Mobilizing Communities to Address Gang Problems

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Introduction

A proven, effective set of prescribed steps for mobilizing communities to address gang problems does not exist. This review of the literature on community-mobilization initiatives was undertaken to identify potentially effective steps, with the aim of laying the groundwork for pilot-testing them. The review begins with a discussion of definitions pertaining to community mobilization, followed by an examination of the history of initiatives that have addressed gang problems. This is followed by a review of research on community-mobilization implementation in five gang program demonstration sites. This report concludes with suggested key elements of successful community mobilization.

Defining Community Organization and Community Mobilization

As we use the term here, community organization is a characteristic of a community. A community may be more or less organized. At one end of the continuum is a community afflicted with disorganization. At the other end of the continuum is a highly organized community characterized by social control by its residents, which is often called "collective efficacy." Community mobilization, as we use it here, includes efforts by individuals or collective actors to improve community organization. In some of the programs reviewed below, community organization is referenced as community mobilization. We view community organization as a goal of community mobilization.

Social Disorganization and Social Control

The role of community organization in the emergence of youth gangs was first identified by Thrasher (1927) in his studies of Chicago gang youth. For Thrasher, gangs were "interstitial" in the sense that they filled gaps in the institutional fabric in which youths grew into adulthood. Where families or schools were weak or ineffective in socializing a youngster, the gang filled the gaps. For Thrasher, strong communities with strong interpersonal ties between neighbors were not settings in which gang problems could develop. The two most prominent researchers who studied gangs in the decades immediately after Thrasher's research were Clifford

Shaw and Henry McKay (1942), and they are credited with having developed the social disorganization theory. In their views, social disorganization is the opposite of community organization. For Shaw and McKay, the fabric of community organization was personal ties among neighbors. Throughout the 1950s, social disorganization remained the key theory in explaining gang problems and in developing gang policy and programs.

This reliance on community organization as personal ties among neighbors was identified as a problem and critiqued by Kornhauser (1978), using Chicago communities and gangs as the object of her research. Kornhauser's key finding was that gang problems did not emerge only in communities where there were weak personal ties between residents. Many poor inner-city communities had very stable patterns of residency and strong personal ties among community members, but still persistent gang problems. In other words, there are exceptions to the social disorganization theory as it applies to gangs.

Building on a model suggested by Hunter (1985) for schools, Bursik and Grasmick (1993) identified two additional levels of community social control and organization that had been neglected in the earlier version of the social disorganization theory. These two were the parochial and public levels. The parochial level of social control consists of ties between community residents and secondary institutions such as schools and businesses. The public level of social control addresses community residents' control of public resources. Representing political power to exert influence on government and the economy, the public level of social control encompasses such important resources as access to and control over law enforcement and the justice system. While personal social control in a community can be high, low levels of parochial and public social control can result in levels of social isolation conducive to serious gang delinquency.

Collective Efficacy

The term collective efficacy is used to describe another way of thinking about community social control (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997; Sampson, 2002). Collective efficacy does not include social control generated from the top down, such as in policing.

Instead, collective efficacy is informal social control. On one hand is a resident's willingness to engage in activity that is of benefit to the community or neighborhoods. On the other hand is a resident's confidence and trust that a neighbor will demonstrate the same commitment to community order. Actions could range from breaking up fights between children to resisting cuts in public services or encroachments on neighborhood stability. According to Sampson and his coauthors (1997, p. 919), "The willingness of local residents to intervene for the common good depends in large part on conditions of mutual trust and solidarity among neighbors. Indeed, one is unlikely to intervene in a neighborhood context in which the rules are unclear and people mistrust or fear one another." Correlates of collective efficacy range from individual perceptions and characteristics to neighborhood-level measures of ethnic segregation and poverty.

Sampson and his coauthors hypothesized a relationship between collective efficacy and community levels of violence. In order to test their connection, they surveyed 8,782 residents of 343 neighborhoods in Chicago, Illinois. They measured collective efficacy at the individual respondent level with a ten-item scale. Five of the items dealt with the stated willingness of a resident to act to constrain neighborhood disruptions. The remaining items focused on the residents' beliefs that neighbors would act similarly. Violence was measured by three separate indicators: residents' self-reports of violent events in their neighborhoods, residents' self-reports of violent victimization, and official criminal justice data on homicides for each neighborhood. From their analyses, Sampson and his colleagues concluded that collective efficacy was negatively associated with violence when other individual and neighborhood factors were statistically controlled. They also found that relationships between poverty and residential instability and violent crime were diminished by the presence of higher levels of collective efficacy.

Community Mobilization Initiatives Against Gang Crime and Delinquency

Community mobilization as a response to gang crime has been around for some time. Examples date back to the first part of the twentieth century and continue through the first few years of the twenty-first century. Frederic Thrasher's (1927) research on Chicago gangs in the early decades of this century incorporated a community organization approach. Thrasher's work is part of what is now referred to as the Chicago School. Thrasher felt that authority for the community response had to be concentrated in one agency that could be held directly accountable to community residents. To be effective, local programs had to be based on timely and systematic social research. Services intended to prevent gang involvement had to be "integrated,"

whether such services were targeted at an individual child, a family, or a gang. In targeting all children in an at-risk area, programs ensured inclusion of the most delinquent youths whom Thrasher assumed were the least likely to be involved in programs. He also maintained that an effective response required community residents to be continuously informed and educated. Thrasher's ideas were never implemented or subjected to evaluation, but his contributions have guided subsequent community-mobilization responses to gang crime.

In the remainder of this section, we review a variety of community-mobilization initiatives that addressed gangs and similar social problems. Our aim is to identify lessons learned that might be applied in future community-mobilization efforts concerning youth gangs.

A. The Chicago Area Project (1929–1962).

Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay (1942) were younger contemporaries of Thrasher in the Chicago School. Shaw and McKay adapted Thrasher's ideas to research and programs. The Chicago Area Project (CAP) designated program target sectors that were labeled "delinquency areas" by Shaw and McKay (1972; Roberts, 1989). From these community assessments, the goals of the Chicago Area Project were to develop local community organizations to fill gaps in social control and to develop indigenous leadership and neighborhood organization (Klein, 1971, p. 44). The guiding theory was Shaw and McKay's concept of "social disorganization," discussed above, and they directed CAP implementation. The CAP approach required program activities to reflect an understanding of gangs and delinquency as part of the social ecology of neighborhoods. Neighborhood committees were formed in six selected Chicago communities identified as "delinquency areas." Each committee was empowered to choose its own director and to make decisions about responding to delinquency in its community. The staff of CAP served as community organizers and consultants for the neighborhood committees and assisted the committees in obtaining the resources needed to develop the responses and programs that the committee selected. CAP staff assisted the committees in establishing regular communication and interaction with criminal justice, school, and social service agency representatives. Assisting individual at-risk youths to complete educational goals and obtain employment were primary activities of the committees.

Formal and informal networks of community individuals and groups strengthened and supplemented by CAP efforts were the major program activity. Steven Schlossman and Maurice Sedlak (1983, pp. 449–462) offer in their history of the long-running CAP an overview of systematic and nonsystematic evaluations. One of the best

known critiques of CAP is found in Saul Alinsky's *Reveille for Radicals* (1946). As a young CAP street worker, Alinsky decided that his assigned neighborhood committee was inadequate for the "real" needs of community residents, and he developed a more confrontational approach as an alternative kind of community response. In 1944, Clifford Shaw, who served as director and lead researcher of CAP, produced a statistical study that showed reductions in delinquency rates in at least one CAP target community. Schlossman and Sedlak (1983, pp. 456–57) noted that resultant criticism of his statistical methods and his interpretations of the social processes of community life led Shaw to shy away from subsequent efforts to support the success of CAP with conventional social science methodology. Schlossman and Sedlak (p. 459) concluded that, in terms of implementation, the program must be regarded as a success. In terms of reducing delinquency, measurement issues (not unknown in today's efforts to evaluate programs) surrounding the study of broad, systemic reforms like CAP virtually render impact evaluation conclusions impossible.

B. Mobilization for Youth, New York City (1961–67).

The goals of the Mobilization for Youth (MFY) were to restructure the social organization of the Lower East Side of Manhattan through community participation and special programs to involve residents in expanded opportunities. A Lower East Side Neighborhood Association was formed to establish a series of neighborhood councils. The councils mobilized indigenous community groups and program activities in gang-related matters and enhanced residents' identification with the community. Originally funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, in 1962 the MFY was the recipient of an action grant from the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime. Richard Cloward was the theoretical progenitor and briefly research director of MFY. Just as Shaw's "social disorganization" theory defined CAP, Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) "opportunity theory" shaped MFY. Opportunities provision and community service were primary goals in the context of community organization, along with the creation of "indigenous" institutions. At the heart of the institution-building process was the Lower East Side Association. The project was central to the War on Poverty and Great Society strategies of President Johnson's administration.

A youth service corps was established, first hiring unemployed youths and using many of them to teach younger children to read. Special programs focused on gang-involved youths, but delinquency prevention programs targeted all children in the community (Bibb, 1967). From community organizations that focused on mobilizing local resources, MFY grew into a social action movement challenging New York City's government in confrontational strategies similar to those that Alinsky had advocated for CAP (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993, p. 168). Klein (1971, p. 44) reported that no specific evaluations of MFY programs were known to him. As with CAP, there is sufficient evidence (Bibb, 1967; Kahn, 1967; Bursik and Grasmick, 1993) that MFY was a success in terms of process evaluation outcomes in the development of the desired community organizations. There was no systematic evaluation of its impact on delinquency or gang involvement.

C. Crisis Intervention Network, Philadelphia (1974–1987).

Philadelphia's Crisis Intervention Network (CIN) was primarily a community organization approach, but like CAP and MFY, CIN had components that reflected other strategic approaches and coexisted with a grassroots community organization, House of Umoja. With a street work and probation/parole unit, CIN represented a coalition of neighborhood-level community organizations. CIN was particularly unique for teaming civilians with police in neighborhood patrols, and gang workers patrolled hot spots in radio-dispatched cars, attempting to defuse potentially violent situations. According to Spergel (1995, p. 253), CIN was "a suppression or surveillance strategy . . . added to a social intervention or youth outreach approach within a community mobilization framework in which all key elements of the community, legitimate and illegitimate, joined to reduce the level of gang crime." The House of Umoja was an independent "shelter for at-risk youths" with an emphasis on building self-respect through an awareness of African-American culture and traditions.

The House of Umoja pioneered the utilization of gang summits and truces to reduce street violence. The umbrella also extended to parents' groups and other grassroots organizations. There is no systematic process evaluation of the project, and it was not based on any particular theory of gangs or delinquency. However, it remains worthy of attention because of the decline in gang-related homicides for Philadelphia in the 1970s—43 in 1973, 32 in 1974, 6 in 1975, and 1 in 1977 (Needle and Stapleton, 1983). In 1992, the Philadelphia Police Department reported that it did not maintain records on gang-related homicides and in 1994 did not officially recognize the presence of a gang crime problem. Without systematic evaluations, it is impossible to know what role gang-response programs played in the perceived decline of Philadelphia's gang problem.

D. DHHS's Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program.

The Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-690) established the Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program in the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). When

applications for funding were solicited in 1989, priority and the largest portion of the funding were given to consortium projects. A community-based consortium was defined as a formal partnership among at least three city, county, town, neighborhood, or other local-level organizations and/or individuals that had the capacity to generate sustained, collaborative communitywide commitment and support for strategies that address the issue of youth gangs. The organizations could involve voluntary agencies, law enforcement, local government, recreational agencies, youth organizations, businesses, churches, foundations, medical facilities, and colleges. Ultimately, all 16 of the consortium projects were funded for three years. In design, these programs constituted a federally initiated, coordinated, and monitored commitment to community organization and strategic responses to gang crime problems. This commitment was on a scale that was historically without precedent. Nine more consortium projects were funded in 1992 with a total of $5.9 million, each for a period of five years at up to $750,000 per year.

The national evaluation of the Youth Gang Drug Prevention consortiums (Cohen et al., 1995; Williams et al., 2002) concluded that while local programs were generally effective in reducing delinquency and drug use among youth participants, the programs were not successful in preventing or reducing gang involvement.

E. A Community-University Model for Gang Intervention and Delinquency Prevention in Small Cities. Few accounts of specific community mobilizations against gangs have been published. During the early 1980s, Racine, Wisconsin, recreational staff noticed gang emergence (Takata and Tyler, 1994). Others were skeptical. To no avail, the recreational staff conveyed their concern to city officials and community leaders. Then, some one hundred citizens signed a petition calling on the mayor to form a task force to evaluate the apparent gang problem and devise solutions. The task force commissioned a University of Wisconsin research group to conduct assessment of the local gang situation. The research group was to assist the task force in developing solutions and gang-related policies. University students were involved in all phases of the research project. Among other measures, student and community surveys were used to obtain data on perceptions relating to youth gang activities from representative samples of more than 1,000 respondents. "This descriptive study was an important first step in learning how to effectively and efficiently deal with the problem of youth gangs" (p. 29).

The gang assessment led to formation of a Community-University Model for Gang Intervention and Delinquency Prevention in Small Cities (Takata and Tyler, 1994; Takata and Zevitz, 1987, 1990.) This team model consists of five major steps that communities experiencing emerging gang problems can take:

- A genuine commitment to youth. This can be demonstrated by working directly with youth, developing an understanding of their problems and concerns, building trust, and empowering them to solve problems. The team must demonstrate a commitment to resolving local issues (e.g., the need for recreational facilities in minority neighborhoods) and develop a thorough understanding of the city's social, political, and economic context, especially race and ethnic relations. In all likelihood, a catalyzing event will occur, if it has not already, that forces recognition of the gang problem.

- Gang problem assessment. The team will need to investigate, observe, and document the developing gang problem while learning from neighboring jurisdictions through the exchange of information. The task force should identify a local college, university, or other community resource that can study the local gang problem. This study would provide the documentation necessary to secure external funding for programs the task force identifies.

- Initial networking. A task force should be formed to collaborate on possible solutions. Its work includes organizing community meetings and neighborhood hearings to identify solutions and develop a collaborative response to gangs. The task force should be alert to politicization of its work by opposition parties.

- Time-out. In this stage, the task force should publish and disseminate research findings, expand its network via conferences and other communication outlets, identify funding sources, establish political foundations for funding, and prepare grant/contract applications for funding.

- Development of new programs. The final stage is program development and implementation. Initial funding might be sought to implement one or two of the task force's recommendations (e.g., community collaboration.) The overall plan should include long-term goals and a master plan. New programs should be implemented through continued collaborative efforts. Research and program development would continue during the implementation of the program.

This community-university model is a very practical approach for smaller cities and towns with limited resources for addressing gang problems, and it also can be adapted for larger cities.

F. MAD DADS. MAD DADS, Inc. (Men Against Destruction—Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder) was formed in May 1989 by a group of concerned Omaha, Nebraska, parents who were fed up with gang violence and the uninterrupted flow of illegal drugs into their community. Omaha, Nebraska, resident John Foster's college-age son had been beaten to death by a group of local gang members. He asked an Omaha resident and businessman (Eddie Staton) to help him organize a group of black men to address the spread of gang violence in north Omaha. These gentlemen were joined by Bishop Robert Tyler, and the three of them led a group of 18 men in the city that formed MAD DADS, a nonprofit organization. MAD DADS is also a Christian organization, attracting missionary-minded volunteers. The activist MAD DADS members are uniformed in black-and-green polo shirts and matching baseball caps. They "present themselves as positive role models and concerned loving parents who are a visible presence in local neighborhoods, against the negative forces destroying children, families, neighborhoods, cities, and ultimately our country."

MAD DADS sponsors several activities that are designed to promote and demonstrate positive images of fathers in the process of engaging and protecting community youth and families. The following activities serve as a model for newly forming chapters across the country:

- Neighborhood street patrols within troubled areas. These neighborhood street patrols are the signature program for the organization. The goal is to assess community needs; report crime, drug sales, and other destructive activities to the proper authorities; and take other actions, such as painting over gang graffiti, while challenging and changing inappropriate behavior.

- Positive community activities for youth, such as block parties, rallies, night parades, and car shows. These include providing chaperones at community events; serving as surrogate fathers for youth at nontraditional times and locations; and visiting local jails and prisons to counsel, encourage, and prepare former inmates to return to their respective neighborhoods, accountable to the community in which they will live.

- Violence reduction programs. "SANKOFA" is a nontraditional, 13-week rites-of-passage program designed specifically for African-American boys and young men aged 6–25.

The following are MAD DADS Street Patrol Guidelines:

- The purpose of the MAD DADS street patrols is to provide a visible, positive presence of community fathers as role models within neighborhoods to maintain a safe and healthy community environment.

- Our goal is not to intimidate nor provoke anyone but to be firm in our commitment to protect our community.

- Upon request, we will be visible at community gatherings.

- We will assist any member of the community, especially the elderly or youth who are victimized, coerced, or threatened by the criminal element.

- We will expose any known drug dealer or crack house to the proper authorities, but under no circumstances will we undertake the responsibility of the police.

- We will be identified by wearing our MAD DADS uniforms and hats. Black, green, and white will be our colors.

- We will be well organized and trained before entering into any area that is heavily infested with criminal activity.

- All MAD DADS will follow the code of conduct without question. Members must agree to follow local and national leadership.

MAD DADS members are often actively involved in community service projects including:

- Counseling youths on the streets and showing a genuine interest in them; teaching them by example to become responsible adults.

- Tutoring and assisting youth in obtaining job training and employment, while providing information and referral services to community-based organizations and groups.

- Working with law enforcement agencies to make communities and neighborhoods safer.

- Showing parental concern in the community by offering hope and a visual resistance to elements of social disorder in the community.

- Developing community-service projects that address negative perceptions of youths.

In 1999, the Omaha chapter started a special division called the "G Crew," made up entirely of former gang members (Schimke, 1999). In Chicago, MAD DADS has sponsored demonstrations in support of public policies aimed at helping kids avoid gang involvement. The Minneapolis–St. Paul organization gathers on Saturday nights, prays, and then travels to troubled areas in the neighborhood to interact

with youths and residents until almost midnight. Members are always well-stocked with information about employment opportunities and job training. President George H. W. Bush named the group as one of his Thousand Points of Light. In 1994, President Clinton presented MAD DADS with a prestigious award for its volunteer efforts.

G. Alliance of Concerned Men. Another example of gang-community mobilization was spearheaded by the Alliance of Concerned Men (ACM) in Washington, DC. This group came together in 1991, five men who had known each other since high school days at Eastern High School in Washington, DC. Some were in business, some had prior brushes with the law, some had abused substances, and some had prior gang affiliations. But they all had strong roots in the community. One of the motivating factors in the formation of the Alliance was the shooting death of a son of one of the members. The question of what they might do to help prevent another such tragic event began to intrude into the gentlemen's after-hours sports conversations, and they finally formalized their group as a community organization—ACM. The Alliance undertook two key self-help community initiatives that established its credibility and community presence. First, it began the "Going Legal" program to help kids get licenses, deal with outstanding warrants, and learn how to access legal systems. Second, the Alliance initiated a "Counseling by Walking" program that took ACM members into the community to walk with youngsters, talk and put an arm around their shoulders, and give them hugs—which startled them at first but became things that they grew to expect.

The Alliance then took on its biggest challenge: to see whether ACM could put an end to the loss of human lives in Benning Terrace in southeast Washington, DC. In this neighborhood, nearly 60 kids had been killed in a five-block radius over a two-year period—for no discernible reason other than revenge. The blatant execution of a 12-year-old in 1997 was the last straw for ACM.

ACM members carried out grassroots intervention in intergang conflicts and successfully negotiated a truce. ACM then established a violence free zone in the Benning Terrace public housing project with assistance from the District of Columbia Housing Authority. The permanence of the gang truce was buttressed by job opportunities the District of Columbia Housing Authority provided for gang members, such as refurbishing the neighborhood, removing graffiti, and landscaping. In February 2004, residents celebrated the seventh anniversary of the Benning Terrace Truce.

An evaluation of ACM's Benning Terrace Initiative (National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, 1999)

identified two themes that best describe what had taken place in Benning Terrace: "transformation" and "familialism." ACM stimulated "transformation of the community, the neighbors, the youth participants and their families, and the change agents, and a transformation in patterns of crime in the community" (p. 124). The familialism concept refers to maintenance of solidarity and transmission of strong family ties that are characteristic of African-American families (Hill, 1997).

In 1997, the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise convened leaders of five effective neighborhood-based youth crime intervention initiatives and distilled from discussions the keys to their success. These key elements fall into two categories: the agent of intervention and the method of intervention (National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, 1999, pp. 56–62).

Alliance of Concerned Men—Effective Intervention Agents: Members reside in the neighborhoods they serve. They have first-hand knowledge of both the community problems and resources, and they have a personal stake in the success of the solutions they suggest. As a result of residing in the neighborhood, they are available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, which is very important. Effective intervention agents possess the following:

- Either have experience with gang activity or have themselves experienced redirection to positive activity. Effective intervention agents are often former gang members or have otherwise made the transition from problem behavior to positive, responsible, and productive lifestyles.

- Are role models who "walk their talk." They "are living examples of the principles they promote, and their daily lives are the embodiment of their transforming message—visible proof that victory is possible" (p. 56).

- Have made a long-term commitment to salvaging the lives of young people. Effective intervention agents often have made unusual personal sacrifices to help others.

- Are often empowered by faith. Many of them contend that it was faith that gave them the power to go into life-threatening situations without fear and that such fearlessness served to protect them from harm.

- Know no boundaries of race and income level. Effective intervention agents are committed to helping all youths, regardless of their races and income levels.

- Are united in a common effort to salvage young lives. Neighborhood leaders do not abide the

pettiness of competition and are eager to share ideas and strategies with others. They sincerely celebrate one another's victories.

- Exemplify integrity. Effective intervention agents make an unconditional commitment to help youths. The consistency in their standards is recognized and appreciated by street-wise youths.

Effective intervention methods include:

- Continuous outreach to the community, while identifying and working with established youth leaders. This often takes an inordinate amount of time, patience, and proof of commitment.

- Careful listening to youths in the community. Effective intervention begins with understanding their views of problems and their ideas for solutions. "The youths who speak the loudest or those who are most visible are not always the ones who are 'calling the shots'" (p. 58).

- Reciprocity by young people for support and assistance they receive. Community service projects are a good example: graffiti removal, neighborhood cleanup, and landscaping.

- Providing immediate recognition and rewards to young people who respond in positive ways. In addition to personal recognition, dinners are relatively easy to arrange and can help produce community cohesion.

- Providing opportunities for "backsliders" to regain footing. This principle applies to youths and adult community stakeholders alike. Most persons embrace change at an uneven pace.

- Encouraging codes of conduct and standards of behavior that should emerge from the young people. These should be explicit, written, and circulated. Examples include no swearing and no weapons.

- Establishing a forum in which youths can practice conflict resolution and come to a nonviolent agreement.

- Integrating project youths into outreach to other young people as mentors, role models, and peacemakers. This not only solidifies their transformation but also takes advantage of their potential effectiveness in transforming peers.

H. A Community Action Resource Team. Growing public concern in Mountlake Terrace, Washington, over increasing juvenile crime and evidence of youth gang involvement led some outspoken residents to demand a citywide curfew (Thurman et al., 1996;

Thurman and Mueller, 2003). In response, the police chief convened several public meetings to discuss the growing concern. These meetings led to the formation of a Community Action Resource Team (CART). CART rejected a curfew and instead recommended establishment of a Neutral Zone, a safe place where at-risk youth could voluntarily congregate and engage in prosocial activities. Each Friday and Saturday evening from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m., program staff and volunteers administer the Neutral Zone concept to youth aged 13–20 who are at high risk for delinquency and gang involvement. Program activities were established at a centrally located elementary school gymnasium. CART then succeeded in securing funding for various services for area at-risk youths, including expanded in- and out-of-school activities for low-achieving students. In addition, youths were provided with various forms of counseling and other essential services (Thurman and Mueller, 2003).

I. The Community Reclamation Project. The Community Reclamation Project in the Harbor Area of Los Angeles County, California, designed a model anti-gang/drug program that could be used by any community experiencing an emerging gang and drug presence (Salazar and Hatchell, 1990). Four target areas were chosen because of indications that they had an emerging gang and drug presence. The Community Reclamation Project coordinated the activities of law enforcement, schools, community-based organizations, churches, businesses, and private citizens and mobilized communities. This overall project goal was accomplished through four key activities:

First, community-network meetings brought together specific public and private agencies (community-based organizations, churches, and schools) to formulate a cohesive plan to avoid duplication of services.

Second, neighborhood involvement activities heightened awareness of how entities of a community interact to bring about a gang- and drug-free environment. "Contending with residents' fear and with neighbors not knowing or trusting each other, we started bringing them together through neighborhood involvement meetings, reassuring them that there was power in numbers and support available to them" (Salazar and Hatchell, 1990, p. 64). Fear of gang crime is a strong motivating force in communities (Lane and Meeker, 2003).

Third, united community activities provided alternatives to gangs and drugs while combining the community elements in a joint effort. Sports programs were developed that involved recreation centers, school organizations, basketball teams, drill teams, student body and faculty, business people, law enforcement, and residents. Neighborhood

walks ("Follow Me—I'm Gang- and Drug-Free") involved youths contacting businesses and asking them to display gang and drug education material, thus bringing the business community into the mobilization process. Job workshops for youth expanded the outreach efforts of public and private youth hiring agencies to include at-risk youth. Graffiti paint-outs provided tangible improvements to community appearance.

Fourth, a continuing culturally specific program was formed that integrated child, parent, and teacher training to prevent involvement of youths in drug abuse and gang activity. This program of activities included school programs (the Second Step violence prevention curriculum that brings teachers and students together and a rites-of-passage program for at-risk youth) and a parenting program, thus completing the circle of child-parent-teacher interaction.

A key factor in the success of the Community Reclamation Project appears to be its effective community-mobilization strategy, which was based on a "systems" conceptualization. In this model, the community system is viewed as comprising schools, law enforcement, residents, churches, government, community-based agencies, and businesses. In this view, the characteristics of the community are determined by how these institutions interrelate with one another. Improvements in these working relationships enhanced community cohesion. Thus, the project aimed to restructure community relationships over time through a series of meetings, programs, and activities intended to encourage people to relate and communicate in new and different ways. Changes in these adjusted intercommunity relationships appeared to bring about changes in the whole community system. Key mobilization techniques included the following:

• Cultivating a natural leader within the community.

• Carefully identifying and documenting residents' concerns.

• Creating a feeling of empowerment by inviting community representatives to speak at community meetings.

These steps helped to establish communication between different community services (government, police, community-based organizations, schools, churches, etc.) and residents, making it easier to reach consensus on priority community problems and potential solutions. Notably, both public (government) and parochial (secondary institutions) levels of social control were enjoined with community residents.

The active participation of the faith community was also a key factor in the success of the Community Reclamation Project. Other community mobilization initiatives have demonstrated this point. For example, the key to the success of Operation Ceasefire in Boyle Heights was the support of area churches, notably those in the East Los Angeles Deanery of the Catholic Archdiocese (Tita et al., 2003). It represented a long tradition of "street intervention" in the area on behalf of local youth. Having this structure of support behind the initiative was vital to the community's acceptance of any role played by law enforcement agencies, given concerns about previous Los Angeles police interventions that had relied exclusively on gang suppression. In another site, the Boston TenPoint Coalition, formed by clergy and laity, was instrumental in the success of Boston's Operation Ceasefire in combating youth violence and gang crime (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999).

J. **Communities That Care.** Use of the public health model to engage communities has helped to align prevention programs with science-based risk and protective factors. The Communities That Care (CTC) operating system is a widely used approach for engaging entire communities in risk- and protection-focused prevention (Hawkins, 1999). It contains research-based tools to help communities promote the positive development of children and adolescents and prevent adolescent substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school dropout, and violence. In the CTC model, mobilization involves "defining the community that will be involved, identifying key stakeholders who should be engaged, recruiting a community leader to champion the process, assessing current conditions, activities, and initiatives already operating in the community, and assessing conditions that could inhibit successful implementation of the CTC system" (Hawkins, Catalano, and Arthur, 2002, p. 959). A key feature of the community mobilization process in the CTC operating system is the identification and selection of a community leader who plays the role of "champion" in leading others in the community to become actively involved. This rarely can be done by outsiders.

It has been demonstrated that research-based prevention programs and activities can be successfully promoted by providing community stakeholders with training and technical assistance in risk-protection assessment and strategic prevention planning (Hawkins, Catalano, and Arthur, 2002). Several hundred communities have been successfully engaged in risk- and protection-focused delinquency prevention programming, some with impressive results (Hawkins et al., 2002), but this operating system has not been used for risk-focused gang prevention programming.

K. Community Change for Youth Development.
Another type of community mobilization initiative involved a consortium of more than a dozen private foundations and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This Community Change for Youth Development (CCYD) initiative was developed by the nonprofit organization, Public/Private Ventures (Walker et al., 1999; Watson, 2002). Initiated in 1996, the CCYD did not target specific adolescent social problems. Instead, it assisted communities in responding to five "basic needs" of youth during their crucial developmental years: (1) adult support and guidance, (2) nonschool activities, (3) "work/learning," (4) youth involvement in decision making, and (5) support through crucial transitions, such as from middle school to high school and from school to work or further education. The CCYD community mobilization strategy involved a mixture of outside technical assistance. A lead agency was selected to mobilize communities. In addition, a combination of "top-down" (from central agencies), "bottom-up" (from community organizations), and "cross-fertilization" (across multiple sites) mobilization strategies were used.

Although the results were mixed in the five community implementation sites and none of them successfully addressed all five goals, several important lessons emerged from the multimillion-dollar initiative. The CCYD initiative demonstrated that mobilization on behalf of youth requires a combination of flexible external supports and local capacities (Walker et al., 1999; Watson, 2002). One of the most critical external supports is a substantive framework—a set of ideas that is research-based, yet understandable and easily communicated, that provides implementation guidance but is not prescriptive about implementation choices (p. 28). Expert technical assistance in translating research and providing implementation guidance and feedback is another critical external support. At least a modicum of existing internal capacity to plan, implement, and sustain a substantive framework is a critical local capacity. "However, significant attention must be paid to developing a number of avenues for residents to be involved, providing training and support for their roles, and finding a productive balance in each community between resident involvement and institutional responsibility" (p. 29).

L. Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders. The Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders (Wilson and Howell, 1993; see also Howell, 2003a, 2003b) is a framework for dealing with all aspects of juvenile delinquency, including gang problems. It incorporates two principal components:

1. Preventing youth from becoming delinquent through prevention strategies for all youth with a focus on those at greater risk.

2. Improving the juvenile justice system response to delinquent offenders through a system of graduated sanctions and a continuum of treatment alternatives that includes immediate intervention, intermediate sanctions, community-based corrections, and after-care services.

The primary objective of a community's Comprehensive Strategy process is to unify and enhance existing programs and services and to develop a systematic approach for:

• Identifying and reaching populations in need of prevention services.

• Increasing communication and information-sharing among all participating agencies and services.

• Coordinating and strengthening existing effective programs.

• Instituting new programs to fill identified service gaps in the current prevention and graduated sanctions continuum.

• Monitoring and evaluating the implementation and impact of the Comprehensive Strategy process and its policies, systems, and services.

Beginning in 1996, the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) provided technical assistance support for the implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy in three pilot sites: Lee and Duval Counties, Florida, and San Diego County, California. The training and technical assistance consisted of a series of training events for members of the communities and designated working groups and tailored training assistants' consultations to support the communities' planning efforts.

Several important lessons learned from this experiment apply specifically to community mobilization (Coolbaugh and Hansel, 2000). A key goal of the Comprehensive Strategy is to mobilize all segments of the community—schools, government agencies, law enforcement, courts and corrections, public and private social service agencies, businesses, civic organizations, the faith community, and private citizens—to cooperate in a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the problems and needs of juveniles in their neighborhoods and the community at large. Commitment from community leaders is crucial to the success of such a coordinated effort. These individuals must understand and champion the principles and goals

of the Comprehensive Strategy and be willing to commit resources to the assessment, planning, and implementation processes. Early achievement of "small wins" was another important factor in the success of initial community mobilization. Even while still in the planning phases of their Comprehensive Strategy initiatives, the pilot sites achieved early wins—small (and sometimes large) accomplishments that came about largely because of their coordinated, systematic assessment and planning efforts. These accomplishments—new funding, stronger partnerships, positive system changes—no matter how small, were enormously important motivators and served as early evidence of the gains the community could achieve with a comprehensive juvenile delinquency plan in place.

M. The Neighborhood Solutions Project. Although gang problems were not explicitly targeted in the following example of community mobilization, there is strong reason to believe that the methods used in the Neighborhood Solutions Project in Charleston, South Carolina, would work in the gang arena because it targeted youth violence and drug use—two characteristic features of youth gangs. The Neighborhood Solutions Project is a broad-based model of citizen and professional collaboration to effect neighborhoodwide change (Swenson, Henggeler, Taylor, and Addison, 2005). More specifically, the initiative involved principally a Multisystemic Therapy (MST) team and other project staff, a community-policing team, health programs, and the people of the neighborhood. The partnership of these four key groups in the project successfully generated reductions in criminal activity, substance abuse, and school problems in the Union Heights Community of North Charleston, South Carolina (Swenson et al., 2005).

In this case study of community mobilization, the project staff sought to engage community residents in a selected community of Charleston (randomly chosen among several high-rate juvenile crime, child abuse, and poverty areas within the city) in reducing these social problems. Several critical steps were taken to successfully engage neighborhood stakeholders in the collaborative effort. These are as follows:

- Identify key neighborhood leaders in the Union Heights Community. These were identified by directing an inquiry to staff in the mayor's office.

- Contact key neighborhood leaders. The project staff chose to contact a single key leader. She agreed to meet with the project team, and this led to the next step.

- Meet with neighborhood leaders as a group. The initial neighborhood leader meeting was with approximately ten leaders from the Union Heights Community. For them to hear about the project was not as important as for the project staff to demonstrate a willingness to learn about the neighborhood, the leaders' concerns, and characteristic strengths of the participants.

- Discuss change priorities. During the initial and subsequent group meetings, the project staff emphasized that they wanted to address in the project what the leaders viewed as the priority community problems affecting their youth and families. The neighborhood leaders chose juvenile crime, substance abuse, and school suspensions/expulsions as the priority problems.

- Convene a communitywide meeting. This meeting was, of course, the beginning of a broader relationship with neighborhood residents. In addition, project staff introduced the project idea, listened, answered questions, and asked questions regarding the residents' priorities and what they wanted to transpire.

- Lay the foundation. Hold many individual meetings with numerous stakeholders. Six weeks of daily, one-to-one meetings (consuming entire days) were held with (1) all ministers within the bounds of the community, (2) school personnel, (3) the mayor and other city officials, (4) family court judges, (5) other judges in the county, (6) business leaders, (7) the recreation department director, (8) department of juvenile justice staff, (9) the sheriff, (10) the police chief, (11) local police officers, (12) local residents, (13) elders of the community, (14) parents, and (15) drug dealers working in the community.

- Convene a second communitywide meeting. In this meeting, project staff laid out the specifics of the project that had emerged from the previous series of meetings and discussions. A unanimous vote approved the decision to move ahead with the project and research plans.

- Develop trust. Community leader Ida Taylor gave the project staff the following rules for gaining the trust of community residents (Swenson et al., 2005, p. 73):

  1. Listen.

  2. Never promise something you cannot deliver.

  3. Do not do too much too soon.

  4. Do not throw money at us; instead, empower us and give us your time.

N. Summary Observations on Community Mobilization and Community Organization.

Our foregoing review of community mobilization programs reveals a variety of institutional arrangements. Each program attempted to deal with a community gang or youth violence problem by mobilizing citizens and institutions. Each program involved an effort to utilize community and/or external resources. These efforts represent an interaction of personal, parochial, and public levels of social control.

Grassroots organizations that grow out of personal ties between neighbors have a particular promise and resilience in mobilizing communities. MAD DADS, the Alliance of Concerned Men, and the Community Action Resource Team serve as examples of effective grassroots organizations built from the bottom up. In each of these programs, citizens formed an organization that eventually took its place among their community's parochial-level organizations. Ultimately, these programs also established positive relationships with law enforcement and other public-level resources.

Grassroots organizations may be essential to sustain any effective mobilization effort because they require and create personal-level ties among residents. These ties demonstrate the willingness of individuals to act on behalf of the neighborhood and the confidence that their neighbors will likewise act. These are essential requirements for collective efficacy. Grassroots programs have strong social foundations in the affected communities. Only such community-based grassroots organizations have the durability to transcend specific events and responses to them. This sustainability will in some part depend on the organizations' ability eventually to establish and maintain stable neighborhoods.

Bursik and Grasmick (1993, p. 177) are admittedly cautious in recommending that former gang members be integrated into effective anti-gang responses. A unique strength of grassroots organizations is their capacity to reach out to former gang members who are likely to reside in communities with chronic gang problems. MAD DADS' creation of the "G Crew" is an excellent example. Former gang members can play a special role in building ties with current and potential gang members in their communities. However, in emerging gang-problem cities, the development of gangs may not be adequate to utilize this kind of resource.

Some reviewed programs represent the formation of alliances between preexisting parochial and public-level organizational resources. Many of these alliances arise through the activism of small groups of individuals working with parochial and public-level organizations. An example is Philadelphia's collaboration among CIN, local law enforcement, and the House of Umoja. The Racine Community-University Model resulted from a network of concerned residents linking up with a university and its resources. Comparable alliances at the parochial and public levels are seen in CIN, the Community Action Resource Team, and the Community Reclamation Project. In these examples, early involvement of residents and a few agencies expanded to encompass a wide array of parochial-level and public-level institutions. Where these parochial-level partnerships and alliances were successful, stronger personal-level networks developed. In these cases, actions by parochial-level institutions built a bridge between the personal and public levels.

In another kind of approach, research-based programs developed by government agencies were brought into communities. These programs usually brought logistic, financial, and technical support from federal, state, or municipal sources. The Comprehensive Strategy and Community Change for Youth Development programs fall into this category. The community consortiums formed under DHHS's Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program may have been similar to this approach, but no models were generated to be followed. These programs begin at the public level and involve public and parochial institutions through program-building. Linking neighbors into personal-level networks may be difficult for these programs or simply unstudied. Similar to these programs are efforts that bring to communities research-based programs developed in university settings. Examples reviewed here include Communities That Care and the Neighborhood Solutions Project. To be implemented, these external programs must go into public-level collaborations. The key to their success rests on extending networks to include the parochial and personal levels.

The two historically best-known gang projects are the Chicago Area Project (CAP) and Mobilization for Youth (MFY). Both programs were based on research and directed by prominent gang researchers. The central goal of CAP was to overcome social disorganization. The provision of legitimate opportunities was the central focus of MFY. Both the CAP and MFY initiatives began with external funding to establish one or more parochial-level organizations. CAP's six neighborhood committees and MFY's Lower East Side Neighborhood Association neighborhood councils were explicitly created to fill perceived gaps in levels of social control. These parochial-level organizations were created with the goal of giving residents access to public resources and other parochial-level institutions such as schools and social service agencies. By recruiting residents to participate in these parochial-level organizations, social links between neighbors were created or strengthened. Both CAP and MFY were marked by conflict between the program's parochial-level

organizations and city administrators who controlled public resources. From historical descriptions of CAP, relations between the neighborhood committees and particularly city agencies were less than cooperative. MYF held a similar position to the CAP neighborhood committees in the parochial level of social control. There is less evidence that MYF, with its greater emphasis on job opportunities for youth, successfully built personal-level ties among residents. In both cases, parochial-level agencies were established in such a way that advocacy for residents put the programs in direct conflict with strong city governments and their agencies.

Our review of community-mobilization programs makes it possible to highlight what appear to be three hallmarks of a community-mobilization program with the greatest possible potential for success.

1. Community-based grassroots organizations must be included as partners in any effective mobilization against gang crime. Such organizations already consist of personal-level networks and the trust between neighbors that is the cornerstone of collective efficacy. Grassroots organizations have to be recognized as viable and legitimate by a majority of the parochial and public-level organizations. While such organizations may be strengthened by external support, it is unimaginable to create them where they do not exist.

2. When external resources and program designs are to be used in a community context, organizations at all three levels of social control must be brought into the program at the planning stage.

3. The most important link that must be strengthened in successful community anti-crime programs is the link between grassroots organizations and law enforcement agencies. If the feasibility of this link is not recognized by either side in the resident-police link, efforts at community mobilization may be in vain.

The Comprehensive, Community-Wide Gang Program Model

Sometimes identified as the Comprehensive Gang Model or Spergel Model, the Comprehensive, Community-Wide Gang Program Model was developed by Irving Spergel and his colleagues (Spergel, 1995; Spergel, Chance, Ehrensaft et al., 1992; Spergel and Curry, 1993) in the course of a decade of research in a nationwide assessment of youth gang problems and programs, funded by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

Initially identified as the National Youth Gang Survey, the project led by Spergel was a research and development project. In the research phase of the project, Spergel's research team attempted to identify every promising community gang program in the United States. The promising gang programs were found in a broad range of communities across the nation. Once programs and sites were identified, the next goal of the project was collecting information on the magnitude and nature of local gang problems. Information was gathered from representatives of each agency or association identified by other participants as being affiliated or a partner in each local program. Spergel and his team of researchers interviewed program developers and reviewed all available program documentation.

The more demanding project goal was identifying the contents of each program and self-reported measures of success. An effort was made to identify the most promising of the promising programs. In each of the most promising community programs, the research team identified the agencies within each program that were essential to the success of the community program. Finally, Spergel and his team made site visits to selected community programs and agencies. From the information gathered through their multimethod investigations, the Spergel team developed manuals for each type of agency that could be part of a successful local community response to gangs, ranging from grassroots child-serving agencies to those including law enforcement, judges, and prosecutors (Spergel et al., 1992).

Spergel and Curry (1993, pp. 371–72) used agency representatives' responses to five survey questions to assign each program to strategies that communities across the country employed in dealing with gang problems:

1. What are your units' or organization's goals and objectives in regard to the gang problem?

2. What has your department (or unit) done that you feel has been particularly successful in dealing with gangs? Please provide statistics, if relevant and available.

3. What has your department (or unit) done that you feel has been least effective in dealing with gangs?

4. What do you think are the five best ways employed by your department or organization for dealing with the gang problem? (Rank them in order of priority.)

5. What activities do gang or special personnel perform in dealing with the problem?

From respondents' answers to these questions, the research team identified five anti-gang strategies—community mobilization, social services delivery, opportunity provision, organization change, and suppression.

The development of the Comprehensive, Community-Wide Gang Program Model was not the first effort in

which Spergel had identified community mobilization as an important part of any community's response to gang problems. In his first published book, Spergel (1964, p. 183) outlined community-action responses to delinquency problems in the final chapter of his study of New York City gangs. He included "organization" as one of three major categories. Even earlier, Spergel (1991) described community organization as consisting of "efforts to bring about adjustment, development, or change among groups and organizations in regard to community problems or social needs" (p. 3). In a later work, Spergel (1969) used the term "interorganizing" to designate links among organizations as a part of community mobilization against gang problems. Specifically, Spergel indicated an awareness of efforts to enhance "intergroup or interorganizational relationships to cope with a community problem" (p. 20). Issues of coordination, as well as mobilization across neighborhood, organization, and governmental levels were addressed in his formulation. Thus, it is not surprising that the Spergel gang model included community mobilization as one of its basic strategies.

Collective actors and individuals were identified as having community mobilization as a strategy based on their use of one or more goals and/or activities from a list of options in Spergel's research that led to formulation of the Comprehensive Gang Model. For example, any strategy that attempted to create community solidarity, education, and involvement was viewed as using "community mobilization" strategies. Prevention efforts involving multiple agencies were treated as community mobilization. All references to meetings with community leaders and attending meetings of community associations were regarded as reflecting a community organization strategy. "Networking" was considered the most basic community mobilization strategy so long as networks were not restricted exclusively to justice system agencies. Creating networks of only law enforcement agencies was classified as another strategy: "suppression." Advocacy for victims was subsumed under the community mobilization strategy when the programs attempted to reintegrate offenders into the community or repair relations between victims and offenders. Victim advocacy was labeled suppression when the program was clearly a strategy of crime control.

Initially, a distinction was made in the analysis of program success between "chronic" and "emerging" gang problem cities. Chronic cities were those that reported gang problems before 1980, and emerging cities were identified as those in which gang problems developed since 1980. Although there were a number of general historical and social distinctions between chronic and emerging cities, the differences are not as relevant as they once were. Much of this reduction in distinctions is attributable to the cyclical nature of gang problems. Even in those cities identified as chronic, gang problems wax and wane over time. In many cities, gang problems have diminished to a point

not to be considered a problem but then reemerged later. In any case, when program strategies were assessed in terms of community perceptions of program success, community mobilization strategies were highly associated with program success, regardless of whether a program was in what were originally labeled as chronic or emerging gang problem cities.

As Spergel's project turned from its research phase to the developmental stage, findings from the team's assessments of the promising gang programs were used to develop a set of guidelines or manuals for community programs. The guidelines formed the Comprehensive Community-Wide Gang Program Model, also known as the Comprehensive Gang Model, or simply the Spergel Model.

It is arguable that any comprehensive community model is, at least on one dimension, a community mobilization program. One of the basic manuals produced as part of the program model was a Community Mobilization Technical Assistance Manual. In the manual, Spergel (1992) offered detailed steps for mobilizing communities to address gang problems. Among these steps were the following:

1. Concern, anger, and indignation must exist in at least one person over the presence or increase of gang activity, e.g., gang signs, recruitment, vandalism, assault, the death or wounding of a gang member or innocent victim.

2. The gang problem must be seen as a major threat to community safety and security. Community leaders must express deep feelings and impress upon others that a problem exists and that something needs to be done about it. The authority and power of the concerned individual(s), usually in conjunction with the support of a community organization or agency, should create the impetus for addressing the problem.

3. The initial local leaders or particular agency persons have to be aware that their agencies or local groups alone cannot change the gang situation or the conditions that create it (Spergel, 1992). They must propose that the problem can be reduced through the combined efforts of local citizens and key institutions in the immediate and larger community. Accordingly, they will need to contact and influence key policymakers and other agency administrators. The major institutional leaders to be influenced include the mayor, the school superintendent, the police chief, the chief probation officer, the director of United Way, a minority legislator, or a business leader.

4. The media, in all likelihood, will have begun to report and comment on the gang situation in the local area, jurisdiction, or particular organizational context (Spergel, 1992). The community or agency leader and an assistant, preferably a community

organizer, will have to take some responsibility for developing and responding to contacts with the media. A variety of representatives should be involved to avoid media competition, distortion, or neglect of the problem. The media should be urged to become involved in all aspects of the mobilization process as early as possible.

In its specifications, Spergel's Comprehensive Gang Model incorporates lessons in community control abstracted from our above review of community mobilization programs against gang crime and similar social problems. The model requires the inclusion of grassroots organizations. Their involvement provides the personal-level networks needed to anchor a community program for community residents. Grassroots organization strengthens the sense of residents' personal involvement and confidence that their neighbors are involved. These are the key elements of collective efficacy. Organizations at the personal, parochial, and public levels of social control are incorporated at the planning stage. A commitment by both public and parochial institutions is required at the outset of Comprehensive Gang Model implementation.

Evaluations of Applications of Spergel's Comprehensive Gang Model. OJJDP initially chose five demonstration sites (Burch and Kane, 1999) to implement the Comprehensive Gang Model (Bloomington, Illinois; Mesa, Arizona; Riverside, California; San Antonio, Texas; and Tucson, Arizona). Implementation of the model already was under way in a sixth site, the Little Village community of Chicago. Although the results of the six-site evaluation are mixed, when it was well-implemented, in three of the communities, the Comprehensive Gang Model effectively guided interagency initiatives in Chicago, Illinois; Mesa, Arizona; and Riverside, California, in developing services and strategies that contributed to reductions in gang violence and drug-related offenses (Spergel, 2007; Spergel, Wa, and Sosa, 2007). General deterrence effects at the project-area level were not as strong as the program effects at the individual youth level. The successful sites implemented mobilization, social intervention (outreach and crisis intervention), opportunities provision (education, job, cultural) suppression, and organizational change strategies. Key ingredients for success were city-county governmental leadership that was committed to the model; management capacity of the lead agency and effective development of a steering committee; interorganizational collaboration; targeting of gang members and at-risk gang youth; development of an interdisciplinary intervention team and coordination of worker efforts; and a combination and balance of social intervention (outreach and crisis intervention), opportunities provision (education, job, cultural) suppression, and organizational change and development strategies. The researchers also assessed the factors that contributed to ineffective implementation of the Comprehensive Gang Model in the three unsuccessful sites. These were mainly weak or inappropriate direction of the steering committees, lack of collaboration (or inappropriate collaboration) among the lead agencies, and lack of development of interagency team-worker arrangements.

By examining the evaluation findings on the six Comprehensive Gang Model programs, we identify below the main barriers to successful implementation and processes by which these barriers can be overcome. (For more details on outcomes of individual programs, readers should consult the original report, Spergel et al., 2007).

- Mechanisms of Community Mobilization. Two of the three effective Comprehensive Gang Model programs successfully used community mobilization strategies (Spergel et al., 2007). One of these sites rated "good" in terms of implementation level, and the second one rated "fair." The third site rated "poor." Overall, the evaluators rated community mobilization as "moderately important" in terms of the degree of importance to project effectiveness. This does not necessarily mean that community mobilization is not as important as other factors; it could be that it was less important than other factors in these particular sites because, quite likely, they already were mobilized to some degree. In fact, sites were required to demonstrate a commitment to mounting an organized response to gang problems to receive federal funding.

  In their comparison of levels of program implementation in the six sites, Spergel et al. (2007) compared sites across a set of key program implementation features. We examined each of these in turn.

- City/County Leadership. Leadership in program development and operation, in large part, mirrors and builds on the leadership in the political setting. A lack of support or misguided direction from those who control the community context of mobilization can be a barrier to community mobilization in response to gangs.

  In one of the successful sites reviewed by Spergel et al., city officials were highly supportive of mobilizing a response to gangs and youth crime. At this site, a coalition of public and nonprofit agencies existed prior to the initiation of the community mobilization effort. In effect, community mobilization involved bringing focused attention and additional resources to an existing level of community organization.

  At a partially successful program site, the mayor had been involved in setting up the original leadership of the program. After two years, however, it was apparent to all involved that the mobilization was not proceeding as planned. City leadership facilitated and cooperated with the program's transition to

a new lead agency—the police department. The final two years of the program produced evidence of effective program operation at both the community and individual levels of change.

In one site, the city's transformation of its police department resulted in a leadership void in program operation. Over the life of the program, perceived conflicts with the mayor's positions arose (Spergel et al., 2007). The program evaluator was able to leverage promised support from the city's police and probation agencies. After the program ended, the evaluator expressed the belief that the project would have been more sustainable had high-level communications—with the mayor and other political officials—been initiated at the time the program was undertaken.

In two cities in which political leadership paid little attention to the community mobilization effort and its operation, police departments were able to ignore commitments to the program. The results were very disjointed, and these programs showed no evidence of effectiveness.

In one site, the mayor retained a great deal of control over the program. An inappropriate agency was designated the lead agency, and its director remained in charge of the program throughout its duration. Successful results were not found for the program, and the program staff engaged in some practices counter to the goals of the Comprehensive Gang Model.

• Steering Committee. Spergel and his coauthors labeled the establishment of a steering or community advisory committee as "somewhat important" to program success. The greatest barrier to the formation of steering and advisory committees is distrust or competition among participating agencies. While a steering committee may not be essential for operational success, it may be very important to program sustainability. In a site where the program was found to be operationally successful, efforts to produce a viable steering committee of community leaders failed. Cooperation was sought from churches, Boys & Girls Clubs, social and business organizations, and elected officials. Despite repeated efforts to create a working steering committee, the organization dissolved each time.

Spergel and colleagues rated the steering committee organization as "excellent" in only one of the program sites. This was the successful site in which the committee was strong prior to the community mobilization effort. In that site, the steering committee's functioning was connected to other structures developed in the program, particularly program leadership. There was a steering committee in a partially successful site. Spergel et al. rated the steering committee as

"good." This was also the site in which a transition in program leadership occurred in the third year of the project. Among the failed program sites, two had politically appointed steering committees. The researchers designated both of these steering committees as "poor." The other unsuccessful site did not become organized enough to attempt to construct a steering committee.

• Grassroots Involvement. A conscientious effort was made at only one of the comprehensive program sites to enlist the participation of grassroots organizations. This occurred in the operationally successful site where the attempts to create a steering committee did not succeed. Two residents of the program community—a social activist and a pastor—organized their own grassroots entity, Neighbors Against Gang Violence. The barrier to institutionalizing the gang response program with an effective steering committee was an inability to create trust between law enforcement agencies and grassroots organizations.

The barrier of being unable to include grassroots organizations is a difficult one to overcome. It is usually related to the degree of criminal justice system participation.

• Criminal Justice System Participation. Gaining cooperation between police and probation can be a daunting task. Still, it was accomplished at three of the sites. One of the barriers to effective community mobilization is police departments that have no interest or involvement in the program. Distrust between criminal justice agencies and other types of organizations is also a common barrier.

According to Spergel et al. (1994, p. 7), "The police department should adopt an approach that combines suppression of youth gang criminal acts through aggressive enforcement of laws, with community mobilization involving a broad cross section of the community in combating the problem." Spergel identifies criminal justice participation as "extremely important" in any community effort to respond to gang problems. In two of the three sites that Spergel et al. identify as successful applications of community mobilization, police departments took on the role of lead agency. In the other successful program, the police and probation agencies played a key operational role, and criminal justice participation at that site was classified as "excellent."

In each of the three unsuccessful programs, police departments did not perceive themselves as being involved in the community mobilization activities. In one site, the only interest the police had in the program was in gathering intelligence on gang-involved youths. In another site, the police were designated as the lead agency, yet they remained

only marginally involved throughout the program. In the third site, police and probation did not consider themselves to be a part of the program.

- School Participation. Schools were incorporated into five of the six community mobilization programs evaluated by Spergel and his colleagues. Only the most unsuccessful site failed to involve schools in its program. In the three successful programs, schools were involved as partners in community mobilization and contributors to program operations. The schools actively participated in efforts to improve program-involved students' attendance and performance. The schools were also involved in steering committees. At one successful site, school staff worked with street outreach workers to reduce school-based violence.

- Lead Agency—Management and Commitment. Having an identified lead agency with strong management capabilities and full commitment was designated by Spergel et al. (2007) as "extremely important." An excellent example is the site at which community leaders had already formed and supported a community-level committee of representatives of public and community-based agencies. A major concern of the preexisting committee was responding to gang problems through prevention and suppression. Before the community mobilization phase of the Comprehensive Gang Model began, a consensus already existed among the other agency leaders that the city's police department would be the lead agency in program operation. Throughout that site's program period, the police department and specific leaders within the police department played a central management role in the program.

At another site, program leadership completely changed during the third year of program funding. The program director and codirector/evaluator resigned. At the beginning, a university and city coalition was charged with providing leadership for the program. Leaders of community-based agencies expressed concern that they were excluded from much of the decision making during the first two years of the program. Once the original director and evaluator resigned, the city police department became the lead agency. A senior police official assumed the roles of director and chair of the Program Steering Committee. Based on data collected during the last two years of the program, Spergel and his colleagues concluded that the program was at least partially successful.

As seen above, police departments served effectively as lead agencies in some settings. In others, early police commitments to lead were not carried through. At one site, the police department took two years to assign a commander of its youth division for a 20-percent time commitment to the program.

The police department supported the establishment of a service component but never showed evidence of any attempt to organize public or community agencies into an operational program.

In another case of early police commitment and later withdrawal, an evaluator took over leadership in the community mobilization. Prior to the beginning of the program, the police department had agreed to serve as the lead agency. By the time the program started, the police department had undergone a major reorganization. Immediate leadership from the police department was not forthcoming. Nor was leadership provided by a newly formed neighborhood advisory committee. It had been anticipated that the evaluator would provide technical assistance at program start-up. The history of this program made it clear that the evaluator served in a default leadership role year to year for five years. Only a dynamic, experienced, and forceful evaluator could have succeeded in this context.

At one site, a gang task force appointed by the mayor was charged with leadership at the beginning of the program. Task force members included two police chiefs (the site comprised two adjacent cities), a public school official, the county court service director, and the director of a youth and family agency. The youth and family agency represented on the task force became the lead agency, and its director was made coordinator of the comprehensive program. Law enforcement representatives did not consider themselves to be "operationally involved" in the program. The agency that served most of the at-risk and gang-involved youth was never granted an operational role in the program. Thus, a coordinated program to serve youth or their families was never developed.

A youth and family agency was designated by the city government to serve as lead agency in another municipality. The agency's director was also appointed to chair a communitywide steering committee. A preexisting, and largely token, collaborative of social service agencies composed the whole program until the third year, when police and probation representatives were added to the survey committee meetings. Neither of the latter two agencies was ever active in the program. In the fourth year, OJJDP staff and national evaluators concluded that the community mobilization in that site had received little support from the lead agency and had not been carried out.

The absence of local program leadership is an insurmountable barrier to community mobilization. Without an effective lead agency or actor, community mobilization cannot translate into program direction or coalescence around a central set of goals.

For more information on the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model and best practices obtained from practitioners with years of experience in implementing the model in their communities, see "Best Practices to Address Community Gang Problems (OJJDP, 2008).

Essential Elements of Successful Community Mobilization

Communities respond to problems that their key leaders or stakeholders perceive to be important to them. The range of problems is broad, including natural disasters, public health problems, external threats, drugs, delinquency, and gangs. What are the most effective techniques for stimulating organized community action in response to complex social issues such as gang problems?

The foregoing literature review suggests several essential elements of successful community mobilization. These are organized in chronological order, as suggested in the reviewed literature, but it is important to recognize that the sequence of steps may vary in different communities. For example, if a community already is well-organized to deal with a variety of youth problems—often by an existing coalition of some sort—it would be advisable to take advantage of this existing infrastructure to address a gang problem. This situation would preclude the need to take several of the preliminary steps outlined in what follows. The suggested sequence of steps presented below assumes that the community has a low degree of organization to address such social problems.

An earlier version of these elements of successful community mobilization was presented and discussed at a workshop, Mobilizing Communities to Respond to Gang Problems, at the 2005 National Youth Gang Symposium in Orlando, Florida. Participants—many of whom had successfully mobilized communities to address gang or other youth problems—made a number of insightful suggestions that have been incorporated.

1. The current or potential gang problem must be recognized by someone as a major threat to community safety and security. At least one person must harbor concern, anger, and indignation over the presence or increase of gang activity, e.g., gang signs, growing vandalism, increased assaults or fighting, the murder or wounding of a gang-involved youth or innocent victim. To initiate community mobilization, these sentiments must be conveyed to others.

   A community safety crisis—such as a drive-by shooting or intergroup fights at school—may also serve as the impetus for community action. It may be important to define the current or potential gang problem within a broader context of a youth crime problem, particularly if community leaders are hesitant to initiate action specifically in response to

a gang situation. There may be too much reluctance (or denial) to mobilize the community over such a specific problem. The community leadership could well view youth crime as the larger, more important issue. In this case, it would be advisable to address the current or potential gang problem within the context of the broader concern. It is important to recognize that, like gang conflicts, community readiness to organize or commit to action on a given problem also is cyclical. Pick the best time—likely during an upswing in community social interests—to attempt community mobilization.

2. Identify key neighborhood leaders in the community. As noted above, in communities that already are organized to address the current or potential gang problem—or related youth crime—this step would involve identification of the most appropriate existing community coalition. These often are interagency entities, perhaps called a task force and typically composed mainly of agency representatives.

3. It is advisable to urge the broadcast media to become involved in all aspects of the mobilization process as early as possible. A variety of media representatives should be involved to avoid media competition, exaggeration, or neglect of the problem. Some community mobilization experts advise that it is best to have formulated an information dissemination strategy before engaging the broadcast media— which would necessitate having assembled such information (in a later step)—others stress the importance of engaging them from the beginning. Regardless, two key points are important:

   • Attempt to engage reporters who tend to cover positive events in a community.

   • Undue media attention, particularly publishing gang names, may serve to give local gangs notoriety and confirm their existence and importance. Along with enhancing their status in the community, publicity could possibly facilitate more group cohesion. Gangs thrive on publicity, and it also aids recruitment of new members.

4. Contact key neighborhood leaders and youths to discuss their concerns.

   • Contacts should be made with local agencies and community groups to inquire about their interest in a collective effort.

   • Local church leaders, school principals, parent groups, human services, business groups, youths, and others should be contacted to obtain preliminary assessments of the problem.

   • Special efforts should be made to obtain the views not only of established agencies and community organizations but also those of less

well-organized groups and individuals closest to the problem.

- A concerted effort must be made to engage residents—even in door-to-door visits—to enlist grassroots and widespread support.

Steps 4–8 could be viewed as a series of focus groups or study circles that are convened to discuss specified problems, such as youth violence or gangs. These could involve repeated meetings of the same group or groups, at which information on the problem(s) is brought to the table—perhaps by invited speakers or participants who volunteer to look into a specific concern and present an analysis and possible action steps toward its resolution. Some community mobilization experts use these forums to identify a set of specific community actions covering, say, a three- to six-month time frame. An example might be studying park safety. This approach is likely to help expand and solidify widespread community involvement and sustained participation. Maintaining momentum is a key obstacle to community mobilization, and early "small wins" are very important to success.

5. Cultivate a natural leader, a community organizer, within the community. He/she must express deep feelings and impress upon others that a problem exists and that something needs to be done about it. This leader must propose that the problem can be reduced through the combined efforts of local citizens and core institutions in the immediate neighborhood and the larger community. Accordingly, he/she will need to contact and seek to influence key policymakers and agency administrators, while playing the role of "champion" in leading others in the community to become actively involved.

6. Convene a meeting of community representatives and discuss emerging concerns. Think of these as community network meetings, focus groups, or study circles, convened to begin formulating a cohesive plan.

- Ideally a public official, either the mayor or a representative of his/her office, an executive of a public agency, or a legislator, should arrange for a meeting in the affected area(s).

- An appropriate balance of perspectives that represents prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies should be engaged.

- Create a feeling of empowerment by inviting community representatives to speak at community meetings.

- Compile a preliminary gang assessment.

This preliminary gang assessment could benefit from a short list of questions that can serve to guide information gathering in a way that enhances its focus. These questions could be developed by the mobilization leadership or borrowed from other communities that have completed such an assessment, several of which can be found online on the Internet.

It is important that the plan be viewed as a preliminary one. The pitfall of becoming "boxed-in" early in the community mobilization process must be avoided. Community participation wanes when early plans take on the appearance of formality, particularly when the usual influential persons appear to be dictating the course of action.

7. Hold numerous individual meetings with many stakeholders and residents to seek their support and refine priority problems. This includes youths. Listen to them carefully to understand their views of problems and solutions. Become prepared to act on their ideas, and continue to involve them actively throughout the mobilization process. It is also very important to enjoin community residents with both public (government) and parochial (secondary institutions such as schools and faith-based organizations) levels of social control; otherwise, the community mobilization effort is not likely to be successful.

8. Convene a second communitywide meeting. Think of these meetings as a neighborhood involvement program to heighten awareness of how community entities can interact to bring about a gang-free environment.

- In this meeting, project staff should lay out the specifics of the project that emerged from the previous series of meetings and discussions.

- Acknowledge an existing/potential gang problem.

- Seek an agreement among stakeholders to work together in addressing the existing/potential gang problem.

9. The community and/or agency leader(s), with the aid of the community organizer, should then begin to involve and solicit the support of a variety of local agencies or community groups, former gang influential persons, and even selected gang youth to alert the community to the gang problem.

- The chief concern should be that something be done to control the problem before it grows worse.

- Establish a sense of urgency.

- The leader(s) should refer media representatives to other knowledgeable or influential leaders and informants in the community so that the media come to understand the nature and scope of gang activity.

10. Create or designate a formal community organization to act on behalf of the community group. Form an information clearinghouse that disseminates information on the current or potential gang problem, and form a speakers bureau. Seek donations from businesses to support activities of the newly formed (or existing) coalition.

11. Conduct an objective assessment of the potential gang problem. Communities can use the National Youth Gang Center (2002a) gang problem assessment protocol (www.iir.com/nygc/acgp/assessment). It guides communities in data and information gathering in five general areas: (1) general descriptive and demographic data on the community, (2) the nature and extent of gang crime, (3) characteristics of school students who are involved in or at risk of involvement in gangs, (4) community members' perceptions of the gang problem, and (5) current and historical responses to the gang problem.

An assessment team needs to be formed to collect and analyze data during the assessment. Staff in agencies with responsibility for addressing the problem—representatives of police, prosecution, courts, corrections, parole, schools, youth- and family-serving agencies, grassroots organizations, government, and others—form the assessment team. Recognizing that each community is different, as are its gang problems, the team must develop a working definition of a youth gang. It is recommended that the community representatives start with local law enforcement's definition of a gang and then expand it to incorporate others' definitions or perspectives.

The assessment should produce insights regarding who is involved in gangs and where gang crime is concentrated in the community. This, in conjunction with other data and information, enables communities to target planned strategies on:

- Seriously at-risk youth

- Gang-involved youth

- The most violent gangs and gang leaders

- The area(s) where gang crimes most often occur

12. Set specific goals and objectives, together with a timeline for their accomplishment. Once the gang problem is analyzed and described, goals and objectives are established that are based on the assessment findings. Specific goals and objectives of the community strategies should be stated in a quantifiable manner so that self-evaluation of them is feasible, such as a given amount of gang crime reduction. A Planning for Implementation manual (National Youth Gang Center, 2002b) is available to guide communities in the overall planning process.

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[i] MAD DADS, Inc., has grown to more than 65,000 involved parents nationally. Its national office was moved to Jacksonville, Florida, in April 2002. More than 60 chapters have been started in 16 states. Chapter locations include Maryland, Iowa, Ohio, Texas, Colorado, Florida, Mississippi, New York, Tennessee, Illinois, California, Michigan, New Jersey, Minnesota, and Georgia.

[ii] http://www.maddads.com.

[iii] http://www.maddads.com.

[iv] http://www.maddads.com/images/stories/newsletters/april_newsletter2005.pdf.

[v] Multisystemic Therapy (MST), which treats juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, and other problem behaviors, is an ecological treatment model that takes into account key systems and their influences in the design of interventions; that is, MST takes a flexible approach wherein interventions are tailored to the specific strengths and needs of each individual family. MST implementation procedures include (1) a set of principles that guide the formulation of clinical interventions, (2) a family-friendly engagement process, (3) a structured analytical process that is used to prioritize interventions, (4) evidence-based treatment techniques that are integrated into the MST conceptual framework, (5) a home-based delivery of services that enables the provision of intensive services, (6) a highly supportive supervision process, and (7) a stringent quality assurance process to promote treatment fidelity.

[vi] Drug-related arrests of program clients were not reduced significantly in Riverside.

[vii] Spergel et al. do not record school participation in the Little Village project in the current report, but the authors make a number of references to school involvement in preliminary reports.

[viii] Special thanks are extended to Ms. Nicole Seaton, a participant in the workshop, for recording the session and making the recording available to the authors.