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General Community Design Model

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Introduction

A model for dealing with the youth gang problem should be based on valid ideas about what causes youth gangs and related criminal activity and what means exist for reducing, if not preventing, the problem. Unfortunately, we do not know a great deal based on research about important characteristics of the problem--especially as it has been manifested in recent years--and even less about how effectively to intervene or suppress it. We do know from recent surveys of criminal justice agencies and community-based organizations that the problem has grown more serious, become more complex, and is spreading to medium and smaller sized cities as well as to suburban areas. It is a problem that is predominantly located in old and newly developed inner city and ghettoized communities, predominantly African-American and Latino. It is an extremely serious problem in some correctional institutions and around some public schools. In many cities drug trafficking has come to be viewed as inter-connected to, and interdependent on, an increasingly mobile gang problem.

Our model of youth gang suppression and intervention assumes that such basic conditions as population movement, poverty, social disorganization, drug market opportunities, social isolation, and cultural misadaptation all influence the establishment and growth of youth gangs. Institutional racism, changing economic conditions, and deficiencies in national social policy also significantly contribute to the problem. Youth gangs or street gangs may be regarded as the extreme manifestation of larger social problems, including youth unemployment, school dropout, delinquency, and alienation in socially disadvantaged communities.

We believe that social disorganization or the failure of specific institutions--family, school, employment as well as individual personality--to properly mesh, provides basic pressure in the generation of the youth gang problem. Social disorganization, however, is not sufficient to explain the character and seriousness of the problem that develops. Poverty or the lack of opportunities--legitimate and/or criminal--is an important conditional and interactive factor. Furthermore, specific circumstances or cultural characteristics and institutional racism may respectively influence the character of opportunities or determine their lack thereof. While much of the complex set of causes of the problem are generated by forces outside of high gang crime communities, we propose that much can be done by a network of local organizations and citizens, along with city, state, and national resources, to reduce the problem. While no "sure-fire" policies and programs exist, certain promising approaches have been identified; all of which, however, require rigorous testing and evaluation. At this time we know more about what does not work in terms of strategy, organizational approach, and program activities than what does work.

Our purpose is to approach the resolution or mitigation of the youth gang problem mainly at institutional and community levels. In essence, we believe that the problem of youth gangs and related

criminal behavior, including extreme violence and drug trafficking, is a function of two central interacting conditions--poverty and social disorganization--which manifest themselves, but can be controlled only partially, at the local community level. Our general design for addressing the youth gang problem focuses primarily on local conditions. It emphasizes the critical importance of having adequate local resources in certain communities for targeting youth most vulnerable to becoming gang members and those already engaged in violent and serious gang-related crime. It stresses the mobilization of criminal justice and local community agencies, as well as local citizens and representatives of business and industry in a collaborative effort to deal with the complex and interacting causes of the problem.

Specifics of the Problem

Youth gangs have been present as a problem in many parts of the world for a long time. They exist in socialist, free market, and developing societies. Youth gang problems were identified in England in the 17th century and in the United States as early as the 18th century. They were restricted to a few large urban centers and, until recently, not considered either a serious or a growing problem. Youth gang members of an earlier period were predominantly white and/or of recent immigrant origin. These youth and their families were not confined to ghetto areas for long periods of time and more readily able to move into conventional or mainstream society.

Current law enforcement and media reports indicate that youth gangs are found, with varying degrees of concentration and seriousness of criminal behavior, in almost all fifty states. However, youth or street gangs have been present in certain cities, mainly large centers, and in some low income smaller cities or suburban areas for decades. In such cities or communities, the gang problem has become traditional, characterized by serious and at times extreme violence as well as organized criminal behavior, including more recently drug trafficking by older or former gang members. In emerging gang problem communities, mainly smaller cities, such factors as population movement, i.e., rapid change or increase of low income minority or immigrant groups, deteriorating economic conditions, and increased social and cultural isolation has encouraged the development of gang-related phenomena, usually of an acute character which can become serious very quickly through gang violence and drug trafficking.

A lack of consensus exists, however, on what constitutes a youth gang problem and there is a tendency for some middle class, particularly suburban, communities to exaggerate the scope and seriousness of the problem. Current reports suggest that several factors distinguish youth gangs of the 1980s from those studied and described by researchers in the 1960s and earlier. Specifically, contemporary youth gangs are characterized by use of more sophisticated weaponry, older members including many in their 20s

and some even older, various forms of drug trafficking, greater mobility, better organization, larger membership, and extraordinarily high rates of participation in violent behavior.

Some important characteristics of gang members are the following. The age of youth gang members ordinarily range from about 10 years to 24 years, with most committed gang members in the 14 to 20 year old range. However, relatively more gang members are in the 20 through 30 year old range than in an earlier period. The predominant proportion of gang members, at least those processed through the justice system, are male. It is unclear whether the proportion of females offenders arrested for gang offenses, cited as 5% to 10% in some studies, has increased in recent years or whether female gang related violence and criminality has grown more serious in relative as well as absolute terms. Gang members represent a variety of types of youth in terms of intelligence, emotional stability, and degrees of commitment to various activities of the gang. Youth gangs tend still to be rather diffuse structures. Gang members may be leaders, core or regulars, associates, recruits or wannabees, often shifting positions with age being only a partially determining factor.

Variables of class, culture, race or ethnicity usually interact with community factors such as poverty, population movement, social instability, and/or social isolation to account for the variety of youth gang problems that have developed. Major youth gang problems currently are mainly found in urban areas or suburban communities where low-income black, Hispanic, and increasingly Asian populations are concentrated. A recent survey of 45 law enforcement agencies with anti-gang programs found that approximately 80 percent of gang members were African-American or Hispanic. Communities with traditional or chronic youth gang problems tend to be characterized by a predominance of Hispanic or African-American gangs. Communities with emerging youth gang drug trafficking problems tend often to have relatively more mobile African-American gangs or gang members, with roots in older established inner city areas.

Asian gangs, especially Vietnamese, Hong Kong Chinese, and Korean gangs, are frequently connected to adult crime groups and appear to be developing with some rapidity on the East and West Coasts. White youth gangs are less often found in inner city areas or identified as problematic. They may be found in certain stable white ethnic areas, integrated into lower or middle class communities and culture. They tend to occur in a variety of forms and can be committed to group or culturally related violence or sophisticated criminal behavior. Examples include Stoners, Neo-Nazi Skinheads, Satanic groups, and motorcycle gangs. There are also reports of an increase in inter-ethnic and inter-racial youth gang composition in various parts of the country, especially the west coast.

Youth gang structures, behaviors, and problems vary according to community, race and culture, membership age, criminal opportunities, proximity to other youth gangs, and other factors. In general, black gangs seem to be relatively larger and more

involved in drug trafficking; Hispanic gangs are relatively more engaged in physical turf-related battling and high rates of distinctively gang-related violence; Asian gangs are smaller and more mobile concentrating on a variety of property crimes; and white gangs participate relatively, more often, in organized crime, vandalism, or hate group activities. Youth gang intimidation and violence, the primary source of the general community's concern, however, remains largely intra-ethnic or intra-racial.

Family factors per se--such as the presence of a single-parent, family conflict or a father, uncle, or brother who is a gang member--are important but they may not alone be sufficient to explain why a youth becomes a gang member. Other pressures or inducements may be required to produce gang behavior, including the youth's personal interests, problems at school, his social needs or developmental problems, and the presence of youth gangs in the neighborhood or at school. Gang members appear not to be especially rebellious or hostile to parents or family members, with the possible exception of white gang members. Some families may condone gang membership, particularly if the youth helps to support the family economically through drug trafficking.

School Factors. Police data indicate that youth gang problems are usually more serious outside than inside school, occurring mostly when the youth travels through "hostile" gang territory on the way to and from school. Nevertheless, gang recruitment and intimidation do occur and gang conflicts may be planned at school, but carried out after class. Youth gang problems in many inner-city schools and in changing neighborhoods are generally perceived as more serious by students than school staff. Students in the middle school grades in certain low income gang areas appear to be at special risk of gang membership and related criminal activity, if they do not perform well in their studies and cannot obtain status and satisfaction at school or through constructive neighborhood activities.

Extreme gang-related violence is most characteristic of older, school drop-out, teens and young adults and may be due to a variety of factors. Because of the changing structure of the economy, older gang members are increasingly less qualified to obtain desirable jobs and less inclined to leave the gang which provides substitute satisfactions and, in recent years greater illegal opportunities for income. Also an accumulation of personal, home, school, and work failures as well as jail or prison experience may contribute to higher levels of frustration and more violent aggression among older than younger gang members.

Organized Crime. Currently, the relative increase of older youth and young adults in youth gangs and the expanded street-level drug market also suggest greater integration of gang violence and criminal gain activity than in recent decades. A closer relationship may now exist between youth gang members or delinquent street corner groups and organized adult crime in certain communities than in an earlier period. The gang member's "smartness", knowledge of the streets, aggressiveness, and violence skills are useful in local, unstable, and competitive adult

criminal enterprises. Some gangs, more often cliques within gangs and former gang youth, may be considered part of organized crime when they regularly engage in drug distribution, "contract" violence, car theft, business, extortion, burglary, pandering, and other crimes primarily committed for economic gain.

Definitions of the Problem

The definition of a youth gang and gang incident are critical to identification of the scope and seriousness of the problem and the approach selected to deal with it. The terms youth gang or street gang incident are essentially determined by law enforcement, but reflect local values, public, political, and organizational interests. The definitions may be all-inclusive or quite limited in scope. Usually the broader the definition, the more likely it will include a broad array of illegal activities committed by the gang member, whether directly a function of gang activity or not. Focus is on the identified gang member when he participates in any illegal situation. The narrow definitional approach emphasizes a delimited set of illegal activities, particularly of a violent character which grows out of distinctive gang interests, situations, functions, or age considerations.

The broader the definition of gang and gang incident, the more likely the assumption that gang membership, per se, predisposes an individual to a wide range of criminal, sometimes organized criminal activities. The narrower definition tends to focus on gang subculture and a limited set of activities particularly relevant to an adolescent period of development. The broader or more inclusive definition by law enforcement, the larger the relative number of gangs and gang members identified and the higher the incarceration rate for gang members. The narrower the definition, the smaller the relative number of gangs and gang members are identified, and the lower the incarceration rate of individuals for strictly gang-related activity. Rates of overall youth violence may not depend on whether there is a defined gang problem present in a jurisdiction. The context and form of such violence, however, may vary significantly. The prevalence of gangs may indeed vary across large cities, not only because of differences in definition but factors that we do not yet fully understand.

Definitions of the problem also influence the nature of the response to it. Suppression strategies appear to be relatively more dominant in those jurisdictions with a broad definition. Social intervention strategies are probably relatively more dominant in those jurisdictions with a narrow definition of the gang, gang incident, and therefore the gang problem. Our view in regard to definition is that it be narrow rather than broad and that the definition of gang and gang incident be viewed in functional terms, but that the ability to identify the gang youth's non-gang motivated criminal activity not be lost in a police information system. Special value, particularly in emerging gang

problem cities, would also be in concentrating attention on repeater youth gang offenders.

The youth gang, for criminal justice system purposes in this model, is defined as a group mainly of young people, often males, engaged in violent and other serious criminal activity, whose goal is not primarily criminal gain, but status achievement, socialization, excitement, and protection. It exists as a residual or surrogate institution where family, school, and legitimate employment no longer function adequately. Youth gangs, furthermore, may be identified by name, sign, symbol, dress code, and specific location. They engage in a variety of consumption oriented activities, including partying, hanging out, and extensive alcohol and drug use. Some cliques, individuals, or former gang members may be engaged in street sale and mid-level distribution of drugs, although in most cases such activity is related to individual gang members rather than gang interest and organization per se.

The narrow definition will provide for better targeting of key or high profile violent youth gangs, their leaders, and repeat offenders. It will not exaggerate the problem and will contribute to a delimited suppression strategy. The youth gang problem should be analyzed in local community structural terms, especially in regard to a breakdown of specific socializing and opportunity providing institutions which affect certain youth more than others. Community mobilization and the re-invigoration of local institutions targeting certain highly at risk youth should become the focus of action strategies. The youth gang problem thereby becomes somewhat more manageable and some moderate success is possible, given the availability of limited resources.

Response to the Problem

Various strategies, policies, and procedures have evolved for dealing with the youth gang problem in recent decades. Some of the approaches appear to be promising based on experience, limited research and evaluation, and theoretical considerations. For the most part, however, these approaches have been developed in response to earlier, more traditional and less serious youth delinquency or gang problems. Approaches to youth gangs whose members are currently involved in somewhat more organized gang activity, extreme violence or drug trafficking are relatively undeveloped and unevaluated. A great deal of research on gangs and program evaluation is required to determine whether current approaches are effective. Therefore the approach and policies suggested as promising in this document require extensive testing.

Responses that Don't Work

Based on research and expert observations of earlier and some current programs, the following approaches appear not to work (see Spergel, et al 1990).

1. Recreation. Athletics, team sports, social activities and programs simply to keep youth busy and diverted,

generally, do not reduce delinquent gang activity. On the one hand, many gang youth are not particularly interested in nor are they "good" athletes and avoid competitive sports. On the other, such activities alone may merely provide opportunities for gang recruitment and increased antagonism between opposing groups. A simple recreational approach serves neither to prevent, rehabilitate, nor suppress gang activity.

Recreation and athletic activities can be useful, if not essential, as a point of contact, development of relationships with positive role models and in conjunction with other activities such as remedial education, job training or placement, and highly skilled counseling.

2. Social Intervention. (counseling group work, street club work, mediation) Individuals strongly committed to gang norms and behaviors seem not to respond positively to individual psycho-therapeutic efforts. Social group or group therapeutic efforts with formed gangs also give no evidence of success in reducing delinquent gang behavior. Outreach or street gang efforts may serve to cohere gangs and increase rates of gang delinquency. Mediation efforts, including peace treaties sometimes have short-run success; but sooner, rather than later, the resumption of violent inter-gang attacks may be expected. Some efforts at prevention of gang activity through educational programs seem to have some success in attitudinal change of younger youth; but it is not clear that behavior of the more gang committed youth is affected. It is also uncertain whether most pre-adolescents or early adolescents are genuinely at risk of gang membership, even in high gang crime communities.

3. Gang Structure - Community-Based Agency Efforts. The gang structure, itself, at times has been used as a basis for controlling and re-directing gang activities. Gang leaders have been employed by social agencies as part of agency youth service programs and used by law enforcement because of their influence over other gang members in efforts to maintain order and protect property at local festivals or during times of riot. These efforts at best produce weak or ephemeral effects. At worst, they result in manipulation, fraud, and racketeering by gang leaders. They may also contribute to increased interagency and community conflict.

4. Simple and Non-Targeted Deterrent Approaches. The exclusive reliance of a community on law enforcement to deal with the youth or street gang problem may result in high rates of arrest, prosecution and transfer of the problem to correctional institutions, contributing to further development of the problem when gang members return to the community. Arrest of youth who may not be committed gang members or who are not involved in serious gang activity often results in quick release from court and detention and may simply enhance the visibility and reputation of certain gang prone youth. Seemingly effective suppression of gang activity may also be associated with conversion of the gang to more criminal gain-

oriented activity such as drug trafficking. This is not to deny that hard core gang leaders should be targeted for arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment, but even this strategy may have limited success, unless accompanied by other strategies.

5. Non-targeted Community Organizing. Occasional efforts to deal with the youth gang problem through improved interagency service coordination or even mobilizing local citizenry around problems of general inner city concern, e.g., improved housing, health, youth employment development, after-school programs for youth, and social services in the neighborhood, have not produced measurable positive results in respect to the youth gang problem. At times they have contributed to general community improvement and local citizen empowerment, but with no evidence available of impact on the gang problem.

6. Non-Targeted Structural Approaches. (To provide opportunities and reduce institutional racism) There is evidence that efforts at the provision of more or better educational, training, and job opportunities for low income or minority youth may not "trickle" down to gang youth. Special educational initiatives generally do not reach out to attract and sustain gang youth in their program. Youth manpower development programs, e.g., Job Corps, while successful in many respects, tend to screen out gang youth. Needed special support or control services are not built into such programs.

Efforts to deal with issues of institutional racism not targeted at gang youth, e.g., opening up unions to minorities or desegregating schools, have also not demonstrated success in reducing gang crime. Social movement and militant change efforts have involved few gang youth and have not contributed to measurable reduction in violent gang activity. More recent busing of minority youth from low income ghettos to other communities has often resulted in increased tension and conflict among youth from different gangs and neighborhoods now thrown together in a strange new school. Such busing is reported to weaken local neighborhood ties and other social controls which existed prior. Busing, unless adequately implemented with special services, may have "gang spread" effect as youth become anxious and organize for defensive or protective purposes.

7. Superficial, Short-Term Crisis Approaches. Most programs for dealing with the youth gang problem have been of a patch-work, non-clearly defined, or implemented character and are mainly responsive to severe gang crises. Such youth agency crisis programs tend to be nominal efforts sustained for a short period, e.g., sometimes a year or two. Program models, assessment procedures, risk population, or appropriate service patterns are not defined or developed. The quality of implementation of those programs leaves much to be desired.

8. Organizational Opportunism and Community Conflict. The youth gang problem presents an opportunity for many local agencies, community, and political leaders to augment personal

and organizational interests. Programs are supported which are not only simplistic and poorly designed, but serve narrow organizational interests uncoordinated with those of other agencies and organizations. When individual agencies assume and act on the basis that their perceptions and approaches are correct and should be exclusively or primarily supported, then interagency and community conflict are likely to arise. Not only is the community's approach fragmented but such fragmentation makes it opportune for gangs to survive and develop through manipulation of one program strategy so that it counters another. An inconsistent set of community strategies may contribute to increase rather than decrease the problem.

Responses that May Work

Much that seems to have been effective in reducing or controlling the youth gang problem is based on the idea of mobilizing community energies to target a youth gang or delinquent group problem. None of these efforts, however, has been systematically tested and evaluated. It is possible that the earliest such coordinated local community and interagency approaches date from the Chicago Area Projects, developed by Clifford Shaw in the 1930s and 1940s. Programs that have held promise in recent years have been based at least partially on this tradition.

1. Crisis Intervention Network Approaches (combining social intervention, suppression, and community mobilization strategies). Probably the most promising recent example of this combined set of strategies was the Philadelphia Crisis Intervention Network (CIN) which was on a 24 hour a day gang crisis intervention, mediation, and surveillance program using streetwise highly mobile workers. A probation unit, focussed on control of older gang youth and young adult influentials, was integrated into the approach. Local parent groups and resident councils supported the agency's efforts. They engaged directly in supervision of youth and related community development activities. Another key aspect of the program was close cooperation with police, schools, recreations, and other agencies as well as strong support from the Mayor's office. A solid consensus was developed about the nature of the problem and what each needed to do reciprocally to address it. A sharp drop in gang homicides and violent gang activity accompanied the implementation of the project over a fourteen year period. However, in recent years a sharp increase in drug related trafficking has occurred along with the decrease in gang violence. In other cities, particularly Los Angeles and Chicago, crisis intervention network projects have not been associated with a decline in the gang problem.

2. Comprehensive Community-Based Approaches. These approaches also assume that various criminal justice,

community-based agencies, and grassroots organizations must collaborate and be held accountable to each other in targeting the gang problem over a sustained period of time. Probation, parole, the police, youth agencies, schools, as well as local groups, including church, mother's groups, business, fraternal homes or organizations, and even former gang leaders become involved in a series of collective efforts to control and reduce the problem. A significant aspect of the approach is the development of trust among the different components of the community system, e.g., mother's groups relate closely to probation officers to support each other in dealing with the problem. An organic or comprehensive approach simultaneously targets older and younger gang youth for supervision and improved access to significant opportunities. Gang associates and parents may also receive various services.

Such a comprehensive approach may be under the auspice of public or private agencies. In at least two instances, there is evidence of a substantial decline of the gang problem over a 10 to 15 year period. In one case, the decline is still sustained.

3. Stable Criminal Opportunity Approaches. Gang violence problems also appear to have been somewhat controlled or reduced in certain low income communities when organized criminal activities develop and become integrated into local community life. Gang activities seem to be more rational, less turbulent, and in fact a transition to organized crime occurs, for example, through sale and distribution of narcotics, other criminal and quasi criminal enterprises. A variety of local business, professional and governmental leaders are coopted. Illegal activities are regularized to meet "illicit" local community needs and to maximize profits. In the process, gang violence is reduced, except when competition or conflict between criminal organizations arises.

It is possible to argue that the reduction of gang violence in certain cities, e.g., New York, Philadelphia and more recently Columbus, Fort Wayne, and Miami has followed this pattern. Youth gang member have been recruited into adult criminal organizations or the youth gang itself is transformed into a criminal organization. In other words, criminal opportunities have served to integrate and stabilize community structure by providing alternate, compatible routes to successful status in American society. Legitimate business and the local citizenry come to tolerate and depend on these more rational illegal enterprises.

Elements of the Model

We identify certain policies and procedures as elements of a prototype design. Five strategies have historically emerged. They include community mobilization, i.e., networking among organizations and grassroots participation; social intervention, i.e., focussing on crisis intervention, counseling, or recreation

to change gang youth norms and values; opportunities provision, particularly improving the means to remedial education, training, and relevant job placement; suppression, i.e., arrest, incarceration, and close supervision of gang youth; and finally organizational development, i.e., the creation of new or special mechanisms to facilitate any of the above four basic strategies. Notions of prevention, intervention, supervision, and rehabilitation as well as ideas of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention may also be employed, particularly as they cut across the four basic strategies we have identified.

Usually all four basic strategies--community mobilization, social intervention, opportunities provision, and suppression-- are used by a range of agencies and community groups in those cities where the problem is chronic and at times acute and a variety of gang and gang prone youth are present. A more limited range of options is usually employed in those cities or communities where the problem has recently emerged, is less serious, and seems to affect mainly younger youth. Our survey of youth gang programs in 45 cities found that strategies of community mobilization and provision of opportunities were interactively highly predictive of perceived (and actual) effectiveness in lowering the youth gang problem, especially in chronic problem contexts.

A strategy primarily of community mobilization seemed best to account for a reduction in the gang problems in emerging problem cities. Based on our field observations, however, these two strategies must also be integrated with the three other strategies: suppression, social intervention, and organizational development.

Organizations tend to subscribe mainly to particular strategies for their own distinctive mission and resource interest purposes. Therefore, conflicts between and among criminal justice, community-based agencies, and grassroots organizations as well as issues of coordination among funding agencies, especially at the federal level must be successfully managed if a community is to be effectively organized to deal with the youth gang problem.

Community Mobilization. If a key problem contributing to the development of youth gangs is the weakness of existing legitimate institutions, such as home, school, employment, and fragmentation of community service delivery, then the most important thing is for the community to be mobilized to do something about these structural problems. A variety of key local community groups or organizations must integrate their strategies and programs and be involved on a daily basis in targeting the youth gang problem. Certain community functions must be enhanced such as socialization, social support, social control, leadership, and resource development. These functions must be appropriate to the nature and level of the problem in a particular community, and specifically addressed to the distinctive needs of different categories of gang youth.

Both local and external community resources must be mobilized to stimulate the development of collaborative and interagency

activities directed at control of the youth gang problem, whether through resource incentives, moral or political pressures, as well as local citizen participation. At a minimum public and community-based agencies must hold each other accountable for what they agree to do in regard to the youth gang problem. Key community and agency individuals and groups should be mobilized to develop or better carry out socialization activities. For example, parents, grassroots organizations, youth agencies, schools, and police should be involved in the education of parents with younger or gang-prone youth, the development of parent support groups, and after-school parent patrols. Neighborhood influentials of stable and good character should become actively engaged in contacting, supervising, and controlling gang youth. It may be possible at times to convince gangs and their members to resolve conflicts, control violent and criminal behavior, and disband in order to participate in community-wide economic and social development activities.

Opportunities Provision. The provision of social opportunities, i.e., a variety of targeted educational, training, and employment programs, is the second most important overall component over the long term for the prevention and reduction of the youth gang problem. School learning opportunities must be developed for younger youth to stay out of gangs by assisting them to find status and self-esteem through achievement in their academic programs and in their relationships to teachers. The schools need to provide intensive, sustained remediation and supervision for gang-prone youth to overcome their earlier socialization deficits and to counter current community gang influences. School administrators and teachers must be able to reach out to parents and solicit the aid of community service agencies to facilitate and enhance the provision of basic educational opportunities to targeted gang prone youth, particularly during early adolescence.

Training and jobs are especially critical resources for older youth still in gangs but who may be at "positive risk" at a certain point in their development for leaving the gangs or for decreased participation in criminal gang activity. Youth committed to gang norms and engaged in criminal activity, but who have suffered injury, arrest, and imprisonment may suddenly "get smart" and "grow up". They may come under pressure from girl friends and families to leave the gang. They may decide to seek to achieve satisfying adult roles and self-respect through training or a job. Supportive counseling and supervision as well as meaningful training and jobs are required for this social transitional process to be successful. Innovative cooperative justice, employment, and community agency processes must be developed to assure not only that the gang youth has access to, but can make adequate use of social opportunities (i.e., academic, training, and job) under conditions that provide both support and constraint.

Focus on strategies of community mobilization and social opportunities does not mean denial of the importance of suppression, social intervention, and innovative organizational

approaches. It means a broadening of approach by law enforcement, social service agencies, and other organizations so that they more openly communicate and fully collaborate with each other and understand the importance of schools, business and industry, local grassroots organizations, and others in also targeting the problem. Most important, criminal justice and community-based agencies must come to view their purposes in such a way that social opportunities and community development are extremely important strategies, contributing both to the social development of gang youth as well as the protection of the community.

Social Intervention. Socialization agencies, such as youth serving and family treatment organizations, should provide crisis and long-term, preventive and remedial services both to identified gang youth and those at risk of membership in youth gangs. These agencies need to target gang-prone alienated and hostile youth in a variety of contexts, i.e., on the streets, in schools, and correctional facilities, in order to change norms and values. They must act as a necessary link to each other's services, enforce social controls and most importantly provide access to critical social and economic opportunities. They serve as front-line forces to connect alienated youth to the legitimate adult world.

These agencies must be able to advocate for, voice concern and interest on behalf of such youth as well as educate and guide youth and their families to meet significant human needs in socially approved ways. They must both provide access to meaningful roles and jobs and a certain degree of supervision and social control, often through crisis intervention. Of special importance is counseling and guidance to gang active teenage parents in chronic problem cities and neighborhoods, and outreach social development activities to gang prone youth in emerging problem cities and neighborhoods.

However, these access services to opportunities are insufficient unless the opportunities for an education and jobs are also present. Also these social service programs must be part of a larger coordinated effort to deal with the problem. A great deal more commitment by community-based agencies is required than is traditional among such agencies to integrate their efforts with schools, police, and other criminal justice agencies. In certain instances, community-based agencies may need to exercise leadership and responsibility in initiating community mobilization efforts, and even developing training, jobs, and business enterprises to employ gang youth.

Suppression. Social control organizations, particularly justice system agencies, are also an essential component of the community for dealing with the youth gang problem, especially through the appropriate use of suppression procedures and supervision of offenders. Hard core gang leaders, i.e., those who are leaders or influentials, and others who have been repeatedly arrested and sometimes convicted for serious gang-related violence and criminal behavior, should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Specialized police and probation gang units in chronic problem contexts must target problem areas and gangs and develop special investigation, intelligence, and enforcement procedures to maximize efficiency. Not only should law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies participate in formal community wide task force and coordinating structures, but provide access to information to other criminal justice and community-based agencies and organizations on how best to identify and cope with the problem. Special advisory committees including representatives of local community groups and community-based agencies should also be established to advise criminal justice agencies, not so much on suppression strategies as on secondary strategies of social intervention and opportunities provision essential to the prevention and control of youth gang crime, especially in chronic gang problem cities.

In communities with less serious or emerging youth gang problems, relatively informal law enforcement, and other criminal justice agency collaboration with schools, community-based agencies, and grassroots groups may be adequate to deal with the problem. Required, however, is knowledge about key gangs and gang leaders, what specific gang crimes have been committed, procedures for collection, analysis, and use of such data, as well as how to neutralize different types of gang-related activity through appropriate collaboration with other justice and non-justice agencies and communities groups, depending on the nature and level of the problem.

In both chronic and emerging gang problem cities, the proactive leadership of the police chief, other principal criminal justice leaders, and support from key political or governmental authorities is required. A suppression strategy must be embedded in a community oriented approach which utilizes local community support, such as citizen patrols, mother's groups, community meetings, and various interagency information exchange mechanisms. A forceful but rational and community sensitive approach to gang suppression will not only calm outraged or frightened citizens and community leaders, but permit and encourage a variety of agencies to develop appropriate social intervention and opportunity providing programs targeted to gang youth. The long-term as well as short-term protection of community residents must be ensured.

Organizational Change and Development. Finally, these strategies need to be appropriately organized in terms of the nature and scope of the problem and mission of the particular organization participating in the community effort. In chronic usually larger city problem contexts, more specialized and formal efforts need to be established through such mechanisms as specialized police gang units, vertical or hard core prosecution, specialized probation, multi-functional community-based agency outreach programs, and special school curricula or security arrangements.

In emerging gang problem contexts such specialization and formalization may generally be inappropriate. However, some improved organizational means need to be developed to target those

younger gang youth at greatest risk of gang involvement for more intensified attention by a variety of agencies and community groups. For example, within the police department this may mean centralized gang identification, analysis of repeat gang offenders, and some limited additional training to all police officers to deal with such youth. For other agencies and community groups, this should indicate a need to improve intelligence gathering and targeting of particular high risk youth for additional attention and services.

Organizational development and change require at the community level not only better mobilization and integration of available resources across individual agencies and community groups, but an expansion and better balance of strategies among those agencies and groups. Thus, criminal justice agencies need to emphasize to a somewhat greater degree, issues of social intervention and social opportunities, while community-based agencies should support or participate in the development of appropriate suppression strategies in relation to the youth gang problem.

Policies and Procedures

Specific policies and procedures must be designed to achieve the objectives of suppression and intervention and ultimately youth gang problem reduction. The following prototype elements are developed as a part of a series of processes or steps essential to each agency or community group engaged in combating the problem. These processes may be categorized into six action areas: Assessing the Problem, Developing Youth Gang Policy, Creation of Goals and Objectives, Relevant Programming, Research Evaluation, and Funding Priorities. The intent of this section is to consider and recommend general policies and procedures. Specific considerations and priorities for particular organizations for policy and program development are provided in accompanying documents.

Assessing the Problem: Recognition and Consensus

The presence of a youth gang problem must be recognized before anything meaningful can be done to deal with it. Usually an incident occurs in which a group of youth is engaged in serious violent behavior. This can be a function of intergroup conflict, gang recruitment, injury to an innocent victim, or other criminal activity such as drug trafficking. The primary motivation for this kind of behavior is development of status, reputation, group defense, or the common interest of the gang as a whole, rather than simply individual gain. Protection of turf, use of colors, signs, symbols, and distinctive clothing are often components of gang behavior.

The gang incident must be viewed as a threat by recognized moral, legal, political, economic, or social authority. The violent and criminal act(s) should also be viewed as a problem that

requires organized community response. A gang situation or even a crisis may exist in a community, but if it is not recognized as a problem, it usually cannot bring about an agency or community response, and adequate policies or programs cannot be formulated.

Usually, the police, news media, politicians, and/or local community groups are the first to perceive and alert the wider community to the presence of youth gang criminal activity. The problem tends to be defined both narrowly in terms of specific gang incidents that emanate strictly from gang motivation as well as more broadly based on the gang-relatedness or membership of the individual as he or she participates in any delinquent or criminal activity, whether strictly motivated by gang activity or not. A narrower definition is recommended in order to target the problem in some manageable and proportionate way while avoiding excessive labelling and extreme community reaction. The specific locations of gangs, membership size, demographics, patterns of criminal activity, especially violence, intimidation, drug use and trafficking, and other distinguishing characteristics must be reliably observed and recorded.

Also important is clear community specific identification of set of the causes or factors contributing to the problem, e.g., newcomer youth attending school or moving into the neighborhood, too little attention to certain pre-gang type youth activities, lack of recreational outlets, inadequate achievement of low-income youth at school, lack of alternative educational programs, insufficient job opportunities, presence of active criminal adult leadership, concentration of poverty and/or disorganized families in certain housing projects or sections of the community, and racism.

In cities especially with chronic gang problems, it is not possible to adequately assess the gang problem unless open communication exists with present and former gang members, concerned local citizens, and representatives from a cross-section of community agencies or organizations. Key decision-makers of the community who are able to influence the way the problem can be addressed must be involved. Community agencies and grassroots groups, including schools, churches, and businesses which are in some way connected to or impacted by the problem should be included in describing its nature and causes and become part of its amelioration or solution. This should be done in a way that protects community, does not unduly punish youth, and avoids giving legitimacy to gang structure or processes.

Of critical importance is development of a consensus on key dimensions of the problem. The key issue may be not only how broadly or narrowly the problem is defined, but also whether those who have access to community resources and develop programs agree on who and what is the problem. Conflicting perceptions are likely to arise, especially when not based on adequate data. There is a tendency for the police to define only high profile criminal youth groups as gangs, for social agencies to define a broader range of youth groups as gangs, and for schools, training facilities, and

business or industry to ignore such youth or relegate them to problems which belong outside of their bailiwick.

Thus, not only consciousness of, but some consensus on, the definition and basis for the gang problem has to be reached by decision-makers of the key agencies and community organizations in the city. Failure of leadership to reach an adequate level of consciousness of the scope and nature of the problem and consensus on need for action can mean a delay in a mobilized community and coordinated approach. Failure to respond may result sooner or later in recriminations among agencies and community groups and further fragmentation of their relationships.

The youth gang problem may also be aggravated by an irrelevant response. For example, some groups may view the gang problem as simply a manifestation of youthful high jinks in a frustrating, disadvantaged environment. Another group sees gang activity as essentially organized crime. A coalition of minority group organizations views gang activity as the ultimate result of white racism. Another group perceives the problem as a failure of parental discipline and control. It is possible that a misperceived and poorly defined youth gang problem will result in action that may have worse consequences than a problem not recognized. The wrong strategy or conflicting strategies establishes a basis for or enhances interagency rivalry and community conflict. Adequate data and understanding of the problem in specific terms are essential to adequate assessment.

Once the youth gang problem is appropriately recognized and a combination of influential organizations--criminal justice, community-based, and grassroots--have agreed on what the youth gang problem is and what its key causes are, existing program needs and organizational resources as well as interagency structures should be assessed. Special interest should be taken to discern the availability of community controls, opportunities, and services necessary to deter and socially develop gang youths.

Organization and Development of Youth Gang Policy

If we assume that the youth gang problem is primarily a function of community breakdown or disorganization, then both the structure and process of a promising response must be directed to effectively organizing the community to target the problem. As indicated above, a better structure must evolve in chronic and emerging gang problem cities which serves to integrate strategies and programs of key criminal justice and community-based agencies, as well as grassroots organization in regard to youth gang problems.

In chronic gang problem cities, this means the establishment of a special local council or statutory commission (possibly enabled by state law) to set policy, accept and allocate funds to implement such policy, and coordinate programs resulting from such policy. Such a council or commission should comprise, minimally, key law enforcement representatives, including police and state's attorney or prosecutors; probation; corrections; parole; judiciary;

schools; community-based agencies, especially youth agencies; grassroots organizations; churches; business and industry; and a criminal justice planning organization. The commission or council should establish special committees on law enforcement, schools, employment, and rehabilitation. A full range of strategies, prevention, intervention, and suppression must be planned, but they must be appropriately ordered or prioritized.

In emerging gang problem cities, less formal or inclusive structural arrangements may be developed to determine and implement policy and programs. Key elements of a youth gang intervention council should be law enforcement, especially police, schools, community-based agencies, and grassroots organizations. Special emphasis must be given to efforts by schools and youth agencies to reach out to younger youth and their families through a variety of prevention and early intervention programs. Gang prone youth must be specifically targeted.

The policies for dealing with youth gang problems need to be sufficiently broad and meaningful to be applicable across types of agencies and the roles of workers. This assumes that a variety of strategies and roles are necessary to deal with the problem in a given community. Policies of deterrence, prevention, or rehabilitation separately are insufficient for confronting youth gang problems. Strategies and how they are carried out, must be systematically integrated, since the problem has different but interrelated aspects. The gang problem is organic, particularly in chronic gang problem cities. It affects different sectors of a gang population, such as older and younger members, in different but reciprocal or interrelated ways. It may not be realistic to deal only with preadolescents if adolescent and young adult gang members exercise great influence on these preadolescents.

The factors to be considered in the development of gang policy and roles include: the nature and seriousness of the gang problem in a community; the history of relationships among agencies and community groups, particularly in reference to the gang problem; the potential of particular agencies and community organizations for collaboration; and the availability of resources. By and large, fewer strategies and more informal interagency collaboration tend to develop in smaller cities, particularly where the gang problem is just emerging. Over time, especially in larger cities where the youth gang problem has become more complex, chronic, and severe, a variety of strategies by agencies and community groups will need to be developed, as agency and community leaders learn that a single, unitary strategy is not enough.

For example, justice agencies, to some extent law enforcement, but especially prosecution and judges, emphasize or tend to restrict their approaches to suppression. However, over time, there needs to be a shift to inclusion especially of community mobilization, but also of social intervention and occasionally opportunities provision, as important strategies. Gang unit officers may not only be primarily engaged in arrest of gang members and investigation of gang incidents, but in information sharing and tactical planning with neighborhood or city-wide

organizations as well as referral of gang youth for family treatment and jobs. Members of a grassroots organization, such as a mother's group, may not only comfort and support members after incidents of gang victimization of their children, but engage in street patrols and collaborate with police and probation around exchange of information and arrest of youth, even their own children, to stop gang violence or drug sales.

An effective school strategy may call for close collaboration among school personnel, parent patrol groups, and police as well as the development of remedial programs for gang youth and the training of teachers and staff on how to be sensitive to, prevent, and control gang problems. The personnel of a low-income public housing project should work closely with police on occasional targeted sweeps to obtain contraband weapons or drugs stored in the vacant apartments or to improve security on project grounds. They can also seek support for resident economic development with special interest in the creation of remedial education, training, and legitimate jobs for gang youth.

Managing the Collaborative Process

The community and institution building process in respect to the gang problem goes through various stages before significant and positive impact on the problem seems to occur. These stages include: denial, organizing and initial program development, goal and problem displacement as well as interagency or intergroup conflict, and sustained program development and impact. The further along the mobilization process, the more likely a positive outcome.

The community organizing process is essentially a political one, characterized by efforts to mobilize and control organizational interest, contain interagency rivalry and conflict as well as overcome community fear and apathy. The youth gang problem, as with other social problems, is usually not recognized or adequately attended to in its early stages. Communities which have little familiarity with or understanding of gang phenomena may overlook initial signs of gang activity, deny them, particularly if police, schools, local politicians, and/or business interests are concerned with maintaining an image that their jurisdiction is safe, secure, and an ideal place to live, work, or visit.

Usually some violent incident or a series of incidents occurs which is identified as gang related. When the presence and threat of gangs can no longer be denied, political, governmental, and local leaders call for action. Meetings are organized often with pressure from the media and under the auspices of the local city or county executive officer. However, the call for action is often based on incomplete information. The problem may be exaggerated. Youth from minority or newcomer groups may be perceived as a threat. Action is often expedient mainly to serve political or organizational interests.

The period of denial, "cover-up", or apathy is often followed by a flurry of political, organizational, and interorganizational activity. A variety of organizations jockey for position as moral leaders. Task forces emerge. The availability of funds allows specific law enforcement agencies to expand and develop special mechanisms and procedures to contain the problem. Special prevention and social intervention programs are funded at a considerably lower level. Established criminal justice and to some extent community-based agencies tend to control the funding allocations process. However, formal and informal exchanges among a variety of organizations in regard to dealing with the gang problem emerge.

At this second stage, only limited collaboration actually occurs. A semblance of joint agency and community group planning and cooperation takes place through somewhat formal or ceremonial community-wide meetings. The gang problem either temporarily abates, grows worse, or more likely is transformed from street corner intergang violence to drug trafficking. Frustrations over program development and progress in dealing with the problem occurs. Interagency rivalry over allocation of funds arises. Issues of minority group participation in policy planning and program implementation surface. Ethnic conflicts develop over what causes the problem, the limited effects of the programs mounted, and the need for new players in the game to cope with the gang problem.

At this stage, charges of institutional racism, military tactics, and ineffective campaigns are raised. Established agencies are accused of serving their own program expansionist needs, often without addressing acute or hard core gang members. The charge is that local community groups have not been sufficiently consulted in the process of identifying the scope or seriousness of the problem and advised on how to address it. The gang strategies, programs, and policies are viewed by minority spokesmen as one more example of racism which serves only to deny them economic and political power. Local agencies and citizen leaders believe they should have received more resources or been more fully involved in the decision-making process, rather than used or exploited in lower or intermediate level positions.

In this critical third stage of the development of a genuine collaborative community approach for dealing with the youth gang problem, temporary coalitions and programs may be torn asunder. Only a series of open meetings and sincere efforts at collective decision-making by all key neighborhood and city-wide actors, and a guarantee of a more sensitive and purposeful distribution of resources to combat the gang problem will bring about a resumption of collaborative efforts. Staff of the various programs must now be clearly multi-racial and multi-ethnic and highly representative of both the local and larger community. While a political negotiation process for dealing with the problem is now more open and involves more criminal justice, community-based agency, and local community actors, the issue of accountability must still be resolved.