Youth-serving agency's prevention and intervention programs for gangs

Julianne Gassman
University of Northern Iowa

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YEOUTH-SERVING AGENCY'S
PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION
PROGRAMS FOR GANGS

An Abstract of a Thesis
Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Julianne Gassman
University of Northern Iowa
May 1996
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe the perception of directors of youth-serving agencies on what prevention and intervention programs have been implemented by youth-serving agencies in eastern Iowa. Directors of youth-serving agencies in the following cities in Iowa answered the questionnaire (Gang Program Assessment Questionnaire): Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Iowa City, Coralville, Adel, Ankeny, Bondurant, Indianola, Johnston, Knoxville, Nevada, Newton, Pella, Pleasant Hill, Ames, Des Moines, Makquoketa, and Urbandale.

The Gang Assessment Program Questionnaire was used to analyze the extent to which gangs were perceived as active in each city as well as expectations for future gang concerns. The second half of the questionnaire was directed at agencies that implemented prevention/intervention programs for gangs. Issues that were analyzed were selected behaviors of youth that participated in the gang prevention/intervention programs, staff training and staff meetings, collaboration, other programs offered, and funding.

Frequency distributions and Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient were utilized to describe the data. Open-ended questions were discussed.

This study showed that directors felt that youth who participated in the gang prevention/intervention programs made positive behavioral changes in their lives. There was a positive relationship between all of the behaviors of the youth and staff training. There was a negative relationship between the behaviors of the youth and staff meetings and between the youth's behaviors and collaboration. Agencies reported that there was an increase in funding.
All of the results were the perceptions of the respondents. There was no hard data to prove or disprove the responses. Many youth-serving agencies in eastern Iowa do not implement gang prevention/intervention programs and this may be because the missions of the agencies are not specifically directed toward youth in gangs or gang activity. According to the respondents of the youth-serving agencies most gang prevention/intervention staff are attending training at least once a year but are not meeting on a regular basis. Most youth agencies are collaborating with other organizations in the community. The relationships between these issues and the perceived behavioral changes of the youth that participated in the gang prevention/intervention staff were a reflection of the beliefs of the respondents.
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May 1996
This Study by: Julianne Gassman

Entitled: Youth-Serving Agency's Prevention and Intervention Programs for Gangs

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts

Dr. De Oliveira, Chair, Thesis Committee

Date

April 15, 1996

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Date

April 26, 1996

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Date

May 29, 1996

Dr. John W. Somervill, Dean, Graduate College
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Gangs have existed worldwide for centuries. The United States began seeing gangs as early as the 1800s (Spergel, 1995). Although the existence of gangs dates back much further, researchers began studying gangs in earnest for the first time in the 1960's (Cummings & Monti, 1993). Different researchers define gangs differently. In Cummings and Monti the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department defines youth gang as:

A group of people who form an allegiance for a common purpose and engage in acts injurious to public health and public morals, who pervert or obstruct justice or the due administration of laws, or engage in (or have engaged in) criminal activity, either individually or collectively, and who create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation within the community. (p. 30)

Short, a sociologist, defines a youth gang as "A group whose members meet together with some regularity, over time, on the basis of group-defined criteria of membership and group-determined organizational structure, usually with some sense of territoriality" (Cummings & Monti, 1993, p. 30). This study will use Huff's (1990) definition when using the term youth gang: A group of adolescents and young adults who recognize themselves as a distinct group, are seen by the community as a group or collectively, and engage in illegal activity that requires a response by the law enforcement and has a negative image in the community.

Youth gangs are spreading across the nation and becoming a much more dominant part of society (Harrington-Lueker, 1990). "Gangs are a national problem and are now reported to be an issue to some extent in nearly all states" (Knox, 1994, p. 7). Many researchers explain the existence of gangs as a result of situations that exist in society (Cummings & Monti, 1993; Goldstein & Huff, 1993;
Huff, 1990; Knox, 1994; Quay, 1987). To understand the phenomenon of youth gangs one must analyze the particular society where gangs have evolved and continue to operate. To implement effective programs that will attempt to end the threatening aspects of gangs, research must be conducted in communities on an individual basis where the gangs exist (Cummings & Monti, 1993).

There are many agencies involved in a community's gang response strategy, including the government, businesses and employers, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, community groups and associations, religious institutions, health care institutions, family, social service industry, unions and voluntary associations, and the military (Knox, 1994). Such a community effort is needed to conquer the existence of gangs (Goldstein & Huff, 1993).

One group of agencies involved in the response to gangs are youth-serving agencies (Goldstein & Huff, 1993; Knox, 1994). There are many prevention and intervention programs that are being implemented by youth agencies to counteract the increase in the number of youth gang members. Further study is needed on the relationship between youth-serving agencies and prevention and intervention programs for gangs (Carnegie Report, 1992; Goldstein, 1991).

As explained in Spergel (1995) youth outreach programs were developed in the 1950s for deviant youths, including youth involved in gangs. In the late 1960s and 1970s these programs were nearly forsaken because gang conflict problems became too complex. Youth-serving agencies concluded that youth gang members were beyond social intervention. In the late 1980s youth-serving
agencies became involved in the youth gang problem again and prevention and intervention efforts have again been implemented.

Youth-serving agencies play a very important role in serving young adolescents who face the possibility of gang involvement (Carnegie Report, 1992). The agencies are an integral part in the general gang response strategy, and have the potential to be the beginning point for intervention and prevention programs for gangs (Carnegie Report). They must continually research and conduct an assessment of gangs in their community if effective programs for gangs are to be implemented (Goldstein, 1991). Through research one can acquire source knowledge on why gangs exist and what keeps them alive.

Youth-serving agencies can not fight against the increasing youth gangs and gang members in isolation. It is logical that directors of youth-serving agencies along with other organizations in the community should collaborate and implement effective, preventive and interventive programs (Carnegie Report, 1992; Goldstein & Huff, 1993; Knox, 1994). This collaboration must not only include non-profit agencies but also businesses and other organizations in the community (Goldstein & Huff). Organizations on their own have individual strengths that can benefit the community. A joint planning and coordination of these organizations can benefit communities in a variety of different ways (Carnegie Report).

Statement of the Problem

Youth-serving agencies are directly involved with many of the youth of the community on a daily basis. They have the opportunity to make a very large difference in the lives of these youth and provide rewarding experiences for young adults (Carnegie Report, 1992).
The effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs provided by youth-serving agencies has not been supported by statistical evidence because the number of gang members increased in the 1980s and continue to grow in the 1990s (Goldstein, 1991; Hagedorn, 1988). Researchers explain that many youth-serving programs dealing with youth gangs throughout the United States that began in larger cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago were implemented after the gang problem was very evident in these locations (Goldstein & Huff, 1993; Knox, 1994). In the state of Iowa the gang problem has not yet reached the height that has in many larger cities (Knox).

According to the Carnegie Report (1992) and Bouza (1993) youth-serving agencies in the past have not taken a proactive approach to gangs. Programs in the past have not proven to be effective. Due to the fact that youth gangs in Iowa have not yet reached the level they have in cities like Chicago and New York, youth-serving agencies in Iowa may have a chance to be preventive against youth gangs and gang violence.

The purpose of this study was to describe director's perception of youth-serving agencies on what prevention and intervention programs have been implemented by youth-serving agencies in eastern Iowa to prevent youth from joining gangs. The prevention/intervention programs were described, including whether or not there was a gang problem in the city and if programs existed. Changes in the funding of youth-serving agencies and programs were also investigated. The second part of this study analyzed the perception of program directors concerning both the youth that participated in the programs and the collaboration efforts within the organization and with other organizations in the
community. The director was also asked to describe their agency's gang prevention/intervention programs.

Significance of the Study

The increase in the number of gangs in the past decade should have produced an increase in the number of programs that have been implemented to serve prevention and intervention roles (Carnegie Report, 1992; Cummings & Monti, 1993; Hagedorn, 1988). There is a need to analyze what youth-serving agencies are doing to prevent gangs and gang violence (Carnegie Report). An assessment of what youth-serving agencies are contributing to the gang response strategy and how their programs have changed will produce an evaluation on what has been done in the past so agencies know what changes to implement in the future (Carnegie Report).

Assumptions of the Study

This research was conducted under the following assumptions:

1. All of the directors of the youth-serving agencies were able to answer and complete the questionnaire as directed.

2. Directors responded honestly concerning their agencies performance in prevention and intervention programs for gangs.

3. The questionnaire was reliable and valid.

Delimitations of the Study

The following delimitations were identified for this study:

1. The questionnaire was distributed to directors of youth-serving agencies in selected cities in Eastern Iowa.

2. Only directors of youth-serving agencies participated in the study.
Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were identified for this study:

1. Individual agencies differ in their knowledge of gangs.
2. Subjects were all from eastern Iowa.
3. Subjects may have had differences in their motivation when completing the questionnaire.
4. Subjects may not have been honest when completing the questionnaire.
5. Subjects may not have understood the directions when completing the questionnaire.

Definition of Terms

1. Member: One of the individuals or units belonging to or forming part of a group or organization (Knox, 1994).
2. Youth gang: "Community recognition as a group or collectivity, recognition by the group itself as a distinct group (of adolescents and young adults), and negative response from law enforcement and/or neighborhood residents" (Huff, 1990, p. 44).
4. Youth-serving agency: An organization that serves youth between the ages of 5 to 21, providing programs and activities for the youth during their discretionary time (nonschool hours).
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to describe the director's perception of youth-serving agencies on what prevention and intervention programs have been implemented by youth-serving agencies in eastern Iowa to prevent youth from joining gangs and reach youth who are already in gangs. There is extensive research on gangs and what schools and police forces are doing to eliminate gangs, while very little research has been done on what youth-serving agencies are doing specifically to counteract the increasing numbers of gang membership (Carnegie Report, 1992; Goldstein, Glick, Irwin, Pask-McCartney, & Rubama, 1989; Knox, 1994).

History

Gangs have been a part of society since early in American history (Prothrow-Stith, 1991; Spergel, 1993). The gang originally evolved from "play groups" that were bounded by sharing particular neighborhoods (Cummings & Monti, 1993; Goldstein & Huff, 1993; Thrasher, 1927). Gangs have been changing over the years and today youth gangs are not necessarily bound by neighborhoods (Huff, 1989; Yablonsky, 1962). Researchers are unclear on all of the changes that have been taking place in youth gangs in the last twenty to thirty years (Bookin-Weiner & Horowitz, 1993; Spergel, 1993). One change that is agreed upon by all researchers is that gangs have been growing drastically since 1980, both in number and in the violent crimes that gang affiliated youth commit. (Ellis, 1991; Hamner, 1993; House Committee on Education and Labor, 1991, 1993; R. Thompson & Karr-Kinwell, 1994).
Gangs, along with many other deadly issues in society today, are becoming an every day part of the lives of our children, especially in larger cities. Every major city in the United States is facing a gang problem, although gangs are not exclusive to large metropolitan areas anymore. Suburban neighborhoods are now faced with the problem of gangs moving into their communities (Stabile, 1991). Knox, Jackson, and Houston (1993) conducted a study with police chiefs and sheriffs and found that 99% of those surveyed believed that the expansion of gangs will continue into suburban areas through the 1990s. During the 1980s the Midwest began seeing a rise in gangs in its cities (Hagedorn, 1988).

According to the 1992 Carnegie Report, more research needs to be conducted concerning the implementation on prevention and intervention programs in the community. There is a need for research on gangs because there is very little recent empirical research on modern youth gangs (Huff, 1990). Research, both on youth gangs and existing programs, may provide the knowledge that is necessary so that new programs being implemented can accurately meet the needs of youth (Carnegie Report, 1992; De La Rosa & Adrados, 1993; Huff).

Theories

There are a variety of different reasons that researchers have developed concerning the existence of youth gangs. Among these reasons are five widely accepted theories. Researchers may not agree on one theory but all of the theories make the same assumption that gangs have evolved out of poverty and continue to grow because of poverty (Jankowski, 1991).
There are five accepted theories concerning why youth join gangs. These are the opportunity theory, subculture theory, the theory by Bloch and Niederhoffer, Miller's theory and Yablonsky's theory.

**Opportunity Theory**

According to the opportunity theory, youth reach out to gangs because of frustration that they have in failing to obtain their goals through conventional methods (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; D. W. Thompson & Jason, 1988). In disorganized urban areas where gangs are prevalent and street violence is common there is very little social control. Greater opportunity exists where there is some measure of social control so that youth can set attainable goals. Gangs provide control in a society where there is none. When youth can not reach their goals because of a lack of opportunities, their frustration may cause them to turn to gangs (Cloward & Ohlin). Gangs allow youth to grow within their environment, achieve goals and over time reach a higher status in the gang (Riley, 1991).

Goldstein and Huff (1993) finds that youth have many basic needs that have to be met. If these needs are not met by conventional methods such as families, schools and communities, youth will reach out to an organization that can provide these basic needs, including youth gangs. Gangs give youth a connection with each other by filling the void in their lives that no one else is filling (R. Thompson & Karr-Kinwell, 1994). These needs range from the basic need for food to a feeling of self-worth and purpose in life. A family can usually provide the basic needs that a youth desires, but in many situations families are failing in their responsibilities (Knox, 1994). Gangs provide youth all of the basic
needs that a family can. Many times the bond between youth gang members is even stronger than that of a family (Knox; Prothrow-Stith, 1991).

Problems in school have been found to be a very strong reason why youth join gangs. Goldstein and Huff (1993) explain that there is a numbing effect on youth when some teachers become unresponsive to youth and see their role as mere employees of the educational system. The curriculum seems irrelevant to the youth and far from their aspirations and interests, therefore gangs become more appealing to youth.

Unemployment was found to be one contributing factor for youth joining gangs because it puts a limit on their opportunity. The unemployment rate for teenagers is estimated to be between 40% and 60% (Huff, 1989; National School Safety Center, 1990). "Because drug distribution and other illegal enterprises tend to be equal opportunity employers, the youths find a more level playing field on which to compete than they would find in the legitimate economic markets" (Goldstein & Huff, 1993, p. 467). Two factors drive a gang's drug business: poverty and employment status (Goldstein & Huff).

Hagedorn (1988) illustrated the unemployment rate among gang founders and the percentage of those adults that are still involved in the gang they were in as a youth. There were 175 black males surveyed, 40 Hispanic males and 10 white males. Ten percent of black male gang founders were employed full-time, 14% were employed part-time and, 70% were unemployed. Ten percent of Hispanic male gang founders were employed full-time and 83% were unemployed. Ten percent of white male gang founders were employed full-time, 40% were employed part-time, and 40% were unemployed. The percentage of gang founders who were unemployed was much greater than gang founders that
were employed. Of those gang members who were employed no one was reported as making more than $5.00 per hour. The percentage of gang founders who continued in the gang as adults were 81% of black males, 70% of Hispanic males, and 100% of white males. Totals did not equal 100% because of gang founders deceased and unknown (Hagedorn).

**Subculture Theory**

Subculture theory states that the violent behavior that takes place in youth in gangs is not deviant within their own culture (Cohen, 1955; D. W. Thompson & Jason, 1988). The tangible goals that youth in at-risk communities visualize as part of normal activities include delinquent behavior, participation in gangs, drug dealing, and violence. Youth who come from at-risk situations do not see their participation in gangs as destructive. A delinquent subculture, which would be the gang, allows at-risk youth to achieve goals which are otherwise unattainable in a respectable society (Cohen).

Economic opportunities for youth in at-risk situations are more profitable through illegal operations than they are through legal means. Economic status through selling drugs would be something that at-risk youth could achieve through a delinquent subculture rather than in "normal" society. In order for legal economic opportunities to equal illegal activity as a motivational factor, the perceived economic gains of legal enterprises would need to increase. As Goldstein and Huff (1993, p. 467) state, "a poor youth must have strong internal values and external support to resist the lure of illegal activities."

**Bloch and Niederhoffer's Theory**

Another theory by Bloch and Niederhoffer (1958) states that participation in delinquent behavior and/or joining a gang is part of the life of an adolescent.
Delinquency is a necessary part of growing up in order to reach adulthood. "The basic function of the gang, then, is to provide a substitute for the formalized puberty rites found in other societies" (Bartollas, 1993, p. 346).

During adolescent years some of the most important qualities to youth is peer approval and acceptance. This approval and acceptance can be provided by gangs, causing the bond within youth gangs to be very strong (Prothrow-Stith, 1991). Youth gangs are providing youth with a sense of belonging and a feeling of self-worth (Ellis, 1991; R. Thompson & Karr-Kinwell, 1994). According to Bloch and Niederhoffer (1958) peer approval and acceptance, which is something that youth gain in participating in a gang and/or delinquent behavior, is part of the maturing process of adolescents.

Takata and Zevitz (1990) illustrate the social reasons that youth become gang members. In a survey taken of 26 middle and high school students that were in gangs, 58% of the gang members said that they joined a gang to have more friends. Fifty-four percent explained that they joined a gang because they had nothing to do. Other reasons that youth gave for joining a gang were so that people would look up to them (46%), to protect themselves from other gangs (46%), because members of the family were in a gang (38%), to have their own money (31%), and because everyone was doing it (23%). Youth who are limited in their ability in school and athletics are more susceptible to gang life than youth who are highly involved in school activities (Moriarty & Fleming, 1990).

**Miller's Theory**

Miller's theory is directed towards the lower class culture. His theory states that gang behavior is an expression of the lower socioeconomic class (Bartollas, 1993). According to Miller, a society that is mostly lower class is more
susceptible to law-violating behavior than middle to upper class societies. Some of the main goals of a lower-class culture are trouble, toughness, excitement and fate. These can all be attained through gang activity even though they involve both negative and positive consequences (Bartollas, 1993; Spergel, 1995).

**Yablonsky’s Theory**

Yablonsky’s theory is closely related to Miller’s theory in that he states gangs arise out of urban slums (Bartollas, 1993). Poverty is one of the characteristics of the lower socioeconomic class culture and urban slums. All researchers agree that poverty is one of the main causes of gangs and a reason that gangs continue to grow (Jankowski, 1991). While Miller’s theory explains the existence of gangs on both social and economic grounds, Yablonsky’s theory focuses on economic reasons.

**Other Reasons Youth Join Gangs**

Huff (1990) estimates the chances of youth becoming involved in a gang in relationship to demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Huff’s (1990) study compares both gang members and those who are not in gangs. There were 427 nongang males surveyed and 193 gang members surveyed. The demographic and socioeconomic characteristics that were analyzed in Huff’s study were age, race, school status, if the youth were living with one or both of their parents, their parent’s employment status, and the level of education of their parents.

In Huff’s (1990) study the age of the nongang youth showed that 6% were 14 or younger, 20% were 15 years old, 25% were 16 years old, and 49% were 17 years old or older. Among the gang members 5% were 14 years old or younger, 18% were 15 years old, 30% were 16 years old, and 48% were 17 years old or
older. The race of the youth surveyed were white, black, Hispanic, Asian, and other. The majority of both nongang and gang members were black. Eighty-two percent of the nongang youth were in school and 17% had dropped out of school. Sixty-two percent of the gang members were in school and 38% of the gang members had dropped out of school. The percentage of school dropouts by gang members was more than twice as high than nongang youth dropouts.

Huff (1990) suggests that the majority of both the nongang youth and the gang members were living with a single parent, although more gang members were living with one parent. Thirty-one percent of nongang youth were living with both parents and 25% of gang members were living with one parent. Forty-eight percent of nongang youth had parents who were both employed and 41% of gang members had both parents employed. Twenty-three percent of nongang youth had both parents unemployed and 25% of gang members had both parents unemployed. The gang members had a higher percentage of neither parents employed and a lower percentage of both parents employed. The difference in the education of the parents of nongang youth and gang members was very little. There was never more than a 3% difference in the categories of their parents having less than a high school graduate, a high school graduate, or being a college graduate.

Racism is a factor that can cause youth to get involved in negative situations. Males are more likely to be a gang member than females. Education, both of the youth and their parents, is a determining factor in the probability of youth joining a gang.

Poverty, increasing crime, unemployment, child poverty, poor education, increasing population, and changing family structure are all integral parts of
societies in the United States (Cummings & Monti, 1993; Goldstein & Huff, 1993; Hartjen, 1978; Horowitz, 1987; Huff, 1989; Knox, 1994; Prothrow-Stith, 1991; William Gladden Foundation, 1989). These are the issues that are often forcing youth to turn towards gangs for security (Arthur & Erickson, 1992; Prothrow-Stith; Shaw & McKay, 1969; Sloan, 1993). Many parts of society share responsibility for the increasing numbers of youth gang members.

Each societal issue must be looked at separately as a reason for the increasing numbers of gang members (Goldstein & Huff, 1993; Haskell & Yablonsky, 1974; Knox, 1994). Not only must these issues be looked at separately but they must be analyzed in relationship to one another (Bartollas, 1988). Youth-serving agencies are a very integral part of society because, next to schools, they involve the most youth (Carnegie Report, 1992). Gang intervention strategies must not only focus on decreasing gangs and gang members, but also the conditions that foster gang development, which are embedded in society (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993).

Impact of Gangs

According to Vandegrift and Sandler (1993) factors that are a result of youth gangs are increased use of firearms, use of illicit drugs and use of alcohol. Spergel (1993) found that drug use and drug trafficking were directly related to gang membership. In San Diego County there were 276 documented gang members on probation and 207 had been convicted of drug related incidences. "The Orange County Probation Department found that 71% of gang members under supervision by its Gang Violence Suppression Unit displayed occasional or frequent drug and/or alcohol use" (Spergel, p. 26).
Violence has increased drastically and according to arrest records a large percentage of violent crime is committed by gang members (Miller, 1982; Spergel, 1993). Firearm death rate for teenagers 15 to 19 years old increased 43% between 1984 and 1988. There is a relationship between violence and gang members, not saying that all youth who are violent are in gangs, but the increase in violence may be due to the increase in gangs and gang members. In 1990, gang-related killings accounted for 35% of the homicides in Los Angeles (Witkin, 1991). Ellis (1991) explains:

Crimes committed by juveniles associated with youth gangs have increased at an alarming rate in American cities. In 1987, approximately 1.5 million juveniles were arrested nationally for serious crimes with some 79,000 being referred to criminal or adult courts. The nation's cities accounted for approximately 1.3 million juvenile arrests, with juveniles in cities having populations of 250,000 and over accounting for approximately 35 percent of the total arrests. (p. 29)

Esbensen and Huizinga (1993) show that male gang members are more likely to commit an offense than nongang members. This was not true for females. There were an average of 53 gang members and about 505 nongang members in this study, yet the gang members committed an offense about 2.5 times more than nongang members. The types of offenses that were studied in this research were street offenses, drug sales, serious, minor, alcohol use, and other drug use. The prevalence rate identifies the percentage of active offenders involved in each specific behavior. The prevalence rate for street offenses by gang members was .85 and .18 for nongang youth. Drug sales had a prevalence rate of .29 for gang members and .03 for nongang youth. Serious offenses were reported at a rate of .83 for gang members and .32 for nongang youth. Minor offenses had a prevalence rate from gang members of .87 and .56 from nongang
youth. Alcohol use had a prevalence rate of .71 for gang members and .35 for nongang youth. Other drug use was reported at a rate of .52 for gang members and .13 for nongang youth.

The individual offending rates of these youth were also studied. Esbensen and Huizinga (1993) found that the individual offending rate for street offenses was 22.3 in gang members, meaning that each person committed an average of 22.3 offenses per person. This showed that gang members committed 1,003 street offenses accounting for 57% of the street offenses. Street offenses had the lowest individual offending rates reported for gang members. The individual offending rate was higher for gang members in all types of offenses except for drug sales, meaning that gang members commit more offenses per person than nongang youth. Youth who are involved in gangs are almost guaranteed to become involved in some, if not many, types of delinquency (Huff, 1990; Stover, 1987).

Another impact of gangs is the negative effect on schools, such as intimidation of students, pressure on students to join gangs, bullying and assaults, and increased drug dealing (Stover, 1987). All of the issues that are being faced on the street are being brought into schools. Some schools are beginning to take on the qualities of prisons with metal detectors, security forces patrolling the hallways, camera monitors, and bolted doors (Witkin, 1991).

Prevention and Intervention

According to the Carnegie Report (1992) 42% of a youth's time is discretionary. This time is spent doing what the youth chooses to do whether it be watch television, engage in a hobby, play sports, going to church or just hanging out. Youth-serving agencies have the opportunity to occupy much of this discretionary time among youths. There are over 17,000 youth agencies that
operate in the United States. All of these agencies have the potential to address the needs of youth and help occupy the time that youth may use to engage in at-risk behavior leading to gang activity (Carnegie Report).

According to a number of experts, gang prevention and intervention programs are both needed and feasible (Covey, Menard, & Franzese, 1992; Curry & Spergel, 1992; Gaustad, 1990; Goldstein et al., 1989; Goldstein & Huff, 1993; Huff, 1989; Knox, 1994; Jackson, 1985; Riley, 1991; Thrasher, 1927). Prevention programs are designed to reach out to children before they become part of a gang and prevent them from joining a gang. Intervention programs need to pull the youth out of gangs once they have made the decision to be a part of the gang (Carnegie Report, 1992).

**Gang Development**

A youth goes through stages before becoming a gang member taking part in all gang activity. Riley (1991) explains that a youth will go through the following stages: Level 1: No involvement or association with street gangs or gang members. Level 2: Admires or identifies with someone who is in a gang. Level 3: Associates with gang members and sometimes participates in gang activity. Level 4: Classified as a gang member.

Every gang also goes through different stages before it becomes a full fledged gang engaging in illegal activity. A gang starts as an informal group (stage 0), then moves into an informal organization (stage 1), next growing into a formal group (stage 2), and finally it reaches a formal organization (stage 3) (Knox, 1994). An informal group is not a gang but rather a loose knit group that commits very little crime. An informal organization is a group that considers themselves a unique entity but they do not own their own "gang headquarters."
A formal group has a strong level of group commitment and members have roles and status positions. A formal organization is the highest level of gang formation typically owning real estate and no longer meeting on the street. This level is also involved in the highest level of crime and violence (Knox).

A community that begins to see gangs goes through stages just as the gang itself and the youth. Bartollas (1993) finds that a community goes through the following stages: Stage 1: Implementation: An adult member of a gang goes into the low-income neighborhoods of a city without gangs to recruit youth to carry out gang activity and join the new gang. This adult will return regularly to this city to supply drugs and pick up money from drug sales. Stage 2: Expansion and conflict: The adult will get the new recruits to truly identify with the gang. New members will begin to wear gang clothing and use gang signs. Conflict will come from the encouragement to keep pushing drugs in the community. The new members will start to expand into public areas such as shopping centers, parks and athletic events. Weapons increase in the community during this stage also. Stage 3: Organization and consolidation: Youths in the community begin to identify with the gang. The leadership comes from the core group but it is still relatively unorganized. Police, school officials, and other members of the community are often unaware of a gang problem at this stage. Stage 4: Gang intimidation and community reaction: More youth become part of a gang and gang members become more visible in the community. The community realizes that a gang problem exists and may plan a reaction. Stage 5: Expansion of drug markets. Stage 6: Gangs take over: Gangs are highly involved in robberies, burglaries, aggravated assaults, rapes and drive-by shootings. The police are
unable to control drug trafficking and violence. Stage 7: Community deterioration: Citizens feel so unsafe they begin to move out of the community.

The process that a community evolves through when gangs are becoming established is similar to the gang disintegration process. According to Arnold (1965) the disintegration process for a gang is: (a) there is an erosion of normative consensus and solidarity. This would be implemented through a combination of community-based social services to provide gang members with valuable life skills such as education, training, and job placement. (b) gang leadership becomes ineffective or lost. This involves intensive family services, housing/relocation assistance and educational placements with the goal of pulling gang members away from the leaders, and occupying the leaders time with these services to keep him away from gang formation. (c) the gang ceases to meet, and (d) finally, the gang loses the value of its group name.

The progression through stages allows several opportunities for intervention (Goldstein, 1991). Programs have the potential to be effective because the target can range from the youth to the gang, or even the community and can be initiated in the early stages of the development process (Quay, 1987). A community can be most effective with programs when a variety of diverse approaches are implemented (Turnbaugh, 1986).

Youth-Serving Agencies

According to the Carnegie Report (1992) youth serving agencies do not actively compete with gangs for the membership of youth. Many programs implemented by youth-serving agencies have been found to be ineffective in keeping youth out of gangs (Stepakoff, 1987). In order for a youth-serving agency to compete with gangs for membership it is necessary to offer all of the
qualities that the youth gang is offering. "In general, programs do not adequately acknowledge the role of youth gangs in addressing young adolescents' needs such as safety, status, meaningful roles, a sense of belonging, and a sense of competence" (Carnegie Report, p. 70). Youth themselves working through youth agencies need to be key actors in the development of successful prevention/intervention youth programs (Spergel, 1995). When youth are involved they feel a sense of ownership and can explain their needs and wants to the program implementers. This can create a closer match of what the youth want and what youth-serving agencies are offering.

Fifteen youth-serving organizations alone reach about thirty million youth every year (Carnegie Report, 1992). With these ratios every youth in the nation should be able to have the attention of a youth agency. Spergel (1995) charted methods which youth-serving agencies could implement through social intervention, which could be used as prevention and/or intervention strategies, including supervised recreation and group work activities, individual, group and family counseling, parent education (gangs), referral for services, job support, crisis intervention, mediation, home visits, and victim assistance.

Stern (1992) reports on the types of services provided by youth-serving agencies in 1982 and 1990. Juvenile justice and delinquency prevention were the largest programs provided by youth-serving agencies in both 1982 and 1990. Thirty-nine percent of youth-serving agencies provided juvenile justice and delinquency prevention in 1982. In 1990 this decreased to 32%. Youth-serving agency's crisis intervention decreased from 23% in 1982 to 8% in 1990. Alcohol, drug, and substance abuse services by youth-serving agencies increased from 19% in 1982 to 30% in 1990.
Needle and Stapleton (1983) feel that despite the fact that youth-serving agencies influence the lives of youth every day they are not taking responsibility for implementing effective prevention and intervention programs to control youth gangs and youth gang crimes. The Carnegie Report (1992) notes that there is a need for research on youth development organizations and programs that meet the needs of young adolescents, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. Not only must youth-serving agencies strive to "make a good kid better" but they have a responsibility to those youth who are in troubled situations and who are at-risk (Pittman & Wright, 1991). According to Thrasher (1927) if youth-serving agencies could meet the needs of young adolescents and fill in where families are failing then this could have the effect of decreasing gang membership. The most important place for directing a youth's spare time is the family, but when the family fails, a youth-serving agency has the opportunity to occupy the leisure-time behavior of the youth.

Staff Training

The Carnegie Report (1992) suggests that adult staff youth workers have an important role in leadership and delivery of youth programs. The Carnegie Report explains that:

Improving the quality of adult leadership involves matters of pre- and in-service training, recruitment and retention, and paid and unpaid (or volunteer) staff at all levels. An immediate first step is for community programs to expand greatly the availability of appropriate training and other forms of staff development for all adults who work directly with young people on either a paid or volunteer basis. (p. 87)

Collaboration

Research has not yet shown that non-profit agencies or businesses alone can be effective in trying to decrease the number of youth gangs and gang
members. Since organizations cannot do it alone, the community as a whole must band together to implement programs to counteract the issue of gangs taking over communities (Huff, 1990; Riley, 1991). Knox (1994) names some of the institutions which may be included in the gang response strategy as the government, businesses and employers, educational institutions, community groups and associations, religious institutions, health care institutions, the family, social service industry, unions and voluntary associations, and the military. All of these community organizations must collaborate to form a link between gang youths, their families and the conventional world (Spergel, 1995).

It is suggested by Pittman & Wright (1991) that no single organization or institution should be solely responsible for assisting young people in planning productive futures and staying out of gangs. Project Success, Center for Schools and Communities (1993) states that organizations and businesses in every community should collaborate to fight against increasing youth gangs and gang members. Collaboration can occur between law enforcements, schools, and community agencies in order to react to conditions that cause youth violence and gang activity (Hobbs, 1994; Mulhern, Dibble, & Berkan, 1994; Trump, 1993).

It is suggested that it is important for youth-serving agencies to build an association between themselves within communities (Carnegie Report, 1992). Networking and collaboration can be structured to work in all directions, with other agencies and organizations in the community, and with the residents in the community (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993). Youth-serving agencies have the ability to relate to the people in the community, through their contact with the public and the youth that they serve, in order to understand the needs of the community and how to best meet those needs. Youth-serving agencies are also able to
communicate with other organizations for support in meeting the needs of the community (Carnegie Report, 1992).

Needle and Stapleton (1983) found that agencies currently work alone and independently without formal communication with each other. Communication is a major part of collaboration efforts (Trump, 1993). "The community needs the service of every member, and it needs young people to become productive, participating adults" (O'Neil, 1990, p. 22).

Milwaukee, Wisconsin demonstrated an example of gang prevention collaboration. The Youth Diversion Project worked with at-risk youths throughout the 1980s. This project was a collaboration of many institutions in Milwaukee. Some of the organizations involved were schools, youth agencies, police, support groups, etc. Gang membership did not decrease in the 1980s but did not increase either, as in many other densely populated cities during this decade (Family and Youth Services Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1993). One of the concentrations of this program was on family. The collaboration aided 80 families, providing them with counseling, support groups, drug abuse education, and other services. The summer day camp had 60 participants who were matched with teens in the community to establish a mentor relationship. Another success of the Youth Diversion Project was the program that involved Hispanic children and their families. One hundred forty Hispanic youths participated in the program which matched them with local businesses whose career interests matched their own (Family and Youth Services Bureau et al.).
Programs

Prevention and intervention programs are both needed in communities that already have gangs in their communities. Prevention is the best way of keeping gangs out of communities and is more cost effective than intervention (Huff, 1990; Jackson & McBride, 1985; National School Safety Center, 1988; Quay, 1987). Once a community has gangs prevention programs alone will not solve the gang problems. Youth could be prevented from joining the gang and at the same time intervention programs could be implemented to get the youth who are already in gangs out and back into society (Knox, 1994). Small cities may have the opportunity to be proactive in the challenge against youth gangs and gang violence because time may still allow them to implement prevention and intervention programs (Hamner, 1993).

The most positive prevention and intervention programs have been found to be those that assist youth in developing more appropriate social relationships and involving themselves in activities other than delinquent behavior (D. W. Thompson, & Jason, 1988). Successful programs many times come from programs that involve the youth in planning activities (Goldstein et al., 1989; Kvaraceus, Ulrich, McCormick, & Keily, 1959). The Carnegie Report (1992) states that youth are rarely asked what they need or want. According to the report agencies need to listen to and work with the youth in the community when developing programs that are intended to meet the needs of the youth. "Adolescents ought to be given a voice and representation in government from the community level on up. It may well be that by helping to determine control, a sense of responsibility will be developed to observe the law" (Bloch & Niederhoffer, 1958, p. 217).
Stepakoff (1987) describes a program that was implemented in 1985 and 1986 in various cities across the nation by the Breakthrough Foundation, Youth at Risk Program. Since that time many cities have requested this program. The Youth at Risk Program was a 10-day intensive course designed for about 80 youths, ages 16-20. The program took place in an isolated location. Youth who went through the program were gang members found by local community youth agencies. The following organizational development interventions were the focus of the program: trust-building and cooperative problem-solving, self-observation and feedback techniques, non-violent conflict resolution, leadership development, communication skills training and goal clarification, and development of support structures. During the course each youth was paired up with an adult that kept track of the youth's progress after the 10 days were done. Also there were monthly large-group meetings where the youth's progress was analyzed. The Youth at Risk Program was effective in pulling youth out of juvenile delinquency and gang violence because the skills learned could be applied to a wide range of situations. Success was measured by adult volunteers who kept track of the youth's progress toward the goals that were set during the program. At the monthly meetings the volunteers and youth talked about the progress of each youth and the youth were coached in the areas where help was needed.

"Any strategy designed to impact and ultimately reverse the current gang problems in urban communities must begin with economic development programs focusing on active gang members and at-risk youths" (Ellis, 1991, p. 32). Areas within a city which are disadvantaged communities and where gangs are most prevalent could be designated "Youth Economic Enterprise Zone." A
Youth Enterprise Zone is a business.enterprise set up to involve at-risk youth with adult business and professional volunteers and staff who work together to run a business. The Youth Enterprise Zones require the support of families, churches, schools, and other community organizations. Examples of youth intensive businesses are coffee shops, fast food chains, recycling enterprises, and record and video shops.

According to Ellis (1991) the objective of each Youth Enterprise Zone was to establish neighborhood-based youth enterprise centers. These centers developed skills designed to do such things as translate gang leader skills into management skills, increase literacy skills, improve self-esteem, provide early intervention by targeting youth thirteen to twenty years old, and provide corporate mentors as role models and trainers (Ellis). Youth who want to get involved in these businesses must go through a training program and if they complete it they are hired either on a full- or part time basis.

In a nation wide survey conducted called the National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Research and Development Project, Spergel and Curry (1990 p. 288) "examined the relationship between youth gang program strategies and perceived program effectiveness as well as reduction in the problem." There were five sets of program strategies that were identified in the study: community organization, social intervention, opportunities provision, suppression, and organizational development and change. From this study Spergel and Curry recommended that a variety of programs be targeted at youth in gangs. These programs should address economic deprivation, lack of opportunities, social disorganization, and mobility of community institutions.
The funding and economics of youth-serving agencies and youth programs is one factor that needs to be considered when trying to be effective in keeping youth out of gangs (Stern, 1992). "Clearly, foundation funding patterns do not match up equitable with known reported national trends in gang crime severity" (Knox, 1994, p. 328).

Youth-serving agencies implement programs with many different missions. It is difficult to ascertain the amount of money spent on different programs within a youth-serving agency (Stern, 1992). Many times organizations do not report the specific use of funds. It is estimated that the amount of money spent on juvenile delinquency by organizations, which was found by Esbensen and Huizinga (1993) to be highest among gang members, has declined between 1982 and 1990 (Stern).

Knox (1994) feels that funding sources including government funding, foundation funding, and private fund raising must equal in value the seriousness of the gang problem that exists in many American cities. D. W. Thompson and Jason (1988) note that it is more cost effective to implement a prevention program to keep youth out of gangs than to have the indirect costs of crime, rehabilitation, and corrections. The eighties was a decade where social programs were dismantled and spending increased on the criminal justice system due to the growing urban underclass and increasing gangs (Hagedorn, 1988). According to the Carnegie Report (1992) in the past federal dollars were used for implementing programs in youth-serving agencies. These funds have been cut, along with federal expenditures to the human services sector as a whole.
Many of the youth who are involved in gangs come from low-income families in at-risk situations (Carnegie Report, 1992; Goldstein & Huff, 1993; Huff, 1990). Data is not maintained on the category of at-risk adolescents therefore "it simply is not possible to put a dollar figure on the amount of government support made available to private agencies for services to young adolescents in at-risk circumstances" (Stern, 1992, p. 88). Government programs directed specifically at youth are very few in number. When looking at the city, county or state funds there was no information found on the amount of dollars spent for youth services (Stern).

Researchers have found that gang members stay in the gang longer today than they have in the past. A youth joins a gang during adolescent years and many remain in the gang, bouncing back and forth between the correctional system and the gang on the street. Youth involved in gangs are likely to drop out of high school and career opportunities are very limited for someone without a high school diploma (Goldstein & Huff, 1993). The costs of a person in and out of prison leading a delinquent life is much higher compared to the costs of someone making a steady income functioning in society (Bouza, 1993; Goldstein & Huff, 1993). It is believed by Bouza (1993) that it is more profitable to prevent youth from joining gangs than to cover the costs of their delinquent behavior once they are in the gangs.

To compare the costs of operating youth-serving agencies to the costs of rehabilitating someone Bouza (1993) explains a program where a student could receive treatment for a drug or alcohol addiction if referred to a hospital or counseling center by a school. In 1992 there were about 1.7 million addicts served. To accommodate facilities for treating all addicts another $1.6 billion
would be required. This was in addition to what was already being spent. This figure is considerable more than the costs of operating a youth-serving agency as shown in the Carnegie Report (1992). According to Hagedorn (1988) there is a very strong relationship between gang members and drug users/dealers. Most gang members make a living from selling drugs. Many gangs as a whole operate in a vast network of drug sales (Hagedorn).

While funding for youth-serving agencies and programs within the agencies are being cut more money is being spent in reaction to youth being involved in gangs. According to Hagedorn (1988) in 1984 a two-year $600,000 federal grant was secured to prosecute violent youth in Milwaukee. The Sheriff's Department received an extra $100,000 to "counter youth gangs." The Milwaukee Public Schools spent $359,584 on security efforts. There is no literature about increased funding to youth-serving agencies in Milwaukee.

Stern (1992) shows the government support for Big Brothers/Big Sisters is 9% of all their revenue. The government support for the Boy & Girls clubs of America is 8% of all their revenue and 5% for the YMCA of the USA. The Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts of the USA do not get any governmental support.

**Summary**

The increasing numbers of youth gangs and gang members is a growing concern for communities all over the United States. At one time this issue was confined to larger metropolitan areas but that is not the case anymore. Gangs are beginning to spread themselves into small communities in all 50 states (Knox, 1994). The problem has been getting worse for the past two to three decades and
will probably continue to grow unless effective programs are implemented to keep youth out of gangs.

Opportunity theory, subculture theory, Bloch and Niederhoffer's theory, Miller's theory and Yablonsky's theory have all been presented to explain the reasons that youth join gangs. A common characteristic of all theories is that gangs evolved from poverty and continue because of poverty, therefore a logical way to combat gangs is the elimination of poverty.

Prevention and intervention strategies can be implemented to keep youth out of gangs. Youth-serving agencies are one resource with a responsibility to youth in this way (Carnegie Report, 1992). Youth-serving agencies have a lot to contribute to the prevention and intervention of youth in gangs because youth agencies have contact with youth in communities and are able to influence the lives of youth. To achieve this goal youth-serving agencies may be more effective if collaborative efforts with businesses, organizations, and agencies within each community are pursued. Agencies and other institutions can work together to eliminate the effect that gangs are having on cities. Currently many agencies are working independently of each other.

Some of the elements in programs that have been successful in the past have focused on trust-building and cooperative problem-solving, self-observation and feedback techniques, leadership development, literacy skills, work attitudes and values, and improving self esteem (Ellis, 1991; Stepakoff, 1987). These are skills that assist youth in developing life skills to function in society, not programs that just occupy the time of the youth to keep them off the streets. The authors of the Carnegie Report (1992) believe that in order for programs to be successful, they need to provide a caring competent staff, a safe
place for the youth to go, and give them exciting, new, and challenging activities to participate in.

It is difficult to implement new programs if funding is being cut. To improve the programs that are already established and begin new programs requires funding. Much of the literature shows that government, state and local funding have been cut.

It is more cost effective to be proactive in keeping youth out of gangs than to pay the price of putting youth through rehabilitation and in prison. It is more beneficial to everyone to keep youth out of gangs and in society functioning in a career rather than having them in gangs and in and out of prisons most of their lives.

More detailed research can be done on what youth-serving agencies are doing to help youth at-risk and keep them out of gangs. This especially needs to be done in smaller cities where the issue of youth gangs is still a rather new situation. If smaller cities begin to implement programs now to eliminate the increasing number of youth gangs and gang members then they can avoid the problem escalating to the degree that it has in larger metropolitan cities.
CHAPTER III
METHODS

The purpose of this study was to assess the perception of directors of youth-serving agencies on prevention and intervention programs that have been implemented by youth-serving agencies in eastern Iowa. The assessment asked for a description of prevention/intervention programs for gangs. This included whether the city had a gang problem and if gang prevention/intervention programs existed. The director's perception of the youth and the programs were analyzed. Collaboration efforts both with the organization and with other organizations in the community were also analyzed through the director's perception.

Research Design

This study was a descriptive study. A questionnaire (Gang Program Assessment Questionnaire) was designed and sent out to directors of youth-serving agencies in eastern Iowa. This questionnaire addressed the extent to which agencies were implementing gang prevention/intervention programs and what aspects of their programs were effective or ineffective. The perceptions of the directors of the youth-serving agencies concerning the behaviors of the youth that participated in the gang prevention/intervention programs were analyzed. Collaboration both within the organization and with other agencies and organizations in the community to fight against the increasing gangs and gang members was investigated. Additional issues that were analyzed were staff training, staff meetings, other programs offered by the agency, funding, and evaluation by youth.
Subjects

The subjects consisted of youth-serving agencies (n = 57) in eastern Iowa. The cities included in this study were Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Ames, Des Moines, Iowa City, Coralville, Adel, Ankeny, Maquoketa, Bondurant, Indianola, Johnston, Knoxville, Nevada, Newton, Pella, Pleasant Hill, and Urbandale. These cities were chosen by selecting five of the larger cities in eastern Iowa: Dubuque, Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, and Davenport and calling the United Ways that serve that area. The United Ways provided a list of agencies that they served in those cities and surrounding areas. Agencies whose mission were to serve youth were then chosen to be a part of the study.

Questionnaire

The Gang Assessment Program Questionnaire was used to analyze the director's perception on present gangs already in the city as well as expectations for future gang activities. The questionnaire did not assume that the organization believed that they had gangs in their community although most of the questions were directed toward agencies that already had programs for keeping youth out of gangs or preventing youth from joining gangs.

The first half of the questionnaire addressed the number of youth that the agency served, the target age of the youth, and described the population served as either low income, middle income, or upper income families. The director was then asked to define "gang" and to state whether there were presently gangs in the city or if gangs would become part of the community in the future. In addition, the director indicated other programs that the agency offered which were indirectly gang-related, such as conflict resolution programs. Funding,
including government, state and local, United Way, and contributions and fees, was also described as either increasing or decreasing.

The second half of the Gang Program Assessment Questionnaire was directed at agencies that implemented prevention/intervention programs for gangs. The behaviors of the youth who participated in the programs were analyzed in relation to their involvement in the program. Directors were asked the extent to which school absenteeism and number of arrests decreased after being in the program and the extent to which gang members left the gang after participation in the program. The extent to which staff were trained and attended regular staff meetings was also described. Collaboration was another issue that was a part of the questionnaire to determine the extent to which youth-serving agencies were collaborating and networking with other agencies and organizations in the community to decrease the number of gang and gang members. The respondents were then asked to explain any successes and/or failures in the agency's prevention/intervention programs.

**Experimental Procedure**

The questionnaire was mailed out to the 130 identified youth-serving agencies in Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, Davenport, and Iowa City, and surrounding areas. Fifty-seven questionnaires were returned. The questionnaire had short answer questions, summated rating, which is answering "agree" or "disagree" to a statement, likert scaling, yes/no answers and three open-ended questions. The recipients of the questionnaire were asked if they would like to see the analysis of the study. The results of the study were sent to any organization that was interested in the information.
The recipients were asked to fill out the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible. The questionnaire took 10 to 20 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the questionnaire they placed the results in an envelope that was mailed to them and send it back to the researcher. A follow up postcard was sent to each agency that had not yet returned the questionnaire to encourage a higher rate of return.

Data Description

The information that was received from the subjects were the answers to the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The summated rating and likert scaling questions were analyzed by calculating the frequency distributions of each answer. A Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to find the relationship between the perceived changes in the behaviors of the youth, staff training/staff meetings and the perceived changes in the behavior of the youth, and collaboration and the perceived changes in the behavior of the youth. The short answer and open-ended questions were analyzed in a descriptive manner. There was a descriptive analysis done on the answers to the questions to see if the cities which were concerned about gang activity were implementing effective programs to counteract the increasing numbers of gang and gang members.

The questionnaire was intended to be answered by the directors of the youth-serving agencies, however in many cases the answers were reported by someone other than the director. This was indicated on the questionnaire by the respondent identifying their job title.

The N in the tables throughout chapter 4 will vary because not the same number of agencies answered the same number of questions. The total N for
each table equals the number of respondents that answered that particular question.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to assess the perception of directors of youth-serving agencies on prevention and intervention programs that have been implemented by youth-serving agencies in eastern Iowa. First the respondents were asked if there was a gang problem in the city. Next, respondents were asked if the agency implemented gang prevention/ intervention programs and asked to describe the programs. In the first part of the study participating agencies answered a survey that was used to determine demographics, and whether the agency felt they currently had a gang problem or would begin to see a gang problem within the next year. The survey also questioned whether funding for the agency had increased or decreased within the last five years. The second half of the instrument was answered by agencies that implemented programs for gang prevention and intervention programs. The questions focused on the changes in the behavior of the youth in the program, staff training/meetings, and collaboration efforts.

Agency Demographics

The following tables describe the ages of the youth served, which income level they were in, and how many youth were served by the agencies. Table 1 details the ages of the youth served. Table 2 reports the economic status of the families of the youth. Table 3 shows the number of youth served by the agency.

Most of the agencies served youth of all ages. Forty nine percent of the agencies served youth from primarily low income families and 40% of the agencies served youth from across low, middle and upper income families. As shown in the study most youth-serving agencies (35) served over 2500 youth.
### Table 1

**Ages of Youth Served by Surveyed Youth-Serving Agencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Youth</th>
<th>N (agencies)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-12 years old</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(10.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-18 years old</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all ages</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>(55.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teens only (13 - 19)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(12.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>youth including over 18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(10.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children only (5-12)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(10.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2

**Family Income of the Youth Served by Surveyed Youth-Serving Agencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Income</th>
<th>N (agencies)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low income (under $30,000)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>(49.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle income ($30,000-$75,000)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low/middle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(5.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle/upper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low/middle/upper</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(40)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

Number of Youth Served by Surveyed Youth-Serving Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of youth served</th>
<th>N (agencies)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 500</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-1500</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(10.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500-2500</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(5.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2500</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>(61.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(15.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gang Identification

One purpose of this study was to determine if youth-serving agencies perceive a gang problem in their community. Ninety-three percent of the respondents answered yes to the statement: "There are gangs in my city." Only three agencies felt that they did not have gangs in their city and would not see gangs within the next year. While 93% felt they had gangs in their city only 26.4% of the agencies had programs for gang prevention and intervention. Thirty-three percent of the directors responded "agree" to the statements: "My agency has worked with gangs in the last year," and "My agency implements programs whose main mission is to keep youth out of gangs." While 33.3% of the agencies said they had worked with gangs or had programs to keep youth out of gangs only 26.4% of the respondents indicated there were actually programs for gangs.
Each director was asked to define a gang. Only 45.6% ($n = 26$) of the questionnaires had this question answered. All of the answers were grouped into one of four categories: (a) group of youth hanging out together, (b) a group of youth who involve themselves in illegal activities, violence, and actions against society, (c) a group of youth involved in illegal activity with a distinct group leader, and (d) a group that engages in positive activity. Table 4 identifies how the respondents defined a gang.

Table 4  
Youth-Serving Agency's Respondents Definition of Gang

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories for Definition of Gang</th>
<th>N (agencies)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group of youth hanging out together</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(23.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including illegal activity, violence, actions against society</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a distinct leader and may involve illegal activity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(23.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes positive activity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(3.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gang Programs

The fifteen youth-serving agencies who responded to the second half of the questionnaire indicated that they offered programs for the prevention and/or intervention of youth in gangs. The number of youth in the gang prevention/intervention programs ranged from 0 to 10,800. Des Moines and
Cedar Rapids had the largest number of gang prevention/intervention programs.

The questions on the second half of the questionnaire were directed to the agencies which implemented gang prevention/intervention programs. The questions were grouped into the following four categories: (a) program results, (b) staff training, (c) collaboration, (d) evaluation, and (e) types of programs.

**Program Results**

The first five questions asked the director to describe any positive behavioral changes in the youth in the gang prevention/intervention program. These questions specifically asked how long the youth participated in the programs, if their school absenteeism decreased, if their number of arrests decreased, and if they left the gang.

Table 5 shows that a large percentage of youth participate in the gang prevention/intervention programs regularly and for a duration of at least one year. This study also showed that respondents believe that youth who participated in the gang prevention/intervention programs decreased in school absenteeism. The perception expressed by the respondent also indicated that youth who participated in these programs also decreased in the number of arrests, and some youth left the gang. The percentage of youth perceived by the respondents to have made a positive change is high.
Table 5
Participation of Youth in the Gang Prevention/ Intervention Programs as Reported by the Respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of youth</th>
<th>Participate regularly</th>
<th>Participate at least one year</th>
<th>Decrease absences</th>
<th>Decrease arrests</th>
<th>Leave gang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None (0%)</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some (50%)</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (100%)</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 illustrates the strong relationship between the respondent's perception of youth's participation in the gang prevention/intervention programs regularly, decreasing in the number of arrests, decreasing in school absenteeism, and youth in a gang actually leaving the gang. The strongest relationship was between youth that decrease in their number of arrests and youth that leave a gang. The weakest significant relationship was between youth who leave the gang and youth who participate in the program at least one year.
Table 6
Correlations Between Categories of Behaviors of Youth in Gang Prevention/Intervention Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participate regularly</th>
<th>Participate at least one year</th>
<th>Decrease absences</th>
<th>Decrease arrests</th>
<th>Leave gang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participate regularly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.9832</td>
<td>.9457</td>
<td>.9155</td>
<td>.8462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate at least one year</td>
<td>.9832</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.9454</td>
<td>.9124</td>
<td>.8358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease absences</td>
<td>.9457</td>
<td>.9454</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.9298</td>
<td>.8898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease arrests</td>
<td>.9155</td>
<td>.9124</td>
<td>.9298</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.9466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave gang</td>
<td>.8462</td>
<td>.8358</td>
<td>.8898</td>
<td>.9466</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Significance level = .01. 2 - tailed. * All r - values are significant

Staff Training

Two of the questions addressed how often gang prevention/intervention staff attend training sessions and if they met on a regular basis. Tables 7 and 8 report how often staff attended training and if they met on a regular basis.
Table 7
Youth-Serving Agency's Staff Who Attend Training Sessions at Least 1-2 Times a Year--N = 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>N (agencies)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(6.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(13.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(13.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(46.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8
Number of Agencies in which Staff Meet on a Regular Basis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N (agencies)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(64.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(35.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 shows the relationships between perceived selected behaviors of the youth who have participated in the gang prevention/intervention programs and two variables, the staff attending training sessions and staff meetings. The perceived behaviors of the youth in the gang prevention/intervention programs
are positively related to the frequency of staff that train at least once a year. This relationship is strong. There is a negative relationship between the selected behaviors of the youth and staff meeting on a regular basis. The strength of the negative relationship averages -.7127.

Table 9

**Significant Levels of the Actions of Youth and Staff Training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participate regularly</th>
<th>Participate at least one year</th>
<th>Decrease absences</th>
<th>Decrease arrests</th>
<th>Leave gang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff train at least once a year</td>
<td>.9419</td>
<td>.9064</td>
<td>.8762</td>
<td>.8418</td>
<td>.8072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff meet at least monthly</td>
<td>-.7390</td>
<td>-.7231</td>
<td>-.7263</td>
<td>-.7180</td>
<td>-.6571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Significance level = .01. 2 - tailed. * All r - values are significant.

**Collaboration**

Four questions addressed the agency collaborating with schools, law enforcement agencies, other youth-serving agencies, and religious organizations. This question did not define collaboration for the respondent nor did the respondent give their definition of collaboration. Table 10 illustrates the collaboration efforts by youth-serving agencies. The total may not equal 100% due to the fact that an agency may collaborate with more than one other agency or organization.
Approximately 70% of youth-serving agencies reported collaborating with law enforcement and other youth organizations. A high percentage of youth agencies see themselves as collaborating with schools and 50% of agencies work with religious organizations.

Table 10

Collaboration Efforts by Youth-Serving Agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration by agency with:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law enforcement agencies</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other youth organizations</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious organizations</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 examines the relationships between the perceived behaviors of the youth who participated in the youth gang prevention/intervention programs and the collaboration efforts of the agency.

A negative relationship was found between the behaviors of the youth and collaboration efforts. This means that as positive behavioral changes increase (as
perceived by the respondent) it is less likely that the agency collaborates with other organizations in the community.

Table 11

Relationships Between Select Behaviors of the Youth and Collaboration Efforts by the Agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration with</th>
<th>Participate regularly</th>
<th>Participate at least one year</th>
<th>Decrease absences</th>
<th>Decrease arrests</th>
<th>Leave gang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>-.6936</td>
<td>-.6937</td>
<td>-.6352</td>
<td>-.6442</td>
<td>-.5261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law enforcement agencies</td>
<td>-.7420</td>
<td>-.7400</td>
<td>-.6300</td>
<td>-.6327</td>
<td>-.5280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other youth agencies</td>
<td>-.6926</td>
<td>-.6900</td>
<td>-.7023</td>
<td>-.6911</td>
<td>-.6413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious organizations</td>
<td>-.7264</td>
<td>-.7021</td>
<td>-.7061</td>
<td>-.6899</td>
<td>-.5972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Significance level = .01. 2 - tailed. r-value.

Evaluation of the Programs

One way to evaluate a youth program is to ask the youth themselves to provide feedback. One question asked whether youth in the programs evaluated the gang prevention/intervention programs. Sixty-seven percent of the agencies that implemented gang prevention/intervention programs allowed the youth to evaluate the gang programs.
Types of Programs

Each director was asked to describe their agency's gang prevention/intervention programs. The responses were categorized into one of the following areas: (a) The agency provided general group activity but not a specific activity; it would more or less provide activities for youth with the purpose of keeping them off the streets (31.3%), (b) The agency implemented specific activities with a defined purpose (25%), and (c) The program had a gang related purpose such as keeping youth out of gangs or providing a program for youth to get their GED (43.8%).

Another question asked was what each agency had done that was particularly successful in dealing with gangs. Fourteen respondents answered this question and the responses were categorized into the following area: (a) programs to build self-esteem characteristics (7.1%), b) programs that involve youth in activities in the community to keep them off the street (7.1%), (c) educational programs (57.1%), and (d) all of the above (28.6%).

The directors were also asked to address what had been least effective in dealing with gangs. The answers were categorized as follows: (a) law enforcement methods (20%), (b) ineffective and untrained staffs (20%), (c) lack of collaboration with other organizations in the community (13.3%), (d) denying the gangs existence (6.7%), (e) not creating enough activities for youth to participate in (13.3%), and (f) labeling gangs as "bad," condemning them and offering them no positive outlooks (26.7%).

There were 15 directors that answered this question and the responses were fairly evenly distributed between all 6 categories with the most frequent answer being giving gangs a "bad" label.
Other programs such as parenting programs, drug prevention programs, violence prevention programs and conflict resolution programs can have an effect on youth and possibly contribute to gang prevention. Seventy five percent of the respondents indicated that anywhere from one to all of these programs were being implemented in their agencies. Eighteen percent of the agencies implemented all of these programs. Table 12 shows other programs implemented by youth-serving agencies.

Table 12
Other Programs Offered by Youth-Serving Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>N (agencies)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting program</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(23.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing violence program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resolution program</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(18.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any 2 of the above</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(25.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any 3 of the above</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(21)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Funding of Youth-Serving Agencies

One factor that could have an effect on whether agencies have gang prevention/intervention programs or not is the increase or decrease of funding. Table 13 depicts the increase or decrease of government funding, state/local funding, United Way funding, contributions/fees and other sources of funding.

Table 13 indicates that there are more increases than decreases in funding as a whole. The mean percent for increases is 40.7 and the mean percentage for decreases is 24.9. It is noted in the table as NA, that the mean percentage for agencies that this did not apply to or that did not answer the question is 30.5%.

Table 13
Percent of Agencies reporting Increases and/or Decreases in Funding, by Finding Source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>State/Local</th>
<th>United Way</th>
<th>Contributions/Fees</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. NA = not applicable

The Respondents of the selected youth-serving agencies were asked to report the behaviors of the youth who participated in the gang prevention/intervention programs, collaboration, staff training and meetings, funding, and
whether the youth in the agency had an opportunity to evaluate the programs they participated in. The results were demonstrated and relationships were reported between the variables.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to assess the existence of gang prevention and intervention programs that have been implemented by youth-serving agencies in eastern Iowa as perceived by the directors of the youth-serving agencies. The respondents were asked if gangs and gang activity existed in their city. If there were gangs present respondents were asked if there was implementation of prevention/intervention programs and the respondent was asked to describe the programs. Changes in the funding of youth-serving agencies and programs were also investigated. The second part of this study analyzed the directors' perceptions of both the youth who participated in the programs and the collaboration efforts within the organization and with other organizations in the community.

This study revealed that 93% of the responding directors of youth-serving agencies feel that they have gangs in their city. The remaining 7% feel that they will begin to see gangs in their city within the next year. This percentage is very high, yet only 26.3% of the agencies provided a gang prevention/intervention program. There is a gap between what agencies feel youth are facing and the programs that are being implemented. There may be different reasons for this gap. One of the reasons may be that the missions of the youth-serving agencies are not directed to youth at-risk or youth involved in gangs. If the mission is not inclusive of youth staying out of gangs then these gang prevention/intervention programs could be overlooked. While many outreach strategies are attempting to reach out to a more diverse population or serve inner city and at-risk youth, many missions do not specifically include counteracting gang activity.
Another reason for the lack of gang prevention/intervention programs may be that the staff that implements programs in youth-serving agencies are not trained to identify the needs of at-risk youth and implement appropriate programs to meet those needs. A gang member that came from the inner city and a low income family is not as likely to listen to someone who is not of their same race, culture, income level and demographic area because mentors are people who youth can relate to and are secure that the person understands their situation. Youth have no reason to trust someone who does not come from their same situation because they do not understand the issues the youth are dealing with from actual experience. An example of an agency who is trying to reach more at-risk youth by recruiting minority volunteers, involving older adults as mentors and training mentors is Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Agencies may not have the resources to implement programs that can be inclusive of all youth.

Agency Demographics

Almost half of the agencies served both children and teens. The age range that the agency served was due to the nature of the agency. Agencies such as Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Girl Scouts of the U. S. A., Junior Achievement, and Salvation Army have different programs for different age levels. An example of an organizational description is the Boys and Girls Clubs of America whose programs are building-centered, have an open-door policy, and offer diverse activities designed to teach good work habits, teamwork, perseverance, self-reliance, and consideration of others (Carnegie Report, 1992). Programs with goals such as the Boys and Girls Clubs of America can serve both youth and teens with a emphasis in the programs according to the age served.
Close to half of the population that was served by the youth-serving agencies in Eastern Iowa were from low income families. Almost 48% of the agencies served low income only and 38.6% served low, middle and upper income families. Researchers agree that one of the main causes that youth join gangs is a result of poverty (Jankowski, 1991). Miller's theory states that gang behavior is an expression of lower socioeconomic class (Bartollas, 1993). If youth from lower income families are more susceptible to getting involved in gangs then youth-serving agencies serving low-income families may have the opportunity to serve at-risk youth.

Spergel (1995) suggests that at-risk youth and youth involved in gangs are associated with poverty, lack of opportunity, unemployment and other issues related to lower income families. Youth-serving agencies are understanding from experts in the field that their services are needed by youth who come from at-risk situations. This may be another reason why youth agencies prioritize services to low income youth.

The general trend among youth-serving agencies is to implement outreach strategies to more diverse groups and at-risk youth (Carnegie Report, 1992). According to the Carnegie Report, Big Brothers/Big Sisters are making it a priority to serve more at-risk youth. Boy Scouts of America have established programs to reach boys living in welfare hotels. Boys and Girls Clubs of America are reaching out to youth who are living in public housing projects. Examples such as these further explain why so many of the youth served by youth-serving agencies are from low-income families.

The number of youth served by youth-serving agencies in eastern Iowa is more than 100,000 according to the surveyed youth-serving agencies. The 1990
Census of Population and Housing reported a total of 219,853 youth between the ages of 1 and 19 years old in the cities which were surveyed. This shows that the cities in the study are reaching about half of their youth. The city with the smallest population of youth was Bondurant reporting 601 youth and the city with the highest population was Des Moines with 52,992 youth between the ages of 1 and 19 years old. It must be considered that some youth may have been counted twice by the surveyed youth-serving agencies if youth belong to more than one agency. Also, the numbers reported are the perceptions of the respondents of the questionnaire. Following is an example of how many youth are served nation wide by two different agencies. Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America served 90,000 youth in 1991. Boy Scouts of America had 4,292,992 boys and girls involved in Boy Scouts programs (Carnegie Report, 1992).

**Gang Identification**

There are a variety of definitions that are used to define a youth gang. This thesis uses Huff’s (1990, p. 44) definition: "A group of adolescents and young adults who recognize themselves as a distinct group, are seen by the community as a group or collectively, and engage in illegal activity that requires a response by the law enforcement and has a negative image in the community."

Before an individual can determine if there are gangs in the community, a definition of a gang must be identified. Each of the respondents were asked to provide their definition of a gang. There were only 26 respondents who answered this question (45.6%). There were 31 respondents who did not answer this question and it cannot be assumed that there was a consistent definition by those that did not answer the question. The question that followed defining a gang asked the respondent to agree or disagree as to whether there were gangs in
their city. Twenty-four questionnaires did not have the answer to the definition of a gang yet they all agreed that there were gangs in their city. A lack of response to defining a gang may be the fault of the questionnaire in that it was an open-ended question.

The 26 responses to defining a gang were categorized into one of four groups. Six definitions were described in such a way that implied a gang was a group of kids merely hanging out but did not directly imply any other activity. All six of these respondents also agreed that there were gangs in their city. The remaining twenty respondents included in the definition acts of criminal behavior or the group of youth recognizing themselves as a formal group. One respondent defined gang as a "small group of individuals, working together, with an elected leader under supervision of a trained adult. Efforts directed towards a positive stated purpose." This is the only definition that described any acts of positive activity.

The respondents who provided a definition of a gang used parts of Huff's definition but were not inclusive of all the issues that are involved in a gang. The one aspect that was never addressed by respondents was that a gang should be identified as a gang by the youth who are actually in the gang. What may be identified as a gang by the public may be a group of youth who are juvenile delinquents but not involved in a gang.

The purpose of the gang definition question was to investigate how directors of youth-serving agencies defined a gang. The result of this question showed that there was very little consistency between definitions from different respondents. This study can only report that there are or are not gangs in a particular community or city according to the definition from the respondent in
each agency. While one respondent comments that there are gangs in the city, another respondent may not agree according to their definition.

Six of the definitions did not include any illegal activity or an identification of the gang themselves as a gang. The main focus of the definitions were that the youth were in groups for one reason or another. An example of a definition of a gang from this category is, "a group of young men and young women who interact together to fill the void of not having a family for support." The underlying meaning of this category seems to be youth who depend on each other for support and/or companionship. Two of the definitions mentioned the youth being involved in negative activity or going against the norms of society, but did not explain any illegal activity.

Most of the definitions indicated involvement of youth in illegal activities. This category usually explained that the youth were associated in some kind of group and their primary purpose was illegal actions and violence.

There were six respondents who focused on the issue that a gang is headed by a leader. Four of the six made a reference to the group being involved in illegal activity. There was only one respondent who commented on any positive activity.

**Gang Prevention/Intervention Programs**

As reported, some agencies were implementing general group activities as gang prevention/intervention programs. A general group activity does not imply a lot of interaction between those involved. One reason youth-serving agencies may be implementing these general group activities is that the staff is not trained on how to interact with the youth and be a mentor and a companion to the youth. Another reason may be that the staff is not qualified to develop and
implement new programs. Also, it may be more cost effective to operate general group activities for youth than implementing specific programs.

Some of the specific programs (not necessarily gang related) that were being implemented were mentoring programs which involved youth starting at four years old and a program (The Learning Tree Program) which focused on tutoring and structured "appropriate" social activities. While these programs may not have been directly related to gang prevention/intervention they appear to be constructive, effective programs based on the responses to the questionnaire.

The gang prevention/intervention programs that were discussed were T. A. G. (Teenagers Against Graffiti), Smart Moves (drug prevention program), middle-high school conflict resolution and anger replacement programs, prevention classes offered for full high school credit, and court ordered counseling. Other agencies mentioned that they discuss social issues such as gangs, structure their programs in the same way gangs do, and offer to help students get their GED.

While some agencies have not yet addressed gang issues, others are educating youth about gangs and offering programs that directly and/or indirectly deal with the concerns of gangs. These programs may be offered in conjunction with the mission of the youth-serving agency. Another reason gang prevention/intervention programs or related programs may be offered is to involve youth in situations that they are facing in real life and to help them cope with all of the pressure that youth face today such as gang, drugs, crime, and violence.
The Gang Programs Assessment Questionnaire addressed the behaviors of the youth who participated in the gang prevention/intervention programs. These questions were used to analyze whether agencies perceived the gang programs to be effective in achieving behavioral changes. According to the respondents, youth who participated in the gang prevention/intervention programs made changes in their behavior in a positive direction. The three areas in which youth made positive changes were decreasing absenteeism in school, decreasing in their number of arrests, and actually leaving the gang.

Another very interesting finding is the strong relationships between all of the perceived behavioral changes of the youth who participated in the gang prevention/intervention programs as reported by the respondents. This may suggest that as a youth makes a positive change concerning one issue, (i.e., decreasing absenteeism) it is likely that they will make a positive change in another respect including leaving the gang. Extensive research has not yet been done on the effects of gang prevention/intervention programs on the youth involved in these programs.

Agency respondents believe that youth are making positive changes in their lives and staying in the gang prevention/intervention program as a result of the program having a positive effect on the youth. Also, if youth are making changes in their behavior this may have a ripple effect, causing more than one behavior to change.

Another issue to consider is that the directors (or possibly someone that works closely with the director) was filling out the questionnaire. There was no data reported to show any participation of youth in gang prevention/intervention programs or that these youth made positive changes in their
behaviors. All of the questions were answered based on the perception of the respondent. If directors are implementing programs that are having positive effects on the youth who are participating in the programs then it may appear that the agency is accomplishing their main goal. Other issues such as training, meetings, collaboration, and evaluation are either then operating effectively or may be seen as minor goals in the agency.

Future studies may address more definitive data concerning the changes that youth make in their lives after participating in a gang prevention/intervention program. Also these changes may be a result of one or more aspects within the gang program. A study may be implemented from the perspective of the youth to find out what aspects of the programs are most effective for the youth and what changes could be made to more satisfy the needs of the youth. Program effectiveness may be evaluated by the changes the program is striving for with the youth verses the actual behaviors of the youth in the gang prevention/intervention programs.

Staff Training

The National Youth Agency (1994) explains that training staff on how to interact and implement programs for youth who are at-risk of becoming part of a youth gang is an essential part of an effective youth gang program. One of the most important of the top three ideals for a perfect youth center as suggested by the Carnegie Report (1992) is a staff who listens to and respects youth. "Adults cannot lead and influence young adolescents in a healthy way unless they are qualified and trained. Community Programs should strengthen the quality and diversity of their adult leadership" (Carnegie Report, p. 86).
Twenty percent of the respondents indicated that staff who work in gang prevention/intervention programs do not have any training for that particular area. A reason for this is explained by J. K. Thompson (1991): "Youthworkers perceive themselves as having a "mission" or a calling, as if it is who they are rather than what they do that matters: 'Born not made'" (p. 110). The Carnegie Report (1992) explains that skills such as effective communication with youth, being a guide and/or facilitator, and making effective decisions are not natural skills but learned through training and experience. These are examples of skills that can benefit youth workers in being more effective on the job. According to the Carnegie Report adult leadership in youth-serving programs can improve the quality of their programs by providing training both prior to the job and on the job training.

According to the Gang Program Assessment Questionnaire 46.7% of the staff that work in gang prevention and/or intervention attend a training session at least once a year. It was indicated that 64.7% of the gang prevention/intervention staff meet on a regular basis. Respondents showed that 35.3% of the staff that worked in gang prevention/intervention do not meet on a regular basis.

One reason that staff may not meet on a regular basis is because the emphasis of the youth-serving agency is not on gang prevention/intervention. These staff members may be involved in other activities as well as gang prevention/intervention and this particular issue does not receive attention during meetings. This also relates to the mission of the agency. The main focus of meetings is going to address the mission of the youth agency which may not involve gang prevention/intervention issues.
There was a positive correlation between the perceived behaviors of the youth after participating in the gang prevention/intervention programs and the staff attending at least one training session a year. This may indicate that a well-trained and competent staff has a positive effect on the behaviors of the youth who they work with in the programs. Surprisingly, there was a negative correlation between the behaviors of the youth in the gang prevention/intervention programs and the staff meeting on a regular basis. One explanation for this finding may be that staff who do not meet on a regular basis spend more quality time with the youth who they are working with, receive feedback from the youth and make the necessary changes to be more effective based on the needs of the youth.

Another reason for the negative correlation between behavior change in youth in programs and staff meetings may be the nature of the agency and how they are constructed for regular meetings. Meetings are not the only form of communication flow and other methods such as memos, news letters and e-mail may be implemented by the agency. This would eliminate frequent meetings yet provide effective communication flow.

It must be remembered that the questions were completed by respondents that work within the youth-serving agency and this may be the reason that the answers were reported as they were. Directors of any agency are not always willing to admit that their programs are not 100% effective or that change is needed.

**Collaboration**

Researchers (Hobbs, 1993; Huff, 1990; Knox, 1994; Mulhern et al., 1994; Pittman & Wright, 1991; Riley, 1991; Trump, 1993) state that it is effective to have
collaborative efforts in the fight against youth gangs and gang members. According to the above research youth-serving agencies need to collaborate with other youth-serving agencies, schools, religious organizations and law enforcement agencies just to name a few, to assist young people in planning productive futures and staying out of gangs.

This study has found that in the surveyed area in eastern Iowa, 70.6% of youth-serving agencies collaborate with law enforcement agencies, 61.1% collaborate with schools, 72.2% of the agencies collaborate with other youth organizations and 50% of youth-serving agencies collaborate with religious organizations. The interesting finding in this study is that there is a negative correlation between the collaboration efforts of the youth-serving agencies and the perceived positive changes in the behaviors of the youth who participated in the gang prevention/intervention programs.

The purpose of describing the relationship between the collaboration and the perceived changes in the behavior of the youth who participate in the gang prevention/intervention programs was to see what kind of relationship existed. The ultimate purpose in a gang prevention/intervention program is to see positive changes in the youth involved and it could be beneficial to know what could possibly effect the progress that youth make in those programs. Collaboration is highly encouraged by researchers (Riley, 1991; Huff, 1990, Knox, 1994; Spergel, 1995; Pittman & Wright, 1991) and knowing the relationship between collaboration and youth in programs can play a role in program implementation of the gang prevention/intervention programs.

There may be a number of explanatory suggestions for the negative correlation. First the organizations that are truly committed to making a positive
effect on the at-risk youth or youth who are likely to become a part of a gang may focus most or all of their attention on the gang prevention/ intervention programs. While other organizations are more diversified in their programs, such as networking in the community, the surveyed youth-serving organizations may be more focused on specific tasks more directly connected with keeping youth out of gangs or helping youth in gangs get out of the gang more than networking.

Another explanation may be unrelated to collaboration directly, other than the agency is not collaborating, but the behaviors of the youth are changing. This may be due to the efforts of the youth themselves to make a better life for themselves. The efforts of youth staying out of gangs is a combined effort on the part of the youth agency and the youth themselves. If youth make positive changes in their lives and use a youth agency as a means to change their lives, part of the credit for this change needs to be given to the individual youth who has made the change. The youth-agency may not collaborate with other organizations in the community but youth in their programs can still make positive changes, which would cause a negative correlation between collaboration by youth agencies and behaviors of youth in the programs. Youth-serving agencies can be a tool for youth to make positive changes in their lives and to reach out to those youth who do not agree or do not believe that life in a gang is the only choice they have for a future.

A study from the perspective of the youth who are involved in the gang prevention/intervention programs as to why they have chosen to try to get out of the gang, or try to stay out of gangs would be suggested at this point. If these decisions are being initiated by the youth themselves, then the youth should be
getting the credit for changing their lives. If the youth feel that a youth-serving agency assisted them in making a better future for themselves than these methods can be duplicated for at-risk youth around the nation.

**Evaluation**

There were 10 respondents that said that the youth evaluate the programs themselves and 5 respondents said that the youth are not part of the evaluation process at all in the agency. Not only within youth agencies but in any organization it is known that involving members of any group who you are serving is important in order to know that you are meeting the needs of those you are serving. Most respondents have indicated that youth are participating in the evaluation process and are showing some understanding that getting youth involved gives them ownership and a sense of caring about the success of the program. In the past involving youth in the implementation of programs was not always practiced. Adults often devised the programs and implemented them. Some agencies are still not valuing the opinion and expertise of the youth who are actually participating in the gang prevention/intervention programs.

"Adolescents are rarely asked what they want, as a result, many youth programs are ill-suited to their ultimate users. Improving the quality programs and services and increasing adolescents' participation, therefore, require input from the young people who will be served" (Carnegie Report, 1992, p. 77). If youth are not asked what they would like to see in a youth program that is aimed to satisfy their needs and wants it is more likely the program will not meet those needs than if the youth are consulted from the beginning in what they would like to participate in.
The respondents were asked their professional opinion on what their agency had done that had been particularly successful in dealing with gangs. The answers were categorized into one of the following groups: a program that addressed self-esteem characteristics of the youth, a general activity in the community such as the youth center being open during evening hours, and educational programs. The majority of the respondents (57.1%) thought that educating the youth was successful in dealing with gangs. A combination of all three was believed to be successful by 28.6% of the respondents of the youth-serving agencies.

As the Carnegie Report (1992) suggests, speaking with youth to identify what their needs are is a successful means in implementing programs interesting to youth. If youth are not interested and energetic about a program their involvement will be very minimal due to their lack of interest. When asked to describe what is successful regarding gang prevention/intervention programs no respondents mentioned communication with youth and making them part of the planning in a gang prevention program.

"Community programs for youth should actively engage young people by providing opportunities to practice new skills, make new friends, have new experiences, and explore new options" (Carnegie Report, 1992, p. 79). Programs that involve the above factors would include aspects that the respondents suggested are successful in gang programs and also may keep youth interested so that they will stay a part of the program. If the youth are having new experiences and exploring new options while participating in a program there is great incentive to stay in the program due to interest, education, and excitement.
The respondents offered their professional opinion concerning what was the least effective method in dealing with youth gangs. The answers were grouped as follows: law enforcement methods, untrained staff, lack of collaboration, denying the gang's existence, not enough activities for them to participate in, and automatically identifying a gang as "bad." The answers were fairly evenly distributed. Often these prevention methods are not used in combination with each other. Law enforcement methods were not found effective in the prevention of gang activity if law enforcement was only used in the sense that arrests were made when the youth broke the law. Law enforcement should work in collaboration with other organizations in the community to be effective in gang prevention and intervention (Hobbs, 1994; Mulhern et al., 1994; Trump, 1993).

Many of the respondents in the youth-serving agencies identified failures in gang prevention such as lack of collaboration and untrained staff. These identified problems were expected because the surveyed agencies did not report a high percentage of collaboration or trained staff. The problems may have been noticed because singularly any one of these methods can not be completely effective without the support of other controls for gang prevention/intervention.

In eastern Iowa 26.7% of the agencies surveyed explained that giving the gangs a "bad" label was not effective, yet in the definitions only one agency mentioned a gang being involved in any positive activity. Half (50%) of the definitions described a gang as being involved in negative behaviors. The negative definitions come from law enforcements, researchers, and literature (Goldstein & Huff, 1993; Huff, 1990; Knox, 1994). If everything that is said about gang is negative it may be that the gang members are living up to the standards
that society is setting for them. As Spergel (1995) points out gangs can "meet the needs of youths for social boundaries and structure as they contribute to personal and social development in particular institutional organizational contexts in the community" (p. 71).

Another problem that was said to be ineffective was the relative lack of activities for the youth. Researchers Goldstein (1991), Huff (1990), and Knox (1994) agree that more youth programs should be implemented to meet the needs and wants of youth. Few programs in the past have been evaluated by the agency or the youth themselves to actually find out if there are enough activities for them or if the activities that are provided are more appealing than being part of a gang.

One reason youth-serving agencies may have identified a problem of not having enough activities is because the mission of the agency is too narrow to encompass enough activities to serve all of the potential youth they could serve. Youth may be in need of youth prevention/intervention programs but if the mission is not inclusive of serving youth at-risk or youth in gangs then this may perceived by the youth agencies as not having enough activities for youth.

Another reason why there may be a lack of activities is a lack of enough staff to support more activities. In order to implement more programs, while still continuing the current programs, more staff is needed.

Further studies can be implemented to investigate the successes and failures in the programming of gang prevention/intervention programs. Not only individual methods need to be questioned but a combination of a number of methods need to be tried. The most effective evaluation process is to get the
youth involved in the planning process and the changes that need to be made for future programs (Carnegie Report, 1992).

Related Programs in Gang Prevention/Intervention

Vandegrift and Sandler (1993) and Spergel (1993) make a connection between the use of illicit drugs, use of alcohol, increased use of firearms, and participation in youth gangs. Therefore programs other than gang prevention/intervention may be addressed. To be encompassing of the issues as a whole, youth-serving agencies can implement programs such as parenting programs (for parents of gang members or youth at risk to gang activity), drug programs, violence prevention programs, and conflict resolution programs.

The Gang Program Assessment Questionnaire addressed whether the youth-serving agencies were implementing programs related to gang activity. Fifteen of the respondents indicated that their agency was implementing at least one of the programs. The most frequent single program that was being implemented was the parenting program \( (n = 10) \). Eleven of the youth-serving agencies were implementing two of the programs and nine of the agencies were implementing three of the programs. Eight respondents indicated that their agency implemented all four of the gang-related programs. All of these programs indirectly were components of a gang prevention/intervention program. A future study may address the specific programming ideas concerning these issues and how they are related to gang activity and/or used in the prevention/intervention of gang activity.
Funding of Youth-Serving Agencies

The Gang Program Assessment Questionnaire found that some youth-serving agencies increased in government funding, state and local funding, United Way, and contribution and fees. This may be explained by Stern (1992) as he explains that it is difficult to demonstrate the amount of money spent on different programs and many times organizations do not report the specific programmatic use of funding dollars. It may be true that the money spent on juvenile delinquency by organizations has declined between 1982 and 1990 (Stern) but the overall funding for the organization could have increased, decreased or stayed the same.

Future studies could address the exact money spent on gang prevention/intervention programs and other related issues. If funding is increasing but the money is not being distributed in the most cost effective manner than funding decisions must be analyzed.

One reason why the government, state and local funding may have had a higher percentage of increases than decreases is that there as been a recent trend to be concerned about the gang problem. "Years of neglect by the Federal government with regard to the gang problem began to change only recently in 1991-92 when federal agencies received the command to get concerned about gangs" (Knox, 1994, p. 446).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of directors of youth-serving agency's on the prevention/intervention programs that have been implemented by youth-serving agencies in eastern Iowa. One interesting finding
was that the respondents gave a variety of definitions for a gang, or did not answer that question at all.

The perceived behavior change of the youth who participated in the gang prevention/intervention programs was positive. Youth-serving agencies perceived positive changes in behavior regarding absenteeism, arrests and actually leaving the gang. Youth were perceived as going to school more, not getting arrested as much, and leaving the gang. These positive results show that the programs were perceived as having some effect on the youth in the program.

As stated by Hamner (1993) small cities may have an advantage concerning the fight against youth gangs and gang violence because time may still allow them to implement prevention and intervention programs. Gangs have a strategy on how they move into a city and begin to form members from the youth in the community. Prevention programs and education on gang activity in smaller communities can bring an awareness to the youth in the community as to what is involved in gang activity, both for the youth themselves and the community. Eastern Iowa may have the chance to be proactive in the issue of youth gangs because gangs have not yet exploded to the magnitude that they have in large metropolitan areas. On the other hand, youth-serving agencies seem to moving slowly in reaction to gang prevention/intervention. As in other cities, it may take the problem becoming more serious before communities will react to gangs.

Other issues that were discussed are funding, staff training, collaboration, and evaluation of the youth programs. To benefit gang prevention/intervention programs in the future, funding could be analyzed according to exactly where the dollars are spent within an agency. Also, the amount of money spent on
youth from low-income families versus youth from middle and upper income families could be documented.

As found in this study directors of youth-serving agencies reported that youth workers are not always properly trained to practice youth work. Youth workers can be trained to be more effective when implementing gang prevention/intervention programs or working with youth in general. The Carnegie Report (1992) explains that skills such as the ability to act as a guide and facilitator, respect for adolescents, ability to empower youth to make good decisions, and encouraging freedom and individual self-determination can be learned skills through training both before the job and on the job.

This study found that the relationship between collaboration and the perceived changes in the behavior of the youth who participate in gang prevention/intervention programs was negative, but it should not be assumed that there is a cause and effect relationship between these two issues. Youth-serving agencies can make collaborative efforts with other organizations in the community to have a common goal to provide safe, interesting and challenging activities for the youth in the community. Youth-serving agencies can also provide effective gang prevention/intervention programs exclusive of the collaboration efforts of the agency.

While most of the surveyed youth-serving agencies were involving youth in the evaluation process, those agencies that are not should look at the value of the input of those that are served. Research (Carnegie Report, 1992; J. K. Thompson, 1991) believes that it is beneficial to both the youth who are served and the youth-serving agency in reaching their goal by involving youth in evaluation.
President Clinton proposed an idea to combat gangs in his nomination acceptance speech in 1992 at the Democratic National Convention. He suggested the idea of college students repaying their college loans by participating in community service and part of this would involve working with gang members and competing with the current attractions that gangs offer to youth. The Clinton covenant to combat gangs is not implemented but perhaps he has enlightened the nation on the importance of addressing gangs and gang activity (Knox, 1994). Knox explains:

To effectively combat gangs in America will truly require enormous new federal resources. It will take more than a bunch of volunteers. It will cost a great deal. But it will be worth it. It could save many lives, it could prevent the burgeoning costs associated with imprisonment, and it could truly help to restore a sense of community on some of our nation's troubled urban areas. (p. 446)
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Dear Director,

My name is Julianne Gassman and I am a graduate student at the University of Northern Iowa. I am conducting master's thesis research in the area of Youth/Human Service Administration. The purpose of my study is to assess how youth-serving agencies in eastern Iowa are reacting to the increasing number of gangs and gang members. I am focusing on prevention and intervention programs that have been implemented, or will be implemented in the next year, by youth-serving agencies. I would like to ask your help in my study.

Enclosed you will find a Subject Information Questionnaire and a Gang Program Assessment Questionnaire. The subject information will be used to gain a better understanding of the director's professional background. The Gang Program Assessment Questionnaire will be used to analyze the prevention and intervention programs that have been implemented by your agency. This questionnaire can be answered by both agencies that have implemented prevention/intervention programs for gangs and by those who have not. Please answer all of the questions that apply to your agency.

Also, enclosed is a self addressed stamped envelope. After completing both the Subject Information questionnaire and the Gang Program Assessment Questionnaire please return them as soon as possible.

Thank you for participating in the study. I greatly appreciate your time and interest in assisting me in analyzing what youth-serving agencies are doing or may implement in the future concerning youth and their relationship to gangs. If you would like to see the results of this study please indicate on the Subject Information Questionnaire.

Thank you for your help,

Julianne Gassman

If you have any questions, please contact me at:
2722 College Street
Cedar Falls IA 50613
(319)277-4172

E-mail address: Gassmaj0609@uni.edu
Fax number (319)273-5833
Appendix B

Gang Program Assessment Questionnaire

Please complete the following questionnaire to the best of your ability.

Code:

1. Number of years you have worked for this organization ____________.

2. Number of years in the youth-serving agency field ____________.

3. Job title of person completing the questionnaire ____________.

4. How many youth participate in your agency's youth programs? _____.

5. What is the target age for your youth programs?
   - 8-12
   - 12-15
   - 15-18
   - other (please specify)

6. What is/are the estimated population (s) of youth that your agency targets for the youth programs? (Income categories based on the Congressional Budget Office (1990).
   - low income family (under $30,000)
   - middle class family ($30,000 - $75,000)
   - upper class family ($75,000 and up)

7. What is the population of all the youth in your agency's geographical target area?
   - less than 500 youth
   - 500 - 1,500 youth
   - 1,500 - 2,500 youth
   - more than 2,500 youth
   - information not available

8. How does your organization define a gang?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Please check agree, disagree, or not applicable (NA) for the following statements.

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<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<td>9. There are gangs in my city.</td>
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<td>(If agree go to #8)</td>
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<td>(If disagree go to #7)</td>
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<td>10. I believe we will begin to see gangs in my city within the next year.</td>
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<td>11. I expect a growth in gangs/gang members in the next year in my city.</td>
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<td>12. My agency has worked with gangs in the last year.</td>
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<td>13. My agency implements programs whose main mission is to keep youth out</td>
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<td>of gangs.</td>
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<td>14. Please check any of the following types of programs that your agency</td>
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<td>offers. (These programs may be independent of any gang-related program</td>
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<td>that you might have).</td>
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<td>______ Parenting programs (for parents of adolescent children)</td>
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<td>______ Drug programs</td>
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<td>______ Conflict resolution programs</td>
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<td>15. Have the following increased or decreased in the last five years in</td>
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<td>your agency?</td>
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<td>Government Funding</td>
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<td>United Way Funding</td>
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<td>Contributions/Fees</td>
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<td>Other Sources of Funding</td>
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If your agency has prevention/intervention programs for gangs please answer questions 16-28, according to the categories, to the best of your ability.

16. How many youth participate in the gang prevention/intervention program(s)?

17. Youth in my prevention/intervention program(s) for gangs participate regularly.

18. Youth participate in the gang prevention/intervention program(s) for at least one year and/or duration of the program.

19. Youth in the gang prevention/intervention program(s) significantly decrease in their school absentees.

20. Youth in the gang prevention/intervention program(s) significantly decrease their number of arrests.

21. Gang members leave their gang after participating in the prevention/intervention program(s).

22. Gang prevention/intervention staff attend training sessions at least 1-2 times a year.

23. Gang prevention/intervention staff meet regularly about their program(s). (ie. bi-monthly/monthly) YES NO
24. a. The organization collaborates with local schools about gang prevention and intervention.  
   
   YES  NO

b. The organization collaborates with local law enforcement agencies about gang prevention and intervention.  
   
   YES  NO

c. The organization collaborates with other youth-serving agencies in the community about gang prevention and intervention.  
   
   YES  NO

d. The organization collaborates with local churches and religious organizations about gang prevention and intervention.  
   
   YES  NO

25. The agency gives the youth in the gang prevention/intervention program(s) an opportunity to evaluate the program(s) on a regular basis.  
   
   YES  NO

For questions 26-28 please attach additional paper if more space is needed.

26. Describe your agency's gang prevention/intervention programs.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

27. In your professional opinion what has your agency done that has been particularly successful in dealing with gangs?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
28. In your professional experience, what do you think is least effective in dealing with gangs?

Please return the Gang Program Assessment Questionnaire in the self addressed stamped envelope by November 17, 1995. Thank you very much and your time.

If you would like a copy of the results of this study please write your name and address below and return this along with the questionnaire.