

**Community Forums and Focus Groups  
Report on Preliminary Findings  
August – September 2006<sup>1</sup>**

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**Background**

The Advancement Project (AP) was selected by the City of Los Angeles as the contractor to develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce gang violence and gang activity in the city, effective March 2006. AP adopted the Public Health Model of Violence Prevention which advocates a multidisciplinary approach that reduces the factors that place youth at increased risk of being involved in gangs and violence while increasing the factors that permit youth to resist the lure of gangs. The goal of this project is to answer the question, “*What would Los Angeles’ gang activity reduction system look like if we could start from scratch?*”

After reviewing current gang reduction programs in Los Angeles, AP set about the task of identifying and determining ideal programs and best practices both locally and nationally. These assessments were undertaken to inform the development of options for implementing an ideal approach for Los Angeles to ensure the safety and vitality of all children.

AP reached out to various stakeholders including key City departments, LAUSD, gang intervention specialists, service providers and philanthropic organizations. Despite a very short timeline, AP also deemed it very important to seek feedback and advice from leaders and residents of the communities most impacted by youth violence. A **Community Advisory Team** composed of nineteen local leaders from six geographic areas was formed in July 2006 (see Attachment A). These nineteen individuals are not “gang experts” but persons recognized as knowledgeable about services and supports for children, youth and families in their communities, persons who value a comprehensive community approach to youth development, gang prevention and intervention. Their advice will help inform the development of recommendations to the City. They were also asked to assist AP in gathering information from other stakeholders in their respective communities.

As a result, 19 community forums and focus groups involving more than 440 participants were held from August 11<sup>th</sup> to September 19<sup>th</sup> in six geographic areas. Subsequently, two additional focus groups and one community forum were held in November and December to deepen our understanding of some of the findings, bringing to more than 500 the number of people involved in 23 discussions convened through the Community Engagement process.

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<sup>1</sup> In November and December, we had the opportunity to convene two additional focus groups: one with members of the Youth Justice Coalition and another with domestic violence service providers. We facilitated both focus groups, given that the individuals and networks of these organizations are directly connected to the issue of community and gang violence. AP was also invited to take part in the November Urban Issues Breakfast Forum, a monthly forum that focuses on urban social, economic and political issues in LA’s central communities, to inform participants of this project.

The six targeted geographic areas are<sup>2</sup>:

- East/Northeast Los Angeles
- Venice/South Bay
- North San Fernando Valley
- Mid San Fernando Valley
- University Park/South Los Angeles
- Central Los Angeles

The purpose of these forums was to:

1. Inform community residents and stakeholders of the GARS project;
2. Identify “what works” in communities - community assets, resources and best practices - that should be considered in developing recommendations to the City Council; and
3. Identify the elements that must be included in a citywide strategy to reduce youth violence but that will also work in local communities.

Participants included parents, advocates, youth, current and former gang members, staff of City and County agencies and representatives of organizations that represent larger constituencies such as: faith-based groups, schools, health and mental health providers, community-based organizations, child- and youth-related service groups, family support groups, labor, small businesses and economic development and housing agencies. Six of these meetings were bilingual sessions (English/Spanish) to accommodate the participation of non-English speaking parents and/or youth; one parent group in Panorama City was conducted entirely in Spanish.

All groups were provided with background materials, an executive summary and website access to the AP assessment of current gang reduction programs in Los Angeles, the Phase I Report. All groups were asked the same three questions:

1. *What “works” in your community to support positive youth development? In gang prevention and intervention? What could work?*
2. *What community resources (programs, groups, organizations, individuals, institutions, funding etc.) are being used --or should be used – in this community to reduce gang activity, to discourage gang membership and to encourage exiting gangs and support positive youth development?*
3. *What/who must be included in a citywide strategy to be realistically implemented and supported in your community?*

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<sup>2</sup> These “planning areas” could serve as an *These “planning areas” could serve as an intermediate level of organization between neighborhood-based networks (and service providers) and the city governance structure, bringing together youth-serving networks, community and nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, hospitals, school-based programs, public agencies, collaboratives and others within each area to improve planning, coordination of efforts and better use of resources.*

## MAJOR THEMES

Although the community dialogues were rich with ideas and opinions about “what works” in communities to reduce youth violence, a number of “themes” were repeated in many, if not all, of the meetings and can, along with all of the information gathered, help inform the development of options for a citywide strategy. The following is a summary of preliminary findings of the rich material gathered to date.

### What Works

- ⇒ Reaching children early; focus on middle school
- ⇒ Parent involvement with their children and with the institutions that educate and serve them
  - accountability of institutions coupled with support and education of parents
- ⇒ Collaboration and partnerships across sectors (education, social services, juvenile justice, law enforcement etc.)
- ⇒ Responsive schools and improved educational environments
- ⇒ Meaningful jobs; training youth for a trade or a career
- ⇒ Comprehensive approaches to stop gang violence and improve youth development that clearly define the role of prevention and intervention but link the two.  
Approaches that
  - require broad community involvement;
  - build multi-sector connections;
  - can count on sufficient resources for the long-term;
  - include multi-year planning;
  - value work with hard core gang members that requires one-on-one intervention over the long term, and
  - include a sustained funding source independent of changing political winds.
- ⇒ Targeted gang intervention programs with workers who understand the gang and prison cultures and are valued for their expertise
- ⇒ Accessible and meaningful programs for youth, especially teens, located in neighborhoods during after-school hours and on weekends. These programs include:
  - mentoring and tutoring
  - sports leagues and camps
  - workshops created by and with youth in their interest areas (e.g. art, music)
  - life skills training and counseling
  - leadership opportunities
  - youth-community connections and volunteer service
  - new experiences for youth outside of their immediate neighborhood.
- ⇒ Youth programs that:
  - are consistent and continue year after year
  - are dedicated to empowering youth and organizing them to advocate for social justice
  - are community-based
  - offer incentives for youth participation;
  - include transportation options that keep youth safe;
  - help parents and children bond;
  - are managed by experienced and caring adults who understand youth culture and are sensitive to the culture, language, education and economic situation of families;
  - build upon proven successful models of the 1970s and 1980s.
- ⇒ Safe spaces for youth; centers in every neighborhood
- ⇒ Safe communities; resident involvement and positive police-community relations
- ⇒ Policies and funding that allow all youth and families to participate in programs and receive services, including immigrant families
- ⇒ Program accountability with better tools for evaluation; community and City agencies working together to define “success”, success measures and program standards
- ⇒ Better informed funders and public officials

## **Local Assets and Resources** (most often mentioned)

- Children and youth
- Parents and parent organizations
- Compulsory education, schools and school-based programs
- School counselors
- Service infrastructure/providers – family support and parent resource centers
- Neighborhood infrastructure - community-based groups and volunteers
- Youth-serving organizations and advocacy groups
- Parks and open space
- Libraries
- Elected officials, council members
- Law enforcement/LAPD
- Businesses and workforce development groups
- Faith-based groups and networks
- Child and youth-related public systems including City agencies and County departments, especially Probation, DPSS, DCFS, LACOE
- Neighborhood councils
- Universities, colleges and researchers

## **What/Who must be included in an implementation strategy**

Using different scenarios from their own experience, participants expressed general support for a comprehensive, sustainable strategy built on a citywide vision but implemented as a mosaic of efforts in different communities. That is, a shared vision with flexibility in its implementation. This strategy would engage community resources across organizational boundaries and systems of care, be youth-centered and link resources to action plans in a way that will achieve better results for at-risk youth and their families at the neighborhood level.

The citywide strategy should be based on an equitable investment in prevention, intervention and suppression strategies and

- Clearly distinguish “prevention” from “intervention” efforts but link the two to support the individual child, teen or young adult;
- Include a coordinated referral and support system among service sectors, including schools and law enforcement;
- Acknowledge and provide support and opportunities to relieve the pressures put on families as a consequence of poverty, low-paying jobs and the lack of education;
- Support asset-based models that value children, youth and families within the context of their culture and language.

To be successful, participants most often cited the following elements as being critical to a citywide strategy:

1. Have the Mayor and top City officials provide visible leadership, making youth a priority and setting aside funding to support that decision;
2. Support reform efforts to ensure the commitment of school administrators and faculty to school-community partnerships and the adoption of more responsive school policies;
3. Establish/strengthen collaborations and partnerships, especially local ‘school-provider’ collaborations, to better serve children and families;
4. Improve inter- and cross-sector communication to facilitate immediate access to information;
5. Hold funded groups, local institutions and city leaders accountable for results;
6. Reframe program evaluation to focus on results, not numbers, and include a community perspective in selecting indicators to measure progress;
7. Centralize data collection and information but make it widely available to improve planning and services;
8. Re-evaluate City policies, programs and funding priorities informed by affected communities and those working with gang-involved youth;
9. Ensure that sufficient program resources are available for the long-term; and include multi-year planning and funding to allow community groups and city agencies to serve all youth who seek services and/or support;
10. Increase funding and staff for one-on-one intervention with gang-involved youth and reward creativity in successful outreach and program development for hard-to-reach youth and families;
11. Strengthen neighborhood structures, respect local leadership and involve youth in the design of local solutions;
12. Support for comprehensive community mobilization that equips and empowers community members, especially youths, to organize and advocate for policy changes;
13. Address inter-related issues of affordable housing, transportation and safety in the most impacted communities; and
14. Develop media campaigns that tout youth and families as valued assets for the City of Los Angeles.

The most frequently suggested programmatic components mirrored the “what works” concepts:

- A. Focus on middle schools.
- B. Expand the number of places/spaces and centers where youth can be safe, create a sense of community, learn and play.
- C. Provide affordable, accessible, quality programs for all youth irrespective of their legal status. Expand after-school programs and include gang-involved youth.
- D. Targeted programs to meet specific needs and interests of youth, such as:
  - Substance abuse treatment (especially for use of methamphetamines)
  - Tattoo removal as a safety and employment issue
  - Immigrant and undocumented youth
  - Youth coming out of prison
  - Youth with no family structure nor supervision
  - Girls and pre-teens at risk of jumping into gangs
- E. Long-term programs for hard-core gang members.
- F. Workforce development and the hiring of youth into meaningful jobs.
- G. More creative avenues for parent involvement; parent support networks.

- H. Hold parents accountable for their children but provide support, education and childcare.
- I. Create a “211” or “website for youth” to inform youth about programs and services available.
- J. Strengthen the preventive aspect of law enforcement.
- K. Do away with expanded background checks and identification of felons on employment applications.
- L. Implement Special Order 40 which is intended to help immigrant communities report violence without being questioned by law enforcement.

**People who must be involved in implementing a citywide strategy:**

Every individual, institution and resource available in the most impacted communities must be involved if gang activity is to be reduced, especially:

- Parents and guardians
- Youth
- Former gang members
- School teachers, administrators and staff; leadership of LAUSD and LACOE
- Staff of community-based and non-profit organizations
- Civic leaders, elected officials and policy makers
- Caring adults who motivate and help youth
- Program and City staff who know and understand communities
- County leaders and agency representatives
- Business people and employers
- Law enforcement, judges and district attorneys
- Church leaders and faith-based groups
- Academics, artists and funders
- Celebrities and upscale residents who can bring attention to the issue

Former and current gang members spoke passionately about the need for a safety net for individuals leaving the gang lifestyle. Support for hard-core gang members requires long-term, intense one-on-one interaction by special individuals who can build trust and provide an element of consistency for them. It is these individuals who are reaching out to the youth who are neither working or enrolled in school.

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| <b>SUMMARY OF FINDINGS</b> |
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Our goal in this compacted process was to reach a representative group of individuals who live, study and work in the communities most impacted by gang violence in the City of Los Angeles. Thanks to the support and energy of our Advisors, meetings were held from Pacoima and North Hills in the San Fernando Valley to San Pedro and Wilmington in the South Bay. We heard the voices of youth and adults in Westlake, Boyle Heights, Koreatown and Hollywood and listened to the parents, providers and advocates of Echo Park, Venice, El Sereno, Cypress Park, the Vermont Corridor and Watts. We also heard the stories of the immigrant experience of the families of Pico Union, Canoga Park and South Los Angeles, to name a few.

All of these participants represent a wealth of experience, knowledge and perspectives that can inform this process. The community-based organizations in particular possess a valuable lived experience and

understanding of the communities they serve. Some of the groups receive City funding, many do not, but they all represent valuable resources available in the neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

The overarching message heard across all groups is: ***“We’ve talked enough; it’s time to act –together”***. Most communities we visited recognize that the complexity of the gang problem requires comprehensive multi-sector (and city-county) solutions. They are of the opinion that the City cannot build healthier communities without addressing basic quality of life issues such as housing, jobs, transportation, safety, healthcare and education. The underlying assumption reinforced through this process is that resources and collaborations IN neighborhoods affected by gangs will help end the violence if given the means and flexibility to do so. Many participants expressed the hope that City and County agencies will partner with resources and leadership that already exist in these communities, sensitive to the cultural, linguistic and socio-economic differences of their respective neighborhoods.

## **WHAT “WORKS” IN COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT? TO SUPPORT GANG PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION?**

### ➤ **Reach children early; focus on middle school**

Participants were very much in agreement that prevention efforts should be as early as 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade when the child begins to make decisions about drugs, gangs and peers. Parents and youth agreed that middle school is the age when children are influenced by lifestyle images, street culture and violence. The presence of counselors, mentors and role models in schools was given high priority as was the development of a more relevant curriculum that will interest students so they won’t drop out in 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Learning about one’s culture was also identified as a way to offset values learned in the street.

*“Middle school is the great ignored wasteland of public education and of our society.” “Test scores dropping in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades have something to do with the structure and discipline they receive in middle school.” “School staff need training because they don’t know the neighborhoods.” “Schools (teachers) use ‘labels’ and make decisions about these kids without really knowing them.” “We are in a culture war with kids bombarded with gangsta rap and attitude, getting a distorted view of reality.”*

### ➤ **Parent involvement with children and with the institutions that educate and serve them**

Every group spoke about the important role parents play in countering gang recruitment and at-risk behaviors in children. They agreed that parents should be held accountable for their children, but that many parents lack a high school education themselves and need support to meet basic family needs in addition to education on how to access resources and deal with their children – i.e. wrap around services. Creating opportunities for parents to meet and interact with other parents, and providing more venues for parents to be with their children (e.g. parks) were considered important strategies.

*“It’s really not about caring, they just don’t know, like my mom who...couldn’t tell me what to do so I had to do it by myself.” “Families need more support than we think. Parents are working two jobs and still live in poverty. They are too tired to come to a class or deal with their child. We need to change the environment and support them to have a better quality of life.” “What works is parenting programs like SEA – a network of parenting classes offered through community organizations and vocational schools.” “Parental involvement is an option in most programs, but*

*it should be a mandate.” “It’s clear that a lot of folks are under so much stress just to pay bills working 80 hours a week that they don’t have time to invest in their children. This is where a ‘safety net’ needs to support them.”*

➤ **Collaboration and partnerships across sectors**

The more animated discussions in the forums had to do with the importance of collaboration and partnerships and the need for long-term relationships built on trust. Service providers acknowledged the need to do more to bring everyone together (education, social services, juvenile justice, law enforcement, elected officials, parents etc.). Highly dedicated individuals and organizations are working together in every community to tackle the gang problem but are asked to do more with scarce resources. One community forum suggested getting help from an outside facilitator to help groups learn how to work together more effectively. Collaboration and coordination of programmatic efforts in prevention and intervention were considered to be among the most important strategies the City could support at the local, regional and City levels – and within service sectors. It’s about focus, information, communication and resources. Leaders shared the desire to institutionalize existing collaborations so that they not disappear if members retire, change jobs or leave.

*“Collaboration works!” “There are many passionate people in this community with a lot of strength. It is so important that we are here together and that we try to consolidate our knowledge, skills and passion on behalf of the community.” “We have to build a bridge to create a continuum for the child from when he is born until he can participate (in society).” “We have many community assets providing services but what is lacking is coordination – one group doesn’t know what the other is doing. The Council office should take the lead in organizing this...” “Everyone should be involved in developing strategies: CBOs, gang intervention workers, youth, mental health providers, corporations willing to invest in youth, etc.” “Collaboration should be the underpinning of everything we do.”*

➤ **Responsive schools and improved educational environments**

The importance of schools, a positive school environment and caring school personnel surfaced repeatedly. Overcrowded schools, revolving administrators, large class size and overburdened teachers who can’t deal with “problem kids” were all identified as barriers to positive child development in schools. However, there were strong feelings about the importance of teachers knowing their students, not letting them go through school without an identity, not just a number. At the same time, participants conceded that most public schools do not have the resources needed for the number of children enrolled and look to school reform as an option.

*“Schools are not performing as they should, especially in developing brotherhood among the kids.” “The schools are not innocent bystanders in the gang situation; they are creating angry children.” “What works is collaboration between the school administration and faculty with CBOs working with the same children.” “There should be a body within the school that meets regularly to discuss the issues of families at that campus, then those issues will be addressed sooner.” “Schools should open their doors to service providers but they get territorial (even when) we extend free services...” “Charter schools work; public education is a breeding ground for prisons.”*

➤ **Meaningful jobs; training youth for a trade or career**

Jobs and workforce development were repeatedly raised as a major component of any City strategy to address gang violence. Young adults were vocal about the need for job opportunities, information about resources available to help them get to college and alternatives to college. Youth pointed to the lack of adequate long-term training needed to qualify for more than a minimum-wage job. The disappearance of the summer youth employment concept was also noted. For former or current gang-involved youth, adult education and other alternatives were considered critical. For this population, jobs should build self-esteem and fulfill the practical purpose of bringing income into the household. They strongly advocated for large employers to reconsider policies that prohibit hiring people with criminal records.

*“School is not for everyone so you have to have job training and a trade.” “Schools are not preparing kids for college; we’re just being prepared to graduate high school.” “Kids see gang members with money so they follow them.” “Employers should have higher expectations of youth and offer support...meaningful jobs that build character and teach values.”*

- **Comprehensive approaches to stop gang violence and improve youth development that clearly define the role of prevention and intervention but link the two. Approaches that**
  - require broad community involvement;
  - build multi-sector connections;
  - count on sufficient resources for the long-term;
  - include multi-year planning;
  - value and support work with hard core gang members that requires one-on-one intervention over the long term; and
  - include a sustained funding source independent of changing political winds.

Several participants stated that they found it difficult to speak about prevention and intervention strategies together because they target different populations. The perception is that there are many more prevention than intervention programs in the City and that prevention discussions dominate efforts to discuss intervention issues. “Good gang intervention” was defined as “effective outreach” – getting to the youth not served by prevention programs and linking that individual to programs. Collaboration with service providers was considered essential to success. Intervention responds to the population at the point where they are in their lives.

Prevention, as defined by the Advancement Project, refers to programs that prevent youth violence, teach life skills, and enhance youth resiliency so that youths can seek productive alternatives to high-risk behaviors including gang membership.

Participants in several groups discussed the importance of a comprehensive approach to gang violence which requires that law enforcement, teachers and other professionals go beyond their appointed roles to help youth rather than punish them. It also requires understanding a young person in the context of his/her life experience and identifying the needs of the entire family, if necessary. It can also mean supporting a child when the family cannot be approached.

*“Intervention is not about jobs, it is about saving lives.” “Prevention is about stopping the cycle.”  
“When you can refer a kid to a program that can assist him and not incarcerate him, that’s*

*prevention and intervention.” “We should restructure how we work with police officers as providers of service.”*

➤ **Targeted gang intervention programs with workers who understand the gang and prison cultures and are valued for their expertise**

Additional support needs were identified for subpopulations of gang-involved youth:

- Substance abusers (especially for use of methamphetamines)
- Tattoo removal - a safety and employment issue as well as a health issue
- Immigrant and undocumented youth
- Youth coming out of prison
- Youth with no family structure or supervision
- Girls and pre-teens at risk of jumping into gangs

Providers in every region of the City agreed that reduction of violent crime requires a greater investment into long-term programs that deal with hard core gang members. And that this will require increasing the number of experienced workers who can “stop the war”, who know how to deal with the human element, career training and placement. Helping someone who is getting out of prison requires a one-on-one commitment of 3 to 5 years. But intervention workers themselves usually have no health care, no mental or physical support nor any staff development opportunities. They burn out because of the pressures of the work and the low-regard in which they are held by law enforcement, schools and other institutions that depend on them in times of crisis. “What works” is institutionalizing this work by giving it a more organized structure and resources.

It was also suggested that the City has a role to play in pushing for policy change in related arenas such as reform of the criminal justice system and prisons because work being done in the streets of Los Angeles is undone by the prison system. (For example: youth on parole are required to return to the community where the crime was committed, forcing them back into their old neighborhoods.) The City can also provide leadership by working with large employers to “ban the box” on employment applications and change policies on background checks that are not job-related (e.g. credit checks). This would provide more job opportunities to former gang members. For example, as a felon, a young person cannot join the JobCorps.

*“Effective outreach to gang members works...Bridges II gives us the greatest autonomy and flexibility to deal with gang members.” “Real networking is happening that will reduce the mayhem in communities.” “The hard core gang member is the shooter, If we can impact that individual, we can impact the rest.” “Ex-gang members can knock on doors and cross racial barriers.” “There are not enough intervention workers in the street to refer youth to programs. We are six for the whole Harbor Area.” “Every community should have agencies that address gangs.”*

➤ **Accessible and meaningful programs for youth, especially teens, located in neighborhoods during after-school hours and on weekends.**

Many programs and activities were listed by participants. Those most frequently mentioned for prevention strategies include:

- mentoring and tutoring
- sports leagues and camps

- workshops created by and with youth in their interest areas (e.g., art and music)
- life skills training and counseling
- leadership opportunities
- youth-community connections and volunteer service
- new experiences outside of their immediate neighborhood

In response to questions put to them, youth reported that they drop out of programs because they are “boring” and are not encouraged to attend – no incentives. There were differences of opinion among parents and youth about the value of having art and mural painting for youth interested in tagging, but there was more agreement about using music to attract youth to workshops and related activities. Affordable camps were seen as opportunities to expose young people to outdoor activities and an environment outside of their immediate neighborhoods. Funding programs for teenagers (ages 13-18) was frequently identified as “what works” for youth because of the perception that most program target younger children.

*“In the eyes of youth, the street has more to offer than a program.” “You have to make it clear to kids that a program or school gives them a better chance at xxx (something concrete, a better life). They need an incentive.” If it costs \$50,000 to incarcerate a youth, there should be \$50,000 to educate a youth.”*

➤ **Youth programs that:**

- are consistent and continue year after year
- are dedicated to empowering youth and organizing them to advocate for social justice
- are community-based
- offer incentives for youth participation
- include transportation options that keep youth safe
- help parents and children bond
- are managed by experienced and caring adults who understand youth culture and are sensitive to the culture, language, education and economic situation of families
- build on proven successful models like those of the 1970s and 1980s (i.e. Project Heavy, Teen Post, El Proyecto del Barrio) A child did not have to be “in trouble” to get help.

Many youths expressed their desire to be involved with programs and organizations that provide them with tools to create actual change and improvements in their communities. They recognize that to have a voice and improve the current practices and policies that affect young people and their families, they need adequate education and training on how to effectively organize and advocate. They believe that community members must lead efforts to alter existing conditions in their neighborhoods by having a voice and a seat at the table when policies are being decided in the City and to increase accountability among the City’s leaders, a belief strongly supported by many youths, especially those who participated in the Youth Justice Coalition focus group.

The discussions focused on the importance of using asset models for youth development rather than the current deficit model. Adults and youth alike agreed on the importance of finding more creative ways to reach and engage young people. For example, teaching them to be employers instead of employees, helping them create their own businesses. “What works” is programs that are smaller, more relationship-based and include more communication between parents and program staff. The

observation was made several times that teens have learned to distrust promises because of the lack of continuity of programs which are often dropped due to funding cuts, lack of volunteers/parent involvement and/or a change in personnel.

*“Kids join gangs because there is nothing here for them to do.” “Youth need to be involved, ask them what they want to know and do; involve them in the solution from the beginning.” “Business owners, celebrities and high-end individuals need to be educated about what’s happening about gangs and get involved.” “We need teen programs with people that know what they are talking about and know what’s going on in the streets...bring older guys who have been in gangs and understand.”*

➤ **Safe spaces for youth; centers in every neighborhood**

Much was said in several community discussions about the lack of community and youth centers in their neighborhoods, the lack of safe spaces where young people can go after school adjourns and “hang out” on weekends. Recreation centers/parks were often mentioned as good alternatives if safety is addressed. Frustration was expressed in several meetings about the presence of LAUSD and City facilities and parks that could be used for programs and sports but are not usually available. The point was made several times that gang members are often put out of schools and need an all-day center with activities for them. One community described a “truancy center” where young people could report, be off the streets and continue their education in the interim with the help of tutors.

*“Schools don’t involve the neighborhood; they also don’t have money.” “Every community needs to have a (multi-purpose) center that is advertised throughout the community; a center with (ongoing) activities and events that involve families and youth.”*

➤ **Safe communities; resident involvement and positive police-community relations**

Safety is a concern common to all communities. As a community issue, it was generally seen as the responsibility of all members in a community. As a gang issue, it was more often framed in terms of youth, parents, law enforcement and schools. School safety was most often considered critical to the reduction of youth violence. Opinions were divided about the success of efforts to strengthen community-police relations. Parents in several communities stated that communication with police officers has improved the gang situation and welcomed greater police visibility. Others were concerned that police were visible in some neighborhoods only after a mugging or a homicide. One parent questioned the logic of having law enforcement in the schools while parents are absent, while a young adult supported more police on campus because of the frequent intrusion of gang members. There was general praise for some LAPD programs like PAL, Kids Cop and others efforts that serve to break down negative barriers between youth and police.

Communities were also divided about the value of gang injunctions. Some parents and community-based groups felt that they were a significant strategy that served the community well. Others felt that injunctions provide a barrier to employment and a pretext for police harassment of gang youth and immigrant families. Former gang members made the observation that many immigrant families cannot identify gangs and miss the signs of gang membership in their children. Accessible and affordable public transportation was framed as both a safety and parenting issue (e.g., teens cannot use public transportation to access programs if they cross gang boundaries; parents in Wilmington travel two hours on a bus to reach a middle school because there is no direct route).

*“Kids don’t listen to you, they watch you.” “We need protection. Stop the drive-bys.” “The new police captain has been very helpful.” “We have programs like ‘Safe Passages’ but they still need funding; 5 people can’t walk 100 kids.” “If we expect to bridge community and law enforcement, we need to see community members in law enforcement.”*

➤ **Policies and funding that allow all youth and families to participate in programs and receive services, including immigrant families**

Policy changes that will facilitate participation of at-risk youth and families in programs were identified by several groups. For example, City-funded programs were perceived to be selective because of the eligibility criteria and the fact that the District Attorney’s assistance to victims of crimes is available to those not involved in gangs. Similarly, youth will not participate in programs that have a “zero tolerance” policy. And many groups noted the need to address the Federal prohibition against the use of public funds for services to undocumented youth and families.

Questions were raised in two meetings whether funding from Proposition 49, 21<sup>st</sup> Century and other special initiatives for after-school programs were addressing the gang problem and providing the kinds of services needed on school campuses.

The equitable distribution of resources to prevention, intervention and suppression was supported as a desired goal. But there was concern about the lack of a stable funding stream equal to the task. An increase in the sales tax or a similar mechanism was suggested to ensure funding over a longer period of time and to safeguard the funding from shifting political priorities. This would also make multi-year funding more feasible, providing programs more flexibility to do longer-term planning.

*“People have been doing this work for a long time and are still not receiving the funding they need while law enforcement receives millions of dollars.” “...there are huge discrepancies in funding...we need Bridges counselors, a good teen center, programs with a bus to pick up kids after school and drop them where their parents can pick them up after work. We don’t have this in our community. It’s not fair.”*

➤ **Program accountability with better tools for evaluation; community and City agencies working together to define “success”, success measures and program standards**

Community-based organizations generally agree that all City-funded projects must be held accountable for results and the deliverables promised under City funding agreements. But there is also strong agreement that City agencies and providers must work together to reshape the City’s data collection and evaluation systems to include qualitative as well as quantitative measures. Organizations need tools to do proper evaluation based on common definitions and agreed-upon measures. By working together, City funders and service providers should agree on more relevant measures of success.

The widely held perception among intervention providers is that organizations that succeed in their work receive less funding compared to those who do not. They agree that much better data is required to establish baselines, set priorities and measure progress. “What works” is a partnership between the City and other stakeholders to select appropriate indicators and put an evaluation process in place that will be less burdensome to City-funded agencies. The time currently required to compile data, prepare

reports and deal with City paperwork is considered to be a poor use of scarce staff resources. One group made the suggestion that the City be responsible for evaluation through site visits and other methodologies.

*“We need to show results.” “The City is fixated on numbers. They don’t talk about qualitative work which takes more time and relationship building.” “The parts of the City that are being more effective because of collaboration are being penalized for being more successful.” “We have to go to the City leaders and require more accountability (for City funds).” “We need a centralized network for programs that keeps them accountable for the use of funds.” “We need stats to support the need.”*

➤ **Better informed funders and public officials**

Participants in several communities suggested that a concerted effort should be made to discuss with individuals who control significant public and private dollars how gang issues reflect the general health of the City and what is happening with families who are just surviving. That it will be necessary to raise the profile of the issue by funding media campaigns to explain the problem and get many more people involved. Business owners, prominent citizens, upscale residents and celebrities also have a stake in the City.

*“Funders have to know the reality of living in these communities.” “When there are killings, our elected officials should speak out.” “We must have a public statement from City leaders that youth are a priority and that funding will follow that priority.”*

**Other Observations/Suggestions:**

- ⇒ Reasonable expectations work. “Evidence-based” is the new ‘silver bullet’. Reasonable expectations apply to programs as well.
- ⇒ Judges and district attorneys must get involved with a new vision and a new mandate. Their decisions must better reflect what people are doing on the front lines and not view suppression as the only option.
- ⇒ Gentrification is pushing families into communities with more gang activity. Low income housing is needed.
- ⇒ Community-owned organizations that are perceived to have “gone corporate” must be held accountable for how they are investing funds in the community.
- ⇒ The City should develop a resource guide or website through each Council office.
- ⇒ Designate Vermont-Manchester as a “safe corridor” project.

**Community Resources**

A number of organizations, programs, institutions and community groups were identified during the community forums. This information will be included in the Advancement Project Team’s analysis of community assets and best practices to be considered in developing recommendations to the City Council.

**Acknowledgement**

This report cannot adequately capture the many voices we heard in communities across the City over a period of about six weeks. But we have attempted to provide a snapshot of the experience as we listened to residents of all ages and backgrounds who care about the future of children and youth in Los Angeles. Everyone we met had something to offer and many are working every day to make Los Angeles a better place in which to live. We thank them for their candor and willingness to share their knowledge to help inform the Advancement Project's effort to develop recommendations for a gang activity reduction strategy in the coming months. We extend a special thanks to the members of the Community Advisory Team and our hosts who organized the forums in very short order and made this process possible. (See Attachment B.)

**GANG ACTIVITY REDUCTION STRATEGY**

**Community Advisory Team**

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*East/Northeast*

|                 |                                       |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Norma Cervantes | Roosevelt High School – Healthy Start |
| Rick Hernandez  | Variety Boys and Girls Club           |
| Tammy Membreno  | Barrio Action Youth & Family Services |

*Central L.A.*

|                     |                                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Robert Aguayo       | El Centro del Pueblo            |
| Larry Lue           | Chinatown Service Ctr.          |
| Susan J. Rabinovitz | Children’s Hospital Los Angeles |
| Angela Sambrano     | CARECEN                         |

*University Park/South L.A.*

|                  |                                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Saundra Bryant   | All People’s Christian Center     |
| Marqueece Dawson | Community Coalition               |
| Arturo Ybarra    | Watts Century Latino Organization |

*North San Fernando Valley*

|                  |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Robert Arias     | Communities in Schools                |
| Maritza de Artan | Casa Esperanza, Blythe Street Project |

*Mid San Fernando Valley*

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Monica Austin-Jackson | New Directions for Youth               |
| Maggie Cervantes      | Tierra del Sol/New Economics for Women |

*Venice/ South Bay*

|                 |                                |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Connie Calderon | Wilmington Teen Center         |
| Steve Clare     | Venice Community Housing Corp, |
| Gloria Lockhart | Toberman Settlement House      |

*Citywide*

|                  |                                      |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Rev. Frank Alton | Immanuel Presbyterian Church         |
| Sylvia Drew Ivie | The California Endowment, Consultant |

Staff: Leticia Ramirez, Advancement Project  
Cecilia M. Sandoval, The Sandoval Group

**COMMUNITY FORUMS & FOCUS GROUPS**

August – September, 2006

| <b>AREA</b>                  | <b>DATE</b>                          | <b>LOCATION</b>                                 | <b>CONVENER(S)</b>  |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>East/NE</b>               |                                      |   |   |
| CD 1,14                      | Tues. 8/22                           | LAUSD District 5<br>El Sereno                   | Barrio Action Youth & Family<br>Srvcs<br>Roosevelt Healthy Start Center |
| CD 14                        | Weds. 9/13                           | Academia Semillas del Pueblo<br>Boyle Heights   | Advancement Project   |
| <b>South LA</b>              |                                      |   |   |
| CD 8,9,10                    | Weds. 8/30                           | Constituent Service Center<br>South Los Angeles | All People's Christian Center   |
| CD 8,9, 10                   | Tues. 9/19                           | Bethel AME Church<br>South Los Angeles          | All People's Christian Center<br>Community Coalition                    |
| CD 15                        | Sat. 8/26                            | Watts Century Latino Orgz.<br>Watts             | WCLO  |
| CD 15                        | Mon. 9/18                            | Office of Councilwoman J.<br>Hahn<br>Watts      | Watts Gang Task Force   |
| <b>Central LA</b>            |                                      |   |   |
| CD 1, 4, 13                  | Fri. 8/25                            | El Centro del Pueblo<br>Echo Park               | El Centro del Pueblo<br>Chinatown Service Center                        |
| CD 4, 13                     | Fri. 9/8                             | Korean Youth & Community<br>Ctr<br>Koreatown    | KYCC<br>Children's Hospital   |
| CD 4                         | Thurs. 8/31                          | CARECEN<br>Pico Union                           | CARECEN   |
| CD 13                        | Thurs. 8/31                          | LeConte Middle School<br>Hollywood              | Children's Hospital   |
| CD 4                         | Fri. 8/11<br>Sat. 8/12<br>Tues. 8/29 | CARECEN<br>CARECEN<br>Advancement Project       | Sin Fronteras<br>Homies Unidos  |
| <b>Venice/<br/>South Bay</b> |                                      |   |   |
| CD 15                        | Weds. 8/16                           | Toberman Settlement House<br>San Pedro 90731    | Toberman Settlement House   |
| CD 15                        | Weds. 8/23                           | John Mendez Center<br>Wilmington                | Wilmington Teen Center<br>Toberman Settlement House                     |
| CD 11                        | Weds. 9/6                            | Boys & Girls Club of Venice<br>Venice           | Venice Community Housing<br>Corp  |
| <b>San Fdo<br/>Valley</b>    |                                      |   |   |

|        |             |                                     |                         |
|--------|-------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| CD 6   | Weds. 8/30  | Casa Esperanza<br>Panorama City     | Blythe Street Project   |
| CD 3   | Thurs. 9/7  | Tierra del Sol<br>Canoga Park       | New Economics for Women |
| CD 6,7 | Thurs. 9/14 | Pacoima Community Center<br>Pacoima | Communities in Schools  |

***Community Forums and Focus Groups held in Phase III:***

| <b>Convener</b>  | <b>Date</b> |
|--|-------------|
| Youth Justice Coalition  | 11/1        |
| Urban Issues Breakfast Forum   | 11/17       |
| Peace over Violence<br>Domestic Violence service provider<br>focus group | 12/8        |

**COMMUNITY FORUMS - MAJOR THEMES  
BY GEOGRAPHIC AREA**

| <b>East/Northeast</b>   | <b>Central L.A.</b>  | <b>Central LA</b>   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><u>What Works</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jobs for youth</li> <li>▪ After School programs</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive programs and mentoring</li> <li>▪ Providing safe spaces for youth, including weekends</li> <li>▪ Meeting basic family needs; parent education</li> <li>▪ Collaboration and communication among community-based organizations</li> <li>▪ Using ex-gang members to reach youth</li> </ul> <p>(Parents and youth)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jobs and job training</li> <li>▪ Education and culture</li> <li>▪ Start early – 4<sup>th</sup> grade</li> <li>▪ Parenting education</li> <li>▪ Centers for youth and families</li> <li>▪ Art and music</li> <li>▪ Mentoring and mediators</li> <li>▪ Collaboration and teamwork</li> </ul> | <p><u>What Works</u> (Pico Union)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experienced workers</li> <li>▪ Support children and youth</li> <li>▪ Begin young (Head Start, 5<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>▪ More programs/spaces for youth</li> <li>▪ Support families; provide parent education</li> <li>▪ Quality of school education</li> <li>▪ Low income housing (impact of gentrification)</li> <li>▪ Help ex-felons get jobs (delete ID box)</li> </ul> <p>(Hollywood)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Informed youth</li> <li>▪ Accessible programs</li> <li>▪ Programs for targeted youth populations</li> <li>▪ Staff knowledgeable about community</li> <li>▪ Partnerships and collaboration</li> <li>▪ Strengthen schools and change teacher attitudes</li> <li>▪ Begin early (elementary; grades 2-5)</li> <li>▪ Parent involvement/education</li> </ul> | <p><u>What Works</u> (Echo Park)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More programs/right programs</li> <li>▪ Programs that build on what youth like (art, music); their interests</li> <li>▪ Youth employment</li> <li>▪ Space and community centers</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive approach/use assets differently.</li> <li>▪ Stronger neighborhoods</li> <li>▪ Collaboration; combine resources</li> <li>▪ Higher expectations re. education of children and youth</li> <li>▪ Gang prevention program in every middle school; different approaches</li> <li>▪ Copy gang intervention programs of the 1970s</li> </ul> |

| <b>East/Northeast</b>   | <b>Central L.A.</b>  | <b>Central LA</b>  |
|---|--|--|
| <u>What/Who must be Included in Strategy</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ex-gang members</li> <li>▪ Centralize data/documentation for programs</li> <li>▪ Human relations training for youth</li> <li>▪ Hold parents accountable</li> <li>▪ LAUSD commitment</li> <li>▪ LAPD responsible to the community</li> <li>▪ Preventive aspect to law enforcement job</li> </ul> | <u>What/Who must be Included in Strategy (Pico Union)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Involve everyone in forming strategies</li> <li>▪ View violence from health perspective – drug problem, double identities, tattoo removal etc</li> <li>▪ Invest in education and training</li> <li>▪ Wrap around services for families</li> <li>▪ Invest in violence prevention/families</li> <li>▪ Public statements from city leaders that youth are a priority and fund it</li> <li>▪ All agencies have a youth component</li> <li>▪ Create a sense of community in neighborhoods.</li> <li>▪ Value neighborhood identities and culture.</li> <li>▪ Law enforcement refer youth to services</li> <li>▪ Implement Special Order 40</li> </ul> | <u>What/Who must be Included in Strategies</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Based on need and geography, not lobbying</li> <li>▪ All levels of community involved</li> <li>▪ Partnerships with schools – restructure education</li> <li>▪ Ask gang youth re. program needs</li> <li>▪ Tangible resources</li> <li>▪ Parent involvement/education</li> <li>▪ Parent networks/support</li> <li>▪ Affordable childcare</li> <li>▪ Impact poverty of stricken communities</li> </ul> |

| <b>University/South LA</b>   | <b>South LA</b>   | <b>Venice</b>  |
|--|---|--|
| <u>What Works (University Park)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More youth programs</li> <li>▪ Involving parents and adults</li> <li>▪ Mentors</li> <li>▪ Jobs and job training for youth</li> <li>▪ Collaboration/coordination of resources</li> <li>▪ Collaboration with schools and colleges</li> <li>▪ Acknowledge differences between the roles of prevention, intervention and suppression</li> </ul> | <u>What Works (Watts TF)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Availability of resources</li> <li>▪ Community-based &amp; operated programs</li> <li>▪ Holding groups accountable</li> <li>▪ Holding City officials accountable</li> <li>▪ Safe environments in schools</li> <li>▪ Parents and schools working together</li> <li>▪ Alternatives to arrest</li> <li>▪ Counseling for youth</li> <li>▪ Parent involvement</li> <li>▪ Parenting/family classes</li> <li>▪ Activities for youth</li> </ul> | <u>What Works</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support education-related efforts</li> <li>▪ Better schools</li> <li>▪ Accountability (begin at the top)</li> <li>▪ Value kids</li> <li>▪ Link prevention and Intervention</li> <li>▪ Collaboration</li> <li>▪ An entity/facilitator to help us collaborate</li> <li>▪ Quality programs</li> <li>▪ A different approach to evaluation</li> <li>▪ Funding and flexibility in defining</li> </ul> |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p>efforts and how they link up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intervention done well means good outreach methods</li> <li>▪ A holistic approach</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Government resources</li> </ul> <p>(Parents &amp; Youth)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Job opportunities</li> <li>▪ Focus youth on attending college</li> <li>▪ Police presence</li> <li>▪ Activities for young people</li> <li>▪ Parental involvement</li> <li>▪ Parent support/parenting classes</li> <li>▪ Education</li> <li>▪ Positive role models</li> <li>▪ Sport programs and safe transportation</li> <li>▪ Safety in neighborhoods/parks</li> </ul>  | <p>success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Involve upscale residents</li> <li>▪ Police officers from our community</li> <li>▪ Change “us v. them” attitudes</li> </ul>   |
| <p><u>What/Who must be Included in Strategy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organize. Designate Vermont-Manchester a “Safe Corridor” project</li> <li>▪ Grassroots movement to link people with resources</li> <li>▪ Everyone in the community involved</li> <li>▪ Change priorities – better coordinate limited resources</li> <li>▪ Connect parents and gang members to services</li> <li>▪ Deal with hard core gang members -different values</li> <li>▪ More funding for intervention</li> <li>▪ A coordinated effort – stop working in silos</li> </ul> | <p><u>What/Who must be Included in Strategy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ministers/counselors</li> <li>▪ The community</li> <li>▪ Parents</li> <li>▪ Schools</li> <li>▪ Community oversight for policing</li> <li>▪ Peace process coordinator</li> <li>▪ Dept of Youth &amp; Community Dev.</li> <li>▪ Community volunteers</li> <li>▪ Program audits</li> <li>▪ Inclusive process with youth, parents, leaders (Latino and African American)</li> <li>▪ Local board members for programs</li> <li>▪ Leadership development</li> </ul> <p>Parents &amp; Youth)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reach the parents</li> <li>▪ Mayor on TV address parents</li> <li>▪ Teens involved</li> <li>▪ Youth programs</li> <li>▪ Role models</li> <li>▪ Former gang members to talk to teens</li> </ul> | <p><u>What/Who must be Included in Strategy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaboratives</li> <li>▪ More people involved</li> <li>▪ Judges and DAs better reflect what people are doing on frontlines</li> <li>▪ Gather statistics to help collaboration</li> <li>▪ Politicians speak out, get media attention</li> <li>▪ Educate business owners, celebrities (visibility)</li> <li>▪ Long-term programs/resources for hard core gang members</li> <li>▪ Link prevention and intervention</li> <li>▪ Reform criminal justice system and prisons, penal codes</li> <li>▪ Employers hire people w/records</li> <li>▪ Neighborhood councils</li> <li>▪ Ongoing sustained source of funding</li> <li>▪ Faith-based ministry working with the incarcerated and their families</li> <li>▪ Use County resources</li> </ul> |

| <b>North SFV</b>  | <b>Mid SFV</b>   | <b>South Bay</b>  |
|---|--|---|
| <p><u>What Works</u> (Pacoima)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Acknowledge and reward successful intervention efforts</li> <li>▪ Collaboration (equitable model of prevention, intervention and suppression)</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive asset-based approach</li> <li>▪ Respect hard core gang intervention efforts</li> <li>▪ Better tools for evaluation – more than quantitative measures</li> <li>▪ Resources for the long term</li> <li>▪ Youth centers and after-school programs</li> <li>▪ Understanding changing youth environment</li> <li>▪ Parental involvement</li> <li>▪ Encourage/support system change</li> <li>▪ Revive successful programs of the 1970s and '80s when all kids could participate</li> <li>▪ Educate funders and City leaders</li> </ul> | <p><u>What Works</u> (Parents - Panorama City)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parents informed re. programs available</li> <li>▪ Leadership programs for youth</li> <li>▪ Programs in libraries and parks</li> <li>▪ Community-police relations</li> <li>▪ Church programs</li> <li>▪ Vigilance in apartment buildings</li> <li>▪ Positive working relationships in neighborhood</li> <li>▪ Peace marches</li> </ul> | <p><u>What Works</u> (San Pedro)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Serve entire family</li> <li>▪ Early education</li> <li>▪ Parent education</li> <li>▪ Intervention (1 on 1)</li> <li>▪ Programs that broaden youth's perspectives</li> <li>▪ Successful schools</li> <li>▪ Collaboration among agencies</li> <li>▪ Political support, open-minded leaders</li> </ul> <p>(Wilmington)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Police presence, positive relationships</li> <li>▪ Parent involvement and support of parents</li> <li>▪ More programs for youth</li> <li>▪ Fund existing programs like the Teen Center</li> <li>▪ Experienced adults helping kids on the streets</li> <li>▪ Start early (middle school)</li> <li>▪ More funding and resources for programs</li> <li>▪ Jobs for youth</li> </ul> |

| <b>North SFV</b>  | <b>Mid SFV</b>   | <b>South Bay</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| <p><u>What/Who must be included in Strategy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Workforce development</li> <li>▪ Legislation re. background checks and identifying as felons</li> <li>▪ Hold City accountable for evaluation, not nonprofits</li> <li>▪ Equitable mode: prevention, intervention and suppression</li> <li>▪ Evaluate workers - care for youth</li> <li>▪ Programs drive evaluation</li> <li>▪ Equity in pay – city v. nonprofit workers</li> </ul> | <p><u>What/Who must be included in strategy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Everyone must be involved</li> <li>▪ Parents especially</li> <li>▪ Parent accountability for their children</li> <li>▪ Neighborhood councils</li> <li>▪ Evening curfew for youth and vigilance</li> <li>▪ Job skills training for youth</li> <li>▪ Community service/volunteering</li> <li>▪ Jobs and programs for gang-involved youth</li> </ul> | <p><u>What/Who must be Included in Strategy</u></p> <p>(San Pedro)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schools – LAUSD</li> <li>▪ LAUPD</li> <li>▪ Existing program</li> <li>▪ Ex-gang members</li> <li>▪ Churches</li> <li>▪ Job training facilities</li> <li>▪ Youth</li> <li>▪ Parents</li> <li>▪ Mentors</li> </ul> <p>(Wilmington)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Councilmember</li> <li>▪ LAPD</li> <li>▪ Parents</li> <li>▪ Counselors in schools and on the streets</li> <li>▪ Schools</li> <li>▪ Faith-based groups</li> <li>▪ Transportation</li> </ul> |

| Current & Former Gang Members  | Current & Former Gang Members - Youth  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More gang intervention programs</li> <li>▪ Funding for proven intervention programs</li> <li>▪ Better schools and teachers who are interested in their students</li> <li>▪ Understanding the culture of communities</li> <li>▪ Community development/housing</li> <li>▪ Jobs and support for ex-felons trying to change their lives</li> <li>▪ Stop police harassment</li> <li>▪ Collaboration and joint efforts</li> <li>▪ Prevention efforts including sports, mentors, parks, caring adults</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More programs and opportunities in our neighborhood</li> <li>▪ Staff who are interested and give us attention</li> <li>▪ Access to programs in open youth-friendly spaces like parks (not in office buildings with security guards)</li> <li>▪ Need to know about programs</li> <li>▪ Involve youth in research, decision-making and in developing strategies and programs</li> <li>▪ Abolish discrimination by raising awareness and sensitivity</li> <li>▪ Teach conflict resolution skills in schools</li> <li>▪ Identify sources of violence (i.e. socio-economic, discrimination, gentrification etc.)</li> <li>▪ Reframe image of youth in the community</li> <li>▪ Reframe cultural norms around violence</li> <li>▪ Spend dollar-for dollar to match intervention funding with law enforcement funding</li> <li>▪ Set up community hearings to educate the community</li> <li>▪ Create safe spaces where youth can express themselves and their concerns about law enforcement and work together on solutions</li> <li>▪ Create legislation to give youth something of benefit such as mandatory job training</li> <li>▪ Create 'safe havens' in all communities for youth to express themselves freely, obtain services for youth and their families, and help develop the next generation of leaders</li> </ul> |