

# DRAFT Listening Tour Interim Report

*Note: This report does not represent a complete analysis, either of the total meetings held or of all the nuanced information gathered in each meeting. The Final Report will contain further depth on a larger range of findings.*

This preliminary report summarizes three-quarters (or five tours out of seven conducted to-date) of the survey data collected since January 2010. Approximately 70 participants attending these meetings from Logan, City Heights, Clairmont, Lincoln Park, Sante Sedro, Glodenhill and Sherman Heights. The major findings to date are summarized in the two sections below: (1) Most Effective Interventions and (2) Catalysts for Transitioning out of Gangs.

## (1) MOST EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

The majority of respondents (57%) reported that Opportunities Provision provided resources and services that ‘worked’ to reduce gang formation and membership, followed by Social Intervention (40%) and Community Organization (3%). The most commonly cited resources are listed in order below:

### Effective Opportunities Provision

*The majority of respondents (81%) view schools as the most important place for preventing and transforming gang membership.* This number includes both youth and adult respondents. Highlighted in particular were classes on conflict resolution, communication and social skills, and leadership; and school cultures that empower young people.

“Community Centers” and after-school programs are rated very effective, along with Physical Infrastructure (streetlights, zoning restrictions to remove liquor-stores) credited for reducing crime and drug sales.

Likewise, Opportunities Provision was the category most often described in terms of top priorities for services and resources for transforming gangs:

- Job Placement (46%)
- Community Centers (38%)
- Physical Infrastructure 11%

### Effective Social Interventions

The most effective social interventions were described as:

- Programs that link youth to New Social Networks (new people, voices, and ideas)
  - Community-Based (i.e. Overcoming Gangs, Turning Hearts)
  - School-Based
  - Prison/Probation-based (i.e. Jolt)
- Mentoring Programs
- School-Based Crisis Intervention Programs/Holistic Family Therapy

**Four types of interventions strategies are available for cities and communities to use in transforming gangs:**

**Opportunities Provision:** *Intervention strategies targeting the preconditions of gang formation and gang affiliation—poor education and unemployment, culture of violence (media) - in areas high in poverty, malnutrition, and mental illness*

**Social Intervention:** *Intervention strategies address the psychological factors in gang-prone youth, and include a wide range of psychosocial interventions*

**Community Organization:** *Intervention strategies that mobilize the communities being affected by gang behavior into becoming actively involved in controlling it.*

**Gang Suppression:** *Intervention strategies in the areas of law enforcement, prosecution, adjudication, intelligence gathering, and in the actual laws that target gang-related crime.*

## Community Organization:

According to several respondents, the Commission on Gang Prevention & Intervention has effectively raised awareness of the problem & built trust between community members and public agencies. Curfew sweeps have been another effective strategy that has brought police together with other community members to monitor after-hours activity by young people.

## Gang Suppression

Protective police presence was identified as an important role in keeping neighborhoods safe. Respondents in Sherman Heights emphasized the importance of rapid police response to 911 calls. Youth respondents in Lincoln Park emphasized police presence as a factor in feeling safe walking to and from school. Several respondents requested greater police presence in high-crime neighborhoods.

## (2) CATALYSTS FOR TRANSITIONING OUT OF GANGS

The decision to leave 'gang life' is a conscious one that appears to depend a great deal on the ability to imagine life otherwise. According to the former gang members we spoke to, the ability to imagine life otherwise occurs in "moments of transition" - moments when people shift in their worldview: their beliefs about life and the basic assumptions that guide their behavior. Across respondents, the two community-based catalysts for triggering moments of transition are:

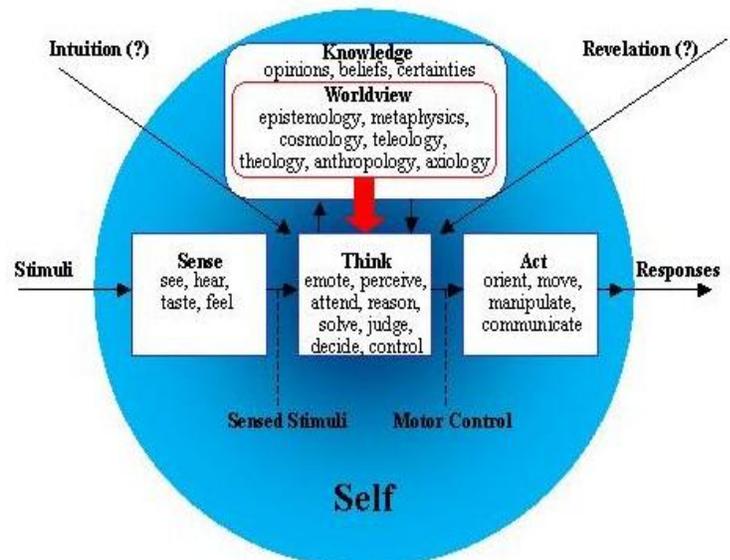
**a. Mentoring Programs:** Youth mentoring programs<sup>1</sup> pair a disadvantaged or troubled youngster and a caring adult. The relationship generally involves spending quality time together and providing support and guidance, with the aim of helping the young person better negotiate life's difficulties. According to the people interviewed, mentors effected change by

- Involving youth in community activities: this helped youth to feel useful, valued, connected to – **and accountable to** – others.

- Motivating or 'pushing' youth to work hard: this supported youth in developing healthy self-esteem, focus on the future, and sense of accomplishment.

**b. Drug/Alcohol Treatment Programs:**

Substance abuse treatment programs are designed to help addicts, alcoholics, chronic relapse victims, and their families find effective treatment and intervention for alcoholism and addiction of the highest quality. According to the people interviewed, programs with a spiritual or religious component were particularly effective.



The World View in the Context of the Self, Ken Funk 2001  
<http://web.engr.oregonstate.edu/~funkk/Personal/worldview.html>

<sup>1</sup> Previous studies have found that "6 months of mentoring was successful in helping to decrease problematic behaviors, suggesting that exposure to caring adults helped youth to feel better about themselves and to engage in less destructive behaviors toward themselves and others. The support and guidance provided by mentors can help youth feel better about themselves, negotiate problems more effectively, and provided a sense of community.

## APPENDIX II

The Listening Tour gathers Community Perceptions Data that describes how key segments of the community are experiencing the gang phenomenon, including community members, parents, community leaders, youth, and gang members themselves. Community Perceptions Data helps the San Diego Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention to understand how to build on, support, and initiate effective strategies to address gang-related risk factors and behaviors in communities around San Diego. Specifically, the Commission is interested in:

### **A. Identifying any new needs for resources and services to address gang-related risk factors and behaviors, based on changes over time**

1. Do community residents perceive the gang problem to have changed? In what ways?
2. Do community residents believe the community's service needs have changed? In what ways?

### **B. Motivations for Gang Membership**

1. What do former gang members report as their primary influences & motivations for joining a gang?
2. In what ways does gang life "follow" or impact people (and their loved ones) after they are out?

### **C. Identify what types of resources and services have worked and why they have been successful? Also, what has not worked and why?**

1. How well have current gang prevention & intervention services worked?
2. What are the protective factors in schools/communities that support youth in making good decisions?
3. What can schools/communities do to strengthen the protective factors that support youth in making good decisions?
4. What services are in place to support parents and in what specific ways can their outreach/impact be strengthened?
5. What level and type of influence do social networking sites and other technology play in youth decision-making?