentoring programs were established in a number of Ontario communities, black and aboriginal communities, with positive results. Community policing programs sought to establish closer partnerships with communities in combating crime.

Based on her study of African Canadian residents in Toronto, Brown (2004) indicated,

Few interviewees doubted the value of police-community initiatives such as Toronto Police Service's T.R.O.O.P program, which reports good success in making connections and opening the doors of communication between youth participants and the police. T.R.O.O.P sends at risk youth on Outward Bound-type wilderness outings with police volunteers. Over the course of a week-end as police and youth together navigate treacherous rapids or watch out for bears, barriers melt and humanity replaces the badge. Such programs should be continued and expanded, with one caveat: they are not vaccines that guarantee long periods of goodwill. The benefits need to be invested back into continued opportunities for dialogue when the participants return. (p.49).

The programs mentioned in a previous section such as AYN in BC, SHOP in Calgary and Youth Violence Initiative program in Ottawa-Carleton demonstrated that it was possible for the police to engage in preventive functions as well as enforcement activities. In fact, most of the research reviewed earlier in this report recommended both preventive and enforcement (targeted) actions on the part of police, in collaboration with youth-serving community agencies and other societal organizations for effective prevention and

reduction of gang problems. Therefore, it may not suffice to prioritize one or the other (prevention vs. enforcement); rather, both might need equal attention. It has been observed,

Police services world-wide have come to recognize the need to couple intervention (enforcement practices) with prevention (addressing the root causes of crime). Consequently, the concept of crime prevention through social development (CPSD) was developed. Canada's national police force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, has officially made addressing the root causes of crime part of their strategy, particularly in dealing with youth. Likewise, provincial and municipal police forces across the country have created programs or community partnerships to assist with social development, addressing those risk factors which make people more vulnerable to, and at higher risk of, engaging in criminal activity. (p.5, Arcand and Cullen 2005).

However, based on responses of police officers in Canada, Arcand and Cullen (2005) also pointed out that in spite of official endorsement of police officers' involvement in crime prevention through social intervention,

many police force members see crime prevention through social development as being "soft" on crime. Several of the members interviewed because of their involvement in CPSD projects expressed frustration at the attitudes of their fellow officers, which tend to be punitive and "hard-nosed", rather than working towards a problem-solving approach. Interestingly, it seems that many of those officers are younger members, who had not had enough years of experience in dealing with people to realize that a punitive approach does not act as a deterrent or resolve the underlying issues such as social risk factors. (p.18).

This quote exemplifies the perceived incompatibility between law enforcement (the prototypical police activity: "chasing the bad guy") and preventive actions through social intervention. It should also be noted that police officers assigned to or choosing to engage in social intervention or outreach or community policing activities should not have to do this as a volunteer - it should be an integral part of their duties, and recognized as such. Arcand and Cullen observed that in spite of the formal mandate, there was a noticeable lack of official endorsement of police involvement, especially the RCMP, in many promising and effective programs - resulting in the dedicated police officers' involvement on their own time, as volunteers, and with a risk of 'burn-out'. Another obstacle to the

sustainability of effective programs was identified as the typically short service assignment about 2 years for most police officers in any given community. Establishing rapport between the police and the community, which is essential for preventive efforts, takes time, and so often, once it is established, the police officer is transferred and a new officer takes his/her place.

These researchers quoted Chief Edgar Macleod, then President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police:

The CACP in 2002 passed a resolution that in essence endorses the blending of Crime Prevention Through Social Development with other successful approaches. The same resolution recognizes the police role as more facilitating community based social development approaches. It is our belief that programs rooted in the community are more likely to be sustained than programs that directly depend on Police resources. It is our view that the police should openly endorse and show their support for citizens who give generously of their time and treasure to the social development of our youth. This approach also recognizes the increased service demands on limited police resources. The police need this kind of support to ensure fewer youth become "at risk" to commit crime.

However, the data regarding actual assigned duties of police officers, including the RCMP, to this kind of program showed that this statement was not yet implemented into consistent action.

Some of the recommendations made by police officers and reported by Arcand and Cullen were:

- Ensure sustainable funding, not just for pilot studies with a duration of one or two years.
- Sincere commitment by senior officers to crime prevention as **real policing** is important. It needs to be promoted, implemented and rewarded - instead of police officers doing this on a volunteer basis.
- Develop proactive crime prevention programs, instead of reactive programs.
- Training for building effective partnerships is needed.
- Need time, training and resources for proper evaluation of programs.

- Networking with other police departments across the country would be helpful.
- RCMP should include information on social risk factors in national training programs for police officers.

In describing the approach taken to combat gang activities, Wakeling (2003) stated that the typically reactive orientation of the police was replaced by an emphasis on crime prevention through problem-oriented policing or community policing in Stockton, California. He further pointed out that this proactive approach extended to other partners in Operation Ceasefire; representatives from all agencies and institutions in the criminal justice system at every level contacted the high-risk youth *before* they perpetrated a crime of serious violence. These representatives, including the workers from gang outreach programs, the social service providers and the clergy communicated clearly that there would be really tough consequences to violence in terms of law enforcement, and choosing the genuine alternative to violence might save their (youths') lives.

The Norfolk Police Assisted Community Enforcement program is another example of at least a partially effective community policing program to deal with youth gang problems in low-income housing areas (Cronin, 1994). Weston (1995) described another community policing initiative of Reno Police Department that formed a Community Action Team composed of representatives from minority neighborhoods, officials from community service agencies, and political leaders. The CAT program focuses on intervention in the cases of violent gang members as well as prevention efforts for other gang members who are not considered hard-core. The program has not been independently evaluated but the local officials believe in its success.

We have noted Huff's (2002) observation before:

... [G]angs are not *the* problem; they are instead a dependent variable — a symptom of more fundamental, causally prior independent variables that have numerous dysfunctional consequences for our society, one of which is gang-related crime. (p. 293).

In view of this fact, recently, similar to the Safer Sunderland Strategy of Sunderland, UK, the RCMP has initiated a plan to develop and implement a crime reduction and prevention plan in Nunavut (personal communication), as a pilot project in partnership with community members, Federal/Territorial, municipal and Aboriginal partners and NGOs. The Northern Youth Action Strategy Community Pilot Project is a three-year project that would strive to achieve the long-term objectives of safe communities, healthy people, community well-being, and learning, skills development and work. Annual interim reports and a final report at the end of the third year would be produced to evaluate the results. This approach is not targeted specifically at combating youth gang problem; however, it is expected to have a wider benefit for the entire community.

The Safer Sunderland Strategy indicates that Sunderland had been predominantly using a reactive and enforcement-oriented approach to treating the symptoms rather than addressing root causes of crime, disorder and drug abuse. The Strategy sought to remedy this situation by focusing on prevention of crime and drug abuse, identifying people/places at risk, early intervention for people at risk, providing support, and rehabilitation for those who need, complemented with prompt enforcement action when deemed necessary. The Safer Sunderland Strategy uses a comprehensive, holistic approach to combating crime and disorder and encompasses strategies to address diverse issues such as housing/accommodation, homelessness, neighbourhood, community and local road safety, health care for youth and adults with drug/alcohol abuse problems, priority offender strategy, corporate involvement plan, children and youth strategic partnership prevention strategy, city centre management plan, domestic violence statement of intent and partnership agreement, cultural strategy, children's services plan, education single plan 2, adult learning plan, study support strategy, area regeneration frameworks, economic development strategy and local development plan.

This approach is based on the assumption that taking care of crime and disorder in any shape and form would address the root causes of youth crime and help achieve a safer community.

Are the strategies to combat youth gang activities different from those employed for combating random youth crime?

Data indicate that the risk factors for adolescent problem behaviours within gangs or outside gangs are very similar. For example, Kathleen Coolbaugh and Cynthia J. Hansel (2000) found that the community risk factors for adolescent problem behaviours were: availability of drugs, availability of firearms; community laws and norms favorable to drug use, firearms, and crime; media portrayals of violence; transitions and mobility; low neighborhood attachment and community organization and finally, extreme economic deprivation. The family risk factors were stated to be: a family history of problem behavior, family management problems, family conflict, favorable parental attitudes toward and involvement in the problem behavior. The school-related risk factors were early and persistent antisocial behavior, academic failure beginning in elementary school and a lack of commitment to school. The individual and peer-related risk factors were rebelliousness, friends who engage in delinquent behavior, favorable attitudes toward problem behavior, early initiation of the problem behavior, substance abuse, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, dropping out of school and violence. The similarity of these variables to risk factors for gang involvement is obvious, as described below.

Similar to the above, research on youth gangs has consistently demonstrated (e.g., Braga et al. 2002; Wyrick and Howell, 2004) that the risk factors are availability of alcohol, other drugs, and firearms; high-crime community, disorganized, disadvantaged and unstable neighbourhood; economic deprivation and poverty; negative attitude toward and low attachment to school, negative labeling by teachers; inadequately functioning schools; truancy; suspension and dropping out of schools; parental criminality; family violence, inadequate parental supervision, discipline and care; gang-involved and/or delinquent peers or peers addicted to alcohol or drugs; antisocial attitude and aggressive behaviour, poor social skills, victimization and/or exposure to violence. On the other hand, the protective factors are the presence of supportive, caring adults (parents/teachers

or others), opportunities for pro-social activities, well-established social norms in stable neighbourhoods, highly efficient schools, effective parents and attachment to “normal” family, good relationships with pro-social group of peers, and social competencies.

Thornberry and his associates (2004) sought to understand the causes and correlates of delinquent behaviour by conducting longitudinal research (the Denver Youth Survey, the Pittsburgh Youth Study, and the Rochester Youth Development Study) for the past 17 years. Consistent with previous research, they found that the self-reported delinquency level for youth who received maltreatment (e.g., physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect) during adolescence was significantly higher (69.8%) than that for those who were never maltreated, and the delinquency level for those maltreated in both childhood and adolescence was the highest (71.4%). They also examined possible explanations for the strong relationship observed between gang membership and delinquency and concluded that

individual gang members are not fundamentally different from nonmembers, but when they are in the gang, the gang facilitates their involvement in delinquency. That is precisely what the Rochester data showed. ... This pattern is found across the 4-year period studied and is observed for various offenses, particularly violence, drug sales, and illegal gun ownership and use. Many of Rochester’s findings about gang membership were replicated in Denver’s high-risk sample. The social processes of being an active gang member clearly facilitate or enhance involvement in delinquent behavior. (p. 10).

However, they also noted that the gang members, compared to non-members were

more likely to be involved in higher levels of minor and serious delinquency and drug use, were more involved with delinquent peers, and were less involved with conventional peers. They also displayed weaker beliefs about the wrongfulness of delinquent behavior and a greater willingness to make excuses for involvement in delinquent behavior. (p.14).

It seems logical therefore, that providing appropriate support, guidance and services to address these root causes in the community, family and schools would be useful to combat not only gang problems but also random youth delinquency. Targeted suppression of the activities of a few repeat offenders who typically participate in the

majority of violent crimes should supplement the prevention efforts. However, gang formation and expansion involve other factors, as already discussed, and a careful collection and analysis of data regarding the areas of intense gang activities, the type of offences committed and the principal offenders would be a useful and essential step to solve the problem. Research also indicates that most youth gangs have a fluid structure where a leader can be easily replaced, and other members can be recruited, if necessary. Therefore, arrest or incapacitation of one member, even a leader, does not necessarily mean that the gang's survival will be affected or its criminal activities curtailed. A related issue is that of the nature of the punishment of youth gang members; incapacitation by sending them to the prison for a number of years rarely prepares them for an alternative life-style, and in many cases might give them the opportunity to form a permanent liaison with hard core adult criminals. In order to provide them with a genuine alternative, such as skill-training that might lead to a decent employment opportunity has been recommended by numerous researchers cited above.

Conclusion

Research suggests that some of the common reasons why youth-gangs may develop and thrive are the fulfillment of basic needs such as the need for:

real opportunities for a better life-style;
love, companionship and belonging;
recognition, self-worth and acceptance;
power, status and excitement;
structure, opportunities and discipline; and
physical safety and protection.

It is easy to see that the social institutions that normally satisfy these needs are family, school, neighbourhood and community/society. Therefore, the risk factors that increase the probability of youth not having these needs met in a healthy way may often cause crime and gang-prevalence. This emanates from the distorted perception of youth that the only choice they have to survive or to earn any money is by engaging in crime and belonging to a gang. Risk factors may include growing up in disorganized, disadvantaged neighbourhoods and in unstable, impoverished, dysfunctional families; poor academic performance, low attachment to school and teachers; associating with delinquent peers; and the tendency to engage in various forms of problem behaviours. Such background factors as experiencing racism and marginalized social status, poverty, lack of family and community support, and media portrayal of violence and criminal lifestyle are also often associated with the primary risk factors.

Therefore, in any prevention program, intensive efforts aimed at the reduction of the risk factors for youth must be undertaken. On the other hand, the protective factors are considered to be high self-esteem, highly developed social, intellectual and problem-solving skills and good academic performance - many of which are either the antecedents

or the consequences of good family support, discipline and guidance, good role models in the neighbourhood and community, and realistic hope for positive opportunities in life.

So the basic premise for any prevention and intervention effort seems to be that programs must be targeted at providing at-risk and gang-involved youth with positive opportunities for fulfilling these needs. In other words any gang-reduction program must include support and counseling for families, especially for hard-to-reach families and communities of at-risk youth, education and training for youth for earning honest livelihood, skills for conflict resolution, and recreational activities (for example, after-school programs) that give youth a healthy lifestyle alternative as well as a sense of self-worth and self-respect. Anti-bullying programs may also help in reducing children's and adolescents' reliance on physical violence for power, thrill and excitement, or just encourage conflict resolution. In this report, we have seen examples of programs that have been evaluated and considered effective, because these programs included these elements. It can be easily seen that police alone cannot provide the multi-faceted remedies required for the complex socio-economic problems at the root of gang prevalence.

Empirical evidence has shown that community mobilization was one of the most effective strategies in addressing the gang problem. This implies garnering support and full participation of neighbourhood residents, churches, and educational/social/outreach agencies in both urban and rural communities, in all socio-economic levels and racially homogeneous or diverse neighbourhoods which are affected. Community mobilization and strengthening and sharing resources at the grassroots level need to be integrated with long-term prevention strategies in any gang-reduction program.

Research also points out the effectiveness of a multi-faceted, multi-partner, comprehensive and balanced strategy to prevent, reduce and combat gang problems. Youth and the media should be considered major players among the partners. The bulk of the empirical evidence discussed in this report seems to suggest that a combination of prevention, intervention, and targeted suppression (of known violent gang members)

strategies work most effectively in addressing the gang phenomenon. It is also crucial, according to Spergel (1995), a recognized expert in gang research, to develop policies and programs based on appropriate targeting of institutions and youth, the stage of gang involvement of the youth and the stage of gang problem in the community.

Finally, any intervention strategy will need to be cognizant of possible politics of the situation - for example, the perception of being too tough vs. too soft with the youth. It will need to strike the correct balance in its approach, and in order to gain community support, be perceived by the community as fair and sensitive. The RCMP already emphasizes problem-oriented policing based on observation, analysis and targeted response in training its cadets. A complex situation such as a pervasive and ever-increasing youth gang problem, especially where racial tensions might exist, may require education and extensive training of police in more advanced and complex problem-solving and interpersonal skills.

Recommendations:

1. An acknowledgement by community stakeholders of the existence of gang problem and a systematic and comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of the problem of each community should be undertaken as the first step in developing any policy or program. This should include an objective assessment of the extent of the problem, the nature of the gangs and their activities, and the perceptions of the neighbourhood residents.

2. Official data on youth gangs and their criminal activities and information from probation and parole officers, schools, community-based youth agencies, prosecutors, corrections officers and community residents should be systematically collected.

Researchers have also observed: "long-term proactive investigations of entire gangs are more effective than short-term, reactive investigations of individual gang members."

(OJJDP, 2000). [A PESP 2005 report stated that Statistics Canada has added new data elements for identifying organized crime and street gang activity to the latest version of the incident-based crime survey (UCR2) (Uniform Crime Reporting Survey) (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005)].

3. The law enforcement community is well positioned to provide leadership in gang prevention and reduction efforts. However, available empirical evidence points to the merit of using multi-agency coordination and it seems that any policy or program development is more likely to succeed if other community institutions (e.g., schools, university research community, church, youth organizations and families), service organizations (e.g., outreach workers, local clubs like Boys' and Girls' Club) and members of the justice system (policy makers, probation officers, prosecutors and defense lawyers) are also involved as team players. In fact, research indicates that community mobilization at the grassroots level was the most effective way of addressing the gang problem. Representatives of at-risk youth and those involved in gangs might also be valuable resources.

4. All key players need to come to a consensus on definitions of terms such as “youth gangs”, “gang activities” “gang codes”, on the principles of prevention, intervention and suppression, on the immediate, interim and long-term strategies and their objectives, as well as on the allocation of respective responsibilities.

5. Strategies that combine components of prevention, intervention, and suppression seem to be most effective in combating the gang problem. Providing youth-at-risk, gang-involved youth and especially those who wish to leave gangs with pro-social skills training, educational and job opportunities for a healthy lifestyle must be an integral component of any prevention/intervention program.

6. Increasing awareness of gang problems toward prevention and counseling and support for effective intervention must be provided to the parents and teachers of at-risk and gang-involved youth. Data demonstrate that risk factors for joining a gang and remaining

attached to a gang as a member may come from many sources, including individual personality tendencies, dysfunctional family, poor school performance, association with delinquent peers and disintegrated neighbourhoods or communities. An effective gang-prevention/intervention/suppression program, therefore, should address all of these variables.

7. Consideration needs to be given to ongoing collection through community-wide surveys, self-reports of youth and official records, monitoring and sharing of gang-related information for implementing collaborative, interrelated strategies of formal (through strategic law enforcement and monitoring) and informal (community residents collaborating to maintain safety, order and discipline) social control. A combination of data collection methods would ensure the comprehensiveness and appropriateness of the strategies at any given stage. Accurate data collection is essential for a targeted approach to gang problems. We have seen that in at-risk areas awareness, education and training similar to the Gang Resistance, Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) might be beneficial; in areas already experiencing gang activities, intervention could be effective, and in areas where the gang problem was already serious, targeted suppression (as was practised in Boston) might be necessary.

8. Adequate resources and their proper allocation are essential for such an initiative to be effective.

9. Any program for addressing the gang problem must have an evaluation component so that knowledge on this important social issue can increase and contribute toward developing subsequent effective programs and strategies.

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