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Comparative report on types of intervention used for youth at risk of joining a street gang

Practices from Belgium,
Canada and France

Montreal, March 2011



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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS REPORT

Comparative report on the types of intervention used for youth at risk of joining a street gang : practices from Belgium, Canada and France.

This report was produced as part of the funding agreement between ICPC and the Government of Canada's National Centre for the Prevention of Crime.

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Introduction

What is a street gang?

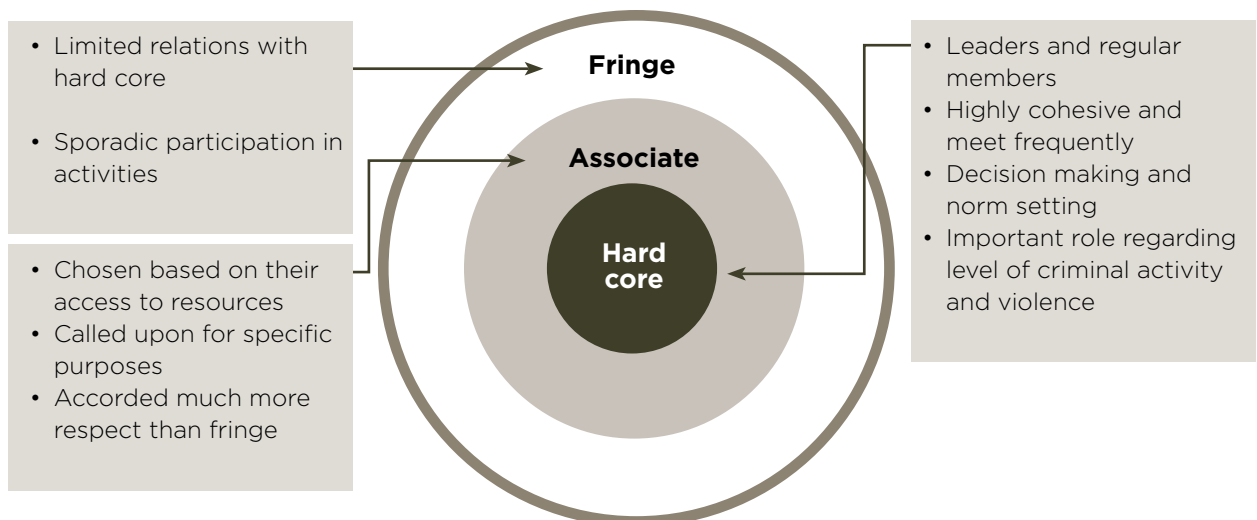
“Youth gangs”, “urban gangs”, “*bandes de jeunes*”, “*gangs de jeunes*”: a variety of terms are used interchangeably to designate what is generally referred to as a “street gang”. Due to the number of different terms used, it is difficult to define precisely what a street gang is. Despite considerable research (Guay and Gaumont-Casias, 2009) on the topic, no universal definition for the term “street gang” has yet been established. There is no consensus, be it among governments, police organizations, community organizations or other civil society actors, as to the criteria for an adequate definition of the term (Barchechat, 2006).

While there may be no consensus as to a definition, what is usually referred to is a group of young people who self-identify as a group, are generally perceived by others as a “distinct group, involved in a significant number of delinquent incidents that produce consistent negative responses from the community” (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2007). The Eurogang network offers the following definition: “A street gang (or a problematic youth group corresponding to a street gang elsewhere) is any stable, street-oriented youth group whose own identity includes involvement in antisocial activity” (Weerman, Maxson, Esbensen, Alridge, Medina and Gemert, 2009). It should be noted that the concepts of identity and delinquent activities are common to both definitions.

Gang structure

While they do not have highly organized hierarchical structures such as are found in criminal biker gangs, street gangs generally are generally comprised of hard core, associate, and fringe members. Figure 1 illustrates and describes the functions of each of the strata.

Figure 1: Street gang structure



Hamel, Cousineau and Vézina (2006).

Street Gang involvement: What are the risk and protective factors?

Risk factors are “life events or experiences that are associated with an increase in problem behaviours” (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2007). They can be divided into five categories: individual characteristics, peer influence, school environment, family and community. Involvement in street gangs may occur when several risk factors are present, as the risks of gang involvement are greater when youths experience risk factors in multiple categories (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2007). Table 1 presents the major risk factors associated with street gang involvement.

Table 1: Major risk factors for street gang involvement

Risk Factors	
Individual characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior delinquency Illegal gun ownership Drug trafficking Anti-social/pro-gang attitudes Aggression Alcohol and drug use Early or precocious sexual activity Violent victimization
Peer group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High commitment to delinquent peers Interaction with delinquent peers Friends who use drugs or are gang members
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor school performance Educational frustration Low attachment to school
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broken home, drug and/or alcohol abuse Family violence Family member who is part of a gang Poverty Lack of adult and parental role models Parental criminality
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High crime neighbourhood Availability of firearms Availability or perceived access to drugs Presence of gangs in the neighbourhood Feeling unsafe

Prince (2008) adapted from National Crime Prevention Centre (2007).

Street gang involvement also often meets one or more of young people’s needs that are otherwise unfulfilled. Thus, young people may join a street gang in search of prestige, recognition, protection, money or a sense of belonging (Hamel, Fredette, Blais and Bertot, 1998). The length of time they remain in the gang is generally quite short, lasting less than a year (SPVM, website http://www.spvm.qc.ca/fr/documentation/gd_46.asp; Spergel, 1995).

There are, however, certain factors which may keep young people from joining street gangs. These factors help young people stay away from gangs and choose their friends in more appropriate ways. The protective factors can be divided into the same categories as the risk factors. Table 2 provides a list of the major factors tied to street gang involvement.

Table 2: Major protective factors for street gang involvement

Protective factors	
Individual characteristics	Intellectual ability and social skills Self-esteem Sense of personal responsibility Pro-social attitudes
Peer group	Positive peer groups Interaction with pro-social peers
School	School success Extracurricular activities
Family	Effective family management practices Solid family ties Family support Residential stability
Community	Presence of community organizations Strong cultural identity Social harmony

Prince (2008) adapted from National Crime Prevention Centre (2007).

Prevention of street gang involvement

In response to the street gang problem, there are numerous actors involved in preventing young people from joining gangs. Prevention initiatives, whether by government bodies, community organizations or the police, are classified as primary, secondary or tertiary depending on their target clientele. Indeed, prevention may be done with young people who have had little or no contact with street gangs, just as it may be done with gang members. The format and contents of the activities, however, will differ considerably. Table 3 presents each of the levels of prevention with the respective targets, objectives and timing of intervention.

Table 3: Description of levels of prevention

Prevention category	Target	Objectives	Timing of intervention	Example of activities
Primary	Young people in the general population	Education and awareness-building	Before onset of problem	Discussion group or presentation of a tool in class
Secondary	At-risk youth	Provision of alternative solutions	At onset of problem	Recreational activities (e.g.: putting on a play about what being in a street gang is really like)
Tertiary	Youth involved in activities of a criminal gang	Treatment and rehabilitation	When the problem is entrenched	Gang disaffiliation program

Meeson, Martel, Prince and Montmagny (2008).

Methods

This comparative analysis report will explore different modes of intervention aimed at identifying at-risk youth and promoting dialogue and gang disaffiliation in Canada, Belgium and France. In concrete terms, we sought to identify preventive practices which influence risk or protective factors in the individuals targeted by their activities.

Out of the host of programs set up to address this issue, we selected those targeting young people at risk of becoming gang-involved or who are already members. We identified 11 programs: three in Belgium, four in Canada and four in France¹. We hoped to be able to base our analysis on similar quantities of information. However, many different terms are used to designate street gangs, not all of which reference the same concepts, and it is necessary to exercise caution when making comparisons, both within a single country and internationally (Barchechat, 2006), as the way the issue is identified varies greatly from one place to the next. The international variations are also reflected in the weight given to the street gang issue in public policies as well as by the types of responses implemented to address it and whether they emphasize prevention, intervention or suppression.

An analytical grid was developed to collect uniform information that would be easier to compare and to permit ready access to information on individual projects. The grid was divided into the following 10 categories:

Table 4: Fact sheet categories

> Name of the organization	> City
> Target population	> Year of implementation
> Level of prevention	> Objectives
> How it works	> Partners involved
> Budget and sources of funding	> Results and evaluations

We then proceeded to collect data. In most instances, the individuals in charge of the programs were contacted and a series of questions submitted to them via telephone interviews and e-mail exchanges. Relevant documentation on each of the practices was also consulted.

Once the sheets had been completed, each of the programs was analyzed vertically. Then a horizontal analysis was performed, allowing for comparison of the Canadian, French and Belgian programs.

There are three chapters in this comparative analysis report, each on a specific country. A comparative chart is presented in the conclusion.

¹ The ICPC also published the *Youth Resource Guide* in 2010. The guide is a resource document focusing on youth-led projects and youth initiatives related to crime prevention and the building of safe and healthy communities.

Chapter 1 Belgium



Background

The street gang or “urban gang” phenomenon appears to be quite limited in Belgium. Between the paucity of research and the media hype, it is difficult to gain a clear idea of the scope of the phenomenon (Barchechat, 2006), but all indications are that gangs appeared around the 1990s in the Brussels region. It was only after the 1991 legislative elections, which provoked a series of riots, that the first signs of gang activity were observed in Brussels with the creation of the “New Jack” gang in the rough Matonge district, followed by the appearance of the “Black Demolition” gang and the “Black Wolves” (Van Belle, 2009).

Belgian authorities responded to the phenomenon by establishing a definition of the term “gang”. They defined a “gang” as a group of minors whose behaviour disrupts public order and security (Vercaïne, 2001). As a result of this somewhat broad definition, young people do not need to be involved in criminal activity to be considered part of a gang. Under this legal definition, almost all groups of young people qualify as gangs.

To refine the criteria used to identify a group as a gang, Brussel’s Public Prosecutor’s Office developed a gang typology comprised of:

- Gangs associated with malefactors actively involved in organized crime;
- Relatively informal ghetto gangs that try to take over a territory and put it under their control;
- Gangs with leaders that are organized around a person with a strong personality and are characterized by high levels of violence, induction rituals and rallying signs;
- Spontaneous gangs that form in natural gathering places, like outside schools, clubs and other recreation spots. (Yansenne, 2006)

Given the complexity of the typology, Belgian police forces suggested that the Public Prosecutor adopt a tool to enhance the management of judicial information on urban gang crime through the creation of an “urban gang” data bank (Yansenne, 2006). In 1999, a circular was issued announcing the creation of UG status (for Urban Gangs—see text box). Since then, the region’s police forces have ceased the use of other expressions, adopting the more general term urban gangs instead.

The creation of the “UG” data bank has provided authorities with a stable and reliable snapshot of the situation. It is difficult however to gain access to this type of data. Nevertheless, some figures are available for Brussels. In 2009, there were 29 urban gangs in Brussels, representing roughly 300 individuals (RTL Info, 2009, Van Belle, 2009). While in 2006, nearly 600 incidents were reported for the entire greater Brussels region (Yansenne, 2006), in 2009, the police responded to 531 incidents in a single police zone (Brussels-Ixelles) (Van Belle, 2009). The data also show that the vast majority of the Belgian young people who make up these gangs and have been questioned by police are males (95%), and while some are minors (40%) and some adults (60%), most are under the age of 26 years (85%) (Yansenne, 2006).

More often than not, Belgian urban gangs are composed of young people of sub-Saharan, especially Congolese, origin (RTL-Info, 2009). Cultural identity issues are at the root of the urban gang involvement of these second generation immigrants. Their criminal activities involve theft, aggravated extortion, and fighting (deadly or otherwise) (Yansenn, 2006, Van Bell, 2009). Incidents tend to take place during the night between Friday and Saturday and half of them occur in public spaces (Yansenn, 2006). The victims are always members of rival gangs.

UG status is a legal “category” used by the Public ministry. To be (temporarily) assigned “UG status”, a youth must have committed, as part of a group and within the past six months, two of the 14 infractions mentioned in a circular issued by the Public Prosecutor on December 28, 2009. The infractions are quite diverse, ranging from the destruction of moveable or immovable property to battery causing death. As a result of being assigned “UG status”, young people are subject to more spot checks in the streets and, if they committed any offences (such as carrying a prohibited weapon), are brought before the Public Prosecutor more quickly. (Nagels and Smeets, 2010)

When urban gangs are subject to criminal action, it is as criminal associations [*associations de malfaiteurs*] (art. 322 to 326 of the Belgian Penal Code) and not “urban gangs” (Vercaïne 2001). The Public Prosecutor’s 1999 circular creating the “urban gang” data bank also cited other infractions that might be used to incriminate these youths such as: the destruction of moveable property (art. 529 PC), drug dealing (art. 2 bis L. 24/02/1921) or gang rape (in particular art. 375 PC) (Van Belle, 2009). It should also be noted that Belgium’s unique characteristics, its dual federal structure incorporating three regions (the Flemish Region, the Walloon Region, and the Brussels-Capital Region) and three communities (the Flemish Community, the French Community, and the German-speaking Community), make the implementation of a unified anti-urban gang policy much more difficult (Swinneh, Hoste, and De Gruijter, 2006). The federal government is responsible for security and the regions for prevention.

With regard to prevention, the creation of the “urban gang” data bank has had a preventive effect on young people as they are less inclined to display their affiliation with gangs to avoid being entered into the UG data bank (Institut national de criminalistique et de criminologie, 2009). In addition, the police carry out numerous prevention patrols in so-called sensitive neighbourhoods to reduce the feelings of insecurity created by gangs. Also, successive governments have concluded prevention contracts with communes to prevent the urban gang phenomenon. These are “integrated comprehensive” local prevention policies to fight petty crime, social exclusion, insecurity, and, consequently, the proliferation of youth gangs (Cartuyvels, 1996).

Inspirational Belgian Practices

The BE+ Project

<http://www.urbansecurity.be/>



The BE+ project, signifying Brussels, Belgium, empowerment and positive outlook (+), was implemented in October 2009. A few months earlier, the federal minister responsible for social integration and urban policy approached the City of Brussels and the communes of Saint-Josse-ten-Noode and Evere about developing a partnership project related to urban gangs (Nagels and Smeets, 2010). The choice of these three districts was motivated by pre-existing mechanisms as well as their ability to ensure financial, administrative and operational tracking of the funds to be made available to them (Nagels and Smeets, 2010).

BE+ targets young people with ties, close or otherwise, to urban gangs in the regions of the three partners. The main objective is to get active members to exit gangs and to convince young people wanting to join that they have alternatives to delinquency. The BE+ project offers different activities.

Table 5: BE+ Project activities for target audiences

	Behaviour	Objective	Activity
Hard core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Organized crime ❖ Not visible in public spaces 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduced criminal career (reintegration) 2. Gang disaffiliation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Meeting parole conditions > Individual coaching > Social and vocational integration
Wannabes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Violent confrontations with other gangs ❖ Visible in public spaces 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevention of criminal career 2. Distancing from gang 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Individual coaching > Social and vocational integration > Workshops on various topics
Small fry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Loitering ❖ Idolizing older members 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive approach to the concept of friends—and groups of friends (pals not “gangstas”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Structured free time > Involvement in collective projects

Vanderhaegen (2010).

Each of the partners in this project has developed its own methods but these can be divided into two types of work: individual and group. Group work focuses on developing positive motivations and generally involves younger participants, the “wannabes” and the “small fry” on the gang’s fringes. Individual work explores the negative aspects of gang involvement to convince members to exit gangs and adopt healthier lifestyles (Nagels and Smeets, 2010).

The regions involved in the project received support from their local police zones, Polbru and Polbruno, as well as from the University of KULeuven which produced a study on the image of UGs on the Internet and how UGs operate. BE+ also benefited from the expertise of the *Réseau régional bruxellois Bandes Urbaines* [Regional Brussels Urban Gang Network]. Created in 2007, the network serves as a platform for exchanges between police services and prevention authorities in the Brussels region. The Public Prosecutor’s Office joined the network recently, in 2010.

BE+ receives €150,000 a year in funding from the Federal ministry of Social Integration and Urban Policy. This permits the three communes involved in the program to hire street outreach and social workers to work with young urban gang members. Each of the communes receives €47,000 and the sum of €9000 is reserved for joint ventures (e.g.: meetings, evaluation).

 **The NOTA BENE project** (*school dropout monitoring group for the City of Brussels*)
<http://www.bravvo.be/>



In 2006, the City of Brussels adopted a security plan prioritizing the establishment of local monitoring groups to prevent school dropout. This led to the creation in 2007 of the Nota Bene program which primarily targets young people aged 6 to 18 years and their families. The program was integrated into BRAVVO (Bruxelles avance, Brussel vooruit), a non-profit organization which has served as a centralizing body for the City's prevention policy since 2004.

This program takes place outside the school environment as a supplement to existing prevention services, and works directly with at-risk youth have dropped out of school.

It has two objectives:

- > To foster an integrated response to school dropout within the city.
- > To intervene in specific dropout situations referred by its partners.

The Nota Bene project adopts two very different approaches to achieve its aims, depending on whether it is dealing with its partners or with young people and their families. A comprehensive approach is adopted with actors concerned with the school dropout issue (actors associated with schooling and education, key community services, police and justice services). The monitoring group establishes co-operation and dialogue among the local actors concerned, elaborates a condition report including an inventory of resources and actors, a study of the issues at hand and a good practice compendium, and offers information sessions.

An individual approach is used with youths and their families. The program provides support for young people and/or their families, informs young people of their rights and obligations and helps them remedy their school situation, offers young people assistance for certain undertakings (looking for a school, registering or reregistering, skills assessment, etc.) and looks for possible suitable avenues for remedying the dropout issue and rehabilitating the young person's life plans.

The Nota Bene project thus serves as a fulcrum linking all the teaching networks and other partners while providing individualized help to young people and their families.

 **The programme multidimensionnel d'encadrement préventif de la violence urbaine** (PMEPVU)



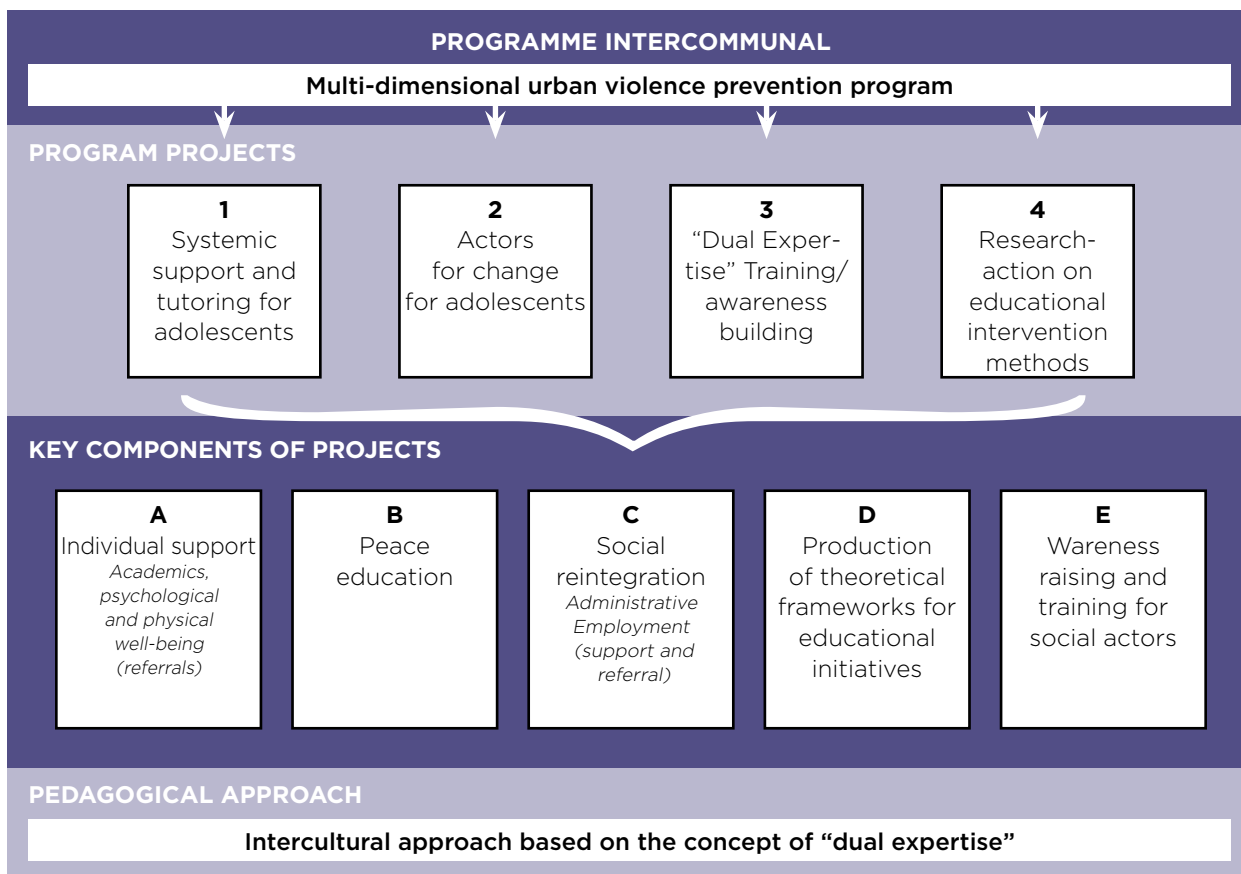
The Ba Ya Ya Observatory (Ba Ya Ya means "big sisters" or "big brothers" in Lingala) was created in 2001. Its main objective is to prevent and reduce delinquency among young people of sub-Saharan origin by restoring social dialogue and developing techniques tailored specifically to working with these young people. The "Programme multidimensionnel d'encadrement préventif de la violence urbaine" ["Multi-dimensional Urban Violence Prevention Program"] for young people from sub-Saharan Africa was created after mediators from the Ba Ya Ya Observatory were called in following a youth's murder by a group of youths from another neighbourhood in 2008. The program started operating on an experimental basis in 2009.

The program is designed to reduce school failure and dropout rates and to create peaceful relations among rival groups of youths. It consists of four projects entailing individual and group activities (see diagram). The PME PVU is a three-phase program spanning a total of two years, and requires serious commitment by the youth involved.

After the first training program, youths are awarded the designation of “Winged Words” (models for others through their words and deeds). The second training program, involving intensive citizenship training through humanitarian placements abroad, earns youths the designation of “Erudite” (in reference to having acquired the ability to analyse and reflect on their social, cultural and economic situation).

In the final phase, youths become “actors for change” (initiating and contributing to changes in their generation’s mentalities) and take part in an awareness-raising campaign.

Multi-dimensional Urban Violence Prevention Program Diagram



Robert and Ndoma (2011).

Fact sheets on Belgian practices

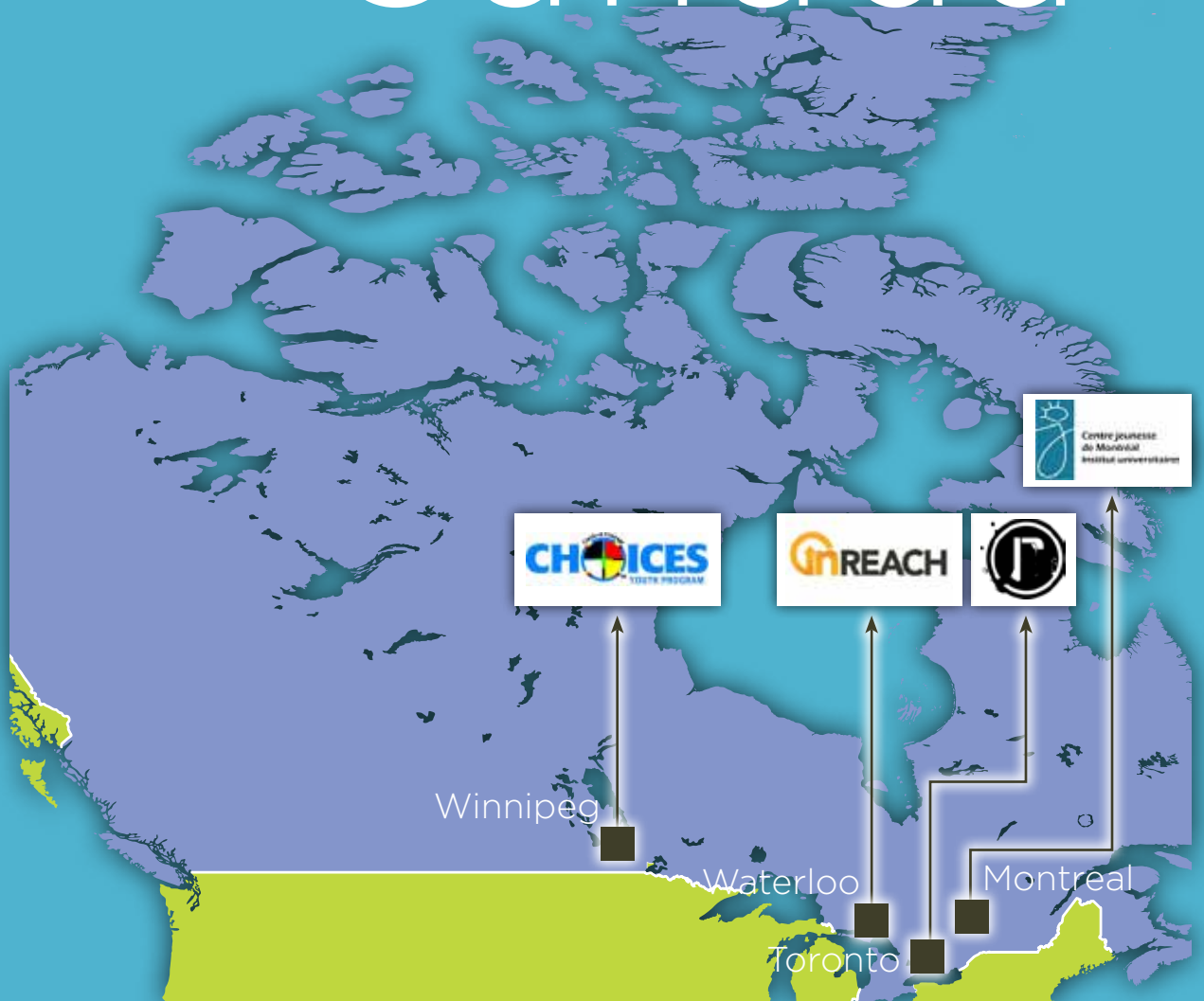
Program title	BE+
Organization	❖ Forum belge pour la sécurité urbaine (FBSU)
City	❖ Brussels and the Belgian communes of Evere and Saint-Josse-ten-Noode
Target population	❖ Youth with close or distant ties to urban gangs
Year of implementation	❖ October 2009
Level of protection	❖ Secondary and tertiary
Objectives	❖ To get active members to exit gangs and to convince young people wanting to join that they have alternatives to delinquency.
How it works	<p>While the projects developed by the three communes are quite different from one another, the various activities can be grouped into two categories:</p> <p>Group activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Recreational activities that provide contact with the youths targeted by the program (e.g. percussion or hip-hop workshops, showing soccer matches, etc.). ❖ Workshops on various topics. ❖ Activities related to urban gangs (e.g. initiation to the concept of forgiveness, raising awareness of the realities of prison life, meetings with members of rival gangs). <p>Individual activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Personal coaching aimed at helping youths develop a “life plan”. ❖ Mediation to facilitate contact between young people being reintegrated and the corresponding institutions (e.g. school, family, justice system, etc.).
Partners involved	❖ The partners are the three communes, the two police zones (Polbru and Polbruno), KULeuven University and the <i>Réseau régional bruxellois “Bandes urbaines”</i> .
Budget and sources of funding	❖ The Federal ministry of Social Integration and Urban Policy provides €150,000 in funding annually.
Results/Evaluation	❖ No impact assessment has yet been completed. However, a report has been written to highlight the accomplishments of the BE+ project and make recommendations for the project as it moves forward.

Program Title	Nota Bene
Organization	❖ Bravvo
City	❖ Brussels
Target population	❖ Young people aged 6 to 18 years and their families
Year of implementation	❖ 2007
Level of prevention	❖ Secondary
Objectives	<p>The aim of the project is to reduce school dropout by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Fostering an integrated response to school dropout within the city. ❖ Intervening in specific dropout situations relayed by the partners.
How it works	<p>The Nota Bene project consists of a comprehensive approach and individual support.</p> <p>Comprehensive approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Establishes partnerships with actors concerned with the school dropout issue of school dropout. <p>Individual support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provides guidance and assistance for youths and families (either residing in the City of Brussels or attending a school there) to sort out the school situation in instances of dropout referred by schools, the police district or field workers. ❖ Redirects towards existing services based on their missions.
Partners involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Nota Bene project establishes partnerships with all actors concerned with school dropout (e.g.: schools in the Vole region, psychosocial and medical services, organizing authorities, Stratégies d'Actions Jeunesse, the family/youth division of the police, community networks, etc.).
Budget and sources of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The project is funded by the Brussels-Capital Region (€150,000).
Results/Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ No evaluation is available.

Program Title	Programme multidimensionnel d'encadrement préventif de la violence urbaine (PMEPVU)
Organization	❖ Observatoire Ba Ya Ya
City	❖ Brussels
Target population	❖ Youth from sub-Saharan Africa
Year of implementation	❖ 2009
Level of prevention	❖ Secondary
Objectives	❖ To reduce school failure and dropout rates, and to create peaceful relations among the various rival groups of young people.
How it works	<p>The PMEPVU is comprised of 4 projects:</p> <p>Systemic Support and Tutoring for Adolescents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Systemic individual and group support of disadvantaged youth to promote academic success. <p>Actors for Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Actors for Change is a project that incorporates peace education, individual support for youth identity formation, and citizenship awareness building for young people that enables parents to be better equipped and develop a sense of accountability and young people and their parents to be gradually integrated into local social, educational, drug rehabilitation, and vocational integration resources. <p>“Dual expertise” training/awareness building for front-line workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Professional training to familiarize front-line workers with sub-Saharan values and history to enable them to communicate positively with young people. <p>Research-action on “dual expertise” intervention methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Identification of good practices developed based on PMEPVU and the profile of members of these gangs.
Partners involved	❖ The organization collaborates with city services, the local police, schools, and street workers on a daily basis (ICPC, 2008).
Budget and sources of funding	❖ The program receives funding from both the public sector (commune of Saint-Josse-ten-Noode) and the private sector (Fondation Reine Paola).
Results/Evaluation	❖ Only 2 of the 4 projects have been subject to an internal evaluation.

Chapter 2

Canada



Background

How is the term “street gangs” defined in Canada? The Criminal Code defines street gangs as a “a group, however organized, that

- a)** is composed of three or more persons in or outside Canada; and
- b)** has as one of its main purposes or main activities the facilitation or commission of one or more serious offences² that, if committed, would likely result in the direct or indirect receipt of a material benefit, including a financial benefit, by the group or by any of the persons who constitute the group.” (Criminal Code of Canada, sec. 467.1 (1))³

While this definition describes gangs from a legal viewpoint, the definition best suited to the realities in the field is the one used by the Montreal Police Service (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2007).

This definition was validated in 1991 by Criminal Intelligence Service Canada and revised in 2003 in conjunction with the Quebec ministry of Public Safety (MPS) (SPVM, 2010; Guay and Gaumont-Casias, 2009). The two definitions underscore the aim of gangs: to participate in or control a portion of the criminal market.

Street gangs were first identified in Canada in Surrey and Vancouver (two cities in British Columbia) in the 1970s (Totten, 2008). As of the 1980s, gangs began attracting the attention of the Canadian media and researchers (Jones, Roper, Styls and Wilson, 2004). Studies show that their evolution has mirrored that of American gangs in terms of structure, names, distinctive signs and clothing (Barchechat, 2006), though on a smaller scale (Jones et coll., 2004; Totten, 2008). Nevertheless, although certain Canadian gangs have adopted the names of international gangs such as the “Crips” or the “Bloods”, no international affiliation has currently been confirmed (CISC, 2010).

“An organized group of adolescents and/or young adults who rely on group intimidation and violence, and commit criminal acts in order to gain power and recognition and/or control certain areas of unlawful activity.”

In the 1990s, street gangs were present in almost all major urban centres in Canada. Each of them was culturally homogeneous. For example, in Montreal, there were more Haitian gangs; in Vancouver, Asian gangs (Jones et coll., 2004). Nowadays, gangs have spread to the suburbs of the major cities.

While it is still difficult to establish the exact number of street gangs in Canada, Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (CISC) has identified over 300 in recent years, with an estimated 11 000 members and associates (CISC, 2006). For purposes of comparison, the Montreal Police Service identified approximately 20 major street gangs in 2010, representing a total of between 300 and 500 members (SPVM website, 2011). However, the phenomenon is not present in all provinces on the same scale: the Western provinces are the most affected, while the Maritime provinces (with the exception of Nova Scotia) have been completely spared (Barchechat, 2006).

Canadian law enforcement agencies noted an increase in the number of street gangs between 2006 and 2010. However, this increase is due not only to the formation of new gangs, but also to “a combination of other factors. Some of these include higher-level organized crime groups being identified as street gangs, cells from larger gangs being identified as new entities, street gangs splintering into smaller criminal groups, or gangs changing names” (CISC, 2010).

The individuals who make up these gangs are mainly young adults between the ages of 20 and 30 years (CISC, 2004), with an average age of 21 years. However, depending on the province, the average age may vary from 16 to 23 years (Mourani, 2009) as recruitment sometimes begins as early as the age of 7 or 8 years (Mourani, 2009). Similarly, Totten (2008) states that nearly half of members are 17 years old or younger. It should also be noted that almost all members are male (Mourani, 2009; Totten 2008; CISC, 2006) and

² Tout acte criminel passible d'un emprisonnement maximal de cinq ans ou plus, ou toute autre infraction désignée par règlement.

³ La présente définition ne vise pas le groupe d'individus formé au hasard pour la perpétration immédiate d'une seule infraction.

“tend to be from groups that suffer from the greatest levels of inequality and social disadvantage” (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2007).

The ethnic composition of these groups tends to reflect the demographic distribution of their environment (CISC, 2004; Mourani, 2009). However, the Astwood Corporation (2004) notes that the dominant cultures are African Canadian (25%), followed by First Nation (22%), Caucasian (18%), Indian or Pakistani (14%) and Asian (12%) and that 36% of gangs comprise two or more ethnic groups.

In terms of criminal activity, Canadian street gangs tend to be active in prominent lucrative markets like “the trafficking of illicit drugs such as crack cocaine, ecstasy, methamphetamine, and marijuana” (CISC, 2006). Their criminal activities also include prostitution, theft, fraud and weapons offences (CISC, 2006, Mourani, 2009). Some of these activities are carried out on behalf of more powerful organized crime groups (such as the Hell’s Angels or the Italian Mafia) (CISC, 2010). Furthermore, street gangs seem to be leveraging technology to conceal their criminal activities while committing payment card fraud and using social networking sites to promote gang culture (CISC, 2010).

The number of homicides attributed to street gangs provides an idea of the level of street gang violence⁴. A Statistics Canada report on homicide in Canada in 2009 indicates that approximately 1 in 5 homicides (124/610) were gang-related. Despite a general increase since the 1990s, there were 14 fewer gang-related homicides in 2009 compared to 2008.

The average age of persons accused of committing these homicides was 23 years, compared to 30 years for non-gang-related homicides. The victims were also younger: 28 years for gang-related homicides and 35 years for non-gang-related homicides. Finally, 80% of gang-related homicides were committed using a firearm (compared to 16% of non-gang-related homicides) (Beattie and Cotter, 2010).

What sort of action is Canada taking to deal with the street gang phenomenon? On the legal front, three sections have been inserted in the Criminal Code of Canada to ensure more severe punishment for individuals acting on behalf of street gangs:

467.11 (1) Every person who, for the purpose of enhancing the ability of a criminal organization to facilitate or commit an indictable offence under this or any other Act of Parliament, knowingly, by act or omission, participates in or contributes to any activity of the criminal organization is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.

467.12 (1) Every person who commits an indictable offence under this or any other Act of Parliament for the benefit of, at the direction of, or in association with, a criminal organization is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years.

467.13 (1) Every person who is one of the persons who constitute a criminal organization and who knowingly instructs, directly or indirectly, any person to commit an offence under this or any other Act of Parliament for the benefit of, at the direction of, or in association with, the criminal organization is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for life (Criminal Code of Canada, 2011).

In addition, a meeting of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACCP) in 2009 produced the recommendation that a national anti-gang strategy be developed. The national strategy would ensure the “constant allocation of police resources” to deal effectively with the phenomenon (CISC, 2010), but it has yet to be adopted.

For prevention, Canada prefers a multi-sectoral approach and an integrated, comprehensive approach (Totten, 2008; National Crime Prevention Centre, 2007). Studies conducted on the Canadian street gang issue

⁴ “Homicides classified as “gang-related” by police, include victims who are members of organized crime groups and street gangs, as well as any innocent bystanders in a gang-related homicide incident.” (Statistics Canada, 2010).

have shown that the most effective prevention programs are those which combine primary, secondary and tertiary prevention activities or intervention. However, very few Canadian programs manage to combine all three (Totten, 2008), with most programs providing primary and secondary prevention activities (Totten, 2008; National Crime Prevention Centre, 2007; Mellor, MacRae, Pauls and Hornick, 2005).

Finally, “The Youth Gang Prevention Fund”, a funding program administered by the National Crime Prevention Center (NCPC), was established to promote the prevention of at-risk youth gang involvement. The fund “invests in communities where youth gangs are an existing or emerging threat and supports initiatives that clearly target youth in gangs or at greatest risk of joining gangs” (NCPC website, 2011).

Inspirational Canadian Practices

Remix Project

<http://theremixproject.ca>

The Remix Project was created to help young people from disadvantaged and marginalized communities in the Greater Toronto Area transform their talents into viable economic revenue streams, thus providing them with alternatives to crime.

Applicants to Remix are selected based on talent, creativity, drive and need. At the beginning of the program, participants meet with program staff to identify their objectives and create an action plan for the next six months. While in the program, participants receive mentoring from industry professionals, internships with companies, grant support, high school credit and multiple professional networking opportunities. The Remix Project provides participants with access to high quality equipment for their artistic projects, such as a full recording studio, photography studio, business development centre, creative arts laboratory, and video editing suite.



Several partners have become involved in the project, including MTV News, Universal Music Canada, New Flow 935, LLAMP and Humber College. Their involvement may take the form of internships, publicity or even financial support for participants wishing to go back to school.

The project was initially funded by the NCPC. Its funding now comes from public (municipal and provincial) and private sources, foundations, and fund-raising initiatives organized by Remix. The Trillium Foundation and TD Bank have also granted the program three-year funding.



Programme de suivi intensif de Montréal (PSI-MTL)

<http://www.centrejeunessedemontreal.qc.ca/>



Centre jeunesse
de Montréal
Institut universitaire

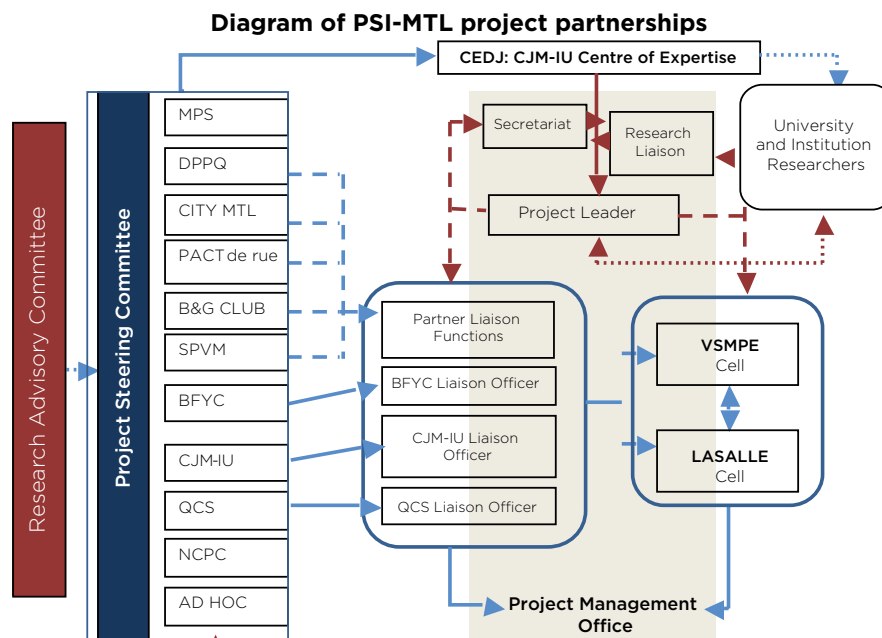
Inspired by the Philadelphia Youth Violence Reduction Partnership and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention model combining prevention, intervention and suppression, the *Programme de Suivi Intensif* [Intensive Support Program] targets young people aged 15 to 25 years who are gang members or at high risk of becoming one (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2010), and who already have dealings with the justice system. The program is a five-year pilot project running from 2009 to 2014 and carried out by the *Centre jeunesse de Montréal – Institut Universitaire*.

The program’s goal is to promote social integration by preventing young people under the supervision of social (youth centres) and correctional services from joining street gangs and by increasing participation in prosocial activities. It is also designed to reduce profitable and violent criminal activity associated with street gangs from the boroughs of Villeray/St-Michel/ Parc Extension and LaSalle by reducing the risks of recidivism among young people aged 15 to 25 years living in the two boroughs and intensifying offender supervision.

Once participants are selected, their risks and needs are evaluated to ensure any legal conditions they are under and their own unique combination of risk and protective factors are fully understood. A focused, intensive plan of action is developed for each of the participants and their families. There are normally three to four meetings a week involving the young person, the family and project staff, as well as other appointments with community organizations arranged by project staff.

Participants devote 20 to 40 hours a week to project-related activities. These may include school, professional training, employment skill development, job hunting, volunteer work and recreational activities (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2010). Street outreach workers provide support for young people in the program, and there are also a number of workshops on different topics that participants may attend.

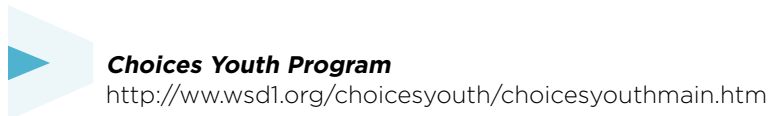
The implementation of a project of such proportions requires the collaboration of numerous partners from various domains. The following diagram illustrates the complexity of the partnerships involved in this project.



Robert and Lacroix (2009).

The diagram clearly shows all the valuable partnerships that have been created by this project as actors from provincial and municipal political arenas, the judiciary, universities, law enforcement, community organizations and correctional services work together to reduce youth gang involvement.

The PSI-MTL program receives both provincial and federal funding. Process and impact evaluations will be carried out throughout the duration of the project.



A few years ago, the Winnipeg School Division decided to introduce activities targeting youth gang activities and related issues, such as drug use, absenteeism and dropouts. Based on the San Bernardino Choices Youth Program developed by the Californian Sheriff's Department, the Winnipeg School Division established its own Choices Youth Program (CYP).

The CYP's mission is to provide students with a comprehensive prevention and intervention program to help them develop a positive self-image as well as productive personal and school lives and to make an active contribution as members of society. Its mission is supported by a series of aims such as preparing young people to live active lives, establishing a safe school environment, reducing negative behaviours, improving the community environment, and reducing substance abuse, dropouts and street gang activity.

To achieve these aims, CYP works with a facilitator from the Justice Department who regularly leads classroom activities focusing on how to build social skills, resilience and gang resistance. Also, every year three wilderness outings are organized to reinforce and test the skills the young people learn in the classroom. There is a once-a-week mentor program with student volunteers from the university who lead recreational activities with the young people, providing them with positive role models, and once a month social activities are organized to strengthen connections between youths and their families. Finally, through the follow-up club, each young person is connected to a positive activity of their choice within the community (which may be a sport, an artistic activity or volunteering) and activities are planned for Spring Break and the summer.

The CYP also has a "Circle of Courage" to foster resilience in program participants. The circle is comprised of four elements: the spirit of generosity, the spirit of belonging, the spirit of mastery and the spirit of independence.

Financed by the Manitoba department of Justice, the program was established in partnership with the Winnipeg Police Service which offers presentations to students on a variety of topics. Although the program has been running for 15 years, an evaluation in two different schools revealed that few parents gave consent, severely limiting the number of young people able to participate in the program.



InReach is a new program in Kitchener, Ontario, targeting youths between the ages of 13 and 24 years with varying degrees of involvement with street gangs. The motivation behind the program's implementation came from the police force's identification of just under 300 street gang members in the Waterloo Region combined with an increase in street gang activity. The aim of InReach, which started in November 2010, is to strengthen participants' social skills to help them exit their gangs.



In order to participate in the program, young people must be referred by the criminal justice system, school, social service agencies or their parents. They may also refer themselves for the program which is conducted entirely on a voluntary basis. The program takes place in 12-week sessions and has three phases:

- > Community Assessment: surveys and interviews are conducted to gather information and data and thus ensure a good understanding of the situation in the field.
- > Social Intervention: individual and group intervention with street-gang affiliated youths. Group sessions explore various topics such as anger management and communication. Employment support is also provided.
- > Community Mobilization: providing support to residents of vulnerable neighbourhoods to help them identify ways to address the street gang issue.

Several partners are involved in this program and contribute their expertise in a variety of areas. Lutherwood specializes in mental health and employment, the John Howard Society offers expertise on the youth criminal justice system, St. Mary's Counselling provides advice on the use of illicit substances, and Reaching Our Outdoor Friends focuses on outreach. The Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council is the administrative lead for the program and the Waterloo Regional Police Service supplies data on the street gang situation and in-kind support.

The Canadian federal government is providing funding (through the National Crime Prevention Centre) for InReach as a pilot program until 2013. Provision has been made for evaluation of the program, but no assessment is yet available.

Fact sheets for Canadian practices

Program title	The Remix Project
City	❖ Toronto
Target population	❖ Young people from disadvantaged, marginalized communities in the Greater Toronto Area
Year of implementation	❖ 2006
Level of prevention	❖ Secondary
Objective	❖ To help young people turn their talents into viable economic revenue streams.
How it works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Remix Project selects participants based on talent, creativity, drive and immediate need. ❖ At the beginning of the program, participants meet program staff to identify their goals and create a six-month action plan. ❖ The Remix program provides the young people with access to a full recording studio, a photography studio, a business development centre, a creative arts laboratory and video editing suite. The facilities permit participants to make the most of their talents while receiving personal and professional guidance.
Partners involved	❖ The partners involved in this project are: MTV News, Universal Music Canada, New Flow 935, LLAMP and Humber College. Their involvement takes the form of internships, publicity or financial support for young people who wish to pursue their education.
Budget and sources of funding	❖ From public (municipal and provincial) and private sources, foundations and Remix's own fundraising initiatives. The Trillium Foundation and TD Bank have granted the program three-year funding.
Results/Evaluation	❖ Remix was evaluated as part of its funding agreement with the NCPIC. In addition, an independent company, <i>Evidence</i> , has been hired several times to do evaluations of the program.

Program title	Programme de suivi intensif (PSI-MTL)
Organization	❖ Centre jeunesse de Montréal-Institut universitaire
City	❖ Montreal
Target population	❖ The program is targets young offenders aged 15 to 25 years involved in, having been involved in or at risk of becoming involved in street gangs. The program is intended to serve 100 young people a year, with 60% coming from the Quebec Correctional Services and 40% referred through the Youth Criminal Justice Act
Year of implementation	❖ 2009
Level of prevention	❖ Tertiary
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To promote social integration by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Preventing street gang involvement by young people under the supervision of social (youth centres) and correctional services. ◆ Increasing participation in prosocial activities. ❖ To reduce profitable crime and violence associated with street gangs from the boroughs of Villera / St-Michel / Parc Extension and LaSalle by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reducing the risk of recidivism among young people aged 15 to 25 years residing in the two boroughs. ◆ Increasing offender supervision.
How it works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Once youth are selected, their risks and needs are assessed to clarify any legal conditions they are under and ensure their own unique combination of risk and protective factors is fully understood. Three intervention methods are combined to encourage members to exit street gangs. <p>Individual action plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A focused, intensive action plan is developed for each of the participants and their families. <p>Street outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Project staff conduct street outreach to identify potential participants and support youth in the program. <p>Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Group workshops are held once a week and cover topics such as communication skills, alternatives to violence, conflict resolution, empathy and problem solving.
Partners involved	❖ CJM-IU, Quebec ministry of Public Safety (MPS), City of Montreal Police Service, Batshaw Family and Youth Centre, NCPC, Quebec Correctional Services, street PACT, Direction of Public Prosecution Service of Quebec (DPPQ), City of Montreal, Boys & Girls Club.
Budget and sources of funding	❖ Provincial (MPS) and federal (NCPC) public sector.
Results/Evaluation	❖ An evaluation of the PSI-MTL is planned, but has yet to be conducted.

Program title	Choices Youth Program
Organization	❖ Winnipeg School Division
City	❖ Winnipeg
Target population	❖ Youth 12 to 13 years of age from 8 schools in the Winnipeg School Division
Year of implementation	❖ 1996
Level of prevention	❖ Primary and secondary
Objectives	<p>This program is designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Prepare young people to lead productive lives; ❖ Establish a safe school environment; ❖ Reduce negative behaviours; ❖ Improve the community environment; ❖ Reduce substance abuse, dropouts and street gang activity.
How it works	<p>The program consists of five elements:</p> <p>A facilitator from the Justice department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Leads regular classroom sessions focusing on the development of social skills, resilience reinforcement and gang resistance. <p>Wilderness experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Three wilderness outings a year to reinforce and test the skills youth learn in the classroom. <p>Mentor program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Weekly sessions with volunteer university students who conduct fun activities for the youths and provide positive role models. <p>Social activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Monthly social activities to strengthen ties between youth and their families. <p>Follow-up club</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Each young person is connected to a positive activity of his or her choice in the community.
Partners involved	❖ Winnipeg School Division, Manitoba Justice and the Winnipeg Police Service.
Budget and sources of funding	❖ This initiative is funded by Manitoba Justice.
Results/Evaluation	❖ A partial evaluation has been completed.

Program title	InReach
City	❖ Waterloo Region
Target population	❖ Young people between the ages of 13 and 24 years who are actively involved, associated with or may be thinking of joining a gang
Year of implementation	❖ November 2010
Level of prevention	❖ Secondary and tertiary
Objectives	❖ InReach's main objective is to help young people build their social skills to help them exit from gangs
How it works	<p>There are three phases to the project:</p> <p>Community Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Surveys and interviews to collect data and establish a good understanding of the situation in the field. <p>Social Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Individual and group sessions with street-gang affiliated youth. Group sessions deal with a variety of topics such as anger management and communication. Employment support is also provided. <p>Community Mobilization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Support for vulnerable neighbourhoods to help identify ways they can address the street gang issue.
Partners involved	❖ Waterloo Regional Police Service, Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council, Reaching Our Outdoor Friends, St. Mary's Counselling, Lutherwood, John Howard Society.
Budget and sources of funding	❖ This project is funded by the Canadian federal government (National Crime Prevention Centre).
Results/Evaluation	❖ An evaluation will be done in the next few years.

Chapter 3

France



Background

There have been youth gangs in France since the end of the 1950s and the appearance of the *blousons noirs*. This popular expression was invented by the media of the time to refer to young delinquents who committed gratuitous acts of violence for no apparent reason (Bantigny, 2007). Two of the principle characteristics of these youth gangs were their large numbers of members and their explosive, “irrational” violence (Macaigne, 1964).

The *blousons-noirs* period gradually began to fade towards the mid-1960s. However, at the beginning of the 1990s, youth gangs made a comeback in the public arena in France (Mohammed, 2007). The end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s marked a turning point in French society with the development of entrenched long-term unemployment in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the widespread casualization of employment, and the establishment of a veritable “social divide” (Sauvadet, 2006).

According to a confidential report by the Vice-Directorate [Sous-Direction] for General Information, in 2010, France had nearly 618 gangs with an estimated total of 10 000 members (Le Figaro, *Plus de 600 bandes identifiées par la police*, May 5, 2010). Here, “gang” refers to [Translation] “multiple types of activities and groups that seem united by the fear they provoke” (Mohammed and Muchielli, 2007, in Duvignau and Delécolle, 2009). In 2009, data from the ministry of the Interior identified roughly 200 organized gangs, consisting of up of 5000 individuals. The French penal code defines an organized gang as [Translation] “any group formed or agreement made in preparation, as evidenced by one or more physical facts, to commit one or more infractions” (Code Pénal, 2011).

In 2006, an international ISRD (*International Self-Reported Delinquency*) survey was administered to students 12 to 17 years of age. According to the survey, a member of a delinquent gang is [Translation] “someone with a group of friends that has existed for more than three months and which tolerates and commits offences or “illegal things”, spends a lot of time in public spaces, and is defined by the respondent as a gang” (Ruetsch, 2010). The results of this study revealed that:

- > 8% of secondary students belong to such a gang
- > 44% of gangs are made up entirely of boys, 52% are mixed and 4% are made up entirely of girls.

In the past twenty years, ethnic gangs have emerged pitting young people from sub-Saharan Africa against youths from North Africa (Barchechat, 2006). Their families’ migrant condition is often at the root of adjustment problems and social stigmatization. The vast majority of these youths are school dropouts (Esterle Hedibel, 2006).

The activities of these gangs vary widely from one gang to another although there are some common characteristics. Increased involvement in the distribution and use of illegal drugs by young people in gangs permits them to get a start on their “criminal career” (Duprez, Kokoreff, 2000) as cannabis trafficking is the principal forum for connections between juvenile delinquency and organized crime (Tournebize, 2006). Theft and car vandalism also make up a significant portion of illicit gang activities (Esterle-Hedibel, 1996).

The reduction and prevention of youth gangs in France is one of the government’s current public security priorities (Hortefeux, Le Figaro, January 21, 2011) as evidenced by the promulgation of the March 2, 2010 law [Translation] “strengthening the fight against group violence and the protection of people responsible for public service missions”. The law breaks new ground by making it an offence to belong to a violent gang. Now, the simple act of belonging to a gang, even temporarily, with the intention of committing voluntary violence towards people or damage to property is subject to a prison term of one year and a fine of €15,000 (Press release by French ministry of the Interior, February 26, 2010). The law is part of a broader anti-gang policy.

In the spring of 2010, the ministry of the Interior established a comprehensive anti-gang action plan. The principal elements of this plan involve the creation of anti-gang groups responsible for information-gathering and legal investigation groups responsible for questioning suspects in those departments most affected by the phenomenon. It established a “prevention, public security” database to include a registry of gang member names and assist in the identification of perpetrators of urban violence. The plan also includes the

creation of a regional urban police forces [*police d'agglomération*] and the gradual introduction of video-protection for the entire country (Press release by the French ministry of the Interior, April 14, 2010).

France's approach to prevention is characterized by the fact that since 1972, it has had official prevention workers. These street workers work in public spaces with young people in difficulty, developing personal relations with them based on listening, empathy, trust and anonymity (Esterle-Hedibel, 1996), and acting as stabilizing role-models.

Inspirational French practices

Parental responsibility courses

<http://www.justice.gouv.fr/>



Parental responsibility courses were created under the March 5, 2007 delinquency prevention law, and the first courses began in Paris on November 10, 2009.

The parental responsibility courses are designed for parents of minors questioned by the police in relation to group violence or armed gatherings, especially under circumstances that would seem to indicate gang involvement. It should be noted that there are no criminal sanctions when the minor questioned is 13 years and younger, but when the minor is over the age of 13, parental responsibility courses are a collateral proceeding. Jeter l'@ncre is the association responsible for running the parental responsibility workshops. Several social actors, such as the police, the municipality, the National Education ministry, doctors, youth legal protection services, etc., also take part in the workshops.

The principal objective of this initiative is to encourage parents to reflect on their educational role and the types of difficulties they experience when exercising their parental authority. Additional objectives to be met include developing and reinforcing parenting skills, contributing to the minor's personal educational plan, incorporating the family into a decision-making process and restoring parental authority.

The parenting workshop is comprised of five two-hour session (for a total of 10 hours) over a period of six weeks. Two moderators lead each session. Three sessions are held with the minor and the parents, including one session with the additional presence of local actors. Another session involves two educators and is dedicated to producing an assessment of the minor's academic and social skills. The final session, with only the parents, focuses solely on family relations. An additional session is held two months after the fifth interview to reassess the situation.

City of Pessac's Chantiers éducatifs

The City of Pessac's *Chantiers éducatifs* initiative (in the Saige, Châtaigneraie-Arago and Haut-Livrac neighbourhoods) was the winner of the *Forum Français pour la Sécurité Urbaine's* (FFSU) 2010 Delinquency Prevention Award. The *Chantiers éducatifs* [educational jobsites] are activities involving the production of goods and services by groups of young people. Through the Chantiers, young people have the opportunity to:



- > Meet their need for recognition and respect;
- > Gauge their motivation to do a job;
- > Adapt their behaviours to accommodate the rules governing group life;
- > Have the benefit of an initial job experience and become familiar with the economic realities of the work world;

- > Engage in active citizenship by taking part in work to fulfil a collective need;
- > Create ties with neighbourhood residents (FFSU, 2011).

The *Chantiers* also permit participating institutions to develop partnerships with one another. There are several partners involved in the *Chantiers éducatifs*. The City Hall, the General Council, social housing landlords, integration organizations and a variety of different associations work together to permit the young people to complete projects in sectors such as the environment, light work finishing, material handling, seasonal work, green spaces, decorating or agriculture.

The project's annual budget is €72,000. Approximately half of the budget is funded by the City Hall, while the other half comes from social partners.

An evaluation was carried out to determine whether any positive effects had been experienced since the *Chantiers éducatifs* were implemented in 2006. Based on the evaluation, a number of observations were made about the three neighbourhoods involved:

- > The hard core of youths, originally comprised of 20 to 30 youths, now consists of only 5 or 6;
- > The number of incidents reported by the police has decreased by 16.7%;
- > Localized crime has gone down by 31.5%;
- > The number of acts of vandalism has dropped by 23%;
- > The number of acts of violence against people has decreased by 18.4%;
- > The number of offences against property has fallen by 28%;
- > The proportion of minors among respondents has decreased by 44%.



In 1982, the *Toulouse Aviron Sports et Loisirs* (TALS) [Toulouse Rowing Sports and Recreation] club was created in the neighbourhoods North of Toulouse. However, educational activities were only introduced in 1988. These activities target young people 8 to 25 years of age, primarily from establishments deemed to be in disadvantaged areas of sensitive neighbourhoods.



As a social actor, the TALS has the following objectives:

- > To encourage social, cultural and male/female mixing;
- > To ensure personal growth through transmission of the values promoted by rowing: respect, solidarity and dialogue;
- > To permit young people in difficulty to re-establish a life plan for themselves and develop a career plan.

The practice of rowing is used as a tool to promote respect, understanding and attention to others. The athletic discipline provides young people with violent behaviours with a means of channelling their energy. There are several partners are involved in the project:

- > Field partners: schools, recreational centres, neighbourhood associations, youth and cultural centres, specialized institutes, local health and social services centres;
- > Institutional and financial partners: the French rowing federation, the Toulouse City Hall, the ministry of Youth and Sports, the General Council of Haute Garonne, the Regional Council of Midi-Pyrénées, the National Education ministry, Toulouse City Hall's educational services.

The total annual budget administered by the TALS is approximately €400,000. The principal operating grants come from the State (€100,000), followed by the City of Toulouse (€70,000), and the Regional Council and local administrations (€23,000 each). In addition to these grants, membership fees generate €50,000 annually.

No complete evaluation of the project appears to have been conducted. However, each of the young people evaluates their experience in the "golden or activity". Thus, each young participant's athletic, behavioural

and academic evolution is assessed. There are also evaluations all year long during weekly team meetings and with neighbourhood partners and actors.

The Meaux Schooling Continuation Initiative

In 2006, the Security Observatory of the City of Meaux noted a considerable increase in the number of secondary school students (between the ages of 11 and 16 years) expelled from the eight secondary schools in the city of Meaux (100% for the 2006-2007 school year, or 56 expulsions). Students would then remain out of school for several weeks, several months even, before going back to school again. This led to the creation in September 2007 of Meaux's *Dispositif de Poursuite de Scolarisation* [Schooling Continuation Initiative] providing temporary services for students expelled from the Collège Dunant de Meaux.



The initiative operates through a partnership involving the school, police, justice officials and social services. The National Education ministry provides personnel (one special education teacher, one administrative officer and one educational assistant) with additional hours for occasional activities by teachers of various subjects. The ministry of Justice ensures the availability of a full-time educator, sessions with specialized personnel (psychologist, etc.), IT resources and the participation of representatives of the Public Prosecutor. The City of Meaux undertakes to provide space and to take responsibility for administration of operating costs.

The aims of this initiative are:

- > To integrate expelled secondary students into a temporary structure with educational and pedagogical vocations as well as an additional legal dimension in certain cases as well;
- > To ensure that students return to school under improved conditions when they re-enrol in a new establishment;
- > To avoid school dropout in order to prevent crime.

In concrete terms, the Collège Dunant de Meaux provides obligatory, transitional education so expelled students waiting to be admitted to a new school may undergo deschooling. Students are given the opportunity to engage in academic activities (primarily focusing on cognitive activation and restoring self-confidence) and professional, transgenerational and multicultural activities to develop their life skills in a natural environment, five days a week (the students spend an average of four weeks in the program before going to a new school).

Fact sheets for French practices/initiatives

Program title	Parental Responsibility Courses
Organization	❖ Paris' Public Prosecutor of First Instance
City	❖ Paris
Target population	❖ Parents of minors questioned by the police in relation to group violence or armed gatherings, especially under circumstances that would seem to indicate gang involvement
Year of implementation	❖ November 2009
Level of prevention	❖ Secondary
Objectives	<p>The aims of the courses are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To encourage parents to reflect on their educational role and on the types of difficulties they experience when exercising their parental authority; ❖ To develop and reinforce parenting skills; ❖ To contribute to the minor's personal educational plan; ❖ To incorporate the family into the decision-making process; ❖ To restore the parents' authority.
How it works	<p>The parenting course lasts 10 hours.</p> <p>Five 2-hour sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 3 sessions with the minor and the parents, one of which also includes local actors. ❖ 1 session is led by 2 educators and focuses on assessing the minor's academic and social skills. ❖ 1 session with the parents is entirely devoted to family relations. <p>Supplementary session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 2 months after the end of the fifth session to re-assess the situation.
Partners involved	❖ The Public Prosecutor's Office has given responsibility for the courses to the Association Jeter l'@ncre. Several social actors (police, City Hall, ministry of National Education, youth protection, etc.) are also invited to take part in the course in session #2.
Budget and sources of funding	❖ The initiative is funded by the State as it is a criminal proceeding.
Results/Evaluation	❖ No evaluation is available at the moment. However the Public Prosecutor's Office is responsible for monitoring and evaluating individual courses.


Program Title	Chantiers éducatifs
City	❖ City of Pessac
Target population	❖ Youths 14 to 25 years
Year of implementation	❖ July 2006
Level of prevention	❖ Secondary
Objectives	<p>The <i>Chantiers Éducatifs</i> initiative pursues educational and social objectives, while promoting mediation and the building of solidarity and social ties. Its aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To provide social and educational actors in the region with a tool for prevention, citizenship building, and mediation under the privileged conditions of an educational relationship. ❖ To activate local partner involvement in prevention and strengthen bonding between institutions and young people / young adults. ❖ To create a mediation tool to develop a more peaceful atmosphere in the neighbourhood.
How it works	❖ Project consists of educational activities involving the production of goods and services, upstream of vocational integration. The main sectors explored are the environment, construction, material handling, seasonal work, organic gardening and culture. Projects generally last one week, with 4 to 5 hours of work a day.
Partners involved	❖ City Hall, the General Council, social landlords, intermediary associations, integration organizations, specialized educators.
Budget and sources of funding	❖ €72,000 provided by the City Hall and social landlords.
Results/Evaluation	❖ The program has been evaluated and the results are encouraging. However it is difficult to do a precise evaluate of this type of initiative. Especially evident are the improvements in young people's attitudes towards institutions and the institutions' attitudes towards young people. The <i>Chantiers éducatifs</i> have helped create a more peaceful atmosphere in the various neighbourhoods.

Program title	L'Aviron
Organization	❖ Toulouse Aviron Sports et Loisirs (TASL)
City	❖ Toulouse
Target population	❖ Youths between 8 and 25 years, most from establishments deemed to be in disadvantaged areas of sensitive neighbourhoods
Year of implementation	❖ 1988
Level of prevention	❖ Secondary
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To encourage social, cultural and male/female mixing; ❖ To ensure personal growth through transmission of the values promoted by rowing: respect, solidarity and dialogue; ❖ To permit young people in difficulty to re-establish a life plan for themselves and develop a career path.
How it works	❖ The TASL runs an educational integration project in neighbourhoods in the North of the City of Toulouse. Rowing and the integration project act as a means and tool for fostering respect and mutual understanding, and serves as a forum for dialogue. The athletic discipline provides young people with violent behaviours with an outlet for their energy.
Partners involved	❖ The partners in this project are schools, recreational centres, neighbourhood associations, youth and cultural centres, specialized institutions, the <i>Unités Territoriales d'Action Médico Sociale</i> , the French Rowing Federation, the Toulouse City Hall, the ministry of Youth and Sports, the General Council of Haute-Garonne, the Regional Council of Midi-Pyrénées, the ministry of National Education, the City Hall of Toulouse's educational services.
Budget and sources of funding	❖ The total annual budget is approximately €400,000. The main operating grants come from the State (€100,000), followed by the City of Toulouse (€70,000) as well as the Regional Council and the local governments (€23,000 each). In addition to the grants, membership fees generate €50,000.
Results/Evaluation	❖ In-house evaluation only.

Program title	Dispositif de poursuite de scolarisation de Meaux
Organization	❖ This initiative is affiliated with the Collège Henri Dunant
City	❖ Meaux
Target population	❖ Students aged 11 to 16 years, expelled from one of the five public secondary schools in Meaux or three secondary schools in neighbouring communes
Year of implementation	❖ September 2007
Level of prevention	❖ Secondary
Objectives	<p>The objectives of this initiative are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To integrate expelled secondary students into a temporary structure with educational and pedagogical vocations and incorporating an additional legal dimension in certain cases as well. ❖ To ensure that students return to school under improved conditions when they re-enrol in a new establishment. ❖ To avoid school dropout and prevent crime as a result.
How it works	❖ During their time in the DPS program, students have the opportunity to take part in academic activities and personal development activities five days a week to help them build their life skills. The students spend an average of four weeks in the program before going to a new school.
Partners involved	❖ This is a multi-partner endeavour (ministry of National Education, youth protection services, Public Prosecutor's Office, <i>Maison départementale de Solidarités</i> , City of Meaux).
Budget and sources of funding	❖ The total annual budget for this initiative is €142,000. However, the financing plan is reviewed each year. Nearly 90% of funding comes from the ministry of Education and serves to cover the payroll.
Results/Evaluation	❖ No substantial, in-depth evaluation has been carried out to date.

Conclusion





The objective of this comparative analysis report was to examine modes of intervention in Belgium, Canada and France that represent effective means of identifying at-risk youth and promoting dialogue and gang disaffiliation. A fact sheet template was created and almost all of the individuals in charge of the selected initiatives were contacted, by email or telephone, to flesh out the information already available. The report examines a total of 11 initiatives (3 Belgian, 4 French and 4 Canadian). The ones selected had numerous characteristics in common and few differences. Table 6 provides a summary of the main aspects of the different practices. Before taking a closer look at the principal differences and similarities, it is important to note that one must always be very careful when comparing modes of intervention as the term “street gangs” is defined differently from one country to the next, and public policies vary in their approach to the prevention of street gang involvement.

The target populations of the selected modes of street gang intervention were primarily comprised of young people between the ages of 13 and 18 years. This period generally corresponds to adolescence, which is when the risks of gang involvement are highest. With regard the year of implementation, apart from the Choices program in Manitoba and L’Aviron in Toulouse, all the programs had been created in the past five years. This demonstrates growing interest among prevention actors in taking action on the street gang phenomenon.

All the practices except Canada’s PSI-MTL offer secondary prevention activities. They provide participants with alternatives in the form of activities designed to keep youths away from gangs. However, the objectives pursued by the practices vary by country. The Canadian practices studied place greater emphasis on integrating young people into society and strengthening their social skills with the ultimate goal of distancing them from or causing them to exit street gangs. The practices in France and Belgium focus more on the educational aspect. In these two countries, programs to prevent violence and gang involvement seem to be affiliated with the school system which offers activities or support to help youths develop a life plan.

All the modes of intervention adopt a multi-sector partnership approach. The projects all involve joint efforts on the parts of governments, police, community organizations and schools. There would therefore appear to be a consensus on the concept of comprehensive integrated prevention on both sides of the ocean. Finally, half of the initiatives are evaluated, although this most often takes the form of in-house evaluations.

Overall, despite the distinctive characteristics of each of the countries, the modes of intervention examined displayed numerous similarities. The term “street gangs” may not be used in Belgium and France but “urban gangs” or “youth gangs” prevention seems to be carried out in roughly the same way as it is in Canada, by offering young people sound alternatives as well as support and guidance for the personal, social and academic dimensions of their lives.

Tableau 6 : Comparative chart of selected modes of intervention

	Target population	Year of implementation	Level of prevention	Objectives	Partners	Sources of funding	Evaluation
Belgique							
BE+	Gang-related youths	2009	Secondary and tertiary	Gang disaffiliation and provision of sounder alternatives	Communes, police districts, KULeuven University and the Brussels Regional "Urban Gang" Network	Federal public sector	Pending
Nota Bene	Youths aged 6 to 18 years and their families	2007	Secondary	Decreased school dropout and develop life plan for individual participants	Schools, police, community networks, government	Regional public sector	No
PMEPVU	Young people from sub-Saharan Africa	2009	Secondary	Decreased school dropout and reduced tension between rival groups	Municipal services, police, schools and street outreach workers	Communal public sector and private foundation	Yes
Canada							
Remix	Young people from disadvantaged and marginalized communities	2006	Secondary	Transformation of young people's creative talents into a source of economic revenue	Organizations working in the cultural sector and one college	Municipal and provincial public sector and private organizations	No
PSI-MTL	Young gang-related offenders aged 15 to 25 years	2009	Tertiary	Social integration and reduction of profitable crime	CJM-IU, MPS, SPVM, CJFB, NCPC, QCS, street Pact, DPPQ, City of Montreal, Boys & Girls Club	Provincial and federal public sector	Pending
Choices	Young people aged 12 to 13 years in 8 Winnipeg schools	1996	Primary and Secondary	Improvement of the school environment and reduction of negative behaviours	Winnipeg School Division, Manitoba Justice and the Winnipeg Police Service	Provincial public sector	Yes

Tableau 6 : Comparative chart of selected modes of intervention

	Target population	Year of implementation	Level of prevention	Objectives	Partners	Sources of funding	Evaluation
Canada							
InReach	Young people aged 13 to 24 years	2010	Secondary et Tertiary	Gang disaffiliation and strengthening of social skills	Waterloo Regional Police, Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council, Reaching Our Outdoor Friends, St. Mary's Counselling, Lutherwood, John Howard Society.	Federal public sector	Pending
France							
Parental Responsibility Courses	Parents of minors questioned by the police	2009	Secondary	Strengthening of parents' educational role and development of educational plan for minor	Public Prosecutor's Office, police, City Hall, ministry of National Education, doctor, youth protection services	Federal public sector	Pending
City of Meaux Chantiers éducatifs	Young people aged 14 to 25 years	2006	Secondary	Improvement of educational, mediation and prevention conditions	City Hall, General Council, social landlords, intermediary associations, integration services, specialized educators	Municipal public sector and social landlords	Yes

Tableau 6 : Comparative chart of selected modes of intervention

	Target population	Year of implementation	Level of prevention	Objectives	Partners	Sources of funding	Evaluation
France							
Aviron	Young people aged 8 to 25 years from disadvantaged neighbourhoods	1988	Secondary	Fostering social mixing, personal growth and the development of life plans by young people.	Schools, recreation centres, neighbourhood associations, Toulouse City Hall, different organs of the French government	Federal and municipal public sector, Regional Council, local governments + membership fees	Yes
<i>Dispositif de poursuite de scolarisation de Meaux</i>	Students aged 11 to 16 years expelled from Meaux schools	2007	Secondary	Reduction in school dropouts and prevention of crime	Ministry of National Education, police, Justice department and social services	Federal public sector	No

To sum up, the objective of this report was not to produce an exhaustive study of initiatives with youths at risk for street gang involvement, but rather to explore different practices in order to identify various modes of intervention and learn from the unique characteristics of each of them.

We cannot claim that the practices examined in this study are representative of all the programs in Belgium, Canada and France but they provide an idea of the types of approaches adopted to deal with street gangs in the three countries. Thus, this report should be seen as an overview of modes of intervention with at-risk youth that presents possibilities for intervention while highlighting the numerous similarities in Belgian, Canadian and French intervention practices.



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