

Preventing Youth Gang Violence in BC:

A Comprehensive and Coordinated
Provincial Action Plan

UBCM Community Safety Forum
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Ministry of
Public Safety
and Solicitor General

Victim Services & Crime Prevention Division

302 – 815 Hornby Street,
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http://www.pssg.gov.BC.ca/victim_services

http://www.pssg.gov.BC.ca/community_programs

Overview of the Strategy

- A joint federal-provincial-municipal-community partnership – Interministry Committee on the Prevention of Youth Violence and Crime
- Coordinated and implemented through collaborative partnerships with communities
- 4-year, multi-staged, community action model that is focused on:
 - building community capacity
 - supporting the direct efforts of local communities

Goals of The Strategy

- The development of evidence-based, coordinated and integrated community plans in seven communities
- Knowledge acquisition - the identification of effective practices for preventing youth gang violence

Planning Context

- Several BC communities have reported an increased level of gang activity and violence:
 - ❑ Over 100 South Asian males have been murdered over the past two decades, with more than 60 homicides since the beginning of 1999;
 - ❑ Kidnapping offences in the Lower Mainland have increased;
 - ❑ An increase in Aboriginal and Hispanic youth gang involvement and violence;
 - ❑ Increase in youth possessing weapons (real and replica), sparked by gang activity.

Planning Context

- Enforcement measures implemented:
 - BC Integrated Gang Task Force
 - Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit
 - Violence Suppression Team
- Rehabilitation measures (Courts):
 - Intensive Support and Supervision Orders
- Need for preventative measures with focus on younger ages – middle school years
- Need for provincial coordination of activities to ensure effectiveness and to avoid duplication

Key Features & Timelines

- **Year 1 (06/07) and ongoing** – Leadership, support and resources provided. Organizing community networks to submit proposals to develop action plans.
- **Year 1 and ongoing** - Community networks supported to conduct needs assessments, inventory of current activities. Build on existing initiatives.
- **Year 2 (07/08)** - Community networks develop integrated, collaborative community-led action plans. Focus on youth engagement and targeting risk/protective factors.
- **Year 3 (08/09)** - Partnerships solidified. Community action plans implemented.
- **Year 4 (2010) and prior** - Evaluation, sustainability planning. Development of provincial communications strategy and evidence-based prevention resources and tools. Wrapping up with a provincial conference.

Community Action & Assessment Networks (CAAN)

- **Vancouver (Urban Aboriginal):** Partnering with the Vancouver Aboriginal-Youth Police Working Group through the Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre Society .
- **Vancouver School Board:** To develop School-based preventative measures.
- **Surrey:** Partnering with the School District, RCMP, City of Surrey and Youth Probation
- **South Asian Community (Lower Mainland):** Partnering with MOSAIC and South Asian Community Coalition Against Youth Violence (SACCAYV)
- **Abbotsford:** Led by Abbotsford Community Services with Abbotsford Youth Commission and Abbotsford Police Department
- **Richmond:** Partnership with Touchstone Family Association and the RCMP
- **Kamloops (Rural/Urban Aboriginal):** City of Kamloops in partnership with the RCMP and three area First Nations Bands (Kamloops, Skeetchetsn and Whispering Pines)

Community Engagement & Selection

- **Level of Need:** Targeting prevention in areas that are high needs, hot spots - where known, identified gang activity exists
- **Level of Risk:** Communities that are at higher risk, greater vulnerability due to risk factors (e.g. socio-economic, history of racism, role of media, school experiences, cross-cultural barriers, lack of opportunities)
- Criteria includes building community capacity, strengths-based, positive youth development/engagement, collaboration, local government support

Provincial Tools & Resources

- 2 Provincial Community Coordinators
 - Coordinate information sharing, networking
 - Identify and disseminate research and resources
 - Attend all CAAN meetings serving as a liaison between community activities and the Provincial Strategy
- Contracted evaluator
 - To work with the Province and Communities throughout the strategy
 - Key learnings inform the evolution of the strategy

Provincial Tools & Resources

- Research into effective practices for the prevention of youth gang violence
 - Conducted by Dr. Mark Totten
 - Examining best/promising practices internationally
 - What works? What doesn't work?
 - What are the elements of these practices that can be applied to the BC context?
- Dissemination of existing tools and resources
 - Print/Multimedia Resources

Provincial Tools & Resources

- Youth Gang Violence Training Day
- Electronic Learning Module – Youth Gang Associated Behaviour and Prevention Strategies
- Information Sheet (Province-wide distribution)
- Youth Against Violence Line Promotion
- Youth Against Gang Violence Media Campaign
- Research & Knowledge Acquisition (emerging issue) - Latin American gangs, their international nature and implications for BC and Canada

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