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March, 2003

Evaluation  
of the  
Gang Violence Reduction Project in Little Village

**Final Report Summary**

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The Evaluation was supported by the Grant # 00-DBMU0017, awarded to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. All views and conclusions expressed in this manuscript are those of the Authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

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# Evaluation of The Gang Violence Reduction Project in Little Village

## Final Report Summary

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## Introduction

In this summary we deal with the development of the Gang Violence Reduction Project (GVRP), with Project operations, and with Project outcomes at the individual-youth, gang, police district, and community resident and organization levels. Information for our analyses comes from monthly activity reports to the Chicago Police Department, interim program evaluations, gang member surveys and self-reports, Project worker summary reports, field observations, focus group findings, police arrest and incident data, community resident and organization surveys, administrative letters and memos, and newspaper reports.

The GVRP was the first of a series of theoretically-informed demonstrations to address the youth gang problem, based on a model for addressing the gang problem in comprehensive and community-based terms which was developed by University of Chicago Professor Spergel and associates between 1987 and 1991. An earlier research and development effort, The Juvenile Gang Suppression and Intervention Program, funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), United States Department of Justice, resulted in a set of interrelated strategies: Community Mobilization, Social Intervention, Provision of Social Opportunities, Suppression/Social Control, and Organizational Change and Development. It was followed by the Gang Violence Reduction Project in Little Village (1992-1997), then by OJJDP's ongoing Comprehensive, Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention and Suppression Program in 1995, followed by their Safe Futures Program, 1996, Rural Gang Initiative, 1998, and Fiscal Year 2000 Gang-Free Schools and Communities Initiative.

The Gang Violence Reduction Project was funded by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA), based on Block Grant funds from the United States Department of Justice Federal Violence in Urban Areas Program, and sponsored by The Chicago Police Department. It addressed a severe, chronic gang-violence problem in an inner-city area of Chicago. What distinguished the Project from prior (and to some extent subsequent) gang-control, intervention, and community-involvement programs, was its strong grass-roots

orientation, involving former gang leaders or influentials as outreach youth workers, and their collaboration with police, probation, and a neighborhood organization to penetrate chronic, violent youth gangs, and to modify their behavior.

Research and evaluation were uniquely integrated into the Project. Assessment, planning, evaluation, and theory testing – particularly of social disorganization theory – were elements of program development and implementation. The Chicago Police Department and the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority had already developed extensive data systems to describe, map, and analyze gang crime in Chicago on a local-community basis, and made access to these data available to the Project.

These unique features, however, must be considered within the context of a particular Chicago tradition and a recent national interest in gang intervention and control programs and research. Chicago has been one of the major centers in the United States for the study of delinquency, urban crime and gangs, and for the development of experimental programs to address these problems. However, most of these programs, in Chicago and elsewhere, have tended to be confined to particular approaches (whether social intervention, grass-roots involvement or suppression), without sufficient development of interdisciplinary, comprehensive or multi-level community approaches. Evaluation research on gangs has also been limited by a lack of adequate comparison groups, not using measures of change in community and organizational contexts, unclear descriptions of program elements and outcome, not using both juvenile and adult police arrest data to specify types of crime committed by gang youth, not using both arrest and self-report data, lack of attention to the effects of confinement data in computing risk periods, not relating crime changes among individual program youth to aggregate or area-level crime changes, and a failure to use multivariate analysis procedures.

Evaluation of The Gang Violence Reduction Project in Little Village

**Part I**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Chapters 1 - 7

## Chapter 1: Genesis of the Little Village Project

In the spring of 1992, a series of events occurred in Chicago government, and among criminal justice agencies in Chicago and Cook County, which made the development of the Gang Violence Reduction Project possible. A new mayor was elected, who appointed a new Superintendent of Police. The structure of the Chicago Police Department (CPD) was modified; its Gang Crimes Unit was eliminated and its functions transferred to other divisions. The Associate Director of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) – the State’s crime and justice planning agency – was appointed Director of the Research and Development Division of the CPD under the Deputy Superintendent, with major responsibility for creation of the city-wide community policing program. At the same time, a former Illinois Assistant State’s Attorney became the Director of Cook County Adult Probation Department, which had special interest in the gang problem.

Dr. Candice Kane was a key generator of interest and effort, across criminal justice agencies, for support of the notion of a comprehensive approach to addressing the gang problem. She had been closely involved with Professor Spergel in the development of the OJJDP Juvenile Gang Suppression and Intervention Program, and later in the development of the Comprehensive, Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Program. She was responsible for the application for funding to the United States Justice Department’s Federal Violence in Urban Areas Program in 1992. The application was approved, and a one million dollar-per-year, four-year grant was allocated to the Chicago Police Department; half to address the problem of domestic violence, and half to deal with the problem of gang violence.

In early 1992, Dr. Kane asked Professor Spergel to produce a concept paper for a pilot project as part of the gang-violence portion of the federal grant. Initially, the project was to target youth and young adults, 17 to 24 years of age, in a Chicago community with a serious gang-violence problem. A community advisory committee was to be established. Professor

Spergel's main task was to assist the CPD Research and Development Division and the Gang Crimes Unit in the development of the project; he was not to play a significant or long-term program-operational role. He also was to receive a separate contract from the ICJIA to evaluate the project.

The original concept paper was submitted in February 1992, and envisioned a project focused on the reduction of serious gang violence, especially gang homicide, aggravated battery and aggravated assault, at both the individual-target-youth and target-area levels in Little Village, a predominantly Mexican-American community of approximately 60,000 residents (U.S. Census 1990). The goal was to achieve a significant absolute or relative decrease in the level of serious gang violence of 100 targeted gang members, as well as a reduction of serious gang violence in Little Village compared to six other similar community areas in Chicago. At least 50 of the youth were to receive intensive, collaborative services and control attention from the project team and associated community-based agencies and grass-roots groups.

### Program Strategy

The Project Model called for a team approach that employed a set of interrelated strategies to address the gang problem – local community mobilization, social intervention (especially youth outreach), provision of social opportunities, suppression, and organizational change and development of local agencies and groups. *Community mobilization* referred to the collaboration and integration of efforts of law enforcement and criminal justice agencies with those of community-based human service agencies, grass-roots organizations, local citizens, and city-wide organizations. Outreach *social intervention* services were to be supplied by neighborhood community outreach youth workers, including some former gang members. The provision of *social opportunities* depended on the availability and successful use of adequate training and education, leading to job referrals and placement for those gang members at greatest risk of committing gang violent offenses. *Suppression*, in some socially modified and

decentralized target-area form, was to be carried out by police and probation (and outreach youth workers), and *organizational change and development* referred mainly to changes in the policies and procedures of organizations facilitating the development of the other strategies. Officials of the CPD Research and Development Division also suggested that if the GVRP developed appropriately, it could be integrated with the planned, but at that time not yet operational, Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) Community Policing Program.

Originally, the Gang Crimes Unit of the CPD was to be responsible for the Project, which was to include intra-departmental coordination among Patrol, Narcotics, Robbery, and Neighborhood Relations units in regard to the GVRP. With departmental reorganization, general responsibility for the Project shifted to the Patrol Division, out of the Deputy Superintendent's Office, in collaboration with the Research and Development Division. More immediate responsibility was placed in the 10<sup>th</sup> District (Little Village area) Commander's office. A part-time neighborhood relations sergeant, a part-time clerical officer and two full-time tactical officers were assigned to the Project.

A full-time adult probation supervisor and three full-time probation officers of the Cook County Department of Adult Probation were also assigned, to provide a decentralized and pilot outreach probation service to targeted youth in the area who were already on probation. A Department of Human Services Chicago Intervention Network (CIN) coordinator and three full-time staff were originally expected to provide youth-outreach, mediation, and crisis-intervention services to targeted youth. The CIN program was restructured, however, and no outreach staff were assigned to the Project. A group of local agencies, community organizations and residents (including former gang members) was expected to be formed into an Advisory Council to advise and consult with Project staff on the development of the program. Regular meetings were to be convened by the Advisory Group to discuss Project issues and activities.

Professor Spergel's duties were to provide advice and coordination in overall program development, as well as staff training and troubleshooting. It was anticipated that Professor



Spergel's direct program activities would be phased out at the end of the first year, as the Project developed an effective set of field procedures and operations.

### Modifying the Plan

The structure and processes of the Gang Violence Reduction Project in Little Village were modified almost before the Project began. The CPD Gang Crimes Unit was reorganized and downsized, and its function confined to intelligence. The Gang Crimes Unit's enforcement duties were taken over by the Patrol Division, which was not initially given clear guidelines for implementing the Project. It was not clear who the police Project coordinator, or leader of the Project, would be, i.e., who would take the day-to-day responsibility for coordination of the various components of the Project.

An outreach community youth-worker unit, a critical component of the Project, had to be recruited to replace the Department of Human Services/CIN because of its withdrawal from the venture. A variety of youth-service organizations were present in Little Village, but none of them had outreach workers, and their programs were not directed to hardcore gang youth. There were other youth-serving organizations outside of Little Village using outreach youth workers, but they preferred to work with younger gang youth, and were reluctant to collaborate closely with the Chicago Police Department.

Unwilling to modify a basic element of the Model, Professor Spergel offered to recruit an outreach worker staff to replace the Department of Human Services component, and to operate it out of the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. This was acceptable to the CPD and ICJIA, as well as to the University of Chicago, at least for a year. The expectation remained of involving the Department of Human Services, or one of the local agencies, in providing youth-work service in accordance with the Model. It was important to get the Project underway as quickly as possible. The Chicago Police Department's continuing organizational context was in flux, and its willingness to support the Model was uncertain.

The lack of strong police interest in, and clear administrative responsibility for, the development of the Project was evident from the start of operations. The CPD showed only a nominal and limited degree of acceptance of its participation in the Model's collaborative concept; it took a cautious wait-and-see attitude in the early Project years. The CPD administration and line staff had a history of skepticism about the value of outreach youth workers, particularly if they were former gang members. The prevailing view throughout the Department was that outreach youth workers were essentially gang members. There was also no tradition of collaboration at the operational level between police and adult probation. Most significantly, the CPD was experiencing an overload of departmental changes. So many new ideas and procedures were confronting administrative and street-level police officers – particularly in regard to planning and implementing a community-policing program – that they could not fully pay attention to the Little Village Project.

There was almost no formal beginning to the Project. The contract between ICJIA and CPD stipulated that the program get started in July of 1992. While the lack of clarity about Project structure and operations did not slow early development, it soon presented obstacles to the Project's full development and later institutionalization. The Project did not begin in an adequately-considered or orderly fashion. Key officials of the various CPD units or associated agencies did not meet to develop a specific, coordinated plan of action. Operational personnel of the different CPD units or agencies were selected and assigned to the Project, but not told what specifically they were to do, nor trained in how to collaborate with each other. The Project concept was not operationalized with proper attention to specific objectives, Project structure, job descriptions, staff relationships and tasks to be accomplished, and lacked a supportive organizational or policy context. In this organizational, contextual and procedural limbo, Professor Spergel made a decision to get the Project “off-the-ground,” and in due course became the unofficial coordinator of the Project’s development and implementation process. He, in effect, served as Project Coordinator at the operational level for the duration of the Project.

## **Chapter 2: Start of Field Operations and Research Planning**

In late June and July, 1992, it seemed clear that the Gang Violence Reduction Project would in fact be undertaken, on some basis. While funding arrangements for the Project would not be consummated until March of 1993, the Project Coordinator (who was also the Project Evaluator) began preparations for Project operations in May of 1992. He knew he would have to engage quickly in various sets of interrelated tasks: hiring and mentoring outreach workers, contacting gang influentials, establishing preliminary working relationships with key police and probation administrators and their respective street-level staffs who would be assigned to the Project, contacting local community organizations and youth agencies, designing Evaluation instruments (including baseline community and individual surveys) and arranging access to criminal justice system data sources.

### **Staff Hiring**

The Project Coordinator selected as an Assistant Director a man with whom he had worked about eight years earlier on a gang project developed by the Coordinator in the Humboldt Park area on the north side of the city. The Assistant Director had been a youth-agency director and a community organizer, and knew many gang youth leaders on the north side. He was presently completing his job as staff assistant for housing to a Chicago Alderman (who would later become the local Congressman). He knew key people in organizations in the Little Village community, such as the 10<sup>th</sup> District police Commander, a key community-organization director, the heads of youth agencies, and priests from several of the Catholic churches. He volunteered his services to help get the Project off the ground, especially by contacting gang influentials and organizing community leaders' support for the Project.

The Project Coordinator's chief purpose in bringing the Assistant Director on board was to assist in quickly obtaining staff who had contacts with the two major gang constellations in Little Village, the Latin Kings and the Two Six. Both were large, relatively well-organized, turf-

based, traditional gangs. According to data obtained from the CPD crime analysis section, they were together responsible for 75% of the heavy violence (gang homicides, aggravated batteries and aggravated assaults) in Little Village.

The Assistant Director did not have direct contact with leadership of the two gangs in Little Village, but he knew of two young men who had formerly been highly influential leaders in north-side gangs which might be related to target-area gangs on the south side. The first, in his late twenties, had been a founder of the Spanish Cobras, but was currently a building contractor and no longer involved in street-gang activities. He had also been one of the youth workers on the earlier Humboldt Park gang project. The second, in his mid-thirties and at that time employed in the City of Chicago's Traffic Department, was formerly an enforcer and General in the Latin Kings organization in Humboldt Park.

Both men knew each other, understood and supported the general purpose of the Project, and agreed to volunteer. Both quickly became part-time, paid youth-worker staff, and remained with the Project until other full-time youth workers were hired. The Latin King youth worker took his street-work position seriously, and was able to make contacts quickly with key south-side Latin Kings through connections he had made with them when he was in prison. The Two Six worker, since he was from a distantly allied gang, had some difficulty making contacts with the Two Six. The part-time job was a lark for him. The Assistant Director and the two youth workers took major responsibilities for the initial contacts with gang youth and their leadership, mostly through direct "walk-ups" to clusters of youth standing on the streets.

The first full-time youth worker was recruited in October 1992, with the aid of the staff of a local youth agency. He was an honorably-discharged U.S. Army sergeant in the recent Gulf War, and a former leader of a Two Six faction. The Latin King youth worker helped recruit a young man in his thirties, influential in the Latin Kings, who had served two extensive prison terms for gang aggravated battery, but who had also completed two years of community college and had factory work experience. In addition, two students from the School of Social Service

Administration were employed as part-time research assistants to help the outreach youth workers access local agency resources to meet the social needs of gang youth, and to develop program recording procedures.

This was a unique beginning to staff operations, largely dependent on the Project Coordinator's prior experience with youth gangs in Chicago and elsewhere, his long-term gang research experience, and his position as a professor at the University of Chicago. However, it lacked the strong commitment to the Project approach of a supportive organizational, interorganizational, and community structure.

### Initial Field Contacts

The purpose of the initial field contacts was to discover who the gang members were, particularly the "influentials" or "shot callers," who were responsible for violent gang behaviors. It was important to persuade those youth on the street, who could influence other gang members, to accept the GVRP. We also needed to know where the gang sections were located, and which sections were most heavily involved in violent gang activity. They would be the groups we would focus on. We were entering the life space of these youth to understand their concerns, to know what they were doing and why, and, in due course, to positively influence their attitudes, values, and behaviors.

The outreach workers had to understand the Project's purpose, and demonstrate what they might do to achieve Project objectives, especially those which would be immediately beneficial to gang youth. The youth workers had no trouble contacting key members of the two gangs. At first, the Latin Kings were antagonistic and suspicious, but in the long run proved to be more accepting of the workers' efforts. The Two Six were initially more friendly and communicative, but proved to be more elusive and difficult to work with. Leadership of the Latin Kings was more centralized; leadership of the Two Six was diffuse and not clearly defined.

A good deal was accomplished by the spring of 1993. A high level of interracial,

intergang hostility and conflict involving Latin Kings and Black Gangster Disciples at the local high school, situated in the border area between Little Village and the neighboring African-American community, was moderated through efforts of the Latin King youth workers, in consultation with Project staff and the administration of the high school. Requests by gang youth for services were made with increasing frequency. Youth requested help with returning to high school, and with getting jobs. About half of the requests came from hardcore “gang bangers.” The Two Six youth worker was able to mediate a dispute between eight Two Six youth and an Ambrose youth. (The Ambrose were a gang in the neighboring Mexican-American community of Pilsen who were allied with the Two Six in Little Village.) The Two Six worker was also able to assist a gang youth with emergency shelter, and helped the girlfriend of another gang youth to find daycare for one of her children. The Two Six worker was also planning a graffiti-removal project with one of the Two Six sections. An early concern was the inability of youth workers to respond to gang-member requests for jobs, despite the improving economy. The workers were not yet sufficiently skilled in identifying job resources, or in getting youth sufficiently motivated to actually start, and stay on, a job.

#### Outreach Youth Worker Orientation

The question of who the targeted youth were to be had to be resolved early. The outreach workers were directed to target (particularly on an individual basis) those youth who clearly were involved in acts of violence, or who incited others to violence. They were instructed to avoid focusing on peripheral or wannabe gang members, and also those gang members engaged primarily in other types of criminal activity, especially drug dealing. (Later, we discovered that most of the violent youth targeted were also engaged in some level of drug dealing.)

Outreach workers were also instructed to engage in a minimum of group activities (particularly athletic events) so as not to cohere the gang further, or reinforce gang norms (often those related to gang fighting). The targeted youth were to receive assistance with job or school

placement, and monitoring by other members of the Project team (particularly by police, but also by a probation officer if the youth was on probation). Focus was on individual services for youth (sometimes in a group context) and encouraging them to participate in non-gang, mainstream activities.

A key responsibility of the youth workers was communication with police and probation officers. Information was to be exchanged about gang events that were likely to result in violence, and especially about targeted youth likely to be involved in these potentially violent events, who would then receive special attention from Project police. Exchange of information did not necessarily extend to providing information about all forms of crime, particularly less serious property crime. Information was transmitted routinely at regular weekly or biweekly Project staff meetings, and informally when Project police and outreach workers got together by telephone or through occasional field contacts.

The primary role of the youth workers, however, was as social agents. They were not to regard themselves as police, or as directly assisting in arresting gang youth. In return, the Project police and probation officers had to develop respect for the youth workers, and assist them in the fulfillment of their primary social-assistance roles. The exchange of information was essential to the development of a case-management system, which included the youth workers' assessing gang situations, assisting youth with counseling/advice and referral for services, and helping Project researchers in their evaluation tasks. Youth workers were provided with letters of identity and descriptions of their responsibilities, as well as with photo identification, to legitimize their roles in expected contacts with non-Project police in the area. Youth workers were also provided with protective vests, because of the frequent shootings between members of the two warring gangs. The vests were not worn regularly in the latter years of the Project, as violence seemed to abate. Youth workers were supplied with beepers; the Assistant Director and senior workers were also provided with cellular phones.

Youth workers were required to be on the street at night, on weekends, and as needed at

periods of gang crisis. There was no established office space for the youth workers, except at the University of Chicago, eight miles from Little Village. The team of youth workers, police, probation, and a community activist would meet regularly at the Probation office in Little Village, and sometimes at a local Protestant or Catholic church.

### Law Enforcement and the Project

The Chicago Police Department was fiscally and administratively responsible for the Project. A special liaison officer was appointed to get the Project off the ground. A Lieutenant from the Research and Development Unit downtown introduced the Project Coordinator and the Assistant Director to the 10<sup>th</sup> District Commander. At first there was some ambivalence in the 10<sup>th</sup> District tactical unit about accepting the Project. An early problem was that the two veteran gang officers from the Gang Crimes Unit who were originally assigned to the Project were not aware of the shift of the Project from the Gang Crimes Unit to the Patrol Division. It was unclear whether they were still expected to be part of the Project effort. There was a lack of coordination here, and this would create problems later.

Two younger officers, recently out of the police academy, were assigned to the Project after two senior 10<sup>th</sup> District tactical officers were offered the assignment – and refused. These assigned tactical officers established good lines of communication with the youth workers. With their aid, they met with members of one section of the Two Six, and then with an equal number from a section of the Latin Kings in their respective street hangouts. The two tactical officers quickly established positive relations with gang members. The Assistant Director, who was also the Supervisor of the youth workers, noted that the gang members were developing “good respect” for the two new tactical officers because they were “not disrespecting” the gang members. After a while, however, the tactical officers began to “feel that the gang members were getting too friendly and making us look bad with the other officers.” The relationship of gang youth and the tactical officers became somewhat strained.



The Project-team concept did not develop smoothly. Project police began to complain that they were not meeting with youth workers often enough, and were not getting as much information from them as they wanted. The youth workers were unsure about working with the police, and at first were reluctant to meet with them other than at the bi-weekly, interagency staff meetings.

Administrative issues of coordination affected the development of the role of adult probation in the Project. Probation officers were outfitted with special telephones and protective vests, and were required to undergo weapons training before undertaking their outreach duties. They were also asked by their agency administrators to get judges to place “special conditions” (e.g., intensive attention) on all Project youth who were on probation. They were originally limited by their Department in their contacts with Project police and tours of duty at night in Little Village. The probation officers struggled to gain recognition of their innovative outreach role, not only from the judges but within their own Department.

#### Community Contacts and Community Organization

A critical task of the Project was community mobilization, i.e., involving key organizations, resident groups, and residents themselves in the development of the Project, and particularly in achieving its objectives. The first order of business of the Project Coordinator and the Assistant Director was to contact local organizations to obtain their perceptions of and experiences with the gang problem, and to explore areas of collaboration. Boys and Girls Clubs, the Park Department, youth agencies, churches, schools, local community organizations, block clubs, and the Alderman’s office were concerned with the gang problem, but not as a priority. They had insufficient resources to develop collaborative programs. Interest was focused on younger youth, particularly in regard to educational or recreational activities, as well as family, health, sanitation, and housing needs and problems.

Key organizational support for the Project came from churches, which were especially

responsive to family concerns about the safety of their children. The local Catholic churches made their gym and other facilities available to the Project, and participated in developing an advisory group. The local high school, which was affected by Hispanic/African-American racial tensions as well as by gang conflict, sought and received assistance from Project workers in resolving gang conflicts, but were reluctant to readmit gang youth who were “kicked out,” or to establish special programs for them. A job-placement agency expressed interest in working with the Project to link youth with jobs in the suburbs, and also to supply transportation. Of the three Aldermen whose jurisdictions included parts of the politically-fragmented Little Village community, only one volunteered to be of assistance by encouraging block clubs to support the Project. United Neighbor Organization (UNO), the largest and most active community organization in the area, did not assist the Project, being mainly interested in issues of housing, schooling, and jobs, and stronger law enforcement and punishment for gang offenders.

Contact was made with a community activist at one of the monthly meetings conducted by UNO. She was a longtime resident of the area, with close relations to Catholic and Protestant churches in Little Village, and had an interest in schools and the gang problem. She had been a member of a gang in her youth, and knew many of the families in the Two Six area. She currently worked as a youth consultant for a national youth agency particularly concerned with alternative education and job training. She and the pastor of an Evangelical Christian church offered their support to the Project, and became co-chairpersons of the Little Village Neighbors Against Gang Violence (NAGV) organization, which was to be closely related to and supportive of the GVRP.

### The Evaluation Component

Many aspects of the Project were developing simultaneously: the youth-work component, team building, community resource development, community organization, as well as structuring an appropriate police-administration context for Project development. Process and outcome

evaluation was also being built into the program. The Chicago Police Department Research and Development liaison to the Project had special interest in research, particularly in community perceptions of the gang and general crime problems. He requested a community survey to assess the impact of the Project on the community, a request which was also related to the Chicago Police Department's planning and preparation for a major, city-wide, community-policing initiative. He also facilitated the Project's relationship with the CPD crime-analysis section for the collection of target and comparison area-level and individual-level police arrest data.

A baseline community survey of residents and organizations in Little Village and the nearby community of Pilsen (which was used as a key comparison community) was undertaken. A variety of agencies, community organizations and police units assisted in the development of the survey, and in contacting community residents. A series of items in the Little Village survey identified potential interest of residents and organizations in participating in an organized, community effort to address the gang problem. The data obtained from the survey would be useful both in providing baseline gang-problem information and in recruiting volunteers for NAGV, which was in the process of formation.

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority also developed an Early Warning Data System which was useful in the provision of data on the nature and scope of gang incidents, gang offenders and gang victims (based on Chicago Police Department crime-analysis data), and in mapping crime "hot spots." These data permitted Project research and program staff to periodically observe changes in the nature of gang offenses on an area and/or gang basis during the course of the Project.

The integration of research and program development was a constant from the very start of the GVRP. The data, and reports developed, served program planning and evaluation purposes. For example, data on the upswing in arrests of younger gang members served as the basis for later extending the scope of youth to be served by the GVRP from 17-to-24-year-olds to include 14-, 15-, and 16-year-olds from the two targeted gangs.

Planning for the individual gang-member survey began in the late fall and early winter of 1992-1993. All members of the Project staff – police, probation, and youth workers, as well as NAGV staff – would be directly and indirectly involved in the collection of gang-member survey data. The survey would be administered to all youth entering the program, including youth entering the program at different time periods. Three waves of youth interviews would be administered in the course of the five-year-Project.

The gang-member survey interview also helped to clarify and reinforce the purpose of the Project. The interviews were conducted by a separate Project research staff, which included local residents and Spanish-speaking students from local colleges as interviewers. Data on individual youth were not shared among Project operations staff, or with any other persons or organizations. However, the Project field researchers, with the consent of the youths interviewed, were permitted to share certain information with the youth's assigned outreach worker regarding the youth's desire for help in returning to school or obtaining a job. Aggregate-level interview data (that did not identify individual youth) were periodically shared among Project operations staff.

Only youth targeted by the GVRP were interviewed. Funds were not available to obtain interviews from a comparison youth group, either in Little Village or the comparison community of Pilsen. However, later in the course of the Project, a non-served, non-interviewed Little Village comparison group was created based on youth who were arrested with the targeted gang members from each of the two gangs. These co-arrestees were gang members as well. No interviews were obtained from these co-arrestees.

Obtaining interviews from targeted gang youth in the open community was a complex and difficult process, depending heavily on the positive relationships established by the youth workers with the gang youth, as well as on the skills of the interviewers. Targeted youth were paid \$20.00 for each interview. Signed, informed consent forms were obtained from the interviewed youth, as well as from the parents of those youth who were juveniles.

### **Chapter 3: Organizational Change and Development**

An underlying strategy of the Gang Violence Reduction Project was organizational change and development. This strategy was basic to the achievement of the other four key interrelated strategies: *community mobilization, social intervention, provision of social opportunities* and *suppression* in regard to the gang problem. The primary goal was to reduce the gang problem, particularly serious gang violence (homicide, aggravated battery and aggravated assault), at the individual, gang, and community levels. The presence of a viable and effective GVRP was regarded as essential to the achievement of this goal. Developing new and relevant agency-support structures, as well as modifying existing community arrangements for addressing the problem, were critical.

Focus of the Project was at the local, neighborhood level, rather than at the broader community or larger institutional levels. The chief orders of business were creating collaborative patterns of interaction among the Project staff, and also involving community residents and other key local agencies in Project program efforts. Organizational change was directed almost exclusively to the development of proximate services and resources for Project youth. Longer-term policy development and institutionalization of the Project Model were not initially addressed. The top-level administration of the Chicago Police Department and the Cook County Adult Probation Department were involved only to remove obstacles to street-level operations, and to observe how the Project developed and whether and what gang-crime reduction occurred.

Limited efforts were made to obtain the support of a range of Chicago Police Department unit administrators, whose major preoccupation was with the development of the community policing (CAPS) program. Contacts by the Department's liaison or the Project Coordinator with city-wide human-service, criminal-justice, school, religious, business and local-funding organizations to "buy into" and ultimately sustain the Project approach – if it was successful – were not made. Such efforts would have required another level of organizing for which staff and

resources – and indeed city political leadership and Chicago Police Department interest – were not yet available.

### Building a Team Structure

At the beginning, each type of worker went separately on his tour of duty within the framework of his agency function or approach. The Project Model, however, was not to have each worker doing his own work “thing” in isolation from other members of the team. Coordination among the different types of workers was not to occur simply through a hierarchical chain of command (first through supervisory and administrative staff, across the respective agencies and then back down through channels). The notion of coordination was operationalized as direct, sometimes immediate, and reciprocal interactions among the street-level staff regarding specific gang problems. This was to take place appropriately in common time and place.

At first, there was little desire for the development of a Project office to facilitate team operations and as a means to building a team structure. There was little interest among staff in meeting at the 10<sup>th</sup> District police station. It was an old, forbidding building with insufficient space for existing police operations, let alone for a new project. The youth workers were resistive to the idea of meeting at the district police station. Most youth workers were well known to the police; many had been arrested before and brought to the district lockup. They also did not want to be viewed as undercover agents for the police. The two Project police tactical officers wanted space of their own to keep notes and records, with access to a computer. The Adult Probation Department was interested in developing its own local office.

The Project Coordinator was also reluctant to establish a location primarily for outreach youth workers, who wanted their own meeting place for counseling and recreational activities. He wanted to avoid the temptation for youth workers to hang out in an office, and for gang youth to take over a facility. A separate meeting place for the Latin Kings and the Two Six and their

youth workers was being called for. This was not feasible for cost reasons, and might also have served to cohere each of the gangs, as well as sustain traditional animosities. The focus had to be on youth workers interacting with gang youth on the streets, with their parents in home contacts, and with local agencies and residents in the community.

In due course, the Adult Probation Department decided to establish a local office and meeting place for its Project probation officers: a space which could also be used by other Project team members. The only problem was that suitable office space in neutral territory could not be found in Little Village, so the office was finally established deep in Latin King territory. At first, the Two Six community youth workers were hesitant to attend staff meetings at the probation office, and were under some threat from the Latin Kings sections in the area. But no serious confrontations occurred, and eventually both the Two Six and Latin King workers used the Little Village probation facility on a regular basis. However, only Latin Kings gang youth came to the office for probation contacts; the Two Six chose to go to the main probation offices in the criminal court building not far from Little Village.

### Information Exchange

The key element in the development of team structure and staff coordination was the exchange of information about the gang problem in Little Village. In the early months, this was of special interest to the Project tactical officers and the organized crime (formerly Gang Crimes Unit) officers, for suppression purposes. They had some knowledge of gangs and key gang influentials or hardcore members in the area, but they wanted to be brought up-to-date on the current gang situation, and needed to keep track of key gang members. The probation officers were new to the area and had to learn as much as possible about gangs. The youth workers were centrally important at these first meetings of the team, both because of their current knowledge of gang activities, and their ability to identify specific gang incidents and the youth responsible for them. But they were reluctant to engage in meaningful discussions, and tended to give

generalized or evasive answers to questions about particular gang youth. The participants at these early meetings seemed to be talking past each other.

The Project Coordinator suggested procedures for information exchange: 1) identify gang youth currently engaged in serious gang violence, those who were influential in creating such violence, and those who clearly had the potential for extreme violence – for example, through their display or possession of guns; 2) verify information through at least one other source, in order to be sure that youth selected for the Project were properly identified and eligible to receive social and control services; 3) take special care not to identify or select wannabe, peripheral, or associate gang members, especially those who engaged primarily in non-violent crimes, whether gang or non-gang related (mainly property crimes); and 4) periodically review the status of Project and other gang youth in order to modify, expand, reduce, or terminate services and/or controls. The Coordinator reminded the police officers present that the identification of youth as hardcore gang members did not necessarily mean they were to be subjected to hard suppression. Many of these youth had reached a point in their gang careers when counseling service or access to opportunities such as jobs could mean a sharp tapering-off of their gang activities.

In one of the early staff meetings, toward the end of the first year (1992), when the Gang Crimes Unit officers and community youth workers were engaged in “war stories,” (i.e., special events in the history of the local gangs) and rehashing prominent gang shootings, a certain communications barrier seemed to be broken. However, a problem arose when the Project tactical officers, new to the gang problem, requested help in associating real names with nicknames or street names. The youth workers themselves did not know the real names of many of the gang youth. At the urging of the Project Coordinator, all the Project workers – probation officers, police officers and youth workers – agreed to provide lists of youth who should be targeted, with either real or street names. The association of street names and real names would be made at subsequent meetings.



Over the next several months, information was increasingly and freely shared about youth to be targeted. However, only certain types of information about the youth came to be shared, e.g., probation status, recent offense charges, present criminal court status, criminal history, certain family information, violent youth activity, and potential for gang violence. Certain non-gang criminal information (e.g., drug use, drug selling, and robbery) was shared less often, particularly by youth workers.

Youth workers began to share information, often in casual conversation with the tactical officers after staff meetings: information about gang shootings, location of “hot spots,” and expected plans and times for confrontations by gangs, and even for drug sales. The tactical officers were also careful on the streets not to point to youth workers as the source of information that might lead to an arrest. Youth workers assisted Project police in solving several homicides by indicating who actual shooters were, and who the non-involved gang members present were.

The youth workers persuaded gang members to show up for (and sometimes escorted them to) probation appointments. They also informed probation officers of the special kinds of help that youth needed. On one occasion, a Project probation officer requested information on how a specific targeted youth could get out of a particular gang section without punishment, and the youth worker helped by contacting a senior member of one of the gangs, who acknowledged that this could occur without gang reprisals.

Youth workers alerted probation officers to gang youth from Little Village who were on regular probation in other jurisdictions in Cook County, or in nearby counties. These youth were subsequently transferred to the Little Village probation gang-unit caseload. In turn, probation and police began to tell youth workers about Little Village gang youth who were arrested and newly placed on probation (and who might not be known to the youth workers) so the youth workers could target them for services.

One initial problem of information-sharing particularly involved youth workers, who did

not at first readily share information with other youth workers servicing opposing gangs, and sometimes not even with workers servicing other sections of the same gang. The youth workers generally were highly individualistic, and some still identified with their earlier gang factions. They tended to act as entrepreneurs in competition for status with each other, and also to act autonomously and charismatically – rather than as members of a team – in addressing gang problems. However, as the youth workers interacted more frequently with each other, established trust, and became increasingly committed to the purpose of the Project, this problem largely diminished.

The tactical officers encountered a somewhat similar problem. Other police officers and members of the tactical squad in the district were at first reluctant to share information with Project police about gang youth and gang incidents, since this might deprive them of opportunities to make gang arrests and get credit for them. However, the Project police were not under the same constraint of making a certain quota of arrests. They shared information about gang youth that could be useful to other district officers working on particular cases. The Project police officers went out of their way to assist other district officers with arrest-relevant information. The modus operandi of the Project officers began to pervade the tactical units of the district.

A more serious problem of communications that affected the long-term viability and utility of the Project was the inability to develop a system of communication and joint planning with social agencies and schools in regard to targeted youth. Most youth agencies and schools did not usually know of the gang activities of youth in their programs that took place outside of their buildings. They were also reluctant to share information about occasional gang activities that occurred within their buildings, or close by. In one case, lack of awareness of the gang-connectedness of a youth at a Boys and Girls Club meeting was followed by the shooting death of the youth as he exited the agency.

While several justice agencies in Cook County were interested in the Project and

occasionally sent observers to the Project meetings, few were willing to share information about particular youth or to collaborate with the Project. Representatives of the State's Attorney's office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Illinois Department of Corrections, and Cook County Juvenile Probation were interested in the Project and called on members of the team for information that was of interest to them, but provided no reciprocal arrangements for transfer of information. Efforts to develop information exchanges with local schools also did not succeed. However, the general lack of cross-agency communication was characteristic of almost all programs dealing with gang youth. For example, Cook County Adult and Juvenile Probation departments, as well as federal probation departments, did not generally share information with each other, even about different members of the same family in their caseloads.

#### **Chapter 4: Social Intervention**

Outreach youth work is integral to social intervention in the comprehensive approach to the youth gang problem. A range of objectives was established for the Project youth workers. Certain procedures were regarded as essential to the implementation of the youth worker's role: flexible working hours; availability for work in the late afternoons, at night and on weekends; focus on particular gangs or gang sections and their more violent members (mainly within the neighborhood); regular attendance at staff meetings; recording or documenting their outreach efforts; acceptance of supervision and training; avoiding over-identification either with gang members or police; assisting with research and evaluation activities.

There were six sets of principles that guided the youth worker in his daily activities: operate as part of a team structure; continually assess the gang and gang-member situation in Little Village; focus on brief individual-youth counseling and provision of social opportunities; work with local residents and community groups to achieve gang violence reduction; deal appropriately with police harassment; and cope with his own performance problems.

### Team Structure

The team structure contributed to respect for, and legitimation of, the role of the youth worker. Regular staff meetings and frequent special meetings to resolve gang issues created a basis for interdependent and mutually respectful relations among youth workers and other team members, especially the police. Team structure and relationships made it possible for community youth workers to introduce Project police to groups of gang youth on the streets. Such carefully constructed meetings among police, youth workers, and gang youth clarified the team role of community youth workers, and reinforced the underlying purpose of the Project. The team structure also served a protective function for youth workers, particularly if and when they were harassed (or likely to be harassed) by non-Project police.

### Assessment of the Gang Situation

Youth workers were not only present on the streets of Little Village during assigned work hours, but at other times as well, since most of them lived and had family and friends in the area. The extensive and varied information obtained at these times had implications for the reliable assessment of gang activities and potential conflicts, and for what actions might be taken by youth workers, police, or by the team as a whole. Information about graffiti “raids,” car rammings, shootings, intra- and inter-gang fights (within and across neighborhoods), and participation in interracial incidents was important in preventing and controlling gang violence. Information less-systematically relayed about a range of crimes in which targeted youth were involved was useful in controlling drug transportation, robberies, and other serious criminal activity not directly related to traditional turf-based youth gang violence.

### Social Intervention and the Provision of Social Opportunities

The youth workers engaged gang youth individually and in small groups – on the streets, at home or in parental or family contexts, at athletic fields or recreation centers, in detention and

correctional facilities, at work, school, and elsewhere – about a range of problems and concerns. They counseled youth to stay off the streets, attend school, find a job, keep appointments with probation officers, turn themselves in to the police when they were being sought, and maintain contact with and work out problem relationships with parents, wives/girlfriends, and peers. The youth worker was identified with the longer-term legitimate interests of gang youth. He was pro-active, a constant broker, a communicator, and a mediator between the youth and other significant persons in his life – family, girlfriends, wives, representatives of social, educational, job, and criminal justice agencies, and sometimes other members of the gang itself.

Education. Outreach workers enrolled youth in a variety of educational programs at social agencies, and in schools, job corps and community colleges. Most gang youth in Little Village were highly ambivalent about returning to regular school. Older youth saw less need for additional education, but needed assistance with referral to training and apprenticeship opportunities. Follow-through for gang youth, e.g., sustaining them in a variety of educational programs, was difficult. Schools were also generally not interested in the return of gang youth to regular programs. The outreach workers and other Project staff were only occasionally successful in getting schools to work out special arrangements to further the youth's education. Yet, despite all the problems, significant increases in program youth returning to school and/or completing educational programs occurred.

Jobs. Gang youth were generally more motivated to find jobs than to return to and/or complete high school or other educational programs. Holding a job brought an acceptable and appealing adult status, but gang youth often were unable to meet the conditions of applying for and adapting successfully to job opportunities. On occasion, the youth worker had to rouse youth out of bed to make a job interview appointment. Many youth were reluctant to work night shifts, in the summertime, in the suburbs, or to undergo drug tests, get a legitimate driver's license, work in a factory or at hard labor, or avoid fights at work – despite “good pay.” Gang youth often had unrealistic job expectations. Nevertheless, the expressed need of gang youth on

the street for jobs was a major basis for communication and establishing a relationship with the youth worker. The youth worker frequently collaborated with job agencies, neighborhood residents, older former gang members, parents, wives and girlfriends in helping youth find and stay on jobs. The Project's part-time job developer increasingly came up with job opportunities (sometimes through job agencies) at hotels, hospitals, restaurants, factories, and local businesses that were of interest to program youth.

Crisis Intervention. Program youth often called on the youth workers in times of crisis – arrest, pressures from the gang, homelessness, fights with wives or girlfriends, pregnancy of wives/girlfriends, parental conflict – and also for help with problems of depression, drug use, alcoholism, physical injuries, hospitalization, etc. The youth workers were accessible by beeper at all hours of the day and night, and were able to assist in the resolution of many of these problems. Treatment and hospital referrals were made. More often, the youth worker engaged in a form of simple counseling and advising. Special training sessions were established in the Project to assist youth workers in developing skills to better address many of these complex problems.

Mediation. Mediation encompassed not only efforts by youth workers to settle external or internal gang disputes, but also the more important function of mediation between the gang youth and the institutions of the larger society. The task of the youth worker was to reduce the alienation of the gang youth by facilitating accommodations between the youth and representatives of various institutions. The worker could be an important mediator between the youth who wanted to leave the gang, and the gang itself. Changing or neutralizing the violent behavior of a program gang youth was usually less difficult than constraining the violent behavior of a gang faction, which often required the assistance of Project police through prevention and control efforts.

### The Youth Worker and the Community

The youth worker helped the community – including parents, neighborhood local organizations, schools, NAGV – to better understand and address the local gang problem. Because of their relationships with gangs and key members of the various gang branches, youth workers were able to persuade gang youth not to engage in retaliation or harassment of parents or neighbors. They were able to persuade gang youth to remove graffiti, not litter the streets, and not hang out in certain locations. Youth workers assisted local residents in addressing problems of gang congregation, gang drug houses, and ineffectual police action in relation to these and other gang problems. For example, the youth workers assisted a local block club and the district police with information that served to close down a tavern where drug selling and drinking by underage youth was prevalent. Youth workers were able to get gang youth and neighbors together to exchange views, and to participate in planning sessions that addressed various aspects of the gang problem. The workers persuaded parents and residents to attend NAGV community meetings. Youth workers were frequently called on by local schools, churches, and community groups to provide information about gangs, to explain Project activities and to advise on ways to deal with their particular gang problems.

#### Collaborating with the Police

Youth workers collaborated with Project tactical officers by providing information that was vital to them and to the District 10 police for their suppression function; information such as stopping planned gang fights and arresting drug dealers. In turn, the Project police offered information and assistance that was important to the youth worker's function: providing data on arrest histories of youth, advising highly at-risk youth to avoid gang influence, and counseling out-of-control gang youth to avoid situations where they would be arrested. The Project police moderated the dangers inherent in the youth worker's outreach role in the high gang-violence Little Village community, and protected youth workers from "hard nosed" and harassing officers, in or out of the district, who were not familiar with (or tolerant of) the youth worker's

job.

The youth workers were at times stopped by non-Project police, abused, arrested, and taken to the District 10 station for booking. The Project police, if nearby in the field or at the police district station, vouched for the workers, who were then released and not arrested or booked. The Project Coordinator had to go to court on at least two occasions to persuade judges to dismiss cases of gang loitering (i.e., hanging out with gang youth on the streets) against youth workers; charges based on a local ordinance that was eventually declared unconstitutional on two occasions by the U.S. Supreme Court.

#### Youth Worker Performance Problems

There were many Project benefits, as well as problems, in using community youth workers, many of whom were former gang members. The limitations and advantages were largely anticipated by the Project Coordinator and other team members. Close supervision by the Youth Worker Supervisor and Project Coordinator minimized the negatives and maximized the positives. Youth workers were counseled, and required, not to over-identify with gang members. A series of Project policies was developed to address certain worker problems. Youth-worker and gang-member contacts with the media were frequent in the Project's early history, but these were later forbidden in order not to give publicity to gang youth, thereby enhancing individual gang or gang-youth status and creating more gang problems. A policy was also formulated to forbid youth workers from representing the Project at various types of political gatherings. Another policy was addressed to a particular youth worker who wanted eventually to be a police officer. He was a part-time security guard and had to be restrained from carrying a weapon on the Project job, even if he might possibly have been legally permitted to do so.

Conforming to Project Norms. Project rules, and normal agency regulations and procedures, were not easy for non-professional youth workers to follow, particularly for those



who were former gang members. Youth workers were expected to complete bi-weekly time cards, account for field time, respond quickly and cooperatively to communications and requests from other youth workers or team members, make appropriate use of beepers and cell phones, provide their own transportation (for which they were reimbursed), fill out field reports, attend bi-weekly team meetings, and also to assist field research interviewers in locating targeted youth for interviews. These expectations were not consistently met. The problem was generally not lack of commitment to Project goals and objectives, or lapses into criminal behavior, but lack of socialization to work rules and expectations about how to achieve goals or objectives. Several of the youth workers were still partially socialized to the street norms and values of a gang-infested neighborhood.

Youth Worker Termination. A range of youth worker performance problems could, and did, lead to termination of youth workers from the Project. Termination came after an extended process of frequent warnings and long discussions about particular issues and problems, sometimes in response to concerns by other team members. When the performance problems could not be corrected and the Coordinator decided to separate the worker from the Project, efforts were made to assist him in finding another position, obtaining unemployment insurance, maintaining health insurance, and remaining positively connected to the Project. Termination caused little Project disruption, and positive Project and personal contacts were usually maintained, often until many years later. (One of the terminated youth workers was later helpful to the Project police in the capture of an escaped jail inmate who was suspected of a double homicide.)

### Summary

The social intervention strategy – employing local outreach youth workers, particularly former gang members, in a team arrangement with police, probation, a community activist, and other representatives of conventional society – was difficult to implement. The process was

fraught with many obstacles, especially in a chronic, severely violent, multi-generation gang community. Yet the outreach social-intervention strategy was essential to the work of the Project team in penetrating the gang, connecting gang youth to mainstream society, and reducing criminal behavior. The youth workers, despite their “untrained” approach, were remarkably successful in helping gang youth to control their violent behavior and to mature into decent adults. Their strengths were in their identification with the gang youth, and in their strong commitment to helping gang youth succeed in a legitimate real-world context.

### **Chapter 5: Suppression**

The Project suppression strategy was a variation of community policing that focused on the youth gang problem. It took into consideration the needs of the youth for social development and social control, as well as the interests of the community for protection. The Project police were interested in preventing gang crime, not necessarily “throwing the book at” all gang kids, and they exercised considerable discretion. Their focus was on arresting youth for serious criminal incidents. The youth’s position in the structure of the gang, and the Project police’s objective of maximizing control over the behavior of the gang as a unit, were important criteria in the decision whether or not to arrest. Project team members, community residents, and local organizations assisted the tactical officers in this more complex community-policing approach, which involved targeting certain gang sections and certain gang youth.

To some extent, the Project police worked outside of the normal scope of the Chicago Police Department's mission and tasks. The CPD, in its initial Project-funding proposal to the Illinois Criminal Information Authority, emphasized community mobilization and provision of social opportunities, but paid little attention to operationalizing these notions. The potential for incorporating the Project into Police Department and related-agency structure was explored periodically, especially in the final year. No special intra- or interdepartmental structures were established to facilitate the development of the Project. The CPD continued to emphasize a

strong, traditional suppression approach, and the Project was relatively isolated from the rest of the 10<sup>th</sup> District police operations. The responsibility of the CPD in the development and coordination of the Project was not clearly delineated. The Project became a sort of “hip pocket” administrative operation of both District 10 and the Research and Development Division of the CPD. The 10<sup>th</sup> District Commander was only assigned five percent of time to the Project, and the Neighborhood Relations sergeant only twenty percent of time. The roles of the two full-time tactical officers were not clearly delineated or fully supported.

From the start, the Project police and probation officers complained that they did not know what was expected of them, and that they had little support in terms of facilities or equipment to do their job. The Project police officers had to develop and perform their job on their own. At an early point, they were almost arrested by other 10<sup>th</sup> District police because community residents saw them dressed in plain clothes, talking to a “bunch of gang youths,” and thought they were drug dealers. The Project police encountered resistance and hostility from fellow tactical officers in the district. “In the beginning, I told them I talk to the kids the same as I’m talking to you. You know, not all of these kids are bad kids. Some of the kids are having a lot of problems and we’re trying to help them out.” But the other police would say, “we want them locked up. That’s our job.” The Project police responded, “excuse me, I lock them up, and three hours later they get out. Would that change anything? I locked the kid up for gang loitering but the kid wasn’t doing anything, and then I get them all against the police.”

A different set of mission and bureaucratic problems confronted the Project probation unit. Early confusion, and a flare-up, occurred when the Project supervising probation officer refused to share information with other members of the Project team about targeted gang youth from Little Village who were on probation. Such sharing of information was at the heart of the coordination and teamwork concept of the Project. Only after several letters from the Project Coordinator to the Adult Probation Department Administrators, which led to a meeting of the Coordinator, the Police Department liaison officer, and the Director of the Illinois Criminal

Justice Information Authority with the Chief Probation Officer, was the problem resolved. Information flowed more freely from probation officers to other Project team members. Despite such failures of organizational policy and structure, and the lack of full administrative support for the roles of police and probation (and perhaps partially because of it), an unusual degree of cohesion evolved among the members of the Project team.

While the Project police officers developed quick and effective relationships with probation officers, it took considerably more time and effort to develop relationships of trust with the outreach youth workers and the local community activist. The police officers said they slowly built team relationships with the youth workers by spending “time together and even socializing with them.” The Project police gave the youth workers their home phone numbers, so the youth workers were able to alert the officers and request their help in crisis situations. However, the officers did not necessarily share all the information they had about particular youth with all of the youth workers. They feared that some of the information would get back to the gang members, and at the same time they were concerned to protect the confidentiality of information they got from youth workers.

The Project police officers noted that “One of the bad things about this job is that we get attached to these [gang] kids and their families. It makes it hard sometimes if we know the family well. We’ve had to lock a guy up for murder. We knew what he was capable of doing, and we were hoping it would not come to putting him away – sometimes for thirty years.”

The probation role, with its mix of social-work helping and enforcement of court and probation conditions, was more readily accepted by gang youth than the police role. Collaboration and sharing of information with both police and youth workers developed more as time went on. Project probation officers were not on the streets as often as other members of the team, and their relationships with gang probationers in the open-community context developed more cautiously. By the end of the second year of the Project, probation officers were fully involved in such Project activities as supervising graffiti paint-outs and participating in intergang

softball games. The role of probation also veered toward a more involved, helping and supportive role than was earlier the case, but only for Project youth on their caseload. Few Project youth were “violated,” except when they were arrested for new offenses. Even then, Project officers were prone to keeping the youth in the community if at all possible.

## **Chapter 6: Community Mobilization**

There were limits to the community-mobilization process in respect to the gang problem. No broad, Little Village resident and organization constituency existed that had the capacity or the will to address the chronic gang problem. Such constituencies and organized efforts were beginning to form for other neighborhood problems, such as housing, education, health, sanitation, and economic development, but not for action in regard to gang crime. Only the police in Little Village were primarily interested in addressing the gang problem through suppressing it. Schools claimed to have enough other priority problems to contend with – poor student attendance, truancy, low educational achievement, racial conflicts (African-Americans versus Mexican-Americans). It could not deal with the special education and control needs of gang youth, although these and other problems were interrelated. Youth agencies were primarily interested in recreation and gang-prevention activities for younger, at-risk youth. Certain local churches came closest to addressing the gang problem in terms meaningful to the community and parents. Local Catholic churches were particularly concerned with the needs of their Mexican-American parishioners, including families with youth who had gang problems.

In the course of their community-agency contact and organizing efforts, the Coordinator and the Assistant Director sought to enlist the aid of existing organization or interagency coalitions. The major community organization in the area was the Alliance for Community Excellence (ACE), a broad coalition of local citizens, public agencies and businesses, and other political, educational, social and religious organizations concerned with selected social, economic, law-enforcement, educational, and housing issues, across Little Village and Pilsen.

ACE was the decentralized, community-organization unit of UNO, a large city-wide, socially militant Latino community organization. A confederation of Catholic churches also existed in the Little Village/Pilsen area, with limited interest in or resources for addressing the gang problem. One of the Catholic church members of this coalition did establish a mission to meet the religious needs of prisoners, many of them local gang members, in the nearby Cook County jail. On the other hand, there were four Little Village churches (three Catholic and one Protestant) that were deeply concerned, became active, and indeed were at the core of NAGV'S efforts to deal with the youth-gang problem in social, religious, and community-development terms. A priest from each of two of the Catholic churches and a Protestant minister from an Evangelical community church assisted in the development of NAGV.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Police District's Neighborhood Relations Council was also a potential source for identifying organizations and residents who could possibly deal with the gang problem. Little Village had been recently selected as one of the five police districts to pilot the city's Community Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS). However, the Council represented mainly the northern part of the district, comprising mostly African-American residents; Little Village Latino residents and organizations hardly participated. (Only one Mexican-American businessman, a funeral director, attended the District Council meetings). The Council was concerned with increasing law enforcement for the purpose of eliminating drug houses, mainly in the African-American part of the community.

There seemed to be no easy route to organizing the Little Village community to take responsibility for addressing the gang problem and working closely with the GVRP. Options seemed to be:

1. A long-term, slow process of building institutional interest in the gang problem through one or more of the existing coalitions – ACE, the Catholic Confederation, and/or the 10<sup>th</sup> District Council;
2. A quick start-up of a new grass-roots, local citizen and organization coalition to

- contribute to the development of the program; and
3. Persuading the police hierarchy at the downtown office to incorporate the Gang Violence Reduction Project-approach in its community-policing program, and/or to take a leadership role in the development of a comprehensive community-wide approach to the gang problem in Little Village, and perhaps in other police districts as well.

To some extent the Project followed all three routes in the early period, but eventually focused on the second alternative – building a grass-roots organization around the gang problem. Major limitations were the Police Department’s lack of commitment to the Project Model, and the low level of interest, resources, and priority among established agencies in the local and city-wide community (other than churches and some residents) in addressing the gang problem in an area-wide, inter-organizational manner. The Project, from its conceptual and operational beginnings, was primarily oriented to street-level service and to the development of local, interagency-networking program activities. The CPD and Adult Probation were willing to sponsor a program of local contact and service to gang youth, with some neighborhood or grass-roots involvement for a limited period of time, to see what would happen.

#### History and Problems of Project-Related Community Organizing Activities

In the process of contacting local service agencies, community groups, businesses, churches, the Alderman’s office and other individuals in the Little Village community to explain the program, the Coordinator and the Assistant Director began to identify local leaders and activists who were not only concerned with the gang problem, but expressed interest in joining an effort to address it. At first, specific program services were requested to assist the GVRP with its program development. A local Community Activist was helpful in negotiating access and support from various churches. The Pastor of a local evangelical Protestant community church offered rooms in his church that could be made available for GED or continuing education activities, as well as for community meetings. The priest of a local Catholic church

indicated that a large gym in the high school associated with the church might be used. The local Alderman, who had himself been peripherally involved in one of the local gangs as a youth, had block clubs and citizen contacts that could be helpful. These community leaders were to be the key members of Neighbors Against Gang Violence (NAGV), the neighborhood organization allied with the Project in the reduction of gang violence in Little Village.

At about this time, the Project research team was planning a baseline community resident and organization survey in Little Village and Pilsen, so that possible community-oriented Project efforts might be encouraged. The community interview schedule for Little Village included a series of questions on whether local residents and organizations were interested in participating in NAGV, which was then forming.

By the spring of 1993, the Community Activist and Pastor had become the key movers in efforts to bring the community together around the gang problem. An open community meeting was planned. The research findings of the community survey were made available, and a series of phone calls to local residents and organizations followed. Flyers were distributed throughout the area by Project youth workers. Announcements were also made at several of the Catholic churches at Sunday masses.

Approximately thirty five people appeared at this first community meeting in May of 1993. Present were Project police, probation officers, community youth workers, and representatives of other agencies, but only seven local residents. A second community meeting was held shortly afterward, in June of 1993, which drew about sixty persons, including forty local residents (six were children). Great concern was voiced at both meetings about the gang problem, especially as it affected children caught in gang cross-fire. A number of suggestions for activities for gang youth, adult volunteer activities, and organizing issues were discussed.

At the June meeting, a small number of residents and agency representatives volunteered to participate in a block-by-block organizing effort with the aid of police, probation, and youth workers. A part-time clerical assistant from a community church, and a part-time organizer were



funded (20 hours per week) through the Project budget specifically to manage and coordinate the organizing process for a three-month period, until funding from outside sources could be obtained. The Community Activist and the Project Coordinator began to solicit foundations and public sources to obtain funding for the long-term organizing and program-development activities of NAGV. Program development, grass-roots organizing, and contacts with gang youth were moving ahead in an interrelated fashion. Community volunteers were assisting the youth workers with their athletic programs at a local Catholic church and the gym in a neighborhood park. Youth workers and the part-time neighborhood organizer were meeting with block clubs about their gang concerns.

A first community-leadership meeting to organize NAGV took place at a local Boys and Girls Club in late June of 1993. Represented at the meeting, in addition to the Community Activist and the Pastor, were priests from three Catholic churches, the director of a local job agency, the directors of the two Boys and Girls Clubs in the area, the Alderman and the local area president of ACE, as well as two local residents, the Project's Coordinator and Assistant Director, and several Project youth workers. Project police and probation officers were not invited. NAGV wanted local neighborhood resident and grassroots groups to take primary responsibility for working closely with the GVRP. The persons present, particularly the representatives of various local organizations, churches, and the Alderman's office, agreed to serve as board members of NAGV.

In the application for funding to a local foundation, the Community Activist stated that the key goal of NAGV was "to reduce gang violence in the Little Village Community," and the objectives of the organization were: "1) To establish four chapters [of NAGV] in target areas of high gang violence activity; 2) to recruit two-hundred members from the community; 3) to initiate at least three activities in the four target areas that would bring together community residents, churches, block clubs, gang members and the police; and 4) also to provide twenty hardcore gang members with jobs or educational/training opportunities."

The funding applications went forward, but there was little direct resident or local-agency organizing by NAGV in the next two months. The only organizing efforts were by community youth workers, who participated in and addressed block-club and community-policing meetings. The chairpersons of NAGV soon began to express more interest in the youth-work component of the Project than in community organizing. The Pastor, along with probation and police officers, frequently attended and participated in the basketball games involving Two Six gang youth at a local park. The Community Activist became interested in the development of the Latin King basketball program at a local Catholic church, and requested responsibility for supervision of the twice-a-week games, which the Project's community youth workers had initiated and conducted over the previous six months. The Coordinator accepted the arrangement and directed the community youth workers to gradually withdraw from the gym. The youth workers were to confine their efforts largely to hardcore gang youth on the streets. This, after all, was their primary mission.

At the October NAGV meeting, the Community Activist also reported the results of a conversation with the director of the city's Youth Development Task Force, and said that, based on information from a staff member of the Chicago Block Development Grant (CBDG) funding organization, the "Mayor is not supportive of what NAGV is doing. The commissioner of the Department of Human Resources, under instructions from the Mayor, was supporting other organizations in the city interested in the gang problem, but only for prevention programs. The close involvement of the Project with gang youth was not regarded as consistent with the Mayor's approach."

A NAGV retreat took place at a Catholic seminary training facility in the suburbs, north of Chicago, in November of 1993. Its stated purpose was to initiate "a process, structure and set of programs of community mobilization involving local residents and organizations to deal with the gang problem." A relatively small group of about twelve persons attended, including the Community Activist, the Pastor, a professional conference facilitator, the 10<sup>th</sup> District

Neighborhood Relations clerk officer, two community youth workers, the Project's Coordinator and Assistant Director, two local citizens, and a target gang-youth who was also a leader of one of the major factions of the Latin Kings in Little Village. It was a very small, grass-roots-oriented meeting.

The conference facilitator helped the group to identify NAGV's strengths, weaknesses, pressing concerns, and issues. The most important strengths of NAGV were identified, in order of priority, as "strong vision," "youth workers," "ability to communicate with families," "act as intermediary with various organizations," and "need for NAGV services." The most pressing concerns were "the perception that NAGV was too close to gang members, according to the police," "too close to the police, according to gang members," "lack of economic opportunities for gang youth," and "exploitation of the gang issue by various organizations." The most prominent weaknesses of NAGV were viewed as "lack of community involvement," "lack of organizational structure," "lack of a clear mission," and "limited funding and staffing."

Finally, a critical issue discussed was whether NAGV should focus "on developing itself as a separate service organization, or a coordinating organization integrating the services and programs of various local agencies on behalf of target gang youth." It was agreed that these issues would be carefully considered. However, the key NAGV organizers – the Community Activist and the Pastor – were already moving in the direction of building a service organization directed to gang youth and gang families. The Community Activist wanted to work closely with the priest of a neighborhood Catholic church to further involve the Two Six gang members and their families in church-related activities. Over the next six months, limited organizing and service efforts took place.

About mid-1994, the Project employed the Community Activist part-time on the Project's payroll to integrate the organizing efforts of both NAGV and the Project. The task, in addition to developing an interagency community network, was to arrange monthly meetings of agency representatives and community residents to discuss program and treatment needs for

Project gang youth, as well as to organize a mass meeting to memorialize victims of gang violence. This meeting was also to inform community residents and gang youth about the work of NAGV and the Project. Press publicity was to be arranged.

This meeting became the largest community event in the Project's history. The memorial service was sponsored by NAGV and the Catholic and Protestant churches together, and took place at a local church. Approximately two hundred community residents, including parents and gang youth (mainly Latin Kings, since the church was in Latin King territory), attended. Two members of the Two Six gang were also present. They were protected by community youth workers, and by Project police and probation officers who were stationed inside and outside the meeting hall. Some of the older Latin King leaders attempted to disrupt the meeting because the Two Six youth were present. But the Latin King community youth workers and Project police intervened to prevent a melee. Reporters from several major city and Spanish-language newspapers were present. An account of the memorial service appeared in the English and Spanish press in the following days. Very positive publicity for NAGV resulted, but with no organizing follow-up.

The Community Activist hired an assistant to provide family services, and continued personally to conduct mothers'-group meetings. NAGV board meetings seemed to slacken again in the late winter and early spring of 1994-95. The Project Coordinator encouraged an interagency meeting, which was finally called in April of 1995. Representatives of five organizations especially concerned with the Little Village gang problem attended – Piotrowski Park, Latino Youth, Farragut High School, Catholic Charities, Mujeres Latinas (a Latina mothers and girls organization providing day care) – as well as the 10<sup>th</sup> District Neighborhood Relations unit, and Project police, probation, and community youth workers. Each of the representatives of these community agencies offered information about programs and services that they could make available to gang youth. The agencies agreed to continue to meet to exchange information about targeted or problematic gang youth in their own organizations (some of the youth were

known across agencies). Joint, or collaborative, programming could be arranged. However, there was no follow-up, and no mechanism for sharing such information was developed.

#### Failure of a Graffiti Program and the End of NAGV.

A series of crises occurred in June of 1995, which had long-term effects on the development of NAGV. The Community Activist's increased interest in the delivery of services to families and individual gang youth continued, referring youth (some were Project-targeted youth) for jobs. However, tensions developed with some of the Project youth workers. The Community Activist believed that the youth workers should have referred more youth to the NAGV program. The church gym program was also closed down by the priest, due to lack of adequate supervision by the Community Activist and the NAGV staff. (Apparently, Latin King vehicles were parked illegally near the church and the youth created a good deal of noise; neighbors complained to the police.)

Without consulting the Project staff, the Community Activist decided to conduct a graffiti paint-out activity involving Latin Kings. A "hot" border street between the Latin Kings and Two Six was inappropriately selected for the paint-out. Forty or fifty youth participated and received NAGV T-shirts. The event was to be a way of advertising the work of NAGV to the community. A young, inexperienced Project probation officer, a friend of the Community Activist, assisted with paint-out preparations. The Project youth workers, the two Project tactical officers and two other Project probation officers were not involved in the planning or implementation of the event. The Community Activist was not present, although the NAGV volunteers were. In the course of the paint-out, two of the Latin King youth broke away from the group, jumped into a car and "did a driveby" at a nearby school yard. A Two Six youth was shot and wounded. Another youth (not a gang member) standing with the Two Six was killed.

Subsequently, the Project Coordinator insisted that, in the future, whether sponsored by NAGV or the Project, the number of gang members selected for any paint-out event must be

small – no more than 10 to 15 youth, not 40 or 50 (as was the case in the incident); that close coordination and supervision of staff and volunteers by the Project and NAGV must be developed; that Project police had to be present; and that the building and streets to be selected for the paint-out had to be well within the territory of a particular gang, and not on the border of an opposing gang territory (essentially contested territory).

NAGV was also having increased funding difficulties. Funds began to run out and the state grant was not renewed, largely because the Community Activist had not provided documentation of NAGV's efforts and financial accounting to the state agency. The NAGV Board was also concerned that the Community Activist had been drawing substantial funds from both the grant and the University of Chicago part-time job, without full clearance from the NAGV Board. A question was raised about "double dipping." The Pastor decided he no longer wanted the NAGV office located at his church.

By the end of the third year of the Project, the organizing efforts of NAGV were viewed as only mildly effective. The Community Activist's primary expressed interest had become establishing an independent service agency which would have an outreach community-worker component; ties to the community, which were initially stronger with the Two Six youth and families, began to weaken. A group of Two Six youth accused the Community Activist of "ratting" to the police. In addition, tension between Project police and the Community Activist increased. The Project police were increasingly suspicious that some of the Community Activist's efforts were toward organizing the community against them. In turn, the Community Activist charged that the local police were falsely accusing a youth in a gang shooting incident. At same time, the Community Activist became less involved in NAGV activity in Little Village, and increasingly involved in city-wide gang-related and youth-development meetings among a variety of social agencies and churches.

In October of 1996, the Pastor agreed to replace the Community Activist as part-time community organizer for the GVRP. His major duties were to draw together a group of

community leaders and organization representatives to assist in organizing neighborhood groups at the block level to support Project operations, and to assist in the development of Project resources, especially job training and development for Project youth. He was to attend all Project meetings, and become more intimately involved in the day-to-day operations of the Project.

The Pastor contacted the NAGV Board to explain his new role, but he, like the Community Activist, seemed to be less interested in contacts with community groups and agencies than in ultimate responsibility for the Project youth workers. He did arrange one community meeting of agencies and local groups to develop a more active and coordinated approach to the gang problem. In attendance at that meeting were the Alderman, representatives of a religiously-oriented drug rehabilitation program, a local hospital, the Little Village Community Chamber of Commerce and a local school, a regional Evangelical Protestant church youth director, and Project staff. The Pastor could not attend the meeting; at the last minute, the Project Coordinator had to take over and conduct the meeting.

### Summary

The Project Coordinator and other Project staff had neither the support nor resources from its funding and sponsoring agencies to organize an effective community-organizing or community- mobilization campaign. NAGV alone simply did not have the capacity or resources to act as a lead organization. Other local youth, welfare, or community organizations in Little Village also did not have sufficient interest to address the gang problem. A unified and active coalition representing diverse institutional interests should have been developed. It is possible that had the Chicago Police Department determined to integrate NAGV into its community-policing efforts, and/or supplied substantial leadership and guidance to the Project, a more effective community-mobilization effort would have resulted.

## **Chapter 7: Project Transition – Crisis, Transfer and Termination**

Project staff acted on the optimistic assumption that the Project would either be transferred to a consortium of local agencies, or transformed modestly (or even expanded) under the aegis of the Chicago Police Department as early as at the end of the first year of operation. Preliminary data on the reduction of gang crime at the individual-youth, district and community levels showed promise. The hope and expectation of Project continuation in some form persisted for almost five years. The efforts of staff were unswervingly directed to building a strong program based on the original program design. Project police, probation officers, and youth workers invested much dedicated work in the expectation that the Project Model would be continued in some fashion. Uncertainty occurred during the second, third and fourth years, then cycles of frustration after the decision was made that the Project would be terminated.

In the fall of 1996, a meeting of key CPD administration personnel was held with the 10<sup>th</sup> District Commander and Neighborhood Relations Unit sergeant, administrative representatives of Adult Probation, the Project Coordinator, and the Acting Director of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, to discuss the future direction of the Project. In the course of discussion, the heads of the various police divisions insisted that the CPD was not a social agency, and was not primarily interested in organizing the Little Village community around the gang problem. They recommended that the CPD should not support the integration of the Project into the Department. The issue of the cost of the Project, if it went city-wide, was raised by the Director of R & D. The Deputy Superintendent expressed qualified support for the Project idea. He stated that the CPD would in the immediate future focus on the development of a police-coordinator role. A full-time sergeant would be assigned to the Project from the Deputy Superintendent's office to explore the possibility of managing the Project. The Deputy Superintendent and the Director of the R & D Division also emphasized the importance of determining the feasibility of the Project as a city-wide model. This should be done as quickly as possible.



By the end of December, 1996, there was still no clear evidence that the Chicago Police Department was committed to sustaining, modifying and/or incorporating the Project. Support was expressed from a variety of sources; at least seven agencies and community organizations were interested in assuming responsibility for the Project, but only for the youth-worker component. The Project Coordinator had decided that, after five years, he would no longer manage the Project. He was an academic and a researcher, and not primarily an agency or program director. His original commitment had been to be Coordinator for one year. His attempts to induce the Chicago Police Department to take over the Project, or to partner it with some appropriate set of organizations, had not yet borne fruit.

Preliminary evidence also suggested that Project outcome at the individual level was effective, and that outcome at the aggregate community level was good, particularly relative to the growth of the gang problem in other comparable communities during the first three- or four-year Project period. But this appeared not to be sufficient to convince the CPD that the Project was effective and feasible. The issue of feasibility, particularly in face of the traditional role of police suppression and the cost of the program (as estimated by the CPD), appeared to be most important. The CPD was not prepared to manage an approach to the gang problem that required significant modification of its suppression philosophy, and collaboration with local community groups and organizations. Community policing (which was focused on enlisting local neighborhood groups to support and enhance the police suppression function) was sufficient for their community-involvement purposes. (There was also some interest in coordinating gang suppression activities with the Cook County Adult Probation Department.)

Three more years of funding (1.5 million dollars) was available from the current block grant of the U.S. Justice Department, as well as additional funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, but these were not sufficient inducement for the CPD to support the Project Model. As the liaison lieutenant from R & D in the first year of the Project stated, the CPD has “deep pockets, and does not need grant funds from the federal government to

develop or sustain any project it is interested in.”

One of the major limitations of the Project was a lack of substantial commitment to community organizing and interagency coordination by both the Chicago Police Department and Neighbors Against Gang Violence. A key problem with NAGV was failure to bring together local organizations to address the gang problem. Perhaps community-organization efforts should not have been carried out by the GVRP, police, or probation staff, but by an existing community organization concerned with the gang problem and committed to bringing different local and city-wide agencies and community groups together. NAGV was conflicted in its mission. It strove to be a service agency first, and a community-organizing entity second. There were many opportunities for NAGV to bring the community together around the gang problem, but, unfortunately, they were never fully developed. Strong, competent leadership was essential in this regard.

A key factor contributing to the lack of full development of the Project Model was the failure by the Coordinator and the Chicago Police Department to stimulate the creation of an interagency-level policy and administrative steering committee for the Project. The Project Coordinator was too involved in day-to-day Project development. Perhaps he should have more strongly insisted that the CPD meet its leadership and administrative responsibilities to the Project at the institutional level. More earnest and imaginative efforts on the part of the CPD to integrate community policing with the Project, involving the area and district commanders, as well as other police units such as the youth and narcotics divisions, should have been taken. A community-based and interagency project cannot be created without the considerable commitment and involvement of leadership from a strong, well-established organization, in this case the CPD.

High-level policy discussions should have been undertaken with city political leaders, including the Mayor, at the start and throughout the Project, to further implement, sustain, and adapt the Project’s collaborative model. Not only the CPD, but also other influential

neighborhood, city, and county leaders should have been partners in this process. A further weakness was the failure of neighborhood and local agency leadership to mobilize constituents, and to redirect their own programs to support the Project. More time and resources generally needed to be allocated to carry out a community-mobilization process, so that not only local but city-wide groups and organizations could come together to address the gang problem in Little Village and in other similar communities in the city.

Despite all of these limitations, a significant reduction in gang crime, especially violence and drug-related offenses, occurred for individual gang youth targeted by the Project over the five-year program period, and also on an area basis, at least during the first three years of the Project (based on extensive research analysis using multiple sources of data; see Part II). The Project was successful in achieving its goals, but not in institutionalizing the Project Model.

Evaluation of the Gang Violence Reduction Project in Little Village

**Part II**

**OUTCOME**

Chapters 8 - 14

## **Chapter 8: Individual Gang Member Survey**

The Gang Violence Reduction Project, conducted between 1992 and 1997, was a community-based, interinstitutional effort to reduce the level of gang violence, particularly among two major gang constellations in Little Village, a very high gang-violence area southwest of Chicago's central business district. Primary focus was initially on older, hardcore gang youth between the ages of 17 and 24 years. Critical to the approach was the close coordination of a team of police officers, probation officers, community youth workers, and representatives of a local community organization in the interrelated control and social support of targeted gang members.

The individual gang member survey was one of several data collection methods used to evaluate the Project. One-hundred and ninety-five (195) individual gang members were interviewed. Only 127 were interviewed over the three annual interview periods – Time I, Time II and Time III. (They were fully representative – demographically and in prior-offense-arrest histories – of the total 195 gang members interviewed.) Focus was on key characteristics and changes among youth who entered the program at varying points during the Project. These characteristics were: the youth's perceptions of the neighborhood; gang structure; family composition; relationships with wives or steady girlfriend; education and job status; legal and illegal sources of income; and self-reported offenses and arrests.

### Pattern Changes

A great many changes occurred for youth between the first and third interviews (Time I and Time III), usually an interval of two years. The changes reported were often highly statistically significant. The community was perceived as getting better. The youth were relatively more satisfied living in Little Village, community gang and non-gang crime were generally seen as reduced, and there was less concern about family victimization by gang crime. However, youth did not see local organizations, residents, or police as changing or doing much

during the Project period to address the gang problem.

There was little change in household composition or size. Household income increased slightly, and was higher in the Two Six than in the Latin King households. While illegal income was a smaller proportion of household income than legal income, ranging from 9.0% to 16.0%, it increased at a faster rate in the Latin King households. Mean total income for the household increased from \$23,644 to \$24,173 over the three-year interview period.

Some of the households or families were involved with the justice system, but at a declining rate over the interview period; gang membership in program-youth households declined from 12.1% to 3.8%; arrests of household members declined from 13.5% to 5.9%; household members on probation declined from 7.7% to 2.7%.

Relationships of gang members with mothers, fathers and siblings were reported as very positive, both at Time I and Time III, but were either statistically non-significant, or predicted significant increases in gang crime. The quality of relationships between gang youth and their wives or steady girlfriends was only moderately positive (and deteriorated by Time III), but was nevertheless important in the reduction of gang violence by the youth. There was some increase in household or family criminal, health, and mental health crises by Time III.

The gang (mainly male) was perceived as not changing in size between Time I and Time III. The female sections, or clusters, who hung around with gang males were perceived as growing larger, however. Fighting between the two male gangs was continual, serious and lethal. Somewhat less serious fighting, which was not often as lethal, continued between sections and within sections of the same gang, although fights by individuals in the same gang section over drug deals could be lethal. There was no evidence that violence at the gang level was perceived as changing between Time I and Time III, although a reduction in violent activity by particular program youth was evident.

A number of youth in the program declared they were no longer active members of the gang at Time III, compared to Time I. The drop was particularly marked for the Latin Kings –

from 46.0% to 29.7%. However, some younger youth who were ordinary or peripheral gang members at Time I became core or leadership members at Time III.

Educational level and employment increased for members of both gangs. At Time III, the number of Latin King dropouts decreased from 52.3% to 35.4%, and Two Six dropouts from 43.6% to 25.8%. The percentage of respondents who returned to school or graduated increased significantly between Time I and Time III: for the Latin Kings ( $t = 2.28, p \neq 0.05$ ) and for the Two Six ( $t = 2.23, p \neq 0.05$ ). At Time I, 35.7% of the Latin Kings reported they were employed; this jumped to 48.2% at Time III. At Time I, 30.9% of the Two Six reported employment, while 63.3% reported employment at Time III. The increase in employment for the Two Six was statistically significant ( $t = -4.11, p \neq 0.05$ ).

Most of the gang youths in the sample were 17 years of age or older at Time I, and no longer completely dependent on the family for sources of income. There was an increase in individual-youth total income from approximately \$9,200 per year to \$12,000 per year. The increase in individual legal income was greater for the Two Six than for the Latin Kings; the increase in illegal income was greater for the Latin Kings. The level of illegal income for the Latin Kings, as a proportion of total income, rose from 15.0% to 23.0%; it remained at 12.0% for the Two Six.

Realistic occupational expectations rose, but aspirations fell over time for members of both gangs. However, income expectations and aspirations remained high for members of both gangs. The (anomic) gap between income aspirations and expectations declined more for the Latin Kings than for the Two Six.

#### Changes in Self-Reported Offense and Arrest Patterns

We found a general and extensive reduction of frequencies and categories of all self-reported offenses and arrests of program youth between Time I and Time III: total offenses reported dropped in frequency, from a mean of 52.7 to 9.4; violent crime, from a mean of 28.7 to

6.6; the most serious violent crime (e.g., aggravated assault, aggravated battery, armed robbery, drive-by shootings and homicides), from 18.5 to 3.6; property crime, from a mean of 24.0 to 2.8; drug selling, from a mean frequency of 4.1 to 2.8. All of these reductions were highly statistically significant, except for drug selling. Similar declines in self-reported arrests for these offenses were reported. These declines were unusually sharp but generally similar to those reported in police arrest records, particularly for violence and drugs, although not at the same extreme level of decline.

These patterns were the same when we examined changes at the gang, program-entry-period, age and category-of-offense levels. All youth – 19 years and older, 17- and 18-year-olds, and the 16-years-and-younger group – lowered their self-reported offense levels, although the pattern of reduction was less dramatic for the youngest group. The largest reduction in self-reported total offenses at Time III was for those youth who reported the most total offenses at Time I, as well as for those youth who were classified as the most violent offenders at Time I. There were decreases in property offenses, violence, and drug selling.

#### Correlations with Outcome Variables

Efforts by youth to avoid neighborhood gang-crime situations, at Time I, were correlated with reduced offense patterns at Time III. However, fear of gang-related problems and the gang-youth's perceptions of neighborhood adults who use youth for illegal activities were correlated with high rates of youth-offending, particularly at Time I. While youth did not perceive the presence of police as related to a decrease in gang violence in the neighborhood, the presence of probation officers addressing the gang problem was related to decreases in levels of various offenses and arrests. Some of these correlations remained significant at Time III, but some did not. The youth's perceptions of activities by community organizations and resident groups were not related to increases or decreases in gang offenses; but the activities of churches, at Time III, were mildly correlated with the reduction in self-reported total offenses and violence offenses.



Certain household or family characteristics were correlated with increases in self-reported offenses. These included larger-size families, higher illegal income, lower legal income, more family members arrested and incarcerated, more household members victimized, and reports of more family problems or crises. Positive relationships with mothers, fathers, and siblings were correlated with increases in reported offenses; however, conflictual relationships with wives or steady girlfriends were correlated with a decrease in offenses. Nevertheless, the more time the youth spent with family, relatives, and wives/steady girlfriends, the lower the probability of his offending. Youth undergoing treatment for drug, mental health or other problems was correlated with reduced total offenses, property offenses, drug use and selling, total criminal arrests, violence arrests and property arrests, particularly at Time I.

There were other individual-level variables at Time I, at Time III, or at both times, which were associated with decreases in self-reported offenses and self-reported arrests: the youth's claim that he was a former or a less-active gang member; the fewer gang friends he had; the less time he spent with gang friends; the more time he spent at work; the youth is currently thinking of leaving the gang or thinking of leaving it in the future; and the higher the reported level of legal income. If the youth perceived that the size of the gang had gone down, he reported a reduction in total offenses, violence offenses and property offenses between Time I and Time III. In none of these analyses, however, did we control simultaneously for prior offenses, age, gang affiliation or type of offense.

### Models

We employed multiple regression modeling as the statistical analysis method by which to predict key outcomes or changes in self-reported offenses between Time I and Time III. We selected neighborhood, family, gang and individual-youth characteristics (identified as statistically significant from the correlation analyses) as predictors of four self-report dependent or outcome variables: *total offenses*, *total violence offenses*, and *changes in these offenses*

*between Time I and Time III.* Our control variables were *pre-program (prior) offenses*, the *youth's age* and *whether the youth was affiliated with the Latin Kings or the Two Six.*

The best model for predicting *self-reported total offenses at Time III* explained 53.0% of total variance. The variables which were most significant in predicting lower numbers of offenses were, in order of significance: being 19 years of age and older; spending the majority of free time with individuals other than gang friends; thinking of quitting the gang; little or no difference between future income aspirations and expectations; membership in the Latin Kings; and being currently employed.

The best model for predicting *change in self-reported total offenses between Time I and Time III* explained 43.0% of the total variance in the model. The variables which were most significant in predicting greater reduction of total offenses were, in order of significance: perception that probation officers were addressing the gang problem at Time I; the youth spending more time with wives or steady girlfriends at Time I; the youth was over 19 years of age; the youth had a smaller disjunction between future occupational aspirations and expectations at Time I; fewer household/family crises at Time III; and the youth's perception that the gang was smaller at Time III (which is almost statistically significant).

The best model for predicting *self-reported total violence offenses at Time III* was similar to the model predicting total offenses, above, and explained 46.0% of total variance. The variables which accounted for a reduction in violence offenses at Time III were, in order of statistical significance: youth was over 19 years of age; youth thought he would leave the gang at Time III; youth did not spend free time with gang friends at Time III; youth perceived that gang size was smaller at Time III; and youth had a smaller or no gap between income aspirations and expectations at Time III. Other variables that were almost significant included: individual returned to school, GED or job training program at Time I; being a former gang member at Time III; low number of household/family problems at Time III; and high number of self-reported total offenses for the first program year.

Our initial efforts to predict *change in self-reported total violence offenses between Time I and Time III* were only mildly successful. We could not find a strong enough model to predict change using the total sample of youth committing violent offenses, essentially all youth in the sample. Consequently, we decided to divide the sample into those who committed fewer violence offenses at Time III than at Time I (n = 75), and those who committed the same number or more violence offenses at Time III (n = 46).

The best model for predicting *change in self-reported total violence offenses of gang youth who are likely to reduce their total violent offenses* explained 60.0% of the total variance. The variables which were most significant in predicting a decrease in violence offenses at Time III, in order of statistical significance, were: number of actions that the youth had taken to avoid gang crime at Time I; satisfaction with his community at Time I; higher number of treatments undergone for personal problems at Time III; low level of monthly illegal income at Time III; and the youth not having known of or contacted probation officers who dealt with the gang problem at Time I.

The best model for predicting *change in self-reported total violence offenses of gang youth who are not likely to reduce (or who may increase) their total violence offenses* explained 68.0% of the total variance. The variables which were most significant in predicting no change or an increase were, in order of statistical significance: the youth was very close to his siblings at Time III; carried a gun a higher number of days per week; had a perception of a larger gang size at Time III; a smaller the number of actions taken to avoid gang activities at Time III; a lower level of total illegal income at Time III; and a lower level of total legal income at Time III.

The above models suggest that a variety of factors, not always the same, contribute to a decrease in, and changes in, total self-reported offenses and total self-reported violence offenses for different types of gang youth. It may therefore be important to develop an approach which includes varying combinations of strategies for different youth, i.e., social intervention or counseling for the youth and his family, provision of job opportunities for legitimate income,

suppression which serves to reduce the size of the gang and diminishes illegal income sources, and factors that create a better quality of life in the neighborhood.

### **Chapter 9: Program Services/Contacts and Effects**

We examined the various program services, contacts and strategies used in the Project, and their impact on youth. We did this mainly through the summary reports of the workers<sup>1</sup> (worker tracking), and to a more limited extent through the reports of the program youth themselves. We have already described the role of the different types of Project workers in qualitative terms, but without reference to specific services and/or contacts provided in quantitative terms. Now we use worker-tracking data to look at characteristics of specific types of service activities – individual counseling, family contacts, school and job contacts or placement, and suppression – as well as at their duration, frequency, and intensity. Services or contacts are also aggregated into types of strategies, such as social intervention, provision of social opportunities, and suppression. Different services and strategies may each be correlated with the other, and may explain increases or decreases in gang activities, gang violence, and the use and sale of drugs, according to the perceptions of the Project workers.

We wanted to determine: 1) what contacts were provided by which types of workers; 2) when specific program contacts were made, over how many months, and with what frequency of contact per youth; 3) the degree of worker-perceived success in provision of the services or contacts; and 4) perceived behavioral change of the youth in that period. Likert-type scales were used to estimate the degree of success in providing the different types of services, and the perceived changes in the level of youth gang activities – gang violence, drug use and drug selling

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<sup>1</sup> The worker-tracking reports were completed retrospectively three times during the course of the five-year program period – in the second, fourth, and fifth years – and summarized service/contract activities during the reporting periods. All the workers completed these summary reports, but which workers completed them for which particular program youth varied, usually based on the extent of the workers' contacts with the youth during the particular reporting period.

In a forthcoming report, we describe the weekly activities of youth workers and their relation to outcome.

– at each of three time periods. Contacts by workers with other team members, and the effects of such collaboration, were also recorded.

Early in the Project a variety of worker-recording and accountability devices were attempted to describe (or measure) what workers were doing with program youth. They included activity logs, crisis incident reports, and debriefings of workers by Project research staff. These efforts were not consistently successful. The Project staff, especially the youth workers, changed periodically, and at times resisted completion of the data forms. Finally, with the aid of a field researcher, a “bare bones” data-collection form and procedure were developed and implemented. The services data obtained should be regarded as approximations of the nature, scope, and impact of activities conducted by the staff. They are roughly consistent with findings obtained from field observations, gang member surveys and police records.

We also note that the duration and frequency (or dosage) of services/contacts were not expected necessarily to be consistently correlated to Project success. Contacts by workers were directed to hardcore gang youth who were at various times exhibiting high rates of violent/delinquent or criminal behavior. The more serious the youth’s involvement in such behavior, the more Project staff members were expected to sustain and/or intensify contacts with the youth. Nevertheless, we expected that the nature of the services and contacts provided, as well as the types of strategies they represented, along with the particular combination of workers involved, would achieve Project objectives, i.e, the reduction of gang activities, gang violence, and even possibly drug use and drug dealing, through a Project team approach.

### The Service/Contacts Youth Sample

The analysis of services, strategies, and types of workers, and their effects on program youth, was based on data from worker-tracking records. Three waves of tracking records involving the various types of workers were collected and analyzed. Our program youth-tracking sample (n = 164) is not exactly the same as the sample of youth in the Project who

received some service or contact, or even the sample of youth who were interviewed in the gang member survey or for whom police data existed. Our gang member survey (or interview) sample included 195 youth. Of these, there was worker-tracking data available for only 164. The workers did not provide tracking data for 31 youth<sup>2</sup>, although most of these youth did receive some services and/or contacts (based on field observational reports). Furthermore, 27 additional youth, who were tracked by the workers but did not participate in the gang member survey, also received services and/or contacts. Unfortunately, we do not have demographic or criminal justice histories for these 27 youth, but we know they were equally divided between the Latin Kings and the Two Six program samples.

Of the program youth (n = 164) in our worker-tracking sample, 85 (51.8%) were from the first interview Cohort, 38 (23.2%) were from the second interview Cohort (although several began receiving services at the same time as the first Cohort), and 41 (25%) were from the third Cohort, who came into the program and were interviewed at the beginning of the fourth program year. The total program-tracking sample (n = 164) was almost equally distributed across the different age groups at program entry: 31.7 % nineteen years and over; 32.3 % seventeen and eighteen years; and 36% sixteen years and under. However, relatively more of the older program group were in Cohorts I and II, and relatively more of the younger group were in Cohort III. More of the youth interviewed two or more times had worker-tracking data (91.4%), compared to those who were interviewed only one time (50.0%).

In their responses to the gang member interviews, a substantial group – 139 (71.3%) of the youth in our survey sample (n = 195) – reported that they had had some contact with the workers. On the other hand, of the 56 youth who reported no contacts with workers, 26 had worker-tracking records. In fact it is likely that they did have worker contact, either from the youth worker or from other members of the Project team. These youth may have either forgotten

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<sup>2</sup>Later we show that, based on police data, the youth for whom no tracking data exist were less delinquent and less appropriate for targeting by the Project.

or denied such contact. There were 90 youth who received limited services or contacts for whom we have police histories but no program-tracking or interview data; most were involved in Project recreational activities conducted by youth-worker staff, and were known to Project police. They comprised our quasi-program group,<sup>3</sup> and proved to be the most serious offenders, based on police data.

### Scope of Services/Contacts

The scope of services or contacts is based on the amount of time contact was maintained (expressed in months), the frequency of contacts per month, and the intensity of contacts, i.e., total frequency of contacts divided by total months of contact. This analysis covers all interviewed youth (n = 164), plus an additional group for whom we have tracking data (n = 27), for a total of 191 different youth. We examine these dimensions of the services/contacts provided by the particular Project workers: youth workers, Project police and probation officers, the NAGV neighborhood organizer, and all of these providers together. We examine program effects over the five-year period by total sample, Cohort, and specific gang.

Key services and strategies were provided, including *social intervention* (individual and/or family counseling), *access to social opportunities* (school and/or job training, referral, or placement), and *suppression* (arrest, surveillance sweeps, probation violation, warnings). These services and strategies were provided by the workers in varying degrees (i.e., frequencies, months of contacts and intensities). Youth workers and Project police provided the most contacts over relatively long periods of time, although with different emphases, than did the Project probation officers and the neighborhood organizer.

The most frequent and long-term services provided were individual counseling and

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<sup>3</sup>The quasi-program sample is a sub-sample of the Comparison Youth Sample (n = 298) developed to track criminal arrest histories of gang youth in the Little Village area who were neither targeted nor served by the Project. Project workers were able to identify 90 of the Comparison Sample youth as having received some type of Project services, at some time during the Project period. These youth were classified as quasi-program youth in the Project analyses. See Criminal Histories and Outcome: Program and Comparison Groups, below.

suppression, followed by family counseling, school and job referrals, and (least of all) athletic activities. On average, all program youth were contacted by one or more types of workers about four times per week, over approximately two-and-a-half years during the five-year program period. Program youth 17 and 18 years of age, who were at their peak period of gang activity and gang violence, were provided with the most contact over the longest period of time.

Based on data from field observations, gang member surveys, and periodic worker assessments, gang youth were targeted at different periods for different types, durations and frequencies of services or controls. Cohort I and II youth, who came into the program earlier, generally were provided with longer periods of contact, but not necessarily with greater frequency or intensity of service, than Cohort III youth (mainly a younger group who came into the program in significant numbers only at the beginning of the fourth program year).

Based on worker-tracking data and the impressions of workers, frequency, length of time, and intensity of services (i.e., dosage of services/contacts) were not consistently related to outcome<sup>4</sup>. Rather, the nature of worker-focused efforts – types of services, strategies, and worker roles – was related to the dependent or outcome variables: *whether program youth increased or decreased their involvement in gang activities, gang violence, drug use, and/or drug selling over time*. Nevertheless, using multivariate statistical procedures (mainly logistic analysis) we found that youth who were provided with more, rather than less, individual counseling were significantly more likely to reduce their involvement in gang activities.

Job training/referral/placement was also significantly correlated with reduced participation in gang violence. Individual counseling had a positive but non-significant effect on drug-use reduction. Suppression activities had no significant direct effect on the reduction of gang activities, gang violence or drug use. None of the types of services or contacts were reported to have had a significant effect on self-reported drug selling. In a further worker-

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<sup>4</sup>However, this is not the case when using police arrest data as the dependent variable.



tracking-record analysis, which focuses on the roles of the different types of workers, both individually and together, no combination of Project workers, including police and youth workers operating together, was likely to reduce drug selling. This is not the case when using police arrest data (see Chapter 10).

Finally, based on gang member survey findings, interviewed youth for whom worker-tracking data existed believed that the Project involved them in various activities (71.9%), and also helped them to deal with a range of personal problems (72.5%).

### **Chapter 10: Criminal Histories and Outcome: Program and Comparison Groups**

In this chapter, we focused on the criminal histories of youth in the program and comparison samples, based on police arrest data before and during the Project. In this analysis we introduced two comparison groups: a quasi-program, non-targeted, group of youth who received some services and contacts, and a comparison group of youth who received no program services or contacts from Project workers: neither of these two groups was interviewed. We selected and matched the comparison samples based on youth from the same two gangs, the Latin Kings and Two Six, who were co-arrestees<sup>5</sup> of program youth, generally at the time the latter entered the program. Our concern was to determine the effects of the Project on targeted youth, in comparison with other similar youth. We used police arrest data, and controlled for detention and incarceration experience before the Project period as well as during the Project period. However, comparable data for the three samples was only available through use of official criminal histories. In the next chapter we integrate findings of self-reports, police data, and services.

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<sup>5</sup> Based on the examination of available police arrest reports, in at least 85 percent of the cases the youth themselves, or the police, identified the co-arrestees as gang members from the same gang as the program youth.

The quasi-program sample (n = 90) comprised youth originally identified as comparison youth in the larger comparison group sample (n = 298). Project workers were later able to identify a sub-sample of these 298 youth as indeed having received some Project services. Each of the co-arrestees in this sub-sample was clearly identified as a member of either the Latin Kings or the Two Six. There were no non-gang members or members of other gangs in this quasi-program sub-sample. Thus, we further concluded there was a very high probability that the remaining 208 co-arrestees were members of, or closely affiliated with, either of the two gangs.

In the present discussion, we deal with a small range of criminal history variables – mainly the types and scope of offenses, and detention and incarceration history – to describe and compare the three samples both before (pre-program) and during the period of youth exposure to the Project<sup>6</sup>. We are especially interested in the effects of the Project on program youth compared to non-targeted youth in the same age categories: 19-years-and-older, 17 and 18 years, and 16-years-and-younger, adjusting or controlling for offense and confinement histories. We observe again that the key goal of the Project was to reduce gang crime, especially gang violence, for youth 17 to 24 years of age. (We focused on a 16-years-and-under group in the last two years of the program.) We describe how the youth samples – program, quasi-program and comparison – were identified, with special relevance to the use of official criminal justice system data.

There were comparable age-category differences within each of the samples. We divided our age groups based on the assumption that three social-development stages seemed appropriate for purposes of both legal definition or justice system processing of gang youth in Little Village and Illinois, as well as on empirical gang-research and developmental theory. Gang youth under 16 in Little Village were largely wannabes looking for gang status, mainly to increase their gang delinquent reputations. Youth 17 and 18 years of age generally were at the peak of their participation in gang crime, especially gang-motivated violence. Youth 19-and-over were usually leaving the gang, obtaining legitimate jobs, raising families and settling down, and/or moving into more sophisticated economically-oriented crime. These were the natural age and gang-developmental stages that the Project was trying to modify.

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<sup>6</sup> The program period was defined on a cohort basis. Program youth from Cohorts I and II, and their corresponding co-arrestees (the comparison youth sample) were defined as entering the program within six months after it started – potentially 4½ years of program exposure. Program youth in Cohort III, and their corresponding co-arrestees, were defined as entering the program at the end of the third, or beginning of the fourth, year of the Project – potentially 2 years of program exposure. The arrests of the Cohort III youth were then multiplied by a factor of 2.25 to make Project (although not necessarily direct program service) effects equivalent.

## Sampling Method

Our three samples in this analysis – using only criminal justice data – comprise more youth (n = 493) than in the analyses previously discussed. The interview and self-report analyses were based only on those youth in the program interview sample (n = 195), and the program services analyses were based only on program youth (n = 164) contacted by Project workers for whom summary worker-tracking records were available. In this discussion we describe and compare three subsamples of youth, all members of the same two gangs: the original target or interview sample (n = 195); the quasi-program group (n = 90), who are also known to have received contacts or services in the course of the Project; and the non-service, non-contact comparison group (n = 208).

The universe of Latin Kings and Two Six youth in Little Village involved in gang crime was not necessarily contacted by Project workers or police generally, or even known to the targeted program youth. The way we arrived at the program and the quasi-program samples is as follows. During the course of the Project, the workers targeted those gang youth known for their involvement in gang violence. We persuaded most of the targeted program youth to undertake a series of standardized interviews and tests, and to accept services or worker contacts. Others in the selected gang factions or branches either refused, or were not readily available.

In 1995, two years after the program started, we began collecting police histories (elaborated by court data) of all targeted youth based on their involvement in the program and participation in our annual standardized interviews. As we searched and examined justice system records, we noted that the program youth were usually arrested with other co-offenders from the same gangs. These co-arrestees were not necessarily interviewed or part of the program. We decided they could comprise a non-program comparison group, and we subsequently obtained special court permission to examine their criminal histories. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to randomize highly gang-involved and violent youth: to randomly assign or provide some with social services or special control contacts and some not, at

least for members of the same gangs in an open community setting. We also did not have sufficient funds to interview comparable gangs and gang youth from Pilsen, the nearby equivalent gang-problem community, although crime data from that area was used in the aggregate-level comparison analysis (see Chapter 12).

### Demographic Characteristics of the Samples

There was no statistically significant difference in characteristics of race/ethnicity, gender, and age across the three samples: program, quasi-program, and comparison. The ethnicity of youth in all the samples was predominantly Latino, mainly Mexican-American; all were males. There were no significant differences in the mean ages of the youth at the time of program-entry or its equivalent for the two comparison groups – in fact they were almost identical: program mean = 17.98 years; quasi-program mean = 17.86 years; and comparison mean = 17.95 years. There was also no significant statistical difference between the ages of the Latin Kings and the Two Six in the program sample, although the Latin Kings were older in the first Cohort, but younger in the third Cohort, than the Two Six. The age range of youth in our samples at the time of program entry was originally 12 years to 29 years. One program and two comparison youth were almost 13 years of age; twelve youth between 25 and 29 years of age were equally distributed across the three sample groups. For purposes of the analysis, we excluded the twelve youth over 24 years of age.

### Prior Criminal Histories

In this section we focus on the criminal histories of youth prior to program entry (the pre-program period) with respect to their patterns of detention/incarceration, total offenses and types of offenses, by age categories, within and across the three samples. (For the quasi-program and comparison groups, the pre-program and the program periods are equivalent to their related program-youth Cohort's periods.) We find, in fact, that there were few significant statistical

differences in criminal history patterns prior to program entry, other than systematic age-category differences within the samples. For purposes of this analysis we have selected only those program youth with criminal histories at the time of program entry. All of the youth in the quasi-program and the comparison samples had criminal histories in the pre-program period. While 83.08% (n = 162) of the program sample had prior criminal histories, 16.92% (n = 33) in fact had no prior or subsequent history of arrest or court appearance (and therefore no detention or incarceration record).

### Detention/Incarceration

Our three samples seem to be well matched for characteristics of prior (pre-program) detention/incarceration records, as well as for ethnicity, gender, and age. We find that 14.2% of the program sample had records of prior secure confinement (n = 23), compared to 12.2% (n = 10) for the quasi-program group, and 10.6% (n = 26) for the comparison group. If we include all program youth in the computation, then the percentage of program youth with records of prior secure confinement is 11.8%. These proportions do not represent statistically significant differences.

If we compare the number of youth in secure confinement during the program versus the pre-program period, the increase is four- or five-fold for each of the samples. The increase for program youth is up from 20 to 89; quasi-program youth from 11 to 57; and comparison youth from 16 to 73. The increase in time in detention and/or incarceration for these youth also goes up as well, particularly for younger youth.

### Arrest Patterns: Pre-Program Period

We find no statistical differences in total arrest patterns by respective age categories between program and comparison groups; they do exist for the quasi-program sample, whose youth generally have a more extensive pre-program history of total and different types of

offenses. For the pre-program period, total mean arrests for the program sample is 4.57, for the comparison sample 4.01, and for the quasi-program group 7.75. The difference is statistically significant ( $p = 0.05$ ) between the quasi-program and each of the other two samples. Again, when we examine pre-program serious violence (homicide, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, and armed robbery), we find no statistically significant differences between program youth (mean = .79) and comparison youth (mean = .82), but each of these two samples had significantly less ( $p = 0.05$ ) history of serious violence than the quasi-program sample (mean = 1.35). The same pattern occurs using the more expansive list of arrests for violence offenses which includes, in addition to the serious violence offenses listed above, simple assault and simple battery, as well as illegal possession of weapons (mainly guns). The mean scores are: program 1.04, comparison 1.16, and quasi-program 1.95.

Again, the same pattern is present for property arrests: program (mean = 1.44), comparison (mean = 1.29), and quasi-program (mean = 2.36). When it comes to drug and alcohol arrests, there are no statistically significant differences among the three samples in the pre-program period. The means are: program – .43, comparison – .34, and quasi-program – .56. For other types of offenses, particularly mob action, disorderly conduct, obstruction of an officer, and also for status offenses, we find the pattern of difference as above, i.e., the quasi-program group has significantly more arrests than either the program or comparison group, and there is no statistically significant difference between program and comparison groups. We appear to have well-matched samples of program and comparison youth, but not of program and quasi-program youth, for all key types of arrest variables. (A forthcoming report will compare pre-program arrest histories of the samples based on particular combinations of types of arrests, e.g., violence and drug arrests.)

### Program-Period Arrest Changes

We describe the findings of six models in some detail. The time periods covered arrests

in the 4½ year pre-program period, i.e., before the youth's entry into the program (or an equivalent period for the quasi-program and comparison samples), and the 4½ year program period. In these analyses using police data, we refer to the pre-program period as Time I, and to the program period as Time II. These time designations are different from those used in the analyses of gang member survey data.

In the General Linear Model (GLM) equation, where we are interested in mean differences, our *pre-program (Time I) arrests* control variables are categorized as “none,” “low,” “medium” and “high,” depending on the particular outcome arrest variable in the equation. The dependent variable *arrest change* is measured using actual differences in specific number of arrests between the particular youth's pre-program and program-period arrests.

Model I: Changes in Total Arrests. In the first model, the control variables *level of total arrests at Time I*, *age category of the youth*, and *time in secure confinement* (especially at Time II) are each highly significant ( $p = 0.001$ ) in explaining variance in the dependent variable, i.e., difference in total offenses between Time I and Time II. *Level of detention and/or incarceration at Time I* and the *interaction of the age category and the particular sample* are also statistically significant, respectively at  $p = 0.018$  and  $p = 0.039$ . This model explains 43.6 % of the variance of the dependent variable *difference in total arrests*.

For this first model, we conclude that there is little to distinguish among the three samples in changes in total arrests comparing Time I with Time II. There is an overall increase in arrests for each sample. However, we observe that the older youth generally reduce their arrests across the samples, while the younger youth (especially 16-and-under) increase their levels of arrests. The program group of 17-and-18-year-olds does better than the comparison sample, as well as better than any other age category, in reduction of arrests. The youngest program group, 16-and-under, appears to do worse than the comparison group.

Model II: Changes in Serious Violence Crime Arrests. In this model, the variables *level of arrests for serious violence crime at Time I* and the *levels of detention/incarceration at Time I and Time II* are highly significant, at  $p = 0.001$ . There are also significant differences in *serious violence arrests* for the three samples ( $p = 0.014$ ) as well as in the interaction term, *level of arrests for serious violence and particular sample at Time I* ( $p = 0.013$ ). The model explains 45.4 % of variance on the dependent variable.

We observe that the program-sample high-violence subgroups do significantly better than the comparison-sample high-violence subgroups in reducing serious violence at Time II. The reduction in serious violence is more than 60% greater for each of the two highly-violent program subgroups, controlling for other variables in the equation. The findings suggest that the Project had a distinctive and considerable effect in reducing the level of arrests for serious violence in the program group, in relation to the comparison group, and also in relation to the less-served, quasi-program group.

Model III: Changes in Total Violence Crime Arrests. The variable *total violence crime arrests* in this model includes not only the more-serious violence crimes (homicide, aggravated battery, aggravated assault, and armed robbery) but also less-serious violence crimes (simple battery, simple assault, and weapons violations). The results of this analysis are very similar to those of Model II. Similar control variables are significant. The model explains 43.7% of variance on the dependent variable.

Again, program youth reduce their level of total arrests for violence crime more than the comparison sample ( $p = 0.030$ ). The program group has a greater reduction of total arrests for violence at all age levels, compared to the other samples. The differences are significant for the 19-and-over category of program youth, in relation to the quasi-program sample ( $p = 0.013$ ) and the comparison sample ( $p = 0.023$ ). Program sample subgroups with a prior history of more extensive arrests for violence do better than the comparable quasi-program and comparison



sample subgroups, respectively at  $p = 0.001$  and  $p = 0.003$  levels of statistical significance. These effects of the Project in reducing total as well as serious violence, at least based on police arrest data, are highly noteworthy using various statistical controls, and are consistent with Project objectives.

Model IV: Changes in Property Crime Arrests. The same procedures are used in this model as in the previous models, except that the dependent variable is the *change in all property crime arrests between Time I and Time II*, and the key control variable is *property crime arrests at Time I*. Only three variables are statistically significant in this model: *property crime arrests at Time I*, *detention and/or incarceration at Time I*, and *at Time II*. *Age and sample*, and the interaction terms of *age and sample/property crime arrests and sample* are not significant. The variables in this equation account for 44.3% of variance on the dependent variable.

The Project appears to have had no effect on the level of property crime arrests of the program sample different from that of the quasi-program and comparison samples. Also, while there was some reduction in property crime arrests for youth in the three samples, we have no evidence that a general decrease in violent crime was associated with an increase in property crime for any of the samples, although this may have been the case for the 16-and-under program group.

Model V: Changes in Drug Crime Arrests. The Project did not target drug-crime behavior by program youth, although workers were concerned about the problem. Drug use and drug-selling activities were pervasive among gang and non-gang youth in Little Village, but were not directly related to the gang violence problem there (except perhaps in a more fundamental, causal sense). Drug selling was relatively well organized, with a great deal of control exercised by adult criminal organizations, particularly the Mexican Mafia (however, some of the Two Six program youth were only peripherally connected with the Mexican Mafia).

Drug selling by program youth was generally on a small scale. Little Village gang youth arrested for drug crimes were mainly charged with drug possession of small quantities of marijuana or cocaine.

On the other hand, based on aggregate-level arrest data, gang-related drug crime in Little Village increased markedly over the program period. We had expected a significant increase in drug arrests for program youth, particularly if gang violence seemed to be going down, or at least not increasing so much as in the comparison areas. To our surprise, police data indicated that arrests for drug crime actually decreased for the program group during the program period, while it increased for the comparison and the quasi-program groups.

We constructed the drug-crime change model the same way as the other models. Again, the control crime category was *Time I drug arrests*, and the dependent variable was *change in drug arrests between Time I and Time II*. Drug arrests were not so frequent as violence crime arrests and property crime arrests for Little Village gang youth. The drug-crime change model is not so powerful as the other models. Only *drug crime arrests at Time I* and *detentions/incarcerations at Time II* are highly significant predictors ( $p = 0.001$ ). The *sample* variable approaches significance ( $p = 0.053$ ), and the interaction term *drug crime arrests with different sample categories* is significant ( $p = 0.021$ ). The model accounts for 17.1% of variance on the dependent variable at Time II.

Comparing the samples, we find that only the program sample has a drop in drug crime arrests at Time II. There is a substantial increase in drug arrests for the comparison sample, and some increase for the quasi-program group, controlling for other variables. This difference is statistically significant ( $p = 0.015$ ). We observe that each of the youth-age categories of the program sample reduce their drug arrests at Time II, while each of the age categories for the comparison and the quasi-program samples increase, except for the 17- and 18-year-old quasi-program sample, which still does not decrease so much as the comparable program age group. The differences are statistically significant for the 16-and-under and the 17- and 18-year-old

youth in the program sample, compared to the same age categories of the youth in the comparison sample (respectively  $p = 0.011$  and  $p = 0.024$ ). Finally, we note differences over time between moderate and serious drug offenders. The reduction is greater for program and quasi-program youth with moderate levels of drug crime arrests at Time I, in relation to comparison youth with the same level of drug crime arrests at Time I who increase their level of drug crime arrests at Time II.

At this time, we cannot adequately explain why the Project was so consistently effective in reducing gang-related drug crime. This objective was not a priority for the Project. The combination of Project-police and youth-worker attention may have been particularly effective with those drug-dealing program youth who were only partially committed to drug dealing, and who were in the process of transitioning out of the gang and criminal behavior anyway. We explore this possibility in the next chapter.

Model VI: Changes in Special-Police-Activity Arrests. There are certain categories of crime, such as disorderly conduct, mob action, obstructing a police officer, that are closely related to police suppression, specifically of gang youth. Our final model addresses the issue of whether law enforcement was becoming more suppressive at Time II and arresting more gang youth for minor crimes, especially younger program youth. Did the Project have an effect of identifying younger gang and/or program youth for arrest for minor crimes during the program period?

We employ the same general linear modeling and analysis of variance procedure. The same pattern of variables enters into our equation, with the exception of the control variable *prior offenses* (which now includes only those offenses distinctive of a presumed police suppression strategy against gang youth), and the dependant variable *differences in these types of offenses comparing Time I with Time II*. The Time I control variables – *gang-targeted police suppression offenses, age group, and detention/incarceration effects* – are significant at Time II

( $p = 0.001$ ), suggesting a special police-activity influence on arrests for certain crimes. This notion seems initially to be confirmed by the statistical significance of the two interaction terms in the equation: *age and sample effects* ( $p = 0.01$ ) and the *prior-period police suppression and sample effect* ( $p = 0.046$ ). The contribution of all of these variables to explain total variance on the dependent variable *police suppression activity differences at Time I compared to Time II* is 40.27%, and is highly suggestive, but a detailed examination of the specific effects of these variables produces a result that is opposite of what we expected.

Surprisingly, there appears to be no evidence of an increase in police suppression-type activities at Time II compared to Time I, for all of the samples. Evidence does indicate that there was a decrease, and the decrease was significantly greater for the program sample in relation to the comparison samples. The police did not single out program youth for special attention. The data indicate that the younger, 16-and-under group generally was more vulnerable to being arrested through special police suppression activities than older categories of youth during the Project period.

The police were not more often targeting gang youth for arrest at Time I than they were at Time II (at least for relatively minor crimes), and they were not “picking on” or labeling program youth. If gang youth were being arrested more at Time II than Time I, it was probably because they were committing more crime generally, and not because of special police tactics.

#### Changes in the Proportion of Youth with Reduced Arrests

Instead of looking at mean differences in types of crime that might be related to program effects, we shift our focus to whether the program succeeded or failed in its effort to reduce the number of serious gang crime offenders, especially gang violent offenders in Little Village. The Project targeted hardcore gang youth in an effort to reduce the level of violence of these youth, as well as of other gang youth generally in the area. The Project did not target any particular gang members, per se, but those gang members who were the most troublesome.

Because of the chronic and serious nature of the gang behavior of the targeted youth, we did not expect that they would suddenly convert to law abiding citizens overnight, no longer getting into difficulty with the law. Our expectation was that they would reduce their gang crime (especially serious gang violence) to a lower level, compared to gang youth with similar backgrounds who were not targeted by the Project. (In this analysis, we excluded the quasi-program youth.) Did more of the program youth shift from medium or high levels of crime to lower levels of crime than did comparison-sample youth?

In a series of logistic regression analyses, with all three offending groups (low, medium, and high), the program sample did better (but not significantly better) than the comparison sample in terms of total arrests, with an odds ratio of 1.36 (i.e., 36% better). For total violence and serious violence, they did 3% better – about the same.

When we focus on arrest changes for violence among youth who were categorized as relatively high-level offenders (i.e., the high and medium subgroups), the program subgroups did better. The two more serious offending program subgroups in the pre-program period had 230% more youth who reduced their serious violence arrests, and 89% more youth who reduced their total violence arrests, than youth in the two comparison subgroups. None of these comparative changes are statistically significant, however.

Thus, when we focused our analysis on the more serious type of offender, especially the seriously violent offender, we found more program youth than comparison youth reducing their level of violence, particularly serious violence.

### **Chapter 11: Modeling Program Effects: an Integrated Analysis**

In this chapter, confined to program youth only, we examine the direct and indirect effects of program elements on individual youth outcome, using police arrest data. Direct effects are program elements that were associated with or predicted a change in gang delinquency patterns. Indirect effects refer to specific program elements that predicted changes in the critical

characteristics, or life space circumstances, of youth which were in turn directly associated with changes in the youth's arrest patterns.

First, we wanted to know if the existence, or quantity, of summary worker-tracking records was a predictor of program success. Some of the youth we interviewed, and for whom we had police histories, may have received limited or no service. Of this group, those who had no service records could comprise a control group, using police arrests as a dependent variable. In our examination of the available worker-tracking records, we found that youth with varying numbers of summary program tracking records had varying police histories. The more summary records, the more the youth was likely to have had a prior history of serious delinquency, particularly of violence and drug crime. In other words, it was evident that the program team targeted the right group for services and control contacts, and that summary worker-tracking records, despite their deficiencies, could be a valid basis for measuring specific program effects.

Also, based on analyses of both summary worker-tracking records and prior police histories, we were able to establish three types of groups and service patterns which describe worker-estimated success rates for program youth: the *successful combined-service* (multiple types of worker/strategies) *group* (n = 30); the *successful single-type service* (mainly social intervention by the youth worker) *group* (n = 64); and the “no success”(mainly combined type service) *group* (n = 30). This “no success” group contained youth whom workers estimated they failed with, or youth who did not respond to their service efforts. In general, the youth workers alone more often provided services to a relatively younger and less-delinquent group, while a combination of workers (usually police and youth workers together) provided services and contacts to a more seriously-delinquent or criminal group, whether the services were later regarded as successful or not.

### Changes in Levels of Arrests

Using a linear modeling statistical procedure to assess the extent to which the different

types of program approaches predict higher or lower levels of arrests for youth in the 4½ year pre-program period versus the 4½ year program period, we found no statistical difference in total arrests by type of service group. Total arrests increase for each group, although the successful combined-service group shows the least increase.

In the model that predicts level of arrests for serious violence and total violence, type of service group is not a significant predictor for serious violence arrests, but it is for total violence arrests. All of the groups show a decline in arrests, but the greatest statistically significant declines are for the highly-violent, 17- and 18-year-old-youth who received a successful single-type service. However, while the successful single-type service group tends to show some consistent levels of reduction in violence crime arrests compared to the successful combined-service and “no success” groups, this can be explained in part by the different age distributions and prior levels of arrests of youth in these groups.

In the model predicting arrests for property crime, type of service is not statistically significant – alone, or in interaction with other variables. Nevertheless, the successful single-type and combined-service groups show some declines in arrests; the single-type group does significantly better than the “no success” group. In the model which attempts to predict change in drug crime arrests, the different service groups show no statistical difference, although the successful combined-service approach seems to contribute slightly to a better reduction in drug arrests.

#### Proportion of Youth with Reduced Arrests

In the next part of the analysis, we focused attention on the proportion of youth who showed any increase, no change, or a decrease in three types of arrests – *serious violence*, *total violence* and *drug crime* – regardless of the level of change for these arrests. In the logistic analysis, we found that the proportion of youth who decrease their total arrests (rather than increase them or experience no change) is 78.0% greater for the successful combined-service

group than for the successful single-type service group; it is 10.0% better in respect to serious violence arrests, 33.0% better for total violence arrests, and 28.0% better for total property arrests. However, these differences are not statistically significant.

Drug crime arrest differences are most pronounced in the various service groups. The largest proportion of youth reducing their drug crime arrests is from the successful combined-service group, which does 2.7 times better than the successful single-type service group during the program period. The difference is almost statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 3.0$ ,  $p = 0.08$ ).

Based on the analyses, it is difficult to conclude that any one particular type of service approach fits all youth with gang delinquency problems, at least based on the estimates of success by Project workers. Our findings suggest that an outreach youth-work (or social-intervention) approach may be more effective in reducing violent behavior for the younger, less delinquent and less violent gang youth. A combined youth-outreach and police-suppression approach may be more effective with the more criminally-committed and more violent, older youth, especially in regard to reducing drug crime arrests.

### Indirect Program Effects

Finally, we focused on indirect program effects. There are life-space factors and changes that may more powerfully and directly affect changes in police arrest patterns than do worker services. We identified those specific life-space factors that contribute to a lowering of crime arrest rates by program youth, and then we identified those specific program-service variables that affected life-space factors and more directly contributed to a reduction in gang crime for program youth.

Many variables enter the first set of multiple regression models. Of special interest is the finding that *completion of a high school degree* (or its equivalent), *holding a job*, *reducing contact with gang friends*, *presence of persons in the household who are gang members or in jail*, *spending more time with a spouse or girlfriend*, and *more realistic future income*



*aspirations and expectations* are important direct predictors of reduced arrests for all of the different types of offenses, at very high levels of statistical significance. This is a pattern we already observed in the models presented using interview and self-report data in Chapter 8. The patterns are even more strongly observed using police data as outcome variables.

In the second set of logistic models, we identify those service factors which are significant inducements to, and predictors of, those changed life-space conditions and variables. They include *suppression*, as it influences the youth to change his status from gang member to former gang member, as well as to more realistically consider his future income aspirations and expectations. Also of special importance is *service dosage*, or the frequency, length of service, and amount of contact that all of the Project workers have with youth, focused on those life-space factors that require modification if arrests are to decline.

In essence, a combined-strategy service approach – including strategies of social intervention, suppression and provision of social opportunities – carried out in a combined program-operational frame of reference, appears to be the basis for effective change in the gang youth's life space and, consequently, in his delinquent behavior, with variations dependent on the age and criminal background of the youth. These strategies represent variations in the applications of theories of anomie, differential opportunity, social control and differential association in overlapping and interactive ways, which serve to explain the reduction in gang-youth arrests for an array of violence and drug crimes.

## **Chapter 12: Aggregate-Level Changes in Gang Crime**

In the design of the Gang Violence Reduction Project, we also proposed that an absolute or relative reduction of gang violence by sufficient numbers of targeted program youth – key violent gang youth – would contribute to an absolute or relative lowering of the overall Little Village-area gang violence prevalence rate, compared to other similar high gang-violence Hispanic communities in Chicago. We expected that the level of gang violence would be

relatively lower in the six Chicago police district beats comprising Little Village, compared to a set of equivalent beats in six other police districts with similar demographic and socio-economic backgrounds and very high gang-violence problems. We could not, of course, control for ecological, social, and environmental changes that might occur in particular communities, such as major population shifts, different age distributions, or gentrification.

Our indicators of gang violence and gang crime were based on Chicago Police Department incident and police arrest data. Data on gang incidents and offenders in particular clusters of police district beats were of chief interest. Incidents of gang violence were classified by type of offense, and offender characteristics had to include ethnicity, age, gender and gang affiliation. The principal target group was older adolescents or young adults – those 17 to 24 years of age – since they were most likely to participate in heavy gang violence. But we were also interested in, and did target, a sizable subgroup of younger hardcore gang youth – 16 years of age and younger – during the Project period, especially during the fourth and fifth years. We expected there would be some influence of older, targeted gang youth on the behavior of younger gang youth. Much also depended on changes in the age distributions of the gang population at the area level, which we were not able to control.

In the following discussion, we describe aggregate-level crime changes based on four different analytic approaches. Our unit of analysis is: the six police beats in Little Village, and clusters of the highest gang-crime beats in six other police districts in Chicago. Special interest is in the comparison of aggregate-level crime changes in Little Village and Pilsen (District 12), the community most similar to Little Village in serious gang violence (with a mainly Hispanic population), and also in District 9, a community contiguous to Little Village, which includes an increasing Latino population and a decreasing African-American, low-income, public housing population. Neither District 9 nor District 12 was served by the Project.

The absolute number of incidents in the various crime categories is analyzed, and the percent change across a five-year pre-program period (August 1987-July 1992) and a five-year

program period (August 1992-July 1997) is calculated. When comparisons are made across the beat clusters by district, the changes are also ranked from one to seven, with *one* indicating the greatest relative decrease (or lowest rate of increase) for the particular type of gang crime, and *seven* indicating the highest relative increase. We utilize a ratio measure in a more controlled analysis, in which change in the levels of serious gang violence in the target area of Little Village is related to changes in levels of serious gang violence in the beat clusters of the other six districts, both in the pre-program and program periods.

We also perform a “hot spot” analysis of serious gang violence by incident location, comparing the size, concentration, and dispersion of incidents in Little Village and Pilsen over the five-year pre-program and program periods. Then we examine differences in prevalence rates of serious gang violence in Little Village compared to Pilsen during the first three years of the Project, using 1990 U.S. Census data.

#### Gang Crime Incident Patterns across Districts

Violence Index. All seven districts (the clusters of selected beats) experienced an increase in the absolute number of seriously violent gang crimes – homicides, and aggravated batteries and aggravated assaults involving the use of a gun – in the five-year program period compared to the five-year pre-program period. The rate of increase for the target area (District 10) was substantially lower – 55.7% – than for all the other districts combined, which had an average increase of 94.8%. District 9 and District 12 (Pilsen) had slightly lower increases in the violence-index crimes than did the target area – 50.3% and 53.5% respectively – over the five-year period. However, in the first three-year pre-program and program analysis, the Little Village target area had the lowest rate of increase – 35.4% – compared to increases of 65.9% for District 9 and 72.0% for District 12. Demographic factors (loss of population) in District 9, and gentrification factors (upgrading of population status) in District 12 may have partially accounted for the relative improvement in these two districts compared to District 10, in the

fourth and fifth years of the five-year analysis.

Drug Arrests. All districts underwent very large increases in drug arrests between the pre-program and program periods. The increases were substantial both in terms of absolute numbers and relative change. Four of the seven districts, including Little Village, experienced an increase of over 600.0%. Gang drug-arrest activity at the aggregated or area level in District 10 did not abate as a function of the Project. Based on individual-level arrest data, there was in fact a reduction in arrests for drug crimes for targeted youth in the program, while there was an increase in drug arrests for the comparison youth (see Chapter 10). Program effects at the individual level did not necessarily translate into area effects, at least in terms of drug arrests.

#### Offender Data

Offender data is based on youth identified as having been involved in gang incidents, as reported by the police, whether they were arrested or not. It represents a more precise, or focused, indicator of the level of crime in relation to police activity. Using the same serious violence index described earlier, but now focused on offenders (the offender serious-violence index), we find a pattern similar in incident reports, although the ranking and level of improvement for Little Village is higher than that achieved using the incident measures.

The District 10 target area experienced the next-to-the-smallest increase – 43.5% – of any of the districts, with the exception of District 9 (23.5%), over the five-year Project period. The District 12 offender serious-violence index rose to 49.4%, somewhat higher than that of District 10. In the earlier three-year comparative offender analysis – between 1989 and 1992 (the pre-program period) and 1992 and 1995 (the program period) – the increase in the target area again was considerably lower – 25.57% – the lowest of any of the other district comparison areas.

#### Non-Gang Violence Index

There was virtually no change in levels of non-gang serious violence offenses in the five-

year program period. It is therefore unlikely that any changes in serious gang violence offenses within Little Village can be explained by an increase in non-gang serious violence incidents. There is no evidence of spill-over, or crime re-labeling, effects (i.e., a serious gang violence crime being labeled a non-gang serious violence crime). In fact, given demographic changes (i.e., an increase in population) a re-labeling process in the other direction was possible in Little Village: more non-gang seriously violent crime could have been labeled as gang-related during the program period.

Evidence is clear that gang violence continued at a high level in Little Village, but it also continued at an even higher level in most of the comparison districts. The Project apparently had more of a positive impact in the control of serious gang violence during the first three years of the program period, than in the last two years of the five-year program period. Across both gangs, there was little evidence of any dramatic shift in gang violence by the age categories of the offenders. The age group committing most violence offenses was still the 17- to 24-year-old males. Also, the drug problem seemed generally to worsen in the Little Village target area as it did in the comparison areas, based on aggregate-level crime data.

### Ratio Analysis

We know that serious gang crime incidents increased in each of the areas over the five-year program period, but now we consider by how much it changed (in relation to the average or mean score for each of the other districts) by computing ratio scores. We do this for the five-year program period as compared to the five-year pre-program period; and then for the first three-year program period and the first three-year pre-program period. The five- and three-year comparison periods enable us to assess relatively long-term and short-term changes that may be associated with program effects. To some extent this also enables us to more precisely examine whether the Project was more effective in the first three years of its existence than in the last two years.

The five-year analysis reveals that the smallest mean increases in serious gang violence occurred in Districts 9, 10, and 12. Much larger increases took place in the other four districts. The changes were not markedly different in District 10 (Little Village) compared to District 12 (Pilsen) and to District 9. We find that, relative to all of the districts selected, the level of gang crime in Districts 9, 10, and 12 in fact declines, by 20.4%, 16.0%, and 21.7% respectively. These declines are not statistically different. If we examine these ratios on a year-to-year basis over ten years, for all of the districts, the Little Village decline relative to the other areas appears to be more consistent from 1988 through 1995. The serious gang-violence pattern in District 9 seems to run from a relatively-high to a low level. The District 12 pattern is more erratic, starting low, rising in the pre-program period, then declining and rising again in the program period. Overall, there is little to distinguish the year-to-year patterns in Districts 9, 10, and 12. Fluctuations in District 12 are greater than in Districts 9 and 10. Sharp changes in population movement and housing patterns in Districts 9 and 12 may account for some of these patterns.

The three-year pattern of program effects (i.e., differences between the three-year program period and the three-year pre-program period) is favorable to Little Village. The smallest increase in mean serious gang-violent incidents occurs in District 10, and the sharpest ratio decline also occurs there. We observe a gradual and consistent decline in gang violent-crime ratios for Little Village over the three-year program period, but also over the three-year pre-program period.

It is apparent that the decline in serious gang violence in Little Village, relative to the other districts, began prior to the start of the program. The pattern of serious gang violence incidents shows little change in District 9, but again, there is considerable fluctuation in District 12 during the three year program and pre-program periods. The ratio decline in gang violent crime is best sustained during the program and pre-program periods in Little Village.

Thus, while we can make a case for a relative lowering of the gang serious-violence incident rate in Little Village over the five-year program period, we can make a similar case for

ratio declines in Districts 9 and 10. Little Village does best in the first three-year program period, versus the three-year pre-program period, and clearly demonstrates the largest ratio decline in mean gang serious violence compared to all of the other districts.

It is still not clear that the relative decline in serious gang violence is necessarily associated with a Project effect in Little Village in the first three years of the program period. The trend in gang violence was downward in Little Village at the start of the program, and continued downward for a succeeding three-year period. What we can claim is that the level of decline was best sustained in Little Village during the program period, compared to the other districts. Also, the more favorable showing of the Gang Violence Reduction Project in Little Village may be partially related to the greater staff involvement, optimism and stability of the program in the first three years.

#### Graph Analysis: “Hot Spots”

We mapped the gang violence index offenses (now including armed robberies) by year for the Little Village and Pilsen areas, identifying the densest areas of gang criminal activity. Concentrations of incidents were determined using STAC (Spatial and Temporal Analysis of Crime) software, developed by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Our primary interest was to determine whether the location and clustering patterns of gang violence index offenses changed in Little Village during the program period; and, if so, were the changes related to the effects of the Project? To more clearly determine whether such effects might be program-related, we also compared pattern changes that occurred in Pilsen during the five-year program and pre-program periods.

The patterns of clustering, or concentration, of violent gang incidents varies somewhat between Pilsen and Little Village. This may be due in part to the differences in size of each of the communities. The Little Village program area contains six police beats; the Pilsen area has three. Little Village possesses a larger population – 60,829 persons – compared to Pilsen’s

35,433 (based on the U.S. Census of 1990). The two larger major gangs in Little Village generally have their own separate turf areas. The several smaller gangs in Pilsen are situated closer to each other.

There was little change in the physical concentration of violent gang incidents across the five-year pre-program and program periods in both Little Village and Pilsen. In general, the clusters in Little Village were smaller, less dense and more spread out than those in Pilsen, and those patterns changed only a little between the pre-program and program periods. The size of the gang problem (i.e., number of serious gang violence incidents), increased in both Little Village and Pilsen. The increase took a somewhat different form in the two communities over time. In the larger Little Village community, the number of concentrated areas increased slightly, but their sizes were generally smaller, and they were distributed more widely. The number did not increase in Pilsen, but the areas of concentration grew somewhat larger and were located in the central part of the three-police-beat area.

The spatial distribution of serious violent gang incidents in Little Village changed slightly during the program period. The Project may have had some impact on dispersing the concentration of gang violent incidents during the first four program years, but it did not seem to have a significant influence on the spacial patterning of serious violence in Little Village compared to Pilsen.

#### Rates of Violent Gang Crime Per 100,000 Individuals

We were interested in the possible effects of the Project which could be associated with changes in prevalence rates of serious gang violent crime on a community (or area) basis. For this purpose, we again selected Pilsen as the comparison area. The base population data were obtained from the 1990 U.S. Census. We decided to compare the prevalence rate changes in serious violent incidents per 100,000 males, 17 to 25 years old, between the three-year pre-program and the three-year program periods (i.e., close to the time the 1990 Census was carried



out). We wanted to limit age redistribution effects, as well as fluctuations in serious gang violence over longer periods. We wanted to better associate rate changes with program effects, if they occurred.

According to the 1990 Census, there were approximately 9000 males, aged 17-to-25, per 100,000 individuals in Little Village, compared to slightly more than 9800 in Pilsen. Thus, Pilsen had a higher density of males in the high-risk, serious-violence, gang-age category than did Little Village. In the three-year pre-program period, however, there were 197 incidents (or 1 incident for every 45.7 males 17-to-25) in Little Village, compared to 152 incidents (or 1 for every 64.9 males 17-to-25) in Pilsen.

In the three-year program period, there were 269 incidents of serious gang violent crime in Little Village, so the rate increased to 1 in 33.4. The number of incidents in Pilsen for this period also increased (to 230), as did the rate, (to 1 in 42.9). At both time periods, then, the incident rate per youth-at-highest-risk was greater in Little Village. However, the increase in the rate over time in Little Village was not so great as the increase in Pilsen. (The Little Village rate increased by 12.3 offenders, versus 22.0 offenders in Pilsen.) In other words, the serious gang violence prevalence rate increased relatively more, about 55.9% more, in Pilsen than in Little Village during the first three program years.

Again, this suggests that the Project was associated with a relatively greater reduction in serious gang violent incidents in Little Village, compared to Pilsen.

### Summary

The aggregate patterns of change in violence index offenses over the five-year program period, compared to the five-year pre-program period, indicated that the target area of Little Village experienced a lower rate of increase in combined serious violent gang incidents, compared to the rate of increase in the average of the other six districts combined. The Project appeared to have been most successful during the first three years of its existence. A limitation

of the aggregate-level analysis is the variability of key community-level demographic characteristics, which makes comparison of changes in the prevalence rates of serious gang violence across different communities and gangs especially difficult over time.

### **Chapter 13: Changes in Perceptions of the Gang Problem: Community Resident and Organization Respondents**

Of considerable importance in the evaluation was to determine the impact of the Project, not simply in terms of changes among program youth or in aggregate levels of gang crime (especially gang violence), but also in terms of changes in the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of community residents and organizations in regard to the gang problem. In Little Village and in Pilsen, 100 residents in the high gang-violence streets as well as representatives of 50 local community groups or agencies from each community were interviewed at Time I (baseline – as the program was starting, 1992-1993) and at Time II (two years later, 1994-1995). At the resident level, comparisons were made between the views of respondents living in the Little Village and Pilsen communities as a whole, and between those living in Latin King and Two Six territories within Little Village.

Pilsen and Little Village are probably more like each other than any two other communities in Chicago that have concentrations of recently-arrived populations of Mexican origin. Each of the two communities seems to have developed along very similar lines, but each has some distinctive characteristics and community problems. Each of the communities has had a reputation for gang violence and drug dealing.

Regardless of how the analyses of data from residents were conducted, Little Village respondents, especially those living in Latin King territory, reported significantly greater improvement in gang crime conditions, i.e., their perceptions about the scope and severity of the gang problem and became relatively more positive than those of respondents living in Two Six territory or in Pilsen.

Between Time I and Time II, significantly more Little Village resident respondents thought the community quality of life was better, and fewer thought it was worse. There was a perceived increase in safety, less fear of walking the streets, and decreased worry with respect to possible crime victimization. At Time I, almost three-quarters of the resident respondents in Little Village, and slightly less than two-thirds in Pilsen, had themselves been, or had family members who had been victims of a crime. These proportions are astounding, and perhaps reflect a situation unique to streets or neighborhoods characterized by very high levels of violent gang crime. At Time II, the perception of victimization was less than 50% for residents in both communities. These differences between time periods were also statistically significant for both communities, but the amount of change was significantly greater for respondents from Little Village.

Little Village resident respondents perceived a significant reduction in crime (gang and non-gang), especially gang violence and property crime. Pilsen respondents often perceived similar reductions in concerns about safety and different types of crime, but these changes reflected a lower level of improvement and were generally statistically non-significant. Significantly more residents from Little Village also perceived that the police were dealing effectively with the gang problem. This pattern was generally replicated in the Latin King and Two Six territories, but residents in Latin King territory responded more like the overall Little Village community, while residents in Two Six territory approximated the more neutral or muted positive response of Pilsen residents.

In order to control for sampling bias, multiple regression analysis was used. The results suggested that the outcomes related to perceptions of lower crime levels were in part an artifact of sampling. Those resident respondents, whether in Little Village or Pilsen, who were interviewed twice – at Time I and Time II (i.e., who were residents in the particular community over the program period) – were generally more positive about community changes than those respondents who were interviewed only once, either at Time I or Time II.

Little Village resident respondents at Time II (even when sampling bias was taken into account) were less afraid in their communities, and rated gang crime as less problematic. Those living in Latin King territory at Time II were also less likely to see gang violence and gang property crime levels as high. These results suggest that respondents who resided in the Little Village community and in Latin King territory saw significantly more improvement in the crime situation than those interviewed (once or twice) who were living either in the Pilsen community or in Two Six territory. The effect of the Project was the only factor we know of that appeared to account for this difference.

Not only were resident-respondent findings consistent with those generally obtained from individual program-youth interviews and self-reports, from individual police histories of program and comparison youths, and, to some extent, from the aggregate-level police data analyses over the same time period, but changes in the perceptions and experiences of the organization respondents were similar to those of the resident respondents, only more shallow, i.e., with less variation within or across time periods.

A range of organizations was sampled in each community, including block clubs, churches and church organizations, health agencies, schools and other educational and youth agencies, social service organizations, businesses, community organizations, employment and job training agencies, city public-service agencies, and political or ward organizations. There was no difference in the nature or distribution of organizations sampled, within or across communities and over time, except that more block clubs were sampled in Little Village than in Pilsen, and more businesses sampled in Pilsen than in Little Village. The key activities of organizations in both communities were education, community organization, and recreation. There were no differences between the two communities in these activities across time periods.

A greater proportion of organization representatives in both Pilsen and Little Village thought the community quality of life was better at Time II compared to Time I, but the increase was larger and of statistical significance in Little Village only. Fewer respondents in both

communities thought their community had grown worse. The most serious problem in both communities, and across time periods, was the gang problem. The drug problem, although not considered as the most serious, was perceived as getting significantly worse in Little Village, but not in Pilsen.

Most organizations in both communities did not deal with the gang problem, and there was little change within and across communities and organizations over time. The key problems that agencies and organizations addressed were family problems, alcohol/drugs, abuse/neglect, health and racism. Interestingly, and surprisingly, the most pronounced change within each community was the highly statistically significant increase in the percentage of respondents who said there were “no community problems” their organizations dealt with at Time II compared to Time I. We are not sure how to interpret this response. Organizations may have been strongly oriented to selected community problems that they were interested in and could address, based on their organizational mission, and at Time II believed these particular problems had been resolved.

In both communities, organization respondents reported an increased feeling of safety and a decrease in fear, with somewhat greater improvement reported in Little Village. Property and personal crime were perceived as decreasing significantly more in Little Village than in Pilsen. In both communities, at each time period, the chief reason for crime was listed as “gangs,” and the pattern did not change over time. Nonetheless, the seriousness of gang crime was reported as significantly lower by the Little Village than by the Pilsen organization respondents at Time II, compared to Time I. No significant change was reported by the Pilsen organization respondents. Conversely, ratings of the seriousness of non-gang crime did not change over time in Little Village, but they did improve significantly among Pilsens’s organization respondents.

In general, respondents in both communities perceived an improvement in various policing activities. The changes were seen as greater (or at higher levels of statistical

significance) in Little Village. Interestingly, the Little Village organization respondents evidenced a greater familiarity with probation officers and the positive role they played. At Time II, half of the organization respondents in Little Village knew a probation officer, while this was true for only a quarter of the organization respondents in Pilsen. At Time II, almost 21% of the organization respondents in Little Village, but only about 4% in Pilsen, believed that probation officers could help gang members find a job.

Organizations in both communities reported that they were increasing their contacts with other community agencies and organizations to address the gang problem. Little Village organization respondents significantly increased their contacts with a range of organizations, such as ACE (Alliance for Community Excellence), UNO (United Neighbor Organization), Aldermen, block clubs, churches, youth agencies, community organizations, Latino Youth, and schools. There was no evidence of a statistically significant increase in organizational contacts by respondents in Pilsen.

Finally, we were interested in whether, at Time II, resident and organization respondents in Little Village had heard of the Gang Violence Reduction Project (GVRP) and Neighbors Against Gang Violence (NAGV – the community organization that was closely related to, but independent of, the Project), and if they did, what they knew of their purposes and staff compositions. Only 25% of the resident respondents in either Latin King or Two Six territory had heard of the GVRP, and even fewer knew specifically what the Project was doing. Few of the respondents knew what the staff composition of the Project was. A few more residents in Two Six than in Latin King territory had experienced direct contact with Project staff members.

On the other hand, more of the Little Village organization respondents (50%) than the resident respondents (25%) had heard of the GVRP. The organization respondents were generally clear that police, probation, and community youth workers were involved. A sizable number (40%) of all organization respondents stated they had participated in GVRP activities, and 50% believed the GVRP was accomplishing its objectives.

Relatively few resident respondents in Latin King and Two Six territories (7.5%) had heard of NAGV, while approximately half of the organization respondents had. Of special interest was that approximately half of the resident and organization respondents were interested in becoming members of NAGV at Time II.

Unfortunately, NAGV was not sufficiently funded and well-enough organized to follow through and utilize such interest. Not until the third year of the Project was there evidence of significant NAGV effort in organizing residents and organizations to deal with the gang problem. However, several local organizations, especially churches, continued to be consistently involved. They opened up facilities, and collaborated in the service-provision aspects of NAGV directed to gang youth.

#### **Chapter 14: Community and Justice-System Leadership Perceptions of the Gang Violence Reduction Project**

In the Spring and Summer of 1997, a series of interviews was conducted with leaders of Justice System agencies and community groups closely connected with the implementation of the Gang Violence Reduction Project. A Project senior research analyst conducted the extensive individual interviews, which he summarized as follows:

The leadership of the Chicago Police Department, the Cook County Adult Probation Department, the University of Chicago, and Neighbors Against Gang Violence (NAGV) supported the Project, but it is clear that these agency and community leaders supported different aspects of the Project (and the collaborative model on which it was based). Each organization supported aspects of the Project that were consistent with its own particular agency mission. For example, police (as did law enforcement generally) stressed increased targeted suppression and supervision; community leaders emphasized services and support; and probation recognized the value of both services and increased supervision (being an agency which has historically provided them together).

Police and probation leadership tended to focus on the benefits of the partnership that

was emerging between them at the street level. Police administrators discussed how they were able to enforce the conditions of probation when they worked closely with probation officers, because they were now quickly able to obtain information about the conditions of a gang member's probation. This was a very powerful tool for monitoring gang probationers.

Increased information-gathering was also mentioned as a benefit of collaboration with community youth workers. Police and probation tended to emphasize that youth workers contributed to increased monitoring of gang members. For example, one of the probation administrators said that youth workers helped probationers get to the probation office for required scheduled visits, which clearly helped with monitoring efforts.

The Project Coordinator, in response, argued that a fully collaborative model involving community youth workers and local community groups, as well as police and probation officers, was more successful in reducing gang violence than was a limited partnership between police and probation. He also cautioned that other gang projects showed that a partnership between police and probation alone can lead to problems with probation officers becoming overidentified with police. This concern was also expressed repeatedly by administrators from the probation and police departments.

Other positive aspects of the collaborative model were discussed. Community leaders said that a collaborative approach to the gang problem can moderate police suppression activities, because officers work closely with community organizations and other workers who provide services. The Project Coordinator added that the collaborative approach can also enhance the community's and youth worker's responsibility for social control of gang youth.

Concerns about collaboration also tended to reflect the different orientations of each of the agencies and community groups. Police and probation administrators expressed concerns about working with community outreach youth workers. Police administrators said it would be difficult to implement a model in which the Department takes direct responsibility for a gang program which includes youth workers who often have gang criminal histories. A probation



administrator and some police administrators discussed concerns about being able to trust youth workers with criminal-justice information because of their backgrounds. Community leaders, on the other hand, tended to support the use of youth workers because they helped in efforts to provide services. The Administrator of NAGV – the local community organization responsible for developing community participation in the Project – insisted that police in Chicago only served a suppression function.

The Coordinator discussed some of the broader police concerns which contributed to police resistance to a collaborative model involving youth workers. He noted the strong emphasis on suppression by the Mayor and Chicago Police Department (CPD), especially in the current political climate. Similarly, the Associate Director from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) said that there were significant institutional barriers limiting the CPD's involvement in a collaborative model. Concerns were expressed by police and probation about youth workers sometimes maintaining a loyalty to the gang. The Coordinator indicated that it was important for justice-system personnel to share only such relevant crime information as would be useful in carrying out Project objectives in regard to specific Project youth. He said that since information tended to flow more from youth workers to others on the Project team than vice versa, this concern was less significant than police and probation administrators suggested.

Concerns about limited community involvement were discussed. Police administrators talked about difficulties finding local agencies with a strong commitment to working with gang members. Greater local agency and business interest and resources were needed. Community leaders were not sufficiently proactive in regard to the gang problem. The Coordinator said that jobs were available, and that better counseling/training of gang members and collaboration with local and city-wide businesses were needed to help gang youth obtain and keep those jobs. The failure of NAGV to engage the community was also mentioned by both agency and organization leaders. Some administrators from the police department also said that because the Coordinator

took full responsibility for managing the Project, there was no need for further police involvement.

The Coordinator responded to a number of these concerns. He stressed NAGV's failure to organize existing community groups as an important reason for limited community participation. The Coordinator also said that the Project could have been transferred to the community, but those agencies which expressed an interest in the Project only wanted responsibility for the youth-worker component, and were not interested in collaborating with justice-system agencies or developing a cross-agency collaborative approach in regard to the gang problem.

### **Conclusion**

While the Gang Violence Reduction Project developed an effective collaborative approach among the members of a team of street-level police, probation, and community youth workers during the course of the five-year program, it was not able to adequately organize the local community or gain the full support of Chicago Police Department administration.

The Project did achieve a significant reduction in certain types of crime among the approximately 200 targeted hardcore gang youth who were served by the program. The coordinated approach was highly effective in the reduction of serious gang violence and drug crime among individual targeted youth. Youth workers alone were also effective with youth who had less violent and criminal records, working within the framework of the collaborative program structure including probation as well as police officers. The Project was less effective in changing the basic institutional pattern of ganging and gang crime in the Little Village community as a whole.

The Project tactical police developed a remarkable ability to communicate sensitively with gang youth, solve gang crimes, and protect the community. Somewhat detached from the central police organization, they developed a balanced suppression and limited social-

intervention approach, which enabled them to deal very effectively with targeted shooters, influentials, and leaders of the gangs.

The strategies of social intervention, provision of social opportunities and suppression (particularly “social control,” or a more balanced version of suppression) were well implemented and successful. Less successful were Project efforts to form a strong local community organization committed to addressing the gang problem in coordinated agency- and citizen-involved terms. The Chicago Police Department also did not provide sufficient central-office commitment to the development of the Project concept and structure. They took no responsibility for developing an interagency steering committee to support the Project. They were content to let the Project Coordinator and local district police administrators – Sergeant and Commander – determine what needed to be done in day-to-day Project operations. The Department could not accept the possibility that it need not take direct responsibility for the youth-worker or social-services component of the Project. A youth service agency and/or a community organization could have been contracted to take such responsibility, as part of a partnership involving the Chicago Police Department and local and larger community-wide organizations, in collectively and interactively addressing the gang problem.

It was apparent that local agencies or community groups alone did not have the resources or leadership capacity to implement such an approach. A city-wide organization committed to long-term as well as short-term control and reduction of the gang problem (e.g., the Chicago Police Department), along with the enlightened (and not politically opportunistic) support of governmental leaders, had to take primary responsibility for such a collaborative effort. The lead agency would have to mobilize and encourage collaborative change in the policies and practices of city and county justice-system agencies, and social, educational, and faith-based organizations, as well as business and local community groups (and even former gang youth) to effectively address serious chronic gang problems.