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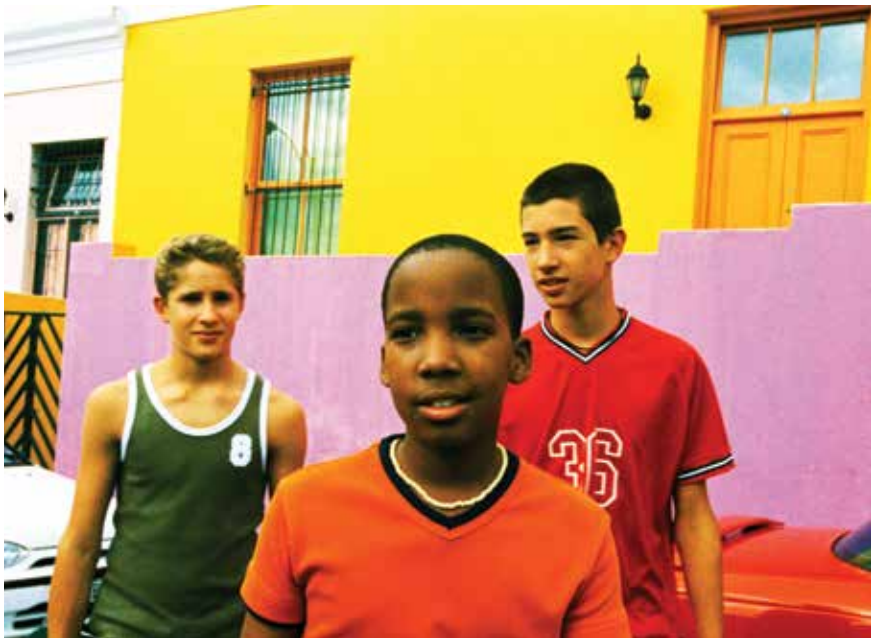
CHANGING COURSE

Preventing Gang Membership



Chapter 1. Why Is Gang-Membership Prevention Important?

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Why Is Gang-Membership Prevention Important?

James C. Howell

- **Gangs are a serious, persistent problem in the United States; according to the National Youth Gang Survey, from 2002 to 2010 the estimated number of youth gangs increased by nearly 35 percent — from 21,800 to 29,400 nationwide.**
- **Because high-rate gang offenders impose enormous costs on society, successful prevention and early intervention programs potentially can produce large monetary cost savings to communities.**
- **Programs and strategies are most urgently needed with high-risk youth, families, schools and communities.**
- **The most successful comprehensive gang initiatives are communitywide in scope; have broad community involvement in planning and delivery; and employ integrated prevention, outreach, support and services.**

In Brief

Youth gangs are not a new social problem in the United States. They have been a serious problem since the early 19th century — and they remain a persistent problem. Overall, one-third (34 percent) of cities, towns and rural counties in this country reported gang problems in 2010.[1] Recent data indicate that nearly half of high school students report that there are students at their school who consider themselves to be part of a gang, and 1 in 5 students in grades 6-12 report that gangs are present in their school.[2, 3] Other data have found that nearly 1 in 12 youth said they belonged to a gang at some point during their teenage years.[4]

The consequences of joining a gang are potentially very serious, both for the youth and for their communities. The frequency with which someone commits serious and violent acts typically increases while they are gang members, compared with periods before and after gang involvement. Adolescents who are in a gang commit many more serious and violent offenses than nongang adolescents.[5, 6] In samples from several U.S. cities, gang members account for approximately three-fourths of the violent offenses committed by delinquents in those samples.[6] Gang involvement also elevates drug use and gun carrying, leading to arrest, conviction, incarceration and a greater likelihood of violent victimization. These experiences bring disorder to the life course through a cascading series of difficulties, including school dropout, teen parenthood and unstable employment.[7]

The total volume of crime costs Americans an estimated $655 billion each year.[8] Over his or her lifetime, each high-rate criminal offender can impose between $4.2 and $7.2 million in costs on society and their victims.[9, 10] Early prevention activities that target high-risk youth can have enormous payoffs *if* they are effective. Early prevention strategies are likely to produce other social and behavioral benefits in addition to reducing the risk for gang membership.

Universal prevention approaches are necessary to reach the entire youth population and reduce the number of youth who join gangs, particularly in high-crime and high-risk communities. More

intensive "*selected*" prevention programs are needed to reach youth who are most at risk of gang involvement.

To succeed, communities must first assess their gang problem and use that assessment to craft a continuum of responses that are communitywide in scope. These responses should involve the community in planning and delivering prevention and intervention programs and employ integrated outreach, support and services. A balanced approach that incorporates each of these components is most likely to have a significant impact.

This chapter draws on multiple data sources to provide a brief summary of the scope of youth gang problems in the United States. The second section considers the consequences of gang membership and calls attention to several issues of concern, particularly the enormous costs associated with gangs and criminal careers. The third section discusses the potential for gang-membership prevention activities. And, finally, the chapter concludes with a call for comprehensive, communitywide initiatives.

The gang problem in the United States persists, even though violent crime and property crime rates have dropped dramatically.[5, 11] An enduring concern for many large jurisdictions is the continued presence of gangs and gang activity, which are often associated with violence and serious crimes.[1, 5] About one-quarter of all homicides in cities with populations of 100,000 or more were gang-related in 2009.[5, 12] Gang activity and its associated violence remain significant components of the U.S. crime problem. It has been reasonably assumed that gang activity would follow the overall dramatic declines in violent crime nationally; however, the analyses provided in this report find overwhelming evidence to the contrary — that is, gang problems have continued at exceptional levels over the past decade despite the remarkable drop in crime overall.

Other data — regarding youth gangs, in particular — are equally compelling. In a 2010 national survey, 45 percent of high school students and 35 percent of middle school students said that there were gangs — or students who considered themselves to be part of a gang — in their school.[2]

Youth gangs are not a new phenomenon; they have been a serious crime problem in the United States since the early 19th century.[5, 13] However, as described below, key indicators of youth-gang activity clearly show the persistence of this social problem over the past decade. These indicators include youth self-admission of gang membership and estimates of gang activity by knowledgeable observers of gangs, particularly law enforcement. Youth surveys are also a main source of information for gauging gang activity.

Although most youth never join a gang, 8 percent of youth reported in a national survey that they had belonged to a gang at some point between the ages of 12 and 17.[4] The proportion of youth that joins a gang during this age span is largest in high-crime areas and among high-risk youth in cities with gang problems. This proportion can vary considerably across cities — for example, 17 percent of youth in Denver, CO, and 32 percent in Rochester, NY, were members of a gang at some point during their teenage years.[5]

Assessments of patterns of gang membership and activity by racial and ethnic subgroups vary widely across data sources (official records vs. self-reports), locations, and how the questions are asked. Adrienne Freng and T.J. Taylor, in chapter 10, describe these patterns and the implications for prevention.

More girls are involved in gangs than most people realize. Nationwide, the male-to-female ratio is approximately 2:1 (11 percent of boys, 6 percent of girls).[4] However, in a nine-city survey published in 2008, researchers found that nearly identical proportions of girls and boys belonged to a gang — 9 percent of boys and 8 percent of girls.[14]

Among early adolescents, girl gang members commit crimes that are similar to those boy gang members commit, including assault, robbery and gang fights, although a smaller proportion of girls is involved.[15, 16] (For more information on girls and gang membership, see chapter 9.)

Presence of Gang Problems Over Time

Reported youth gang problems grew significantly in the United States during the 25 years before 1995, reaching the highest peak in our nation's history in the mid-1990s.[17] In the 1970s, only 19 states reported youth gang problems. Twenty-five years later, all 50 states and the District of Columbia reported youth gang problems. Formerly a problem only in large cities, youth gangs became present in many suburbs, small towns and rural areas during the 1990s. Thereafter, there was a significant decline in the number of jurisdictions reporting youth gang problems, which continued until 2001.[18]

As shown in the figure below, the percentage of localities reporting gang problems through the National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS) jumped almost 10 percentage points (23.9 percent to 33.6 percent) from 2001 to 2005. The estimate has remained elevated since 2005; slightly more than one in three cities, suburban areas, towns and rural counties reported gang problems in 2010.[1] The data from the NYGS also indicate that, during 2002-2010, the estimated number of gangs increased by nearly 35 percent, from 21,800 to 29,400 (special data analyses from the National Gang Center, Tallahassee, FL). Although the number of gang homicides has dropped in suburban areas and smaller cities, recent evidence has shown increases in gang violence in large urban areas. In cities with more than 100,000 people, for example, gang-related homicides increased by more than 10 percent from 2009 to 2010.[1]

Student reports of gang activity in the School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey show a similar pattern. In the mid-1990s, 28 percent of a national sample of students reported that gangs were present in their schools.[19] This dropped to 17 percent in

Percentage of Local Law Enforcement Agencies Reporting Youth Gang Problems, 1996-2010

SOURCE: Data from National Gang Center Survey Analysis: Prevalence of Gang Problems in Study Population, 1996-2010. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Available at http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis/Prevalence-of-Gang-Problems#prevalenceyouthgang.

1999, then began to increase to 23 percent in 2007 — nearly the level reported a decade earlier — and dropped slightly in 2009.[3, 19]

Although there are some discrepancies in these data (largely because they come from different sources and are gathered using different methods), they clearly show that gang activity is widespread and that strategies for gang-membership prevention need to address all segments of the child and adolescent population in the United States.

Gang-Joining

Studies have shown that the gang-joining process is similar to how most of us would go about joining an organization — that is, gradually, as familiarity and acceptance grow. A youth typically begins hanging out with gang members at age 11 or 12 and joins the gang between ages 12 and 15. In other words, the process typically takes from 6 months to 1-2 years from the initial association with a gang.[20, 21, 22, 23]

Some widely held beliefs on why youth join gangs are misleading.[5, 24] For example, there is a common misperception that many youth are coerced into joining a gang. Quite to the contrary, most youth who join a gang very much *want* to belong to a gang but for reasons that may vary. The major reason youth give for joining a gang is the need for protection, followed by fun, respect, money, and because a friend was in the gang.[25, 26] (For more information about why youth join gangs, see chapter 2.)

Gang-joining typically has several steps, particularly in communities where gangs are well-established.[27] In elementary school, children may hear about gangs and some are in awe when they see gang members in middle school. Seeing gang members for the first time can validate their importance in a young adolescent's mind. Also, the schoolyard may have separate gang hangouts to which youngsters gravitate. In addition, the most vulnerable children enter middle school with poor academic achievement, and their street exposure renders them prime candidates for gang membership. Researcher Diego Vigil observes that "[a]s they become more and more involved in the oppositional subculture, they become increasingly disdainful of teachers and school officials — and in the process become budding dropouts."[27] Walking home from school with friends, a child might have a chance to bond with gang members with whom he had been hanging out during the school day. Perhaps he is invited to join them by older gang members who wish to make their group appear bigger and more menacing in the eyes of onlookers, particularly to rival gang members. The child or adolescent who joins the gang may feel compelled to do so. Faced with the prospect of belonging to nothing and feeling alone, youngsters in this situation may feel that they *must* join the gang, "even though," Vigil notes, "the requisites for membership are quite demanding and life threatening."[27]

The Consequences of Gang Membership

At the individual level, youth who join a gang develop an increased propensity for violence and, in turn, are more likely to be victims of violence. In addition, the likelihood of favorable life-course outcomes is significantly reduced. Communities are also negatively affected by gangs, particularly in terms of quality of life, crime, victimization and the economic costs.

Increased Involvement in Violence

Studies of large representative samples in several large U.S. cities show that many gang members are actively involved in violent crimes.[5, 28] Youth commit many more serious and violent acts while they are gang members than before they join and after they leave the gang. During the time they are actively involved in a gang, youth commit serious and violent offenses at a rate several times higher than youth who are not in a gang. In late adolescence, gang involvement leads to drug trafficking and persistent gun carrying.[29]

Gang members account for a disproportionate amount of crime in communities where gangs are particularly active.[5, 28] In several cities, gang members accounted for more than 7 in 10 self-reported violent offenses in the study sample.[6] The extensive criminal involvement of gang members — particularly in serious and violent crime — has been noted by Terence Thornberry, a highly respected gang researcher, to be "one

of the most robust and consistent observations in criminological research."[6]

Life-Course Outcomes

Gang involvement encourages more active participation in delinquency, drug use, drug trafficking and violence, and in turn may result in arrest, conviction and incarceration.[28, 30] These effects of gang involvement also tend to bring disorder to the life course in a cumulative pattern of negative outcomes, including school dropout, cohabitation, teen parenthood and unstable employment.[7] These and other unfortunate impacts of gang involvement on youngsters' lives are particularly severe when they remain active in the gang for several years.[28]

Individual Victimization

The victimization cycle can begin at home, when children are abused or neglected. Youth who experience violent victimization — such as maltreatment at home or assaults outside the home — may experience a range of consequences: becoming more aggressive themselves, being rejected from prosocial peer groups, affiliating with high-risk youth, and consequently being at elevated risk of joining a gang.[5] According to researcher T.J. Taylor and his colleagues, "Although victimization preceding gang membership often comes from sources outside the gang, other gang members are often the ones inflicting the victimization once youth become involved with gangs."[31] It should come as no surprise, therefore, that active gang members are also more likely to be victimized themselves than are youth who do not belong to a gang.[26, 31]

Frequent association with other gang members encourages and reinforces violent responses to situations and retaliation against others; this, in turn, elevates the risk of violent victimization in gangs.[32, 33, 34]

For girls, regularly associating with gang members increases the likelihood of very high-risk sexual activity, other problem behaviors and violent victimization.[35] (For more information on girls, see chapter 9.)

Community Decline and Costs

More than seven out of 10 very large cities reported a consistently high level or increasing proportion of gang-related homicides over the 14-year period, 1996-2009.[12] Fear of crime and gangs are immediate, daily experiences for many people who live in neighborhoods where gangs are the most prevalent.[36] Also, the intimidation of witnesses is serious — it undermines the judicial process, making it difficult for law enforcement to maintain order in gang-impacted areas.[37]

Other negative impacts of gangs on communities include the loss of property values, neighborhood businesses and tax revenue; weakened informal social-control mechanisms; and the exodus of families from gang-ridden neighborhoods.[38]

The total monetary burden of crime on Americans is estimated at $655 billion each year.[8] Researchers are now able to estimate the costs of crime to victims, to the criminal justice system, and those incurred by the offender.[9, 10] Mark Cohen, at Vanderbilt University's Owen Graduate School of Management, and Alex Piquero, at the University of Texas at Dallas, have estimated the staggering cost of crime imposed on society by high-risk youth: A youth with six or more offenses over his or her lifetime imposes $4.2 to $7.2 million in costs on society and the victims.[9, 10] These costs include $2.7 to $4.8 million resulting from crimes committed as well as costs due to drug abuse and the lost productivity due to dropping out of high school.

For young offenders who become chronic offenders (six or more police contacts through age 26), costs imposed in the early ages (through age 10) are relatively low — about $3,000 at age 10.[9] Over a lifetime, these costs aggregate to nearly $5.7 million. This demonstrates the costs and benefits of early interventions that target high-risk youth, which can have a high payoff *if* they are effective.[10] All too often, the initial intervention with high-risk youth occurs several years after the onset of an offender career — and at enormous cost to taxpayers.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: THE COMPREHENSIVE GANG MODEL

The Comprehensive Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Model — supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) — is one model that has demonstrated effectiveness in multiple cities.[39, 40, 41, 42] Researchers looked at five cities in the initial evaluation of the model; they compared youth and neighborhoods that received Comprehensive Gang Model programming with matched comparison groups of youth and neighborhoods that did not receive the programming.[39] They found that the program was implemented with high fidelity in three of six sites (Chicago, IL, Riverside, CA, and Mesa, AZ). In these three sites, there were statistically significant reductions in gang violence, and in two of these sites, there were statistically significant reductions in drug-related offenses when compared with the control groups of youth and neighborhoods.[39]

In the most recent evaluation of the Comprehensive Gang Model in four cities (Los Angeles, CA, Richmond, VA, Milwaukee, WI, and North Miami Beach, FL), researchers concluded that the model was successfully implemented in all four sites despite substantial variation in the nature of the sites' gang problems, albeit with varying impacts.[41] The researchers also found that although results varied across outcomes, one or more indicators of crime reduction were seen. In sum, the Comprehensive Gang Model has demonstrated evidence of its effectiveness in reducing gang violence when fully implemented with program fidelity. Although the research to date has been primarily on the intervention and suppression components, the Comprehensive Gang Model holds promise for integrating prevention activities with intervention programs and suppression strategies.

The first step in implementing the Comprehensive Gang Model is for the community to take stock of its particular youth gang problem because the response must be tailored to fit the situation. No two gangs are alike, and no two communities' gang problems are alike. Assessing the nature and scope of a gang problem is the first step. The National Gang Center provides an assessment manual that identifies many of the social contexts in which gangs form and the elevated risk factors that can lead to child delinquency and gang involvement[43] (see http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Comprehensive-Gang-Model/Implementation-Manual).

The second step is taking an inventory of existing programs that address risk factors for gang-joining and other conditions that give rise to gangs. Gaps in existing prevention activities can then be easily identified in the third step. Only then is a community prepared to consider programs and practices that need to be put into play in response to the local gang problem.

Questions to Guide the Assessment

Because information on what constitutes a gang is often misrepresented in broadcast media, each community should agree on a common definition to guide data collection and strategic planning. This practical definition could be considered as a guide:[5]

- The group has at least five members, generally ages 11-24.
- Members share an identity, typically linked to a name.
- Members view themselves as a gang and are recognized by others as a gang.
- The group has some permanence (at least 6 months).

Prevention Options

Because gang membership typically occurs along a pathway to serious and violent delinquency, delinquency prevention programs can help to prevent gang involvement. Involvement in juvenile delinquency — almost without exception — precedes gang-joining, and *very early involvement* in delinquency has been shown to be a precursor behavior for gang-joining in several independent studies.[21, 28, 44, 45, 46, 47] In fact, one study suggests that fighting and other delinquent acts by age 10, and perhaps younger, may be a key factor leading to gang involvement.[45] Another study found that failure as early as in elementary school is a main risk factor for later gang involvement.[46]

Children who are on a trajectory of increasing antisocial behavior are more likely to join gangs during their late childhood or early adolescence.[45, 48] In fact, we know that early onset of behavioral problems can escalate to gang involvement and, in turn, to serious and violent offending.[49, 50]

There are multiple strategies for working with pre-delinquent and delinquent youth in early prevention of gang-joining. For example, it is possible to focus at the individual level on at-risk children, particularly disruptive children. Other strategies work at the family, school or community levels to reduce risk and to enhance protective influences. Other chapters in this book discuss the principles for gang-joining prevention that are

- The group has a degree of organization (for example, with initiation rites, established leaders, symbols or colors).
- The group is involved in an elevated level of criminal activity.

The last four criteria are particularly important when validating the existence of gangs in small cities, towns and rural areas because few gangs survive in less populated areas.[51]

To help communities determine the nature and scope of their gang problem, an assessment should answer these questions:

- Who is involved in gang-related activity and what is the history of the gang?
- What crimes are these individuals committing?
- When are these crimes committed?
- Where is gang-related activity primarily occurring?
- Why is the criminal activity happening (for example, individual conflicts, gang feuds, or gang members acting on their own)?

Answers to these questions help stakeholders focus on bona fide gangs.

The assessment should also identify:

- Neighborhoods with many risk factors for gang involvement.
- Schools and other community settings in which gangs are active.
- Hot spots of gang crime.
- Gang members with high rates of criminal offending.
- Violent gangs.

Identifying Program Gaps

After making an assessment, communities should identify program gaps and develop and coordinate a continuum of prevention and intervention program services and sanctions. These should work in concert with community and government agencies in responding to serious and violent gang activity. Prevention and intervention services should be directed to the neighborhoods, schools and families from which gangs emanate. An implementation guide is available at http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Comprehensive-Gang-Model/Implementation-Manual.[52]

Planning and Development

To facilitate program planning and development guided by the Comprehensive Gang Model, OJJDP's Strategic Planning Tool — available at http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/SPT — offers a variety of resources, including:

- A list of research-supported risk factors for delinquency and gang membership, organized by age, and strategies that address them.
- Data indicators (measures) of risk factors.
- Sources for finding relevant data.
- Hyperlinks connecting risk factors with effective programs that address them.
- A "Community Resource Inventory" for community planning groups to store and maintain up-to-date information on existing programs.
- A free software program ("Client Track") to track services and client outcomes.

relevant to each of these levels in more detail: chapter 5 looks specifically at the individual child, chapter 6 discusses the family, chapter 7 looks at school-based prevention strategies, and chapter 8 discusses community-level prevention programs.

Each of these strategies is a key component of communitywide programming that, of course, can be expanded to encompass cities, counties and entire states. It is important to recognize that although family and school settings are important, they are often not sufficient. Preventing gang involvement of children who are alienated from their own families and schools — particularly in communities characterized by concentrated disadvantage — is a formidable challenge. Consider, for example, an analysis of data, collected by the National Center for Education Statistics, on more than 17,000 kindergarteners nationwide. Looking at parent and teacher reports, the researchers identified 9.3 percent of the kindergarteners as "severely impaired" because of low levels of self-control and high levels of impulsivity.[53] These children are at risk for challenges at home and at school, suggesting the need for comprehensive programs beyond family and school settings if they are to have a significant impact.

This is why many of the chapters in this book address the range of contexts that are crucial for prevention activities — including gang-joining prevention. Every community should address youth violence as part of its continuum of prevention programs, including specific services for children

who are exposed to violence and are victims themselves.[54] In addition, more attention needs to be given to within-gang victimization and victimization of nongang youth by gang members in the individual, family, school and community contexts. In this regard, here are some priorities:[54]

- Mental health professionals should be placed in schools to immediately identify children needing services and deliver or coordinate those services.
- Interventions must focus on families and peer group affiliations.
- Prevention services at multiple levels and across multiple systems must address youth at risk and in need of protection.
- Prevention services must also give priority to the development of positive coping skills, competencies and problem-solving skills in children and adolescents so they can deal effectively with high levels of exposure to violence and victimization.

A Communitywide Strategy for Gang Prevention

We know that the most successful comprehensive gang initiatives are communitywide in scope — with broad community involvement in the planning and delivery of interventions — and offer a wide variety of integrated programs and services from multiple agencies that are coordinated by an intervention team.[5, 39] Statewide implementation of prevention programming also appears feasible, as suggested by progress in the implementation of the Comprehensive Gang Model by the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.[30] Moreover, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security is providing large-scale funding for prevention and intervention programs that support the model statewide in large urban areas.[55]

Universal prevention programs are needed to reach the entire youth population in high-crime and high-risk communities. *Selected prevention programs* are needed to reach youth at risk of gang involvement. Each of these types of programs can help to reduce the number of youth who join gangs.

Intervention programs are also needed to provide sanctions and services for younger youth who are actively involved in a gang to help them separate from the gang. Law enforcement *suppression strategies* and intensive services are needed to target and rehabilitate the most violent gang members as well as the older, criminally active gang members. In addition, *reentry programs* are needed to help offenders who are returning to the community after confinement.

All of these components are integrated in OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Model, which has shown positive effects in multiple cities.[39, 41] See the sidebar, "In the Spotlight: The Comprehensive Gang Model," for more information on this communitywide approach that incorporates key gang-membership prevention strategies and principles.

Conclusion

Crimes committed by gang members have enormous costs — and beyond the cost of crime itself are the long-term consequences of gang membership, even when it lasts for as little as a single year during adolescence. Typically, drug use, gun carrying and involvement in drug sales increase with gang membership and decrease when youth leave gangs. Gang members are responsible for the majority of crimes committed by delinquents in many areas of large cities. Gangs account for about one-fourth of all homicides in very large U.S. cities[12] and for more than six out of 10 homicides among youth ages 15-24 years in some cities, such as Los Angeles and Long Beach, CA.[56] The individual impact of being a gang member — and the associated costs — are well-known, including school dropout, teen parenthood and unstable employment.

We must develop strategies and programs that reach high-risk youth, communities, families and schools. To be sure, preventing gang activity is not easy. But the good news is that gang crime can be reduced — even among some of the worst gangs — and communities can be protected from the social destruction that often follows in the wake of gangs.

Unfortunately, the typical first community response to gangs is suppression strategies, but these are not enough when gangs are rooted in the cracks of our society where core social institutions — like families and schools — are weak and fractured. The youngest gang members emerge from small groups of rejected, alienated and aggressive children and adolescents. They spend more time together and become actively involved in delinquency — when street socialization is substituted for the nurturing and guidance of parents, teachers, mentors, outreach workers, ministers, and other positive adult role models.

That is why we must implement early prevention strategies that keep youth from joining gangs in the first place. Prevention programs that divert youth from joining a gang can have enormous payoffs *if* they are effective. In fact, early prevention strategies are likely to produce other social and behavioral benefits in addition to reducing risk for gang membership. This is a smart investment that surely will pay large dividends.

Although there is no quick fix, once communities make a commitment to solving gang problems, they are in an excellent position to undertake strategic planning to thwart gang development and overcome established gangs. Each community needs to assess its own gang activity, prepare a strategic plan that fits its specific gang problem, and develop a continuum of programs and activities that parallels youth's gang involvement over time. Services must be directed where they are most needed in the community and to vulnerable youth and their families.

The evidence shows that the most successful gang initiatives are communitywide, have broad community involvement in planning and delivery, and provide integrated outreach, support and services. In other words, communities that organize and mobilize themselves using a data-driven strategy can direct their resources toward effectively preventing gang formation and its associated criminal activity.

About the Author

James C. (Buddy) Howell

James C. (Buddy) Howell has been conducting research on gangs for more than 30 years. Dr. Howell has published extensively on gangs in schools, risk factors, myths about gangs, drug trafficking, gang homicides, and "what works" in preventing gang-joining and reducing gang crime. In his new book, *Gangs in America's Communities,* Dr. Howell details a communitywide approach to gang prevention. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Colorado and is currently a Senior Research Associate at the National Gang Center.

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