



Toolkit for Community Planning



Ministry of
Justice

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Preface

Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division of the British Columbia Ministry of Justice is committed to developing and distributing practical information to prevent and address the issue of gang violence and crime in BC. This Toolkit is designed to assist service providers, community leaders, and others who are working to help prevent youth from becoming involved in gangs or to help them leave gangs.

The materials in this Toolkit have been designed to provide communities throughout British Columbia with the necessary resources to plan and implement programs to work effectively at preventing youth gang-related activity.

Acknowledgments

The BC Ministry of Justice, Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division would like to thank all those individuals and organizations whose work contributed to the development of this Toolkit. In particular, the following are acknowledged for their invaluable contributions to this resource:

- CAANs — the eight Community Action and Assessment Networks who participated in the BC provincial youth gang prevention strategy from 2006 to 2010, and whose advice and experiences informed the content of this Toolkit
- Alberta Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General — Alberta Gang Reduction Strategy, Safe Communities
- Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU-BC)
- National Crime Prevention Centre, Public Safety Canada
- Department of Justice, Government of Canada
- Adler School of Professional Psychology
- GT Publishing Services Ltd.



In 2011, the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit Integrated Threat Assessment on Organized Crime reported that there are over 120 criminal gangs operating in British Columbia. Gangs such as Red Scorpions, Hells Angels, Independent Soldiers, The UN Gang, Redd Alert, and Indian Posse are all known to be active in various areas of the province. Between 2006 and 2011, 126 gang-related homicides occurred in the Lower Mainland of BC.

While three-quarters of these gangs operate in the Lower Mainland region, gang-related activity has also been reported in other areas of the province. There has been an increase in gang-style murders, shooting, and violence in the past two decades. Gangs in BC are involved in activities that include homicide, extortion, kidnappings, trafficking of weapons, money-laundering, personal robberies, assaults, prostitution, human trafficking, and drug dealing. While enforcement measures have been successful, enforcement on its own is not enough to curb gang violence. There is a need for preventative measures with a focus on youth — both to protect them and prevent them from becoming involved in gang activity.

Communities with emerging gang issues or those who want to implement preventative measures are looking for ways to expand upon their existing capacity to intervene with youth in positive ways. Trends related to newcomer youth gang violence and gang-related sexual exploitation have been identified in several communities. Pressures on the social service sector often result in frontline workers being the first point of contact for vulnerable youth. An increasing numbers of youth are presenting with diverse and challenging needs that may make them vulnerable to becoming involved with gangs.

The intent of this Toolkit is to provide current information and resources to enable communities throughout British Columbia to develop locally relevant strategies to respond to potential youth gang issues. In addition, communities can expand upon current opportunities to engage youth in positive and preventative activities. The Toolkit will assist communities in mobilizing key stakeholders, identifying strengths in the community, and making action plans to utilize assets. Communities then have the opportunity to initiate local programs that will empower and engage youth in positive and socially responsible directions.

Community Action and Assessment Networks (CAANs)

Much of the content of this Toolkit is based on the work of eight community agencies — Community Action and Assessment Networks, or CAANs — that have previously participated in the BC provincial youth gang prevention strategy. Over the course of four years (from 2006 to 2010), a number of program and strategies were implemented by the CAANs. Representatives from each of the CAANs were interviewed and several sections of the Toolkit have been included so that other communities across the province can benefit from their knowledge and experience.

The eight CAANs are:

- Abbotsford CAAN—Abbotsford Community Services Society
- Surrey CAAN—Surrey School District and Surrey RCMP
- Kamloops CAAN—Kamloops School District
- Richmond CAAN—Touchstone Family Association
- Vancouver CAAN—Vancouver School Board
- Prince George CAAN—Justice Education Society of BC Northern office
- South Asian Community Coalition Against Youth Violence CAAN (SACCAYV) —led by MOSAIC
- Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Community CAAN—led by the Vancouver Police Department and the Aboriginal Community Policing Centre

Advice, best practices, and case studies from the eight CAANs are integrated throughout the Toolkit. Detailed information about the CAANs and their programs can be found at the GangPrevention.CA web site: www.gangprevention.ca/partners/about-us

Using the Toolkit

The main focus of this Toolkit is a “Five-Phase Community Plan” for developing a community response to assist vulnerable youth. The five phases in this community plan are:

PHASE	OBJECTIVES
Phase One: Community Mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify and engage people and organizations that have a stake in addressing youth gang issues in the community• create a shared understanding of the issue and a vision for how to address it• communicate about the issue to the community• begin to understand the local context — the specific nature and impact of youth gang issues
Phase Two: Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify community risk factors associated with potential youth gang activity• identify resources in the community that support gang prevention, including<ul style="list-style-type: none">– resources and programs to assist youth who are at risk of becoming involved in gang-related, violent, or criminal behaviours– pro-social resources and programs that will assist the community in developing resilient youth• identify gaps in existing community resources• set priorities for meeting community needs
Phase Three: Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• create concrete goals for action based on needs assessment and defined priorities• articulate a defined action plan• identify resources to support the community plans
Phase Four: Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• outline specific tasks that need to be implemented to launch action items• implement action items• acknowledge and affirm results
Phase Five: Evaluation and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop clear goals for evaluation• determine a method for evaluation• determine evidence required for evaluation• develop an evaluation plan to gather information to<ul style="list-style-type: none">– determine the success of the program– build for the future• reflect on the community plan and set goals for sustainability

This five-phase model is consistent with current thinking and experience in the field of community development; indeed, many of the additional resources cited throughout this Toolkit use similar approaches.

Each phase in the plan is supported by a number of resources to help guide you and your working group through the development and implementation of your community plan.

The diagram beginning on the next page illustrates the various components contained in this Toolkit. Note that these materials are provided to give you as much support as possible, but all are **optional** — you are free to choose those elements that best suit your community needs.

A “Quick Start Guide” has also been created — a brief, shortened version of the information included in this full Toolkit. This Quick Start Guide is available at the BC Ministry of Justice web site:
www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/gangs/index.htm

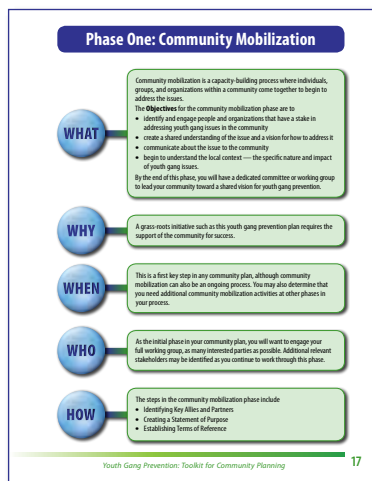
TOP TIP

Be mindful of language: not all stakeholders respond well to the “gang prevention” terminology, and the term “anti-gang” is often found to be too negative. Once you have selected your projects and programs, you may be able to replace references to “gang prevention” with pro-social language that highlights the positive factors of the work you are doing (e.g., leadership, positive decision-making, enhancing respectful, relationships, community development, empowerment, communication skills).

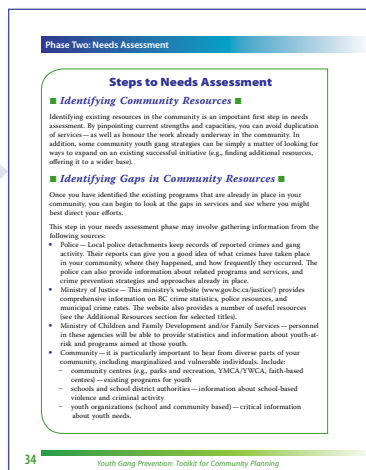
Toolbox Contents

This Toolkit contains several types of information that you will find useful in your community planning.

Five-Phase Community Plan

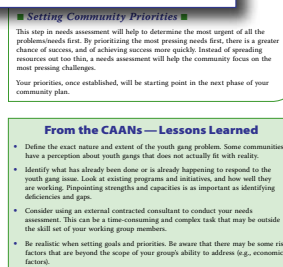


Each phase in the plan begins with this one-page outline, introducing the key ideas for that phase.



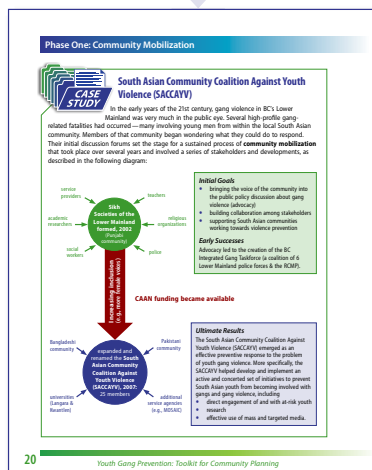
Steps

These pages outline the steps within each phase of the plan.



From the CAANs — Lessons Learned

This section contains phase-specific advice taken from the experiences of the eight CAANs in BC who have undertaken gang intervention strategies.



Case Studies

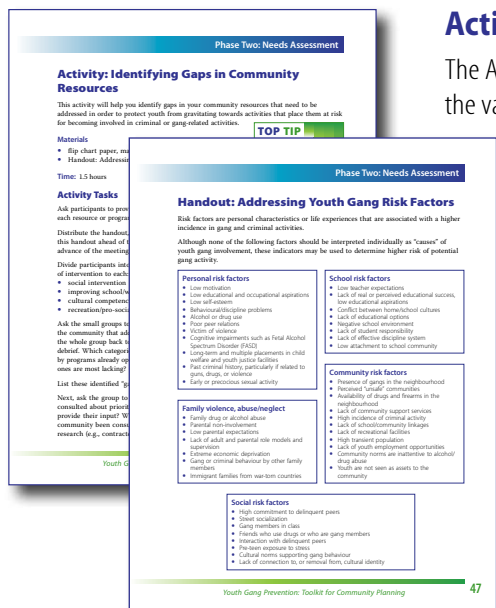
Within each phase you will find a Case Study that explains how one of the CAANs addressed the various challenges associated with that phase of their community plan. These Case Studies are provided for background information and best practice advice, but you may also choose to use them for handout and discussion as part of your working group meetings.

Activities

The Activities provide step-by-step information for guiding your working group through the various phases of developing and implementing your community plan.

At the end of each phase section you will find additional materials to support the activities, such as

- background information
- handouts for use with your working group
- PowerPoint notes (to guide you through working group discussions using the PowerPoint presentation provided as part of this Toolkit package).

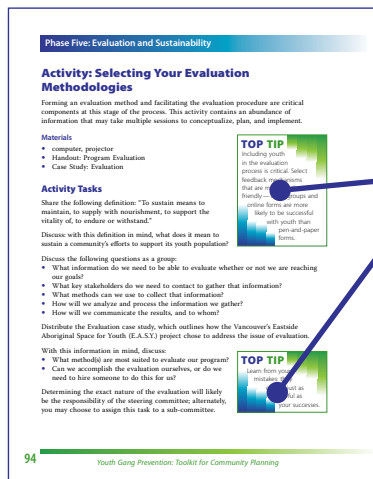


Featured Resources

A number of resources are profiled throughout the five phases. For a more comprehensive list of useful resources, see "Additional Resources" at the end of the Background and Support section of the Toolkit.

Program Highlights

Several gang intervention strategies and programs are profiled throughout the five phases. For a more comprehensive list of successful gang prevention programs, see the "Sample Programs" handout provided as part of Phase Three.



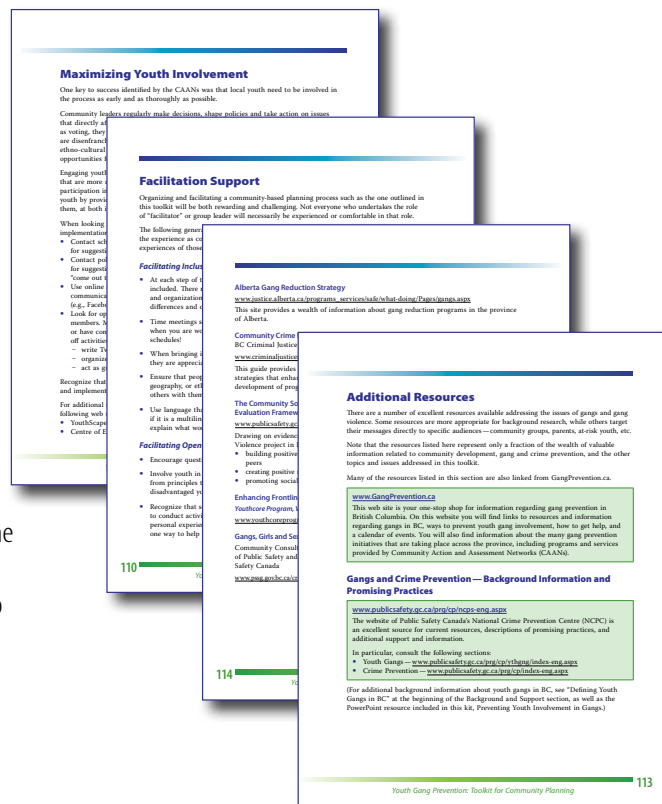
Top Tips

These boxes highlight best-practice advice from the CAANs.

Background and Support

This section of the document provides additional information that may be helpful to you and your working group as you plan and implement your community strategy. This section includes topics such as

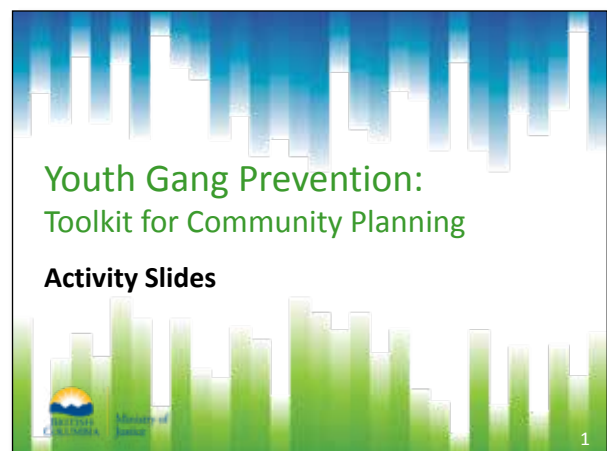
- Defining Youth Gangs in BC — background information about the nature of gangs
- Communication Strategies — ways to communicate and market your program, as well as receive feedback from the wider community
- Maximizing Youth Involvement — a variety of strategies to help ensure youth are fully integrated in your community plan
- Facilitation Support — guidance and suggestions for facilitators who may not be experienced or comfortable in the facilitation role
- Additional Resources — a number of print, web, and video resources for background information and implementation support



Two PowerPoint presentations are available online at www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/gangs/index.htm



This presentation provides a background overview of gangs in BC. You can use it as part of your working group or community-wide orientation sessions.



This PowerPoint can be used to facilitate group discussions during some of the activities in Phase One and Phase Three. (See the relevant activities in those sections for information on how to use this PowerPoint.)

Phase Zero: Before You Begin

The activities in the Five Phase Community Plan are designed for use with your working group — those individuals from the community who have agreed to take part in your youth gang prevention strategy.

Regardless of whether or not you have an initial group of stakeholders in place (e.g., a community taskforce on gang and crime prevention), consider the following approaches as part of the initial stages of your work.

Communicate with the Community at Large

Holding an initial community information session can serve multiple purposes. It can help you to

- assure the public that youth gang prevention is a priority issue and is being taken seriously (this is particularly important if you are starting your work in response to a critical incident)
- dispel myths and build a common understanding about the nature of youth gangs — provincially and within your community
- begin building community buy-in for projects and programs you may undertake in the future
- identify potential participants for your working group.

Begin by identifying all stakeholders in the community that have an interest in gang prevention. These stakeholders should include but are not limited to

- police
- youth probation
- victim services
- municipal government
- Aboriginal bands and Aboriginal community organizations
- school and school board representatives
- youth groups — within schools, community organizations
- parent groups (e.g., school Parent Advisory Council)
- frontline Ministry of Children and Family Development workers
- family services agencies
- immigrant services
- local businesses/Chamber of Commerce
- local media
- other community groups and service agencies (e.g., parks and recreation, YMCA/YWCA, faith-based agencies, Neighbourhood Watch).

TOP TIP

People want to know that this is not a group to duplicate what is already going on but an effort to bring together and build on the work already taking place in the community. Be clear about how important this is.

Hold a large information session or community forum and invite all identified stakeholders to participate. The PowerPoint presentation provided with this Toolkit, “Preventing Youth Involvement in Gangs,” can be used for background information; alternatively, your local police may have similar presentations that depict information about gang activity specific to your community. See the Additional Resources section at the end of this Toolkit for sources of further background information.

At the information session, present background information and any preliminary objectives you may have.

Identify and Connect with Potential Working Group Members

Youth gang issues impact the community and individuals in diverse and unique ways. Communicating with a wide range of partners can help form a clear picture of the issue and rally people around a common cause.

When considering potential partners to reach out to it can be helpful to ask yourself, who are the community stakeholders that have an interest in:

- helping vulnerable youth
- preventing gang-related violence
- preventing gang recruitment
- helping youth exit gangs.

Other questions to explore include:

- Who can provide support to your efforts?
- Who might be opponents and what might their concerns be?
- Who are the decision-makers?
- Who is at risk or vulnerable?

It may also be helpful to take a youth-centred approach: Visualize a young person you may know who is vulnerable to gang involvement or who is already involved in a gang and ask:

- Which agencies, organizations, or systems does this youth come in contact with?
- Where does this young person seek support?
- What activities does this young person engage in?
- Who genuinely cares about this young person?

Forming a Steering Committee

Note: if your working group is small and your initial projects are relatively short-term and discrete, you may not need a steering committee.

TOP TIP

If your community has a significant immigrant population, be sure to involve representatives from this stakeholder group in your planning. Refugee youth are often at a higher risk of gang involvement. Involve these communities in your working group, and communicate directly with the wider immigrant community. Translate materials as required.

A steering committee helps provides a structure for building a commitment enhancing your overall community plan, coordinating programs and ensuring that everyone involved is working toward the same goals.

Depending on the nature and makeup of your working group, you may choose to form your steering committee by approaching individuals rather than asking for volunteers.

You may decide to establish your steering committee before your first working group meeting (see Phase One: Community Mobilization), or after your working group has met. The latter is particularly valuable if you want to assess members' areas of interest and expertise, as well as if you form your committee from volunteers.

Whatever method you choose, your steering committee members should be

- dedicated and willing to commit to the project from start to finish
- diverse, representing as many segments of the community as possible
- ideally between 7-10 members (recommended for a well-functioning group).

Organization and Scheduling

Consider the following strategies when planning your initial working group meetings. Subsequent meetings should be flexible to meet the needs of group members.

- Invite key stakeholders personally.
- Engage youth in meaningful ways: give them a voice to express themselves, invite a youth representative to sit on your steering committee and/or set up youth advisory committees.
- Involve immigrant communities. Involve these communities by including information and interests that speak to them culturally and are translated into necessary languages.
- Develop communication mechanisms such as an email "listserv" for all key stakeholders. This helps increase communication and collaboration.
- Meet regularly, at least one meeting monthly or bi-monthly.
- Send email summaries of outcomes from meetings.
- Ensure the process is open, inclusive, and transparent. Foster good inter-committee relationships and allow for consensus-based decision making.

TOP TIP

Be aware that addressing youth gang issues takes time.

Rushing the process will create gaps that will be unhelpful or even harmful.

TOP TIP

Model partnerships between youth and adults. When you are planning your meetings, make sure that youth have leadership roles. This may include having a youth-adult facilitation team. If adults are facilitating the main parts of the session, make sure that young people are co-facilitators, leaders of icebreakers and energizers, or hosts and coordinators of the event.



Phase One: Community Mobilization

WHAT

Community mobilization is a capacity-building process where individuals, groups, and organizations within a community come together to begin to address the issues.

The **Objectives** for the community mobilization phase are to

- identify and engage people and organizations that have a stake in addressing youth gang issues in the community
- create a shared understanding of the issue and a vision for how to address it
- communicate about the issue to the community
- begin to understand the local context — the specific nature and impact of youth gang issues.

By the end of this phase, you will have a dedicated committee or working group to lead your community toward a shared vision for youth gang prevention.

WHY

A grass-roots initiative such as this youth gang prevention plan requires the support of the community for success.

WHEN

This is a first key step in any community plan, although community mobilization can also be an ongoing process. You may also determine that you need additional community mobilization activities at other phases in your process.

WHO

As the initial phase in your community plan, you will want to engage your full working group, as many interested parties as possible. Additional relevant stakeholders may be identified as you continue to work through this phase.

HOW

The steps in the community mobilization phase include

- Identifying Key Allies and Partners
- Creating a Statement of Purpose
- Establishing Terms of Reference

Steps to Community Mobilization

■ *Identifying Key Allies and Partners* ■

If you have conducted preliminary community meetings (see Phase Zero: Before You Begin), you will have begun the process of connecting with your stakeholders. Once you begin your plan, confirming that you have identified all the relevant community partners will be an important first step. Stakeholders in the community that have an interest in gang prevention could include

- police
- youth probation
- victim services
- municipal government
- Aboriginal bands and Aboriginal community organizations
- school and school board representatives
- youth groups — within schools, community organizations
- parent groups (e.g., school Parent Advisory Council)
- frontline Ministry of Children and Family Development workers
- family services agencies
- immigrant services
- local businesses/Chamber of Commerce
- local media
- other community groups and service agencies (e.g., parks and recreation, YMCA/YWCA, faith-based agencies, Neighbourhood Watch).

Identifying stakeholders is important to ensure that all voices are heard, that you have community wide buy-in for your strategy. It's also a starting point in identifying existing resources aimed at curbing youth gang activity — see Phase Two: Needs Assessment.

■ *Creating a Statement of Purpose* ■

Whether it's a vision statement, a mission statement, or a set of guiding principles, your group's work will be more focussed when you have an agreed-upon central aim.

A statement of purpose should inspire a broad-based community input. Ultimately, it takes the commitment of the community to ensure success.

Establishing a vision statement can take time, and should incorporate wider community input where possible. Look for ways to communicate a draft statement of purpose to the wider community for feedback and input. Consider a Facebook page, a blog, or a Twitter account to publicize various aspects of your community plan and engage support.

■ *Establishing Terms of Reference* ■

Terms of reference are important for

- setting a framework to avoid inter-agency competition and duplication of resources
- clarifying the expectations for everyone involved
- communicating with the wider community
- evaluating success.

From the CAANs — Lessons Learned

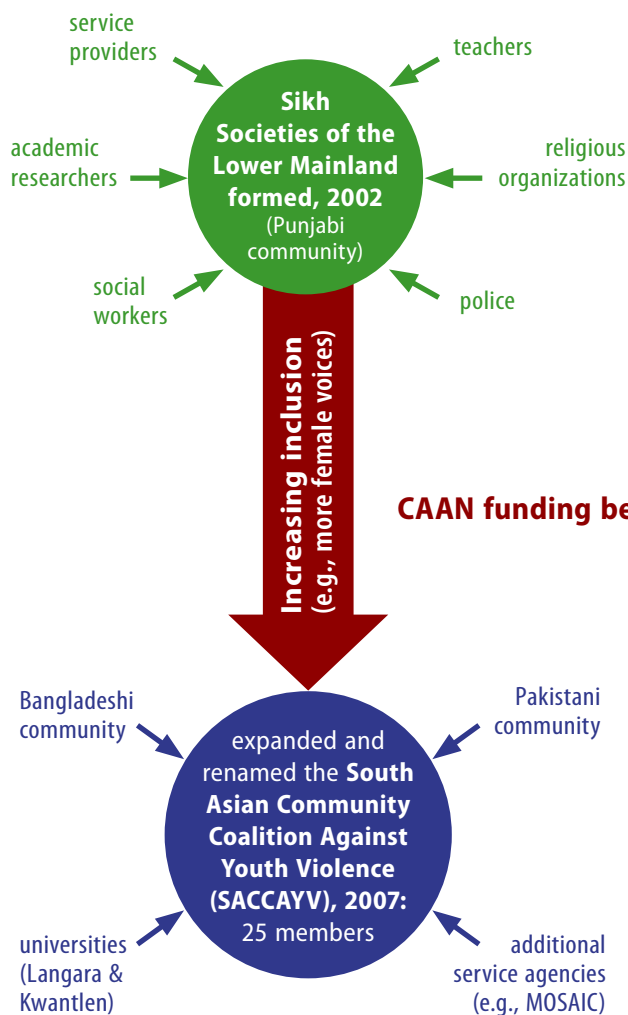
- Make the development and maintenance of strong, positive relationships your first priority. Work on relationship building before even beginning to discuss actual programming or strategies.
- Set expectations for open, honest, and respectful dialogue. This helps keep conflict and disagreement constructive rather than destructive.
- Be inclusive. Include specialists from differing walks of life, representatives of differing ethnic, religious, and language communities, and the voices of both women and men.
- Involve youth at the beginning of the process and throughout all phases.
- Respect differences you may have within the group, but build collaboration by concentrating on common goals and objectives.

Phase One: Community Mobilization

CASE STUDY

South Asian Community Coalition Against Youth Violence (SACCAYV)

In the early years of the 21st century, gang violence in BC's Lower Mainland was very much in the public eye. Several high-profile gang-related fatalities had occurred — many involving young men from within the local South Asian community. Members of that community began wondering what they could do to respond. Their initial discussion forums set the stage for a sustained process of **community mobilization** that took place over several years and involved a series of stakeholders and developments, as described in the following diagram:



Initial Goals

- bringing the voice of the community into the public policy discussion about gang violence (advocacy)
- building collaboration among stakeholders
- supporting South Asian communities working towards violence prevention

Early Successes

Advocacy led to the creation of the BC Integrated Gang Taskforce (a coalition of 6 Lower Mainland police forces & the RCMP).

Ultimate Results

The South Asian Community Coalition Against Youth Violence (SACCAYV) emerged as an effective preventive response to the problem of youth gang violence. More specifically, the SACCAYV helped develop and implement an active and concerted set of initiatives to prevent South Asian youth from becoming involved with gangs and gang violence, including

- direct engagement of and with at-risk youth
- research
- effective use of mass and targeted media.

Key Strategies used by the Coalition to Mobilize the Community

Collaboration

Due to existing public concern surrounding the issue of youth violence, there was a widespread willingness within the Lower Mainland's South Asian communities to seek solutions. The Sikh Societies of the Lower Mainland (and later, the SACCAYV) was able to build upon existing community organizations, resources, and initiatives by identifying stakeholders working for common clients or goals (i.e., agencies working with at-risk youth or to help prevent youth violence) and seek opportunities for co-operation and joining forces where appropriate.

Inclusiveness

The SACCAYV made a deliberate effort to include specialists from differing walks of life, representatives of differing ethnic, religious, and linguistic communities, and the voices of both women and men in the discussion. The Coalition also acknowledged the diversity of perspectives within the group by using "language" that was mutually agreed upon and that reflected the vision of the collective (the name change itself—from Sikh Societies of the Lower Mainland to South Asian Community Coalition Against Youth Violence—became a means of mobilizing a broader South Asian community to engage with the issue of youth gang violence).

Open, honest, and respectful dialogue

The SACCAYV became a forum for discussions regarding topics such as

- cultural and social dynamics within the South Asian community that seemed related to the issue of youth gang violence in either an enabling or preventive way
- things that stakeholders were already doing to address the opportunities and challenges associated with those dynamics.

Flexibility

Being willing to support multiple, complementary prevention activities rather than seeking a single "solution" to the problem of youth gangs proved to be an important strategy for the SACCAYV. This type of flexibility made it possible for the Coalition to accommodate differing views and priorities among stakeholders, while retaining an overall consistency of purpose.

Organization

With over 25 participating stakeholders, the SACCAYV needed a two-tier organizational structure in order to act effectively and avoid becoming unwieldy. So in addition to a working group that met every other month to share information and make "big-picture" decisions, the SACCAYV established a five-member steering committee that met more frequently to make executive decisions about programs, activities, and communication strategies, and to provide an immediate response capacity as well as a constant point of contact for the broader community.



A Toolkit for Community Leaders

Alberta Parks and Recreation Association, 2011 (rev.)

This dynamic resource offers clear, easy-to-access information and advice on a wide range of community development issues. Although not specifically designed for addressing youth gang issues, the resource provides practical advice and direction for any individual or organization wanting to make a difference in their community.

Key content of this resource kit includes:

- Planning using a community development approach
- Effective facilitation
- ACE Communities – Active, Creative, Engaged

For ordering information, visit

www.acecommunities.arpaonline.ca/market/community-leadership-toolkit/

Activity: Identifying Key Allies and Partners

The focus of this activity is to identify key community partners to ensure that all voices are heard. If this is your first working group meeting, the activity also provides opportunities to learn about each other's expertise and experience.

Materials

- computer, projector
- white board/chalkboard/flip chart/smartboard
- PowerPoint: Identifying Key Allies and Partners (slides 2–6)

Time: 2-3 hours

Activity Tasks

Begin by welcoming participants, and thanking them for agreeing to take part in this endeavour. If you have time, you may wish to begin with an icebreaker activity. (Dozens of such activities can be found online.)

Introduce yourself, your background, and why you chose to be involved in this project. Invite the rest of the group members to do the same. One such strategy to accomplish this is to

- have group members form pairs
- introduce themselves to each other
- bring the group back together, and have partners introduce each other to the rest of the group.

As members are introducing themselves and their affiliations, keep track of stakeholder groups represented.

Next, have participants form groups of 4-6. Display slide 2 of the PowerPoint, "Identifying Key Allies and Partners," and guide the group through the questions posed. Continue with the rest of the questions (to slide 6).

Bring the group back together and ask for one representative from each small group to present their findings. Look for common themes, and compare to the stakeholders already represented. Create a list of community allies and partners to contact.

If youth are not already represented at the meetings, discuss how they will be included in future working group sessions.

TOP TIP

Include breaks, activities, socializing, refreshments, and play into your agenda.

TOP TIP

Ensure youth are involved in your planning — as early as possible, and throughout the process. See "Strategies for Maximizing Youth Involvement" in the Background and Support section for more information.

Activity: Creating a Statement of Purpose

In this activity your group will create a unified vision about your community plans for addressing youth gang activity.

A statement of purpose should inspire a broad-based community input. Ultimately, it takes the commitment of the community to ensure success.

Materials

- computer, projector
- white board/chalkboard/flip chart/smartboard
- PowerPoint: Creating a Statement of Purpose (slides 7–8)
- optional Handout: Sample Vision Statements

Time: 1-2 hours for initial visioning; follow-up time required by the whole group or selected individuals.

Preparation

Ask group members if their stakeholder groups have vision or mission statements that can be shared. Make copies, or scan electronic copies that can be projected. Sample vision statements from existing gang prevention initiatives are also included as an optional handout.

Activity Tasks

Share sample vision statements from stakeholder groups. Look for common themes, key phrases, etc.

Display the Statement of Purpose PowerPoint slides. The questions in this presentation can be worked through as a whole group in smaller groups.

Debrief and discuss. Are there any common themes and ideas that we can all agree on?

Facilitate an integration of the themes and ideas into one statement of purpose that the participants agree upon. Be open to identifying this vision statement as a draft, which can be revisited and confirmed at the next meeting.

Discuss how the draft will be communicated to the wider community for feedback and input. Consider a Facebook page, a blog, or a Twitter account to publicize various aspects of your community plan and engage support. Blogs, discussion boards, and listservs are particularly useful for this stage of the process when you want to solicit feedback for further development.

TOP TIP

Document everything — every step of your working group and steering committee deliberations.

This will help with accountability, evaluation, and sustainability.

Note: Defining a community vision can take time and several meetings may need to be scheduled to complete this work. Alternatively, you can do some consultation by phone, or invite contributions from stakeholders by email. You may wish to ask for volunteers from your working group to collect feedback and redraft the statement of purpose based on that feedback.

Activity: Establishing Terms of Reference

Terms of reference are important for

- setting a framework to avoid inter-agency competition and duplication of resources
- clarifying the expectations the working group has for the steering committee, and vice versa
- communicating with the wider community
- evaluating success.

Materials

- white board/chalkboard/flip chart/smartboard

Time: 1 hour

Activity Tasks

To begin this activity, it's important that everyone is clear about who's who, and who has what responsibilities. You may decide to use different terms, but the terms used in this toolkit are:

working group	Your overall committee of community volunteers who have agreed to take on the task addressing youth gang activity.
steering committee	You may decide to set a smaller steering committee to oversee operations, particularly if your working group is very large and/or is made up of individuals who are serving primarily in an advisory capacity and are unable to make a significant time commitment to the working group.
sub-committee	Depending on the nature of your planned action(s), you may decide that you need to set sub-committees to be responsible for specific projects or particular tasks.

For this next exercise, divide participants into two groups. Ask one group to brainstorm what expectations they think the steering committee should have of the working group. Ask the other group to brainstorm the expectations the working group should have of the steering committee.

Debrief and discuss. What core principles should be established to guide the project? (e.g., inclusion, cultural appropriateness, transparency, collaboration)

Phase One: Community Mobilization

As a whole group, discuss and establish a Terms of Reference for the steering committee and project that includes

- affirmation of the vision statement (as revised based on community feedback)
- identifying core principles that will guide the project
- outlining expectations of working group members
- outlining expectations of steering committee members.

In preparation for the next phase in the plan (needs assessment), ask group members to consider the cultural and social dynamics of your community. What are forces that may help us as we work toward our community plan? What forces might work against us? What are stakeholders currently doing to address these strengths/concerns?

TOP TIP

Respect differences within group, but build collaboration by concentrating on common goals and objectives.

Handout: Sample Vision Statements

The following Vision statement and Guiding Principles are taken from Edmonton's Community Solution to Gang Violence (CSGV).

For full text, visit The Community Solution to Gang Violence: A Collaborative Community Process and Evaluation Framework

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cor/apc/com-sul-gan-vio-eng.aspx

Vision

The Greater Edmonton area is a safe and healthy community in which our youth and other citizens, agencies, institutions and government are sufficiently informed and empowered to value and take collective and individual responsibility for maintaining a community free of gang violence.

Guiding Principles

We take responsibility, individually and collectively, to create the conditions for a community free of gang violence

- Consciously learn more about gangs and gang violence.
- Share information with each other.
- Listen to members of our own committee and working group and communicate with members of other working groups – for the purpose of sharing information.
- Encourage existing organizations to pay attention to community needs and provide services within the scope of their mandates.

We will work collaboratively with others to create a community-wide approach to address the issue of gangs and gang violence

- Support each other's endeavours.
- Demonstrate flexibility; be open-minded to the ideas of others and to change.
- Avoid silos and build connections.
- Find out what is happening now (the community work with youth that positive), and we will support and celebrate this.
- Respect the different parameters of different organizations.

We will build connections and create structures and processes that are culturally competent and inclusive

- Include a regular opportunity for "reflection in action" on a quarterly basis, so that we can actively track what we are learning about process and make changes accordingly.
- Be constantly vigilant to ensure that structure does not get stuck.
- Establish connections and working relationships with immigrant and refugee communities.
- Create and use an inclusion lens.

Phase One: Community Mobilization

We will promote active citizenship to create a community free of gangs and gang violence.

- “Give a darn” and pay attention to our own neighbourhoods and do something personally or find help.
- Support and help people to understand what they can do for themselves.
- Increase community awareness.
- Work to influence/build infrastructure to support active citizenship.
- Identify how citizens can get something back by participating in this process.

We will build on community strengths and assets.

- Identify what other people are doing, and refer, use the services, broadcast their existence.
- Acknowledge groups in the community.
- Use an asset based approach to creating change

We will foster sustained commitment, coordination and collaboration based on a shared vision and mutual respect

- Develop commitment within a community wide approach, over time

The following Mission statement is taken from the Vancouver School Board’s YES program — Youth Empowered & Safe.

Mission Statement

The objective of this initiative is to implement a comprehensive prevention strategy to prevent gang involvement among youth by providing them with the necessary support, connection to services, and assets to foster youth resiliency and healthy development. Building on a long-term commitment to prevention and social responsibility, this initiative highlights the importance of supporting young people, developing and fostering their sense of belonging, and helping them create and strengthen connections with a pro-social network of peers and healthy adults. The values of inclusion, respect, equality, empathy, trust, honesty, and compassion form the philosophical basis of YES. The engagement of youth in both the development and implementation of the YES initiative is a key objective.

PowerPoint: Identifying Key Allies and Partners

Facilitation notes



Read the questions aloud as they are displayed on the screen.

Allow sufficient time for small group or whole group discussion before moving on to the next set of questions.



To ensure that a thorough list is generated, guide further discussion by asking the group to consider who are the community stakeholders that have an interest in:

- Helping vulnerable youth?
- Preventing of gang-related violence?
- Prevention of gang recruitment?
- Helping youth exit gangs?

PowerPoint: Creating a Statement of Purpose

Facilitation notes



List outcomes. What does your community want to do?

Discuss possible ideas for completing the vision statements.



To help stimulate discussion, you can interject pro-social terms such as

- value
- leadership
- respect
- relationships
- community development, empowerment

Phase Two: Needs Assessment

WHAT

A needs assessment is a way of gathering information about a community's opinions, needs, challenges, and assets. It is a dynamic, ongoing process that can be used to determine priorities and decide which project(s) will best meet the identified needs of the community.

The **Objectives** for the needs assessment phase are to

- identify community risk factors associated with potential youth gang activity
- identify resources in the community that support gang prevention, including
 - resources and programs to assist youth who are at risk of becoming involved in gang-related, violent, or criminal behaviours
 - pro-social resources and programs that will assist the community in developing resilient youth
- identify gaps in existing community resources
- set priorities for meeting community needs.

WHY

A needs assessment is important to make sure your priorities are met as part of your community plan. A needs assessment also increases efficiency by helping you to avoid duplication of other groups doing similar youth gang prevention activities.

WHEN

You or another agency may already have undertaken a needs assessment prior to you starting this community plan. If so, you will likely want to revisit it as part of this phase to ensure that it still fits your vision.

WHO

Needs assessment should begin with your entire working group to ensure you have as much input as possible in identifying existing resources. At some point you may decide to contract a more detailed needs assessment process to an outside agency.

HOW

The steps in the needs assessment phase include

- Identifying Community Resources
- Identifying Gaps in Community Resources
- Setting Community Priorities

Steps to Needs Assessment

■ *Identifying Community Resources* ■

Identifying existing resources in the community is an important first step in needs assessment. By pinpointing current strengths and capacities, you can avoid duplication of services — as well as honour the work already underway in the community. In addition, some community youth gang strategies can be simply a matter of looking for ways to expand on an existing successful initiative (e.g., finding additional resources, offering it to a wider base).

■ *Identifying Gaps in Community Resources* ■

Once you have identified the existing programs that are already in place in your community, you can begin to look at the gaps in services and see where you might best direct your efforts.

This step in your needs assessment phase may involve gathering information from the following sources:

- **Police** — Local police detachments keep records of reported crimes and gang activity. Their reports can give you a good idea of what crimes have taken place in your community, where they happened, and how frequently they occurred. The police can also provide information about related programs and services, and crime prevention strategies and approaches already in place.
- **Ministry of Justice** — This ministry's website (www.gov.bc.ca/justice/) provides comprehensive information on BC crime statistics, police resources, and municipal crime rates. The website also provides a number of useful resources (see the Additional Resources section for selected titles).
- **Ministry of Children and Family Development and/or Family Services** — personnel in these agencies will be able to provide statistics and information about youth-at-risk and programs aimed at those youth.
- **Community** — it is particularly important to hear from diverse parts of your community, including marginalized and vulnerable individuals. Include:
 - community centres (e.g., parks and recreation, YMCA/YWCA, faith-based centres) — existing programs for youth
 - schools and school district authorities — information about school-based violence and criminal activity
 - youth organizations (school and community based) — critical information about youth needs.

- Aboriginal bands and organizations — may offer information particularly related to on-reserve gang and crime activity.
- Small business owners — documented problems they have had with crime and gang activity.
- Local media — media reports on issues of gangs, crime, and violence.

In both this step and the previous, you may decide to engage an outside consultant to assist your needs assessment process.

■ *Setting Community Priorities* ■

This step in needs assessment will help to determine the most urgent of all the problems/needs first. By prioritizing the most pressing needs first, there is a greater chance of success, and of achieving success more quickly. Instead of spreading resources out too thin, a needs assessment will help the community focus on the most pressing challenges.

Your priorities, once established, will be starting point in the next phase of your community plan.

From the CAANs — Lessons Learned

- Define the exact nature and extent of the youth gang problem. Some communities have a perception about youth gangs that does not actually fit with reality.
- Identify what has already been done or is already happening to respond to the youth gang issue. Look at existing programs and initiatives, and how well they are working. Pinpointing strengths and capacities is as important as identifying deficiencies and gaps.
- Consider using an external contracted consultant to conduct your needs assessment. This can be a time-consuming and complex task that may be outside the skill set of your working group members.
- Be realistic when setting goals and priorities. Be aware that there may be some risk factors that are beyond the scope of your group's ability to address (e.g., economic factors).



Surrey's "Wrap" Project

Needs assessment is an important component of any community-based effort to address youth involvement in gang activity; but for the CAAN in Surrey BC — operating with Surrey School District as its lead agency and including a mix of educators, front-line social service providers, and law enforcement/corrections personnel — it proved central to the entire undertaking. From the outset, the CAAN steering committee saw the importance of engaging an outside consultant, recognizing that needs assessment is a complex process — particularly in a diverse community such as Surrey where so many factors affect the dynamics of gang activity and where numerous agencies and programs to address the issue were already in place.

In selecting a consultant to lead the needs assessment, the committee identified that they wanted someone who

- knew the community
- had pre-existing relationships that could be leveraged
- possessed good research and process-based skills
- had experience conducting effective needs assessments.

A consultant from Kwantlen Polytechnic University was identified as fitting these criteria. Although not a "gang expert," he quickly brought himself "up to speed" on published literature pertaining to youth and gang involvement to build on his existing knowledge of the local situation. Working closely with the steering committee, he organized focus group sessions for each of the three stakeholder communities to obtain responses to a common set of questions:

- What is your personal/professional experience with gangs (gang members, activities, victims)?
- What is a gang? Why do youths join gangs?
- What signs of gang membership should parents & teachers look for?
- What does being a gang member or pledge mean for a young person's life (school, how time is spent, relationships)?
- How can the community (family, friends, school, etc.) discourage membership?
- How can community (family, friends, school, etc.) reclaim gang members?

In his follow-up report, he outlined various aspects of the gang problem locally and suggested possible responses. Specifically he

- established which gangs were already active within the community
- examined the roles of ethnicity and a "wannabe tough" (fight club) culture in fuelling the attraction to violence and gangs among school-aged youth
- explored the stressors facing the first-generation immigrant families who make up a significant percentage of Surrey's population:
 - a need for parents to put in long working hours to secure a place in Canada's economy — making for less parental oversight than existed in the country of origin

- a sense of honour and responsibility for family behaviour that makes it difficult for parents to admit their children might be involved in inappropriate activity
- a disregard for traditional authority on the part of youth, who are caught between old ways and a new culture that offers and celebrates freedom and self-expression
- recognized the strengths and applicability of existing programs provided by the Ministry of Justice, the Surrey school district, and the RCMP.

To help pinpoint where intervention would be most needed, the consultant developed practical assessment tools to help identify at-risk youth and families. (This tool is provided as a handout later in this section — Sample Risk Assessment Tool.)

Thanks to this work, to their own existing expertise, and to discussions that took place as part of their needs assessment process, the CAAN steering committee members saw that the problem of youth gravitating toward gangs would best be addressed by a “wraparound” strategy – tailoring interventions to individual youth at risk rather than expecting them to access needed support from a bewildering array of organizations and agencies, each operating within its own isolated mandate. They accordingly opted to

- improve the capacity of educators and other professionals who work with youth in Surrey to identify which youth and families might need targeted support
- focus their efforts on creating a comprehensive catalogue of the community resources available to support youth at risk, so a wraparound intervention program could be arranged, where needed.

Since members of the CAAN steering committee were themselves working with at-risk populations, they were well positioned to identify, contact, and assess the capacities and sustainability of the many agencies and organizations already operating within the community. As a result of diligent cooperative effort, they were able to create a comprehensive, 400-page resource catalogue that included credible, evidence-based programs providing specific types of services to youth and families.

As a result of the needs assessment, Surrey’s CAAN steering committee opted to strengthen the community’s capacity to identify individual youth at risk, recognize their needs, and refer them for support as early as possible, recognizing that the needed support services already existed. They concluded that if individual educators and youth workers themselves had the needs assessment capacity to identify individual youth at risk, along with good information on what referrals were appropriate and possible, wraparound support that might make a difference could be provided.

Phase Two: Needs Assessment

Handout: Sample Risk Assessment Tool

Developed by the Surrey CAAN

FACTORS	NO RISK	LOW RISK	SOME RISK	HIGH RISK
# of times missed school without permission in the past month	0	1	2-4 times	>4 times
# of days per week when youth is not supervised by an adult after school	0	1	2	>2
Youth engages in conversation with adults	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
# of older friends youth has who are not known to the family	0	1	2-3	>3
# of times youth has changed schools in the past year	0	1	2	>2
# of times youth has moved in the past year	0	1	2	>2
# of different households youth has been part of in past year	1	2	3	>3
# of adults youth has that he or she can depend on	Many	Several	One or two	None
Youth grade average in school	"B" or better	"C"	Failing	Failing
Youth is involved in organized school or after-school activities	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Youth has friends who do drugs	None	Few	Some	Many
Youth seeks necessary help	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
# of times youth has been involved in a violent incident in the past year	0	1 or 2	3 or 4	>4
# of times youth has been found with drugs	0	1 or 2	3 or 4	>4
Youth has unexplained cash	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
# of times youth has stayed out overnight without permission in past month	0	1	2	>2
Youth shuts down or changes page on computer when adult approaches	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
Youth is disrespectful	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
Youth tells parents about his or her day	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

Note: When conducting this risk assessment with parents or caregivers, any questions answered with a “don’t know” should be considered either some risk or high risk. Youth with insufficient caregiver supervision are at higher risk of gang-related activity.



Identifying Your Community's Crime Problem: A Guide to Needs Assessment

BC Ministry of Justice

This booklet provides practical and easy-to-understand advice about how to approach community needs assessment.

The guide was published as part of a series of booklets published for inclusion in British Columbia's Safe Communities Kit.

www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/publications/docs/safe-community-assessment-guide.pdf

Activity: Identifying Community Resources

Identifying existing resources in the community is an important first step in needs assessment. By pinpointing current strengths and capacities, you can honour the work already underway in the community — as well as avoid duplication of services.

Materials

- white board/chalkboard/flip chart/smartboard
- Case Study: Surrey Wrap Project

Time: 45 minutes

Activity Tasks

Review the questions you posed at the end of the previous phase: what are the cultural and social dynamics of our community? What are forces that may help us as we work toward our community plan? What forces might work against us? What are stakeholders currently doing to address these strengths/concerns? Discuss, and record results.

Distribute copies of the “Surrey Wrap Project” case study. Discuss the case study with the large group.

In small groups, brainstorm all available community resources for youth. Report back this information, and list.

Divide up the list of community resources and programs and ask each group member to take responsibility for contacting these before the next session. For each resource, they should provide

- a brief description of the resource
- information on how to access the resource
- whether or not the resource is at capacity and has a waitlist
- fees if any
- contact information —phone, web, email, etc.

TOP TIP

Be ready to gather needs assessment data from direct sources, including youth and community members that serve the needs of youth.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Victoria Community Map

www.youthcore.ca/map_splash?&PHPSESSID=08bc2e0f6c560f3ffe306af413652e38

Hosted by Youthcore, greater Victoria's online youth portal, this online annotated map helps youth find resources in their area. Indexed by neighbourhood, the map identifies community resources related to a wide variety of areas, including

- sports and recreation
- health
- education
- music, arts, and culture

Activity: Identifying Gaps in Community Resources

This activity will help you identify gaps in your community resources that need to be addressed in order to protect youth from gravitating towards activities that place them at risk for becoming involved in criminal or gang-related activities.

Materials

- flip chart paper, markers, tape
- Handout: Addressing Youth Gang Risk Factors

Time: 1.5 hours

Activity Tasks

Ask participants to provide a brief report of the resources contacted (from previous session). List each resource or program on chart paper so that these can be referred to for the next activity.

Distribute the handout, Addressing Youth Gang Risk Factors. (You may wish to distribute this handout ahead of time via email to allow participants to read the information in advance of the meeting.)

Divide participants into four groups, and assign one category of intervention to each:

- social intervention
- improving school/work prospects
- cultural competency
- recreation/pro-social programs.

Ask the small groups to list the current resources available the community that address the risk factors for youth. Bring the whole group back together to share their findings and debrief. Which categories of intervention are best addressed by programs already operational in the community? Which ones are most lacking?

List these identified “gaps” for use at the next session.

Next, ask the group to consider whether or not the wider community has been sufficiently consulted about priorities for community services. Have youth had an opportunity to provide their input? What about parents and caregivers? Have cultural groups within the community been consulted? Other stakeholders? How will they be consulted? Is outside research (e.g., contracted service) required for additional needs assessment?

TOP TIP

Be aware that there may be some risk factors that are beyond the scope of the community's ability to impact.

TOP TIP

Practise cultural competency: have initial information materials and sessions available in different languages. Involve cultural customs in group meetings if beneficial. Use cultural approaches authentically, with the support and leadership of the local cultural communities.

Activity: Setting Community Priorities

This activity will help you set priorities, based on your needs assessment, to develop a community response.

Materials

- white board/chalkboard/flip chart/smartboard
- information from previous two sessions
- highlighter pens or sticky notes
- Handout: Addressing Youth Gang Risk Factors

Time: 1 hour

Activity Tasks

Review information gathered at previous sessions. Focus on risk factors, and the identified community resources that are designed to address those risk factors.

Referring to the risk factors identified in the handout, ask participants to use highlighters or sticky notes to identify the three or four risk factors they think are most important to address. After a few minutes to complete this individual activity, bring the group back together to share their responses.

As a whole group, work on achieving consensus for addressing the risk factors seen as the highest priorities. Refer to the resources already in place in the community, and consider which risk factors are not already being addressed. What additional community responses are needed? What types of programs might address these gaps?

Record the ideas of the groups for the next phase of the community plan, action planning.

TOP TIP

Prioritize needs carefully. Actions plans will be based on decisions made during the needs assessment phase.

TOP TIP

Look for preventative strategies, rather than just reactive solutions. Focus on ways to proactively strengthen resources and programs to positively impact and protect youth.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

The Little Black Book

www.youthblackbook.com

The Little Black Book is an online guide to youth resources in Surrey, Langley, Delta, and White Rock. This resource contains helpful information about a variety of youth-oriented services pertaining to health, violence prevention, education, counseling, recreation and more.

Resources are organized by categories such as

- There's nothing to do
- I'm looking for support
- I want to know about ...
- I need help
- I need to go somewhere

Background: Needs Assessment

What is a Needs Assessment?

A needs assessment is a way of gathering information about a community's opinions, needs, challenges, and assets. It is a dynamic, ongoing process that can be used to determine priorities and decide which project(s) will best meet the identified needs of the community.

Elements of a good needs assessment include the following:

- a clear, concise statement of the challenge the community will try to solve
- an accurate description of the population to be served by any projects
- an understanding of factors or specific reasons about which action should be prioritized over others.

Needs assessment is a complex process that involves

- acquiring some familiarity with scholarly research and the thinking of experts in the fields of crime (and especially gang) prevention — particularly with respect to best practice and to experience in other comparable jurisdictions
- defining the exact nature and extent of the problem (of gangs and of youth involvement in gangs) in a community; this in turn involves identifying valid and credible methods for gathering and analysing pertinent information
- determining the views of both CAAN stakeholders and members of the community at large (re nature & scope of the problem, what people perceive to be required)
- identifying what has already been done or is already happening to respond to the perceived problem (programs, initiatives, “tools”; how well they are working and whether they need to be phased out, altered, or extended), given that pinpointing strengths and capacities is as important as identifying deficiencies and gaps.

You can use a needs assessment to learn what the people or communities that you hope to reach might need. For example, you might want to find out about safety issues in your community, about access to services or about the extent to which your community is dealing with a certain type of crime.

Your needs assessment may involve gathering information from the following sources:

- Police — Local police or RCMP detachments keep records of reported crimes and gang activity. Their reports can give you a good idea of what crimes have taken place in your community, where they happened, and how frequently they occurred. The police can provide information about crime prevention strategies and approaches already in place.
- Ministry of Justice — This ministry's website (www.gov.bc.ca/justice) provides comprehensive information on BC crime statistics, police resources, and municipal crime rates. The website also provides a number of useful resources (see the Additional Resources section for selected titles).

- Ministry of Children and Family Development and/or Family Services — personnel in these agencies will be able to provide statistics and information about youth-at-risk and programs aimed at those youth.
- Community — it is particularly important to hear from diverse parts of your community, including marginalized and vulnerable individuals. Include:
 - community centres (e.g., parks and recreation, YMCA/YWCA, faith-based centres) — existing programs for youth
 - schools and school district authorities — information about keep files on school-based violence and criminal activity
 - youth organizations (school and community based) — critical information about youth needs
- Aboriginal bands — may offer information particularly related to on-reserve gang and crime activity
- Small business owners — documented problems they have had with crime and gang activity
- Local media — media reports on issues of gangs, crime, and violence.

Problem-Based vs. Strength-Based Community Development

When assessing community needs, one method is to consider problems and deficiencies. This approach is referred to as “problem-based” needs assessment. A second method is to focus on discovering and utilizing community capacities, assets, and resources. This second method is referred to as “strength-based” and is the approach primarily used in this toolkit.

The rationale for using the strength-based needs assessment includes:

- Strength-based approaches stress local leadership, investment, and control in both the planning process and the outcome. Community residents are in the best position to know the community’s true strengths and capacities, they are the local experts.
- Strength-based approaches use both formal, institutional resources (such as programs, facilities, and financial capital) as well as individual, group, and informal strengths and resources. By connecting across traditional sectors and boundaries, communities often discover previously unrecognized interests, talents, skills, and capacities that can be matched with needs or challenges in another part of the community.
- Strength-based approaches focus on the capacities or gifts that are present in the community, and seek to link the strengths and priorities of all community partners. This mutual engagement, respect, and commitment yield benefits to everyone involved.

For more information about strength-based approaches, refer to the community consultation paper, “Strength-Based Approaches to Youth Gang Prevention in B.C.” www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/publications/docs/gang-prevention-youth-strength-based.pdf (2010, BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the National Crime Prevention Centre, Public Safety Canada)

Handout: Sample Risk Assessment Tool

Developed by the Surrey CAAN

Youth Risk Assessment Tool				
FACTORS	NO RISK	LOW RISK	SOME RISK	HIGH RISK
# of times missed school without permission in the past month	0	1	2-4 times	>4 times
# of days per week when youth is not supervised by an adult after school	0	1	2	>2
Youth engages in conversation with adults	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
# of older friends youth has who are not known to the family	0	1	2-3	>3
# of times youth has changed schools in the past year	0	1	2	>2
# of time youth has moved in the past year	0	1	2	>2
# of different households youth has been part of in past year	1	2	3	>3
# of adults youth has that he or she can depend on	Many	Several	One or two	None
Youth grade average in school	"B" or better	"C"	Passing	Failing
Youth is involved in organized school or after-school activities	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Youth has friends who do drugs	None	Few	Some	Many
Youth seeks necessary help	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
# of times youth has been involved in a violent incident in the past year	0	1 or 2	3 or 4	>4
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Youth has unexplained cash	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
# of times youth has stayed out overnight without permission in past month	0	1	2	>2
Youth shuts down or changes page on computer when adult approaches	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
Youth is disrespectful	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
Youth tells parents about his or her day	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

Note: When conducting this risk assessment with parents or caregivers, any questions answered with a "don't know" should be considered either some risk or high risk. Youth with insufficient caregiver supervision are at higher risk of gang-related activity.

Handout: Addressing Youth Gang Risk Factors

Risk factors are personal characteristics or life experiences that are associated with a higher incidence in gang and criminal activities.

Although none of the following factors should be interpreted individually as “causes” of youth gang involvement, these indicators may be used to determine higher risk of potential gang activity.

Personal risk factors

- Low motivation
- Low educational and occupational aspirations
- Low self-esteem
- Behavioural/discipline problems
- Alcohol or drug use
- Poor peer relations
- Victim of violence
- Cognitive impairments such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
- Long-term and multiple placements in child welfare and youth justice facilities
- Past criminal history, particularly if related to guns, drugs, or violence
- Early or precocious sexual activity

School risk factors

- Low teacher expectations
- Lack of real or perceived educational success, low educational aspirations
- Conflict between home/school cultures
- Lack of educational options
- Negative school environment
- Lack of student responsibility
- Lack of effective discipline system
- Low attachment to school community

Family violence, abuse/neglect

- Family drug or alcohol abuse
- Parental non-involvement
- Low parental expectations
- Lack of adult and parental role models and supervision
- Extreme economic deprivation
- Gang or criminal behaviour by other family members
- Immigrant families from war-torn countries

Community risk factors

- Presence of gangs in the neighbourhood
- Perceived “unsafe” communities
- Availability of drugs and firearms in the neighbourhood
- Lack of community support services
- High incidence of criminal activity
- Lack of school/community linkages
- Lack of recreational facilities
- High transient population
- Lack of youth employment opportunities
- Community norms are inattentive to alcohol/drug abuse
- Youth are not seen as assets to the community

Social risk factors

- High commitment to delinquent peers
- Street socialization
- Gang members in class
- Friends who use drugs or who are gang members
- Interaction with delinquent peers
- Pre-teen exposure to stress
- Cultural norms supporting gang behaviour
- Lack of connection to, or removal from, cultural identity

Phase Two: Needs Assessment

In addition to these five categories, cultural and gender risk factors must be considered.

- **Cultural risk factors:** In British Columbia, youth gang members are predominantly ethnic minorities and Aboriginal youth. They are among the most marginalized of Canadian youth. They often face barriers in education, employment, and full participation in Canadian society. The lure of status, money, and a sense of belonging and protection is appealing to these young people. The increase in gang activity and crime in some Aboriginal communities has been attributed in part to an increasing youth population, inadequate housing, drug and alcohol abuse, a high unemployment rate, lack of education, poverty, poor parenting skills, and the loss of language and cultural identity.
- **Gender risk factors:** Girls and young women face unique risk factors. Sexual abuse is a key pathway into gang involvement and this type of abusive behavior continues through their relationships with young men in gangs who often view women as sexual slaves or coerce them to participate in the sex trade. Young women may form or join an all-female gang either independently or as a subset of a male-dominated gang. Girls may be involved as accomplices to male gang members in drug smuggling, money laundering, credit card theft, fencing of stolen property, etc.

The presence of 1 or 2 risk factors alone is unlikely to result in gang involvement. Youth who join gangs tend to have multiple, co-existent risk factors that influence their involvement.

“Non-traditional” youth from well-functioning families with sufficient resources and connections to cultural identity may still be at risk. For these youth, the motivation to join gangs is similar to at-risk youth: power, prestige, protection, a chance to make money, or a sense of belonging.

The identification of the specific risk factors associated with youth gang involvement helps us determine where and how to focus prevention efforts.

Community Action to Address Risk Factors

Most youth who join gangs do so for the perceived positive aspects — fulfilling a need for

- social belonging
- money
- power
- protection
- identity
- cultural connection.

Therefore, a key priority for gang prevention is for communities to work towards fulfilling these needs in safe, positive, pro-social ways. Protective factors are positive influences that minimize the impact of risk factors and decrease the likelihood of problem behaviour.

Successful strategies for enhancing protective factors address one or more of the following approaches:

- **Social intervention** — gang members are more likely to respond to programs taken directly to them. Teams of workers from different disciplines target specific youth to engage the gangs in more pro-social activities or to influence members to exit.
- **Improving school/work prospects** — youth who graduate from secondary school are more likely to be employed compared to school drop-outs. Unemployment is one of the key risk factors for youth joining gangs. Work programs and life skill development for youth have proven to be successful strategies in reducing criminal behaviour.
- **Cultural competency** — for individuals, cultural competency is an approach to communicating and working respectfully with people from diverse cultures. For organizations, cultural competency means creating the practices and policies that make services more accessible to diverse populations, and that provide for appropriate and effective services in cross-cultural situations. Where lack of cultural connection is a primary risk factor, it may also be appropriate to tailor community approaches to specific cultural groups.
- **Recreation/pro-social programs:** recreation and skill development activities provide alternatives for youth at risk, and can give a youth a chance to discover new interests, form healthy relationships, and strengthen leadership skills in a safe environment.

In addition to preventing youth from joining gangs, it is important to reduce membership duration for youth who belong to a gang and to provide appropriate services (drug treatment, employment and educational opportunities) once they leave the gang.

For additional information on ways to build on and enhance key developmental assets for youth, visit “40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents” by the Search Institute.

www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18

Phase Three: Action Planning

WHAT

Your action plan is a series of tasks or steps designed to achieve your community goal or vision for addressing youth gang activity.

The **Objectives** for the action planning phase are to

- create concrete goals for action based on needs assessment and defined priorities
- articulate a defined action plan
- identify resources to support the community plans.

WHY

The purpose of action planning is to organize and develop specific programs, services, or initiatives. The action plans will use community assets to strengthen specific areas or address specific needs that have been identified.

WHEN

The action plan builds on the priorities you defined as part of Phase Two. It is recommended that you allow time for wider community feedback on your priorities before finalizing your action plan.

WHO

The whole working group should be part of generating broad project ideas, although the responsibility for creating the actual plan may be undertaken by the steering committee or a sub-committee.

HOW

The steps in the action planning phase include

- Connecting Priorities to Action
- Creating Action Plans
- Identifying Resources

Steps to Action Planning

■ *Connecting Priorities to Action* ■

Determining priorities was part of the previous phase, Needs Assessment. The next step is to start thinking about goals or actions to address those priorities.

There are many ways you can look at priorities for action. One way is to classify your needs by categories such as

- mentorship programs — adult role models working with at-risk youth in a one-on-one or group setting
- recreation programs — provide opportunities for physical outlet, positive socialization, and development of positive interests
- life skills programs — focussing on education, job readiness, and living skills, enabling youth to plan for life without criminal behaviour
- programs that meet physical needs for youth (e.g., food, clothing, shelter).

■ *Creating Action Plans* ■

A community action plan is a well-defined “road map” for creating community change by identifying what will be done, who will do it, and how it will be done.

Action plans are intended to address targeted, short-term gaps, such as gaining access to specific recreational activities for youth. Long-term goals such as creating a strategic plan for the growth of resources and activities for youth can also be addressed through action planning.

Action plans need to be closely tied to your needs assessment and stated priorities. Consider the following questions:

- What needs to happen to effectively address this issue? Is this attainable in the short term or is this a long-term goal?
- What possible barriers are there to success? (e.g., barriers related to finances, time, facilities, education about the issue, human resources)
- What resources are currently available?
- Will these resources address any of the barriers identified?
- What additional resources will be needed?
- Is there a way to get these resources?

■ *Identifying Resources* ■

Many community gang prevention programs can function within existing funding structures—from municipal governments, school boards, police authorities, Aboriginal bands, etc. In those cases, no additional funding resources will be required.

As part of this phase of your plan, you will need to take a look at your existing funds available in relation to your action plan. If there is a gap between finances available and finances required, you will need to either revise your plan or seek additional funding.

Consider sources such as the following for funding your programs:

- municipal government
- school board
- local businesses
- service clubs (e.g., Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions)
- Aboriginal band(s)
- BC Ministry of Justice—Crime Remediation and Crime Prevention Grant Funding Program
- Public Safety Canada—National Crime Prevention Centre

From the CAANs—Lessons Learned

- Involve youth on an ongoing basis in action planning, implementation, and evaluation. Some of the most successful programs involve a youth-leading-youth model.
- Include a focus on elementary aged youth. Working proactively with vulnerable pre-adolescents on skills such as communication and conflict resolution can help fix problems before they become serious.
- Tailor your communication strategies for your audience. Communicating with youth tends to be more successful via social media or dynamic events. Communicating with police and government is often best achieved by emails or letters. One-on-one interpersonal communication is usually extremely effective, but requires time, opportunity, and follow-up.
- Be flexible, rather than trying to find a single “solution” to the problem of youth gang violence.
- Consider starting small. Tackle smaller, short-term issues effectively rather than big problems in a disorganized manner. Small successes will help feed larger ones.



Vancouver's YES Project

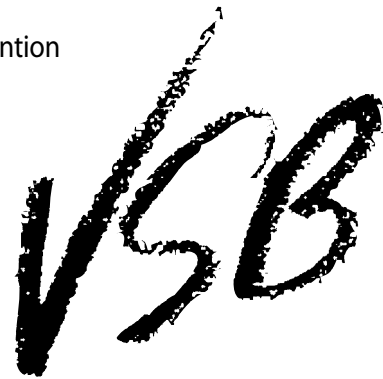
When Vancouver School Board staff who worked with at-risk youth undertook in 2007 to lead the formation of a CAAN that would address the issue of youth involvement in gangs, their initial community mobilization

and engagement efforts resulted in the creation of a network that included over 40 participants:

- non-teaching VSB staff with specialized student support mandates (e.g., school-based administrators, school/district multicultural workers, and school/district youth and family workers)
- representatives from civic/regional entities with applicable mandates (e.g., the City of Vancouver Social Planning Department, the Parks Board, neighbourhood Community Centres, Vancouver Police Department, Vancouver Coastal Health)
- representatives from local non-profit, youth-oriented service organizations (e.g., Family Services of Greater Vancouver, the YMCA-YWCA, Watari).

To facilitate project development, a smaller CAAN Steering Committee was formed and three part-time contract staff (a Coordinator and two Youth Facilitators) were engaged. Ideas for action were assembled and reviewed in light of

- the expertise and advice of researchers in the field of gang prevention
- a formal needs assessment
- small-group discussions involving CAAN partners who were already engaged to some extent in providing extra-curricular, youth-oriented programming that could be adapted or extended to address the issue of gang involvement — the focus being to determine what was working well and to identify gaps in service.



It soon became apparent that what was needed was a collection of varied, complementary initiatives focused on

- engaging youth most at risk of becoming involved with gangs (i.e., those aged 12–14, struggling to make the transition from elementary to secondary school) in activities that would
 - involve their input and perspectives, on an on-going basis, in project planning, implementation, and evaluation
 - include opportunities for positive social interaction and exposure to positive role models
 - help promote resiliency (ability to resist the temptations of gang life) by building on their strengths and developing their leadership skills through volunteer experiences that provide them with a sense of purpose and coherence
- increasing the availability of existing programs that included such activities and that were already proving effective in preventing gang affiliation
- providing training, education, and awareness for various key school personnel, parents, and community members on gang prevention (issues, strategies, and youth-driven activities), with the aim of promoting the adoption of effective prevention and early intervention practices.

Over the ensuing two years, the VSB and other individual CAAN partners planned and implemented a series of specific actions under a single project umbrella entitled YES (Youth Empowered and Safe). The actions included

- a mentorship program wherein identified vulnerable elementary students were teamed up for one year with a secondary school student who had received training in mentorship, facilitation, communication, and conflict resolution
- interactive workshops to promote gang awareness for students grades 6-7, co-presented by a secondary student and one of the CAAN Youth Facilitators
- creation of an up-to-date database of Vancouver-based prevention and early intervention resources (programs, people, agencies) available to VSB staff and CAAN partners
- provision of liaison and financial support for VSB teachers to refer additional youth identified as vulnerable to small-scale prevention/early-intervention programs already provided by community agencies (i.e., extending the capacity of certain CAAN partners to provide after-school and pull-out programming); an example of this was the Family Services of Greater Vancouver's Respect, Safety, & Violence Prevention (RSVP) program, which the CAAN endeavoured to make available to all elementary students who could benefit
- organization of creative outlets for vulnerable youth, including a youth art event (2009) and a youth poster development campaign
- creation and maintenance of a website containing resources, contact information, links, and news updates for CAAN partners
- development and publication of a parent booklet, "Steering Kids Away From Gangs—What Parents Need to Know," translated and published in multiple languages
- related presentations to parents concerned about the threat of gangs for their children
- development and promotion within the VSB of alternatives to suspension and restorative discipline practices (e.g., conferencing and victim-offender mediation) for vulnerable and at-risk youth to assist in keeping them engaged in school
- efforts to create an Arts Leadership course as an alternative to traditional curriculum offerings for vulnerable youth within the school system
- development and implementation of resources for VSB teachers to make appropriate connections between existing "Safe Schools" and Social Responsibility messaging (curriculum-based) and the gang prevention messaging of the YES project (extra-curricular, for the most part).



A key feature of the multi-year YES project was the responsiveness of action planning to both the input of youth and the findings of evaluation regarding particular initiatives. Successful initiatives were extended (e.g., in year 3 of the YES project, the mentorship initiative was extended to include summer opportunities such as paid employment, day camps, and summer school offerings tailored specifically to the needs and situations of vulnerable youth. Less-effective activities were discontinued and resources reallocated to what worked. This contributed significantly to the overall success of the YES project.



Primer on Municipal Crime Prevention

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities provides practical tools to assist municipalities to plan and undertake crime prevention strategies based on the basic principles of leadership, partnerships, safety diagnosis, action plans, implementation, and evaluation. The resource provides guidance on how to organize a local council, identify local problems, develop an action plan, plan crime prevention programs, and undertake, monitor and evaluate interventions.

www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Primer_on_Municipal_Crime_Prevention_EN.pdf

Activity: Connecting Priorities to Action

This activity will introduce the group to the processes required for a successful action plan.

Materials

- computer, projector
- white board/chalkboard/flip chart/smartboard
- Handout: Sample Programs
- results of needs assessment and stated priorities (from phase two and wider community feedback)
- Case Study: Vancouver's YES Project
- Handout: Features of Successful Youth Programs

Time: 2–3 hours

Preparation

Assign one of the “sample programs” (from the handout) to each working group member. Ask them to prepare a short presentation on their assigned program, identifying the nature of the program, whether or not anything similar already exists in your community, and how the program could address your identified priorities.

Activity Tasks

Review the stated priorities as defined in the previous phase, as well as any feedback you may have received from the wider community.

Have group members present their sample programs to the rest of the groups. Look for ways to draw connections among and categorize the sample programs. Categories could include:

- mentorship programs—adult role models working with at-risk youth in a one-on-one or group setting
- recreation programs—provide opportunities for physical outlet, positive socialization, and development of positive interests
- life skills programs—focussing on education, job readiness, and living skills, enabling youth to plan for life without criminal behaviour
- programs that meet physical needs (e.g., food, clothing, shelter).

Distribute the Case Study (Vancouver's YES Project). Discuss: In what ways did the Vancouver CAAN connect their priorities to action? What aspects of their plan might work in our community?

Revisit the results of the needs assessment and the stated priorities for action. Discuss: what types of programs might best meet these priorities? Are there any sample programs that we can use as models for our own projects?

Phase Three: Action Planning

Note: if any of the sample programs are particularly relevant for your community, ask for a volunteer to make contact with the organizers of that program for more information.

Distribute the handout, *Features of Successful Youth Programs*. Discuss: which features are reflected in the sample programs discussed? Which features are most desirable for our projects?

Debrief: At our next meetings we will working through an action planning process. Are we ready for this step or do we need to do more mobilizing or needs/assets assessments? Is there any additional information needed before beginning to work on a community action plan to enhance our community's capacity to address youth gang activity?

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Plea Community Services — Career Path

www.plea.ca/our-services/school-work

Career Path provides meaningful employment and mentoring to young people, age 15-18, in the Vancouver, Richmond, North Shore, and Sea-to-Sky areas who are either identified as gang members, affiliated with criminal associates, or at high risk of gang involvement.

The program combines intensive one-to-one support and supervision, job placements and employer mentoring with a variety of training and educational opportunities. The program provides a practical, multidisciplinary approach to employment by increasing the youth's ability to function in work and community environments. Career Path collaborates with and supports employers who offer employment preparation and apprenticeship programs and who are willing to mentor the participant in the workplace.

Activity: Creating Action Plans

Materials

- computer, projector
- white board/chalkboard/flip chart/smartboard
- Handout: Community Action Plans
- PowerPoint—Developing SMART Action Plans (slides 9–13)
- Handout: Action Plan Template
- copies of draft action plans created in previous session

Time: 2–4 hours

Activity Tasks

Distribute the handout, Community Action Plans, and discuss.

Work through the step-by-step process outlined in the PowerPoint, Developing SMART Action Plans.

Divide participants into smaller groups, and distribute the Action Plan Template. Have each group create a draft action plan for a selected outcome. (Depending on how many projects or programs you will be undertaking, different groups can work on different tasks or the same one.)

Bring the groups back together to share and synthesize their results. These will be used in the next step: Implementation.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Project No So Much (PNSM)

www.tgmag.ca/aorg/pdf/PNSM8pgr_WEB_e.pdf

Project Not So Much (PNSM) is designed to engage young men in positive activities. Its discussion-based format gives everyone a chance to talk about the issues most relevant to them, their peers, and their community. These young men, ages 14-24, come together two to four times a month to express their biggest concerns. The group usually consists of youth at risk of getting caught up in the streets. Young men from across the Greater Toronto Area — representing various ethnic and racial backgrounds, youth in school, those from the shelter system, criminal justice system, Children’s Aid Society (CAS), homeless youth, and street-involved youth — are all represented in the group.

Through discussion, tools have been developed to make the process of giving back entertaining and educational for all involved. Workshops, videos, skits, and publications are just some of the vehicles for engagement used to assist these young men in demonstrating leadership skills in a positive way.

Activity: Identifying Resources

Note: Many community gang prevention programs can function within existing funding structures — from municipal governments, school boards, police authorities, Aboriginal bands, etc. In those cases, no additional funding resources are required.

This activity is provided for communities seeking additional funding sources to implement or expand their programs.

Materials

- white board/chalkboard/flip chart/smartboard

Time: 1–2 hours

Activity Tasks

Discuss as a group:

- What funding do we have currently?
- What are our program funding objectives?
- What projects can we undertake with little or no additional funding?

Discuss various available sources of funding. Include the following categories:

- Local funding sources — there is often competition for funding at the provincial and federal level, so local funding should be investigated first. Since the focus of your program is community safety and well-being, use the idea that a safe community benefits all to “sell” your program and let community groups know that reducing gang activity is in everyone’s best interest. Potential local sources of funding include:
 - businesses
 - service clubs (e.g., Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions)
 - municipal government
 - school board
 - Aboriginal band(s)
- Provincial and federal funding sources:
 - Crime Remediation and Crime Prevention Grant Funding Program (BC Ministry of Justice)
www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/grants/index.htm
 - National Crime Prevention Centre (Public Safety Canada)
www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/ncps-fndsndx-eng.aspx
 - British Columbia Foundations Funding Programs
www.loanshopcanada.com/bcfundingfoundations.htm

Phase Three: Action Planning

- CivicInfoBC web site with information on a range of municipal issues – see section on “Funding”
www.civicinfo.bc.ca
- Aboriginal Justice Strategy (Department of Justice)
www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/ajs-sja/index.html
- Victims Fund Project Funding (Department of Justice)
www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/pcvi-cpcv/proj.html
- Vancouver Foundation
www.vancouverfoundation.ca/grants/index.htm

Ask for volunteers to investigate potential funding sources and report back at the next session.

For an up-to-date list of funding sources, visit the GangPrevention web site:
www.gangprevention.ca/partners/resources/funding

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Youth Alliance Against Gang Violence

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/yth-llnc-eng.aspx

The Youth Alliance against Youth Violence (YAAGV) program, also known as the Warrior Spirit Walking program, was developed in 2007 in response to the high number of street and gang-involved youth in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. YAAGV is a community-based crime prevention program that uses the Circle of Courage Approach as its foundation, and incorporates elements of Wraparound and Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) into the design. The program was designed specifically to suit the needs of Aboriginal youth who were gang-involved or at risk of gang involvement. The program sought to: increase youth attachment to school; increase youth employability and life skills; reduce youth involvement in gang-related violence and crime, and; increase literacy skills and high school completion rates.

Handout: Sample Programs

The following are only some of the many projects and programs currently in place to address the issue of youth gangs. Some programs are targeted directly at gang prevention, while others address more general themes of the development of healthy communities and alternatives for young people.

Note: additional information about many of these programs can be found in the Case Studies found in each of the five phases in this Toolkit.

Surrey Wraparound: A Youth Driven Comprehensive Plan for Gang Violence Prevention (Surrey Wraparound)

www.bc.rcmp.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=73&languageId=1&contentId=8915

In response to increased gang activity and youth crime, the City of Surrey developed anti-gang/crime prevention strategies aimed at working with at-risk youth (11 to 17 years old) and their families. These strategies were developed to maximize public safety, curb violence, and curtail criminal activity. One such strategy was the Surrey Wraparound: A Youth Driven Comprehensive Plan for Gang Violence Prevention (Surrey Wrap). The Surrey Wrap was delivered through a partnership between the Surrey School Board and the Surrey RCMP. The overall goal was to prevent gang-related crime in the Surrey community through the development and application of a wraparound approach for supporting youth at risk of gang involvement, youth displaying gang-associated behaviours, and those currently in gangs.

This project builds on and enhances other initiatives already in place locally, including

- the provincial government's *School-based Settlement Services* program, aimed at new permanent residents
- the Surrey school district's *Intervention, Refocus, Reflect, & Reintegrate* pilot project aimed at suspended students
- the joint school district/RCMP/Surrey Crime Prevention Society youth website project, *Protecting Surrey Schools Together* (www.psst-bc.ca/).

Youth Alliance Against Gang Violence

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/yth-llnc-eng.aspx

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Phase Three: Action Planning

Gang Prevention Strategy (GPS)

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/es-gps-eng.aspx

To address the issue of youth gangs, Living Rock Ministries, a non-profit Christian outreach based in downtown Hamilton, Ontario, delivered the Gang Prevention Strategy. The objective of the GPS was to reduce the risk of gang involvement among at-risk youth. Specifically, the program aimed to increase awareness of consequences of gang involvement, encourage youth to adopt a less positive attitude toward gangs, increase motivation to participate in pro-social behaviours, decrease risk factors that contribute to interest in gang activity, and increase protective factors that contribute to youth's interest in pro-social activity.

Youth Advocate Program (YAP)

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/2012-es-25-eng.aspx

Halifax Regional Police had been tracking gang-related activity and identified seven gangs active within the Halifax Regional Municipality. The Youth Advocate Program (YAP) was piloted in six communities in the HRM as a response to gang activity, four of which were the above-noted housing areas. The goal of the YAP was to address the risk factors that make youth vulnerable to gang influence and involvement, such as a lack of school attachment and positive role models, low self-esteem, engagement in anti-social behaviour, poor family relationships and bullying.

Regina Anti-Gang Services (RAGS)

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/2012-es-26-eng.aspx

Regina Anti-Gang Services (RAGS) was developed in 2007 in response to the high level of gang activity in the North Central neighbourhood of Regina. It offered support to gang-involved youth in one of the most deprived, gang-filled, and criminally active neighbourhoods in Canada. The Regina Anti-Gang Services Project aimed to help gang-involved youth leave their gangs safely. Towards this objective, RAGS sought to: increase youth attachment to the labour force, schools, and retraining; increase their attachment to healthy adult role models; reduce their involvement in gang related violence and crime; and decrease gang-related sex-trade activity.

Winnipeg Youth Gang Prevention Fund

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/2012-es-27-eng.aspx

Winnipeg youth who are involved with gangs or at risk of gang involvement face a complexity of issues and risk factors. Because of the entrenchment of certain gangs in the city, some youth gang involvement is inter-generational. Programs, services, and support for youth who are gang-involved or at-risk have to respond to these varied needs. The objectives of the Winnipeg YGPF

projects were to: address specific risk and protective factors associated with youth violence and gang membership; mitigate risk of gun violence and gang activity; provide alternatives to gangs to help youth develop pro-social competencies and attitudes; prevent gang-related crime and victimization. Each project addressed a unique neighbourhood, community and clientele.

Youth at Risk Development (YARD)

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/2012-es-28-eng.aspx

In response to growing concerns about gang violence, the Youth At Risk Development (YARD) program offered prevention services to high-risk youth and youth involved in gang-related activities in Calgary. YARD is a city-wide program that focuses primarily on prevention and intervention, by aiming to address the roots of gang involvement at the individual level through an emphasis on social development and rehabilitation. YARD sought to: decrease youths' anti-social attitudes and beliefs; improve problem solving and anger management skills; decrease anti-social peer association and positive attitudes toward gangs; improve school attendance and school performance; improve attitudes toward employment; increase participation in pro-social activities; improve family relationships and relationships with supportive adults; decrease substance use; and decrease criminal activity.

Pilot Project to Implement the Looking After Children (LAC) Approach in Québec

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/2012-es-30-eng.aspx

The Looking After Children (LAC) project was conducted by the Association des centres jeunesse du Québec (ACJQ) and four youth centres located in the Outaouais, Bas-Saint-Laurent, Chaudière-Appalaches and Montréal (Batshaw Youth and Family Centres) regions. The project aimed to improve care provided to children and youth placed in foster families in Québec in order to reduce risks of future offences. The goal of the LAC approach is to guide interventions to improve the existing experiences and living conditions of foster children, to promote their optimal development and build resilience.

Durham Youth Gang Strategy (DYGS)

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/2012-es-32-eng.aspx

In 2006, Durham Ontario police data indicated a growing number of self-identified, gang-involved youth in the Pickering/Ajax/Oshawa region. Ten street gangs were known to operate in Durham and approximately 21 of Toronto's street gangs had at least one member living in the Durham region. In response to the growing gang problem, the Durham Youth Gang Strategy (DYGS) was launched. The DYGS is a comprehensive program developed by the Durham Family Court Clinic and the Murray McKinnon Foundation, in collaboration with community agencies to support prevention and intervention activities.

Phase Three: Action Planning

Pohna — Keepers of the Fire

www.justice.alberta.ca/programs_services/safe/history/Pages/pohna.aspx

Established as a way to intervene with groups of Aboriginal youth aged 11 to 17 involved in criminal and gang-related activity in Edmonton, it represents a dynamic, responsive, and integrated approach to prevent these youth from becoming entrenched in further gang activity, association, and lifestyle. Features include

- a focus on empowering at-risk youth to create change, on building their resilience to deal with personal challenges, and on surrounding them with supportive adults
- helping practice grounded in an Aboriginal outlook, wherein resilience is a function of the young person's sense of connectedness to family, community, the natural environment, and the cosmos
- making youth themselves the drivers of programming (e.g., they identify personal goals, what they can do to meet their goals, and what help they need from others)
- provision of specific services and supports according to the individual needs and interests of youth (e.g., supports may include working with schools to increase a youth's attendance and connection to school, connecting the youth and family to aboriginal culture and teachings, getting youth involved in recreation and the arts, helping them manage personal crises, or supporting them to deal with substance abuse issues or to accept and learn from the consequences of their criminal activities).

While emerging youth gangs continue to be a problem in the community, it is clear that Pohna, with its focus on reclaiming lives one at a time, is achieving positive results:

- ongoing evaluation supports the view that individuals involved with Pohna show a reduction in interactions with criminal justice system and more positive relationships with school, peers, family, and community
- through involvement with Pohna, the community's capacity to respond effectively to gangs and their associated ills continues to grow
- a more specific and practical sense of how best to work together to provide needed support for vulnerable youth and their families
- a better understanding of what works and what doesn't in terms of supportive practice
- renewed hope that even the most complicated, crime-engaged, and abandoned youth can be turned around.

Victoria Community Map

www.youthcore.ca/map_splash?&PHPSESSID=08bc2e0f6c560f3ffe306af413652e38

Hosted by Youthcore, greater Victoria's online youth portal, this online annotated map helps youth find resources in their area. Indexed by neighbourhood, the map identifies community resources related to a wide variety of areas, including

- sports and recreation
- health
- education
- music, arts, and culture.

Walk Tall Youth Life Skills Program

Operated by the Carrier Sekani Family Services, Walk Tall is a prevention program designed to deter at-risk youth from negative influences by engaging them in positive activities that will build their self-confidence and life skills. Originally an initiative of the Prince George CAAN, the project continued with federal funding, and operates in both Prince George and Burns Lake.

Walk Tall is helping youth to develop positive identities and relationships, increasing their attachment to school, and providing them with access to recreational programming, cultural traditions, and community services. Features of the program include

- cultural and recreational programming
- gender-specific programming
- age-appropriate programming
- specific focus on risk/protective factors
- evidence-based process.

The Little Black Book

www.youthblackbook.com

The Little Black Book is an online guide to youth resources in Surrey, Langley, Delta, and White Rock. This resource contains helpful information about a variety of youth-oriented services pertaining to health, violence prevention, education, counseling, recreation and more.

Resources are organized by categories such as

- There's nothing to do
- I'm looking for support
- I want to know about ...
- I need help
- I need to go somewhere

Phase Three: Action Planning

Plea Community Services — Career Path

www.plea.ca/our-services/school-work

Career Path provides meaningful employment and mentoring to young people, age 15–18, in the Vancouver, Richmond, North Shore, and Sea-to-Sky areas who are either identified as gang members, affiliated with criminal associates, or at high risk of gang involvement.

The program combines intensive one-to-one support and supervision, job placements and employer mentoring with a variety of training and educational opportunities. The program provides a practical, multidisciplinary approach to employment by increasing the youth's ability to function in work and community environments. Career Path collaborates with and supports employers who offer employment preparation and apprenticeship programs and who are willing to mentor the participant in the workplace.

PSST: Protecting Surrey Schools Together Surrey CAAN

www.psst-bc.ca

Protecting Surrey Schools Together (PSST) was created by the Surrey School District in partnership with the Surrey RCMP to promote a safe and caring school environment for students. It is a secure and confidential place for students to write articles, share their experiences, and connect with each other in a safe environment. The “Report It” section is a protected and anonymous way for students to report bullying, threats of violence, and vandalism.

South Asian Community Resource Office (SACRO)

www.abbotsfordcommunityservices.com/index.cfm?method=pages.showPage&pageid=7da14cee-011c-15ab-ccf6-d806ed68318b

The goal of SACRO is to prevent/ reduce criminal and/or gang involvement of South Asian youth in the Abbotsford community by providing outreach, mentorship, and individualized Wraparound programming to youth participants. Youth facilitators also provide youth, families and friends with community services and resources that may be needed.

One of the projects of SACRO is Youthemes — a program that offers a proactive approach to gang prevention that connects youth to support services such as job training, mentoring, recreational programming, and educational opportunities.

The Eastside Aboriginal Space for Youth (E.A.S.Y)

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/ythgng/cpa12-vpdwgp-eng.aspx

This project was delivered by the Vancouver Police Department and the Circle of Eagles Lodge Society, with support from other government and urban Aboriginal organizations in Vancouver. The project is designed to prevent high risk, Aboriginal youth in Vancouver from joining gangs. The program provides youth with resources and alternatives to gang involvement to reduce the risk factors associated with gang activity and increase the protective factors linked to positive and healthy development. The project provides a late night resource centre, outreach, recreational activities, and community engagement forums. Eighty high-risk youth participate in this project through all programs.

Cedar and Sage

Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre

www.vacpc.org/cedar-sage

Based on a “Circle of Courage” model, the project involves workshops for youth addressing the themes of

- Belonging and Cultural Teachings
- Mastery and Life Skills
- Independence and Leadership
- Generosity
- Community Involvement.

Activities stemming from the project include:

- Shared youth/elder nights
- Saturday breakfast program with follow-up workshops
- Graduation ceremonies
- Outreach activities
- Volunteering at Elders lunches
- Community Courage Award Ceremony

StreetSmarts Youth Leadership Program

Richmond CAAN

www.touchstonefamily.ca/program/caan.html

StreetSmarts is a leadership program for youth who may be at risk of gang involvement. The objective of the program is to support at-risk youth to develop leadership skills through a series of workshops and to receive mentorship in order to make positive life choices. The program supports low asset youth who would benefit from intensive mentorship and support. Youth are referred through the Richmond School District, community agencies, and parents. The program connects at-risk youth to support services, job training/educational opportunities, mentoring, as well as educating youth, parents, and community on youth gang prevention.

Handout: Community Action Plan

A community action plan is a well-defined “road map” for creating community change by identifying what will be done, who will do it, and how it will be done.

Action plans are intended to address targeted, short-term gaps, such as gaining access to specific recreational activities for youth. Long-term goals such as creating a strategic plan for the growth of resources and activities for youth can also be addressed through action planning.

Action plans need to be closely tied to your needs assessment and stated priorities.

Consider the following questions:

- What needs to happen to effectively address this issue? Is this attainable in the short term or is this a long-term goal?
- What possible barriers are there to success? (e.g., barriers related to finances, time, facilities, education about the issue, human resources)
- What resources are currently available?
- Will these resources address any of the barriers identified?
- What additional resources will be needed?
- Is there a way to get these resources?

Handout: Action Plan Template

Objective: _____

Action Phases	Timeline	Persons Responsible	Required Resources (human resources, facilities, financial)

Handout: Features of Successful Youth Programs

Based on the experiences of the CAANs and other experts in the field, consider the following when structuring your youth programs.

- Keep programs free or very low-cost for youth participants. User fees are a significant barrier for at-risk youth. A program doesn't have to be expensive or complicated to have a positive effect on youth.
- Consider planning gender-specific programs. The dynamics of male and female gang activity are very different, and tailoring programs to gender-specific audiences can help address particular needs within each group. Separate programs for young men and women will also help minimize instances of harassment and distraction.
- Drop-in vs. closed programs each have both advantages and disadvantages. Drop-in programs can serve more youth, but closed groups often have better relationship formation.
- Ensure adequate adult supervision of programs. At-risk youth in particular need strong support and supervision.
- Consider having an honorarium for youth who take on leadership roles.
- Schedule activities for the convenience of youth participants, not adult supervisors.
- Avoid waiting lists and other restrictions (e.g., age restrictions) whenever possible. Remember that youth are often very "now" focussed and unwilling to wait for access to services.
- Create programs within neighbourhoods; don't make youth travel far to get to programs.
- Offer refreshments at activities as incentive for youth to attend. Work with local restaurants and food companies for donations and contributions.
- Establish a strict "no drugs/alcohol" policy. Having this expectation clear at the beginning will help avoid misunderstanding. Youth are more likely to buy into such a policy if it is understood at the start.
- Successful programs have structure and youth know what their roles are, what the expectations are, and what the outcomes will be for them. This structure should help buy-in.
- When arranging for speakers or guests in programs, look for the "hook" and find out what are youth are interested in. Start off program sessions with an interesting speaker, and then follow it up with a reinforcing/teaching component.

- Look for projects that help to build family and cultural identity. Family and culture are hugely important to youth identity, and youth lacking those connections are at a much greater risk of being involved in gang activity. Foster care, neglect, abuse, poverty, and lack of healthy role models may provide barriers to youth's feelings of identity and community.
- Make the program sustainable so kids learn to trust service providers and build positive relationships.
- Create spaces that encourage participation and encourage meaningful engagement, and that the young people feel connected to.
- Look for ways to involve youth in spreading the word about activities to other youth who may benefit. Contests with prizes and “bragging rights” are particularly successful ways for youth to take a lead in communication. Contests can focus on the best _____ communicating a pro-social, anti-violence theme. Examples for youth creation include
 - videos
 - plays
 - songs/raps
 - flashmobs
 - comics
 - posters
 - t-shirts

A sample youth video PSA contest winner is available online — *Teacher War* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=B96P1Vt6hKA)

PowerPoint: Developing SMART Action Plans

Facilitation notes



Phase Three: Action Planning

Developing SMART Action Plans

1. Identify the area of focus to be addressed.

9

Discuss as a group: Let's look at the gap areas we identified and prioritized previously. Choose one item that will be acted upon.



Phase Three: Action Planning

Developing SMART Action Plans

2. Create Action Goals:

- S Specific
- M Measurable
- A Achievable
- R Realistic
- T Time-bound

10

Action goals explain exactly what the intended tasks will be. Effective goals are action oriented, clear, and are related directly to the problem. One way to do this is to write SMART goals.



Phase Three: Action Planning

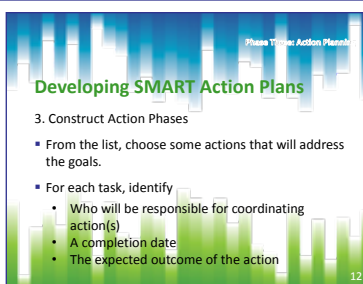
Developing SMART Action Plans

Sample short-term SMART goal:

"Within the next two months community agencies with gyms will be asked to waive membership fees for youth aged 12 to 18."

11

Ask groups to write one action goal to address the chosen need, challenge, or problem.



Phase Three: Action Planning

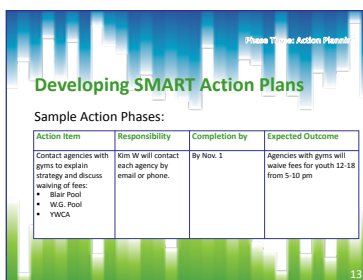
Developing SMART Action Plans

3. Construct Action Phases

- From the list, choose some actions that will address the goals.
- For each task, identify
 - Who will be responsible for coordinating action(s)
 - A completion date
 - The expected outcome of the action

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Action steps are a realistic list of solutions and activities that will address the gap to be addressed the goals. Responsibility for completing or facilitation completion is also assigned.



Phase Three: Action Planning

Developing SMART Action Plans

Sample Action Phases:

Action Item	Responsibility	Completion by	Expected Outcome
Contact agencies with gyms to explain strategy and discuss waiving of fees. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Blair PoolW.G. PoolYWCA	Kim W will contact each agency by email or phone.	By Nov 1	Agencies with gyms will waive fees for youth 12-18 from 5-10 pm

13

This is one example of developed action phases. Choose one task, identified by the groups, and demonstrate how it can be developed into phases.

Phase Four: Program Implementation

WHAT

Implementation is the stage where all your planned activities are put into action. Monitoring and reflecting on progress is important in the implementation phase to make sure that activities can be executed as planned — and that you can adapt to challenges as they may arise.

The **Objectives** for the program implementation phase are to

- outline specific tasks that need to be implemented to launch action items
- implement action items
- acknowledge and affirm results.

WHY

Program implementation is the “action phase,” when you put into place the results of your previous steps. This is the stage where the most visible results of your plan can be seen. In addition, program implementation is the most public part of your plan, and allows you to gain wider community support.

WHEN

The timing of your program implementation will depend on the nature of your program, your method of identifying and enrolling at-risk youth, and when various resources (e.g., facilities, guest presenters) are available.

WHO

Although implementation of specific elements may be the responsibility of steering committee or one or more sub-committees, the whole working group should have opportunities to be part of implementation. Indeed, some members may feel that this is the only stage of the process where their involvement is required or valuable. Interested groups and individuals within the wider community who have previously been uninvolved in the working group may also take part in the program at this point.

HOW

The steps in the program implementation phase include

- Planning for Implementation
- Checking In
- Celebrating Your Achievements

Steps to Implementation

► *Planning for Implementation*

This part of your implementation strategy is where your plans become reality.

The steps involved in implementation will vary according to the nature of the project you are undertaking, but will likely include factors such as

- detailed actions and tasks
- person or people responsible for each task
- resource requirements — facilities, materials, technology required, guest presenters, refreshments, etc.
- timeline for each stage
- budget
- communication strategies (e.g., how programs and strategies will be promoted, how youth clients will be identified and invited to participate).

► *Checking In*

Once implementation has begun, it's a good idea to check in with everyone involved — including program facilitators, steering committee, and sub-committees — to see how plans are progressing.

Be sure to include a means for data collection as part of checking in. This will prove valuable when you conduct your evaluation phase.

► *Celebrating Your Achievements*

Getting this far has likely been a time-consuming and challenging journey for your working group, so it's important to take time to celebrate what you have accomplished.

Consider a public element to your celebration, which gives you an opportunity to communicate your successes with the wider community.

From the CAANs — Lessons Learned

- Appoint a facilitator or a facilitation team with responsibility for specific programs. Facilitators should ideally be experienced in working with the target audience (youth, and particularly youth at risk), and able to communicate with young people on their level.
- Establish sub-groups to take on particular tasks or projects. Allow people to contribute in areas in which they are most enthusiastic and energetic.
- Try to reach a balance between flexible and controlled intake/membership. Having a defined membership in your programs helps establish stability for the youth involved, but you also want to be able to accommodate additional at-risk youth as they are identified. Be prepared for increased interest in your program as a result of word-of-mouth, and consider having a second phase/intake begin shortly after the first.
- Involve youth in spreading the word about activities to other youth who may benefit. Contests with a creative focus (video, poster, song, etc.) and featuring prizes or “bragging rights” are particularly effective ways for youth to take a lead in communication.
- Look for ways to incorporate long-term adult-to-youth mentorship into your program. Youth will benefit from having stable relationships with appropriate adults, particularly if they are transitioning out of a criminal or at-risk lifestyle.
- Monitor each step of the program to see whether it has been properly implemented, and to assess whether the program is succeeding. Monitoring tells you how you are doing, and may guide you to make changes if necessary.
- Keep careful records throughout implementation to help in your evaluation process.

Phase Four: Program Implementation



Richmond's StreetSmarts Program

In September 2009, having received needs assessment input from key stakeholders and confirmation of interest and value from some former youth-gang members, the Richmond CAAN decided to launch StreetSmarts — a group program for youth at-risk for becoming involved with gangs.

The objective of StreetSmarts was to provide at-risk youth with a positive alternative to gang involvement by empowering them to pursue constructive personal goals and developing their leadership capacities. The program consisted of a series of three-hour meetings, held twice a week over a 12-15 week period. The meeting events and discussions dealt with matters such as

- identity
- personal choices, and the associated risks and rewards
- personal and work-related resources & services
- developing positive social contacts
- positive social & recreational activities.



The program also provided individual case planning and conferencing for group members.

Since its inception, the StreetSmarts Program has become an established, important part of Richmond's effort to prevent youth from being drawn into gang life. Offering two to three "workshops" per year, with 15 to 25 participants each, the program was further expanded in the summer of 2012 through the addition of a summer session. Today, the StreetSmarts Program is respected in all quarters, and especially among the youth who have participated and benefited. Much of this is due to the success of the implementation effort, which incorporated the following key features:

- ***a skilled facilitation team, in touch with the outlook of the target population***

An important contributor to the program's success is the skill and suitability of the StreetSmarts two-member facilitation team, which consists of a youth facilitator/outreach worker as well as the adult CAAN Coordinator. As a former gang member, in touch with the street and the world inhabited by at-risk youth, the youth facilitator is particularly effective at engaging and connecting with program participants, breaking quickly through barriers and opening doors:

- he does media-enhanced school and community presentations about his own experience (getting out of gang life and turning his life around) and the value of StreetSmarts
- he speaks to gang-vulnerable youth in a "language" that they can relate to
- he approaches at-risk youth one on one, recruiting those in particular need of support to participate in the program
- he sets an example of someone who has found positive alternatives to gang life
- having shared some of their experiences and struggles, he teaches at-risk youth to work collaboratively with others who have NOT been through the same things.

- ***a flexible, yet controlled intake processes & closed group membership***

Recognizing the importance of being able to identify high-risk youth and draw them into the program, the StreetSmarts conveners consider input from a wide variety of sources when deciding whom to include in their upcoming sessions:

- referrals from teachers (Richmond School District) and social workers (Ministry of Children and Family Development)
- referrals from within the justice system (e.g., probation officers)
- referrals from past participants
- recruitment by the youth facilitator (whose personal history and social networks put him in frequent touch with members of the target population)
- self-referrals by youth who know of StreetSmarts “through the grapevine” or who are seeking a chance to participate in a second workshop, having derived clear personal benefit from their first.

Actual inclusion in a workshop is decided on the basis of an in-depth interview, designed to establish potential for benefit as well as to clarify expectations associated with involvement. Prospective participants make commitments regarding attendance and confidentiality and agree to closed meetings in which participation is restricted to those who are enrolled, with no casual “drop-ins” allowed. This important feature allows group members to build trust over successive sessions and become willing to discuss subjects that may be personal or difficult. Indeed, post-session feedback from youth reveals that this is a feature many of them particularly like and appreciate.

- ***a clear, simple delivery structure backed by supportive CAAN stakeholders***

Although backed by a coalition of CAAN stakeholders, StreetSmarts is largely delivered by a single agency, Richmond’s Touchstone Family Association. Providing in-kind support in the form of meeting space within its facility, Touchstone works closely with the two part-time facilitators hired by the CAAN to lead the workshops. In fact, the adult facilitator, who serves as the CAAN coordinator, is also a member of Touchstone’s staff.

To avoid competing agendas that might emerge if multiple service-delivery agencies were involved, the CAAN oversight network includes mostly government-affiliated agencies (MCFD, the School Board, RCMP, etc.) — with Richmond Addiction Services being a notable exception. All members of the CAAN are invested in the successful implementation of StreetSmarts and support it whenever possible. Specifically, leaders and representatives of CAAN stakeholder organizations have on several occasions been instrumental in helping StreetSmarts secure ongoing funding in a changing and challenging funding environment.

- ***opportunities for ongoing mentorship***

While the StreetSmarts weekly meetings play an important role in establishing credibility, trust, respect, and empathy among participants, ongoing mentorship is critical to keeping them engaged and supported in their move away from gang life. Positive relationships are key to their belief in a personal future away from crime.

Where appropriate, opportunities for interaction with adult mentors are provided — caring individuals who are able to develop meaningful relationships with program participants and connect them to resources and services they may not have discovered on their own. With its consolidation as a successful program, however, StreetSmarts has also been able to develop and offer youth mentorship, whereby youth from last year’s cycle are now mentors for this year’s cycle. This contributes enormously to making program gains self-sustaining and helps ensure the effectiveness of StreetSmarts over the long term.

Activity One: Planning for Implementation

With your Community Action Plan developed, the next task is to build a corresponding plan that will support the successful implementation of the strategies and activities you have identified.

Materials

- Action Plans (from Phase Three)
- Handout: Implementation Template

Time: 2-3 hours

Activity Tasks

In large group, identify short-term activities from your Action Plan that the group wants to launch and that require an implementation plan.

Discuss the desired results (outputs and outcomes) of these activities and record them on the Implementation Template handout.

Determine what specific actions need to be taken to launch the activity.

Determine a timeline for implementation.

Estimate the cost of the activity, if any, and determine who will be responsible for funding the activity.

Finalize an Implementation Plan for each action item and assign responsibility for supporting/monitoring the launch of each activity. The Implementation Plan handout can be used as guide for this, although an electronic template may prove more useful.

TOP TIP

Establish sub-groups to take on particular tasks or projects. Allow people to contribute to the actions in areas in which they are most enthusiastic and energetic.



Building Community: A Toolkit for Youth and Adults

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development/Tides Center Building

www.theinnovationcenter.org/files/BuildingCommunity_ToolKit.pdf

Building Community describes a process by which youth and adults in communities can explore the strengths and gifts of people, place, past, present, and future. Finding out about these gifts enables community members to both start and build on work to create positive community change.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Newton Knights Surrey CAAN

www.bc.rcmp.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodeld=73&languageId=1&contentId=2091

The Newton Knights Program runs out of Tamanawis High School and offers pro-social activities to local Surrey youth, such as recreation and sports opportunities, in a neighbourhood known for youth gang violence, vandalism, and criminal activity.

The Surrey CAAN uses a Universal Assessment Tool to identify youth involved or at-risk of involvement in gangs. School district staff has been training to effectively utilize this tool.

Phase Four: Program Implementation

Activity Two: Checking In

This activity should be conducted after implementation has begun and programs/projects are underway.

Materials

- white board/chalkboard/flip chart/smartboard

Activity Tasks

As a group discuss

- How the group is feeling progress so far?
- Is there anything that's missing?
- Have unforeseen additional needs arisen?
- Do the plans need to be adjusted in any way?
- How can we keep stakeholders and community members informed of our plans and progress?

TOP TIP

Monitoring each step of the program to see whether it has been properly implemented can reveal why a program succeeds or fails. Earlier in the planning process, you established goals and set objectives. These objectives are targets that you should meet as you carry out the program. Monitoring tells you how you are doing, and may guide you to make changes during implementation if necessary.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Youthemes Abbotsford CAAN

www.abbotsfordcommunityservices.com/index.cfm?method=pages.showPage&pageID=7d8581fb-06b6-9450-3f24-3cc4cfb3792f

The Youthemes program is a proactive approach to gang prevention that connects youth to support services such as job training, mentoring, recreational programming, and educational opportunities.

Activity Three: Celebrating Your Achievements

Getting this far has likely been a time-consuming and challenging journey for your working group, so it's important to take time to celebrate what you have accomplished.

Materials

- white board/chalkboard/flip chart/smartboard

Activity Tasks

Discuss ways you will celebrate and communicate your projects — both as a working group and with the wider community.

Get each member to contribute what they consider to be a positive experience from the process up until this point.

Discuss organizing an opening celebration to a program. For example: pizza party, movie night, barbeque, flashmob, dance, creating a video and posting it online, live music, radio/TV interviews. Discuss:

- Consider your youth population, what type of opening celebration would be best suited to them?
- What steps do you need to take to implement this opening celebration?
- How can each member of the group contribute to this celebration?
- What will the expenses be?
- When will this celebration happen?

Refer to “Communication Strategies” in the Background and Support section of this toolkit for ideas about getting out your message.

TOP TIP

Have partners and stakeholders (e.g., program administrators, parents, youth) draft letters of support for the program in order to ensure you have adequate evidence of success. This documentation will become valuable at the evaluation stage, and may also support funding initiatives.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

The Eastside Aboriginal Space for Youth (E.A.S.Y.)

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/ythgng/cpa12-vpdwgp-eng.aspx

This project was delivered by the Vancouver Police Department and the Circle of Eagles Lodge Society, with support from other government and urban Aboriginal organizations in Vancouver. The project was designed to prevent high risk, Aboriginal youth in Vancouver from joining gangs. The program provided youth with resources and alternatives to gang involvement to reduce the risk factors associated with gang activity and increase the protective factors linked to positive and healthy development. The project provided a late night resource centre, outreach, recreational activities and community engagement forums.

Handout: Implementation Template

Actions to be Taken	Who Is Responsible	By When	Estimated Cost

Phase Five Evaluation and Sustainability

WHAT

Evaluation is a process that determines whether your project's activities are meeting your project's goals and objectives in the manner expected. The evaluation results can help you revamp your project or plan a new one — sustaining your plan for the future.

The **Objectives** for the evaluation and sustainability phase are to

- develop clear goals for evaluation
- determine a method for evaluation
- determine evidence required for evaluation
- develop an evaluation plan to gather information to
 - determine the success of the program
 - build for the future
- reflect on the community plan and set goals for sustainability.

WHY

Evaluation processes feed sustainability, allowing you to continue your programs with maximum efficiency and effectiveness. A defined evaluation process may also help you secure support for additional future program implementation.

WHEN

A formal evaluation should take place at the end of your planning process, although ongoing formative assessment can and should take place throughout. Indeed, successful evaluation depends on gathering timely data at key stages of the process.

WHO

Depending on the nature of your evaluation processes, evaluation can be undertaken by your entire working group, your steering committee, or an outside contracted evaluator. Determining who conducts the evaluation will be a part of this phase of the plan.

HOW

The steps in the evaluation & sustainability phase include

- Conducting an Evaluation
- Looking Back and Moving Forward

Steps to Evaluation and Sustainability

► *Conducting an Evaluation*

Evaluation is a process that determines whether a project's activities are meeting the project's goals and objectives in the manner expected. The evaluation results can help you revamp your project or plan a new one. A defined evaluation process may also be a requirement to ensure continued funding and resources, or may help you secure funding for additional program implementation.

Evaluating your program and your process serves many purposes. Evaluation processes feed **sustainability**, allowing you to continue your programs with maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Without an effective, evidence-based evaluation, a program's sustainability is threatened because needs/gaps go unidentified, youth's voices go unheard, and potential growth areas become missed opportunities.

The basic steps in project evaluation are:

- identify the goals and objectives
- describe the project activities
- identify what you want to know —the results or outcomes you want to assess
- identify data sources and data collection tools that will give you actual results and outcomes
- collect, organize and analyze the data and conclusions
- report the results and identify next steps.

You may or may not need the services of an expert outsider to help you conduct your evaluation. This will depend on the purpose of your evaluation, the complexity of your program, and the skills and time of the people in your working group.

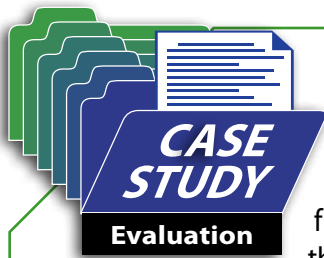
► *Looking Back and Moving Forward*

Although evidence-based evaluation is an important task in any community development project, personal reflection is equally important for sustainability. It's an opportunity for everyone involved in the process to think about the project and their role in it, and how future work should proceed.

While much of a reflection or process evaluation exercise will be personal and affective in nature, it should include a reference to the group's vision and goals (as identified earlier in the plan).

From the CAANs — Lessons Learned

- Start planning your evaluation process **before** implementation begins. “Before and after” data is essential for evaluating success.
- When developing evaluation criteria, consider both
 - visible and measurable indicators such as criminal activity, incarceration rates, and school achievement
 - less visible but equally valuable considerations such as youth’s perceptions of their own skills, capacities, and identity.
- Consider using an expert outsider to conduct your evaluation. This decision will depend on the purpose of your evaluation, the complexity of your program, and the skills and time of the people in your working group. Your local college/university may be able to help in identifying a suitable evaluator.
- When getting evaluation feedback from youth, be sure to select mechanisms appropriate for that audience — focus groups and online forms are more likely to be successful with young people than pen-and-paper forms.
- Share your experiences. Use social media, blogs, and other strategies to connect with other communities, to talk about your successes and challenges, and to learn from each other’s experiences.
- Be prepared to adapt to changing circumstances. Expect factors such as funding models, organizational structures, key players, and “on-the-ground” priorities to evolve over time.
- Remember that change takes time, and try not be discouraged if you don’t see immediate, tangible results. The process of working toward change is a success in itself, and should be celebrated.



Vancouver's E.A.S.Y. Project

When Vancouver's Eastside Aboriginal Space for Youth (E.A.S.Y.) project was launched in 2010 as a way to help prevent high-risk Aboriginal youth from drifting into gang involvement, it represented a fresh attempt to "do things right" and make a measurable, sustainable difference in the face of a difficult situation. An earlier attempt by the Vancouver Police Department and various downtown eastside organizations involved in working with at-risk urban Aboriginal youth to address the gang issue had already been unsuccessful for a variety of reasons, including

- too much rushing of the process and insufficient time and attention devoted to building trust and positive relationships between the two communities involved (the policing community and the urban Aboriginal community)
- a lack of pre-existing systems for designating representative spokespeople and mandating decision-makers within the urban Aboriginal community
- widely differing protocols and working styles within the two communities (e.g., legally mandated security protocols, such as criminal record checks, on the police side vs. protocols regarding the sharing of knowledge and the expression of respect on the Aboriginal side)
- difficulties establishing and maintaining clear and consistent program and management structures
- a lack of cultural competence and sensitivity to Aboriginal traditions and cultural practices on the part of some key players within the program.

With the benefit of a fresh start and an important new CAAN partner (the Circle of Eagles Lodge Society, an organization with over 45 years of experience working within the urban Aboriginal community), the E.A.S.Y. project proponents initiated a new evaluation process by finding an evaluator who

- was herself Aboriginal and someone the urban Aboriginal youth could relate to, in that she had experienced similar life paths and had a genuine understanding of their cultural backgrounds
- had extensive experience working with different types of evaluation and more specifically working with different elements of the Aboriginal population (reserve, urban, youth, FAS, high risk, etc.)
- was local and had prior experience working with the people and organizations who would be participating in — and affected by — the E.A.S.Y. Project

From the start, the new evaluator (and evaluation team) approached the process differently, attending already scheduled events within the community, conducting focus groups and interviews, and building relationships with both project staff and youth participants before expecting them to answer difficult or revealing questions about their lives. During this phase, staff and youth were able to ask questions about the evaluation and really understand its significance as well as the importance of their input. The evaluator's objectives were to ensure

that the evaluation process felt transparent to all, to establish trust, and to engage participants by demonstrating that they could have input into the conduct of the evaluation as well as into the body of information gathered.

Once a positive relationship had been established, and participants were confident that their opinions about the process were valued and that the information they shared would be handled in a sensitive, confidential manner, the evaluator was able to collect baseline data on youth participants' behaviour, attitudes, and awareness through carefully worded risk assessment tools. These included a "Developmental Assets Profile," which focused on participants' sense of their own skills, capacities, and/or situations with respect to matters such as

- support
- boundaries and expectations
- constructive use of time
- positive values
- positive identity.

This strength-oriented, asset-building focus not only yields valuable information that can be used to evaluate the project, but helps participants recognize that their lives are not a total failure and that they have positives they can build on. At the same time, the data surveys included questions that would indicate participants' levels of risk for gang involvement, focusing on matters such as

- interactions with the police, arrests and/or incarceration
- having friends who were gang or crew members
- having a family member who had been in a gang
- having been asked to be part of a gang
- having actually belonged to a gang
- having engaged in criminal activity (over the past six months)
- having used drugs and/or alcohol (including patterns of consumption — what, when, how often)
- reasons for wanting to consider joining a gang.

When combined with secondary data available from police, corrections, and school records, as well as with surveys of police perceptions regarding changes in levels of gang-related activity involving Aboriginal youth, these "before & after" surveys (which can be re-administered as long as the project remains active) have already begun to provide a persuasive indication that the E.A.S.Y. Project is proving successful in reducing youth gang involvement among urban Aboriginal youth. Certainly, there is broad consensus among stakeholders that the project has made a significant contribution to building improved relationships between the VPD and these at-risk youth.





Sustaining Success in Edmonton: CSGV and the Pohna Project

In early 2011, after almost 8 years in operation, Edmonton's CSGV (Community Solution to Gang Violence) — a local initiative that had successfully brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to find solutions to an evolving gang problem in the city — decided to wind down its coordinating role and cease operating as a distinct initiative.

This decision was not taken because of difficulties or conflicts among CSGV stakeholders. Indeed, a solid foundation of stakeholder cooperation had been established at the outset in 2003, when visionary leaders from the Native Counselling Services of Alberta and the Edmonton Police Service looked beyond their individual mandates and took steps to bring their two organizations together along with other key partners to find ways to address the issue of gang violence. And with the help of those partners (including Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools, Youth and Children's Services, Edmonton Young Offenders Centre, Edmonton Attendance Centre, Crown Prosecutors Office, Youth Criminal Defense Office, and Youth Probation), the CSGV team had built carefully and steadily on their initial foundation by articulating consensus principles to guide how the stakeholders would work together, concentrating on relationships and process (for specifics, see the statement of principles provided in the handout in Phase One: Community Mobilization).

Nor was the decision to disband the CSGV taken because the problem of youth gang violence in Edmonton had been permanently solved. The issues that give rise to youth gang involvement, particularly among young people within the city's Aboriginal population, are extremely deep-rooted. A long history of colonial oppression and failed attempts at assimilation (evidenced in residential schooling, which severed intergenerational links within First Nations communities and which robbed entire generations of parenting skills and family support) have created feelings of alienation and dislocation that still make gang membership attractive to some young people. And while sustained gang suppression measures undertaken by Alberta's law enforcement and justice systems have helped keep in check adult organized crime groups, youth gangs continue to emerge. These newer youth gangs, which offer a sense of belonging and identity, seem focused primarily on building a reputation and creating a place within the street gang culture. Unlike traditional organized crime groups where violence is a by-product of the "business" of criminal activity, violence is often the primary product or currency in these gangs. Physical assaults are a rite of passage for those seeking to join, trying to quit, or facing expulsion. And members engage in acts of swarming, intimidation, and assault just to show they are worthy of belonging.

Shutting down the CSGV was not a reflection on the stakeholders' level of success in addressing the youth gang problem, either. Not only was the community that coalesced around CSGV fully mobilized and engaged with the issue, but partner organizations created and implemented a number of projects directed toward youth at risk for criminal activity and gang involvement. One project in particular, Pohna: Keepers of the Fire, stands out, both for its success in helping at-risk youth move away from the gang lifestyle, and for its role in engaging CSGV stakeholder representatives directly in the implementation of programming.

In fact, the decision to wind down CSGV reflects an increased interest on the part of both the public and governments in Alberta in developing a more comprehensive approach to countering the spread of gangs. When CSGV started its work in 2003, the issue of youth gangs was not high on the community's agenda. However, since then the issue was taken up by other groups and initiatives. Most notably, in 2008 the City of Edmonton initiated a Task Force on Community Safety that resulted in the establishment of REACH, a coordinated long-term community safety strategy for Edmonton. Then in November 2010, the Alberta Gang Reduction Strategy was announced with a province-wide mandate to promote many of the elements advocated by CSGV. Given these developments CSGV members decided that it did not make sense for CSGV to operate as a parallel entity and that it was better to fold its work into that of REACH and the Alberta Gang Reduction Strategy.

The decision to wind down the CSGV, therefore, reflected a willingness on the part of stakeholders to abandon a redundant structure in the interests of sustaining the principles, the approach, and many of the projects that the network had initiated. After careful consideration, stakeholders determined that both REACH and the Alberta Gang Reduction Strategy were better positioned than CSGV had been to access resources for programs and develop policy that would advance the work they had begun. And their flagship initiative, the Pohna Project, is one of several that continue to serve and evolve with the participation and support of many of the individuals who built CSGV. By continually adjusting the range of services provided to address the needs and issues of an evolving client base, the Pohna team keep their efforts relevant, and thus worth sustaining. And members of CSGV likewise continue to participate in the work of REACH and the Alberta Gang Reduction Strategy.

On one level CSGV has wound down but on another level it has renewed and reinvented itself. Its work continues, albeit in a different way.



Activity: Selecting Your Evaluation Methodologies

Forming an evaluation method and facilitating the evaluation procedure are critical components at this stage of the process. This activity contains an abundance of information that may take multiple sessions to conceptualize, plan, and implement.

Materials

- computer, projector
- Handout: Program Evaluation
- Case Study: Evaluation

Activity Tasks

Share the following definition: “To sustain means to maintain, to supply with nourishment, to support the vitality of, to endure or withstand.”

Discuss: with this definition in mind, what does it mean to sustain a community’s efforts to support its youth population?

Discuss the following questions as a group:

- What information do we need to be able to evaluate whether or not we are reaching our goals?
- What key stakeholders do we need to contact to gather that information?
- What methods can we use to collect that information?
- How will we analyze and process the information we gather?
- How will we communicate the results, and to whom?

Distribute the Evaluation case study, which outlines how the Vancouver’s Eastside Aboriginal Space for Youth (E.A.S.Y.) project chose to address the issue of evaluation.

With this information in mind, discuss:

- What method(s) are most suited to evaluate our program?
- Can we accomplish the evaluation ourselves, or do we need to hire someone to do this for us?

Determining the exact nature of the evaluation will likely be the responsibility of the steering committee; alternately, you may choose to assign this task to a sub-committee.

TOP TIP

Including youth in the evaluation process is critical. Select feedback mechanisms that are more youth-friendly — focus groups and online forms are more likely to be successful with youth than pen-and-paper forms.

TOP TIP

Learn from your mistakes: they can be just as useful as your successes.

Activity: Looking Back and Moving Forward

Although evidence-based evaluation is an important task in any community development project, personal reflection is equally important for sustainability. This final activity provides an opportunity for everyone involved in the process to think about the project and their role in it, and how future work should proceed.

Materials:

- computer, projector
- community statement of purpose (from Phase One)
- Handout: Moving Forward
- Evaluation results, if available

Time: 1-2 hours

Activity Tasks

Display or distribute the community statement of purpose established in phase one. Label one side of the room with the heading “We were successful in achieving our vision” and the other side with the heading “We were not successful in achieving our vision.” Ask participants to place themselves on one side of the room or the other, or somewhere in between, depending on which statement the most agree with. Have them discuss their reasons with the others closest to them on the continuum.

Distribute the handout, Moving Forward. Ask participants to take a few minutes to reflect on the questions and answer them as honestly as possible. Advise them that this is a personal reflection and they will not be required to share their responses if they do not wish to do so.

As an alternate methodology, divide participants into small groups to discuss the reflection questions.

Bring the group back to discuss any responses they feel comfortable sharing. Debrief with the following questions:

- What efforts do we try to sustain, and what do we let fade away?
- If one person or a small group is doing most of the sustaining, is our work really sustainable?
- How can we both maintain the work, and continue to grow and change?

TOP TIP

Share your experiences. Use Facebook, blogs, and other strategies to connect with other communities, to talk about your successes and challenges, and to learn from each other's experiences.

Phase Five: Evaluation and Sustainability

If funding is a major issue for sustainability, refer to the “Identifying Funding Sources” activity in Phase Three. Discuss:

- Are there any more potential funding sources that haven’t been accessed yet?
- How can we use the successes of our work so far to promote the program and gain additional funding?

If available, share the results of the formal evaluation process.

If this is your last meeting, take time to thank all the working group members for their time and effort. Remind participants that change takes time, and they should not be discouraged if they don’t see immediate, tangible results. The process of working toward change is a success in itself, and should be celebrated.



Evaluating Crime Prevention through Social Development Project Handbook

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/_fl/Evaluation_handbook-E.pdf

This guide provides a number of tools and metrics that can be useful in evaluating your program.

Handout: Program Evaluation

Evaluation is a process that determines whether a project's activities are meeting the project's goals and objectives in the manner expected. The evaluation results can help you revamp your project or plan a new one. A defined evaluation process may also be a requirement to ensure continued funding and resources, or may help you secure funding for additional program implementation.

Evaluating your program and your process serves many purposes. Evaluation processes feed **sustainability**, allowing you to continue your programs with maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Without an effective, evidence-based evaluation, a program's sustainability is threatened because needs/gaps go unidentified, youth's voices go unheard, and potential growth areas become missed opportunities.

The basic steps of project evaluation are:

- identify the goals and objectives
- describe the project activities
- identify what you want to know—anticipated results or outcomes
- identify data sources and data collection tools that will give you actual results and outcomes
- collect, organize and analyze the data and conclusions
- report the results and identify next steps.

Your evaluation may or may not require the services of an expert outsider. While expert help is sometimes needed, it's not always required. You may consider using an outside evaluator if

- complex statistics are needed to analyze the results of your evaluation
- you plan to use a wide variety of information-gathering methods, requiring detailed comparison and analysis
- you are unsure what information is needed to answer your evaluation questions
- you want an objective viewpoint
- your evaluation involves experimental and comparison groups, requiring different levels of statistical comparison.
- your existing personnel do not possess the required time or experience to conduct a complex evaluation.

Reporting the results of your evaluation is an important final step. For key partners and funders, it ensures accountability. At a practical level, the evaluation may lead to additional funding for future projects. Distribution of the evaluation report also contributes to the evidence base and assists other communities in their future planning and in identifying opportunities for improvement. Your local college or university may be able to assist with designing and carrying out an evaluation.

Phase Five: Evaluation and Sustainability

To help determine the most effective means of evaluation, consider the following:

- What is your main goal for evaluation? (e.g., working toward next steps/sustainability, administrative requirement for funding)
- Who is your target audience for this evaluation? (e.g., funders, parents, youth, schools)
- What questions are necessary to ask in order to get the information necessary for your target audience?
- How can you ask questions in a way that is non-leading and will yield objective, rich answers?
- Is it necessary to consider your program's effectiveness over time? If so, you may want to consider a "stage model" evaluation — asking questions at different intervals during the program so as to gather information on progress/challenges over the course of the program as well as after program completion (if program has terminated)
- Have you considered culturally competent evaluation to ensure cultural issues that may be discussed by participants can be understood and heard in a safe and trustworthy manner?
- How will you ensure evaluation participants will feel safe giving honest feedback? Will you protect confidentiality (and how)?
- Are there any other ethical considerations to take into account?

Evaluation Methodologies

When considering evaluative procedures, there are many formats that can produce rich, informative responses.

The following chart gives an at-a-glance comparison of a variety of evaluation methodologies.

Phase Five: Evaluation and Sustainability

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Questionnaires or surveys (pen and paper or online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good for collecting a lot of information from a lot of people • easy to administer and analyze • feeling of anonymity may produce more honest responses than interviews • can be conducted online or remotely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • potential for people to misunderstand questions • not good for collecting stories or careful feedback • literacy may be a barrier
Interviews (in person, phone, or other)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allows for in-depth exploration of a topic • efficient way to get a range of information • allows for immediate clarification and follow-up questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be hard to analyze responses • sometimes difficult to schedule • interviewer may influence responses • requires skill to facilitate
Documentation Review (finances, memos, reports, meeting minutes, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easy to collect • doesn't take much time on the part of source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hard to get a full picture • information not always complete and hard to compare
Observation (visiting a program or activity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allows for great understanding of how something actually looks and feels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time consuming and hard to compare • observations may not be typical, hard to get people to act as they normally do • may be subjective
Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allows for in-depth exploration of a topic • allows for multiple approaches to data collection (e.g., brainstorming/concept mapping, role plays, kinesthetic response) • efficient way to get a range of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be hard to analyze responses • can be difficult to organize • focus group participants may influence each other's responses • requires skill to facilitate
Community Meetings or forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • useful for getting broad response • builds ownership of project and relationships • allows for multiple approaches to data collection (e.g., brainstorming/concept mapping, role plays, kinesthetic response) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may be difficult to organize and facilitate • participants may influence each other's responses

(For more information on using focus groups, refer to “Guide to Organizing Focus Groups”, created by the province of Quebec as part of their *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities*. www.crpspc.qc.ca/Tdx2_vol10_GuideForumDiscussion_web_eng_2012.pdf)

Questioning

Developing the appropriate questions to ask in your evaluation is integral to gathering the relevant information that will truly speak to the effects of your program. Consider the type of data you are looking to collect: qualitative (rich, experiential, subjective information) or quantitative (objective, statistical, general information). Also consider

- Literacy ability: is your evaluation accessible in different formats for people with lower literacy levels?
- Language obstacles: have you considered user-friendly language, translation services?
- Culturally sensitive information: how will you address responses that may be culturally sensitive or require vulnerability from participants?

Open vs. Closed questions: “Open” questions are questions that cannot be answered with simple “yes” or “no” responses. Although there are benefits to “closed” questions, often they do not give rich qualitative data. Consider the type of data you are looking to collect when formatting your questions. Examples of an open ended question would be: “What was your favourite part of the program?” or “How has your involvement in this program influenced your life?” Examples of a closed question would be: “Did you like the art component of the program?” or “Do you feel the facilitators made efforts to understand issues faced by Aboriginal youth?”

Leading vs. Non-leading questions: “Leading” questions are ones that influence the participant to answer the question in a certain way. “Non-leading” questions do not imply a certain answer. An example of a leading question would be “Tell me about the positive impact this program had on you?” An example of a non-leading question would be “Has the program had any specific impact on you?”

Handout: Looking Back and Moving Forward

What project, program, or feature are you most proud of?

What do you think was the most significant barrier to the success of any given project, program, or feature?

How might that barrier be overcome in the future?

How well do you think youth-at-risk were served by your project or program? Why do you think this?

Are there any projects or features that you think are **not** worth continuing? If so, why?

How do you feel about your personal level of involvement in the project?

Do you think you will be more or less involved in future efforts of this kind?

What is the one piece of advice you would give to someone new coming to this community project?



Defining Youth Gangs in BC


Adolescence presents many challenges. Youth are moving from childhood to adulthood and dealing with many developmental milestones within a relatively short time period. Biological, psychological, and social changes abound and many youth manage to navigate through to adulthood in ways that involve little risk to themselves and others. More vulnerable youth may experience much greater difficulty and risk. Some of these risks include becoming involved in gang-related or criminal activities. Risk factors have been identified that point to youth who may be most vulnerable for seeking belonging with a negative peer group, placing them at greater risk for gang involvement.

Traditional risk factors such as poverty, family and school difficulties, drug use and dealing, involvement in violence, and vandalism are prevalent among youth who become gang involved. Vulnerable youth may also have a tendency to resolve interpersonal challenges through confrontation and physical contact, and may be disengaged from family, school and community activities.

Non-traditional risk factors have become apparent in several British Columbia communities. These risk factors can be observed within populations of relatively affluent, culturally diverse, young men and women. Within these groups, choosing to become involved in a gang is seen as improving status, protection, and providing financial rewards.

In the 2010 report “Summative Evaluation of the Preventing Youth Gang Violence in BC — A Comprehensive and Coordinated Provincial Action Plan,” (BC Ministry of Public Safety) gangs in BC are characterized as either “hybrid” or “traditional” in their makeup.

- **Traditional** gangs are usually
 - in the inner city
 - large
 - ethnically homogenous
 - multi-generational
 - male-dominated with a high degree of loyalty
 - highly territorial and organized with concentrated leadership
 - identity-oriented
 - highly violent.
- **Hybrid** gangs tend to be
 - found in urban or suburban areas where there is a large concentration of youth
 - multi-ethnic
 - single generational
 - less territorial
 - more fluid re: gang affiliation and identity
 - less reliant on rites and rituals
 - extremely violent and dangerous.



Youth gangs in BC often consist of fluid membership, a lack of organization, and multiethnic composition where the youth typically come together for a series of criminal events. Younger gang members who are in the process of being recruited are more likely to commit serious and violent crimes as they are trying to prove themselves to other, often older gang members.

As British Columbia's communities have become increasingly diverse and multi-cultural, it is necessary to consider cultural aspects that may play a role in understanding gang involvement. Any plans or programs that are implemented must reflect careful consideration of the diverse characteristics of the local community.

Gender also plays a role in gang involvement. Males may be the more visible members of gangs but females are also at risk. Many girls are at risk of harm because of their association with known gang members. Methods of dealing with the prevention of gang involvement must also consider the different needs of all genders.

Potential Indicators

Although none of the following factors should be interpreted individually as “causes” of youth gang involvement, these indicators may be used to determine higher risk of potential gang activity.

Family Indicators

- Stressful home life
- Parental non-involvement
- Low parental education level
- Low parental expectations
- Abuse/neglect
- Permissive truancy attitudes
- Gang or criminal behaviour by other family members

Personal Indicators

- Low educational and occupational aspirations
- Low self-esteem
- Behavioural/discipline problems
- Alcohol or drug use
- Poor peer relations
- Negative experiences with police
- Poor internalization skills

Community Indicators

- Lack of community support services
- Lack of community support for schools
- High incidence of criminal activity
- Lack of school/community linkages
- Lack of recreational facilities
- High transient population
- Lack of youth employment opportunities
- Community norms are inattentive to alcohol/drug abuse
- Youth are not seen as assets to the community

School indicators

- Low teacher expectations
- Poor school performance
- Conflict between home/school cultures
- Lack of educational options
- Negative school environment
- Lack of student responsibility
- Lack of effective school attendance and discipline systems

In addition to these indicators, youth from some minority populations are more likely to experience ethnicity as an indicator of potential gang activity. Three primary minority populations are over-represented in youth gangs in BC: East Asian (including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Taiwanese), South Asian (Punjabi, Fijian, Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Fijian) and Aboriginal. Indicators specific to Aboriginal and immigrant youth can include:

- discrimination and social exclusion as part of daily life
- barriers to settling in BC and becoming part of a wider community
- lack of employment or economic opportunities
- lack of a sense of belonging
- gang leaders seen as “role models” or “success stories” within the cultural community.

Communication Strategies

Community awareness and public attention will be a key component of program success.

Be sure to involve youth in creating and publicizing your message. Youth will be more in tune with the most relevant strategies and vehicles for communication.

- Utilize the local print and broadcast media whenever possible: Create regular write-ups in local newspapers, radio, TV. Use media as connecting tools between your working group and the public.
- Have a website and update it with the group's activities. Use the website throughout your development process to communicate your message and gather feedback from the wider community.
- Hold public forums and information sessions. Invite guest speakers to tell their success stories related to gang and crime prevention.
- Use high interest and high impact strategies such as
 - flash mobs
 - contests (e.g., video, song, or poster contests with a gang prevention message)
- Make use of social media and web services and applications to reach new audiences, increase visibility, and build community. Consider social media such as
 - blogs
 - social networking (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)
 - discussion forums
 - wikis
 - online broadcasts and streaming media (e.g., podcasts/vodcasts, video sharing such as YouTube).

For more information, refer to “Working with the Media”

BC Ministry of Justice

www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/publications/docs/safe-community-media-guide.pdf

Maximizing Youth Involvement

One key to success identified by the CAANs was that local youth need to be involved in the process as early and as thoroughly as possible.

Community leaders regularly make decisions, shape policies and take action on issues that directly affect youth. Because young people lack access to official processes such as voting, they have few avenues for influencing decisions and policies. Youth who are disenfranchised or marginalized—including youth in care, Aboriginal youth, ethno-cultural minorities and sexually exploited youth—are even less likely to have opportunities for participation in decisions affecting their lives.

Engaging youth in decision-making processes throughout the process leads to decisions that are more responsive and appropriate to youth's needs and interests. Meaningful youth participation involves recognizing and nurturing the strengths, interests and abilities of youth by providing opportunities for youth to become involved in decisions that affect them, at both individual and systemic levels.

When looking for ways to identify youth to be involved in the planning and implementation processes, consider the following:

- Contact schools, faith-based groups, recreation groups, and other community agencies for suggestions of youth leaders who are committed to community service.
- Contact police, correction services, and Ministry of Children and Family Development for suggestions of individuals who have been involved in gangs in the past and have “come out the other side.”
- Use online media whenever possible to engage working group members and communicate your message. Youth are more likely to respond to social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, blogs) than to more traditional forms of communication.
- Look for opportunities for youth to be involved in ways other than as working group members. Many youth are unwilling to commit long periods of time to a single project or have continually changing schedules; involving youth in short-term projects and one-off activities is often a successful approach. For example, youth can be asked to
 - write Twitter, Facebook, or blog posts
 - organize or facilitate recreation events or publicity events
 - act as guest speakers.

Recognize that youth have valuable ideas and that these ideas need to be shared, nurtured, and implemented.

For additional strategies and resources on involving youth in community change, visit the following web sites:

- YouthScape — www.youthscape.ca/HomePg.html
- Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement — www.engagementcentre.ca/

Facilitation Support

Organizing and facilitating a community-based planning process such as the one outlined in this toolkit will be both rewarding and challenging. Not everyone who undertakes the role of “facilitator” or group leader will necessarily be experienced or comfortable in that role.

The following general facilitation tips are offered to help guide your efforts and to make the experience as comfortable and successful as possible. The tips here are based on the experiences of those who have already undertaken this path.

Facilitating Inclusion

- At each step of the process, be mindful of what your group does to make people feel included. There may be factions or stereotypes between groups, politics between people and organizations, and differing expectations or styles. The challenge is to bridge differences and create an environment in which all people feel included.
- Time meetings so that all team members can be present. This is especially important when you are working with youth and adults — two groups with very different schedules!
- When bringing in new people, make sure that they know why they are there and that they are appreciated by recognizing their effort to participate.
- Ensure that people don’t feel like they are in the minority, whether because of age, geography, or ethnicity. Also ensure that people know that they are welcome to bring others with them to the meetings and activities.
- Use language that everyone understands. This may be the actual language you speak in if it is a multilingual group. Also be careful about using jargon, and take the time to explain what words mean.

Facilitating Open Dialogue

- Encourage questions and make time for feedback.
- Involve youth in all phases of the process. Build recognition of the value of working from principles that recognize youth as agents of change, especially for marginalized or disadvantaged young people.
- Recognize that social change and youth engagement can be abstract concepts. It helps to conduct activities that allow participants to connect these concepts to concrete personal experiences. Guest speakers or video resources that tell personal stories are one way to help make connections.

Facilitating Consensus

- Set a policy to make decisions based on group consensus. When making a decision, ask the group, “Can everyone live with this?” If someone cannot, think about ways to adapt the plan in order for all to feel it is acceptable. Have a fallback option for using a majority vote when you are stuck or a quick decision needs to be made.
- Keep the group focused on shared interests and common goals related to supporting youth in your community.
- Create a shared vision or statement of purpose to build common understanding and help increase involvement.

Facilitating Engagement and Momentum

- Get the word out. Use communication through the media, email, and personal contact to build keep everyone involved in the effort informed, connected, and engaged.
- You are probably working as a volunteer with other volunteers. Anything people offer is a contribution that should be recognized and valued. Recognize what people do at meetings, community gatherings, on radio, in newspapers and newsletters, etc.
- Welcome the involvement of new participants to help build momentum. New people bring energy, ideas, and even other new people with them.
- Follow through on what you say. People often want to see if the “new group” will last and what you can do.

Managing Presentation Anxiety


Does the thought of presenting to a group of people make you feel nervous? Do you get stomach butterflies, cold and clammy hands, a dry mouth and a pounding heart? This is a common experience and there are several effective coping strategies to manage the anxiety.

The week before

Plan and Prepare

- Take enough time to thoroughly prepare. Review and familiarize yourself with the material and presentation.
- Identify material that is essential and must be delivered, versus information that could be excluded if time becomes a factor. This ensures the key information is always delivered. (Refer to the “Objectives” for each phase for help in this.)
- How flexible is your presentation—is there time for discussion, questions, and unplanned interruptions?
- Confirm audio-visual equipment and develop any visual aids you will be using.

Practise

- Practice helps to reduce stress. Practise your presentation in front of a mirror, or with a friend or family member, or record yourself and play it back.
- Re-work material until it flows.
- Develop effective non-verbal communication skills such as pauses and gestures for emphasis.
- If you are not familiar with using PowerPoint, you may want to practise the technical aspects before you start the workshop. For example, to advance from one slide to the next, click the right arrow key  on your computer.
- Time your presentation, but remember that in the real thing, there may be questions and interruptions, so leave time to be flexible.

Be Positive

- Visualize success.
- Talk to yourself about what can go right, not what can go wrong.
- Remind yourself why you're doing this: because you believe in the subject.

The hours before

- Make sure all the PowerPoint presentations and other resources you will need are loaded onto the computer you will be using for the session.
- Arrive **at least** 30 minutes before the presentation to set up the room and equipment.
- Set up the computer, projector, and screen ahead of time to make sure you have the optimum picture size, and so that all participants will be able to see the screen from their seats. Adjust the focus if necessary.
- Relax by breathing deeply, and contracting and relaxing leg and arm muscles.
- Greet participants as they arrive to promote a friendly and welcoming environment.

During the presentation

- Take a slow, deep breath and let it out gradually before beginning and during the presentation. It will appear to be a natural pause.
- If nervousness becomes overwhelming, admit it to your audience. They will empathize and your confidence will return.

Additional Resources

There are a number of excellent resources available addressing the issues of gangs and gang violence. Some resources are more appropriate for background research, while others target their messages directly to specific audiences — community groups, parents, at-risk youth, etc.

Note that the resources listed here represent only a fraction of the wealth of valuable information related to community development, gang and crime prevention, and the other topics and issues addressed in this toolkit.

Many of the resources listed in this section are also linked from GangPrevention.ca.

www.GangPrevention.ca

This web site is your one-stop shop for information regarding gang prevention in British Columbia. On this website you will find links to resources and information regarding gangs in BC, ways to prevent youth gang involvement, how to get help, and a calendar of events. You will also find information about the many gang prevention initiatives that are taking place across the province, including programs and services provided by Community Action and Assessment Networks (CAANs).

Gangs and Crime Prevention — Background Information and Promising Practices

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/ncps-eng.aspx

The website of Public Safety Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) is an excellent source for current resources, descriptions of promising practices, and additional support and information.

In particular, consult the following sections:

- Youth Gangs — www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/ythgng/index-eng.aspx
- Crime Prevention — www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/index-eng.aspx

(For additional background information about youth gangs in BC, see “Defining Youth Gangs in BC” at the beginning of the Background and Support section, as well as the PowerPoint resource included in this kit, Preventing Youth Involvement in Gangs.)

Alberta Gang Reduction Strategy

www.justice.alberta.ca/programs_services/safe/what-doing/Pages/gangs.aspx

This site provides a wealth of information about gang reduction programs in the province of Alberta.

Community Crime Prevention Guide

BC Criminal Justice Reform

www.criminaljusticereform.gov.bc.ca/en/what_you_can_do/crime_prevention_single_page.pdf

This guide provides information and tools for communities in BC to develop strategies that enhance public safety and security through crime prevention and the development of programs that help the groups most at risk of becoming involved in crime.

The Community Solution to Gang Violence: A Collaborative Community Process and Evaluation Framework

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cor/apc/_fl/com-sul-gan-vio-eng.pdf

Drawing on evidence regarding gang prevention, the Community Solution to Gang Violence project in Edmonton helps increase protective factors among youth by:

- building positive relationships and patterns of interaction with mentors and pro-social peers
- creating positive social environments through community, family and service organizations
- promoting social and economic policies that support positive youth development.

Enhancing Frontline Effectiveness to Prevent Youth Gang Violence Learning

Youthcore Program, Victoria

www.youthcoreprogram.ca/download.php?id=3280

Gangs, Girls and Sexual Exploitation in British Columbia: Community Consultation Paper

Community Consultation Project — Abbotsford Youth Commission for the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the National Crime Prevention Centre, Public Safety Canada

www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/publications/docs/gang-prevention-girls-sexual-exploitation.pdf

Gang Prevention for New Immigrant and Refugee Youth in BC

Community Consultation Project — Immigrant Services Society of BC for the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the National Crime Prevention Centre, Public Safety Canada

www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/publications/docs/gang-prevention-immigrant-refugee.pdf

This paper explores why and how immigrant and refugee youth may become involved with youth gangs. Drawing both from contemporary Canadian studies, and consultations with newcomer immigrant and refugee youth and youth workers in Metro Vancouver, this paper outlines the challenges newcomer youth face in their settlement process and advocates for early sustained support to assist youth and their families to adjust to life in Canada.

Justice Education Society — Youth and Gangs

www.justiceeducation.ca/resources/youth-and-gangs

This web site includes gang information factsheets available in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish and Punjabi.

Prevention of Youth Gang Violence: Overview of Strategies and Approaches

Public Safety Canada, 2012

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/ygpf/ygpf-osa-eng.aspx

This resource describes some of the best approaches to prevent youth gangs and serious youth violence used in communities across Canada. Specifically designed to assist organizations interested in submitting proposals under the Youth Gang Prevention Fund, the information in this resource addresses a number of topics related to needs assessment, including information about and promising practices related to

- evidenced-based preventive approaches
- wraparound approaches
- violence reduction intervention
- youth at risk programs.

Promising Practices for Addressing Youth Involvement in Gangs

Mark Totten

www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/publications/docs/totten-report.pdf

This research report provides clear guidelines on evidence-based practices for addressing youth gangs.

Community Planning and Development

Building Community: A Tool Kit for Youth and Adults

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development/Tides Center Building

www.theinnovationcenter.org/files/BuildingCommunity_ToolKit.pdf

Building Community describes a process by which youth and adults in communities can explore the strengths and gifts of people, place, past, present, and future. Finding out about these gifts enables community members to both start and build on work to create positive community change.

Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets

John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, 2003

www.abcdinstitute.org/publications/basicmanual

This guide to what the authors call “asset-based community development” summarizes lessons learned by studying successful community-building initiatives in hundreds of neighborhoods across the United States. It outlines in simple, “neighborhood-friendly” terms what local communities can do to start their own journeys down the path of asset-based development.

Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement

www.engagementcentre.ca

The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement brings together the expertise of youth, youth service providers, academic researchers, and policy makers to identify, build and undertake models of effective practices for engaging youth in meaningful ways. The website features an extensive resource centre and includes information from organizations that successfully engage youth.

Primer on Municipal Crime Prevention

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Primer_on_Municipal_Crime_Prevention_EN.pdf

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities provides practical tools to assist municipalities to plan and undertake crime prevention strategies based on the basic principles of leadership, partnerships, safety diagnosis, action plans, implementation, and evaluation. The resource provides guidance on how to organize a local council, identify local problems, develop an action plan, plan crime prevention programs, and undertake, monitor and evaluate interventions.

Safe Communities Kit

BC Ministry of Justice

www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/publications

The Safe Communities Kit was developed to assist communities and individuals in preventing crime and enhancing safety across British Columbia. The following six publications make up the kit:

- An Overview of Crime Prevention and Community Safety Planning
- Identifying Your Community's Crime Problem: A Guide to Needs Assessment
- Getting Your Crime Prevention Strategies Underway: Project Planning Guide
- Splash and Ripple: Using Outcomes to Design and Guide Community Justice Work
- Safe Communities Be Safe Guide
- Working With the Media

All six publications are available as PDFs from the web site.

Resources for a Youth Audience

Teens Against Gangs videos

www.gangprevention.ca/youth/resources/teens-against-gangs-videos

On video in particular is *Teacher War* (Teen Against Gangs PSA) (also available on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=B96P1Vt6hKA) This video won a gang prevention film competition. It uses satire to show the absurdity of gang behaviour.

Inmate interview

www.psst-bc.ca/gangs/inmate-interview

This short video gives a powerful message from a former gang member, now incarcerated. It succinctly shatters any myths about the glamour of the gang lifestyle.

Warrior Boyz

National Film Board, 2008, 43 minutes

www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/collection/film/?id=55413

To date, more than a hundred young men from the South Asian community have died in gang-related violence in Metro Vancouver. Gangs are a reality of urban life, yet behind the body count and the headlines, a far different battle is being waged. Educators and parents are taking action against gang violence. Director Baljit Sangra's documentary *Warrior Boyz* takes an unflinching look at the root causes of gang violence, and offers real solutions and a hard-fought hope for the future.

A corresponding teaching guide is also available: www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/sg/100541.pdf

Gang Prevention Comics

www.thehealthyaboriginal.net

The Healthy Aboriginal Network has created a number of comic books on health and social issues for youth, including two dealing with gang issues:

In *Path of the Warrior*, Cullen gets rolled out of his gang and is forced to reconnect with his family and community. Team sports and culture become his new support system. (a discussion guide for this comic is available from the First Nations Health Council: www.fnhc.ca/pdf/FNHC_Comic_Book_Guide.pdf)

Droppin' the Flag focusses on the issue of integrating gang youth back into communities. Incarcerated youth were asked about their experiences with their gangs. *Droppin' the Flag* is the product of those discussions. (This comic is available in two versions, a “regular” and “explicit language” version.)

Youthscape

www.youthscape.ca/HomePg.html

YouthScape is an Canada-wide initiative to engage young people in creating long-term change. YouthScape is based on the idea that all young people can make important contributions to their communities that result in more inclusive, adaptable and healthy, diverse, protective, collaborative spaces and places for all members of society.

YouthScape provides an environment for young people to safely participate and contribute to decision making and planning in partnership with adults and key decision makers.

Youth Clinics and Counselling Services — Vancouver Coastal Health

www.vch.ca/your_health/youth/youth_clinics

Vancouver Coastal Health offers free, confidential counselling to youth age 13 to 25. Youth can access counsellors at the Youth Clinics listed below or through their schools.

Mind Your Mind

www.mindyourmind.ca

An award winning site for youth by youth, this is a place where youth can get info, resources and the tools to help them manage stress, crisis, and mental health.

Resources for Parents

40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents

www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18

The Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of healthy development — known as Developmental Assets — that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. Each category of developmental asset includes tips to “take action” — practical activities parents and family members can undertake.

Steering Kids Away from Gangs

www.vsb.bc.ca/steering-kids-away-gangs

This booklet, developed by the Vancouver School District, is available in English, Punjabi, Chinese, Tagalog, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Interactive Resources — Web and Phone

Youth Against Violence Line

1-800-680-4264

www.youthagainstviolenceline.com

From schoolyard bullying to gang violence and organized crime, many people today have witnessed violence or have been victimized themselves. The Youth Against Violence Line provides a safe and confidential way to get support and information about available services or to report an incident of youth violence or crime in BC. YAVL is a toll-free, BC-wide telephone help line, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To learn more, see the Youth Against Violence Line website and YAVL Information Sheet.

Concerned parents, teachers, caregivers, service providers and others are also welcome to call for information and assistance.

VictimLink BC - 1-800-563-0808

VictimLink BC is a toll-free, BC-wide telephone help line, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. VictimLink BC provides information and referral services to all victims of crime, and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence. Please visit the VictimLink BC website for more information.

Crime Stoppers - 1-800-222-8477

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, you can call 1-800-222-8477 to provide anonymous information on crimes in your community. Highly trained civilian and police tip takers receive these calls and are able to investigate and evaluate tips before they are forwarded to police investigators. Crime Stoppers tipsters are guaranteed that they will not have to give their name, be identified or testify in court. Because of this, Crime Stoppers gets valuable information that might not otherwise be provided. Crime Stoppers tipsters could be eligible to receive cash rewards of up to \$2000 upon an arrest and charge on a tip that they have provided. For more information, please see the Crime Stoppers of Metro Vancouver website.

Youth Chat Line

www.youthspace.ca

A newly piloted youth chat online support service provided through NEED Crisis and Information Line based in Victoria. It provides youth with anonymous and confidential support through a discussion forum, email counselling, and the live one on one chat counselling service.

