

# Youth gangs in canada essay sample

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Youth gangs in Canada is becoming more and more of issue. Adolescents across Canada resort to joining youth gangs for many different reasons. A youth gang is a group of young adolescents who use intimidation and violence to gain prestige among other gangs and control certain areas of unlawful activities. For all the reasons an adolescent would join a youth gang, police and the Government have come up with programs to prevent youth from joining and to get them to leave the gangs. With programs involving prevention, intervention, and suppression, the Canadian Government is adequately addressing youth gangs within Canada.

Teenagers and young adults join youth gangs for many reasons. Reasons a teenager would join a gang include family factors such as parental abuse or even a lack of supervision, school factors meaning if a adolescent has early school failure, he is more likely to become a violent person, " Early school failure is predictive of subsequent violent behaviour" (Maguin & Loeber, 1996). As well as the neighbourhood one grows up in plays a factor in their future behaviour, so does many other factors. That is why programs are created to revolve around the issue at hand. " Street gang crime has many different causes and facilitators. This means that solutions to the problem must also be multi-faceted and involve a combination of prevention, intervention, and suppression programs." (Linden 5).

The government uses the Prevention method to start with. This targets young kids who are at risk of joining gangs. Within the prevention program expands with even more programs to resolve the issue encouraging a young child or teenager to join gangs. Ranging from recreational programs such as summer camps to parental training to provide the correct skills need, there

is a prevention program for any issue. Although not all these programs are not guaranteed to work, it is almost a trial and error scenario, “ While there are some consistent patterns in the research that provide guidance to program planners, you should not assume that they will be effective. Thus ongoing evaluation – preferably using experimental or quasi-experimental designs – is crucial” (Linden 10).

The Canadian government also uses Intervention programs. This programs purpose is to help street gang members, especially youth leave gangs as well as prevent young people who are on the border of joining street gangs join them. Along with prevention techniques, intervention program must be individualized to meet the adolescents needs to get them out of their current gang. Multisystemic Therapy which was designed specifically for chronic juvenile offenders which can be also connected to youth gangs, is a home based program where all areas of the adolescents life that influences them are involved including home, school, peer group and neighbourhood. With therapists available twenty-four hours a day, this program can be successful. The purpose of Multisystemic Therapy is to “ empower the family to take responsibility for making and maintaining gains.... parents are encouraged to develop the requisite skills to solve their own problems rather than rely on professionals” (Leschied & Cunningham 9).

Another intervention strategy based out of Regina, is called RAGS which stands for Regina Anti-Gang Services specifically targets gang involved Aboriginal youth from the ages of thirteen to thirty. The goal is to reduce the amount of youth gang crimes by providing services that can end in

adolescents leaving the gangs. The program offers intensive counselling, teaching life skills and cognitive skills. With research showing, this program reaches the intended Aboriginal youth with some success.

The next program the government uses is called Suppression programs. Suppression programs include police crackdowns, the use of informants, improved prosecution efforts and tougher laws to deal with street gangs. But there is little evidence to prove that this is long term effective. But another way was discovered that being called targeted deterrence. Deterrence meaning to discourage a criminal from committing crimes and specific would mean to specifically target a group, such as youth, from committing crimes. Specific deterrence has the potential of reducing youth gang crimes. " Most of the targeted deterrence programs that have been evaluated over the past decade could be considered comprehensive programs to varying degrees because most have also included prevention and/or intervention components in addition to suppression." (Linden 13). Having both prevention and intervention techniques into one program can be quite successful.

Youth gangs within Canada has become a growing issue within the last few decades. The Canadian government has become aware of this and has taken swift but careful and documented action. Programs being created to individualize the needs of the youth gang members such as prevention, intervention, and suppression become successful in transforming the youth gang members and preventing of younger kids from going down that path. These programs show that the Canadian government cares. The Canadian government is adequately addressing the youth gang issue in Canada.

## Works Cited

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