
**Research and program evaluation in Illinois:
Studies on drug abuse and violent crime**

**Evaluation of the Little Village Gang Violence
Reduction Project: The First Three Years**

Executive Summary

August 1998

Prepared by

The University of Chicago

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**Evaluation Funded by
Illinois Criminal Justice
Information Authority**

**Jim Edgar, Governor
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**ILLINOIS
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
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Executive Summary

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Introduction

Present day youth gangs, particularly in Chicago and several other major urban centers, appear to be larger, better organized, more violent and criminally oriented than in earlier decades since World War II. They no longer comprise only juveniles but range from 12 to 24 years, though entry into the gang may come earlier, and the gang member may be identified with his or her gang well into middle age and beyond. The most serious manifestation of the gang problem, especially violence, appears to be concentrated between the ages of 17 to 20 years of age and older. The youth gang problem is increasingly widespread in large and small communities, in urban, suburban, rural areas, and Indian reservations across the United States, and in other countries. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) in a recent study of law enforcement agencies reported that over 300 Illinois cities and towns had gang problems.

While considerable research exists on the nature and scope of the problem, almost no recent evaluation exists on programs to address the problem. The absence of knowledge about what programs exist and what approaches work or do not work is due to a variety of factors: the lack of adequate models to develop programs; the difficulty of conducting programs that address the problem; and the extreme difficulty of conducting evaluation research on community-based programs.

Program and evaluation efforts that address the gang problem have also been handicapped by lack of adequate and consistent definitions of what a gang incident is and what a gang or gang member is, inadequate police data systems, and politicization of the problem through denial or overreaction. While strategies of suppression and increasingly prevention are dominant, little attention has been paid to strategies of intervention or a combination of strategies in recent years.

Background of the Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project

The goal of the Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project of the Chicago Police Department was to reduce serious gang violence at the individual youth gang member and the community area levels. The project was initiated with a grant from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority in mid-July 1992 and lasted until mid-July 1997. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority received funds to develop and evaluate the Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice Anti-Drug Abuse Act. The analysis and a final report of the full five years of the project are due in June 1999. The following report covers various aspects of the first three years of project development, program operations, outcome and impact.

Key ideas of the Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project (GVRP) were based on the Juvenile Gang Suppression and Intervention (Research and Development) program sponsored by the United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1987-1991 and earlier researched programs, including the Crisis Intervention Services Project conducted in Humboldt Park, Chicago

in 1983-1984, funded by the ICJIA. The Authority continues to play a major role in developing, testing, funding, and reporting current gang program efforts in Illinois.

The Little Village Model

The underlying assumption of the model is that the gang problem, particularly in its serious and chronic form, is a response in large measure to community social disorganization. The inability of key social institutions such as family, school, police, youth agencies, the church, business or employers, and other local and city-wide organizations to address collaboratively the gang problem, especially in poor, often isolated communities containing minority or newcomer populations. Each organization concerned with or impacted by the problem tends to follow a particular strategy with little relation to other strategies. This often creates interstitial or socially and economically isolated areas in which gangs flourish. The key idea of the model is to have organizations and representatives of the local community work together to de-isolate, socially assist, and control gang youth so that they can participate in legitimate mainstream activities in society.

The GVRP focused on the integration of strategies of social intervention and suppression within a supportive framework of organizational change and development. It also involved community mobilization at the grass roots level and the provision of increased social and economic opportunities targeted to youth 17 to 24 years of age. Many gang youths in Little Village were participating in serious gang violence, such as homicide, aggravated battery and aggravated assault.

Problem Community and its Gangs

The project was implemented in the 10th District of the Chicago Police Department (CPD) in the South Lawndale community area, encompassing Little Village (La Villita), an area of 5 ½ square miles, comprising six police beats, southwest of Chicago's central business district. The area was selected because it was one of the two most chronically gang violent in the city, where intergang fighting had persisted for more than two decades. Drug offenses, nongang-related crime, and delinquency generally were serious, but still at moderate levels compared to other areas of Chicago. The community of 100,000, ninety percent Mexican or Mexican-American, contained an estimated 30,000 undocumented persons. The population was primarily lower income and working class; however, 40% owned their own homes.

Until the middle 1970s, Little Village had been middle European working class community. Little Village today is still in many respects a first and second generation thriving community of small businesses and factories, with mainly Catholic but a few Protestant churches, and a range of social, cultural, educational, medical, and ethnic institutions. Several community-wide organizations and block club associations exist, but none with a predominant interest in the gang problem.

Two major gang constellations seem to split the community into two sub-areas, Latin Kings and Two-Six, each with about fifteen sections or factions. The Latin Kings are the older, better established gang with an estimated 1200 gang members in the eastern, poorer part of the community. The Two-Six are the newer, somewhat younger gang with about 800 members in the less depressed part of the community containing more privately owned homes.

The two gang constellations were responsible for 75% of all gang-motivated homicides, aggravated batteries and aggravated assaults in Little Village in the three year pre-project period, 1989-1992. Three other smaller independent Mexican gangs, mainly on the eastern border, and two African-American gangs on the north and northwestern parts of the community accounted for the remainder of the gang-motivated violence, based on CPD definitions and statistics. Youth, age 17 to 24 years, accounted for 70% of the serious gang violence; youth 16 and under were responsible for 20 percent of the serious gang violent crime; and adults 25 years and over for the remainder. Although female gang affiliates existed in the area, females as offenders were identified in less than 5% of the heavy gang violence; however, they accounted for an increasing percentage of drug and property-related offenses, but still far less than that absolute number reported for males.

Program Structure and Process

The Research and Development Division of the Chicago Police Department (CPD) formally administered the project, and the local 10th District commander was nominally in charge. The project remained relatively isolated from the rest of the CPD or 10th District police units. The principal investigator (PI) of the evaluation became both the day to day coordinator and the evaluator of the project. He was also in charge of the community youth work component. The evaluation was separately funded by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA), yet there was an extraordinary amount of interaction between the program practitioners and the evaluators.

Three different agency units comprised the project: the police with two full-time tactical officers, a part-time Neighborhood Relations sergeant and a part-time clerical officer; three full-time adult probation officers; and the equivalent of four full-time community youth workers, including a full-time field supervisor, under the direction of the principal investigator/coordinator; and a half-time community organizer. Neighbors Against Gang Violence (NAGV), an independent organization affiliated with the project, was also formed. Its board included representatives of a Protestant Evangelical church, three Catholic churches, two Boys and Girls Clubs, a local park recreational center, a suburban job agency, and a representative of a branch of a major citywide Latino community organization.

All of the community youth workers, one of the tactical police officers, one of the probation officers, and the community organizer were currently or had recently been local residents of Little Village. The team members met formally every two weeks and sometimes more frequently at the Little Village Cook County Adult Probation office, established specifically for the project. The project team generally worked late afternoons and evenings – often until midnight or later, and at least part of the weekend and some holidays. Informal contacts among the project staff occurred almost every other day. The workers often called each other at home to share information pertaining to gang violence prevention or control.

The team members were committed to their own organizational missions, yet were able to develop remarkably strong identification with the project; team cohesion and morale were extremely high. There was little direction or control from central office police or probation administrators. Project police were not required to make a certain

number of arrests, for example. Probation officers had relatively small caseloads. Local project policy, practice, and team functioning evolved largely on its own. Tactical officers shared information about gang incidents and referred gang members to community youth workers for jobs and school programs; community youth workers provided information to police about hard core youth, particularly those involved in violent gang incidents, and they also helped youth to meet probation appointments and follow probation rules; probation provided project police with access to a great deal of information about criminal activities and criminal justice processing of target youth outside the city but within Cook County; the community organizer who lived in the heart of gang conflict territory shared her long-term knowledge about local families and events, and was a channel of communication between community residents and the project team.

There was no formal referral process of gang youth to the program. The community youth workers in each of the two gang areas were the key initial source of program youth contact for inclusion in the program and referral to services in the broader community. Other members of the team, particularly the police, confirmed the appropriateness of particular youth to be targeted. On the other hand, a small number of specific gang youth were initially known to the police and probation workers. Community youth workers were quickly able to contact and establish a full program relationship with them.

A variety of contacts and services were provided, including referral to and placement in jobs or job training, remedial education, recreational activities, counseling of gang youth on the streets and in their homes, crisis counseling, drug treatment and

mental health referrals. The parents, spouses, and girlfriends of most target youth were contacted and sometimes provided with brief counseling or referral for their own problems or those related to the target youth. Contacts were often made with youth in jail, prison or on behalf of them in court. Project police and probation officers together toured "hot spots," gym facilities, and occasionally visited homes of youth or their parents, wives, or girlfriends.

As a rule, community youth workers did not openly join police or probation officers in these contacts. However, all program youth were told about or came to experience the working relationship of project staff members with each other. Frequently police, probation, and community youth workers were involved together with gang youth in sports events (softball, basketball games), graffiti paint-outs, and group discussions around gang-related and criminal justice issues. These group events took place mainly on the University of Chicago campus, sometimes in Little Village. Intergang games took place, as a rule, on the campus, which is neutral turf.

Evaluation Design

The evaluators collected information over time from a number of different data sources including interviews of individual gang members, individual official police records for program and comparison youth, project staff contact and service records, surveys of community residents and local community organizations, aggregate level police analyses and monthly program reports, and census data.

Almost all youth targeted for contact and services by the project agreed to participate in the research (no more than five youth targeted for the program refused to

be initially interviewed and included in the program). In total 148 youths from the first two cohorts, that is, a group(s) of youth entering the program and interviewed in successive yearly time intervals, were interviewed at least once. One hundred and three (n=103) or 69.6% of the original group interviewed were interviewed at Time III, or approximately three years later. All but two of the 148 individuals in the two cohorts agreed to sign consent forms permitting the researchers to obtain their CPD and Cook County Court records. Comparison youth were those from the same gangs arrested closest in time to points of target youth entry into the program, but who were not contacted or served by any of the program staff.

A variety of service and contact records were completed by project community youth workers, police, probation officers, and the NAGV worker for each youth in the program. Not all youth in the program were research contacted or served by all types of workers, but most who were interviewed three times were served or contacted by at least two types of workers.

Aggregate level monthly and annual incident data were supplied by the crime analysis section of the CPD and the Early Warning System of ICJIA totaling gang homicides, aggravated gang batteries, and aggravated assault for the 10th District's Little Village beats and comparable clusters of beats in six other comparable Latino high gang violence districts, including Pilsen, which was almost an identical gang problem area.

We were also able to compute changes in prevalence rates of gang violence for males 17 to 25 years of age in Little Village and its closest comparison area, Pilsen, over a three year pre-project and project period using 1990 census and CPD data. Community surveys of perceptions of the gang problem were conducted in Little Village

and Pilsen. One hundred (100) heads of households living in the highest gang violence streets (based on police and informant reports) and 50 representatives of a variety of organizations in Little Village and Pilsen were interviewed.

Finally, we were also able to determine what the cost-benefit of the Gang Violence Reduction Project was compared to its absence in six other comparable high gang violent Latino areas during the first two years of the project. (See Table 1).

Implementation of Project Strategies

Five strategies were implemented with varying degrees of success: organizational change and development, community mobilization, social intervention, provision of social opportunities and suppression.

1) Organizational Change and Development. The CPD, the sponsor of the project, only partially accepted the idea that former gang members and local community groups could collaborate with police officers in the control, i.e., suppression and prevention, of gang crime. During the course of the project, top level administrators of the CPD were preoccupied with the development of community policing. There was no attempt to integrate project operations and community policing and little attempt by CPD or the Cook County Adult Probation Department (CCAPD) to relate the work of the project to other units.

The project developed mainly at the project team level with the University of Chicago principal investigator as the coordinator. The local commander and lieutenant of the CPD tactical team did supply some support to the Neighborhood Relations sergeant and other officers of the team. In essence, police and probation officers on the

project team were relatively detached policy and operations-wise and somewhat isolated from their main units, with minimal two-way feedback. In spite of this, and perhaps because of it, a highly cohesive project team operation was quickly achieved.

2) Community Mobilization. The development of a public interagency structure or a broad-based steering committee of public and local community agencies was not achieved. Key organizations, such as the public schools, Chicago Department of Human Services, and the Cook County Juvenile Court probation department refused to participate or only participated peripherally in the work of the project. An organization of local churches, citizens, and agencies was formed but only partially developed. The community mobilization process was therefore only partially effective at the grass roots level.

Further, there was insufficient interest at administrative CPD levels in an interagency coalition or the support of a local community organizing effort to support a broad prevention, intervention, and suppression approach. NAGV leadership was also conflicted as to its purpose: whether to develop into a local community-wide coalition of agencies and neighborhood groups or into a social service agency providing services to meet social needs of gang youth and their families.

3) Social Intervention. This strategy was relatively well achieved in respect to reaching out, contacting, and providing a range of limited but intensive services to highly delinquent and aggressive gang youth between the ages of 14 and 24. Most community youth workers were effective in contacting youth and learned to make use of local agency and city-wide resources to aid in the mainstreaming and socialization of gang youth. They were partially effective as team members, supplying information variably on

gangs and gang youth for purposes of social control, particularly in regard to gang violence control.

The community youth workers required constant support and supervision. They were continually at risk as they fulfilled their mediator or broker function between the gang and conventional worlds. Some of the youth workers remained too identified with gang factions, others were too strongly identified with law enforcement. A process of training and close interaction with other team members reduced these risks of over-identification. The project demonstrated that community youth workers, who were ex-gang offenders, could work reasonably well with law enforcement, social service agencies, families, and job sources to conventionalize gang youth and assist with the control of gang violence and crime. Expert traditional social services were not expected of, nor supplied by, community youth workers.

4) Provision of Social Opportunities. The project was reasonably successful in providing access to jobs and educational resources, particularly as the project developed. The presence of an expanding economy helped. Direct job placement, referrals to job agencies, and informal neighborhood networks were useful. Training and continuing educational resources were available. Motivating gang youth to take jobs, undergo additional training and education was a continuing struggle for project workers.

Local agencies, schools, businesses, and especially churches were able to reach out to accept gang youth into their programs or make special arrangements for use of their facilities for parent group discussions, community meetings or recreation events, and the like. Greater access to local resources and services could have been made available with supplementary project funds. Socialization of gang youth in interaction

with the provision of social, educational, and employment opportunities had to go hand in hand, and it did to a modest degree.

5) Suppression (Social Control). A broad approach to suppression, i.e., social control, was achieved by project workers through collaborative efforts. Project police and probation modified their suppression approach and still were able to achieve an improved level of arrests and control of serious offenders. They were involved in a variety of social problem-solving and community-oriented gang prevention and control efforts, which increased knowledge of the gang problem and which youth to target for suppression and why. The community youth workers also functioned as control agents as well as service providers. Persistent communication with other workers and target gang youth and joint project staff member planning were key elements of reducing the level of gang violence among target youth.

An effective communication system about the local nature and scope of the gang problem was developed from a variety of sources: CPD aggregate-level arrest and crime data and continual research based program assessment as well as project worker observations, citizen information, and easy communication with gang members themselves. Individual-level arrest or interview data obtained by the researchers was confidential and not shared with any source (other than project evaluators among themselves). Each of the project team members developed positive and productive communication and a network of relationships with gang youths, their families, local citizens and agencies. Project workers were not viewed as intrusive or harassing in their social control efforts. There were no significant complaints about the development of a targeted suppression approach by project workers in the first three years of operation.

Selected Program Results

A total of 428 gang youth were documented as receiving some kind and level of program contact and service in the five years of the project. A total of 192 youths in the three cohorts were targeted or intensively contacted and served. At least one interview was completed for each one. Complete justice system histories through the program period and beyond were obtained for these youth. An additional 236 gang youths, usually peers of the target youth, also received some contact and service, e.g., job placement, school referral, family contact, participation in athletics, brief group meeting and individual crisis intervention. Complete justice system records were obtained on 41 of these youth, since they were originally classified as control youth but later found to have had contact with project workers. None of the 236 gang youths received baseline interviews but were documented from service, gym, and other activity lists.

A street-oriented gang program is inherently network based, and program policy must determine which youth will be targeted. Eighty percent of the total targeted gang youth sample (n=192) had prior arrests or court records. The total comparison group (n=155), co-arrestees identified from adult court records, did not differ significantly from the program group in average number of prior arrests or age. The test groups in our analysis comprised youth in the program (n=84) and comparison groups (n=114) who ranged in age from 14 to 24 years. Only those program youths who had prior records were included in the analysis of both program and comparison youth data, based on court and police records.

The following program contact and service results pertain to all 103 target youths in the first two cohorts who were interviewed three times. A sizable number of program youth were provided with, and reported receiving, contacts and services from the project. Most (93.2%) of our reinterview sample were provided with some type of contact or service. All (100%) of the Latin Kings (n=52) and 86.3% of the Two-Six were provided contacts and services. Program delivery characteristics as indicated by worker or program youth reports were as follows:

- Of the youths provided contacts and services, 91.3% were provided by project community youth workers; 36.9% by project tactical police; 9.7% by project probation officers; and 15.5% by NAGV.
- Forty-six and seven-tenths percent (46.7%) of youth contacted received only community youth worker contacts or services (mainly social intervention); 39.8% of youth were provided a combination of community youth worker and/or NAGV services along with police and/or probation contacts and services (coordinated social intervention and suppression). The remaining youths were contacted by only a police officer, a probation officer, a NAGV worker, or a combination of community youth worker / NAGV or a combination of police / probation.
- Project workers reported they provided the following proportion of program youth with the following major types of contacts or services:
counseling/crisis intervention (89.3%); school or job referral/assistance

(78.6%); athletic participation (67.0%); family contacts involving mainly parents (64.1%); and suppression, mainly project police arrest (31.1%).

- Target youth reported receiving the following types of services, mainly from community youth workers: general counseling/advice services (67.7%); contacts at home (62.9%); contacts with parents (49.5%); employment-related problems (16.5%); help with a justice system problem, such as court appearance (10.0%); a school problem (8.9%); gang-related problems, usually leaving the gang (8.9%).
- At Time I or Baseline, 30.6% of youth indicated they were currently employed; at Time III, 47.2% of youth indicated they were currently employed.
- At Time I or baseline, 27.8% of youth indicated they had received a high school diploma or a GED certificate; at Time III, 46.2% of youth indicated they had received a high school diploma or GED certificate.

Outcomes / Impact

1. Individual-level Program Youth Self-Reports

- Comparing Time I and Time III, the average number of total crimes per program youth declined from an average of 5.5 to 2.9, a reduction of 47.3%.

- The average number of violent crimes (threats with or without a weapon, beating someone with or without a weapon, gang intimidation, robbery with or without a weapon, participating in a homicide, and participating in a driveby shooting) declined from 3.1 to 1.7, a reduction of 45%.
- Of the youth provided only with a community youth worker service (n=40), the average total number of crimes reported at Time I was 4.9, which decreased to 2.7 at Time III, a reduction of 44.0%.
- Of the youth provided with a coordinated contact from community youth worker and project police (n=36), the average total crimes reported at Time I was 6.2 which decreased to 3.0 at Time III, a reduction of 51.6%.
- In respect to violent crimes, of the youth provided only with a community youth worker service, the average decrease was from 2.7 at Time I to 1.5 at Time III, a reduction of 41.0%.
- In respect to violent crime, of the youth provided with a coordinated contact/service, the average decrease was from 3.6 at Time I to 1.9 at Time III, a reduction of 47.0%.
- Comparison youth were not interviewed.

Based on self-report data, community youth workers only served somewhat less delinquent or violent youths than did the combination of community youth workers and police together. Regardless of program approach, the reductions in crime were

statistically significant. However, no controls for program youth age, extent of prior program crime histories, or gang identification were imposed on these data.

2. Police Data on Program and Comparison Youth

We compared program youth with police records (n=84) and control youth (n=114) who were similar gender and age range at the time of program entry for the three prior program and three program years. We used juvenile and adult records and controlled for risk period, i.e., when the youth was in jail or prison and not exposed to risk of arrest. The findings, based on a logistic multivariate analysis, were as follows:

- Program youth reduced their odds of arrest by three; i.e., comparison youth were three times more likely to be arrested in the three year program period.
- More specifically, program youth showed a greater decrease in arrests for crime in the program period to the three year pre-program period (38.8%); arrests for comparison youth declined by 25.4%.
- Among youth in both groups who were under 19, the percent of program youth reduced their total arrests (30.6%) was greater than the equivalent age comparison youth (14.1%).
- Older youth (19 and over) in both the program and control samples reduced their total crime patterns more than did younger youths. However, the amount of reduction for youth 19 and older in the program group was

greater than for older youth in the comparison sample (58.1% reduction versus 40.0%).

Furthermore, in a more specified comparison, using analysis of covariance for violent index crime, controlling for variables of gang membership, age, project and comparison cases, total three year prior arrests, and the interaction variables of gang versus age, project or comparison group assignment, we found that project membership contributed significantly to a reduction of violence, particularly for older youth. No other variable was significant, except prior violent offenses which predicted increased violence ($R^2 = .13$).

In a similar analysis of program youth alone to determine the effect of community worker only versus coordinated community youth worker and police approaches on gang violence, we added an interaction term of gang by age by worker. The results indicated that type of service/contact approach was significant in reducing gang violence in varying ways. The community youth worker only approach contributed significantly to the reduction of gang violence for older Latin Kings, but not to the Two-Six. On the other hand, the coordinated contact/service approach contributed significantly to a reduction of gang violence for older Two-Six but not for the Latin Kings. No other variable, including prior history of gang violence was significant ($R^2 = .19$).

Both self-report analyses and the more sophisticated statistically controlled analyses based on police data indicated a generally positive and powerful project effect in reducing gang crime, especially gang violence. However, there appeared to be different program effects for younger and older youth for different gangs and for different

program worker approaches employed. These factors were in complex interaction with each other.

Aggregate-Level

The goal of the project was not only to reduce gang violence (absolutely or relatively) at the individual program youth level but also at the area level, i.e., in the Little Village area.

1. Police Data

The comparison of changes in gang violence (gang homicides, aggravated gang batteries, and aggravated gang assaults or threats with a weapon) in the Little Village police beats in District 10, with clusters of police beats in six other comparable high gang violence districts over a four year pre-program and four year program period indicated that the lowest increase in gang violence occurred in the Little Village area. CPD and Early Warning System aggregate statistics only partially reflect program effects, since they include Latin Kings and Two-Six in the program as well as other gang youth who were not in the program.

- There was an increase from 197 to 269 gang violent incidents, a 36.5% increase in the program area during the program period.
- However, there was an average increase from 145 to 277, or 91.0% in the comparable beat clusters in the other six districts in the same period.
- The increase for the most comparable area, Pilsen, was from 152 to 230 incidents, or 51.3%.

To some extent, the large increases in all of the sites may be an artifact of a change in CPD recording systems in January 1993. However, on a relative basis, it is clear that Little Village's increase was significantly lower for the four year program period than for any of the other areas.

2. Rates of Gang Crime per 100,000 Individuals

We were able to compute a "rough" ratio between the number of violent gang crime incidents (i.e., gang homicides, aggravated gang batteries with handguns and/or firearms, and aggravated assaults with handguns or firearms) for males 17 to 25 years of age per 100,000 persons living in the Little Village and comparable Pilsen areas during the three year pre-project and three year project periods, using 1990 census and CPD crime analysis data.

- The prevalence rate of gang violence in Little Village rose from 1 incident per 56.2 males in the pre-program period to 1 incident per 41.1 males in the program period. This was an increase in rate of 26.9%.
- However, the prevalence rate of gang violence in Pilsen rose even faster from 1 incident per 90.5 males in the pre-program period to 1 incident per 54.8 males in the program period. This was an increase of 39.4%.
- In other words, the increase in prevalence of serious gang violence in Pilsen, the best comparison area we could find, was 33.0% greater than in Little Village, the program area.

3. Community Surveys

Surveys of representatives of 100 heads-of-households or adults were administered in the highest gang violence blocks in Little Village and Pilsen in the first year of the program. The survey was repeated at Time II, in the third year of the program. The analysis also compared the two sub-communities containing heads-of-household living in the highest gang violent blocks of the two gang territories, the Latin Kings and Two-Six, in the first and third years of the program. Our findings were:

- Little Village residents perceived a statistically significant increase in safety; fewer were afraid to walk in the neighborhood; and there was a significant decrease in worry about victimization over time; in Pilsen, few of the changes between years 1 and 3 reached a level of statistical significance.
- Little Village residents perceived a significantly greater reduction in crime – gang and nongang, violence and property crime – than did Pilsen residents over the two time periods.
- More Little Village residents reported that the police were effectively addressing the gang problem at Time III than did Pilsen residents.
- This pattern of findings was repeated comparing the perceptions and experiences of residents in Latin King and Two-Six territories. More residents in Latin King territory compared to Two-Six territory observed

greater levels of positive change over time, often at statistically significant levels in the same categories indicated above.

A range of representatives, often the heads of fifty organizations, was sampled in each community, including block clubs, churches and church organizations, health agencies, schools, youth agencies, social service organizations, businesses, community organizations, employment and job training, public service and political organizations.

- In general, changes in perceptions and experiences of the organizational respondents were similar to those of the resident respondents in their respective communities, only more shallow, with less variation across communities or time periods.
- The findings of the community surveys were also somewhat affected by sampling bias. Those residents who were interviewed twice, i.e., who were residents in the particular community or subcommunity over the two time periods, were generally more positive about community changes than those residents who were interviewed only once, either at Time I or Time II.
- However, Little Village residents and those living in Latin King territory at Time II, even when sampling bias was taken into account, were less afraid and rated gang crime as less problematic in their communities. The Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project appears to have accounted in part for these various positive changes.

4. Cost-Benefit Analysis

The analysis compared changes over a two year pre-program and two year program period across the clusters of police beats in the seven CPD districts (selected before the project began), including Little Village in District 10. Cost-benefit data were obtained from estimates of the costs of violent crime, including murder and assault (i.e., aggravated battery and aggravated assault), computed from figures for Illinois by the Surgeon General's Office, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, January 11, 1995. The estimates were in 1993 dollars. The direct victim or offender costs include medical care, mental health care, future earnings, public programs (police arrest and incarceration), as well as property damage and loss. Indirect costs, i.e., quality of life change costs, were not included.

- The estimated direct cost savings that can be attributed to the effects of the project, using an average of the six other areas as a comparison, was \$10,952,125 for the two year program period.
- The cost savings for Little Village, using the Pilsen area as a comparison, were much greater. The increase in costs of violent crime in Little Village was 37.1% over the two year comparison pre-program and program periods, the lowest of the seven areas; while the increase in costs of violent crime in Pilsen were 166.0%, the highest of the seven areas for the same periods.

The direct victim and offender costs alone for gang homicides in Little Village for the two year program period were estimated at \$11,452,245; the direct victim and

offender costs for aggravated gang batteries in Little Village for the two year program period were \$15,305,600. The direct cost of a single gang homicide is over a million dollars.

Conclusion and Questions

Based on the data obtained mainly during the first three years of the Gang Violence Reduction Project and thus far analyzed, the project appears to have been a striking success. Considerable weakness existed in the implementation of the community mobilization and organizational change and development strategies. The strategies of social intervention, provision of social opportunities, and especially the approach to suppression or social control were well implemented. The cohesive team approach was probably at the heart of the success of the project in reducing gang crime, especially serious gang violence.

The Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project has had national impact. It is the first test of a national strategy by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Bureau of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice to address the youth gang problem. Why then was not the project concept further developed after termination of the fifth year of the project, this is a puzzle which we shall address more fully in our final report covering the entire project period. In anticipation of that report, we can identify four major weaknesses of the project which can be rectified in the future.

1. The lack of CPD support for the project from top policy-makers and administrators. This could be attributed to the entrenched tradition of suppression in the CPD.

2. The preoccupation by the CPD with problems of implementation of its community policing initiative and exaggerated fears of risks that might accompany further development of the GVRP approach.
3. The hierarchical nature of CPD command and the lack of back and forth communication between top and street levels of the department which made for administrative ignorance of the project values and achievements.
4. Finally, the weakness of the community mobilization efforts at the local, but especially at the interorganizational and wider community, level to pressure the mayor's office, city council, and the police department to shift from the city's traditional and failed approaches to the gang problem to innovative and promising comprehensive community-based approaches.

Recommendations

Replication and adaptation of the Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project or comprehensive community-wide approach to the gang problem should be attempted.

Required for the approach are:

1. Leadership understanding and commitment by key organizations in the community to the value of a collaborative approach to the youth gang problem.
2. An extended period of study (e.g., six months or one year) of the local gang problem and data-based planning that involves key agencies and community groups.

3. Law enforcement leadership committed to a balanced policy of prevention, intervention, and suppression as a key element of comprehensive community-based problem solving approach.
4. In all communities, a close cooperative working relationship among police, probation, outreach youth work, local community organization, schools, and job placement/training organizations with support from other agencies and community groups.
5. Special attention to development of effective relationships at the street level of operations between community youth outreach and police staff. This may involve extensive long-term collaboration, based on administrative policy and appropriate training.
6. The development of both an operational street-level team and an interactive interagency and community-wide policy level approach to the problem.
7. An adequate law enforcement data system to provide accurate, detailed information and analysis on the nature and scope of the gang problem over time.
8. The use of indigenous staff, particularly community youth worker staff, to the greatest extent possible.
9. The development of careful evaluation procedures as early as possible to

document the successes and failures of the program in quantitative, policy-relevant terms.

10. Public resource support for the development of the program on a long-term basis.

Table 1. Sources of Data, Types of Instruments, and Units of Analysis

| Source of Data | Type of Instrument | Unit of Analysis |
|--|---|--|
| Communities (Little Village and Pilsen) | Community Surveys (T ₁ , Baseline, T ₂ , 2 years later), 1992 and 1994 – Respondent Interview a. Heads of Households (in highest gang violence streets) b. Organizational Representatives (agencies, churches, businesses, city government, school councils, block clubs, etc.) | Residents in a. Little Village 100/period; Pilsen 100/period Organizations in b. Little Village 50/period; Pilsen 50/period |
| Gang Members | Individual Gang Member Survey [†] | Youths a. All Program Youths (n=148)* b. Only those interviewed in 3 Successive Years (n=103) |
| Chicago Police Department Crime Analysis Division | Aggregate Level Police Incident Records - 7 Districts (8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 25), 1988-1996 | Clusters of Comparable Beats by District (n=54) |
| Chicago Police Department Records Division | Police Individual Arrest Records (1989-1995) | Youths a. Program Youths with records (n=126) b. Comparison Youths with records (n=155) |
| U.S. Census and U.S. Health and Human Services (plus Chicago Police Department) | Cost Benefit Analysis (changes in prevalence rates of aggregate gang homicides, aggravated batteries, aggravated assaults for males 17-24 years, 2 years pre and 2 years program comparison communities, based on Chicago Police Department, U.S. Census, and U.S. Health and Human Services Cost data) 1980-1992; 1992-1994) | Clusters of Comparable Beats a. District 10 vs. District 12 b. District 10 vs. Average of all Beats in Districts 8,9,12,13,14,25 |
| Cook County Circuit Court | Circuit Court Records (1989-1995) | Youths a. Program Youths with records (n=126) b. Comparison Youths with records (n=155) |
| Program Workers | Program Tracking Forms (workers interviewed T ₁ , T ₂ , T ₃) | Youths Serviced/Contacted a. Four Types of Workers (n=103) b. Five Community Youth Workers (n=94) c. Two Chicago Police Officers (n=38) d. Three Cook County Adult Probation Officers (n=11) e. Neighbors Against Gang Violence Worker (n=16) |

Note:

T₁, T₂, and T₃ stand for Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3, respectively.

† indicates no comparison youths were interviewed.

* Third Cohort youths not included.

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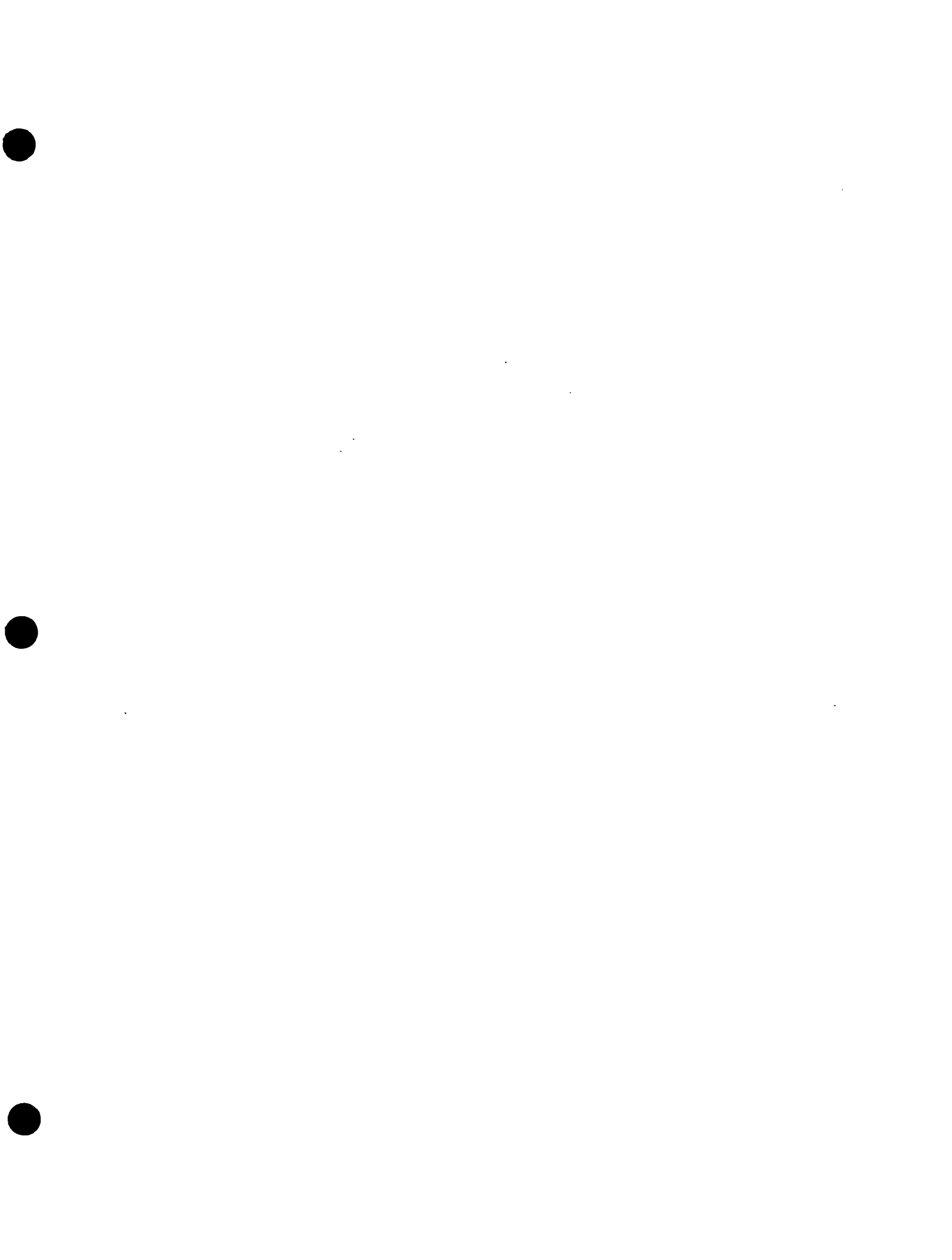
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