# EXAMINING POLICE-INVOLVED ANTI-GANG PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES IN THE LOWER MAINLAND OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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**Abstract**

In recent years, the Lower Mainland District (LMD) in the province of British Columbia (BC), Canada, has experienced an increase in gang violence as a result of the illicit drug trade. This major paper explores police-involved anti-gang programs and strategies for at-risk and gang-involved youth in the LMD. After reviewing the scholarly literature published in North America, this major paper examines the research on gang prevention, intervention, suppression, and comprehensive programs determined to be effective for gang-involved youth. In addition to a review of the literature, this major paper specifically examines two youth gang prevention programs, namely the Surrey Wraparound program and the Abbotsford Youth Crime Prevention Project, which are both currently funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre's (NCPC) Youth Gang Prevention Fund (YGPF). The research findings highlight the opportunities for researchers, educators, and policy makers to implement appropriate gang prevention programs that can help reduce gang violence in the LMD.

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## Dedication

I would like to dedicate my major paper to the individuals that are committed to making a difference in the lives of young people who are affected by gangs and gang violence.

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**List of Acronyms**

| | Acronym | Term |
|---|---|---|
| i. | APD | Abbotsford Police Department |
| ii. | BC | British Columbia |
| iii. | BGCA | Boys and Girls Club of America |
| iv. | CAAN | Community Action and Assessment Network |
| v. | CFSEU | Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit |
| vi. | CGM | Comprehensive Gang Model |
| vii. | CJS | Criminal Justice System |
| viii. | FVRD | Fraser Valley Regional District |
| ix. | GHB | Gammahydroxybutyrate |
| x. | GITTO | Gang Intervention Through Target Outreach |
| xi. | GPTTO | Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach |
| xii. | GREAT | Gang Resistance Education Training |
| xiii. | GVRD | Greater Vancouver Regional District |
| xiv. | JUSTIN | Justice Information System |
| xv. | LMD | Lower Mainland District |
| xvi. | LSD | Lysergic acid diethylamide |
| xvii. | MA | Master of Arts |
| xviii. | MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| xix. | NCPC | National Crime Prevention Centre |
| xx. | OJJDP | Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention |
| xxi. | PRIME | Police Records Information Management Environment |
| xxii. | RAT | Risk Assessment Tool |
| xxiii. | RCMP | Royal Canadian Mounted Police |
| xxiv. | SACRO | South Asian Community Resource Office |
| xxv. | SGES | Surrey Gang Entrenchment Scale |
| xxvi. | SGET | Surrey Gang Enforcement Team |
| xxvii. | SOC | System of Care |
| xxviii. | UFV | University of the Fraser Valley |
| xxix. | US | United States |
| xxx. | VPD | Vancouver Police Department |
| xxxi. | WAYS | Wrapping Abbotsford Youth with Support |
| xxxii. | YCJA | Youth Criminal Justice Act |
| xxxiii. | YGPF | Youth Gang Prevention Fund |
| xxxiv. | YLS/CMI | Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory |
| xxxv. | YRC | Youth Resource Centre |

## Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent years, the Lower Mainland District (LMD)[1] in the province of British Columbia (BC), Canada, has experienced an increase in gang violence, mainly as a result of the illicit drug trade[2] (Bouchard & Hashimi, 2017; Dhillon, 2017, March 25; Diakiw, 2015, April 22; The Canadian Press, 2016, October 28). According to Bouchard and Hashimi (2017), the gang violence in BC has typically erupted in waves as gang members engage in "tit-for-tat" shootings over territory, drug markets, and interpersonal conflicts. Bouchard and Hashimi (2017) explained that waves of gang conflict take shape when a *triggering event* occurs, such as a homicide of a high ranking gang member. In this context, a wave is defined as an *abnormal* increase or frequency of gang related homicides that are beyond the established baseline of one gang-related homicide per month in BC (Bouchard & Hashimi, 2017). Therefore, the occurrence of two, three, or more gang-related homicides per month represents a clear deviation from the baseline (Bouchard & Hashimi, 2017).

However, Bouchard and Hashimi (2017) stated that in order for the spike in gang-related homicides to be considered a wave, and not just a crime spree, there must also exist a saturation period when the abnormally high rate of gang-related homicides stabilizes and sustains around a maximum. In this way, following the peak period of gang-related homicides, an abrupt decrease represents an end of a wave of gang-related conflict (Bouchard & Hashimi, 2017). The end of a gang related conflict could be as a result of various factors, such as a homicide of a gang leader or a negotiation or truce between the rival groups (Bouchard & Hashimi, 2017). In addition, as a

[1] LMD includes the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) and the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD). GVRD includes 15 municipalities with a total population of 2.3 million. Nearly half of this population resides in Vancouver (proper) and Surrey (as of 2009). Other large cities within GVRD include Richmond, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Delta, New Westminster, Langley, Maple Ridge, and Delta (Giacomantonio, 2015).

[2] According to Levinthal (2005), illicit drugs can be defined as "drugs whose manufacture, sale, or possession is illegal" (p. 3). Some examples of illicit drugs include cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and club drugs (ecstasy, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), ketamine, and gammahydroxybutyrate (GHB)).

result of high profile incidences, the police play a role in decreasing or ending a wave through several initiatives, such as investigations, interventions, and suppression projects (Bouchard & Hashimi, 2017).

For example, one of the first major incidences in recent BC history that was indicative of a wave of gang-related conflict involved the high profile case of the "Surrey Six" on October 19, 2007 (Bolan, 2014, April 8; Langton, 2013). On this day, six execution style slayings, of which two victims were innocent bystanders, took place as a result of the Red Scorpions and the Bacon Brothers co-orchestrating a plan to murder 22 year old Corey Lal, former Red Scorpions member turned competitor, who had been selling drugs in and around their claimed turfs of Surrey and Abbotsford, BC, through "dial-a-dope lines" (Bolan, 2014, April 8; Bouchard & Hashimi, 2017; Langton, 2013). Michael Le, founder of the Red Scorpions, met Jamie Bacon earlier in 2007 while in jail for drug trafficking (Bolan, 2014, April 8). Both Michael Le and Jamie Bacon agreed that once they were out of jail, they would conduct business together (Bolan, 2014, April 8). In the summer of 2007, a merger took place between the Red Scorpions and the Bacon Brothers in which Jamie Bacon set the ground rules for conducting the drug business.

According to Honourable Mr. Justice A.G. Henderson, a dial-a-dope operation is different than the traditional method of someone going to a specific location to buy drugs as anyone can place a phone call and after the dealer has determined the credibility or legitimacy of the caller, he or she can make an arrangement to have the drugs delivered to a predetermined location (*R.* v. *Franklin*, 2001). Dial-a-dope lines are highly valuable to the gangs that operate them because they can be difficult to detect by police and can generate tens of thousands of dollars (*R.* v. *Franklin*, 2001). For example, Michael Le, founder of the Red Scorpions, testified

in court that when he was 18 years old, his single dial-a-dope line operating in New Westminster, BC was generating between $125,000 to $150,000 per month (Bolan, 2014, April 8).

Following the "Surrey Six" incident, several gang related homicides took place around the LMD area in various acts of retaliation between July 2007 and July 2012, with the peak year being 2009 (Bouchard & Hashimi, 2017; Jingfors, Lazzano, & McConnell, 2015; Langton, 2013). Over the five year period, at least four waves of gang related conflicts occurred following the homicides of prominent gang leaders and players in the LMD.

On February 6, 2009, Kevin LeClair of the Red Scorpions, a lieutenant and close confidant of the Bacon Brothers' side of the Red Scorpions, was murdered in the parking lot of the Thunderbird Centre Mall near Langley, BC by two men who sprayed his pickup truck with bullets (Bolan, 2014, April 8; Langton, 2013). According to Bolan (2014, April 8), Michael Le reported that the dispute between Corey Lal and the Bacon Brothers' side of the Red Scorpions had been simmering for months. Corey Lal, prior to his murder, had allegedly attempted to recruit Kevin LeClair to work for him (Bolan, 2014, April 8). A problem that Kevin LeClair faced was that he was previously aligned with the United Nations gang prior to him joining the Red Scorpions, which made him a target for changing allegiance (Bolan, 2018, February 19). It is alleged that Cory Vallee, of the United Nations, was one of the shooters that killed Kevin LeClair and he was charged with first degree murder along with conspiracy to kill the Bacon Brothers between January 1, 2008 and February 9, 2009[3] (Bolan, 2018, February 19).

On October 16, 2010, Gurmit Dhak of the Dhak/Duhre group was murdered in the Metropolis at Metrotown Mall parking lot located in Burnaby, BC (Bouchard & Hashimi, 2017; Langton, 2013). When police attended, they found Gurmit Dhak slumped over the steering wheel of his BMW SUV, which was riddled with bullets (Langton, 2013). Gurmit Dhak's murder was

[3] Cory Vallee's murder trial verdict is expected in June 2018 (Bolan, 2018, February 19).

believed to be the result of the Dhak/Duhre group trying to spread across the LMD with their drug enterprise (Raptis, 2012, February 6). The Dhaks consisted of select members of the United Nations gang and were enemies with the Red Scorpions, Independent Soldiers, and some of the Hells Angels (Langton, 2013; Raptis, 2012, February 6). The Duhres, originally consisted of three brothers who grew up in North Vancouver, BC, and operated under the Persian Pride gang (Raptis, 2012, February 6). Later, the Duhres moved to Surrey where they became the understudies of Bindy Johal, who was a popular 1990s Indo-Canadian gangster shot dead in a Vancouver nightclub (Raptis, 2012, February 6). The Dhak/Duhre group formed an alliance in 2010, according to police, to fill the power vacuum in the LMD as a result of rival leaders of the United Nations and Red Scorpion gangs being arrested for crimes related to drugs and gang-related activity (Raptis, 2012, February 6).

Just over two years after the murder of Gurmit Dhak, on January 17, 2012, Sandip Duhre was shot and killed at Sheraton Wall Centre's Café One (Bouchard & Hashimi, 2017; Raptis, 2012, February 6). According to Raptis (2012, February 6), Sandip Duhre was at one time a mentor to the Bacon Brothers in Abbotsford. However, gangsters who once worked for the Bacon Brothers began to work for the Dhak/Duhre group, which led to increased violence. According to Bouchard and Hashimi (2017), the Dhak/Duhre conflict had the greatest number of homicides due to a conflict with the Wolf Pack, which consisted of several loose alliances between the Red Scorpions, Independent Soldiers, and some of the Hells Angels[4]. From Raptis' (2012, February 6) perspective, the tit-for-tat series of gang-related hits has yet to end.

The wave of gang violence from 2014 to 2017, according to Abbotsford Police Department's (APD) Chief Bob Rich and Vancouver Police Department (VPD) Superintendent

[4] The loose alliance membership included Jonathan Bacon (Red Scorpions), Larry Amero (Hells Angel), and James Riach (Independent Soldier) (Bolan, 2012, June 25).

Mike Pourteous, is the result of drug traffickers who had originally aligned themselves with either the Red Scorpions or United Nations gangs, which are rival gangs (Bolan, 2018, January 29; Hopes, 2015, September 24). Prowse (2013) stated that gang group members are often fluid and often align themselves with other gangs as they are only loyal to money and often make the decision to switch allegiances when the money dries out or when they perceive that there are better opportunities with another gang. Similarly, an allegiance to one particular gang leader is under constant pressure as there is the risk of being the victim of a targeted attack by the leader's enemies, arrested by police, or when the means to meet the demands of the payroll of the gang members is removed (Prowse, 2013).

As a result, since the Dhak/Duhre group lost its dominance in the LMD, new groups, such as the Grewal, Kang, and Dhaliwal have emerged, who were originally affiliated with the Red Scorpions, but have since established their own dial-a-dope operations (Bolan, 2018, January 29). These three groups were at odds with the Sandhu/Sidhu group, which was originally associated to the United Nations gang, resulting in various assaults, shootings, and murders (Bolan, 2018, January 29). In recent years, Gavinder Grewal of the Grewal group established his own gang, called the Brothers Keepers, after splitting off from the Kang group (also originally Red Scorpions aligned). According to Chief Bob Rich, Gavinder Grewal had been in a conflict with the Sandhu/Sidhu group over drug turf in Abbotsford dubbing it the Townline Hill Conflict, named after where most of the violent gang related incidents occurred in the city.

In June 2016, Gavinder Grewal was charged with second degree murder for the shooting death of Mandy Johnson (Hopes, 2018, January 16). While Gavinder Grewal was in pre-trial custody, the Brothers Keepers began to turn on each other, resulting in an internal conflict, while they were engaged in an external conflict with both the Kang and Sandu/Sidhu groups (Hopes,

2018, January 16). On September 27, 2017, Gavinder Grewal was released from custody on strict bail conditions and he re-located to a condo in North Vancouver. On December 22, 2017, Gavinder Grewal was found slain inside his condo (Bolan, 2018, January 29).

According to Jingfors et al. (2015), many of the murders of gang members in the LMD are targeted, a firearm is used in the majority of these homicides (73%), and 80% of the homicides occur in public settings in BC. In some incidences, innocent bystanders have been injured or killed in these attacks, such as the "Surrey Six"[5] event in 2007. In addition, in the summer of 2017, in Surrey, a 64 year old female was the innocent victim of a bullet grazing her shoulder during a broad day-light gang shooting in a residential area (Johnston, 2017, July 10). The death of a 15 year old boy in Vancouver, BC, on January 15, 2018 was the result of him being shot in the head by a stray bullet while driving in a passing car with his parents (Brend & Britten, 2018, January 15). Various communities and police organizations within the LMD have expressed frustration with the number of gang conflict shootings and killings that have occurred in BC, especially with the growing trend of shooters having no regard for the safety of the public (Cohen, 2017).

In a partial response to gang violence, in May 2015, the federal government announced that funding had been approved for Surrey Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to receive 100 new police officers to help fight the gang related violence (CBC News, 2015, May 19). In addition to the 100 new police officers, Ottawa committed $3.5 million over the next five years to the Surrey School District and crime prevention programs (CBC News, 2015, May 19). On November 17, 2017, Ralph Goodale, Canada's Public Safety Minister, announced $327.6 million

[5] The "Surrey Six" incident took place inside of a high rise building located in Surrey, BC. However, two of the victims were innocent bystanders.

over the next five years and $100 million annually following the first five years to address gang violence (Cohen, 2017).

**The Value of Focusing on Youth at Risk for Gang Affiliation**

Based on the push from local and national governments to invest more money into local school district crime and gang prevention programs, the focus of this major paper is to explore the range of current programs in place that target youth that may be at risk for joining a gang. According to Spergel (1990), youth gang members aged 13 - 19 years old are often recruited by organized crime groups to serve as lookouts, couriers, messengers, distributors, and sales persons for drugs (Chatterjee, 2006; Corrado, Markwart, Gronsdahl, & Kimmitt, 2016). Chatterjee (2006) explained that youth involvement in the drug trade is commonly motivated by money, and being a part of a distinct gang group that affords other benefits, such as security, a peer group, protection, rebelling against low levels of employment, and thrill seeking and excitement (Chatterjee, 2006). According to Ngo, Rossiter, and Stewart (2011), many youth, especially those of ethnic minority backgrounds, get involved with drug trafficking as a means to escape low levels of employment that are often tied to their ethnic status, poor language skills, and a general lack of social capital as a result of living or being raised in a marginalized community. However, many researchers have also found that youth from middle and upper-class backgrounds get entrenched in the gang culture for reasons of money, power, fame, and image (Chu, Daffern, Thomas, Ang, & Long, 2014; Langton, 2013). According to McConnell (2016), some youth who are at-risk for gang affiliation, or those who are gang affiliated, come from middle class backgrounds and they generally choose their pathway toward a gangster lifestyle.

From the perspective of the communities where the youth come from and live, the presence of illicit drug activities involving the sale and consumption of drugs can serve as an opportunity to make a lot of money in a short period of time (Butters, Sheptycki, Brochu, & Erickson, 2011; McConnell, 2016). The presence of this form of neighbourhood dysfunction can play a contributing role in the development of a youth's anti-social behaviour and experiences and can serve as an attraction to the perceived lucrative drug trade (McConnell, 2016; Moloney, Hunt, & Joe-Laidler, 2015). McConnell (2016) argued that where a community offered access to a criminal subculture, such as the drug trade, youth will adapt to this opportunity and learn how to engage in it, commonly through gang membership or affiliation. McConnell's (2016) research pointed out that for many of the persons involved or associated with gangs, the attainment of mainstream cultural goals through the illegitimate means of drug trafficking was viewed as an acceptable way to succeed.

According to Hamel and Savoie (1997) (as cited in Hemmati, 2006), a street gang is comprised of a group of adolescents and young adults who commit various forms of criminal acts and operate for reasons of territorial and economic gains. The main criminal activities of street gangs tend to be the production of drugs, drug distribution, and drug trafficking (Hemmati, 2006). Hemmati (2006) stated that, in the LMD, a street gang can be identified by its ethnic composition, which, in this case, are predominantly Asian, Indo-Canadian (East Indian), and Native Canadian (Aboriginal). In addition, street gang members are almost exclusively male and range in age from approximately 12 years old to early adulthood (Hemmati, 2006).

On the other hand, McConnell (2016) rejected the terms *gang* or *street-based gangs* in their application to BC because it attached a connotation that young ethnic men were fighting over geographical turf and that they wore distinct colours and identifying clothing similar to the

gangs in the United States (US). McConnell (2016) argued that BC does not necessarily have an organized crime or gang problem, in terms of the traditional definitions of organized crime or gangs, because the membership of the groups and how they behave does not fit with the traditional, American-based definitions. Perhaps the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU), which is comprised of police officers from various LMD police organizations to combat gangs and organized crime groups, best defined the BC phenomenon of gangs as:

> An organized group of three or more, that as one of its main purposes or main activities the facilitation or commission of one or more serious offence, that, if committed, would likely result in the direct or indirect receipt of a material benefit, including a financial benefit, by the group or by any one of the persons who *constitute the group* (Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit, 2015b, p. para. 1).

In this definition, CFSEU recognized that gangs in BC were not entirely ethnic based; a conclusion that is supported by the accounts provided above on the gang conflict in BC.

Based on CFSEU's definition it is evident that many of those involved in the Lower Mainland gang conflict have been involved in the drug trade for the purpose of obtaining financial benefits. To gain greater financial benefits, the gangs in the LMD have resorted to violence to gain dominance and control over the drug trade through control of lucrative dial-a-dope lines and territories (McConnell, 2016). According to Butters et al. (2011), when drug selling networks are part of gang activity, this illicit market is more likely to engage in extreme forms of violence using guns as the preferred weapons of choice in order to gain dominance over other gangs and to control the drug market.

According to CFSEU, between 2006 and 2015, a total of 344 homicides or attempted homicides were committed in BC (Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit, 2015a; McConnell, 2016). Many of the victims or intended victims of these incidents were gang-related and were either directly or indirectly (through associations) linked to gangs, such as the United

Nations, Red Scorpions, and Bacon Brothers (Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit, 2015a). During these incidents, a firearm was the most common method of attack. The age range of the victims or intended victims was between 15 to 25 years old (Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit, 2015a).

Based on the fact that many of the victims who are involved in the drug trade in the LMD area range between 15 to 25 years old, hold no rigid gang affiliation, and are motivated by financial gain, this major paper will adopt the following definition of a youth gang; any group consisting of three or more people between the ages of 15 to 25 whose primary motivation is to gain financial benefit through criminal activity, namely drug trafficking. This definition does not incorporate a portion of the *Criminal Code* (1985) of Canada's definition of a criminal organization, namely that a gang consists of three or more persons, as well as portions of key age ranges and terms identified by CFSEU as being the main characteristics of youth involved with gangs in the LMD.

**The Purpose of Implementing Evidence-Based Programs**

Shootings and homicides related to the drug trade have been on a rise, especially in Canada's major cities, such as Toronto and Vancouver, since the start of the 2000s (Butters et al., 2011; Chatterjee, 2006). In 2005, the Prime Minister's Office stated that Statistics Canada's 2004 Homicide report counted 81 victims killed in the previous year as a direct result of their involvement in illegal activities, such as drug trafficking and gang violence (Chatterjee, 2006). In 2006, as a part of the planning to implement a Youth Gang Prevention Fund (YGPF), the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) began reviewing youth gang prevention literature to establish programs that could be implemented across Canada to reduce gang violence and to

prevent youth from joining a gang (Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013). The NCPC looked to the US for possible programs and identified the top three as the Comprehensive Gang Model (Spergel Model), the Milwaukee Wraparound program, and the Gang Prevention Through Target Outreach program (Linden, 2010; Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013). Following the identification of these programs, the NCPC issued a letter of intent to potential project recipients requesting descriptions from prospective program participants on how they would implement one of the three aforementioned gang prevention models (Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013). These projects were designed to target at-risk youth, their families, and their immediate environments through various initiatives and resources (Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013).

Reaching and intervening with youth when they are at-risk of joining a gang is essential. School-based programs to detect risk factor behaviours are also extremely important for early intervention (Butters et al., 2011). The two programs that target youth who could be or are involved in the Lower Mainland gang conflict and are funded by the YGPF are the Surrey Wraparound program and the Abbotsford Youth Crime Prevention Project. Both of these projects are based on the Milwaukee Wraparound program and include key partners, such as the city, the schools, and the police. The police and school staff are able to make referrals to their respective programs within their jurisdictions if the youth exhibits any number of risk factors for gang involvement. These specific risk factors will be discussed in greater detail below.

These types of programs are referred to as secondary prevention as they involve working with individuals most at risk of committing crime (Giacomantonio, 2015; Ngo et al., 2011; Tanasichuk, Hogg, Simon, Ferguson, & Wormith, 2010). Secondary prevention programs concentrate on youth who are considered to be ‘at risk’ based on the presence of several key factors, such as decline in school performance, negative run-ins with the law, and associations

with negative peer and adult networks. However, Giacomantonio (2015) stated that a comprehensive crime prevention strategy also involves primary and tertiary initiatives.

Briefly, primary prevention focuses on the development and implementation of pro-social, economic, health, and educational policies to enhance overall well-being in a community (Giacomantonio, 2015). An example of primary prevention programs are notably those that are umbrella initiatives, such as after school sports camps that keep youth active and engaged within the community (Hennigan, Maxson, Sloane, Kolnick, & Vindel, 2013). In other words, these are programs that are delivered to a general population, such as all youth in secondary school. Tertiary gang prevention programs are those that focus on youth who are known to police to be engaged in criminality or are known to be a gang member. These youth require both formal and informal social control measures to assist them to become more pro-social or to control their behaviour (Hennigan et al., 2013). An example of a tertiary prevention program is a police-based, anti-gang suppression team that overtly and proactively targets known at-risk and gang-involved youth.

The main focus of this major paper is on secondary prevention programs in the LMD that target youth at risk for joining gangs or those associated to the Lower Mainland gang conflict in Surrey and Abbotsford. As mentioned above, the main approach taken in these two cities is a comprehensive gang model based on the Milwaukee Wraparound program. There are a number of reasons why comprehensive gang models are more effective than just suppression programs that focus on arresting known gang members (Spergel, 1990, 2006, 2010). For instance, comprehensive programs include a wide range of community partners and stakeholders, of which the police are just one partner, and typically include prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies. Moreover, as outlined by Hennigan et al. (2013), suppression programs are typically

limited in scope and are difficult for the police to sustain over a long period of time because they require a large amount of resources. Wiley, Carson, and Esbensen (2017) argued that the consequences of arresting gang affiliated youth are inconsistent with general anti-gang programs as, when they are evaluated properly, they typically demonstrate little to no change in a youth's deviant attitudes and peers, and contribute to modest increases in delinquency. Meanwhile, according to Wiley et al.'s (2017) research, non-gang at risk-youth experienced a range of negative consequences associated with some of the common tactics associated with suppression programs, such as arrest, that can increase the odds of at-risk youth joining a gang.

**Research Questions Addressed in this Major Paper**

This major paper will address a number of important research questions. First, based on the NCPC recognizing three US-based gang prevention programs, what makes these programs "promising"? Second, are the Surrey Wraparound and Abbotsford Youth Crime Prevention Project programs (Milwaukee Wraparound program based) effective in achieving their stated goals and outcomes? Third, what is the added value or the positive outcomes associated with the police being involved in the Surrey Wraparound program and Abbotsford Youth Crime Prevention Project? With respect to the third research question, the focus will be limited to the police's involvement in youth gang programs from these two programs' perspectives, as opposed to discussing the role of the police in the US-based programs. However, police involvement in the US-based programs may be referred to in order to provide greater context of what the police value may be in relation to such programs.

These research questions are important to answer because evidence-based empirical research is required to ensure that Canada is investing effectively and efficiently in preventing,

intervening, and suppressing youth at risk of gang activity. In 2013, Ottawa held a summit to address the lack of actionable research on policing and community safety issues that brought to light three main themes; the need to increase the efficiency of police services, the need to introduce more effective models of community safety, and the need to improve efficiencies within the criminal justice system (CJS) (Huey & Ricciardelli, 2016).

This major paper applies a combination of these three priorities to examine youth gang-prevention strategies and can contribute to informing policies, practices, and programs to prevent at risk youth from joining gangs in the LMD area, and to prevent them from further escalation of the Lower Mainland gang conflict within our local communities. As Hennigan, Kolnick, Vindel, and Maxson (2015) stated, the combinations of efforts from academics, police, and the community are required to assist youth to become and remain positive contributors within our societies, and an examination of the above mentioned programs will help shed light on how best to do this with at risk youth. This research will also address the debate of the "get tough" on youth crime approach, which advocates for harsher and stiffer penalties for youth to effectively implement a sense of responsibility (Bala, 1994; Braga, 2016; Butters et al., 2011; Svensson & Saharso, 2015) as compared to advocating for youth crime prevention programs for youth at risk for joining a gang (Cohen, 1998).

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

In 2006, the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), as part of implementing a Youth Gang Prevention Fund (YGPF), reviewed the research literature evaluating youth gang projects (Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013). The NCPC determined that three programs were potentially viable models to apply and evaluate in Canada. All three of these models were classified as promising and as they had a structured curriculum, specific protocols, and dosage recommendations (Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013, p. 3). The three models were the Comprehensive Gang Model (CGM), Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach (GPTTO), and the Milwaukee Wraparound, also known as Wraparound Milwaukee, (Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013). Prior to examining these programs in-depth, some important terms are defined below for the purposes of their application in this major paper.

### Defining Key Terms

It is important to define the term youth in the context of this major paper as its definition is constantly changing based on changing social and legal values (Alvi, 2012). For example, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (*YCJA*) (2002) states that a young person is someone who appears to be 12 years old or older, but is less than 18 years old. In the context of the *YCJA* (2002) defining a young person, Bala, Carrington, and Roberts (2009) argued that this age range presumes that young persons have heightened vulnerability, are less mature, and have reduced capacity for moral judgment. The Surrey Wraparound program targets youth aged between 11 to 17 years old and the Abbotsford Youth Gang Prevention Project targets youth aged between 15 to 19 (Public Safety Canada, 2012, 2016). An inference may be made in regard to the age range variation in comparison to the legal definition on the basis that vulnerabilities (or risks) may be slightly

outside of the legal age range due to the manner in which at-risk and gang-involved youth issues unfold in these respective communities. Still, for the purposes of this major paper, an at risk youth will be defined as someone between the ages of 11 to 19 years old who is at-risk to be involved in a gang or is already gang-involved.

Moloney et al. (2015) stated that scholarly discussions about gangs are also entwined with risk-based discourse and images, but what has been missing is a definition of "at risk" as it applies to gang-related or associated youth. Traditionally, the definition of an "at-risk" youth for gang affiliation has been based on the presence of one or more traditional risk factors, such as poor performance in school, negatively influencing their peers, and participation in a group that sell drugs, steals, or commits crimes in general (Howell & Egley, 2005; Jennings & Gonzalez, 2016; O'Brien, Daffern, Chu, & Thomas, 2013). Spergel (1990) stated that youth who take part in such at-risk behaviour and activities attract crime and increased police enforcement within their community.

Of note, O'Brien et al. (2013) found that traditional risk factors, such as school and neighbourhood factors, were weak at predicting youth gang membership. Traditional school risk factors include low commitment to school, low educational aspirations, low school attachment, low academic achievement, and unsafe school environment (O'Brien et al., 2013). Traditional neighbourhood risk factors include criminogenic indicators (e.g., drug use), impoverished area residents, and a high level of exposure or presence of violence in the neighbourhood (O'Brien et al., 2013). O'Brien et al. (2013) stated that psychological risk factors were also significant and should be considered non-traditional risk factors as they shape a person's emotional dimensions, search for identity, and how one manages one's identity. For example, research has indicated that self-esteem is a dynamic relationship that can determine youth entering or leaving a gang

(Alleyne & Wood, 2010). As such, an at-risk youth with low self-esteem may experience a degraded sense of self worth and attaching to a gang could provide comfort and belongingness by being around other similar youth (Dmitrieva, Gibson, Steinberg, Piquero, & Fagan, 2014). Once in a gang, the at-risk youth with low self-esteem may try to gain status among others in the gang through the use of violence or by selling drugs in order to demonstrate their value to the gang (Alleyne & Wood, 2010, 2013; Dmitrieva et al., 2014). Alleyne and Wood (2010) found that at-risk youth find high levels of self esteem through possessing large sums of money and material effects, which tends to wrap them up into the gang lifestyle.

Additionally, the glamorization of the gang lifestyle was common among at-risk youth. While the presence of traditional risk factors is important in identifying at risk youth, McConnell's (2016) research identified the presence of non-traditional risk factors among those youth in BC affiliated with gangs, such as coming from 'good' families in that they did not come from impoverished homes or poor socio-economic backgrounds, they lacked a work ethic, possessed a sense of entitlement, and had a general unwillingness to be patient and work towards a goal in a legitimate, legal manner. According to the Surrey Wraparound program, non-traditional gang risk factors also include being the firstborn son, the only son in the family, the family owning their own business and working long hours, and the youth's peer group being uni-ethnic (Public Safety Canada, 2012). The family owning their own business and working long hours may lead to spending less time with the youth, which could result in a diminished awareness regarding the youth's at-risk lifestyle or gang-involvement.

For the purposes of this major paper, both traditional and non-traditional risk factors are important in explaining and defining the term at-risk youth for gang affiliation in the LMD context. The rationale to include both traditional and non-traditional risk factors is because the

literature has, for several decades, provided evidence of traditional risk factors as being strong indicators for youth to join gangs, particularly in the US and to some areas in Canada, such as northern or prairie communities (McConnell, 2016). However, non-traditional risk factors especially from a research perspective in LMD are a relatively new phenomenon (McConnell, 2016).

Moreover, researchers, policy makers, and practitioners have yet to agree upon a uniform definition of a youth gang (McConnell, 2016). Ezeonu (2014) believed that the term "gang" may have as many varying definitions as the amount of researchers investigating the subject matter. However, Klein's (1971) definition of gangs has been widely adopted by many researchers, policy makers, and law enforcement agencies (as cited in Chettleburgh, 2003; Spergel, 1990). Klein (1971) stated that a gang is any denotable group of youngsters that are distinctly perceived in their neighbourhood, that recognize themselves as a denotable group, and have been involved in a significant number of delinquent incidents that call for a response from the neighbourhood and law enforcement (Ezeonu, 2014; Young, 1993).

In 2002, the Canadian Police Survey on Youth Gangs was conducted by Astwood Strategy Corporation under contract to the Solicitor General of Canada (Chettleburgh, 2003). The purpose of this survey was to examine the extent and breadth of youth gang issues in Canada. This report found that many police agencies had either adopted or created their own definitions of youth gangs (Chettleburgh, 2003). Chettleburgh (2003) defined a youth gang as a group of youth or young adults in a jurisdiction under the age of 21 years old that the respondent or other responsible persons in their agency or community were willing to identify or classify as a gang. This is a loose definition, according to Chettleburgh (2003), which allowed for police agencies to interpret youth gangs through their own lenses and community contexts. Survey

results from police agencies revealed that the top four criteria used to identify a youth gang were a group that committed crimes together, had a leader(s), had an organization structure, and displayed or wore common colours.

Ezeonu (2014) argued that, too often, American discourse on gangs made its way into the Canadian context, and it was not always applicable or so easily transferable. Ezeonu (2014) stated that Canadian political and cultural differences should lead scholars to be critical of accepting or applying definitions from another context into one's own perspective. Similarly, Alleyne and Wood (2010) argued that many European countries have used the American stereotype of gangs to inform their definitions, which has negatively influenced empirical research. For example, researchers accepting definitions of gangs and the risk factors for participation from the United States may fail to research adequately their own local contexts (Alleyne & Wood, 2010, Klein, Weerman, & Thornberry, 2006). The risk in doing this is that they may not capture the at-risk youth for gang affiliation, which may fail to inform appropriate local prevention programs and strategies.

In the Canadian context, gangs may not present themselves to be tight-knit groups where they are ethnically cohesive or wear gang colours to show solidarity, which is more common in the US. Outside of the US, research suggested that most street gangs consisted of loosely connected cliques or social networks, rather than coherent, organized groups (McConnell, 2016; O'Brien et al., 2013). Given this, it is important to develop a localized interpretation and definition of a gang to accurately measure the scope of gang prevalence, and to avoid over or under estimating the size and scope of the problem (O'Brien et al., 2013). An over or under estimation of the problem can influence the allocation of resources (e.g., increased or decreased monetary funding for prevention programs) and lead to ineffective solutions (e.g., prevention

versus police suppression) (O'Brien et al., 2013). It is clear from reviewing the literature that there is no universally accepted definition of a youth gang, but, for the purposes of this major paper, the definition of a youth gang will be any durable street-oriented youth group whose own identity includes involvement in illegal activity and may present as a group united by mutual interests (Chu et al., 2014).

## Strategies and Programs for Youth At-Risk for Joining Gangs

As a result of youth gangs receiving academic, law enforcement, and media attention over the last 30 years, many gang prevention, intervention, and suppression programs and initiatives have been established (Spergel, 2006; Wong, Gravel, Bouchard, Morselli, & Descormiers, 2012). This literature review will describe each of these types of programs below.

### Prevention Programs

Some of the leading scholars have defined prevention programs as consisting of three different levels; primary, secondary, and tertiary (see Esbensen, 2000; Hennigan et al., 2015; Hennigan et al., 2013). In general, prevention strategies might target risk factors leading youth to gangs or they might target youth already involved in gangs through strategies that may prevent gang membership or even seek to prevent gang-related crimes (Wong et al., 2012).

Primary prevention programs are broad community based initiatives aimed at all youth within a specific community, such as secondary school students, and frequently includes components that support the youth's family (Hennigan et al., 2013; Ngo et al., 2011; Tanasichuk et al., 2010). Esbenson (2000) provided the Gang Resistance Education Training (GREAT) program as an example of a primary prevention school based initiative that focuses on general

delinquency. The GREAT program was introduced by the Phoenix Police Department in 1991 to provide all students with resistance tools to prevent them from being lured into gangs (Esbensen, 2000). The GREAT program offers 14 different programs concentrating on violence, drug, and other social problem prevention strategies (Esbensen, 2000).

Though these programs are useful for the positive development of youth, they have not been successful in reaching and preventing youth who are at-risk for gang affiliation (Hennigan et al., 2013). Wong et al. (2012) similarly described primary prevention programs as preventive awareness, which may lead at-risk participants (with no specific focus) through school-based curricula, information sessions, after school activities, and sports programs.

Secondary gang prevention programs are designed for those youth who have been identified as being at-risk for gang affiliation by presenting with one or more established risk factors (Hennigan et al., 2013). As a result, the success of secondary gang prevention programs rests on them being able to identify youth who are at risk for joining gangs (Hennigan et al., 2013; McConnell, 2016). In their review of gang prevention programs, Wong et al. (2012) stated that secondary gang prevention programs required the community's awareness and support to bring to light the dangers of vulnerable youth joining gangs in their local contexts. Secondary prevention programs can provide targeted outreach to youth in gang-dominated neighbourhoods (Wong et al., 2012).

Tertiary gang prevention programs target individuals who are already gang involved. This level of programming commonly encompasses intervention and suppression tactics (Esbensen, 2000). For the purposes of this major paper, intervention and suppression programs are examined individually on their own below.

### *Wraparound Milwaukee*

Dr. Lenore Behar coined the term "wraparound" in the early 1980s to describe the application of comprehensive community-based services and programs for youth and their families as an alternative to institutionalizing youth and then reintegrating them back into the community (Robison & Ogles, 2011; VanDenBerg, Bruns, & Burchard, 2003). The term wraparound is a shorthand reference to flexibility, comprehensiveness of service delivery, and a number of approaches to keep at-risk children and youth in the community (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014; VanDenBerg et al., 2003). The wraparound process is a collaborative team-based approach between program members, at-risk youth, parents, community members, mental health professionals, and educators, who all meet regularly to improve an identified at-risk youth (VanDenBerg et al., 2003).

The wraparound team is entrusted with designing, implementing, and monitoring an individualized plan using a collaborative process driven by the perspective of the family and the at-risk youth by placing them at the centre of the services. From this position, the at-risk youth receives a combination of professional supports through trained experts and natural supports through, for example, community members. Most importantly, the plan set in place for an at-risk youth is based on the strengths and culture of the youth, their family, and community (VanDenBerg et al., 2003). According to Ogles and Robison (2011), this process of developing and applying individualized strength-based services, that includes input from the family and community partners, has become known as the "wrapping" component, and "around" is in reference to the at-risk youth in a manner that meets their specific needs (p. 3091).

Since the 1980s, the wraparound process has been applied to a variety of settings and disciplines, such as mental health, social services, and youth at-risk for gang affiliation

(VanDenBerg et al., 2003). The type of case management employed to assist at-risk youth follows the system of care (SOC) framework (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014), and aims to address the underlying causes of the at risk behaviour with the youth in local community settings, as opposed to formal institutions that may be located outside of the youth's community (Robison & Ogles, 2011). The SOC framework incorporates a comprehensive spectrum of services and supports that are organized into a coordinated network to meet the diverse and changing needs of children and adolescents with severe emotional and behavioural disorders (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014; Robison & Ogles, 2011).

The wraparound process is triggered when a youth exhibits problematic behaviour that is often detected by multiple child-serving agencies, where the behaviours have reached a point where informal or formal approaches are insufficient or have failed (Robison & Ogles, 2011). The wraparound approach involves the development of individualized, collaborative efforts, and comprehensive plans through the involvement of multiple service agencies (Robison & Ogles, 2011). For example, key partners from the CJS, schools, community representatives, and family advocates may create an oversight team that focuses on the at-risk youth. From these key partners, a specific team leader is selected that manages the coordination of finances, intra or inter agency collaboration, and manages the day-to-day operations (Robison & Ogles, 2011). Simultaneously, a team of service providers from various other systems and agencies work with meeting family members, the team leader, and community leaders to help develop a wraparound plan for the at-risk youth (Robison & Ogles, 2011).

As a leading example of this type of approach, the Wraparound Milwaukee program was established in 1994 in Milwaukee County Human Services Department, and concentrated

primarily on youth with mental health needs (Kamradt, 2000; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014). In an effort to refine the theoretical and focus of a wraparound approach, the National Wraparound Initiative drafted the following ten principles:

1. ***Family voice and choice.*** Family and youth/child perspectives are intentionally elicited and prioritized during all phases of the wraparound process. Planning is grounded in family members' perspectives, and the team strives to provide options and choices such that the plan reflects family values and preferences.
2. ***Team based.*** The wraparound team consists of individuals agreed on by the family, and is committed to the family through informal, formal, and community support and service relationships.
3. ***Natural supports***. The team actively seeks out and encourages the full participation of team members drawn from family members' networks of interpersonal and community relationships. The wraparound plan reflects activities and interventions that draw on sources of natural support.
4. ***Collaboration***. Team members work cooperatively and share responsibility for developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a single wraparound plan. The plan reflects a blending of team members' perspectives, mandates, and resources. The plan guides and coordinates each team member's work toward meeting the team's goals.
5. ***Community based***. The wraparound team implements service and support strategies that take place in the most inclusive, most responsive, most accessible, and least restrictive settings possible, and that safely promote child and family integration into home and community life.
6. ***Culturally competent***. The wraparound process demonstrates respect for and builds on the values, preferences, beliefs, culture, and identity of the child/youth and family, and of their community.
7. ***Individualized***. To achieve the goals laid out in the wraparound plan, the team develops and implements a customized set of strategies, supports, and services.
8. ***Strengths based***. The wraparound process and the wraparound plan identify, build on, and enhance the capabilities, knowledge, skills, and assets of the child, family, the community, and other team members.
9. ***Unconditional***. A wraparound team does not give up on, blame, or reject children, youths, or their families. When faced with challenges or setbacks, the team continues working toward meeting the needs of the youth and family and toward achieving the goals in the wraparound plan until the team reaches agreement that a formal wraparound process is no longer necessary.
10. ***Outcome based***. The team ties the goals and strategies of the wraparound plan to observable or measurable indicators of success, monitors progress in terms of these

> indicators, and revises the plan accordingly (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014, pp. 3-4).

The focus on the outcomes and evaluation of the wraparound process is important because program outcomes are used as the primary basis of evaluation (Robison & Ogles, 2011). At the front-end, it appears that the wraparound process may be effective based on its theoretical framework focused on active partnerships between the youth's family and community to provide tailored services to specific populations and settings. For instance, according to Kamradt (2000), the Wraparound Milwaukee program found greater success when it targeted youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. In this context, in terms of performance measures and outcomes, Kamradt (2000) found that, in terms of recidivism, one year after being enrolled in the program, most rates of recidivism among participants were cut in half.

Suter and Bruns (2008) (see original source in Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014) examined the outcomes of wraparound services by conducting a review of 36 studies. The researchers found that the majority of these studies had substantial methodological issues where there was a lack of comparison groups. In 2009, the same researchers conducted a meta-analysis examining the effectiveness of outcomes of wraparound processes (Suter & Bruns, 2009). For their research, they selected experimental and quasi-experimental designs and only seven studies met their selection criteria out of their previous 36 studies (Suter & Bruns, 2009). Of the seven studies, only two were focused on juvenile youth involved in the justice system. In their latter study, they found that the youth receiving wraparound services were better off than 63% of those who received conventional services. Suter and Bruns (2009) defined conventional services as "…typical services that youth would have received if they were not enrolled in the wraparound program" (p. 339). However, overall, Suter and Bruns (2009) concluded that the

wraparound process showed only modest levels of effectiveness, and it did not meet the strict requirements for evidence-based treatments.

Bruns (2008) attempted to answer the question of whether wraparound worked from an evidence-based perspective, and he concluded that there was no simple answer. First, Bruns (2008) stated that wraparound programs have been applied to a variety of populations from various ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds targeting specific concerns, such as depression and violent behaviours. Second, wraparound is continually evolving and is being applied in each geographical place differently depending on the context, and this makes it difficult to assess from an evidence-based perspective because there is no consistency. Similarly, since the wraparound is designed for individuals, it is difficult to identify a control group to determine the effectiveness of the program. "This means that the target outcomes will be different for each participant, making it harder to find impact, especially when only one or two outcomes measures are used (e.g., a standardized behavioral or functional scale)" (Bruns, 2008, p. 110). Howell (2010) echoed Bruns (2008) stating that highly prescriptive or exemplary programs are often difficult to replicate with high levels of fidelity in comparison to the original program.

**Targeted Prevention and Intervention Programs**

Gang intervention programs are similar to gang prevention programs; however, the difference is that gang intervention programs target known gang members. These types of programs offer gang involved youth an alternative legitimate means to pro-social lives by removing barriers that have kept them stuck in gang life (Dunbar, 2013). Some of the ways that barriers are removed are by introducing and educating gang-involved youth on key issues, such

as promoting and protecting safety, addressing personal issues, promoting positive change, access to education and employment, and encouraging pro-social relationships to name a few (Dunbar, 2013).

Though all of these are important factors, two of the most influential factors that have had a positive effect with at-risk or gang involved youth are protection, in terms of safety education and skill development, and pro-social relationships. Dunbar (2013) raised important challenges that at-risk or gang involved youth may face when attempting to leave a gang or distance themselves from those who are gang involved. In this case, youth will calculate the risks to themselves, friends, and family when making the decision whether to leave or distance themselves from gangs. Gang intervention programs can serve these types of at-risk or gang involved youth by providing a safe place to go to, as well as creating and maintaining pro-social bonds with non-gang involved persons. Through pro-social association, at-risk or gang involved youth can reform their identities through the assistance of intervention type therapies that many programs at this level offer, such as cognitive behavioural therapy or aggression replacement therapy. Gang intervention programs focus on the behaviour of the known gang members through social skills seminars, conflict resolution workshops, and job skills training (Wong et al., 2012).

### *Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach (GPTTO)*

In the 1980s, the Boys and Girls Club of America (BGCA) began a pilot project in partnership with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to examine designing programs aimed at youth gang prevention and intervention (Arbreton & McClanahan, 2002). As a result, the Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach (GPTTO) and Gang

Intervention Through Target Outreach (GITTO) programs were created to address the increased youth gang problem in the US (Arbreton & McClanahan, 2002). Both of these programs were designed to help youth 6 to 18 years old stay out of gangs and steer clear of their gang-associated behaviours (Arbreton & McClanahan, 2002; Tanasichuk et al., 2010).

In total, 33 BGCA piloted the GPTTO and GITTO programs in the 1990s across the US in keeping with the OJJDP's earlier version of the Comprehensive Community-Wide Model (this model will be discussed below). Some of the reasons why the BGCA was a suitable piloting organization for the GPTTO and GITTO programs was because it had been established for over a 140 years and had historically dealt with and operated within marginalized communities. More specifically, the BGCA served youth who were disengaged from school, had been in trouble, and were not connected with pro-social supports and resources. Also, based on a survey conducted by Kotloff, Wahhab, and Arbreton (1997) (as cited in Arbreton & McClanahan, 2002), 54% of youth aged 10 to 18 years old served by the BGCA were at-risk for negative long-term outcomes.

Because the GPTTO and GITTO are community and site-based prevention and intervention strategies, the BGCA formed broad initiatives to attract youth at risk for gang involvement, as well as youth who were already gang involved through four key components. First, as with most gang prevention or intervention programs, community mobilization was initiated by seeking local resources to combat the gang problem. Second, recruitment of 50 youth at-risk for gang involvement and 35 youth who were already gang involved took place through outreach and referrals. Third, both programs (GPTTO and GITTO) aimed to develop positive experiences for both types of youth (prevention and intervention) by developing interest-based programs. Last, the youth in these programs were individually managed through case

management across four key partners; law enforcement/juvenile justice, schools, families, and the BGCA. The goal of individualized case management was to decrease the number of at-risk youth from joining gangs and decrease the number of youth already gang involved by measuring the reduction through negative contacts with the justice system and increases in school attendance to improve academically.

In October 1997, Public and Private Ventures, with funding from the OJJDP and the Pinkerton Foundation, commenced a program evaluation of the GPTTO and GITTO with the goal of examining implementation approaches (Arbreton & McClanahan, 2002). This goal was expanded to include evaluating outreach, recruitment, and youth outcomes through four key questions: (1) Did the Clubs (in reference to BGCA) reach their intended population of youth? (2) Did the Clubs engage youth and provide them with positive developmental experiences? (3) Did youth's participation in clubs play a positive role in and have the desired effects on their lives? (4) How did Clubs accomplish their GPTTO and GITTO goals and what challenges did they face?

Some immediate limitations of the evaluation were that it involved 21 BGCA sites from across the US at a time when the GPTTO was still relatively new. Similarly, GITTO has just developed its strategy around the same time period. Additionally, the BGCA were required to recruit 50 youth at-risk for gang involvement and 35 youth who were already gang involved. Though a major component of both the GPTTO and GITTO programs is recruiting hard to reach youth, the manner in which the programs were implemented in each community varied due to a variety of factors, such as each community having its own gang related structures and cultures, which required appropriate program adaptability to fit their specific needs.

In terms of addressing the issue of the GPTTO and GITTO evaluations, each BGCA recruited, on average, 44 out of 50 and 34 out of 35 youth, respectively, over the course of one year from November 1997 to October 1998. An interesting finding was that, for both the GPTTO and GITTO programs, the top three recruitment sources included direct outreach by program staff (36%), parents or relatives (27%), and schools (18%). Surprisingly, the police had zero referrals for the GPTTO program and only 6% of the referrals for the GITTO program. To ensure that the GPTTO and GITTO programs targeted the appropriate youth, the Gang Risk Profile, developed by Irving Spergel, was utlized (please see Table 1 below) (Arbreton & McClanahan, 2002).

**Table 1: Gang Risk Factor Profile**

| Risk Factor | Description | Point Assigned |
|---|---|---|
| Gang Behaviour | Youth exhibits gang signs, symbols, and indicates s/he identifies with a gang but does not yet claim s/he is a gang member nor is s/he identified by others as such | 3 |
| Family Issues | The youth comes from a highly distressed or crisis ridden family from a gang problem neighbourhood. Youth comes from a family where relatives have been gang members | 2 |
| Peers | Youth whose friends are gang members | 3 |
| Youth Behaviour | Youth with a record of delinquency | 2 |
| | Youth who hands out on the streets with or in gang neighbourhoods with friends who are not necessarily gang members at the time | 2 |
| | Youth who does poorly in school | 1 |
| | Youth who does not identify with conventional adults or organizations | 1 |
| | Youth who tends to act out, has low self esteem, especially in pre-adolescent or early adolescent years | 1 |
| Socio-Economic Status | Youth is a member in a low income family in a racially/ethnically segregated neighbourhood. | 2 |

Source: (Arbreton & McClanahan, 2002)

The Gang Risk Profile uses a point value assigned to a set of factors associated to gang involvement. A youth who scores seven or higher is considered to be at high risk of gang involvement. However, it is not clear how the program designers decided that the Gang Risk Profile would be a suitable screening tool to determine whether a youth is at risk for gang involvement. Some of the factors, such as the socioeconomic status of the youth, peer group associations, and identifying with conventional adults or organizations, appear to be out of the control of youth, as these might be circumstantial to the communities in which the youth live and are attached to. To this end, the factors that the Gang Risk Profile brings into scope to determine at risk-youth may be too general and broad to be effective (Wong et al., 2012). Wong et al., (2012) found that other risk factors representative of deeper perspective offered better evidence for determining gang involvement, such as the importance of delinquent friends, non-delinquent problem behaviours, series of negative life events, favourable attitudes about breaking the law, lack of parental supervision/monitoring, and commitment to negative peers. Nonetheless, the evaluation found that 64% of the youth referred were included in the GPTTO program and 94% in the GITTO.

In total, 48% of the GPTTO and 96% of the GITTO youth were between 13 to 19 years old, which reflected the target population well. The majority of the youth were male and came from low income families and communities. In terms of delinquent behaviour, a common characteristic of the youth was assaulting another person (70%). However, the difference between the GPTTO and GITTO was significant at the level of police contact, with a rate of 24% compared to 58%, respectively.

With respect to the manner in which the researchers measured if the GPTTO and GITTO engaged youth and provided them with positive developmental experiences was interesting. In

terms of measuring the engagement of youth, this was determined by how often each youth attended the program over the course of a year (e.g., not at all, 1-2 times per week, 2-3 times a week, and almost every day). Here, 27% and 32% did not attend the GPTTO and GITTO programs at all, respectively. According to Arbreton and McClanahan (2002), 96% of GPTTO and 86% of GITTO youth received adult support from at least one BGCA staff member, on average. However, this contact with a BGCA staff member, in terms of frequency or what and how the youth received the interaction as positive, was not provided.

Regarding whether the GPTTO and GITTO programs played a positive role in the lives of youth and whether the desired effects occurred as intended, Arbreton and McClanahan (2002) stated that a 12 month follow-up was conducted with youth in both programs to compare pre-and-post program results to measure five key areas; relationship behaviours, positive use of leisure time, school behaviours, delinquent behaviours, and gang behaviours. The researchers decided to include a comparison group from nearby schools and other youth-serving organizations. According to Arbreton and McClanahan (2002), the results were insignificant. More specifically, "…the youth served by the prevention Clubs came to the Club having already engaged in significantly more in almost every delinquent and gang behavior measured and faring more poorly at school than had their comparison group who did NOT participate in the Clubs" (p. 26). Youth served in the GITTO program were similar to their comparison group, but were more likely to belong to a gang and perform poorly in school.

The last part of the evaluation examined how GPTTO and GITTO accomplished their goals and what challenges they faced. Arbreton and McClanahan (2002) found that the most frequent contact that the program facilitators had was with schools and families. Police officers and probation officers especially valued their time spent at the GPTTO and GITTO programs. It

appeared that these types of programs served as an outlet to some justice system professions, such as probation officers. The justice system professions, like police officers and probation officers, were one of the many partners that the GPTTO and GITTO worked with to receive youth referrals, but, as mentioned earlier, they scored lower than direct outreach efforts, family, and school referrals. Direct outreach efforts were the most successful in recruiting youth as some GPTTO and GITTO programs hired former gang members who knew where at-risk and gang involved youth hung out.

Once the youth were recruited, the GPTTO and GITTO programs' strategy was to meet the needs and interests of the youth. For example, if a particular youth wanted to become better at playing a team sport, it may be possible that appropriate conflict resolution skills may need to be taught or developed. Some of the challenges were also related to meeting the interests and needs of the youth, such as job-related skills and employment, to mitigate the effects of living in an impoverished area of the community. Some internal organizational challenges were presented in the form of staff turnover and the processes involved in the documentation of intake forms and tracking changes during case management. Despite some of the challenges and the overall results, Arbreton and McClanahan (2002) concluded that the GPTTO and GITTO programs were promising based on the delayed onset of gang behaviours, fewer contacts with the justice system, and improved schools grades and peer family relationships (Arbreton & McClanahan, 2002; Tanasichuk et al., 2010). It was not clear in Arbreton and McClanahan's (2002) report how exactly these positive outcomes were achieved or how long-lasting they were.

In addition, Arbreton and McClanahan (2002) pointed to an earlier research article by Thornberry and Burch (1997), in which these researchers stated that the GPTTO program was promising because "…youth participate in structured recreational and educational activities

focusing on personal development to enhance communication, problem solving, and decision making skills" (p.4). However, no detail as to the exact structure or process of the GPTTO was provided by Thornberry and Burch (1997). Additional attempts to locate a formal structure for the GPTTO and GITTO programs through an internet search were also unsuccessful.

Braga (2016) raised the concern that the recent popularity of gang outreach programs, also referred to as "streetworker" programs, despite evaluation studies suggesting that control versus treated groups underscores the effectiveness of the prevention program, was problematic. Braga (2016) argued that McCord, a prominent researcher in the field of youth gang prevention, supported the assertion that some programs could increase crime, drug use, diminish life coping skills, and result in premature death as a result of gang-related homicide (Braga, 2016). Braga (2016) also argued that there were numerous grey areas and unpublished research on program evaluations that found harmful and undesirable effects related to gang prevention programs. Some of the programs evaluations based on the 1980s and early 1990s initiatives, according to Braga (2016), were not done formally and properly with accepted methodological approaches so their results should be considered with caution.

**Suppression Programs**

Specialized suppression programs are led by police gang units and date back to the 1960s to deal with the increased youth gang activity in large urban areas, such as Los Angeles, California and Chicago, Illinois (Spergel, 2006). It was thought that youth gangs contributed disproportionately to crime, causing a political and social panic to correct the problem (Spergel, 2006). Specialized police gang units were trained in procedures to target and suppress youth gangs through proactive approaches. The basic principles of operating police gang units still

exists and involves proactive police officers both in uniform and plainclothes who identify, photograph, and record youth gang members (Spergel, 2006). Police gang units have trained other parts of the CJS and school systems, which has led to the further legitimization of youth gang suppression tactics (Spergel, 2006). Though the focus of this major paper is not on suppression programs, a brief overview will be provided to provide some context as to what specific function they serve.

Klein (2004) (as cited in Spergel, 2006) maintained that the essence of youth gang suppression is the punishment, control, and separation of gang involved or affiliated youth, including the use of surveillance and information systems as a means of informal and formal social control. To this end, police are less concerned with the underlying or root causes that make youth attracted to gangs and focus on aggressive stops, searches, and sweeps of youth in an effort to lay charges and suppress violence (Spergel, 2006).

Gang suppression programs mainly employ two strategies; targeted policing and pulling levers (Wong et al., 2012). In terms of targeted policing, specific neighbourhoods are focused upon by increased police patrols concentrating on gang-related crimes, such as drug trafficking, firearms, and homicides. The goal of this approach is deterrence through the arrest of gang members and their associates, with the anticipated outcome of achieving a general deterrence effect on gang activity (Wong et al., 2012). Pulling levers strategies involve reaching out directly to gang leaders and letting them know that gang activity will no longer be tolerated. Pulling the lever refers to using all legally available options to stop the violence. Though this strategy is an effective solution to gang-related violence, it has traditionally focused exclusively on gun violence (Wong et al., 2012).

Suppression efforts are primarily law enforcement approaches that seldom reach out to partners from prevention and intervention programs (Klein & Maxson, 2006). The overall goal of suppression is to reduce gangs and gang activity, and some communities have complained about such efforts claiming that they increase police acts of racism and violence (Klein & Maxson, 2006). Though the results of suppression are easy to measure and have arguably been successful based on police making several arrests, advancing investigations in regard to chronic gang problems, and decreases in the number of homicides and shootings, suppression is not sustainable because they are typically human and technologically resource heavy (Hennigan et al., 2013; Wong et al., 2012).

**Comprehensive Programs**

One of the most popular approaches to address youth gang involvement are comprehensive programs. Comprehensive approaches are those that combine prevention, intervention, and suppression initiatives, and are designed to have long-lasting effects on youth gang involvement (Hennigan et al., 2013; Howell, 2000; Spergel, 2010). These programs commonly have identifiable outcomes that are measurable over time. For example, outcomes that can be measured are the reduction of youth joining gangs, a reduction in gang-related violence, and the overall reduction in the total number of gangs and gang members in a jurisdiction (Hennigan et al., 2013). The comprehensive program approach stipulates that prevention, intervention, and suppression approaches be used simultaneously within a community setting (Wong et al., 2012).

The comprehensive model focuses on forming partnerships with local private and public agencies (e.g., law enforcement) to provide educational, emotional, and treatment services to

youth at risk of joining a gang or those who are already involved in gangs. Comprehensive programs are difficult to implement because they require a long term commitment from a large number of stakeholders, substantial financial commitments, the ability to offer a wide range of services, and consistent leadership (Hennigan et al., 2013). One of the most common comprehensive programs is the Comprehensive Gang Model (CGM).

### *Comprehensive Gang Model (CGM)*

The creation of the CGM dates back to 1987 when the OJJDP launched a Juvenile Gang Suppression and Intervention Research Development Program directed by Dr. Irving Spergel (Spergel, 2010). Prior to that, Spergel (1990) argued that there had only been four basic strategies to deal with youth gangs; local community organization or neighbourhood mobilization, youth outreach or street gang work, social and economic opportunities provision, and gang suppression and incarceration. According to Spergel (1990), by taking a more comprehensive approach, the importance of community disorganization and lack of opportunities should guide the development of strategies to deal with the youth gang problem, especially in cities where the problem is chronic.

Spergel (1990) proposed that a special coordinated effort should be taken by local authorities with statutory powers that should take place between public, voluntary agencies, and community organizations to integrate efforts between police, prosecutors, judges, correction officials, parole, and probation, with support from schools, businesses, and local community groups. Spergel (1990) recommended that leadership of such an undertaking should be taken by an official agency with a tradition of rehabilitation, community education and involvement, and offender supervision, possibly a probation, parole, or law-enforcement agency. In addition,

police departments should expand their gang units to include intelligence gathering, community prevention, social support (e.g., counseling, social, and vocational referrals), community development, and coordinated criminal justice strategies (Spergel, 1990). In terms of schools and social agencies, they should give priority to juvenile offenders and adolescents to collaborate with law enforcement to foster gang program development (Spergel, 1990).

Spergel (1990; 2010) was one of the first academics in the US to conduct a national assessment of the gang problem and to propose a detailed comprehensive program. Spergel and his team made visits to various sites throughout the US to identify programs that were promising or "most promising" (Spergel, 2010, p. 1). According to Spergel (1990), promising programs were, for example, "multiple agency service approaches, including value transformation, deterrent, and supervisory strategies, and closely integrated with community involvement and targeted on younger gang youth, may be promising" (Spergel, 1990, p. 257). Of note, a further examination of the works of Spergel and those who have cited his works provided no clear evidence-based results to indicate why these approaches were "promising" (see Spergel, 1990, 2006, 2010; Thornberry & Burch, 1997; Totten, 2008). Spergel (2010) asked program representatives five survey questions and their responses helped develop the five key strategies used to build the Comprehensive Gang Program that became a part of the Comprehensive Gang Model (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Five Strategies of the Comprehensive Gang Model**

| Strategy | Description |
|---|---|
| Community Mobilization | Involvement of local citizens, including former gang-involved youth, community groups, agencies, and coordination of programs and staff functions within and across agencies. |
| Opportunities Provision | Development of a variety of specific education, training, and employment programs targeting gang-involved youth. |
| Social Intervention | Involving youth-serving agencies, schools, grassroots groups, faith-based organizations, police, and other juvenile/criminal justice organizations in "reaching out" to gang-involved youth and their families, and linking them with the conventional world and needed services. |
| Suppression | Formal and informal social control procedures, including close supervision and monitoring of gang-involved youth by agencies of the juvenile/criminal justice system and also by community-based agencies, schools, and grassroots groups. |
| Organizational Change and Development | Development and implementation of policies and procedures that result in the most effective use of available and potential resources, within and across agencies, to better address the gang problem |

Source: (Spergel, 2010, p. 2)

In the early 1990s, the CGM went through some amendments to create a simplified model for implementation that included five steps. First, the community needed to recognize that there was a gang problem. Second, the community needed to conduct an assessment of the size and nature of the youth gang problem that could lead to the identification of a target community or population. Third, a steering committee, in collaboration with local leaders, must set goals and objectives to address the identified problems. Fourth, the steering committee had to identify and

develop programs, strategies, services, tactics, and procedures consistent with the five core strategies.

In 2007, the initial demonstration site representatives met to discuss and establish best practices based on their experiences with implementing comprehensive gang programs. This resulted in a further refinement of the main steps associated with this form of a comprehensive program; convening a steering committee, administering the program, assessing the gang problem, planning for implementation, implementing the program, selecting program activities, and sustaining the program (Spergel, 2010).

A steering committee is the taskforce behind the organizational structure to combat the issues. At a minimum, Spergel (2010) stated that the steering committee should consist of representatives from law enforcement, corrections, probation/parole, schools, social services, local units of government, faith organizations, employment programs, and community residents (Spergel, 2010). Between these partners, the steering committee forms overarching policies to oversee the project and maintains interagency communication. For example, memorandums of understanding (MOUs) may be drafted to become more efficient in communicating with one another when it comes to information sharing regarding youths.

Once a steering committee is formed, a lead agency is selected to provide the administrative framework to help facilitate the work between the intervention team and the steering committee (Spergel, 2010). Some important administrative duties of the lead agency include providing a secure location to hold vital data on clients within the program, tracking activities of partner agencies, coordinating regular meetings, framework for hiring staff, and administrating funds and grants received (Spergel, 2010). As a result, lead agencies will incur significant costs in terms of dedicating specific employees and time towards such efforts.

Comprehensive gang programs experts stated that the best lead agencies, in no specific order, were law enforcement, prosecutors/criminal justice agencies, city government, schools, local service providers, and other state agencies. However, each one of these agencies comes with their own distinct disadvantages and advantages.

Law enforcement agencies receive updated crime and gang trends due to the nature of their role in society. In addition, law enforcement agencies have access to financial and business management supports. The disadvantage is that community members may not understand the extent of the role of the police in addressing the gang problem (Spergel, 2010). Other staff members, such as outreach workers, that work with at-risk or gang affiliated youth may find it difficult to trust the law enforcement agencies, which may lead to obstacles in transparency with information (Spergel, 2010).

Prosecutors and other criminal justice entities may be advantageous as lead agencies from the perspective of enabling or leveraging the participation of law enforcement agencies in the program. Since prosecutors and other related criminal justice entities receive many of the reports (e.g. charges) from police, they may be able to detect some issues that can be corrected through comprehensive gang problems as opposed to formal court procedures. The disadvantages of these organizations as lead agencies are largely attributed to the way they may be perceived by the community. For example, they may be perceived as only being interested in prosecuting and incarcerating gang members. Additionally, they may be disconnected from the communities where such programs may operate to help at-risk and gang affiliated youth (Spergel, 2010).

A city government as a lead agency will afford access to key personnel in various city departments and elected officials that may help with increased buy-in to the program. Since city officials, such as mayors, work closely with law enforcement agencies, they may also be

leveraged to provide their input and assistance. A key advantage of a city government as a lead agency is that they may be able to help shape policies and practices for involved inter-agencies. The disadvantages for city government as a lead agency revolve around a concern that a program may lack stability over time due to changing political regimes. Similarly, budgets and fiscal restraints may result in the comprehensive program coming to a premature halt or not receiving the type of support required (Spergel, 2010).

School districts have obvious advantages, such as access to educational and performance data pertaining to a youth. Also, access to the youths' family and history through formal school records and informal knowledge through teachers who have had contact with the focus youth or siblings are an advantage (Spergel, 2010). School districts also typically overlap with where the programs are likely to exist and they can absorb the program once the funds are spent. Some disadvantages of having school districts as lead agencies might be school policies that focus on only serving at-risk or gang affiliated youth if they are students within the school district, or make it difficult to hire some outreach youth workers whom have a criminal record (Spergel, 2010).

Local service providers as lead agencies have advantages, such as a history of work and experience in the community and with the target population (Spergel, 2010). However, they may not possess sufficient in-depth knowledge regarding gang-involved youth and related programming strategies to provide the most effective help. At times, other priorities of the local service agencies may supersede those of assisting at-risk and gang involved youth. State agencies also possess few advantages and generally have more disadvantages. For example, they may not be centrally located in the target area, therefore, they may be perceived as outsiders (Spergel, 2010).

Once the steering committee decides on a lead agency, a position of a program director is created with a carefully crafted job description. A program director must possess the knowledge and skills in the areas of criminal justice, education, social services, research (e.g., data collection, analysis, and methods), developing short and long-term plans, and conflict resolution to name a few (Spergel, 2010). The overall coordination and leadership of the comprehensive gang program is conducted by the steering committee, lead agency, and program director. These three conduct a detailed assessment of the gang problem prior to implementing the program. The assessments are conducted methodically to determine the types and levels of gang activity, gang crime patterns, community perception, and what the service gaps are (Spergel, 2010). Some things that are considered at the assessment level are the scope and breadth and the issues. For example, is the focus community-wide, a few blocks, and is the assessment going to be over a few months or more (Spergel, 2010).

Through the results from the assessment stage, the steering committee guides the planning and implementation phases taking into consideration all of the findings. As the transition from the planning to implementation of the program takes place, the steering committee must bring together all the partners to ensure program sustainability. For example, the intervention team is a core component of the program as it identifies youth, engages them to work with the team, assesses them on an individual basis to determine their needs, goals, and issues, and develops individualized intervention plans (Spergel, 2010). According to Spergel (2010), the intervention teams should consist of personnel from criminal justice related fields, schools, and outreach agencies.

Outreach workers serve a distinct role in that it is their primary responsibility to build relationships with those youth in the program, as well as to reach out to other gang-involved

youth in the community. Outreach workers are essentially the recruiting tool for the program and are best able to provide assistance to families. Outreach workers are also able to help with solving conflicts by acting as a liaison between the youth in the program and service providers, such as schools and law enforcement.

The appropriate selection of law enforcement personnel is crucial to the success of the program as they should possess a strong connection to the at-risk or gang-involved youth and the community. Law enforcement personnel should have the ability and capacity to build trusting relationships with their target youth population and possess a clear understanding of the gang culture that exists. Some strategies that Spergel (2010) recommended to build awareness of the program internally for law enforcement agencies is to have personnel rotate periodically to offer their services to the program and the target youth. This may also help in building a broader base of trust between the community and law enforcement (Spergel, 2010). In terms of selecting programs and services that are offered, they should be designed to fit the unique needs of the youth, families, and communities that they serve.

An early indication of some success of the CGM was the Gang Violence Reduction Program during the evaluation period from 1993 to 1998 in Little Village, Chicago (Spergel, 2010). This community consisted of low and working-class persons, overwhelmingly of Mexican-American descent. The program targeted mainly older gang members aged 17 to 24 years old, from two of the area's most violent gangs, the Latin Kings and Two Six. In the Little Village community, these two gangs accounted for approximately 24 homicides in the preceding two years leading up to the implementation of the program (Spergel, 2006, 2010). The program provided a combination of outreach, services, suppression, and surveillance of known gangsters.

Outreach was primarily conducted by former gang members belonging to each of the gangs in an effort to prevent and control gang conflicts involving drug related activity. Most of the services to the target population were also provided by outreach activities in the form of crisis intervention, family counseling, and referrals to other services. Suppression of the two gangs was conducted by intelligence gathering between law enforcement, probation, and parole in an intelligence-led manner to arrest those persons who were most contributing to the ongoing gang conflict (Spergel, 2006)

Spergel (2006) found some key changes in the program youth from a social and arrests context. Spergel (2006) examined the program effects on approximately 200 youth over a three-year time period and, at the yearly mark, comparative assessments were made. Self-report comparisons of year one and year three from the program youth indicated that the program helped reduce criminal involvement in property crimes and violent offences, including robbery, gang intimidation, and drive-by shootings. Overall, with respect to the quantity of violence offences, the average was reduced from 28.7 in year one to 6.6 by year three. Spergel (2006) also stated that all youth reported that they were less involved in all types of gang-related offences. Spergel (2006) attributed some of these changes to life-course and life-space factors, such as maturation and a reduction in the rate of offending as one got older, structural factors, such as familial socioeconomic status, family disruption/crowding, parental divorce, and foreign place of birth, and individual factors, such as temperament and the attitudes and behaviours of siblings or peers (Devers, 2011). A limitation of Spergel's (2006) evaluation was that it did not factor in nor provide an in-depth analysis of life-course events, and what factors exactly led to the decreases in gang involvement or law enforcement contacts. It could be assumed that the decreases could be attributed to a combination of factors related to life-course trajectories, prevention,

intervention, and suppression activities, and not exclusively to participation within the gang program.

Wong et al. (2012) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of evaluation studies looking at the effectiveness of street gang control strategies and concluded that these comprehensive programs provided only anecdotal evidence of effectiveness. Wong et al. (2012) reviewed a Public Safety Canada paper that classified the comprehensive gang model as promising (see Linden, 2010) despite its various limitations and challenges that came with program implementation. Also, despite the title stating "comprehensive", Wong et al. (2012) found that the program in practice had a dominant suppression aspect. In terms of program implementation, Wong et al. (2012) argued that fidelity was important from the perspective of the degree to which a program was implemented based on its design. Fidelity is measured through the effects observed following implementation that can be attributed directly and exclusively to the program. Second, high implementation fidelity is determined based on the programs' ability to be replicated and applied to different community settings.

Wong et al. (2012) found that many of the programs that they evaluated, which claimed to have been based on Spergel's CGM, had such low fidelity that they were categorized into different program strategies, as opposed to being comprehensive. One of the reasons why Spergel's CGM had such low fidelity was because there are no clear guidelines on how to implement the model's five core strategies (Wong et al., 2012). Another reason why Spergel's (2010) model was not universally effective across all communities was because it expects that all program partners and agencies will be on the same page, in terms of program delivery, responsibility, and accountability, which is an unrealistic goal (Wong et al., 2012).

## Chapter 3: Findings

According to Census 2016, the City of Surrey is the second largest municipality in BC with a population of 517,887 (Statistics Canada, 2017b). Over 161,955 people in Surrey are under the age of 24 years old, which makes it a city with a relatively young population in comparison to many other municipalities across Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017a). From a language and diversity perspective, over 240,700 of the population's mother tongue language is other than English or French (official languages of Canada). The most widely spoken mother tongue other than an official language is Punjabi, which is spoken by 106,100 of the people in Surrey (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Given this, it is no surprise that almost 33% of Surrey's population is South Asian (Statistics Canada, 2017a). The median for total economic household income in Surrey is $89,793, which is more than $1,000 above BC's total median economic household income (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Surrey also consists of BC's largest school district, Surrey School District, and is home to one of Canada's largest South Asian student populations (Statistics Canada, 2017a; Surrey Schools, 2018).

In comparison, Abbotsford is the fifth largest municipality in BC with a population of 121,279 (Statistics Canada, 2017b). Once dubbed the murder capital of Canada (Hopes, 2015, September 24), Abbotsford's population of persons under 24 years old is 44,255 (Statistics Canada, 2017a). From a language and diversity perspective, 45,235 peoples' mother tongue is other than one of Canada's two official languages (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Punjabi is the mother tongue of 28,050 people (Statistics Canada, 2017a). In Abbotsford, nearly 26% of the population is South Asian (Statistics Canada, 2017a). The median total economic family income is $84,723, which is more than $5,000 below the total economic family household income for BC (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

Though Surrey and Abbotsford are two of the fastest growing cities socio-economically in BC, they have had their challenges with respect to the recent increases in youth gang violence. Many of the youth featured in the recent media and police reports, which have been alleged to be associated to the Lower Mainland gang conflict, are of South Asian, Punjabi background. According to CFSEU, there have been 344 gang-related and attempted homicides in BC between January 1, 2006 to June 30, 2015 (Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit, 2015a). Based on the data collected in relation to the current gang conflict in Surrey, the average age of a victim is 24 years old and 82% of gang-related homicides involved a firearm (Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit, 2015a). Moreover, according to CFSEU (2015a), 25% of the victims of these homicides are Indo-Canadian.

The community outcry for the safety of the public and positive youth engagement has been heard in several community events led by the Surrey RCMP and APD in which they have expressed their role and responsibility in working with community partners to prevent youth from entering into a gang lifestyle. The Surrey RCMP has been strategically involved in several youth programs geared toward various levels of prevention since the 1990s (e.g. primary, secondary, and tertiary) (Sanchez, Rai, & Buna, 2017). The APD created their Gang Suppression Unit in 2010 to address gang violence in the city in a comprehensive manner (Abbotsford Police Department, 2012).

**Surrey Wraparound Program**

The Surrey Wraparound program was created in April 2008 due to the rise in youth gang violence in Surrey (Public Safety Canada, 2012, n.d.). According to a Public Safety Canada (2012) report, Surrey had a higher level of crime rate relative to the rest of the province. For

example, in 2009, Surrey had 99.4 incidents per 1,000 population compared to the provincial average of 90.1 per 1,000 population. The Surrey Wraparound program was supported by the NCPC and the YGPF with an initial grant in the amount of $808,000 (Public Safety Canada, 2012). At the time of program implementation, it was operated by the Surrey School District and its key partners, the City of Surrey and the Surrey RCMP (Public Safety Canada, n.d.; Sanchez et al., 2017). The broad objective of the program was to offer supports to youth at-risk for gang affiliation or to those who were already gang-involved by enhancing their social and problem-solving skills.

The program operates on a philosophy of care and addresses mental health and substance abuse issues through an adopted wraparound approach that includes a core set of concepts and principles, including voice and choice, team-based, natural supports, collaboration, community-based, culturally competent, individualized, strength-based, and persistence (Sanchez et al., 2017). At-risk youth are placed at the centre of care and are aided by a facilitator and a wraparound team to support and engage their well-being (Public Safety Canada, 2012). The Surrey Wraparound program is delivered through the partnership between the City of Surrey, Surrey RCMP, and the Surrey School District (Public Safety Canada, 2012).

The way the Surrey Wraparound program process works is that an at-risk youth for gang affiliation or a gang-involved youth can be referred to the program through school staff, the RCMP, or the family (Public Safety Canada, 2012). Once a youth is referred, a referral form is completed to assess various risk factors to determine program eligibility and create an intervention plan (Public Safety Canada, 2012). At the individual level, factors are assessed, such as prior delinquency or drug trafficking, desire for status, identity, and self-esteem (Public Safety Canada, 2012; Sanchez et al., 2017). At the family level, dysfunction, single parent homes, and

whether family members are in a gang are assessed (Public Safety Canada, 2012; Sanchez et al., 2017). At the peer pressure level, a determination is made whether a high commitment to delinquent peers exists (Public Safety Canada, 2012; Sanchez et al., 2017). At the schools level, poor school performance, high levels of anti-social behavior, a lack or decline of attendance and achievement or attachment at and to school are strong indicators of risk factors (Public Safety Canada, 2012; Sanchez et al., 2017). At the community level, whether cultural norms support gang behaviour and the presence of gangs and drugs in the neighbourhood are assessed (Public Safety Canada, 2012; Sanchez et al., 2017).

All of the above information is examined against three specific scales to determine whether the youth is a suitable candidate for the program. These three scales are the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI), the Risk Assessment Tool (RAT), and the Surrey Gang Entrenchment Scale (SGES). The YLS/CMI is a risk assessment and case management tool that has been validated through research (Public Safety Canada, 2012, n.d.) and uses a 42-item checklist that produces a detailed survey of a youth's risks and needs that can be used to create a case management plan (Sanchez et al., 2017). The YLS/CMI was developed using longitudinal data on risk and protectors factors of youth involved in criminal activity and focuses mainly on assessing traditional risk factors (Public Safety Canada, n.d.). The YLS/CMI tool allows for program staff and other criminal justice practitioners and professions to identify a youth's major needs, strengths, barriers, and incentives (Public Safety Canada, n.d.).

Some YLS/CMI assessment items include a history of conduct disorder, current school or employment problems, criminal friends or associations, alcohol/drug problems, leisure/recreation activities, personality/behaviour, family circumstances/parenting styles, and attitudes/orientation towards pro-social and anti-social behaviours (Sanchez et al., 2017). All Surrey Wraparound

program staff have been trained and certified in the use of the YLS/CMI, and it is used to determine the eligibility and risk level of the youth when entering the program (Public Safety Canada, 2012). Although currently not validated, the RAT tool was developed by the program to address non-traditional gang risk factors, such as being the firstborn son, the only son in the family, whether the family owned their business, and whether the youth's peer group is uni-or multi-ethnic (Public Safety Canada, 2012). Another tool that currently remains not validated, the SGES, was also developed by the program to determine if participants were gang affiliated, gang members, or associated with gang members (Public Safety Canada, 2012).

The Surrey Wraparound program aims to provide pro-social alternatives for youth at-risk for gang involvement, youth displaying gang associated behaviours, and those currently involved in gangs (Public Safety Canada, n.d.). As a result, the City of Surrey, in collaboration with Surrey RCMP and Surrey School District, has developed a series of anti-gang crime prevention strategies aimed at at-risk youth and their families to prevent gang related crime (Public Safety Canada, 2012, n.d.). The Surrey Wraparound program targets youth aged 11 to 17 years old who are enrolled in Surrey School District, and who are classified as being at-risk of becoming involved in a gang or gang activity using the above mentioned assessment scales (Public Safety Canada, 2012; Sanchez et al., 2017). Specifically, "the program targeted two distinct groups of youth. The first was "traditional" at-risk youth who experience poverty, substance abuse and unstable home situations. The second were youth who were predominantly South Asian, middle-class, with families who worked long hours, often in a family business" (Public Safety Canada, 2012, p. 2). The second distinct group that the Surrey Wraparound program targets fits the definition of non-traditional at-risk youth defined above.

The Surrey Wraparound program offers a comprehensive and collaborative support system for students who exhibit signs of gang association behaviour based on traditional and non-traditional risk factors (Sanchez et al., 2017). The goal of the program is to attach youth to school and the community by building trust and positive relationships, while reducing risk factors for gang association and membership (Sanchez et al., 2017). The table below further details the differences between traditional versus non-traditional gang risk factors, according to the Surrey Wraparound program.

**Table 3: Surrey Wraparound Program Risk Factors**

| Traditional | Non-Traditional |
|---|---|
| Lower income neighbourhoods based on postal codes | Higher income neighbourhoods based on postal codes |
| Single parent households | Intact families – both biological parents in home |
| High chances in addresses and schools attended | Stable employment |
| Inconsistent employment | Larger extended families |
| Achieved lower academic marks | Achieved higher academic marks |
| Aggression | Depression |

Adapted from: (Sanchez et al., 2017)

Of note, while these traditional and non-traditional risk factors are interesting, there was no research or information to indicate why these particular ones were chosen by the program.

A further examination of the foundation of the Surrey Wraparound program led to the development and implementation process of the program. The Surrey School District initially collaborated with the Surrey Community Action and Assessment Network (CAAN) to conduct a comprehensive inventory of the available services offered by local agencies. Through this meeting, the foundation for the selection of supports for youth in the Surrey Wraparound program was formed. A variety of language and cultures were taken into consideration to have

an impact on prevention and intervention through education and awareness (Public Safety Canada, n.d.). An internet search of the Surrey CAAN did not lead to any websites or specific literature on the organization. However, a report was located, completed by Bhatt, Tweed, and Dooley (2010), in which they described CAANs as helping coordination efforts to decrease youth involvement in gang related activities. CAANs consist of a variety of key partners, such as schools, law enforcement, and local service providers (see Bhatt et al., 2010). Information regarding the Surrey Wraparound program from the perspective of the Surrey CAAN findings would have been helpful to analyze what the issues and challenges were surrounding at-risk and gang-involved youth in Surrey.

In addition, from conducting further background research regarding the Surrey Wraparound program, it was discovered that the Surrey School District's Youth Diversity Liaison Program played an important role in providing culturally sensitive and relevant support for diverse students and their families who were experiencing a variety of challenging circumstances (Public Safety Canada, n.d.; Surrey Schools, 2016). The Youth Diversity Liaison Program continues to provide knowledge of gang activities to its key partners through documented incidents of youth gang associated behaviour on school property that includes confrontations, intimidation, and serious assaults with a weapon, such as a firearm or a machete (Public Safety Canada, n.d.). Similar to the Youth Diversity Liaison staff, outreach workers from the City of Surrey and Pacific Community Resources Society report gang-related behaviour to the Surrey Wraparound program partners that occurs in a variety of areas of the city, such as bus loops, city parks, and recreation centres (Public Safety Canada, n.d.). Limited information was available in regard to the Surrey Wraparound program's key partners and structures. Also, there

was little detailed information available regarding the precise process of the Surrey Wraparound program.

According to the Public Safety Canada (2012) report, a wraparound meeting can take place in one of three ways; one-on-one mini wraps, quick wraps, and full wraps. This process was cited by referring to an evaluation report by Debicki and Cailleaux from 2009, entitled *Wraparound Facilitator Certification Four Day Training.* This evaluation was sponsored by Atira Women's Resource Society and Wrap Canada, which had no direct bearing on the process of the Surrey Wraparound program.

To determine if the Surrey Wraparound program was effective (a term used loosely in the evaluation without clear measurable factors), a preliminary assessment of 40 of the 75 youth engaged in the programs' activities shortly after implementation was completed (no exact date provided) (Public Safety Canada, n.d.). The preliminary findings indicated that the program was targeting the appropriate youth and based on the referrals received by partner agencies. Many of the youth were classified as high-risk based on the referral form and risk assessment tools (Public Safety Canada, n.d.). The preliminary findings did not indicate what the backgrounds of the youth generally were (e.g., social, ethnic, and gender) or whether they were representative of traditional or non-traditional risk factors. A potential major limitation of the Surrey Wraparound program was that, when it was first implemented, it did not capture youth at-risk for gang affiliation or those who were already gang-involved as they presented non-traditional risk factors (Public Safety Canada, 2012).

Another preliminary assessment finding was that when the program began in 2008, it had 40 youth referrals and, with significant media exposure, the program quickly reached its capacity and a waitlist was created (Public Safety Canada, n.d.). Coupled with this difficulty to meet

demand, the program began to receive a greater number of elementary school aged youth referrals, even though the program was originally designed to meet the needs of older, high school aged youth between 15 to 17 years old. However, the program administrators quickly realized the target age of youth in reality was 11 to 14 years old (Public Safety Canada, n.d.). It appeared that, though the pre-implementation assessments that took place, the youth target population was not adequately anticipated, making it difficult for program administrators to provide adequate service delivery. It appears that program staff responsible for managing the youth struggled with time and resource allocation. According to the Public Safety Canada (n.d.) report, the time and resource intensiveness of participant risk assessments were lengthy and in-depth, which often made them re-visit the max capacity number of the program to possibly reduce it or hire more staff.

A formal evaluation report by R.A. Malatest & Associates was completed in 2011 entitled an *Evaluation of the Abbotsford Youth Crime Prevention and Surrey Anti-Gang Wraparound Projects* (not available for review based on internet searches) (Public Safety Canada, 2012). This evaluation took place from January 2009 to March 2011. At that point, 132 youth were admitted into the program (Public Safety Canada, 2012). The ratio of youth managed by program staff was approximately ten youth to one staff member (Public Safety Canada, 2012). The average age of the youth was 14 years old, 84% were male, and 60% were visible minorities, while 13% were Aboriginal and 27% were Caucasian/other (Public Safety Canada, 2012). The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which each program was implemented as intended, to assess whether the intended outcomes were achieved, to provide a description of cost analysis of the program, and to identify the lessons learned (Public Safety Canada, 2012).

The evaluation methodology employed a quasi-experimental design that matched a comparison group of youth that was drawn from the waitlist. The matching of the comparison youth group to the program youth group was based on gender, age, and ethnicity (Public Safety Canada, 2012). At the time of the comparison youth group selection, the only data available was negative police contact history (Public Safety Canada, 2012). Police contact appeared later in Smith-Moncrieffe's (2013) report. It may be possible that police contact was a factor used to measure the Surrey Wraparound program's success over time, as the program reported a 67% reduction in police contacts compared to the control group (see Public Safety Canada, 2012, 2013; Public Safety Canada, n.d.; Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013).

An interesting note regarding the comparison youth group is that they were taken into the program as space became available (Public Safety Canada, 2012). However, the evaluating researchers claimed to have maintained the traits of the comparison group youth through propensity scoring[6], but details as to how propensity scoring was conducted were not stated in the evaluation. This may be problematic as it could be possible that the comparison group youth may have been exposed to services or treatments provided by the program rendering some reliability issues on the outcome results during pre- and post-testing that was used to assess the effect of the program in relation to the youths' criminal activity (Public Safety Canada, 2012).

For data collection, the three assessment tools, the YLS/CMI, RAT, and the SGES, were used for the evaluation (Public Safety Canada, 2012). In addition, qualitative interviews were conducted with school, police, program management, facilitators, and two program graduates. File reviews of police data on negative youth contacts and school administrative data were also used as a part of the data collection to get a more complete view of program effectiveness. In

[6] Propensity scores, when used in observational studies, estimate the effect of research participants receiving treatment when random assignment of treatments to the research participants is not feasible (Thavaneswaran & Lix, 2008). In this case, the treatment is considered to be the Surrey Wraparound program.

terms of reaching the target youth, based on data collected through the YLS/CMI, it was determined that 95% of the youth were classified as being at a high or moderate risk. The SGES indicated that 53% of the youth were gang affiliated. These findings appeared to be contradictory to the earlier preliminary assessment that was conducted that found that the YLS/CMI was not an effective tool to detect non-traditional risk factors. Also, the SGES is not a validated, tested tool, and no explicit information is available on it to provide further insight into the risk factors or the methods to make assessments using the tool.

Surprisingly, the evaluation determined that program fidelity was not assessed due to the assessment tools (YLS/CMI, RAT, and the SGES) not being administered by persons with specific training (Public Safety Canada, 2012), which is contradictory to another report that stated that the program staff were trained on the YLS/CMI (see Public Safety Canada, n.d.). It was interesting to note that the program staff responsible for completing the referral form and running the youths' alleged risk factors against the three scales were not trained, but were able to categorize the youth as being at-risk for gang affiliation or gang-involved. This evaluation also made the assumption that, based on their interviews with program staff, the program appropriately followed the wraparound philosophy of care (Public Safety Canada, 2012). Such a claim cannot be validated with the information provided in the report, and the wraparound philosophy of care is just the tenets or principles of a wraparound approach. These principles do not indicate how well a program was implemented. However, the evaluation did state that the program staff felt that there was inadequate time and planning in place prior to rolling out the program, which may be a more accurate account (Public Safety Canada, 2012).

In terms of outcomes, the evaluation's qualitative data findings indicated that there was increased awareness among school staff regarding the Surrey Wraparound program (Public

Safety Canada, 2012). Awareness was mostly raised through literature-based programs, multiple presentations made about the program, and several media stories about the program (Public Safety Canada, 2012). Similarly, the RCMP increased their awareness about the program and promoted its use to other police officers. This police awareness was believed to be as a result of their move away from working in the same venue as school staff (Public Safety Canada, 2012). The levels of awareness to use the program appears to have been mostly brought to the attention of those key players (e.g., Surrey RCMP and Surrey School District) who should be already aware of the program once it had been implemented. There was no focus on making the families, who are directly facing the challenges of their children and who are at-risk for gang affiliation or who are gang involved, more aware of the program. Echoing this, there appeared to be no focus on making community partners more aware of the program to help curb youth gang affiliation.

The program evaluation appeared to have measured effectiveness either through increased police awareness of the Surrey Wraparound program or externally measuring the police impact on youth. Again, with respect to the 67% reduction in negative police contacts, no explicit timeline was provided, and no critical in-depth comparison was made with the comparison youth group. In terms of gang prevention, the evaluation was only able to provide one occasion of a documented incident (Public Safety Canada, 2012).

With respect to the program's ability to enhance school attachment, the evaluation indicated that there was a limited effect on absenteeism and tardiness based on 18 youth participants' data from 2009 to 2010 (Public Safety Canada, 2012). An interesting finding from conducting interviews with youth revealed that increased school attendance was actually sometimes linked to gang involvement or where gang members attended school to associate with each other (Public Safety Canada, 2012). Overall, the evaluation considered the Surrey

Wraparound program to be cost effective based on 132 participants in the program from 2009 to 2011. It was calculated that the average cost per participant was $8,786 (Public Safety Canada, 2012). The program evaluators concluded that it was better to enroll youth in this type of a program, rather than spend more on youth in terms of incarceration.

Smith-Moncrieffe's (2013) report entitled *Youth Gang Prevention Fund Projects: What did we learn about what works in preventing gang involvement?* classified the Surrey Wraparound program as being primarily "police contact" based on the youth's behaviour that led them to be in contact with police officers as a result of their violent and non-violent gang involvement. Success was measured by the program if youth behaviours, such as theft and selling drugs, were reduced, in addition to fewer negative police contacts (Public Safety Canada, 2013; Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013). However, no specific definition or rationale was provided behind the term "police contact" in relation to the Surrey Wraparound program selecting this as a measurable outcome factor to indicate success. In addition, a majority of the information cited in this report regarding the Surrey Wraparound program appeared to have been re-cited from the Public Safety Canada (2012) report. In addition, Smith-Moncrieffe's (2013) report and the Public Safety Canada (2012; n.d.) reports do not provide any evaluation commentary regarding the Surrey Wraparound program's impact.

**Abbotsford Youth Crime Prevention Project**

Similar to the Surrey Wraparound program, the Abbotsford Youth Crime Prevention Project (Abbotsford program) is also based on the Wraparound Milwaukee program (Public Safety Canada, 2016). The Abbotsford program was implemented in April 2009 and works with two distinct groups; youth who are street entrenched, sexually exploited, and homeless who are

at risk for gang and criminal involvement, and South Asian youth who are at risk of joining gangs or those who are already involved in gangs (Public Safety Canada, 2016). The Abbotsford program's objective is to prevent crime though an integrated approach of mentoring and outreach services for the youth and their families (Public Safety Canada, 2016). Some partner agencies that help with the program delivery are the Abbotsford Community services through the South Asian Community Resource Office (SACRO) and Wrapping Abbotsford Youth with Support (WAYS), which is located within the Youth Resource Centre (YRC). SACRO provides services for the second target population, South Asian youth, while YRC provides services for the first target population (Public Safety Canada, 2016).

The Abbotsford program was implemented, in part, because, in 2008, crimes against persons increased by 13% (Public Safety Canada, 2016). By the end of the first three months of 2009, four gang-related homicides involving firearms had occurred (Public Safety Canada, 2016). In May 2009, a double homicide of two local high school students occurred (Public Safety Canada, 2016). Leading up to these violent incidents, a research study conducted in 2007 revealed that, in terms of the first defined group, the Abbotsford program catered to as many as 50 youth who were involved in the drug or sex trades (Public Safety Canada, 2016). The second group, South Asian youth, were, at that time, disproportionately involved in youth gangs (Public Safety Canada, 2016).

Of note, the Public Safety Canada (2016) report did not cite a source for the claim about the proportion of South Asian youth who were gang related or involved. In fact, this claim is allegedly largely based on anecdotal and media information that focused on the degree of family conflict, generational issues, gang activities, and violence within the South Asian Abbotsford community (Public Safety Canada, 2016). At a conference presentation, Totten (see Totten,

2008), a gang researcher, made the claim that "…many South Asian gangs are involved in trafficking marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, and these gangs have been linked with incidents of extreme violence, including numerous murders involving South Asian youth (18 to 35 year olds) in the BC Lower Mainland in the last three years" (Public Safety Canada, 2016, p. 2). What this quote does not take into consideration is that Abbotsford was once dubbed the murder capital of Canada (approximately around 2009) as a result of the increased outlaw motorcycle gang presence and the Bacon Brothers influence over the drug trade within this region (Hopes, 2015, September 24; Langton, 2013). In addition, most BC gangs are not uni-ethnic or homogenous (McConnell, 2016).

Even in consideration of the unique BC context of gangs (McConnell, 2016), like the Surrey Wraparound program, the Abbotsford program aims to assist targeted youth based on the same Milwaukee Wraparound principles and strategies (Public Safety Canada, 2016). Youth are selected for the program through self-referrals, referrals from their families, police, or community members (Public Safety Canada, 2016). The referral is generally based on three things; the youth is already in a gang and wants to exist, there is a risk that the youth might get involved in gang or criminal activity, or they are at risk of becoming involved in street-related gang behaviour. The program targets youth in these two groups who are between the ages of 15 to 19 years old and live in the Abbotsford area. In addition, the Abbotsford program also includes their parents or guardians as participants in the program (Public Safety Canada, 2016).

Even though both of these focal programs are based on the Milwaukee Wraparound, and even considering that they are similar cities with ethno-cultural and linguistic population characteristics, there appears to be a difference with the target age group for the youth. None of the evaluation reports stated why this difference existed or what the unique characteristics of

each city were. For example, if at-risk or gang-involved youth in Surrey were younger than those in Abbotsford, and thus required a differing age range to focus on.

The Abbotsford program was consistent with the Surrey Wraparound program on the basis of once a youth is in the program, they are provided with tailored wraparound services, including being assigned a program staff member. The expected outcomes are mostly social and behavioural changes. For example, through program assistance and counseling, it is expected that the youth will be able to overcome or reduce the damage caused by alcohol or drug use. Providing access to pro-social activities, such as sports or cultural-based dance classes, there is also support for youth to re-engage in school and explore post-secondary options.

The Public Safety Canada (2016) report contains a long list of partners with whom it hopes to achieve the above stated positive outcomes, including:

- The City of Abbotsford
- Abbotsford Police Department
- Abbotsford School District (including secondary school administrators and the school district transitions teacher**)**
- Mennonite Central Committee: Employment and Community Development BC
- CYRUS Centre
- Fraser House Youth Alcohol and Drug Society
- British Columbia (Abbotsford) Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Abbotsford Youth Commission
- Youth For Christ
- Adolescent Crisis Response Program
- Fraser Valley Youth Association
- STOLO/Xyolhemeylh Child and Family Services
- Abbotsford and Mission Child and Youth Committees
- Fraser Valley Community Action Team against sexual exploitation
  (Public Safety Canada, 2016, p.3)

However, there is no mention of which agency is the lead agency, and what the other agencies' distinctive roles are. To this end, there is no specific mention about how the Abbotsford program

will meet its outcomes, or how they accomplish their goals in terms of inter-agency workings, working with at-risk or gang-involved youth, and their families.

The preliminary evaluation only included some basic level information about implementation. For example, the observations section just had the headings of *Staff Training, Intensive Assessment, Multiple-Approaches to Services Youth, and Families and the Community,* which were followed by simple descriptive statements that did not include any real value (Public Safety Canada, 2016). In addition, only some details were provided regarding the preliminary statistical information provided by the police or school board regarding any at-risk or gang involved youth. This was troublesome as some youth had little contact with the school district, which meant that little information was available about them that could be used in the program (Public Safety Canada, 2016). No additional information was available on this program's evaluation.

Table 4 demonstrates what all NCPC's YGFP hopes to achieve. In terms of the evaluations conducted on Abbotsford program, similar to the Surrey Wraparound program, minimal evidence is supportive of the overall desired outcomes. In terms of the other desired outcomes listed in Table 4, none of the evaluation reports provided detailed evidence of success indicators. For example, positive change in awareness, skills, and attitudes would have been an interesting desired outcome to test for program effectiveness as it would have provided meaningful insight regarding the motivating factors for especially non-traditional youth to join gangs in BC.

**Table 4: Youth Gang Prevention Fund Desired Outcomes and Indicators**

| Desired Outcomes | Examples of Indicators Used to Measure Change in Desired Outcomes |
|---|---|
| Positive changes in knowledge and understanding | Knowledge about use of drugs and consequences<br>Understanding effects of substance use |
| Positive change in awareness, skills and attitudes | Awareness of consequences of drug use or gang involvement<br>Attitudes toward the justice system, anti-social peers, substance abuse or the education system<br>Decision-making skills |
| Positive changes in risk and protective factors and/or anti-social behaviour | School attendance<br>Emotional regulation<br>Family relationships<br>Alcohol and drug abuse<br>Association with anti-social peers |
| Offending behaviour and/or gang membership | Police contacts<br>Arrests<br>Gang exits |

Adapted from: (Public Safety Canada, 2013)

**The Role of the Police in Youth Gang Programs**

An interesting finding from both the Surrey Wraparound program and Abbotsford program is that they both appear to place a lot of emphasis on the police's role in reducing the youth's contact with them. For instance, Smith-Moncrieffe (2013) labeled the Surrey Wraparound program as a "police contact" based, without providing evidence about the reduced youth contact with the police being a measurable outcome beyond what may be perceived as surface level. For example, mere reduced police contact does not factor in other program components, such as mentoring or skills development, that may have contributed to reduced negative police contact. In addition, both the Surrey Wraparound program and Abbotsford program place their respective police agencies as important key partners in facilitating their programs. However, the Surrey Wraparound and Abbotsford program evaluations did not present much information on the benefit of having the police involved. To this end, it is necessary to explore what has led the police in BC to be involved in programs designed to prevent at-risk

youth from being involved in gangs, and helping gang-involved youth make alternative life choices.

To provide some socio-legal context to the police's role in preventing or intervening in at-risk or gang-involved youth in BC, in 1996, the province underwent a major restructuring of several provincial ministries and criminal justice organizations to include and offer a wide range of programs and services for youth justice, which contributed to a downward trend of youth custody numbers leading into 2014 (Corrado et al., 2016). Specifically, what led to the declines in the numbers of youth custody were, in part, the efforts undertaken by the police to bring a multifaceted education and instructional program during the training of all police officers focused on youth justice (Corrado et al., 2016). Under the *YCJA* (2002), the police have the ability to exercise discretion and divert a youth to an intervention program, rather than to process the youth through the formal youth justice system (Corrado et al., 2016). In most cases, diversion from a police perspective is recommended for a youth who has only a few negative police contacts, has engaged in a less serious offence, and does not have a previous justice involvement (Corrado et al., 2016).

According to Corrado et al. (2016), the value for police to refer a youth to a community-based program is arguably empowering and appealing to the police because it provides an element of direct decision making and a quick consequence or outcome for the youth, as opposed to entering the formal court process. Corrado et al. (2016) noted that, in BC, there has been increased concern about a few youth offenders, who, in some capacity, are targeted by adults or directed by them to commit murders to intimidate others who are typically involved in drug trafficking. As a result, cities in the LMD have created specialized gang units to discourage youth from joining gangs through specialized programs. For example, the Surrey Gang

Enforcement Team (SGET) is actively involved in the Surrey Wraparound program to deliver presentations and engaging with at-risk or gang-involved youth (Sanchez et al., 2017).

The police are able to track alternative options with youth through the Police Records Information Management Environment (PRIME), which is a BC-wide police-work related interface that allows for data and file management, as well as ease of information sharing across various police agencies (Giacomantonio, 2015; Kaloti, 2009). Similarly, the Justice Information System (JUSTIN) allows for police and Crown counsel to manage and process incidents and track judgments against youth to ensure that the *YCJA* (2002) is used and applied as it should be in accordance with diversion operations (Corrado et al., 2016).

By reviewing this history of the police being restructured to handle youth justice issues from a more informed, educational, and multi-faceted approach through the discretion afforded by the *YCJA* (2002), it appears that society have come full circle to providing youth with care to correct the gang problem in BC. In this light, it is plausible to infer that the police in Surrey and Abbotsford are able to refer youth to the Surrey Wraparound and Abbotsford program based on the quality and frequency of contact they may have with the particular youth. For example, if police have determined a pattern for a youth to be consistently found in the company of gang-involved youth in vehicles or other public places where he or she is a party to an offence, the police may refer that youth to a program, such as Surrey Wraparound or Abbotsford program.

The Surrey Wraparound and Abbotsford program do not clearly mention the value of having the police-involved in their programs, but it is possible that the police play an important role from multiple perspectives (Spergel, 2010). The police are arguably the most informed, outside of the community, regarding trends in youth gangs. The police are an intelligence-based

organization that store vast amounts of data on systems like PRIME that are able to link and track associations, connections, and crimes committed by gang members.

From a comprehensive model perspective, the police are able to operate in a fluid manner that enables them to assemble funding and resources to go from prevention to suppression, depending on the severity of gang issues or conflicts (Spergel, 2010). The advantage of police involvement in anti-gang programs is, in part, their ability to assemble and have access to financial and business management supports (Spergel, 2010). The disadvantage, as stated above, is that community members may not understand the extent of the role of the police in addressing the gang problem within their communities and may view gang issues as exclusively the responsibility of the police. For example, Ben-Porat (2008) stated that problem-oriented policing approaches, such as suppression initiatives in particular communities, could lead to over-policing.

The increased police contact youth may experience with an over-policed community could lead to negative perceptions of the police (Ben-Porat, 2008). For example, Hayle, Wortley, and Tanner (2016) found that, when accounting for gender, age, house-hold income, type of living, and self reported delinquency, racial minority youth were more likely to be stopped by police leading to an increased number of police contacts. Further, Hayle et al. (2016) found that street youth who trafficked in drugs or shoplifted were more vulnerable to police stops and searches when compared to their peers who did not engage in these activities. To prevent negative community perceptions of the police, according to Spergel (2010), it is important to include police officers, and by extension their police organizations, that are genuinely interested in helping communities and youth that are negatively affected by gangs.

Since Surrey and Abbotsford are ethnically diverse with unique challenges faced by non-traditional risk factors (McConnell, 2016), it is important to have police officers that are representative of the communities from a diverse ethnic and language perspective who can reach out to youth and their families. Based on research conducted by Ben-Porat (2008), Bortolussi (1999), and Perrott (1999), police officers of ethnic minority background often become police officers to help the community, rather than being driven to be crime fighters in positions of authority. Police officers may be effective in terms of being involved in gang prevention programs, but there needs to be a balance of appropriate levels of policing the community, representativeness of the community, and outreach with at-risk and gang-involved youth.

## Chapter 4: Recommendations and Conclusions

This major paper focused on three key research questions. First, based on the NCPC recognizing three US-based gang prevention programs, what makes these programs "promising"? As stated above, in 2006, the NCPC, as a part of implementing the YGPF, looked to the US to adapt programs for at-risk and gang-involved youth. Smith-Moncrieffe's (2013) report indicated that the three US-based programs in their application to a Canadian context were promising because research indicated that they incorporated a structured curriculum, specific protocols, and dosage recommendations. The only detailed evaluation report found on the GPTTO/GITTO programs was completed by Arbreton and McClanahan (2002), and concluded that these programs were promising because they delayed the onset of gang behaviours, led to fewer contacts with the justice system (e.g., police, probation, or parole), and improved school grades and peer family relationships. Abreton and McClanahan (2002) also referenced Thornberry and Burch's (1997) research in which they stated that the GPTTO program was promising because youth participate in structured curriculum and recreational activities focused on their development into contributing members of society. Abreton and McClanahan (2002) nor Thornberry and Burch (1997) mentioned in their research studies how they respectively measured their promising, positive outcomes. In addition, they appeared to be using different criteria to establish what was promising about each program.

Spergel (1990, 2006, 2010) is a seminal scholar on the topic of comprehensive programs. Spergel's (1990) perspective on promising programs was also slightly varied from Abreton and McClanahan (2002) and Thornberry and Burch (1997). According to Spergel (1990), promising programs comprise "…multiple agency service approaches, including value transformation, deterrent, and supervisory strategies, and closely integrated with community involvement and

targeted on younger gang youth, may be promising" (p. 257). In this way, promising programs appear to be those focused slightly more on suppression.

In relation to determining a promising program, program fidelity is important. Wong et al.'s (2012) meta-analysis of evaluation studies concluded that evaluations of comprehensive programs provide only anecdotal evidence of effectiveness. Going back to Smith-Moncrieffe's (2013) statement that the three US-based programs were promising because research indicated that they incorporated structured curriculum, specific protocols, and dosage recommendation, this also appears to be anecdotal based on the literature review presented above.

On the question of whether the Surrey Wraparound and Abbotsford Youth Crime Prevention Project programs are effective in achieving their stated goals and outcomes, the first challenge in answering this is the lack of literature and evaluations available. The term wraparound is a shorthand reference to flexibility, comprehensiveness of service delivery, and approaches to keep at-risk children and youth in the community (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014; VanDenBerg et al., 2003). Suter and Bruns' (2009) research concluded that what constitutes an effective wraparound program is constantly evolving based on the specific needs of a given community. This makes it difficult to assess from an evidence-based perspective because there is no consistency between programs (Suter & Bruns, 2009).

The preliminary evaluations of the Surrey Wraparound program did not yield what can be considered entirely positive outcomes based on the YGPF's list of desired outcomes and examples indicated that are used to measure change in the desired outcomes. For example, the Surrey Wraparound program failed to realize through their pre-implementation process what their actual target age group was (see Public Safety Canada, n.d.). In addition, the Surrey Wraparound program was unsuccessful in including youth that exhibited non-traditional risk

factors. In addition, Surrey Wraparound program evaluations appeared to have measured effectiveness either through increased police awareness of the Surrey Wraparound program or a reduction in negative police contacts among program participants. The latter has been reported anecdotally in many of the reports regarding the Surrey Wraparound program (Public Safety Canada, 2012, n.d.; Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013).

The Abbotsford program, similar to the Surrey Wraparound program, is also based on the Wraparound Milwaukee program. Only one evaluation report was located on this program, which did not provide any detailed information on its effectiveness. In fact, several limitations were highlighted and only some details were provided regarding the preliminary statistical information on at-risk or gang-involved youth provided by the police or school board. This was troublesome as some youth had little contact with the school district, which meant that little information was available about them that could be used in the program (Public Safety Canada, 2016). Moreover, the preliminary evaluation only included some basic level information about implementation. Given this, it is recommended that more research be conducted specifically on at-risk and gang affiliated youth within the LMD because they can be characterised as having unique, non-traditional risk factors (McConnell, 2016). As a result, adapting programs and strategies that may be effective in certain cities in the US may not necessarily be transferable to the LMD context.

The third research question examined what is the added value or the positive outcomes associated with the police being involved in the Surrey Wraparound and Abbotsford Youth Crime Prevention Project programs. The existing evaluations did not specifically shed light on the police's role other than mentioning that youths' reduced contact with the police was a measurable success (Public Safety Canada, 2012). However, these two programs do consider the

police to be key players in terms of information sharing about youth-gang trends, associations, networks, contacts, and the alleged ethno-cultural make-ups of the groups (Public Safety Canada, 2016; Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013; Totten, 2008).

Corrado et al.'s (2016) research provided some broad context for police-involvement in gang prevention and intervention programs that might contribute to positive outcomes. For example, in terms of board information delivery to the community and in schools, the SGET and the CFSEU are involved in conducting presentations and gang awareness (Sanchez et al., 2017). However, based on the mandate of these two organizations, they play various roles in education, prevention, intervention, and suppression. This is consistent with the findings from the comprehensive model perspective that the police are able to operate in a fluid manner that enables them to assemble funding and resources to go from one strategy to another, such as prevention to suppression, depending on the severity of gang issues or conflicts (Spergel, 2010).

One of the most challenging aspects of helping to prevent and intervene with at-risk youth, particularly in the LMD, is that many of these youth appear to come from middle class families, and possess a number of non-traditional risk factors, which the aforementioned programs are not designed to address (McConnell, 2016). Moreover, some families are unwilling to come forward or participate with programs because they fear the stigma they may suffer from the community (Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013). In order to possibly overcome this, as Surrey and Abbotsford are ethnically diverse, it is important to have police officers involved in gang prevention programs that are representative of the community and who can reach out to youth and their families.

In conclusion, based on the extensive literature review conducted for this major paper, future research should focus on collecting qualitative data through interviews with former youth

gang members of middle-class backgrounds that reside in the LMD area of BC to determine what exactly led them to join gangs. More research with and on these youth will provide important information on non-American or non-traditional risk factors that can be used to develop more targeted and effective prevention and intervention programs. Given the different contexts, it is clear that successful programs in the US cannot simply be transplanted to BC with the expectation that they will be equally successful or effective (McConnell, 2016). As McConnell (2016) argued, "…we need to be more strategic and better informed. Nonetheless, some particular, site appropriate programs may have the potential for successful modification for implementation here in Vancouver, such as the Surrey WRAP project… (pp. 196-197)".

Hennigan et al. (2015) stated that the combination of efforts from academics, police, and the community are required to help assist youth to become and remain positive contributors within our societies, and it is critical that prevention and intervention programs are both theoretically sound and effective when applied. It is hoped that this major paper serves as a starting point to help inform discussions around what type of programs are needed for youth who are at-risk for gang affiliation or those who are already gang-involved who come from middle class families.

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