
Promising Practices for Addressing Youth Involvement in Gangs

*Research Report prepared by
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*In support of the Strategy,
Preventing Youth Gang Violence in BC:
A Comprehensive and Coordinated
Provincial Action Plan*

Disclaimer

This research report was prepared by **Mark Totten, PH.D** in support of the *Preventing Youth Gang Violence in B.C.: A Comprehensive and Coordinated Provincial Action Plan*. The views or opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General of British Columbia.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
1. Socio-demographic Factors and Prevalence of Canadian Youth Gangs.....	3
2. Classification of Canadian Youth Gangs	4
2.1 Hierarchical Structure	5
3. Prevention and Intervention Approaches	6
3.1 What Doesn't Work?	7
3.2 What Works?	8
4. Gender Issues	14
5. Delivering Culturally Competent, Evidence-based Gang Prevention and Intervention Strategies in B.C. Communities	16
5.1 East Asian Gangs (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Mongolian, Hong Kongese)	17
5.2 South Asian Gangs (Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Nepalese, Bhutanese, Iranian, Afghani, Tibetese, Filipino)	18
5.3 Aboriginal Gangs	18
6. Conclusion	21
7.1 General	23
Appendix A: List of Current Youth Gangs Operating out of BC	32
Appendix B: Promising Canadian Gang Prevention and Intervention Initiatives (revised and updated list based upon Mellor et al., 2005).....	35

Introduction

In 2007, the British Columbia Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General's Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division in partnership with the Inter-Ministry Committee on the Prevention of Youth Violence and Crime received funding from Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre to lead the implementation of the *Preventing Youth Gang Violence in B.C.: A Comprehensive and Coordinated Provincial Action Plan*. The initiative consists of a four year strategy that aims to provide support for youth gang prevention initiatives at both the community and provincial levels. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division funded the *Promising Practices for Addressing Youth Involvement in Gangs* research report as part of the four year prevention strategy.

B.C. communities currently engaged in the strategy include Vancouver, Surrey, Abbotsford, Richmond and Kamloops. The Aboriginal Youth/VPD Working Group and the South Asian Community Coalition Against Youth Violence are also engaged in the strategy. The project includes involvement from police, municipalities, school districts, youth-serving agencies, community agencies and local youth. In particular, the Integrated Gang Task Force (IGTF, composed of 60 full-time police officers and thirteen civilian staff), which investigates all gang activity in the Lower Mainland (the southwest corner of British Columbia, encompassing the Greater Vancouver urban area, as well as coastal and valley rural areas, with 60% of the B.C. population), is a key partner.

This research report provides clear guidelines on evidence-based practices. The focus of this report is on young people aged 12 – 20 years. Although some B.C. gangs involve only adults (such as the Hell's Angels), many include both adults and youth, and some are composed only of youth. For those gangs wherein both adults and youth are involved, the adults typically are in control and give direction to the younger members. This report therefore examines those gangs in which membership includes both youth and adults, and those gangs which are composed only of young people.

1. Socio-demographic Factors and Prevalence of Canadian Youth Gangs

In 2002, the results of the Canadian Police Survey on Youth Gangs estimated the number of youth gangs in Canada at 434 with a total membership of 7,071. Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia had the highest percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs. No youth gang activity was reported in the northern territories or the Maritimes, with the exception of Nova Scotia. Surrey and Vancouver reported the earliest onset of youth gang activity in the country (1975 and 1979 respectively). According to the Astwood Corporation, in 2002 there were 1,027 youth gang members in B.C., or 0.26 members per 1000 population.

The largest concentration of gang members (all ages) is in Saskatchewan, followed by Ontario (CISS, 2005). On a per capita basis, Saskatchewan has 1.34 members per 1,000 population, or approximately 1,315 (CPS, 2002). It is estimated that there are between 800 – 1000 active First Nations gang members in the Prairie Provinces (CSC, 2001).

In Canada, almost all young gang members are male; almost half are 17 years old or younger (CISC, 2004; Edmonton Police Service, 2005; Gordon and Foley, 1998). Most gang members are African Canadian/Black (25%), followed by Aboriginal (22%) and 18% are Caucasian/White (Totten, 2003; Gordon, 2000; CSC, 2004). Over one-third of gangs in Canada are composed of two or more ethno-racial groups (hybrid gangs). Street gangs in Saskatchewan appear to be the most homogeneous (Aboriginal). Nationally, 40% of Canadian police forces believe that the return of adult or youth gang member inmates to the community has a negative influence on street gangs on the outside, particularly those young males on the periphery and those who are in the process of being tested out for membership. Youth gang member collaboration with established criminal organizations (such as the Hell's Angels, Big Circle Boys, and Indian Posse) is highest regarding chemical trafficking, intimidation/extortion, kidnappings, sophisticated auto theft rings, and earning large amounts of money through whatever means possible (CPS, 2003). In the U.S.A., no more than 1 percent of youth aged 10-17 years are gang members (Snyder and Sickmund, 2006) and the average age when adolescents start associating with street gang members is 13 years old. (NIJ, 1998). Please see *Appendix A* for a list of youth gangs operating out of B.C.

2. Classification of Canadian Youth Gangs

The multidimensional frameworks developed by Mellor, MacRae, Pauls and Hornick (2005) and Gordon (2000) highlight the different types of Canadian gangs involving young adults. When these two models are integrated, gangs can be defined as: visible, hardcore groups that come together for profit-driven criminal activity and severe violence. They identify themselves through the adoption of a name, common brands/colours of clothing, and tattoos to demonstrate gang membership to rival gangs. Street gangs are not part of larger criminal organizations and often have a geographic 'turf' (often specific social housing projects and/or areas they claim to be their own for drug distribution) that they protect from rival gangs. Youth and adults carry out planned and profitable crimes and gratuitous violence against rival gangs. Ethnic and racial composition of gangs is an important defining feature.

In British Columbia, ethnic and racial minorities dominate membership, although there has been an evolution from ethnically homogeneous to more multi-ethnic gangs recently. In particular, the South Asian street gangs evident in the 1990s have evolved into ethnically diverse gangs. Current examples of multi-ethnic (or hybrid) gangs in the Lower Mainland include the *Independent Soldiers* and the *United Nations*. These street gangs tend to be single-generational, less territorial and do not emphasize traditional gang rights and rituals. On the other hand, ethnically homogeneous gangs tend to be intergenerational, highly structured and territorial, use identifiable means of communication, and rely on violent entry and exit rituals to protect the gang from outsiders. Current examples include the Chinese *Big Circle Boys*, the Vietnamese *Viet Ching*, the Aboriginal *Redd Alert* and *Indian Posse*, and the Latino *Mara Salvatrucha 13*. Many of these gangs operate independently in small cells. The Hell's Angels motorcycle gang, which is almost exclusively Caucasian, poses a significant threat in B.C. due to its size and sophisticated criminal business operations. It is very rare for young people to be involved in this sophisticated organization.

It is important to understand the historical evolution of Canadian gangs with ties to USA gangs. During the 1980's in Chicago, many hard core gang members were sent to prison. With so many incarcerated gang members, gangs began separating into alliances to facilitate easy identification. The two alliance names that emerged were the *People Nation* and *Folk Nation*. All gangs that were originally aligned with the Black P-Stone Nation aligned with People Nation. Those that were originally aligned with the Black Gangster Disciple Nation aligned with the Folk Nation. Many current Canadian gangs identify with one of the two Chicago alliances. People Nation sets include the following gangs: Bloods, Black P-Stone, Latin Kings, Vicelords, Spanish Lords, El Rukns, Bishops, Latin Counts, and the Kents. Folk Nation sets include gangs such as: Crips, Black Gangster/Gangster Disciples, La Raza, Cobras, Latin/Maniac Latin Disciples, Spanish Gangsters, Two Sixers, and the Eagles. People gangs use left identifiers (such as hats tipped to the left, left pant pocket out, left pant leg rolled up; Folk gangs use right identifiers (same identifiers noted above, except with a right

orientation). Some Canadian youth copy the left or right identifiers of the two alliances without understanding the origins of these patterns of behaviour.

2.1 Hierarchical Structure

The classification of British Columbian gang typology and roles of young people within gangs can be done using the multidimensional frameworks developed by Mellor, MacRae, Pauls and Hornick (2005) and Gordon (2000). An integrated Canadian model allows for a general typology that can be applied and adapted to identify specific types of gangs in B.C. Youth can be categorized on a continuum of gang involvement into one of the following groups: spontaneous criminal activity group; purposive criminal group; street gang; or criminal business organization. Then, youth can be classified into one of the following roles: wannabees/posers (these individuals belong to spontaneous criminal activity groups or purposive criminal groups); recruits (into street gangs); associates; or leaders of street gangs. Adults are much more likely to belong to higher-level criminal organizations with hierarchical structures, whereas youth are mainly engaged in loosely organized groups which have cellular structures and fluid membership.

Many B.C. gangs have a common structure which is very similar to that identified in the U.S.A. (Block and Block, 2001), Europe (Klein, 2002) and other countries (Grennan et al., 2000). The degree of organization in a gang is defined by: the structure and hierarchical nature of the gang; the gang's connection to larger, more serious organized crime groups; the sophistication and permanence of the gang; the existence of a specific code of conduct or set of formal rules; initiation practices; and the level of integration, cohesion, and solidarity between the gang's members (Mellor et. al., 2005). Gang-related communication rituals and public display of gang-like attributes are common, including tattoos (Totten, 2000, 2001; Gordon, 2000).

The leadership structure in many B.C. gangs which have *both* youth and adult members is made up of the original founder and core members who started the gang. Membership commitment can be measured in a hierarchical ranking system within the gang. Often, there is not one person who directs other members in street gangs, although older members have more influence compared to young members (CISC, 2004; Mellor et. al., 2005). *Hard-Core* members are males who actively promote and participate in serious criminal activity and gratuitous violence against rival street gangs. These males are generally in their late twenties – early thirties. Hard core gang members decide which criminal activities the gang will participate in and are considered to be faithful in their loyalty to the gang. These leaders are also responsible for settling internal conflicts within the gang (Hughes and Short, 2005). These conflicts typically arise from members having friendships with rival gang members, those who engage in sexual relations with girlfriends of fellow gang members without their expressed consent, or those who steal money from criminal profits or chemicals such as crack cocaine, crystal methamphetamine, and ecstasy. Consequences range from severe beatings to death.

Active Members usually fall within this hierarchical level (sometimes they are classified by gangs as 'recruits' or 'general' members). These thirty to forty year-old members usually have been with the gang since it started, and are experienced, proven members. Most gangs require prospective *recruits* to meet certain criteria and perform criminal acts before they are allowed membership into the gang. Younger gang members are most likely to be involved in the most serious crimes of violence, as they are in the process of being recruited into the street gang. These youth want to prove themselves and rise through the ranks; they often earn serious money for gangs. To gain entry, a recruit generally requires sponsorship. These members have their loyalty tested often by gang members and 'put in work' by undertaking criminal activities when directed by leaders (Valdez, 2000). Before a recruit is allowed entry into the gang he is required to pass three initial tests:

- a series of criminal acts called *strikes* at the direction of his superiors in the gang to prove his loyalty. Many of the gang-related crimes in Canada are strikes committed by new gang members trying to increase their status in the gang.
- produce *paperwork* (copy of their criminal record) to members of the gang. The greater the number of convictions, the more respect and status the recruit achieves in the gang.
- endure a beating from the other gang members where they punch, kick, and assault the recruit to prove their strength and loyalty (often called *beating in*, *jumping in*, or *boot-fucking*).

It is important to understand that almost all youth gang members in B.C. belong to street gangs, where the membership is fluid, there is a lack of organization and structure, the composition is multi-ethnic, and youth frequently come together for a series of criminal events. Status is defined by ability to make large amounts of cash and engage in serious violence. Very few youth, if any, belong to criminal business organizations, unless they are being recruited by family members who are already members of the organization. Again, it is only a very small number of the total youth population who participate in gangs (less than one percent).

3. Prevention and Intervention Approaches

Although there are many Canadian gang prevention and intervention initiatives (see Appendix B for a listing of recent and current programs), most have not been evaluated. The lack of data concerning why and how gangs form and dissolve is indicative of the absence of theoretical foundations driving these programs. Canadian evaluations are weak and lack scientific rigor, and focus on youth in community settings rather than institutional settings.

However, there is a large body of evidence supporting effective programs for serious and violent youthful offenders (Lipsey and Wilson, 1998; Shaw, 2001). A significant

proportion of these youth belong to gangs. Gang membership is one of the strongest predictors of individual violence in adolescence. In the Rochester site of the U.S.A. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency, gang members committed nearly twice as many crimes as non-members and two-thirds of chronic violent offenders were gang members at some point (Hawkins et al., 1998; Thornberry, Huizinga, and Loeber, 1995). There is therefore a significant overlap of risk factors for gang participation with those risk factors for non-gang serious and violent offending. OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders provides a framework composed of the following components: early intervention programs for children 0 – 6 years of age and their families; prevention programs that try to prevent youth from joining gangs; intervention programs that target existing gang members during crisis and conflict situations and when there is potential to exit the gang; and graduated sanctions (Howell, 1998; Wilson and Howell, 1993).

3.1 What Doesn't Work?

Historically in Canada, gang suppression and community safety strategies have won out over evidence-based treatment and prevention. Unfortunately, scarce resources have been spent on 'get tough' approaches, where young gang members are incarcerated at huge financial cost. Ironically, the best gang intervention programs cost a fraction of the 'lock 'em up' approach, yet have not been implemented in a systematic fashion across the country. Approaches described below are proven to be ineffective and should be stopped. These include:

- *Curriculum-based prevention programs* targeting youth at-risk for gang involvement, such as the American Gang Resistance Education and Training program (G.R.E.A.T.) and the many Canadian primary prevention initiatives (see Appendix B) effect modest, short-term change. However, follow-up studies have found program participants to be as likely as non-participants to become gang members in the long-term.
- *Traditional detached-worker programs*, which use social workers, youth and recreation workers or Aboriginal leaders who outreach into gangs are ineffective and can do more harm than good by increasing gang cohesion (Klein, 1995). More modern detached-worker programs (such as the Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development) have included curriculum components addressing consequences of gang involvement, peer pressure, and substance abuse. These programs remain ineffective in preventing youth from joining gangs.
- *Gang suppression program* evaluations have found mixed results. These programs are based on the prosecution and conviction of gang members, especially targeting gang leaders. Although effective in decreasing gang-related crime in the short term, gang suppression programs fail to address important psychosocial issues such as child maltreatment, mental health, substance abuse,

education and employment. Programs such as the Chicago Area Project, Operation Hammer, CRASH, and other suppression strategies are very costly (Klein, 1995). Suppression initiatives should only be utilized if other prevention and intervention programs have not been successful. Even then, suppression should be used to complement a range of interventions.

- *Incarcerating gang members* does not reduce future criminal behaviour (Aos, Miller and Drake, 2006). The majority of gang members “age out” of gang activities in their early twenties without any intervention at all (Snyder and Sickmund, 2006). Studies in the U.S.A. demonstrate that locking up gang members *increases* the chances of re-offending and staying in the gang (Benda and Tollet, 1999; Olson, Dooley and Kane, 2004). This is the close proximity thesis – the argument that grouping early onset, high-risk youth together increases the negative bonding amongst members and leads to even more entrenched anti-social and criminal behaviour. Olson and colleagues followed 2,500 adult inmates in Illinois released in 2000, 625 of whom were gang members. Just over one-half of the gang members were re-incarcerated for crimes within the two year tracking period. A study in Arkansas found that prior incarceration was a stronger predictor of re-offending compared to a poor parental relationship, gang membership and carrying a weapon (Benda and Tollet, 1999).

Similar results have been found in Canada with incarcerated gang members (Nafekh, 2002; Nafekh and Stys, 2004). In a comparison of 1,955 gang members and inmates who were not gang-involved, the incarcerated gang members were more likely to re-offend (gang-related violent offences), have employability problems, associate with criminal peers, and be involved in assaults on prison staff and inmates and alcohol seizure. Prisons in British Columbia have seen the growing domination of Asian gangs. Correctional Services Canada notes that the "increase in the admission of members and associates of gangs and criminal organizations... can be attributed to the government's introduction of legislation to combat organized crime and to the success of the integrated approach of law adopted by law enforcement."

http://www.cscscc.gc.ca/text/releases/04-06-25_e.shtml

3.2 What Works?

In Canada, about one percent of all children and families with the most complex mental health needs take up roughly one-third of all available human services resources in traditional services (Offord et. al, 1990). The long-term outcomes for these traditional, high-cost services (primarily residential and out-of-community) are poor in most cases (Ballantyne and Raymond, 1998; Burchard et al. 1993; Gutkind, 1993; Lourie, 1994; Duchnowski, 1994). These young people usually have early onset aggression prior to age six years. If left untreated, most turn into serious and violent offenders and gang members. It is less costly and more effective to prevent youth from joining gangs than it is to support a member to exit a gang (Greenwood, 2006). The programs which have

the best outcomes are those which combine primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in a multi-disciplinary and multi-systemic community approach. Some research indicates that positive outcomes depend more upon the individual young person compared to engagement in gang activities (Aos, Miller and Drake, 2006).

Primary prevention focuses on the entire child and youth population at risk and the biological, personal, social, and environmental risk factors linked to criminal behavior. Gang prevention focuses on awareness and education. It is thought that if resiliency is enhanced and youth develop a capacity to recognize risky situations, then they may be better equipped to resist engaging in gang-related activity.

Secondary prevention services target individuals and groups identified as being at greater risk of becoming gang members. Community assessments frame these strategies. The focus is on reducing risk factors rather than on variables that are not changeable (Offord and Bennett, 2002). Both social problems (such as poverty, social disorganization, unstable housing, discrimination, poor living environments) and individual risk factors (such as addictions, family violence and child maltreatment, poor parenting abilities, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, school drop-out and unemployment) are targeted. Protective factors such as strong family bonds, completing school, and positive peer group are promoted. The National Crime Prevention Centre (Public Safety Canada) has adopted a risk-protective framework to increase protective factors and assets by building positive relationships and patterns of interactions with youth, create positive social environments surrounding youth and to promote social and economic policies that support positive youth development.

Tertiary prevention targets gang members and recruits directly to rehabilitate or incapacitate youth, address the needs of victims, and provide exit strategies and support to leave and remain out of gangs. Outcomes of these programs depend on the motivation and commitment of young people.

Canadian programs have been described and categorized by their level of prevention in Mellor et al.'s 2005 report. Roughly three-quarters of the programs are funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre. The remainder is supported through other public institutions and private sources. Most programs focus on awareness about gangs and/or education. Programs having a secondary level prevention approach tend to address risk factors that make youth more vulnerable to gang involvement. Approximately one-third of Canadian programs focus on primary prevention, another one-third target secondary level prevention, and a few programs incorporate both primary and secondary elements. A small minority focus exclusively on tertiary initiatives, with a couple incorporating both secondary and tertiary elements. Only a handful of programs target all three levels. A majority of the programs are located in either urban or rural Quebec. Nationally, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba have roughly one-third of programs (split equally) and Ontario has a small minority of programs.

The initiatives described below are proven to be effective in preventing membership in gangs and intervening with gang-involved youth.

Irving Spergel's Comprehensive Gang Model is a community-wide response to gangs which has been adopted by the OJJDP across the U.S.A. This model consists of five core strategies which flow from an integrated and team oriented problem solving approach using secondary and tertiary prevention. The foundation of the model is that a lack of social opportunities and the degree of social disorganization in a community explain the youth gang problem. Contributing factors such as poverty, institutional racism, poor social policies, and a lack of or misdirected social controls are important. Each aspect of the model is described below.

- a) *Community mobilization:* Mobilizing community leaders and residents to plan, strengthen, or create new opportunities or linkages to existing organizations for gang-involved or at-risk youth. Community organization around prevention of gangs in neighbourhoods with an emerging gang problem is one of the few approaches to gang interventions with a positive outcome (Spergel and Curry, 1991; Spergel, 1995).
- b) *Social intervention:* Gang members are more likely to respond to programs taken directly to them as opposed to those they have to seek out themselves (Stinchcomb, 2002). Teams of workers from different disciplines target specific youths, gangs, and social contexts to engage the gang in more pro-social activities or to influence members to exit. Detached workers take part in social activities (such as recreation) and provide social services such as tutoring, employment counselling, advocacy work with the police and court, individual counseling, and family services (Howell, 2000).
- c) *Provision of academic, economic, and social opportunities:* Many gang intervention strategies have failed to implement an ecological framework to address educational and employment opportunities in the community (Huff, 1990). These programs encourage members to stop or decrease participation in gang activities. Other social opportunities provided include programs to address poverty, malnutrition and mental illness. Educational and vocational programming for high-risk youth are proven to result in lower crime rates (OJJDP, 2006). School and employment bonding initiatives provide structured time and hope for the future for potential gang members. High-risk youth who graduate from secondary school are much more likely to be employed compared to school drop-outs. Unemployment is one of the key predictors of youth crime.
- d) *Gang suppression:* Activities that hold gang-involved youth accountable, including formal and informal social control procedures of the justice systems; and
- e) *Facilitating organizational change and development:* to help community agencies better address gang problems through a team problem-solving approach, not unlike the community oriented policing framework (Burch and Kane, 1999).

- The *Little Village Project* (Spergel, 2006; Spergel et al., 2003) has shown the most positive outcomes of any comprehensive gang intervention program. Little Village is an inner-city area of Chicago experiencing long-term gang violence problems. Roughly 200 young gang members took part. Data consisted of 127 individual interviews between Time I and Time III, monthly activity reports to the Chicago Police Dept., gang member surveys and self-reports, project worker summary reports, field observations, focus group findings, and police arrest and incident data. These data were compared to data collected during a three year pre-project period, and with two control groups obtained through arrests of non-targeted young people at program entry.

Multivariate statistical analyses indicated that gang members who participated in more individual counseling sessions were more likely to reduce involvement in gang activities. There was a significant decrease in the number of self-reported offence and arrests over the two-year period, and the strongest predictors of this were the following factors: participants' perception that their probation officers were addressing the gang problem at Time I, gang members spending more time with female partners at Time I, being aged 19 years or older, having a stronger connection between future goals and expectations, fewer family and household crises at Time III, and the participant's perception that the gang was smaller at Time III. The program youth experienced a significant reduction in violent crime arrests compared to the two groups of control youth. The hardcore gang youth demonstrated the most significant decreases in arrests, although there was not any major decrease in the overall gang crime in the Village (Spergel et al., 2003). This latter issue could be due to any number of factors, including the fact that many gang members in Little Village did not participate in the project.

- Boston's *Operation Ceasefire* (Braga and Kennedy, 2002), which engaged a broad array of local, State, and Federal officials, as well as community and neighborhood leaders, proved to be an effective and efficient response to youth violence and gangs.
- *Multi-systemic therapy* (MST) is highly effective with serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders (Henggeler, 1997). It is a cost-effective program which provides gang members with intensive therapy, supervision and monitoring. The MST worker accomplishes supervision strategies in a supportive manner, compared to traditional monitoring by probation and police. MST focuses on the multiple determinants of criminal and anti-social behaviour, and provides services in the youth's own neighbourhood. Offending is viewed as having many causes; therefore, interventions focus on the multitude of factors influencing anti-social behaviour. The family is the primary area of work, and building on the youth and family's strengths is a main focus of the intervention. There is an average of 60 hours of contact with families over a four-month period. Interventions follow the trademarked intervention of the Family Services Research Centre at the Medical University of South Carolina (Henggeler et al., 1992). It has been tested in many

sites (for example, the Second Chance program in Galveston, TX, which targets gang-involved youth - see Thomas, 1996).

- *Wraparound* is a complex, multifaceted intervention strategy designed to keep youthful offenders at home and out of institutions whenever possible. A comprehensive continuum of individualized services and support networks are “wrapped around” young people, rather than forcing them to fit into categorical, inflexible therapeutic programs (Portland State University Research and Training Center, 2003). Individual case management is a cornerstone, although Wraparound is very different from conventional case management programs: in the latter, an individual case manager or probation officer navigates them through traditional social and youth justice services (Burchard et al., 2002). Baltimore’s Choice Program and San Francisco’s Detention Diversion Advocacy Program have demonstrated positive outcomes through intensive supervision and individualized treatment plans for both young offenders and those at risk. These outcomes are not nearly as good as those of Wraparound projects which target serious and violent youth. Wraparounds conducted in Canada and the U.S. have been effective in reducing the frequency of residential or institutional placement of children and youth, reducing recidivism and arrests of seriously violent youth (Duchnowski et. al., 1993; Clark et. al., 1994; Yoe et. al., 1995; Tighe and Brooks, 1995; Northey et. al., 1997; VandenBerg and Grealish, 1996).

The following six principles guide Wraparound:

- a) A collaborative, community-based interagency team (with professionals from youth justice, education, mental health, and social services systems) designs, implements, and oversees the project. One organization takes the lead in coordinating each individual Wraparound case.
- b) A formal interagency agreement sets out who the target population for the initiative is; how they will be enrolled in the program; how services will be delivered and paid for; what roles different agencies and individuals will play; and what resources will be committed by various groups. This is commonly referred to as a system of care.
- c) Care coordinators who are responsible for helping participants create a customized treatment program for guiding youth and their families through the system of care. Care coordinators are usually employees of the lead agency.
- d) Child and family teams (family members, paid service providers, and community members such as teachers and mentors), who know the youth and his/her complex needs, work in partnership to ensure that the young person’s needs in all life domains are addressed with cultural competence.
- e) A youth driven comprehensive plan of care, which is updated continually, identifies the young person’s unique strengths and weaknesses across domains, targets specific goals and outlines action plans. This plan addresses the roles of individual team members (young person and family included) in achieving the goals.

- f) All Wraparound programs articulate specific performance measures to measure the outcomes of interventions throughout the course of the initiative.
- *Wraparound Milwaukee* integrates Wraparound programming and managed care financing (covered by Medicaid). Individualized case management and a comprehensive continuum of treatment programs and social services are provided to youthful offenders and their families (Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division, 2003). Evaluations consistently show that youth demonstrate marked improvement in their behavior and socialization, and they are significantly less likely to recidivate than graduates of conventional treatment programs. The average cost is also less than half the cost of traditional residential programming (Kamradt, 2000; Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division, 2003).
 - The *Connections* program in Clark County, Washington, also demonstrates significant positive outcomes using Wraparound in the juvenile justice system with youth who have mental health needs. A 2004 evaluation found that participants were less than half as likely as control group youth to re-offend, and re-offended nearly half as often. When Connections participants re-offended, they committed less serious crimes, took more than three times as long to re-offend, and were incarcerated for significantly fewer days than control group youth (Regional Research Institute for Human Services, 2004).
 - The *California Repeat Offender Prevention Program* (ROPP, also referred to as the '8% Solution') is a multi-site early intervention program targeting young offenders at high risk of becoming serious repeat offenders and gang members. Originally developed by the Orange County, California Probation Department in the early 1990s, the program integrates intensive supervision with Wraparound services in eight counties. Evaluations showed that control group youth significantly improved their academic performance and were twice as likely to complete probation orders compared to comparison group youth (State of California Board of Corrections, 2002). Replication of the ROPP has had mixed results, largely due to failure to implement the program fully, inability to deal with community risk factors such as poverty, and problems with interagency collaboration, high staff turnover, and inadequate documentation (the Los Angeles ROPP did not show any difference between control and experimental groups) (Zhang and Zhang, 2005; Schumacher and Kurz, 2000; State of California Board of Corrections, 2002).
 - The *Philadelphia Youth Violence Reduction Partnership* (YVRP) targets offenders who are at high risk of being killed or killing others. Youth-serving organizations and criminal justice agencies collaborate to balance intensive supervision with comprehensive therapeutic support. YVRP provides youth with increased supervision and supports their access to relevant resources (employment, mentoring, school bonding, counseling, healthcare, and drug treatment). Street workers and police help probation officers supervise

participants, resulting in almost daily contacts with seriously violent youth and smaller caseload sizes. Street workers mentor youth and broker in other services. A key goal is to stabilize the families of participants through such efforts as jobs for parents and locating housing. Analysis of youth homicide rate in Philadelphia suggests that the YVRP is effective (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2004; McClanahan, 2004).

- *Integrated Systems of Care (ISC)*: The needs of children and youth with serious emotional and behavioral disturbances and their families are best met through establishment of integrated systems of care. When these children, youth and families receive cross-sectoral coordinated services, their functioning substantially improves at school, at home, and in their community. Canada lags decades behind the evidence-based ISC policies in many other parts of the world (for example, the U.S.A., U.K. and Australia). The U.S.A. Congress established ISCs in 1992 and there are more than 60 ISC communities across the country. They are funded through cooperative agreements with States, communities, territories, and Tribal Nations, and administered by the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Every child and family receives an individualized service plan tailored to their unique needs. These plans are family-driven and youth-guided. ISCs, with or without Wraparound, are very effective in preventing violence and gang membership by high-risk children and youth.
- A full array of services and supports is provided in the home community in which the child lives. No child or adolescent is ineligible to receive services based on the severity of his or her behavior or disability. Providers do "whatever it takes" to ensure children, youth, and families receive appropriate services and supports for as long as they are needed. Services are delivered in the least restrictive, most natural environment that is appropriate for the child's needs. Family members of children and youth who need mental health services work together with service providers to develop, manage, deliver, and evaluate policies and programs. Child and family-serving agencies establish formal linkages to ensure that the system of care is adequately coordinated and integrated. Case management services are provided to ensure that the full range of services is delivered and to help the child and family move through the system as their needs change. Early identification and intervention with early onset children are essential to promoting positive outcomes. All services are responsive to the family's culture and language.

4. Gender Issues

Females made up twelve percent of B.C.'s gang population in 2002 (Astwood Strategy Corp., 2004). Female youthful offenders have unique and special risks compared to

male youth involved in the justice system. Common risks for girls include: a history of victimization (mainly physical, sexual, emotional abuse); academic failure, truancy, drop-out; repeated running away and prostitution; unstable family life (lack of connectedness, isolation, other family members involved in justice system); a history of unhealthy, dependent relationships, primarily with older males; mental health issues; and a history of substance abuse. Compared to violent young men, violent young women report having experienced significantly higher rates of physical and sexual violence victimization in their childhood. Young women's criminal behaviour is most closely related to abuse and trauma suffered at home, whereas young men's criminal behaviour is most closely linked to involvement with peers and activities involved in crime (Totten, 2002).

There are important gender differences in the process by which young women are charged, the context of their criminal behaviour, and the types of offences which they commit. Males and females differ in levels of participation, motivation and degree of harm caused by their offending. The context of young women's usage of violence is very different from that of young men: violence committed by young women usually occurs in self-defense or in anticipation of victimization by physical or sexual assault. Girls are much less likely to engage in serious, violent crime, and are much more likely to engage in non-violent property and drug offences. Girls are far more likely to enter the justice system from the child welfare system or from engaging in status offences (running away, prostitution, underage drinking, truancy, curfew violations), administrative breaches, and shoplifting. Child sexual abuse is strongly associated with self-destructive behaviour and it can lead to other criminal activities (such as solicitation and substance abuse), which in turn leads to increased violent offending. A majority of these young women have a history of running from abusive homes, child welfare facilities and mental health centers. These acts are 'criminalized' (Totten, 2004; Miller, 2001; Chesney-Lind and Hagedorn, 1999).

Canada has few, if any, female hard-core criminal gangs. Most youth gangs are male dominated. Females who participate in gangs are for the most part treated as sexual slaves and are forced to play tertiary roles (look-out for the police, dealing drugs, working in the sex trade to bring in money). Often, they are traded amongst gang members for coercive sex. Females are typically required to carry weapons and drugs because they have a lower chance of being searched by male police officers (Campbell, 1991; Curry, 1998). Although some studies indicate that young women are being allowed by male members to participate in violent activities (Brotherton, 1996; Deschenes and Esbenson, 1999), the majority of studies suggest that this is not the case (Chesney-Lind et al., 1996; Miller, 1998; Lurigio, Swartz and Chang, 1998). Compared to non-gang members, females in gangs are more likely to be substance abusers; display many anti-social characteristics; support the use of violence; have unstable employment and living arrangements; have low educational attainment; and come from abusive and unstable families.

Girls in gangs resist and negotiate gender roles outside of traditional femininity – the gang is a space to 'do gender differently'. Anne Campbell (1987, 463-464) writes "Gang

girls see themselves as different from their peers. Their association with the gang is a public proclamation of their rejection of the lifestyle which the community expects from them.” Are they ‘one of the guys’, as Jodi Miller (2001) argues Laura Fishman’s account of the 1960s Vice Queens of Chicago (the African-American female auxiliary to the male-dominated Vice-Kings), who reported a preference for same-sex intimate relations as an avenue out of chronic sexual violence and forced prostitution by the Vice Kings, suggests that the social construction of femininity in gangs is a very complex matter. It is therefore important that any prevention and intervention strategies for young women be founded upon their unique risk and protective factors, which are fundamentally different compared to those of young men. These strategies should never mix the two genders in the same program, nor should programs for young women simply replicate those provided to young men. Examples of quality programs for high risk young women include Stephanie Covington’s *Beyond Trauma: A Healing Journey for Women* (2003) and Nell Myhand and Paul Kivel’s *Young Women’s Lives: Building Self-Awareness for Life* (1998).

5. Delivering Culturally Competent, Evidence-based Gang Prevention and Intervention Strategies in B.C. Communities

It is of critical importance that all individuals having an interest in addressing B.C. youth gang issues have a solid understanding of local ethno-racial minority groups and integrate cultural competency into all prevention and intervention efforts. The most recent census data for B.C. indicate that visible minorities make up 49% of the Vancouver population (total pop. 545,671). The most populous visible minority groups in B.C. are (in decreasing order of size): Chinese (365,490), South Asian (210,295), Filipino (64,005), Japanese (32,730), Korean (31,965), Black (25,465), Latin American (23,885), West Asian (22,380), and Arab (6,605). Canada has roughly five million immigrants, half of whom are youth, who live in large urban centres (Statistics Canada, 2004).

Youth from racialized groups (non-dominant ethno-racial communities who, through the process of racialization, experience race as a key factor in their identity - Galabuzzi, 2001) have higher levels of social and economic disadvantage and are at increased risk for social exclusion, negative physical and mental health outcomes, and joining gangs (Ornstein, 2006; Totten, 2005). Discrimination and social exclusion are a part of daily life for many newcomer (immigrants and refugees arriving less than 5 years ago) and ethno-racial youth (Anisef and Kilbride, 2003; Galabuzi, 2002; Noh et al., 1999; Surko et al., 2005). These youth face multiple barriers and challenges in settling in B.C., including stress related to the immigration and resettlement process, dealing with exposure to atrocities due to internment in refugee camps, lack of access to vital services, language barriers, intergenerational and gender differences, and adolescent developmental transitions (Berry et al., 2006; Anisef and Kilbride, 2004; Khanlou et al., 2006; Beiser, 2004; Beiser and Hyman, 1997). To make matters worse, thirty percent

of immigrant children and youth live in families whose total income falls below the official poverty line (Beiser, 2005).

Three primary minority populations are over-represented in youth gangs in B.C.: East Asian (including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Taiwanese), South Asian (Punjabi, Fijian, Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Fijian) and Aboriginal. Although there are some gangs which have members drawn predominantly from particular ethnic groups (e.g., East Asians), almost one-half of gangs have a multicultural composition (Astwood Strategy Corp, 2004). For example, the Los Diablos gang historically has been comprised of a mixture of Hispanic, Chinese, Indo-Canadian, and Caucasian youth and young adults. Other hybrid gangs in the Vancouver area, such as the United Nations, are mixtures of Caucasian, Chinese, Filipino, Black, Aboriginal, Hispanic, Vietnamese and Japanese young people.

5.1 East Asian Gangs (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Mongolian, Hong Kongese)

More than one-third of British Columbian youth gang members are Asian. Asian Organized Crime (AOC) includes Chinese groups like the Triads; loose criminal affiliations; migrant smuggling organizations; Vietnamese street gangs; Korean groups; and the Japanese Boryokudan (Yakuza). AOC groups place high priority on ethnicity for membership in their organizations. Common criminal activities range from extortion and protection rackets to home invasions to sophisticated credit card fraud, counterfeiting, and thefts of high-tech components (for example, computer chips). Drug trafficking is a major source of AOC revenue. In Canada, Chinese organized crime groups import base chemicals from Asia for the production of Ecstasy. The Lower Mainland of British Columbia is a primary base for AOC groups (Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia, 2001).

Most AOC is based on *guanxi* relationships (connections or networks which are the foundation of Chinese culture). Guanxi is a social system based on the ties between people related by blood or marriage. They speak the same dialect and come from the same region of China, Hong Kong or other Chinese-speaking countries. These complex social relations make it very difficult to refuse a request of any kind from a friend, acquaintance or family member. If an individual has already requested a favour, s/he must honour any future requests. Should this individual be unable to return a favour made by someone with whom s/he has a guanxi relationship, the individual must find another person who can. A chain reaction is commonly triggered, and the ensuing honour-based code of silence makes it exceedingly hard for police to solve gang crimes. Contrary to Western ideals of familial blood ties, the 'extended family' in most Asian cultures includes people bound by these guanxi social relations. Highly structured gangs and Triads provide members with a sense of family, something which is very appealing for immigrants without blood family members in Canada. Asian youth gangs act as 'storm troopers' on the front line for these more established organized crime groups and get a small share of criminal proceeds. Within these complicated social

relations, disrespecting another individual is not permitted. Showing disrespect (causing someone to lose face) usually results in the aggressor being shamed and socially excluded. The overt display of emotional vulnerability is discouraged because it can result in other people becoming upset and losing face (RCMP, 1997).

5.2 South Asian Gangs (Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Nepalese, Bhutanese, Iranian, Afghani, Tibetese, Filipino)

The RCMP's annual report on organized crime ranks South Asian groups third after Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMG) and AOC in terms of their strength and organization in B.C.'s hierarchy of criminal organizations. Historically, South Asian gang violence has been extreme, sporadic and triggered by pride and honour, saving face, and hyper-masculine posturing over young women. Compared to the highly structured and low profile murders by OMGs and AOC groups, South Asian gang violence has been very public and high profile (Group of Ten, 2004). Up until recently in B.C., there was on average ten murders per year involving 18 – 35 year-old South Asian young men as both victims and perpetrators. Codes of secrecy and intimidation of witnesses has made solving gang crimes problematic in these closed South Asian communities.

The Group of Ten Report attributed this extreme violence to the conflict between the patriarchal and authoritarian parental values and the more liberal Western values of their sons. It is important to understand that these gang members *are not* representative of the overwhelming majority of South Asian boys and young men in Canada. Most gang members do not have healthy adult role models due to a lack of parental engagement. Some immigrant parents work very long hours to financially support their families. They are unavailable to help their children, many of whom struggle with racism and social acceptance.

These factors contribute to extreme definitions of violent masculinity which compensate for the crises of alienation and identity experienced by these second-generation South Asian young men. Many have deep-rooted feelings of inadequacy. They desperately want to belong to mainstream Canada, yet they are caught between two worlds: they are not white like Caucasian youth, nor are they black like African-Canadian youth. They individuate from their families because their parents adhere to a belief system which does not apply to Canadian youth culture. Deep-rooted parent-child schisms result in some young men defining their identity based upon reputation, pride, and 'eye for an eye' beliefs of retribution and revenge. Extreme violence and gang-banging are alternative means of achieving power, money and status by some. What is often portrayed in the media as simple acts of disrespect or looking at someone the 'wrong way' are instead acts which trigger in South Asian gang members deep-rooted experiences of devaluation in Canadian society.

5.3 Aboriginal Gangs

First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples comprise 3% of the population of Canada, or approximately 976,000 people (Statistics Canada, 2001). The majority live in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and in the Northern territories, but an increasing number now live off reserve in urban areas. The latest census figures show that almost one-half of the population who identify themselves as Aboriginal live in urban areas. The proportion of Aboriginal peoples is increasing compared to every other group in Canadian society, and their average age is much younger than rest of the population. Approximately 36,855 people identify themselves as Aboriginal in Vancouver. The vast majority of this group is North American Indian (22,700), whereas Métis and Inuit individuals (12,505 and 260 individuals respectively) comprise the remainder of this group. Just under one-half of the Vancouver Aboriginal population is aged nineteen years or younger (10,660 were 15 years of age or under in 2003; an additional 3,240 were aged 15 - 19 years).

The prevalence of psycho-social problems in this population is staggering. Aboriginals face multiple risk factors and have few protective factors that promote resilience. Many historical issues are associated with this disproportionate burden of suffering:

- racism, colonization, marginalization and dispossession;
- loss of land, traditional culture, spirituality and values;
- breakdown of community kinship systems and Aboriginal law;
- entrenched poverty, overcrowded and substandard housing (Bittle et al., 2002; Dooley et al, 2005);
- ill-health and suicide (The suicide rate for Aboriginals under age of 25 years is approximately six times higher than the rate for non-Aboriginals. Approximately one-third of all deaths are due to suicide, arguably the most elevated rate of any racial group in the world (Shah, 1990; York, 1990);
- alcohol and drug abuse (one quarter to two thirds of Aboriginal young people in northern and isolated reserves inhale gasoline [Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, 1990]. The incidence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is very high);
- high rates of criminalization (Aboriginals represent 17% of the federal and provincial prison populations);
- inter-generational cycles of violence (the incidence of family violence, sexual assault, spousal homicide, child witnessing of spousal violence, and homicide are all higher in Aboriginal populations);
- low educational attainment, school drop-out and unemployment (Many Aboriginal children experience difficulty identifying with mainstream teachers, schools, and the educational process. The lack of meaningful and adequate jobs on and off reserves blocks conventional means of achieving success and bonding to broader Canadian society [Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Statistics Canada, 2001]);
- institutionalization and forced assimilation policies have resulted in high numbers of Aboriginal youth being placed into child welfare, mental health and other institutions (Grekul and LaBoucane-Benson, 2006; Trevethan et al., 2002).

Children and youth who have experienced out-of-home-care are more likely to be involved in gangs compared those who remain at home (Totten, 2000; Kelly and Totten, 2002).

- elimination of traditional means of achieving masculinity is compensated for by a hyper-masculine exertion of power and control over women and children (Blagg, 2000).

The development of gang culture must be contextualized through the historical lens of the destruction Aboriginal identity and culture. The intergenerational footprint of this colonization and forced assimilation is found in the minority of youth who join gangs. The grandparents and parents of today's Aboriginal gang members were stripped of their parenting capacity. Sheer survival – a sense of family, an identity, protection, steady income – are all key reasons why Aboriginal youth join gangs (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, 2003). These youth, substantially younger than any other ethno-racial group involved in Canadian youth gangs, are recruited both on the street and in justice facilities. School bonding and family attachment cannot prevent gang involvement for these youth. Many adopt an African American hyper-sexualized violent masculinity, copied from rap artists and U.S. gangs. In a cruel twist of irony, they become alienated from their communities and lose their identity as a Cree, Blackfoot, Lakota, Dene, or Métis, for example. This is the modern version of forced assimilation – only the gangs are doing the removal instead of the Canadian government.

Four key approaches to Indigenous crime prevention are evident in countries around the world. These evidence-based strategies are founded on a holistic approach, wherein solutions to crime prevention are conditional on improving the overall quality of life in these communities (Capobianco, 2006; Capobianco, Shaw and Dubuc, 2003). These approaches are:

- 1) community involvement (mentoring, night patrols, culture and recreational programs, youth organizations and centres, cultural camps, parent education and youth outreach);
- 2) self-determination (social and economic measures such as Aboriginal schools, employment training; Aboriginal community policing);
- 3) empowerment (capacity building, leadership development, positive youth development programs);
- 4) restorative justice (Aboriginal Justice Groups/youth justice groups, healing circles).

Specific programs in Canada and elsewhere in the world include: Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Alter-Natives to Non-Violence project Outdoor Classroom; Gwich'in Tribal Council's Culture Based Crime Prevention Project, Northwest Territories; Chiannou/Tiknagin Aboriginal Head Start Programme (Programme d'aide préscolaire aux Autochtones), Val D'Or, Quebec; Lighthouses Project Manitoba; Boys From the Bush Program, Cape York, Australia; Youth and Indigenous Leadership Activity, Guatemala.

6. Conclusion

There are many myths perpetuated by the media and the general public which contribute to a social panic about youth gangs. In reality, the vast majority of B.C. youth are healthy, contributing members of society; less than 0.5% belong to gangs. It is important to understand that most gangs in Canada are adult, not youth gangs. Further, the large majority of youth who are mistakenly classified as 'gang members' are instead involved in anti-social behaviours which, although serious nonetheless, are not gang-related. Quality anti-gang strategies therefore must address these negative stereotypes, particularly the ones that promote racist beliefs about the prevalence of gang cultures within certain ethno-racial groups.

This report has provided a multi-dimensional model for the identification of youth engagement in anti-social peer and criminal groups, street gangs and criminal business organizations. Youth can be categorized along this continuum in terms of the typology of group/gang, their roles within these groups/gangs, and ethno-racial composition. An overview of evidence-based practices for youth gang intervention and prevention has been provided, with clear direction on what strategies work (and should be promoted) and what strategies fail (and should be stopped). Unfortunately, Canadian initiatives to date have not been rigorously evaluated, nor have the majority been based upon quality approaches from other parts of the world.

The body of evidence from other countries provides very strong evidence about *what* types of strategies work for *which* populations in what types of settings (*where*). There is compelling data which support the need for gender-responsive and culturally competent models of intervention and prevention. Girls and young women have unique risks and protective factors compared to boys and young men; it is bad practice to select and implement programs which are not founded upon this reality. There is indisputable evidence pointing to the fact that suffering serious and prolonged sexual abuse by men is a key pathway into gang involvement for young women. There is compelling research supporting the fact that almost all female gang members are treated as sexual slaves by their male counterparts. What works for male youth cannot possibly work with females.

There is also sound evidence outlining the necessity of cultural competency. This is because British Columbia's youth gang members are disproportionately made up of ethno-racial minority and Aboriginal youth. These youth face enormous barriers to full participation in society, including blocked opportunities for good schooling and employment. The identity, sense of family, protection, and fast money gained through gangs are very appealing to marginalized young people.

Finally, the setting of programs (where they are delivered) is of the utmost importance. Quality strategies are neighbourhood-based and intensive family support, delivered in the home, is a key ingredient. Get tough and 'lock 'em up' approaches have the exact

opposite effect of that intended: incarcerating gang members and those at risk of joining gangs is very expensive, increases gang cohesion and recruitment, and in many cases results in these youth committing more serious crimes upon release. Instead, Wraparound approaches, based upon an integrated system of care model, result in significant cost savings and have excellent outcomes.

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Appendix A: List of Current Youth Gangs Operating out of BC

EAST ASIAN GANGS

Big Circle Boys (called Dai Huen Jai in Hong Kong and China) - The most prominent Asian (Chinese) gang in the Vancouver area is the Big Circle Boys (BCB). It is one of the most active organized crime groups in Canada. The BCB originated in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province, in the late 1960s. Its presence was detected in Vancouver in the late 1980s, and by the early 1990s it had established groups throughout Canada. It is involved in many criminal activities, such as: importing and distributing cocaine and heroin, murder, loan-sharking, extortion, human smuggling, credit-card fraud, counterfeiting, home-invasions and exporting stolen luxury cars. The BCB do business in small independent groups or cells, unlike the highly organized structure of **Triads**. Youth members are involved in violent street crimes. The Vancouver BCB has links to other Asian criminal groups, such as the **Lotus gang**, the **Kung Lok triad**, Vietnamese gangs, and the Hong Kong BCB.

The United Bamboo Gang (UBG) was established in Taiwan by ethnic Chinese individuals following World War II, after the Kuomintang party left mainland China to avoid the communist takeover. It is currently the largest Taiwanese-based triad, with an estimated membership of 20,000. The group maintains criminal relationships with less organized gangs, including the **Black Dragons**, the **Vietnamese V-Boys (Vietnamese Boyz, VBZ or V-Boyz)** and **Hung Pho**. In Vancouver, it is involved in heroin trafficking, alien smuggling, and the trafficking of women. Like the BCB, this gang has primarily adult membership, with a small number of youth involved in violent street-level crimes.

Viet Ching - Vietnamese gang involved in organized, high-tech and business crime, extortion and human trafficking, marijuana growing, methamphetamine labs. Vietnamese street gangs in Vancouver such as the Viet Ching are loosely structured with a fluid membership, often linking up with other criminal groups to do business. Vietnamese groups control a majority of the marijuana-growing operations in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. Viet Ching works with BCB to export marijuana south to the U.S. and across Canada. Vietnamese gangsters are known for being ruthless and unpredictably violent during confrontations. Other Asian crime groups are more organized and evade police, but will resort to violence and murder to protect their criminal interests. Viet Ching and BCB have networks with other large cities in Canada, and some groups are linked with the Hong Kong triads.

14K Triad – Based in Hong Kong, the 14K is involved in heroin smuggling, extortion, narcotics, gambling, money laundering, home invasion robberies, prostitution, alien smuggling, computer chip theft, and many other crimes in B.C. A small number of youth have been known to have relationships with this triad, primarily through familial ties.

Sun Yee On Triad – This criminal business organization operates in other major Canadian metropolitan areas apart from Vancouver. Criminal activities include trafficking of heroin and methamphetamines, alien smuggling, credit card fraud, and trafficking of women to the U.S.A. Adult members have a strong group identity, rarely

admit new members, and use a highly sophisticated operating structure. Again, a handful of youth have been affiliated with this Triad through intergenerational ties.

SOUTH ASIAN GANGS

Given their loose organization and fluid membership, it is estimated that roughly 10 - 20 gangs operate in the Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley/Vancouver Island areas, each made up of about three or four leaders and 10 - 15 associates. They are cellular in nature, and most operate independently. Vancouver Police Department statistics on south Asian-based homicides noted a significant increase for the period of 1994 – 2000, when membership was dominated by Indo-Canadian young men. Examples of these earlier gangs include the **Indo-Canadian Mafia/Punjabi Mafia, Surrey Jacks** and **Persian Pride**. However, these gangs are now multi-ethnic and specialize in the transport of marijuana, heroin and cocaine, which is facilitated by the fact that many gang members work in the commercial trucking industry. These gangs work with other crime groups in the movement of illegal drugs.

LATINO GANGS (HISPANIC, MEXICAN, SOUTH AMERICAN)

MS-13 Mara Salvatrucha – The first MS-13 gang member was arrested in Vancouver in 1997. MS-13 members are easily recognized by police because most are heavily tattooed on their upper bodies, including the arms and face, with MS-13 lettering done in Gothic style. A shaved head with a goatee beard is also popular. Some youth wear blue and white clothing. The number of MS-13 gang members identified by Vancouver police has increased in recent years. MS-13 gang activity in Vancouver involves street-drug dealing, assault, auto theft, burglary, drug trafficking, extortion, identity theft, drug-debt collection and weapons trafficking. They are associated with the Hell's Angels.

Sur 13 (Surenos) MS gang members will also use the Spanish word sureño, meaning "southerner" to identify themselves. Sometimes Sureno is abbreviated to SUR. They are associated with **Los Cholos**.

Los Diablos - mixture of Hispanic, Chinese, Indo-Canadian, and Caucasian youth and young adults. Identifiable by red and black colours, they were first identified in 1989 in the Vancouver area.

Los Cholos – members of this Folk Nation gang are Mexican and Spanish. Los Cholos emerged after the imprisonment of many **Los Diablos** gang members. 'Cholo' means gangster. They are affiliated with **La Gran Raza** (La Raza) in the USA. Their adopted colors are those of the Mexican flag (green, white and red). Tattoos of 'Mi Vida Loca' (my crazy life) and 'LR' are common.

ABORIGINAL GANGS

Indian Posse and Redd Alert – active in northern and interior B.C. currently. Members tend to be younger compared to other street gangs (mid to late-teens). These two gangs join with the Hells Angels and Asian-based criminal organizations to carry out criminal activities. The Annual Report of the Criminal Intelligence Service of Canada (CISC) indicates that in exchange for their services, Redd Alert and Indian Posse supply a number of Aboriginal-based street gangs ". . . with low-level quantities of illicit drugs, including marijuana, cocaine and methamphetamine". Redd Alert, which originated as prison gang in Edmonton in 1990s, is active in Vancouver and much of Lower Mainland, and there have been reports of the gang's activity in the Okanagan region. The prairies are considered to be the home base for these gangs, especially in the cities of Winnipeg and Regina. Although these Aboriginal gangs are uni-ethnic at the present time, they may become hybrid at some point.

AFRICAN-CANADIAN GANGS

West Coast Players (WCP) – a Black gang of pimps and drug dealers with ties to Asian organized crime groups in British Columbia. This group recruits young women in the Lower Mainland and traffics them to the United States to work as prostitutes. The group is also active in Coquitlam. Recent evidence suggests that the WCP has evolved into a multi-ethnic gang.

MULTI-ETHNIC GANGS

Independent Soldiers – Concentrated primarily in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, lower Vancouver Island, this gang is loosely organized into small groups of friends and relatives. Members are Fijian, Malasian, Singaporean, and Indo-Canadian. The Independent Soldiers are involved in the drug trade, sex trade, gun smuggling, kidnapping, home invasions, and cross border human trafficking.

UN Gang (United Nations) - Gang members' origins include Iranian, Indo-Canadian, Caucasian, and Asian. The U.N. operates out of Abbotsford and the Fraser Valley. Established around 2000, it is made up of youth and young adults, primarily involved in drug trafficking and gun trafficking.

Red Scorpions – A common identifying mark is the letters 'RS' tattooed, in an Old English style of script, on wrist, neck or shoulder. The Red Scorpions are a multi-ethnic gang operating in Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminster and Port Moody. Heroin and cocaine trafficking are primary activities.

Appendix B: Promising Canadian Gang Prevention and Intervention Initiatives (revised and updated list based upon Mellor et al., 2005)

1. Primary Prevention Programs

2003 – 2006 B.C. primary prevention initiatives (educational videos, primary and secondary classroom education, parent information, community collaboration)

- Protecting Surrey Schools Together, Surrey School District and Surrey RCMP.
- Empowering Indo Canadian Youth to Lead a Healthy, Productive and Crime Free Life, Richmond Alcohol and Drug Action Team.
- “e-race”, Miscellaneous Productions Society, Vancouver.
- “Gangs: Breaking News” Youth Gang Prevention Video/Facilitator’s Guide, BC Safe Schools/Communities, Abbotsford.
- Youth Gang Prevention Video/Facilitator’s Guide for Parents, Educators, Police & Community Agencies, BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, Vancouver.

2001 – 2006 Manitoba primary prevention initiatives (recreation, educational videos, booklets, primary and secondary classroom education, parent information, community collaboration)

- Lighthouses, Manitoba Justice.
- Project Gang Proof, Manitoba RCMP, Winnipeg Police Service, Manitoba Justice.
- Take Action: Street Gang Awareness, Winnipeg Police Service.

2001 – 2006 Saskatchewan primary prevention initiatives (recreation, educational videos, primary and secondary classroom education, parent information, community collaboration)

- Operation Target, Prince Albert Parkland Health Region (Addiction Services, Sexual Health Clinic), Prince Albert Police Service, RCMP, Saskatchewan Justice/Corrections, Youth Outreach Program (Central and Northern Saskatchewan).
- Street Gangs Presentation, Saskatoon Police Service Community Liaison Unit.

2001 – 2006 Alberta

- The Community Solution to Gang Violence, community organizations, government, community members, Edmonton.
- Youth Options: Crime Prevention for Youth Forums, Beverly Towne Community Development Society, Edmonton.
- Clean Scene, Clean Scene Network for Youth Society (Alberta, Northwest Territories).

2005 – 2006 Quebec primary prevention initiatives (videos, primary and secondary classroom education, parent information, community collaboration)

- Prévention de l’adhésion aux gangs de rues, Forum-Jeunesse Charlevoix-Ouest, Baie-Saint-Paul.
- Prévention de l’adhésion des jeunes aux groupes ou gangs criminels, Centre de prévention de la violence familiale Generations, Montréal.
- Prévenir le phénomène de gang en gang, Maison des jeunes de Mascouche.
- Ma gang au service de ma communauté, Relais des jeunes Gatinois, Gatineau.
- La gang... Expose tes couleurs!, Le comité régional de prévention du crime, Saguenay-Lac St-Jean, Chicoutimi.
- Prévention de l’adhésion aux gangs de rue, Forum Jeunesse Charlevoix-Ouest, Baie-St-Paul.

- Connaitre, comprendre et agir, Justice alternative et médiation, Cowansville.
- Je choisis ma gang!, Table de concertation-jeunesse Bordeaux-Cartierville, Montréal.
- Je choisis ma gang, Fondation Carrefour Enfance Famille, Montréal.
2005 – 2006 Ontario primary prevention initiatives (videos, primary and secondary classroom education, parent information, community collaboration)
- Rexdale Youth Community Violence Prevention Alliance Leave Out Violence, Toronto.
- Five Core Curriculum, Toronto Police Service, 33 Division, North Central Toronto.

2. Secondary Prevention Programs

(cognitive skills, social and life skills training, wilderness experience and structured recreation, theatre and arts, academic enhancement (tutor, mentors), parent and family skills training, counseling, street outreach, crisis services, peer mediation, anger management)

- Choices Youth Program, Winnipeg School Division/Community and Youth Corrections/Winnipeg Police Service.
- Community Cadet Corps Program, National Community Cadet Corps, RCMP (First Nations and Métis children).
- Needs Assessment on Young South Asian Women, South Asian Interactive Society, Abbotsford.
- Spirit Builders: A Community Response to Gang Recruitment, Community Youth Task Force (Regina, Balcarres, Abernathy, Little Black Bear, Okanese, Starblanket, and Peepeekisis, Saskatchewan).
- Youth Emergency Crisis Stabilization System, MacDonald Youth Services, Winnipeg.
- Jeunesse et la Rue, Association des Jeunes de la Petite Bourgogne, Montreal.
- Je change de gang!, Maison des jeunes St-Elzéar, Gaspésie Saint-Elzéar de Bonaventure.
- Toi, pis ta gang!, La Maison des jeunes de Boischatel, Région of Côte de Baupré, Boischatel.
- Gagne sans ta gang!, Centre des jeunes L'escale 13-17 de Montréal-Nord inc.
- Newton Area Drop-in Basketball, Surrey RCMP/VERSA Youth Centre, Surrey.
- Le Projet X – periode Scolaire, Comité Jeunesse La Presqu' Île, Vaudreil.
- C'est qui ma gang?, Maison des jeunes de Varennes.
- Gang de rue et jeunes vulnérables, état de la situation dans notre communauté, Réfuge La Piaule du centre du Québec inc., Drummondville.
- Patro de rue, Patro Laval inc.
- Libre Expression, Action Jeunesse St-Pie X de Longueuil inc. (Maison de jeunes Kekpart), (Longueuil).
- C'est qui ma gang, Maison des jeunes de St-Léonard, Montréal.
- Prévention des gangs de rue, Centre d'amitié autochtone de Québec inc., Lorretteville.
- GangNions a se rassembler, Maison des jeunes l'Atome, Stoneham.
- Une gang, c'est du sport!, Centre Option Avenir inc., St-Hyacinthe.

- Prévenir l'adhésion des jeunes a des gangs criminels, Unité d'information et d'action en toxicomanie des Moulins, Terrebonne.
- Ma gang, ma ville, Maison de jeunes « Laser » Roberval, Chicoutimi.
- Intersection, Carrefour Jeunes employ Saint-Laurent, Montréal.
- Projet travail de rue « PIBAMADZI » au rythme de l'environnement, Centre d'amitié autochtone de Val d'Or.
- Jeunesse en jeux, Mise au jeu, Montréal.
- Les jeunes solidaires, Trans-Art 2000, Montréal.
- Baskagang, Association sportive et communautaire du Centre-Sud inc., Montréal.
- Racisme et gangs de rue: Actions vers une meilleure prévention de la criminalité – Phase II, La Fédération des Communautés de l'Estrie, Sherbrooke.

3. Tertiary Prevention Programs

(exiting gangs, intensive intervention, individual and family counseling, monitoring, mentoring, Aboriginal teachings, employment counseling, life skills training, literacy upgrading, resistance strategies, workshops and presentations, drama, art, street outreach, prostitution, sexual abuse therapy)

- Consolidation and Activation of a socio-community network designed and implemented for youth in the process of gang exit, Fondation Québécoise pour les jeunes contrevenants, Montréal.
- Adopt an Offender Program, Prince Albert Police Service.
- Bimosewin (Aboriginal Gang) Initiative "Taking Responsibility for Your Path in Life", CSC (Prairie Region).
- Breaking the Cycle: Youth Gang Exit and Ambassador Leadership Program, Canadian Training Institute, Etobicoke.
- Gang and Teen Violence Program, St. Leonard's Home, Young Offenders' Residential Services, Trenton.
- Ototema (for young women), Brandon Friendship Centre.
- Prévention de l'adhésion des jeunes aux groupes ou gangs criminels : Projet Ado-Communautaire en Travail de rue ; Rue Action Prévention Jeunesse ; Travail de rue/Action Communautaire ; Movement Jeunesse Montréal-Nord (Café-Jeunesse multiculturel) ; Plein Milieu (Prévention de l'adhésion des jeunes aux groupes ou gangs criminels) (Montréal, Québec).
- Le Projet LOVE: C'est qui ma gang, Montréal (for young women).
- Paa-Pii-Wal Program, Circle of Life Thunderbird Safe House, Winnipeg.
- Rossbrook House, Rotary Club/United Way/Province of Manitoba/City of Winnipeg.

4. Primary/Secondary Prevention Programs

- Gagner avec ta gang! Phase 1: état de la situation, Sud-Ouest Region, Montréal.
- Comprendre les facteurs relies aux phénomènes de gangs par une concertation sociale et une volonté collective, Maison des jeunes Alaxion, Falardeau.
- La Gang, NON MERCI!, Maison de jeunes de St-Prime.
- Le phénomène des gangs dans Portneuf, L'Autre Avenue, Organisme de justice alternative.

- *Projet Alternative Gang*, Motivation Jeunesse, Québec.
- *Amène pas ta gang!*, Défi-Jeunesse du Haut St-Maurice inc., La Tuque.
- *Intégration des jeunes a risque de Rivière-des-Prairies*, Équipe R.D.P., Montréal.
- *S'appartenir et agir pour mieux grandir!*, Le Journal de la Rue, Montréal.
- *Gangs de rue*, Les OEuvres de la Maison Dauphine inc., Québec.
- *Inter-organizational collaboration to promote the development of "Best practice prevention approaches" to reduce gang related activities amongst Black youth*, Côte-des-Neige Black Community Association, Montréal.
- *Gang Intervention and Prevention Workshops*, Spirit Keeper Youth Society, Edmonton.
- *Cambodian Youth Initiative*, Multicultural Health Brokers' Co-op, Edmonton.

5. Secondary/Tertiary Prevention Programs

- *Briser le silence*, Le Bon Dieu dans la rue, Montréal (for young women).
- *Élément HIP HOP N.D.G. – G.D.N.*, Prévention Notre Dame-de-Grace, Montréal.
- *Gagne sans ta gang!*, La maison des jeunes La Parenthèse, Québec.
- *Gang Intervention and Prevention Workshops*, Gang Awareness Intervention Network (Edmonton, Alberta reserves).

6. Primary/Secondary/Tertiary Prevention Programs

- *Alter-Natives to Non-Violence Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations* (Saskatoon region).
- *Warrior Spirit Walking*, Prince Albert Outreach Program Inc.
- *Spirit Keeper Youth Society*, Edmonton Task Force, Edmonton.
- *Youth Gang Awareness Cultural Camp*, Federation of Saskatchewan First Nations.
- *Youth Ambassador's Leadership and Employment Project*, Canadian Training Institute, Toronto.

7. Other Initiatives

- *Blood Tribe Police Service, Standoff, Alberta*: developed a model to address gangs on the Blood Tribe Reserve. A network of police, corrections, families, schools, and other community agencies was created to profile and track gang members, involve families, and provide prevention and education services.
- *Calgary Young Offender Centre*: established a joint committee with police to gather and share information, identify gang members as they enter or exit the youth and adult prison system, and improve case management and planning.
- *RCMP "D" Division Gang Awareness Unit, Manitoba*: Created in September 2000 to develop and promote anti-gang initiatives including school presentations, lectures to community groups, developing community gang response plans/programs, and training on gang issues. The unit collaborates with community groups, provincial and federal government bodies, schools, parents, youth, aboriginal and civic leaders.

- B.C. Inter-Ministry Committee on the Prevention of Youth Violence and Crime: Provides a provincial forum for Ministries and other organizations to partner on the prevention of youth violence, crime and victimization. This inter-disciplinary group includes provincial ministries, federal departments, police, school districts, parent groups and professional associations.
- Montreal Police Service Multidisciplinary Team Strategy on Street Gangs: Objectives are to reduce street gang activity through integrated prevention and intervention by: exchanging information; networking to develop new services; developing information and training tools; mobilizing the community and supporting secondary prevention projects; conducting research; developing a provincial information gathering tool; and creating five multidisciplinary teams and a coordinating committee.