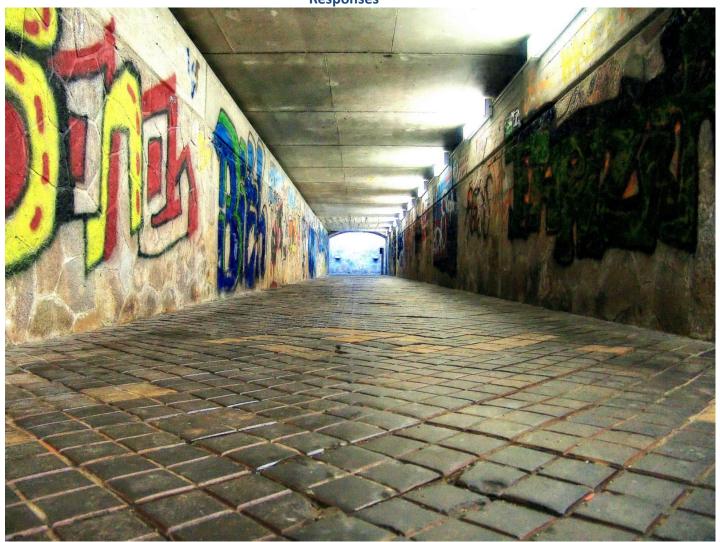# EU Gangs Programme

Summative Research Report

of

Transnational Partner Research Responses

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Contents

1.Background

Gang violence and disruption blights many communities and the conditions for the emergence of street gang associations are present and enduring: de-industrialisation, austerity, poverty, entrenched youth unemployment, racism and the 'underclass'; the many social tensions associated with familial and personal circumstances are compounded by declining social mobility with impacts on 'identity' and status for males and females.

Gang association has life-course implications on gang members and for communities who often bear the brunt with consequences for community cohesion and community safety. The pervasiveness of the challenge is reflected in how in some regions in Europe the political and policy focus has shifted from managing anti-social behaviour to more serious violence perpetrated by young people.

Gang terminology is problematic and disputed, though its locus in public policy is 'disaffected' urban street youth. The concept and context of its praxis is variable and this was to be captured as part of the country specific research work from partners. The 'gang' is primarily a phenomenon of the 20th century, and of the North American city but its locus amongst partner countries is highly localised and variable both in form and context. In areas of concentrated social and economic deprivation, the conditions are now present to make the formation of deviant youth gang formations possible.

In countries blighted by gang activism there is strong political discourse increasingly constructing 'gang' solutions through crime control and criminal justice contexts, not in the rectifying of adverse social conditions or in devising collaborative mechanisms for social action to build stronger learning communities with enhanced capacity to challenge gang associational recruitment, retention and disruption.

Each country is at different stages of development reflecting a growth in gang culture and rising youth unemployment against a background of diminished capacity amongst state actors; but the conditions for the emergence and spread of gang activism are present across all EU member states.

2. Methodology

This report has been compiled from information collected from the partners through their country specific responses as required by using the guidance template provided to partners on 18th December, 2013 by ABCD Services Ltd (attached at Annex A). This guidance supplemented a detailed report using the UK (England and Wales) as an exemplar and was produced following critical feedback from the first meeting of the transnational partners at the meeting in December, 2013.

The aim is to provide a summative representation of national perspectives that illustrates the gaps, differences and similarities in the ways in which organised and serious youth deviancy is identified and addressed. This includes analyses of the conditions for its existence and the strengths and limitations of existing policy, practice and skill sets. This summary is designed to enable effective consultation with communities affected by these issues and to develop structured proposals setting out how best to work alongside 'professionals' from the public, private and 'civil society', as well as volunteer community activists and gang members.

The themes (below, with word limits) formed the framework to structure responses from each partner and were for guidance purposes only; the purpose being to establish core and underpinning knowledge that will inform the development of the learning programme, i.e. the minimum, indicative content base for the programme.

1. Definitional review (500 words)
2. Social structure (1000-1500 words)
3. Socio-psychological approaches (1000-1500 words)
4. National policy context (1000-1500 words)
5. Short national profile (300 – 500 words)

Understandably, all partners shaped their responses to local conditions and realities and provided a more detailed representation than was anticipated in the original guidance structure in terms of word limits and the situational relevance of the categories originally profiled. Partners have responded using different formats and sub-headings within the originally drafted main themes. For clarity and consistency each countries responses referred to in this report are catalogued under recognisable heading and sub-headings taken from the original guidance brief.

To capture the fullest flavour of each partner's research and reflections as much of the original country reports feature in this report with some editing. Where partners have used visual data such as tables and graphs this has not been included for reasons of space, though all reports in full are contained as an appendix to this report.

UCB (UK) has used a pilot learning programme to undertake additional research for the UK, with more of a focus on the development of an initial set of learning proposals. Their response illustrates their thinking from specific local need and builds directly on the themes covered in the initial UK report presented to the first meeting of partners. UCB highlighted the need to give greater credence to the implications of safeguarding clients and the safe working of practitioners and emerging practitioners through prioritising interpersonal and communication skills given the scale of 'risks' prevalent in the context of gangs and gang impacted environments. These matters were under-stated in our original UK report.

Itinerant youth gangs are recognised everywhere as problematic and the interventions or emerging prevention programmes are influenced by the vagaries of political pressure and social policy priorities within each country. Consequently the data gathered in this report reflects differences in definition, context and actions. Though there are many variables across countries there is a recognised problem even if some governments do not prioritise or recognise the 'gang' phenomena as separate to youth delinquency and/or disaffection. Therefore, it is important to look at the differences in the formulations and representations of 'the gang' in the individual countries.

There is no attempt within the methodology to provide for a comparative analysis: the purpose is to gather qualitative data that is representative and contemporary for each country and locality to enable progress on local consultation, the preparation of a training needs analysis to determine both common learning programmes and learning outcomes alongside specific national needs based on clear perspectives.

This report is subject to further amendment following local consultation responses and will be inclusive of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approaches utilised in the consultation process.

3. Recommendations arising from the partner research contributions:

A common theme that underpins the following recommendations is the weakness inherent in devising 'gang' solutions based exclusively on crime control and criminal justice contexts. The prevailing model that views 'delinquent youths' purely as 'risks' to be managed, has logical, ethical, political and economic limitations and this is recognised, in different contexts, by all of the national partners in this project.

Approaches have to be enduring and involve communities alongside agencies in creating an infrastructure for challenging gang associational recruitment, retention and disruption as well as support for extrication.

- Analyses have re-affirmed the importance of the key conceptual and theoretical foundations for a programme of this sort. Consultations need to feedback on the relevance to a programme of this nature of:
    o Social Structural constraints
    o Socio-psychological factors
    o Policy – at a range of levels

- Partners should secure through consultation an understanding of the importance of defining the issues being addressed and the context in which they are taking place (i.e. participants in programmes will benefit from debating definitions and the relevance of context)

- Additionally, national analyses suggest that consultations and planning could consider addressing the following (practical / applied) issues:
    o How can your programme help participants develop an understanding of Interpersonal communication skills, boundaries and cultural competencies
    o How can your programme help participants to improve the safeguarding of children and young people
    o How can your programme help participants to improve safety for people working in gang environments (for professionals, para-professionals and local activists)
    o How can your programme consider what a 'wraparound' or 'whole person' approach may involve IN PRACTICE – i.e. if a fundamental area of agreement amongst transnational partners is the rejection of a purely 'crimino-genic/risk-based' definition of youth delinquency, what does an integrated and 'holistic' approach/response begin to look like? Does it need to consider e.g. integrative/non-stigmatised educational solutions, mental health/emotional wellbeing, family based interventions and therapies, other?

- Analyses broadly distinguish between 'prevention' (e.g. education, resilience support) and 'intervention' (e.g. mediation, desistance/extrication), programmes; in drawing this distinction, partners should consider the differing implications for safeguarding and working practices

- Partners should ensure they involve the full range of relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to the obvious and relevant state agencies

4. Common themes:

The impact of austerity and the withdrawal of the state from many welfare and social support functions is characterised and profiled strongly across the responses. This new reality for many states has consequences for civil structures with challenges emerging most noticeably associated with enduring youth unemployment and the increasing ghettoisation and marginalisation of many communities. What is key is a common sense of internal 'insecurity' and the 'ethnicisation' of national debates.

The evidence from France, Italy and Greece along with established research from the UK acknowledges the impacts of long-term de-industrialisation, as immigration in combination with segregated housing, job and social mobility pressures places significant pressures on already marginalised young people and communities.

Gang activism and gang formations appear across all partner states with common threads of urban marginality, immigration pressures, declining social mobility and familial constraints present as shared factors. Though all states share human rights and child protection commitments through international Treaty obligations, practice and reality can and is variable to the theory of 'entitlement' as a detailed reading of each partner's report illustrates.

Rising, and in some states, enduring youth unemployment is creating the conditions for youth disaffection, with recognition that environmental and familial pressures place many young people at risk from varying forms of radicalism and criminality.

Media sensationalism, distortion, exaggeration and stigmatisation are present in the representation of 'gang' activism across all partners with an over-focus on reaction, often reflecting 'moral panics' around immigration, family and peer relationships. Public policy responses are invariably reactive.

Recognition from all partners to common social structural constraints is detailed across all responses, often supported by domestic research literature alongside common and discernable socio-psychological pressures as traditional moral frameworks such as the church and the family are marginalised in the face of globalisation and the widening commodification of life.

Pressure for a re-definition and the place of the 'state' in determining the space and structure of 'social welfare' is real as economic liberalism becomes entrenched.

From the perspective of the local ethnography of gangs there is consistent reflection within responses to common concepts associated with:

- Social structural factors (associated with austerity, declining social mobility, poverty, immigration and race: creating the conditions for marginality)
- Familial changes/pressures
- Peer pressures
- Educational disruption
- Parenting and attachment issues
- Issues of identity and attachment to the 'group'
- Status, stigma and coercion
- Leaving the gang (extrication)
- Desistance

- Safeguarding

All respondents acknowledge that without recognising and accommodating the variable risks that different groups face, individualised interventions associated with personalised 'risk' (i.e. the risk presented to others) will fail.

Working within gang affected environments as a practitioner is deeply challenging and was not subject to any detailed analysis in the original UK Report for transnational partners. This relates to the skills, underpinning knowledge and understanding that workers/practitioners may need to develop to work in the context of gangs and gang impacted environments. These matters have been identified in the Training Needs Analysis questionnaire subsequently issued to all partners.

5. National differences

There is significant variation in civil infrastructure arrangements in respect of the capacity for or existence of youth deviancy interventions and related safeguarding and rehabilitation arrangements which reflects the development stage, economic status and cultural norms of each country.

The UK and France are currently the only states that operate national youth gang interventions although their scale, content and reach vary significantly. Both interventionist pathways are reactive and driven by crimino-genic considerations. Only recently in the UK has the context for interventions begun to shift towards 'safeguarding' though the 'risk factor paradigm' still predominates as policy is driven by a reductionist approach to 'risky individuals' and 'risky families' to the neglect of social structural conditions.

The economic crisis in Greece has huge human consequences. Greek gang association has a political dimension not experienced by other partner states. The rise of the radical right has stimulated gang activism under 'Golden Dawn' who are exploiting the deteriorating socio-economic situation to radicalise vulnerable youth. Outside of this highly criminalised sphere Greek gang activism is particularly ethnicised. The capacity of the state to frame and pursue a coherent juvenile justice strategy is severely restricted by capacity challenges. This is occurring against a backcloth of violence and bullying in schools.

Where states place their criminal age of responsibility has implications for how interventions are shaped with clear implications for considerations of safeguarding and safe working practices. This is particularly a focus in the UK (England and Wales only) when dealing with 'risk', 'responsibility' and 'sexualisation' (particularly of females) with a criminal age of consent set at 10 years.

The context of 'street gang association' in the UK is very different from partner country contexts with the exception of France. In both countries there is a pre-dominant crimino-genic paradigm associated with risky individuals and specific localities clearly framed around the concept of urban street 'gang' and associated with areas of high social and economic deprivation. This does not directly transfer or translate into any of the partner contexts though in Italy the pressures of immigration is significant in many northern cities and street gangs are emerging and drawing negative media attention.

In Romania the drive to accelerated growth from such a low economic base is placing pressure on urban life as there is a significant population transfer from rural areas. Street gangs exist and are known to police in all major cities. However, the rehabilitation and modernisation of Romanian juvenile correctional service is work in progress and under-resourced

The situation in Romania is distinctive for historical, demographic and economic reasons. Street gangs and the 'threats' they pose are as much a condition of rapid urbanisation as they are of settled social/structural differences. Gang association with street crime is tempered by economic growth, 'but lacking the collective pressure, political and administrative authorities have not developed policies to solve the social issue of gangs.' Romania is investing in its juvenile correctional system and are following a western European model of rehabilitation including a shift to a restorative justice framework. Modernisation is slow and the EU are supporting reform.

Italian youth gang activism focuses on several northern cities, 'as immigration flows into urban areas is often at the basis of increasing social and cultural conflicts, particularly in the North and present as integration-related problems.' Unlike other partner states Italian juvenile delinquency interventions 'represents a kind of 'investment', structured to avoid the dynamics of stigmatisation. Consequently, a higher priority is placed on safeguarding, reflecting the cultural significance of the family in Italian social policy thinking and design. There is clearer multi-agency working arrangements in Italy and a strong commitment to integrated practice within a devolved system. The tradition of 'volunteers frequently operating in all youth related services' is distinctive to the Italian correctional model.

Greece

The position in Greece is serious given the swathe of austerity measures and its related political and social fallout, particularly the impact on youth prospects. For many Greek citizens the economic and social consequence of severe and enduring austerity measures means an unprecedented squeeze on living standards with far-right political activism in the ascendant.

Greek juvenile correctional services are ill-equipped to face with emerging challenges as one-third of students (boys and girls) have fallen victim to violence in schools. There is a 'serious problem' associated with the states capacity given 'the complete lack of services for young offenders care in our country…' Although the Greek judicial system does not recognise juvenile gangs there is unambiguous evidence of intra-ethnic gang tensions (Roma, Russian and Greek) and far right activism associated with Golden Dawn that draws in disillusioned and vulnerable youth.

In Greece juvenile gangs exist but they do not use the same systematic violence as in UK or the USA. They are usually groups of young people that are engaged in delinquent activities however they are not specifically organised for this purpose with distinctive names, symbols etc.

The main organised gang operating in Greece is the extreme right "Golden Dawn" where young people are engaged in criminal activities and are specifically organised for this purpose, having a recognised leader and specific symbols. This criminal organisation is organised in local "gangs" hierarchically structured and is reaching into schools to recruit members. Other gangs are related with the control of illegal sources of income such as prostitution and drugs. There are high levels of participation of immigrants in these gangs. The relevance of school bullying is not related with gang activities as such but it sets the conditions for the emergence of such behaviour.

The Greek partner's report indicates there is a professional social support structure in place that predominantly works with schools though there appears to be no coherent prevention programmes or collective interventions. Responses to gang activism is predominantly reactive and penal 'as we have abandoned any belief and thought having to do with the pedagogic character of rehabilitation and imprisonment.'

France

With its roots in the challenges of migrant assimilation during the 1980s the ethnology of French gang association has combined deepening resentment to immigration with social policies that have created deeply excluded neighbourhoods, producing a panic response to serious violence from the state over the recent decade. A policy of containment has emerged with specific estates identified as priority intervention areas, particularly, though not exclusively, in Parisian working-class neighbourhoods.

Despite the presence of significant organised and violent youth gangs the national government has withdrawn its priority recognition of gang problems, witnessed in the 2013-2017 national delinquency prevention strategy plan.

France has sophisticated civil infrastructure arrangements set out in statute law, supported by comprehensive child protection framework arrangements. However, gang interventions, like the UK are founded on considerations of 'risk', but differently as a risk to 'community safety' and the Republic's citizenship values.

The weakness in intelligence gathering and an over-reliance on police statistics for defining the 'gang' phenomena hinders accurate and reliable evidence of the real presence of gang activism. The presence of reliable and independent survey and statistical instruments outside of the state 'remains underdeveloped in France.' Through an emerging gang specialist research base evidence is emerging of available

Italy

The Italian constitution declares its protection of the family and its fulfilment, promoted through institutions for the protection of maternity, infancy and youth. Based on the research responses Italy adopts a more integrated approach to juvenile delinquency with a strong familial aspect to interventions and a resistance to incarceration.

There is a shared youth culture in Italy that doesn't particularly distinguish gang membership from wider youth culture. Street groups acting violently in public places has emerged and has been studied in northern Italian cities, particularly in Milan and Genoa where academic and public attention is focused on the existence of street organisations or groups made of Latin American young people.

Specific projects have been jointly implemented by youth and social workers and researchers with the aim of fostering social inclusion and preventing violence. Though there is no associated learning framework or shared learning practice or common resources.

The social protection of children and minors in Italy is paramount and guaranteed in the Italian constitution. Social services in collaboration with non-profit organizations and social cooperatives deal with local interventions and also manage a range of initiatives and physical assets.

Though Italy has a criminal age of responsibility a child's maturity is assessed and frequent manifestations of juvenile group delinquency are met with services intervening across Health (SSN) in matters such as addictions; the municipality (family and social support) providing prevention programmes that are flexible to need. In response to phenomena such as 'gangs' and more general juvenile delinquency, the actions, objectives and priorities for action by Municipalities are defined in specific Zonal Plans. Municipalities, regions and the state must, in fact, engage and empower the not for profit sector.

Romania

The post-communist era and the conditions for development and growth were set-out in the conditions for entry into the EU. Though the country is experiencing unprecedented growth, this is from a low base with deep structural impacts not least in an accelerated urbanisation. Investment in the modernizing of correctional services is slow and there is an emphasis on juvenile delinquency. Romanian society has become much more secularized with consequences on the framing and reinforcement of moral certainties.

Despite these structural and contextual changes there are no pro-active policies dealing with prevention and the distractions associated with adolescence. As for the policies targeting young people there have been some unsuccessful attempts to create a national strategy for young people. There are very few communities that develop projects and programmes for youth and when it happens, in many cases they are part of some obscure or political interest.

The most disturbing fact is that there is no national dialogue with young people from political leaders, concerning the problems affecting youth. Youth are not seen by the authorities and by the representatives of society as being a resource; nor is any recognition given to the value and potential contribution of young people to communities.

The impact of rapid urbanisation and associated disparities of wealth and rising disadvantage are causing social strain. The level of disruption creates the conditions for youth deviancy. There is little trust between young people and the institutions of civil society.

There is no national or local prevention strategy dealing with gang related youth disaffection, though there are programmes targeting more generally juvenile delinquency which are coordinated locally by the police. What is clear is at a municipal (civic) level there are no interventions other than punishment through the courts.

UK (England and Wales)

In relation to UK gang interventions as currently constructed the renewed attempt to refashion the state so it becomes ever-more accountable to the market has consequences for community cohesion and community solutions within a discourse increasingly constructing 'gang' solutions as not to be found in the rectifying of adverse social conditions but in crime control and criminal justice contexts.

In response to a series of high-profile youth shootings and knifings deemed to be gang associated, by the late 2000s in the UK a racialised and underclass conflated discourse of gangs, guns and knife crime was being endorsed at the highest political level. The government's response to this was the 2011 Ending Gang and Youth Violence Programme, which targeted 33 'hotspot' English cities and towns.

Gang violence continues to blight too many communities; gangs thrive in neighbourhoods of deprivation, declining social mobility and poor educational achievement. The riots in August 2011 also highlighted the problem, with at least one in five of those arrested in London known to be part of a gang.

But the over focus in UK policy on 'risky individuals' and 'troubled families' has contributed to a 'gang industry' phenomena which is increasingly politicised and racialised. Policy targets both cohorts (individuals and families) but is based on a risky predictive formulation identified by an influential social policy academic as 'the risk factor prevention paradigm.' Policy focus is on the risk people and families present rather than the risks they face. In the

UK there appears to be little public appetite for a proactive model of resolution addressing those needs and challenges faced by 'risky individuals' or 'troubled families'.

The recent emergence of widespread young female sexual exploitation is forcing significant reflections on prevention and intervention strategies with a re-drawing of concepts of 'risk', with significant impacts for safeguarding arrangements.

Despite a strong and honourable history and tradition of effective youth work training, little is borrowed from such practices and utilised in the UK gang intervention context.

6. National Perspectives

Italy

National policy

1. Is there a specific and coherent set of policies and policy instruments that address issues relating to gangs and serious gang associated youth offending?

"The Republic assists through economic measures and other provisions the formation of family and the fulfillment of its duties, with particular consideration for large families. It protects maternity, infancy and youth, promoting the institutions necessary thereto".

In the Italian legal system the 'management' of juvenile delinquency for under 18 year olds is considered differentially to adult offending through the use of judicial discretion over process and sanctions. There are frequent manifestations of juvenile group delinquency with services intervening across Health (SSN) in matters such as addictions; the municipality (family and social support) and prevention programmes that are flexible to need.

The juvenile justice system provides that a specialised judge (Juvenile Court) and a special prosecutor deal with crimes committed by those who have not attained the legal age of eighteen. The maturity of the child must be assessed and the minor can be subject to punishment only if deemed 'responsible' for a crime. Re-education measures are never mandatory. The concept of 'administrative offense' applies, which if committed by minors are not punishable. Where offences are repeated or related to the individual's disadvantage, for example hanging around with bad people or educational deficiencies in the family, the intervention of the police, health and social services and of the school is then allowed, being prompted by authorities that acknowledge the behavior and by social services that may ask to the civil courts to take measures to prevent the family's behavior becoming detrimental to the child (Art. 333 of the Civil Code).

'Young adults' (aged of just over 18) receive similar treatment in the event of conviction to older adults.

2. In order to locate relevant policy, identify:
a) Which levels of government are involved in policy making and implementation relating to gangs?

There are devolved arrangements from national directives framing integrated system of interventions and social services, identifying the 'essential levels of social assistance', in order to ensure it in all regional settings. The planning and organisation of the integrated system of interventions including social services is under responsibility of the local authorities, the Regions and the State, pursuant to legislation. Italy identifies a National Plan and has established a Charter of Social services (setting out social opportunities and access criteria).

The Regions are responsible for:

- planning and coordinating social interventions;
- integrating health, social care, training and job placement interventions;
- establishing criteria for accreditation;
- supervising public and private facilities;
- establishing a register of individuals allowed to perform tasks as indicated by the law;
- determining the quality of performance;
- determining the levels of user participation in the spending;
- financing and planning training for professionals within the social sector;

Municipalities must involve, and cooperate with health care providers, with other local authorities and with the associations of citizens. Municipalities deal with:

- Determination of parameters for the evaluation of the conditions of poverty, limited income and total or partial inability due to physical and mental disability, and related conditions so to take advantage of the benefits from interventions;
- Authorisation, accreditation and supervision of social services and residential structures (both semi- public and private)
- Granting citizens the right to take part in the control of service quality.

The actions, objectives and priorities for action by Municipalities are defined in specific Zonal Plans. Municipalities, Regions and the State must, in fact, engage and empower the sector of non-profit organisations.

b. Which departments/agencies of government are involved in policy making and implementation relating to gangs?

The Department of Juvenile Justice (Dipartimento Giustizia Minorile: DGM), is one of the four departments within The Ministry of Justice, and is responsible for both juvenile offenders and the victims of crime. Its core brief is the protection of minors through the prevention and combating of crime affecting minors.

In addition, Italian legislation has attributed to this institute the functions for management, scheduling and coordination regarding social welfare and health care, relating to local and regional authorities. Municipal Social Services are responsible for the supervision, tutelage and protection of children in the event of difficulties and shortcomings of the parents, which must be activated in the presence of risk factors in the development of the child (Art. 9 and Art. 23 of Law 184/83) even in the absence of a direct request of the family.

3. What are the key principles underlying relevant policies?
Juvenile delinquency interventions 'represents a kind of 'investment', structured to avoid the dynamics of stigmatization. Focus is on 'benefit' with punishment or conviction not the inevitable consequence of offending.

Solutions are accordingly 'filtered' with prison only used in the absence of viable alternatives. A crime committed by a minor 'shall not affect, however, their opportunity to build a future adult life in normal social inclusion." (Pighi, 2002).

The interventions of assistance and control tend to help the family to implement change processes, work to promote the empowerment of parents and remove the causes of discomfort, as much as possible. Support for parents to properly perform their duties is intended to implement the minors' right to grow up peacefully in their own families. When the Municipality acts as foster parent, it consequently tends to make up for the lack of role of the family.

4. What are the specific programmes, policy instruments and legal framework that are in place?
Advice and guidance for the use of resources and access to services;
Social-psychological support for parenting;
Inclusion of children in educational contexts in the area;
Individual and group social-educational projects;
Financial support to families with children;
Interventions related to adoption and foster care;
Placements in residential communities;
Interventions relating to indicted children pursuant to DPR 448/88;
Measures related to legal separation;
Assistance related to procedures and findings of the juvenile authority.

5. How is policy experienced at local levels?
a) Agencies involved in local delivery

Social services in collaboration with non-profit organizations and social cooperatives deal with local interventions and also manage:
Residential communities for minors;
Residential communities for mother and child;
Refuges for people in need;
Home educational interventions;
Parent-child day care centers;
Educational centers;
Young careers;
Local aggregation centers;
Sports adoptions.

b) Impact of judicial and other legal measures

The social protection of children is paramount and set out in legislation.

c) How communities are engaged

Communities are engaged in projects meant to help young people with volunteers frequently operating in all youth related services.

6. Are there available programmes of learning to develop professional skills relevant to this agenda?

a) Resources/toolkits available for practitioners

Seminars are held in local territories when projects about youth gangs are available. In the region of Emilia-Romagna, seminars for the local police have been organised by the regional service for urban security.

b) On-line courses and programmes for practitioners

No information currently available.

Social structure

1. Definition - what is a gang?
a. Are the definitions provided in US and UK literature relevant to your national context?

In Italy the terms '*gang and baby-gangs'* are frequently employed by the mass media to describe some juvenile delinquency. Professionals who deal with or study juvenile group delinquency consider such labels 'problematic' and nor representative of most of the Italian youth groups that sometimes commit crimes. Italian youth gang association is different, to the representation of American gangs. In Italy there are very few groups that have some, or often none, of these features. The Eurogang definition: (Weerman et al. 2009, p.20) does not describe the Italian reality.

b. Are there clear or identifiable gaps?

Italian youth groups that can be seen as gangs are not highly structured, their local identity does not imply the control of a territory and their members, in most cases, have mixed ethnic origins, with illegal activity not part of such group identity.

"The presence of youngsters committing criminal and anti-social behavior in small groups is registered in several cities of the country. The most frequent crimes committed by deviant youngsters are property crimes. What emerges is an increasing tendency by some young people, throughout different territories, to steal in shops and megastores or from other people (often from other young people) in order to obtain brand name items, mobile phones, etc."(Crocitti, Lucianetti, Nobili, Terenghi 2013, p. 151).

'In general, in Italy the problem of gangs is evidenced only in a very limited number of cities in the North, despite the local and national press increasingly reports episodes of youth deviance and/or anti-social behavior as if they are committed by "baby-gangs", (thus revealing an improper use of the term)". (Crocitti, Lucianetti, Nobili, Terenghi 2013, p.153).

In two large cities in the North of Italy, Milan and Genoa, there are gangs of young Latin immigrants, especially from Ecuador, whose features are similar to the "American" representation of gangs: a name for the gang, rules and codes and typical clothing but without any control on the territory and any economically oriented criminal intent.

In the region of Emilia-Romagna, particularly, informal groups spontaneously gather in public places due to temporary situations, without planning any actions, imitating symbols or dress in the style of gangs (i.e. copycat groups) but there are very few groups that we can consider gangs. The members are aged 12-25 years old, mostly males but also girls, sometimes having a hidden leadership role. (Crocitti, Lucianetti, Nobili, Terenghi 2013 e Crocitti, Barbieri 2012).

2. What are the social forces that shape behavior and form the context in which gang can emerge?
a. What are the social structural conditions that influence this? What are the underlying socio-economic factors?

Young people committing anti-social and criminal acts are not always from deprived backgrounds. Immigration flows into urban areas is often at the basis of increasing social and cultural conflicts, particularly in the North and present as integration-related problems. Integration challenges may occur along the need to feel part of a group: the gang can fulfill a need for 'belonging'.

"The cities of Milan and, particularly, of Genoa have become the capitals of Latin immigration (especially from Ecuador). In the first phase (second half of the '90s) the phenomenon mainly regarded women irregularly working as caregivers for Italian families. With a second immigration wave characterized by family reunions, the presence of Ecuadorian immigrants radically changed in terms of composition and size, determining a different social perception and representation. Latin youths (i.e. *hermanitos*) belonging to the street organizations (i.e. Latin Kings or Ñetas) arrived in Italy between 2000 and 2003, as a result of the massive migration wave from Latin America. In this sense, the phenomenon of street organisations in Milan and Genoa is linked to the migration processes, although their members were not necessarily engaged in similar experiences in their native country (Queirolo Palmas, 2006). These immigration flows - mainly due to family reunion - and the marginal condition, in which young people live, are among the main factors determining the formation of street groups and members' affiliations. Family reunions are common, with the arrival of young people who have lived their childhood and most of their adolescence in their native country. Their custody has frequently been granted to relatives, especially grandparents. Once in Italy, with a feeling anger and disorientation, they have to confront difficult living conditions (lack of money, living in small and overcrowded apartments, etc.). Also, "they experience a condition of alienation both in their school context and in the labor market." (Crocitti, Lucianetti, Nobili, Terenghi 2013 p.154)

b. How does the mass media and the rise of social media impact on gang-related reporting and activity?

The mass-media, especially local media, tend to emphasize problems related to gangs and for some academics and researchers (Cannarella, Lagomarsino, Queirolo Palmas, 2007) the mass-media created the phenomenon of gangs, reporting some events and crimes committed by youth groups and describing them as typical American gangs as featured in the movies.

Social media is used by youth gangs to communicate and reinforce their group identity: sometimes, a conflict emerging in the virtual space of social media, can be subsequently taken into a 'real context'.

c. What is the impact of youth culture on gangs and gang culture?

There is a shared youth culture in Italy that doesn't particularly distinguish gang membership from wider youth culture. Youth have their own music, style, and clothing but they look very much like other young people, who are not members of gangs. It is therefore hard to identify gang members only by their clothing or style.

d. How relevant are the concepts of belonging and social status to gang involvement and ongoing associations?

Different factors can influence groups' affiliation:
1. Groups offer a form of community belonging where youngsters can experience affective relationships, support and solidarity;
2. Groups offer the opportunity to escape from life strains and anonymity, while sharing practices that question their discriminatory situation;
3. Membership to a group offers the chance to avoid family control and experience freedom, power and risks associated with a group's action.

"Violent behaviors usually represent a way to safeguard the respect of the group and/or of the individual group member. Furthermore, the use of violence is connected to specific cultural variables that define a masculine identity according to which males have to demonstrate to be brave, physically strong and courageous". (Crocitti, Lucianetti, Nobili, Terenghi 2013 p.155).

"The analysis of street violence is useful to trace the boundaries among groups and is characterized as follows:
1. Conflicts occur among peers belonging to the same age range and sharing a similar subculture;
2. Conflicts occur in specific places, such as clubs and undergrounds.

Violent acts represent a way of expressing group affiliation and they also contribute to the definition of a group's internal hierarchy and leadership". (Crocitti, Lucianetti, Nobili, Terenghi 2013 p.156).

e. What is the relationship between gangs and crime and how is this represented in academic and policy debates?

Street groups acting violently in public places has emerged and has been studied in northern Italian cities, particularly in Milan and Genoa where academic and public attention is focused on the existence of street organisations or groups made of Latin American young people.

Specific projects have been jointly implemented by youth and social workers and researchers with the aim of fostering social inclusion and preventing violence. (Cannarella, Lagomarsino, Queirolo Palmas, 2007 e Bugli, Conte 2010).

Violent episodes that took place in Genoa and Milan, leading to subsequent charges of criminal association, robberies and assaults determined the construction of a misleading image of these groups by the mass media. Violence was not proved to be connected to criminal activity or to activities aiming at controlling the territory. On the contrary, in most cases, violent acts (such as fights) were not planned and often originated in fortuitous events (the conflict over a girl, a bad look or a previous enmity). (Crocitti, Lucianetti, Nobili, Terenghi 2013)

f. What is the impact of family in socialisation process of young people and what are the social factors that shape the development of deviance?

Some of the youngsters that join gangs, but not most of them, have troublesome families and parents with legal problems. Sometimes there are problems in family relationships due to absent parents. In general, familial problems can be one of the disadvantages that lead young people towards antisocial and criminal behaviors.

Socio-psychological approaches

1. Why do people join gangs and "behave badly"?
a. Why do some young people join gangs and embrace offending behavior?

Often young people join gangs to find other people with similar experiences of social marginality. This is typical of gangs of youngsters living in the city suburbs and sharing similar situations related to family problems, marginality and discrimination, failures at school and job insecurity. Nonetheless, young people with 'normal' backgrounds join gangs, thus making it difficult to identify exactly the reasons for joining gangs and embracing offending behaviors.

b. *Why do the majority of young people from similar backgrounds "choose" a different path?*

The need of belonging, coupled with a sense of marginality, is not always the cause for joining a gang and having a criminal or antisocial behavior.

2. What is the meaning of social-psychology in understanding human groups and gangs?
a. How important are issues of identity and attachment in understanding gang membership?

Issues of identity and attachment are very important for youngsters and it is their need of identity and belonging that lead them to join groups and also the so-called gangs. Belonging to a group gives status, even if in conditions of marginality.

b. How can the most relevant socio-psychological approaches be applied to working with gangs?

The first studies about gangs are important because they connect this phenomenon to the social, spatial and demographic features of the urban context.

Thrasher (1927) affirms that youngsters belonging to gangs are especially children of immigrants that live in urban disorganised suburbs. They meet in public places to satisfy their need to socialise, like all adolescents do. The creation of gangs develops in an informal way, because young people share traditions and memories and identify themselves as a group being different from other groups.
Criminal acts and violence are interpreted as a consequence of lack of parental control and a way for gang members to affirm themselves and claim their spaces and their existence in the society.

Cohen (1963) attributes gang origins to the social structure. For working class youngsters, there is no correspondence between predominant values and the possibility to have success in life, because of their social condition. Hence, the antisocial and criminal acts are caused by the sense of being considered losers in the society and the need to be positively accepted in the group thanks to criminal and antisocial acts. Deviant conduct is then acquired inside the gang.

It is also important to consider the Desistance model, in order to understand how a process of desisting to crime can happen.

Greece

National profile
According to the last Greek census the population is 10,815,197 people. Some 91.6 %
(9,903,268) of the permanent population is Greek. The rest (911,929 citizens) of the country were foreigners of different nationalities, without including the large percentage of illegal immigrants living in Greece.

There has been an increase in criminality in Greece over recent years, something which is directly related to the economic crisis. A great number of crimes committed have as a sole motive mere 'bread-winning'. More specifically, for juvenile offences, the paper submitted for this project illustrates research conducted at the Athens Minor Court. The research findings are detailed in the main Greek report annexed.

National policy

1. Is there a specific and coherent set of policies and policy instruments that address issues relating to

gangs and serious gang associated youth offending?

The Greek Ministry of Justice in line with the Beijing Declaration (U.N., 1985) and the Child's Rights Treaty (legally validated by Greece in 1992), and after consideration of European practice, has reviewed the current Greek juvenile penal code. According to the new law (Act 3189/2003), juveniles are defined as aged between 8 and 18 when committing an offences. The term 'juvenile delinquent' is not now used in Greece as the Public Prosecutor has discretionary powers to impose legal punishment on the young offender under certain circumstances, including the power to impose rehabilitative measures on young offenders. Minor courts try offenses committed mainly by juvenile's aged 13-18 years old. Rehabilitative measures include reprimand (as the most frequent imposed measure on juveniles), assigning parents more responsible for the control of their minors (second most frequent imposed measure and usually imposed in cases of traffic offences), assigning custody of minors to guardians – are enriched now with other alternatives for non-incarceration/institutional treatments of the young offender.

This is positive measure, but faces difficulties in enforcement due to the limited development of the type of institution regarding undertakings on a national level as well as the lack of supportive mechanisms for families. Greece has also introduced the measure of 'mediating' between the perpetrator and the victim aiming for an apology to the victim, encouraging out-of-court settlement concerning the consequences of the offence and the measure of victim's compensation.

The institution of 'mediation' is indisputably a positive and innovative measure, which requires specially trained social workers and adequate funding both for its implementation and its effectiveness. For the first time, juveniles' participation in the institution of communal service, a measure that was applicable only to adults. While this constitutes an important step in a juvenile delinquent's reintegration in society, its framework as well as its functioning still remains vague.

A relevant measure that is also at the Justice services' disposal is the recommendation for the young offender to attend social and psychological programmes, which requires the sufficient existence of an efficiently coordinated network of services having to do with the psychological health of children and adolescents. One of the most important rehabilitative measures included in the new legislation is the imposition on the young law-breaker to attend a vocational training school. This measure promotes the social integration of a child/adolescent. However, the system of vocational training has major weaknesses in Greece. The levels of school drop-out rates constitutes one the most significant factors with infringing behaviours amongst youth.

There is the imposition of therapeutic measures, including attendance in a consultative, therapeutic programme on the part of the juvenile or his/her guardian to a therapeutic or other similar type institute. Referrals come from experts such as doctors, psychologists and social workers. This form of legislation presupposes that there is in our country the possibility of training professionals dealing with psychic health like psychologists, social workers, child psychiatrists, in forensic child and adolescent psychiatry issues and in the evaluation as well as the application of modern therapeutic approaches.

The use of specially designed rehabilitation centres for juvenile delinquents is imposed only exceptionally. The time that the young offender should spend in this type of centre must be set precisely by the court. New legislation includes stipulations for incarcerated offenders who have addictions. Young offenders can now exercise their right of appeal against a court's decision regardless of the time they must serve in such type of centre. The temporary detention of a young offender is only permitted for those age 13 and over, shifting from the former baseline of 12 years, and only where there is a charge bearing at least a 10-year imprisonment on conviction. It is also stipulated in the new law, that the young offender's inability to pay bail imposed does not allow his/her temporary detention and leading him/her to prison.

The institutional treatment of juvenile delinquents ought to be abolished as a type of punishment. The scar of imprisonment and their criminal record reference follows them for the rest of their life resulting in conducting an infringing behaviour and criminal life.

Previous studies conducted on a cross- section of young law-breakers indicated that minor offences which were not characterised as criminal actions and did not cause an official public reaction, had only a temporary impact on young offenders' lives and they did not affect them later in life. On the contrary, research on a cross-section of adult inmates of a particular Greek prison showed that the majority of inmates consisted of ex-juvenile delinquents, who were serving a long-term imprisonment.

Implementation of alternative methods of intervention and treatment on young offenders should be preferred as well as the implementation of community service programmes or other similar types of programmes on a local mainly level. For example, it would have been much more productive and fruitful for a young law-breaker, who has committed a crime to an elderly person, to offer his/her service for some time in an old people's home in order to have first-hand experience about the problems of the third age, their physical and psychic pain and to be fully aware of the harm or damage he/she has caused to the victim, rather than to be sentenced to imprisonment in juvenile's prison.

2. In order to locate relevant policy, identify:
a) Which levels of government are involved in policy making and implementation relating to gangs?

There are significant 'inadequacies' in the Greek system. The complete lack of services for young offenders' care in our country is the main problem concerning juveniles' infringing behaviour, which exists as a serious problem; however, it is not so serious regarding the nature of offences.

The current Greek legislation provides the opportunity for such measures to be taken, but there is lack of proper network services, particularly in the issue concerning juvenile's custody supervisory services, the issue concerning offering help both to the juvenile delinquent and to his/her family as well as in the issue having to do with the prevention at a very young age. This happens because here in Greece there is a substantial shortage of services dealing with the primary care relating to prevention when it comes to issues regarding psychosocial disorders. Although Greek legislation offers the discretion needed for judges to impose rehabilitative or/and therapeutic measures, their implementation becomes inapplicable due to a number of inadequacies such as lack of material-technical infrastructure, lack of properly trained staff and lack of adequate funding. On the one hand, the services undertaking the task of dealing with juveniles' custody as well as with the implementation of rehabilitative measures do not have the ability to offer a substantial and therapeutic service, on the other hand, the living conditions of young offenders in rehabilitation institutes and the way they are organised have never become a subject of research, remaining in reality 'closed' institutions.

In recent years, the attempt not to put juvenile delinquents in this sort of rehabilitation centres or other similar types of institutions is not enough to create more suitable conditions which would lead young offenders to the kind of services that they really need. Public funding is particularly limited when it comes to the infrastructure associated with education, sports, recreational activities - leisure for juveniles, social services development regarding family support, funding local communities and in general with provisions reinforcing social bonds.

Social structure

1 – Definition: what is a gang?

Are the definitions provided in US and UK literature relevant to your national context?

'To be a student at a state school today is a challenge. Rumours, fights, teasing, bullying, it all exists' (Jones & Compton, 2003).

Adolescents, and sometimes children in certain areas (particularly in the impoverished neighbourhoods of large cities) have a tendency to join gangs which take part in a variety of illegal activities; vandalism, battery, brawling, gang rape, robberies, theft. This phenomenon is connected to the tendency of the young to express their opposition towards existing institutions in an exaggerated manner, their search for identity, their ambivalent stance towards power (they desire to be independent *and* to belong somewhere), and to freely make decisions yet at the same time be guided.
It should be remembered that the five characteristic definitions that have been given to gangs are as follows:

The Greek response examines 5 academic definitions or representations of street gangs each showing continuity over time. Taking each into consideration these definitions distinguish common features that, in other words, differentiate a gang from a simple union of individuals or group for the committing of criminal offenses (common legal definition), the gang from the delinquent group and gang delinquency from the group – from common – exhibition of delinquent behaviour (group delinquency).

There isn't a significant presence of juvenile gangs within the framework of the Greek Penal Justice system using the criminal meaning of the term. Contextually the compositional elements of a gang are concerned with the duration of its functioning in a specific geographical space or zone of influence, its distinguishing foundational structure and organisation which leads to self-identity and status, the recognition of a leader and hierarchy as well as the existence of rules and group procedures. Though there is little evidence of gang association through the criminal 'lens' it is important demonisation and the stigmatisation of groups of adolescents who are, or who go on to exhibit delinquent behaviour does not happen.

In Greece, the main type of gang crime that is current far right gangs. These are gangs which are composed generally by 15-20 people attacking immigrants in the street and they provoke damages in houses and shops owned by immigrants. These gangs are hierarchically organized on the basis of geographical criteria and their activities cover the whole of Greece. These gangs are part of the extreme right wing party "Golden Dawn" (Χρυσή Αυγή) which is represented in the Greek parliament with 21 MPs after they have received 7% of the votes in the national elections which were held last June.

This type of gang fits very well with the definition of Curry and Spergal because it includes delinquent juveniles and adults organised in a complex manner. There is a recognised leader and membership rules. They use also specific symbols inspired by the German Nazis. Currently, the leader of the party and many of the MPs are in prison for the creation of "criminal organisation" http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.article&id=408905. This criminal organisation is composed of different gangs operating in a local level on the basis of a highly hierarchical structure. The activities of such gangs has resulted to the murder of the antifascist singer Pavlos Fyssas http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Pavlos_Fyssas and to many street attacks, mainly towards immigrants. Until recently, the members of these gangs had a certain immunity by the police officers in Greece. This is explained by the fact, according to polls, nearly 50% of the Greek police officers voted for 'Golden Dawn' in the last election.

The activities of juvenile gangs are also growing in Greece. These gangs are usually involved in vandalisms or robberies. However, at this time they do not adopt systematic violence as it happens with gangs coming from other countries (UK, Germany, USA etc.). Another type of gang activity relates to gangs who control illegal sources of income such as prostitution, gun dealing and drugs. These gangs are generally composed of people of the same nationality who fight each other for the control of specific areas. They are not juvenile gangs but mostly gangs in which adults participate. These gangs have an internal hierarchy, a recognized leader, fight with each other for the control of territory therefore they fit with the definitions even if they lack other characteristics such as emblems and a sense of belonging. In this context gangs composed by immigrants, Roma and also Greeks.

Gangs that fight each other for the control of the territory and also because of mutual hate do not exist very often with the exception of the case of the Roma and the Greek/ Russians. The Roma have always been a society apart in Greece and although they are 100% Greek citizens they neither enjoy the benefits that most other people do nor do they blend in with the rest of the urban population. They often live under squalid conditions, in tents and makeshift homes. Roma gangs often fight with the gangs formed by Greek/ Russians. The Greek/Russians are people of Greek origin who lived in the former Soviet Union and have now returned to the homeland. They also tend to stick to themselves and to congregate on the streets, sometimes forming what you could call juvenile gangs. The use of guns in these populations is much higher than in the mainstream population. They often fight for the control of illegal activities in the sense of the above mentioned paragraph.

 The main characteristics of these gangs are the following:

- These gangs are developed and active in degraded neighborhoods

- There are usually many immigrants that form part of these groups

- Their members adopt violent behavior

- The structure of the gangs in Greece is not very strict

- Gang membership is small

- The members of the gang are usually around the same age group

- The gangs have a relatively short life span

- There are no emblems and it is rare that these gangs have a name.

These gangs generally fit with the definitions made by Malcolm Klein even if some characteristics (as the distinct "name" and identity are not so common). Many times, even if they generally fit to these definitions, the Greek Penal System do not recognize them as such.

The Greek context for gang association is at a distance from that associated with organised crime led by adults, though there is contemporary space for its emergence. There is evidence that the locus of youth gang association is within schools with widespread bullying. One third of students (boys and girls) have fallen victim to violence in schools. The victims have no one to talk to and have the conviction that neither their parents nor their teachers are able to help them.

2. What are the social forces that shape behavior and form the context in which gang can emerge?
a. What are the social structural conditions that influence this? What are the underlying socio-economic factors?

The worsening of economic factors since the 1980's has led to an increase in crime and the concentration of the poor and 'marginalised' groups in many American inner city areas; a situation not significantly different in most European countries. The rise in violence and criminality is a consequence of the crisis facing modern civilization. The contradictions of our own era, the weakening of moral values as well as the improbability of their replacement with new ones, prompt modern man to moral insensitivity and incite him to commit spasmodic acts of rebellion through violence and criminality. A characteristic feature of large modern cities is their inhospitable character, their anonymity and over-population, which favours the exhibition of delinquent behaviour. Furthermore, in the cities there is an absence of traditional culture which is a key element of communal coherence and cohesion. The bonds between people weaken and social barriers are less rigid. A worrying factor is indifference, social tolerance and ensuing lack of reaction to murders, robberies, and rapes – in front of passers-by - in urban centres. Unemployment, impacting mainly the young, and poverty are important factors as incitements to violence and criminality. After all, fear for the future and insecurity comprise the basic causes of the manifestation of violence. The predominance of non-democratic regimes, social injustices and racial discrimination lead to violent riots and war. The young, in particular, who are by nature rebellious, react in a violent manner in a society which does not meet their expectations. They believe it is the only way to react by using, unfortunately, violence to fight violence.

b. How does the mass media and the rise of social media impact on gang-related reporting and activity?

The Mass Media has been accused of projecting exaggerated messages of a generalised social decline, contributing to cynicism and the lawless behaviour of the young. At the same time the disproportion between the image of an unreal world and the impossibility of the intervention of the media for its attainment often leads to delinquency. Television has been accused of downgrading the world to idols while at the same time hindering any critical reaction to it or any effective answer from those who watch it. Specialised research has been done as to the role of hero role-models on the small and big screen and their impact on the adoption of delinquent behaviour by juveniles.

The unreasonable use of violence for good is a common motif in mass media productions directed at young people. Research in The United States and in Germany proved that showing suicide on television led to a steep rise in adolescent suicides. Equally, watching violence on a continuous basis may lead to violent and delinquent behaviour. The Mass Media is, to a large degree, responsible for the propagation of violence and criminality. For many the broadcasting of such scenes is a means of defusing the aggression of a person. This opinion is not substantiated, however, because a person watching scenes of violence is stimulated by them with the result that they regard them as a normal and common element of society.

Generally, it appears that the factors impelling individuals towards delinquency do not act independently; here a mixture of the psycho-personal, the social and environmental combine to form supporting or contributory factors in youth delinquency.

d. How relevant are the concepts of belonging and social status to gang involvement and ongoing associations?

Involvement in gangs is independent of nationality but is linked to social and/or economic factors. Often the young come from a deprived family environment or have been abused by the family. Failure at school and the ensuing isolation at school confirm the sense of rejection that they already feel at home. These young people become trapped in a vicious circle; rejection by their environment – anger – anti-social behaviour – more rejection from their environment. They feel wronged by abuse and neglect, while at the same time they lose their way in a culture of unadulterated self-centredness, materialism, a spiritual void, rampant competiveness, completely debased values and a debased sexuality. A gang becomes, therefore, an attractive choice for children. From the moment they become part of a gang, they gain a family and an identity. The other members want to be

their friends and they themselves become members of a group. In other words, they belong somewhere. The gang leader becomes the father which they may never have had before. Where complete indifference and a void reigned in their lives, now the group gives them meaning and a purpose. If their participation is accompanied by material gains, the temptation is even stronger. From the moment they function as a group, their way of thinking becomes modified and becomes more absolute and disjunctive. They do not see 'others' as people, they only see 'us against them'. This thought is only seen in 'black and white' and a form of racism grows towards the 'others'. These 'others' can be, for example, 'another gang', 'adults', 'the government', 'immigrants', or 'rival football supporters' or ideological groups. The 'others' become the root of all evil. Subsequently, violence inflamed by anger from rejection and the deprivation they have experienced, appears as an 'acceptable solution'. When the children are a group they function as a terrifying gang of accomplices.

f. What is the impact of family in socialisation process of young people and what are the social factors that shape the development of deviance?

'A life of bad family relationships and without interests', that is how life is described which seeks affirmation from within juvenile gangs according to academic research from Crete (2012) undertaken among 305 students of Junior High school and High school. The research was undertaken by the Department of Psychology at the University of Crete by Professor Anastasia –Valentini Riga, The findings are based on the answers given by these students to a questionnaire with 81 questions. 10.9% of the students declared that they had at some time been part of teenage gangs while 74.3% declared that they knew about these gangs. According to these students 35.1% answered that a teenage gang functions because "they want to be 'cool'", 20% replied that they had 'bad habits' and descriptions followed such as – 'they commit violence' [16.9%], 'they break the law' [8%], 'they have family problems' [8%], 'they destroy things' [4.9%], 'they are not liked by others' [2.7%]. The reasons for someone joining a gang are; 'they protect the neighbourhood from other gangs' the majority declares [23.68%], 'they like the atmosphere' [21.05%], 'they share a common ideology' [13.16%], 'they harass other children' [10.53%], 'in this way they discover their area' [7.89%], and finally other reasons are cited [10.53%].

Family relationships have a direct bearing on initiation into a juvenile gang. Of those who declared that their internal family relationships are 'very good', 8% declared that they had at some time been gang members. The number triples [24.1%] when relations are average and soars to 100% when relations are 'not so good'. Conversely, positive replies to the question whether at some point they had deliberately destroyed an object rose gradually from 18.5% to 50%, and whether they had behaved in a violent manner at school, from 28.5% to 50%.

Also derived from these answers is the fact that extra-curricular activities (athletics, art) are almost non-existent. Of all those who declared that they do not have varied interests, 100% declared that they have at some time taken part in, or that they want to be initiated into, juvenile gangs.

Socio-psychological approaches

1. Why do people join gangs and "behave badly"?
a. Why do some young people join gangs and embrace offending behavior?

The causes which lead young people to adopt threatening behaviour and actions towards their peers and their initiation into gangs are diverse:
a) The desire by the victimizer to acquire a popular image through their domineering behaviour. They believe that they have the ability and the facility to direct the choices of their peers through their own personal

worth and create the impression in those surrounding them that if they don't align themselves with their criteria, they will find themselves facing the victimizer's wrath.

b) Their attempt to exclude persons who have different characteristics and who do not follow the accepted mode of dress, thought and behaviour that is familiar among the majority of adolescents. In reality they exhibit their repugnance towards that which provokes a feeling of 'being different' and that which has become different from the accepted norm.

c) The decaying values and eroded ideals of the realities of a harsh modern society create within the young accumulated rage and aggressive tendencies. The alienated human relationships of a capitalist system which create and project a feeling of superiority in the individual, based on the criteria of material wealth and not on a wealth of human values , results in the superficial and mixed up composition of certain young people.

d) The unsuitable behavioural role-models shown by the Mass Media and which are often aimed at the young in the thoughtless adoption of acts which offer them the illusion that they acquire strength and superiority because they impose their will on the powerless. Violence is presented as heroic and its acceptance and use is considered a blessing.

e) The absence of essential education from within a sterile and isolating educational environment which creates feelings of stress, negativity and opposition, and whose victims are those who are the vulnerable targets of this rage. The bullies find fertile ground for their acts of violence in the school complex where relations between educators and students are estranged from healthy pedagogic procedures.

f) Disrupted family relationships which can be characterised as ranging from indifference to the overprotective stance of parents towards their children, or even to examples of violence and aggressive behaviour. The victimizers or school bullies try through their actions either to bridge the gap created by the lack of attention and care within their own family environment, or to forcefully show their presence when they have become the recipients of the oppressive overprotective behaviour of their parents. Additionally it is possible that they may reproduce and zealously mimic the aggressive and violent stance of their family related role-models.

As to why some young people prefer a gang (and not a youth club, or a radical political movement) can be attributed to:

a) To psychological factors (e.g. young people with high risk characteristics, who seek dangerous innovations while disregarding the consequences).

b) The problems of family life (the initiation into a gang can be either an act of radical separation from the family and its values, an act of vengeance against the parents, or it constitutes the mimicking of the choices made by siblings or friends).

c) Difficulties to adapting to life in society (e.g. rejection by the school community).

d) The dominant sub-culture (or initiation into a gang may be considered 'a badge of honour' which brings benefits and privileges).

It is therefore clear that the characteristics of a juvenile gang are:
- Gangs develop and are active in depressed areas.
- Many immigrants are to be found among gang members.
- The members adopt violent behaviour.
- European gangs have a less cohesive structure than the gangs of The United States. The participation in these groups strengthens the self-image of its members.

Conclusion

Youth gangs are distinguished by criminal association and the profile of youth gang activism is heavily linked to ethnic identity.

There is increased criminality in Greece, which are attributable to deteriorating living conditions, the lack of bare necessities and in general the low living standards of people here. However, the educational systems should function in a preventative way before the appearance of such problems related to infringing conduct and even before these problems develop to serious cases of violence and aggressiveness. As a result, emphasis should be given to the prevention of such problems of misconduct and aggressiveness as well as to the deep understanding of initial causes that create such problems.

Usually in Greece we deal with problems reactively, often at the point of a crisis. In a framework for the prevention of children's misconduct closer cooperation between educators with trained school psychologists would enable early identification of children at risk, who may be prone to problematic behaviour or who may face serious stressful home circumstances. These children may display problematic behaviour and that is why they should be supported in due time so as to be able to manage the stressful conditions they face and not be punished harshly or be expelled from school in order to 'come to their senses'. In the framework of prevention, preventative programmes ought to be designed and materialised for all students, under the guidance of school psychologists with experience in this type of preventative programmes. These programmes should be focused on conflict resolution, cultivation of the sentimental intelligence and social-sentimental skills of students (Elias and co-operators 1997), on reinforcement of students' psychic resilience (Freitas & Downey, 1998).

It is useful to examine not only the child and the variables, which have as a focal point the child himself, but also to study the child's environment as well as their interaction. In other words, we have to learn to analyse the conditions which may put a student at risk, to examine the causes of students' anxiety and his school failure, their family problems (unemployment, domestic violence, child's abuse etc.) as well as his social isolation and not having many friends (foreign students, students from other schools).

Romania

National profile

Romania is the seventh largest EU Member State (population 21.4 million, with an area of 237.500 km^2). The economy lags significantly behind the majority of EU countries. In 2005, GDP per capita was 34.8% of the EU-25 average and around 55% of the new EU Member States average. Growth over the last 6-years has averaged at 6% annually fuelled by credit investment into the private sector and continuing fiscal reforms to modernise the economy. Unemployment is relatively low but masks significant disparities regionally and between rural and urban economies as subsistence farming persists.

The economy has been able to rapidly capitalise from foreign direct investment, attracted to the country by comparatively low wages, rising productivity (although from a low base), as well as by the market size. Romania's geographical location within the EU is a further positive factor. (An over view of Romania's demographic profile and relevant crime statistics is an appendixes to this report.)

National policy

1. Is there a specific and coherent set of policies and policy instruments that address issues relating to gangs and serious gang associated youth offending?

In post-communist Romania the phenomenon of street gangs, or the gangs of teenagers and young people fighting each other with guns to gaining influence in an urban area, or committing violent crimes against the population, did not exist. Most offenses committed by gang members are against property: theft and burglary.

Gangs are not seen as a significant general issue which need focus and resources to be solved, unlike the issue of institutionalised children in the late 1990s. Lacking the collective pressure, political and administrative authorities have not developed policies to solve the social issue of gangs.

However, in recent years, helped by political pressure from the EU, changes are beginning to appear in national legislation regarding juvenile delinquency policy such as:

1. The change from the so-called *retributive justice* to *restoring justice.* Unlike retributive justice, with its emphasis on punishment and the isolation of the criminal or of the delinquents from rest of society, the shift to restorative re-defines or expands the concept of "justice". Now we have a system that focuses on the needs of the victim and the offender. Restorative justice seeks to renew social bonds; the reconciliation between victim and aggressor, healing the trauma and the damages brought to the victim and the importance for the perpetrator to understand the damage caused

2. *The judge for minors.* This has an important role in preventing offending and protecting minors, and also in taking measures against minors who offend. This is delivered through a unitary system of justice for minors. *The judge for minors*, a measure applied experimentally, should be a magistrate that works in the court of laws for minors and who should take into account the characteristics, age and the social and psychological background of each minors.

3. *The appearance of the probation institution*. The 'probation' institution aims to provide an indispensable connexion between delinquency, social reaction, prevention measures and control. The institution's approach combines a historical perspective with that of the processes in the developed countries within the EU and from the USA. Here interventions include community measures and punishment, combining coordinated solutions of prevention and sanctioning.

Interventions consider educational factors, the family and school with support from workers in social care and state agencies such as the police and the justice system seeking to reduce juvenile delinquency. The control of juvenile delinquency and its reduction is very much linked to the pursuit of rising living standards.

New institutions and new judicial and administrative have been created to facilitate these changes such as: the National Administration of Penitentiaries, the Independent Service for Prevention of Criminality and the Probation Service. Two modern centers of rehabilitation for delinquent minors have been created in Găieşti and Buziaş as adapted environment.

Despite these structural and contextual changes there are no pro-active policies dealing with prevention and the distractions associated with adolescence. As for the policies targeting young people there have been some unsuccessful attempts to create a national strategy for young people. There are very few communities that develop projects and programmes for youth and when it happens, in many cases they are part of some obscure interest or of a political interest.

The most disturbing fact is that there is no national dialogue with young people from political leaders, concerning their problems. Youth are not seen by the authorities and by the representatives of the society as being a resource; nor is any recognition given to the value and potential contribution of young people to communities.

The key principles that underpin relevant policy

- the protection of minors;
- the right to education;
- the non-discrimination of minors

The specific programmes, policy instruments and legal frameworks that are in place

The Romanian criminal code asserts the protection and promotion of children's rights. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has responsibility for national programmes for juvenile delinquency, complemented by the Ministry of Education and Research. Specific programmes are developed by Police and Educational Institutions at a local level and include:

      a. Projects/Campaigns/Action plans, targeting deviance and juvenile delinquency through prevention and the reduction of victimisation of young people. Activities are delivered in in schools and led by policemen, teachers and representatives of non-governmental organizations in the area of activity;

      b. Action plans target absenteeism and the prevention of school abandonment

      c. Organising diversionary events and activities targeting young people.

How communities are engaged

The community is involved through juvenile delinquency prevention campaigns organised and conducted by the Police and schools. Citizens are informed as to the risks drawing young people into delinquency. There are also many non-governmental organisations (Save the Children Romania) involved in activities to reduce the victimisation of young people. There are no specialised programme for youth gang association as gang issues are not an acknowledged because in Romania the gangs phenomena is deemed part of juvenile delinquency.

Programmes of learning available to develop professional skills relevant to this agenda

There are no programmes, courses or resources for practitioners.

Social structure

1. Definition - what is a gang?
a. Are the definitions provided in US and UK literature relevant to your national context?

Romanian society has not recovered from a savage forced urbanisation process tied to rapid industrialisation. Consequential population shifts from the village to the city have caused major changes in life style including the emergence of so-called "neighbourhood gangs ". This urban element appeared as a 'model of import' from the United States of America and Western Europe. It should be noted that this social phenomenon has not proliferated in Romania in comparison to Western societies and is, at present, a phenomenon which is decreasing.

There is evidence that recruitment and exploitation older youth are using young people under 14 –years of age to commit criminal offences such as theft or robbery, to evade criminal prosecution or punishment.

b. Are there clear or identifiable gaps?

In Romania the 'gang' is urban, relationally based with its own rules, and identities associated with fashion, music, language, sometimes leading to social deviance. Membership is hierarchical with members aged 12-25. Under Romanian criminal law, the criminal age of responsibility is at 14 years. There is a current shift in formation/identity from the 'neighbourhood gang' to the 'street corner gang' (a differentiation associated with comparative levels of criminality and ant-social behaviour). According to a report published by the Bucharest Police, in 2006 there were 89 neighbourhood gangs known to the Police, in 2007 – 83 and in 2008 there were 54 gangs. In comparison the 'corner of the street gangs' registered a significant growth, from 51 in 2006 to 68 in 2008. This trend is maintained to the present day.

2. What are the social forces that shape behavior and form the context in which gang can emerge?

The causes linked to youth gang association are many and complex and include:

- Poverty and social disadvantage
- Low educational attainment
- Family breakdown and disruption
- Gang 'pull' factors such as status, solidarity and fear of reprisals

How does the mass media and the rise of social media impact on gang-related reporting and activity?

The mass media has significant influence and is instrumental as an opinion former and purveyor of information. Rather than reinforce or contribute a climate of 'normality' the media over-focuses on scandals, promiscuity and is contributing to an erosion of societal values.

A recent study shows that a Romanian teenager spends on average about 6-8 hours in front of the TV/computer: the media has become an "acquaintance". In these conditions of an avalanche of violence, moral decay, excessive promotion of consumerism and of the materialism through models like "the guy who has money has all that he wants", the young man loses an important chance to understand core values and he can be pushed into poor choices.

Over recent years there has been some coverage of youth gang disruption in Bucharest and other cities. But the stories were sensationalised and did not address or prompt a debate about juvenile delinquency, rather the focus was on the failure of policing.

What is the impact of family in socialisation process of young people and what are the social factors that shape the development of deviance?

The structural problems of the family are strongly felt in this post-modernist time as significant changes are linked to the passing from the traditional family to the modern family. In our study we will take into consideration some elements like the educational or the cultural level, the material state, the relationships between the members of one family (parent-parent, parents-child/children, and child/children-parents), and the spiritual profile.

The family institution provides emotional, attachment and protective support to young people; moulding 'healthy behaviour' with parenting attributes being a major factor in the success or the failure of forming a young man's character.

In most of the cases in which a teenager adopts deviant behaviour, the following influences have been identified as familial shortcomings:

- Parental discord and dependency or domestic violence issues
- Unemployment and poverty and related material problems
- Parental work/time commitments leading to breakdowns in communication and the young person's consequential isolation
- Parental capacity issues related to low cultural and educational impacting negatively on the their child's development
- Paternal and maternal roles are dysfunctional leading to displaced attachments for the young person.

The school

School is one of the most eroded institutions in the post '89 Romanian society. The role of the educator has been constantly eroded through the teacher's authority. In the communist era the teacher was a stakeholder of the parent's authority which has been consistently 'pulled back'. At present the pupil is empowered with many rights and few obligations.

Education is the key factor in developing a child's character, it is a fundamental principle for the pupil to understand that in life there are rights and obligations that lead to responsibilities, influencing the capacity to take healthy decisions in life.

Unfortunately, in Romanian schools there is no direct approach to dealing with the problem of teenagers' deviant behaviour, such as neighbourhood gangs. There is a lack of debate on this subject, at a pre-university level and the academic level. Thus, there are no prevention/informational campaigns or a strategy to form specialists in working with teenagers who become gang associated.

Other societal factors

Romanian society has become much more secularised with moral and spiritual consequences for the moral guidance of young people. The church is inactive on issues or debates relating to gang association when formerly it would give a lead.

The impact of rapid urbanisation and associated disparities of wealth and rising disadvantage are causing social strain. The level of disruption creates the conditions for youth deviancy. There is little trust between young people and the institutions of civil society. There is no national or local prevention strategy dealing with gang related youth disaffection, though there are programmes targeting more generally juvenile delinquency their coordination locally. What is clear is at a municipal level there are no interventions other than punishment through the courts.

Socio-psychological approaches

Man is the most complex creature endowed with the ability to make free choices; choices based on personality, character, experience and context. These realities can make the difference between a good choice and a bad one. Such complexities influence how and why a teenager joins a gang and develops criminally deviant behaviour.

Taking criminal decisions is the result of mental processes that occur at the level of consciousness. The specific circumstances of individual's life have also an important role. Under this context, the offense should not be considered simply as a reaction to external factors, as the actual situation of life itself generates an act of will, but only when correlated with an individual's personality, reflecting the interests, habits, attitudes, psychic peculiarities of the individual.

A child's personality begins to emerge after the age of two, when the child starts to perceive and to pay attention to what happens around him. The family is the early socialiser. During adolescence individual personality develops as does identity. The so called 'crisis' of adolescence leads to wider impacts for the teenager, the family and beyond. This is a period of increasing capacity for abstraction and synthesis as the child becomes strong and capacity grows. His group of friends put its mark on the formation of personality. His entire thinking holds a large dose of subjectivity. Countering this is the 'objectivity' represented by parents and teachers. All his turmoil of adolescence leads to the crystallisation of personality. When the child grows and develops in unhealthy conditions, in a divided family, when he is negatively influenced by classmates, or by friends, his personality can

become that of an offender. The personality of a juvenile delinquent is the result of unsuccessful connections of a range of factors that contribute to the creation of human personality.

Behavioural disorders can represent one of the bio-mental origins of juvenile delinquency. Such disorders can manifest as suicidal behaviors, absconding, aggression and juvenile delinquency. Juvenile delinquency is affected by emotional immaturity and other imparted development factors.

Running away and homelessness are two other factors relating to serious behavioural disorders, usually associated with school dropout and disturbance. Running away is not a crime but it is a beginning of delinquent behavior. Vagrancy is a form of organised escape, determined by dissatisfaction with the natural environment. Victims of homelessness are often children raised in orphanages where living regime is severe. In general, children with disharmonic personalities are inclined to wandering.

Among the factors leading to this phenomenon there is a spirit of revolt, a desire for independence, boredom, a spirit of adventure or the pursuit of happiness. Some specialists consider that adolescent homelessness is a "symbol" of insulation in a dehumanised world from the family universe point of view.

Deficiencies of affection impact on juvenile delinquency. The majority of juvenile delinquencies are children coming from dysfunctional families. They have a disharmonic personality due to lack of affection and emotional impulses. Emotions play a very important role in creating appropriate behaviors and in adapting to the environment. A child deprived by the warmth of a family, by the emotions of others can lead to an egocentric personality.

The emerging personality of a child is strongly influenced by the example of its parents. The family prepares the child for life, it can be an educational environment or, on the contrary, it can facilitate deviant behaviours. The family exerts their influence on the child by its structure, its material and cultural standards. Family system dysfunction is the main cause of deviant behavior in children. Family breakdown or death can also exert a negative influence on the child.

Failure at school and school instability can create the conditions or make possible the emergence of delinquency. Poor educational experiences can impact on child development and lead to affiliations with peers who are disaffected.

Peer influences are significant in many situations (gang or clan grouping) creating a "negative " influence which can lead to juvenile delinquency . These groups are made up mostly by young people from dysfunctional families, with deficient schooling and school failure. Such groups are active on the edge of social deviance , frequently extewnding to criminality. Research research shows that the group of friends in which the juvenil delinquent is integrated, consists usually of individuals of the same age and sex with minors involved. Some authors believes that these groups functioning by virtue of a 'defense mechanisms' .

Conclusion

"Gangs" and "gang related crimes" are concepts challenging to translate and to adapt to local realities in Romania. The perception of the general public and the understanding varies from assimilating these concepts to something present in "American movies" to ridiculing them in association with a fashion and music trend specific to Balkan countries.

It is a topic with not much priority, that develops slowly in the subsidiary and that will become in the near future a "sudden" crisis that "takes us unexpectedly". So for our further actions prevention is the key word, together with the creation of specialised networks able at the needed moment to take direct action.

France

National profile

The population of France is 65.8 million of which 16.2 million are aged 20 or less. Its surface area is 674,843 km$_2$. It is a founding member of the EU, with a GDP of 2 032.3 billion euros (2012).

Note the data sets supporting sources and studies are detailed in the full report as an appendices.

National policy

Is there a specific and coherent set of policies and policy instruments that address issues relating to gangs and serious gang associated youth offending?

Rising gang violence, particularly in Paris, during the late 2000s was not properly understood by national government, though the phenomenon is not new to France. "*When faced with the rise of violent gangs who attack the rules and the organization of the society and the symbols of our Republic, the State does not have the right to show weakness"* (François Fillon, Prime Minister, 2009).

In 2009, the French National Supervisory Body on Delinquency (future ONDRP) collected the limited available evidence to better understand this phenomenon. A study conducted by the Central Headquarters of Public Security in March 2009 enabled improved quantification of the problem. It produced an inventory of 222 violent gangs in France, which assembled around 2,500 regular and a similar number of associate members. Between September 2008 and August 2009, the Central Headquarters of Public Security counted 366 confrontations between gangs, of which more than 80% took place in the Paris region. These confrontations resulted in six fatalities and 143 persons were inflicted with grievous bodily harm (Pillet, 2009). These figures do not represent the scale of gang delinquency, especially where 'highly sensitive' or difficult neighbourhoods are concerned given the prevalence of 'community silence'.

The number of complaints filed in these neighbourhoods is thus much lower than figures for inhabitants' perception of insecurity. When faced with the lack of actual information and unsuitable actions delinquent gang activity did not follow the general decrease of delinquency. In consequence public authorities launched a series of measures detailed in the 'Combat plan against violent gangs'.

This 2009 Combat Plan set out 16 measures following four general objectives:

- To adapt and to modernize the actions against gangs
- To improve the efficiency of judicial investigations
- To make criminal law stricter
- To protect and make "highly sensitive" school institutions safer

These measures, which concern the actions of the police, the justice system and the national education system, aim at a better knowledge of the phenomenon as well as a more appropriate means of action. Thus, they concern especially:

- The creation of an urban conglomeration police in each geographical delinquent activity area (especially in Paris) with a clear mission: to coordinate the collection of information and in particular to improve the reactivity of law enforcement agencies in response to the high mobility of gangs
- The introduction of a group specialized in combatting urban violence and gangs within the authority of public security in each French department
- The acceleration of the deployment of 100 local neighbourhood units (UTEQ) and of "companies de sécurisation"10 (units adapted to "sensitive" neighbourhoods, created in 2008)
- The creation of shared intelligence a file dedicated to urban violence and the phenomenon of gangs for the information to be shared more easily and accessed by all the actors in the penal chain.
- The acceleration of the installation of CCTV systems in school zones (those declared "sensitive")

In 2010 the President strengthened legal measures and penalties which has become the legislative component of the Combat plan against violent Gangs.

French law accommodates for juvenile delinquency group (gang/mob) offending. The prerequisite in French law concerning the perception of offences committed in groups is that there is no collective criminal responsibility, as under the law 'one is punishable only for one's deeds'. This individualization of criminal responsibility, however, is not an obstacle to someone being charged with offences committed in groups, once it has been established that the suspect has played a role in the acts, if only through abstention (Pillet, 2009).

French courts do not hesitate to make all members of an informal gathering responsible for a crime or misdemeanour, as long as one offence may be attributed to each of them, or to take into account the context in which the acts of violence or the destructions have been committed, and particularly the phenomenon of "mob behavior" created by a group.

The juvenile justice system:

The Juvenile Justice System Directorate belongs to the Judicial Youth Protection Directorate. This authority takes care of both children and adolescents at risk and of juvenile delinquents as identified by legal directives. Proceedings in the system allow for non-penal interventions including a range of 'orders'. The juvenile court system has powers for a range of sanctions for infractions including: parental supervision orders, exemption from punishment and strictly educative measures, judicial protection, placement and compensation.

France has comprehensive child protection arrangements and operates a framework of 'children at risk'. However, the incorporation of statistics and surveys outside of policies of prevention and security remains underdeveloped in France. The causes and/or the consequences of this fact are that the tools to measure delinquency offer only a partial image of reality, as a result of flaws within the police and judicial statistics as well as the fact that the methods of analysis and exploitation used remain questionable. Only recently has France adopted victim survey and self-referral crime surveys. Hence the reliability of official data is questionable as being representative with consequences for under-reporting of juvenile delinquency. It is essential to make use of other sources, and in particular information obtained through surveys directed at a sample of the population. Statistical methods which allow us to obtain information directly from the victims or potential offenders, such as victimhood and self-referral crime surveys, are sources of information which supplement administrative statistics. Only since 2007 has had an actual regular and representative victimhood survey at its disposal (the Lifestyle and Security Survey).

To improve data collection and reliability an informative report referring to the statistical measuring of delinquency and its consequences was submitted to the Assemblée Nationale at the end of 2013 (Le Bouillonnec,

Quentin, 2013). Starting with the strict overview of the situation in France, it presents certain recommendations as to how to develop the situation. The main point is to redirect the missions of ONDRP towards research and assessment of the public policies, but also to highlight overlapping views that encourages the development of regular victimhood surveys, in order to confront police and judicial data with non-penal information. The point is also to give the surveys of general population priority while measuring certain kinds of delinquency.

The role of delinquency prevention:

As part of the "Combat plan against violent gangs" and subsequent repressive legislation, President Sarkozy identified the need to ensure …'*the prevention of delinquency being inseparable from the combat against criminality'.* Subsequently, several reports published between 2009 and 2010, the first of which authored by Jean-Marie Bockel, refers widely to the question of violent youth gangs. The objectives are to improve public authorities' analysis and surveillance capabilities when confronted with the phenomenon of a number of young people getting out of control, in order to produce effective responses. Three great working groups emerged covering:

- support to parents
- the restoration of citizenship through school interventions
- the implementation of a strategy to reconquer public space.

'*The point here is to look at the reality in front of us, to face up to the challenges which undermine the republican pact in its day-to-day expression, whether we talk about the phenomenon of gangs, of trafficking, of the rise to power of the underground economy or of fundamentalist proselytism, hostile to the principles of secularism.'* (Bockel, 2010). The question of violent gangs is thus integrated into the working group concerned overall with the damaging occupation of streets and public space in general.

The first of these reports produced by Bockel states …'*The street is the place for all the trafficking around which the activity of gangs develop"* (Bockel, 2010). In response a programme of police-school interventions introduced tailored training courses to improved relational understanding. This is part of the 'Juvenile Delinquency Plan' (JDP).

The basis for this proposition is two-fold: the persistent rejection and hostility between the young and the police force, and the way unprepared police officers are assigned to the most difficult neighbourhoods. The police schools programme is generalist and does not constitute a complete training course dedicated to the issues particular to children and adolescents.

Specialized training courses remains open and it constitutes one aspect of the overall national strategy concerning delinquency prevention. Other practical are underway such as the University of Versailles' proposed a degree in "Security and urban life", which includes studies on youth sociology and delinquency.

The integration of academic courses in the social sciences and humanities, as well as research work, may be found not only in training courses addressed at those who would like to take up work in related professions. It is also present in certain documents edited by the Police Headquarters, addressed at existing staff, following the example of an informative brochure "Preventing acts of violence, four axes, and eight measures" (2010). This document combined both the "Combat plan against violent gangs" and the JDP, delivered through partnership-based and multidisciplinary field staff teams. It takes into consideration both police statistics and the data obtained through victimhood and self-referral crime surveys in order to decipher the mechanisms of violence and

to define predictable variables of delinquency and repeat offending. It is based on interviews with experts and analysis of the research.

As far as the phenomenon of violent gangs is concerned, works considering the subject include those of Eric Debarbieux and Catherine Blaya (analysis of the phenomenon in the school context) or those of Marwan Mohammed (relations between the degree of parental supervision and membership of violent gangs).

Institutionalised mobilisation:

The role of the delinquency prevention authorities is – among others – to understand the phenomenon, illustrated by their willingness to train field agents as well as through the publication of documents whose objective is to better describe and quantify gang culture.

The promulgation of certain academic studies by the administrative authorities has allowed work on the study of violent gangs in France to become more widely known outside the hermetic world of experts studying the question of the juvenile gang delinquency. This phenomenon, which was observed notably between 2009 and 2010, soon came to an end: Institutional publications on juvenile delinquency are rare today. In fact, the Inter-ministerial Committee for Delinquency Prevention (CIPD) does not mention "gangs" in its appraisal of the national delinquency
prevention plan carried out between 2010 and 2012 (CIPD, 2013) or in the presentation of the new national strategy of delinquency prevention elaborated for the years 2013-2017 (CIPD, 2013).

Social structure

1. Definition - what is a gang?

From the 'Apaches' of the Belle Epoque to 'Blousons noirs' in the 1960's to the 'Zoulous' in the 1980's, historians focusing on working-class youth have emphasized that groupings of young persons have always caused fear (Perrot, 2001). 'Youth gangs' are indeed inextricably linked with a strong warrior image, marked by a multiplicity of definitions. The etymology of the word 'bande' (from Italian: *banda*, a corps of troops distinguished by its flag) refers to the notion of a group having a leader and bearing a distinctive sign, which represents it and differentiates it from others (Esterle-Hedibel, 2007).

In 1974, Philippe Robert and Pierre Lascoumes proposed the first typology, still referred to today, distinguishing four forms of youth gatherings: groups with an institutional base, spontaneous groups, hordes and gangs (Robert, Lascoumes, 1974).

- · *Groups with an institutional base* are sub-groups of young persons who were initially united within the framework of organized socialization (popular education, schooling, sport education or competition)
- · *Spontaneous groups* are informal (emotional, entertainment-based or relational) gatherings of young persons who frequent the same place (school) or territory (neighbourhood). Their composition is quite homogeneous as far as age, sex and social milieu are concerned
- · *Hordes* are gatherings of numerous young persons without an organized structure but with a 'collective awareness of belonging' or 'common attitude' on the musical, esthetical or Cultural level. The interrelations in *hordes* are quite weak, and generally based on body language and the physical behaviour rather than on verbal relations
- · *Gangs* are a form of *hordes* but their composition is rather reduced and the interrelations are much more important and thus more efficient for collective actions towards a common objective.

More precisely, Robert and Lascoumes define gangs as "*informal groups essentially consisting of a fairly limited number of adolescents, whose attitude appears to the wider society as marginal, or even deviant. Their activities and sometimes their delinquency provide an objective basis for this attitude. It is enough to pay attention to the three characteristics: an informal group – homogeneous – deviant in comparison with its environment and deviant at an age of social integration.*" (Robert, Lascoumes, 1974).

The *Eurogang* network contains several cumulative criteria of a gang. A group of young persons is a "gang" when its members qualify themselves as such, declare that it has existed for two or three months, when it often occupies public space and tolerates and/or commits delinquent acts. According to these criteria, used in the self-referral crime study conducted in 2009, Éric Debarbieux and Catherine Blaya estimate that 8% of junior high school students belong to a delinquent group (Debarbieux, Blaya, 2009).

The work of Marwan Mohammed challenges terms such as "peer group", "clan", "set" or "syndicate" as they do not reflect source analysis and empirical observations (Mohammed, 2011).

How does the mass media and the rise of social media impact on gang-related reporting and activity?

During the 2000s media representations of young people (in the majority from immigrant and coming from working-class neighbourhoods), as gang members appeared to belong to the "dangerous classes". A series of serious gang related incidents were profiled in the national media. Subsequently, apart from stories in local news, the "riots" of October-November 2005 constituted the most important event incriminating 'gangs' (Mucchielli, Le Goaziou, 2006; Roché 2006). Speaking in November, 2005, the Minister of the Interior, and future President of the Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy, declared that "*the main cause of desperation in the council estates (banlieues) is drug trafficking, gang law, the fear dictatorship, and the withdrawal of the authorities of the Republic*". 'Gangs' have gradually started to appear to be the principal source of the 'council estate problem'.

In February 2006, hundreds of articles, broadcasts and reports were dedicated to the case of the 'barbaric gang', a group of young persons who have kidnapped, held prisoner and murdered a young man of Jewish origin. The media's expression 'barbaric gang' did not come from the reputation that the group had acquired before the case – none of the close relations of the defendants knew it. Rather it came from the fact that the expression successfully combined two themes that were central to the fears and moral panic of the French at that time:

· Decivilization caused by foreigners; and
· The violent Americanization of council states.

Gangs, or what they represent, could then constitute a dangerous and close reality for a part of society. They have become a synonym for local insecurity and have themselves caused fear. Under the influence of the media, a fear of young persons in working-class neighbourhoods emerged whose representation was dominated by delinquency and violence. Working-class neighbourhoods would become the territories of high-risk social disorganization, ethnicised and occupied by violent youth (Boucher, 2009).

Structural social conditions and socio-economic factors:

In the sociological paradigm, gangs inscribe themselves into the local and global social logic as the expression of institutional dysfunction (Mucchielli, Mohammed, 2007). The Chicago School (Becker, Goffman) recognised that gang deviant phenomena allows access to a certain form of integration and recognition, making up for institutional shortcomings. The gang becomes a space for collective experimentation and a place to build up identity through peer recognition. This search of social space develops in more or less violently, depending on the

presence of the welfare state, family structures, the state of the school system and the job market. As Michel Kokoreff (2006) highlighted the transformation of gangs in recent history reveals the deep changes within our society.

The social effects in 1980's of de-industrialization created mass unemployment and social insecurity. In this context, youth gangs are analysed in the light of "galère", as an experience which favoured the appearance of new social logics when faced with disorganization and exclusion (Dubet, 1987). In the same decade immigration and its focus on council estates has compounded social tensions including the stigmatization of children of immigrant families assigned a double identity. During these years gangs consisted mostly (in terms of visibility, at least) of young people coming from the Maghreb, Sub-Saharan Africa or the West Indies. A young person of foreign origin became synonymous with social danger, which contributed to the progressive attribution of an 'ethnic' character to the question of gangs. While discrimination concerning employment, accommodation or activities affected all of such young persons, 'ethnicized' identities developed, especially among those who were members of gangs (Esterle-Hedibel, 1999). Finally, the progressive development of illegal drug markets since 1980 compounded these factors as drug misuse and trafficking led to the establishment of underground economies in poor neighbourhoods caused a domino effect: increasing repression of young persons, criminalization of the new working classes, and the stigmatization of 'sensitive estates'. (Duprez, Kokoreff, 2000). The convergence of these elements, according to Kokoreff, illustrates the change in the way gangs are perceived and their power to question our social functioning.

Insecurity, relegation and ethnicization are the three general social phenomena which may allow us to understand, from a strictly sociological point of view, the issue of gangs. Some even propose the term 'ghettoization' (Boucher, 2009) to define a process that would include a variety of phenomena, such as the increasingly high levels of insecurity of inhabitants, integration in a markedly ethnicized territory or the high visibility of inactive and stigmatized young persons. These territories could be then defined through the means of social segregation. The unemployed, persons receiving minimum social benefits, broken families, immigrants, long-term unemployed youth ("jeunes en galère"), etc., would constitute the heart of this population (Boucher, 2009).

Nevertheless, the sociological aspects here are irrelevant unless we analyse representations from young people themselves who inhabit these spaces and how they may perceive their social prospects. Self-awareness and the awareness of one's place in society is formed very early, from the moment the earliest external assumptions and judgements are made, the child understand that it belongs to a certain social milieu; that it lives in a certain neighbourhood and, for many children from marginalised neighbourhoods, that it has skin of a certain colour. This raises the question as to the whole of the social construction of individual identity, particularly to the sources of the development of negative self-image: stigmatized housing, inferior economic position, the increasing depreciation of blue-collar work, the lack of faith in public authorities and the precocious contact with racism at school, leisure, job search, and in contact with police officers, etc. It must be indeed emphasized that juvenile delinquents, especially those who are members of a gang, show this feeling of depreciation of self more often than others and that, in the situation where social
possibilities are denied to them, delinquency may be considered a strategy of self-valorisation.

Studies concerning drug trafficking in the so called 'sensitive' neighbourhoods confirm this: "*the point is maybe less to make up for the accumulated frustrations and more to get back at someone in relation to their own existence to earn a place one lacks*" (Duprez, Kokoreff, 2000).

Families, peers and schools in the origins of delinquency:

Broken Families:

In general, a number of studies show that the link between broken families and delinquency is weak or non-existent as far as serious offences are concerned (thefts, violent behaviour), slightly more significant in the case of drug consumption (especially soft drugs), and highly significant in the case of "problematic behaviour" (absconding, school absenteeism, discipline problems at school).

Family and peers:

The majority of future delinquents start to commit illicit acts as pre-teens. The phenomenon appears approximately between the ages of 8-10, increases at around 12-13 years, increases/peaks about 15-16, then significantly decreases over time, almost entirely disappearing from the mid-thirties.

What are the factors which restrain or, on the contrary, encourage the development of delinquent activity (Mucchielli, 2001)? If *family* is undeniably the first socializing environment of a child and the source of its identity, of its perception of the world and its behaviour, it rapidly ceases to be the only social milieu involved, or even the one that is the most decisive. Leaving early childhood means becoming open to the world outside the family, accepting new roles (especially in the school system), competition with peers (at school, sport and other activities), as well as confrontation and affiliation with new social categories. The young person internalizes more or less coherent social identities, which define roles and attitudes. If delinquency can start between the ages 8-10, it is because this corresponds to the point when the child ceases to be directly and almost exclusively dependant on its parents with regards to the definition of itself and the construction of its identity. Its peers, school and to a greater extent the global perception of society and of its future appear then as dimensions essential in the development of its behavior.

The influence of *peer groups* is very important in many respects. Of all the factors linked directly with delinquency, peer influence is undoubtedly the one criminological studies have focused upon the most during the last twenty-five years (Reiss, 1988). Firstly, we must consider the fact that the peer group may be initially formed by siblings. The role of siblings in instigating and perpetuating engagement in delinquency is firmly established (Rowe, Farrington, 1997). The results of such research indicate that, in general:

·   the percentage of juvenile delinquents is higher in families where other members have also been delinquent (however, this also refers to the parents)
·   the influence of siblings increases with the number of siblings
·   when they exist, delinquent groups of siblings contribute significantly to the delinquency in a given geographic area.

Peer groups are major agents of socialization and constitute a framework for initiation into petty delinquency in certain situations, often in the form of games and sometimes rites of passage (Bloch, Niederhoffer, 1974) or as evidence of bravery even before becoming, possible sources of revenue or the purchase of consumer goods. The incriminated acts are vandalism against public buildings, defiance and insults addressed at persons in public authority (teachers, police officers, etc.), petty thefts and violations of the Highway Code which involve risk taking with the aim of making an impression or for pure entertainment (Leputre, 1997). These everyday experiences take place in the context of inactivity, boredom, amusement, self-affirmation, challenge and a situation in which one peer gets others to follow. Nevertheless, if certain forms of petty delinquency and violence pertain to socialization between peers, they should not necessarily be considered forms of asociality forewarning of a future delinquent career.

The role of the school:

In very disadvantaged psychosocial contexts, the question which arises does not concern the initial transgression but rather one of withdrawal or alternatively the reinforcement of lifestyles leading to deviancy. It is probable here the school plays a decisive role. Sociological studies and observations of field actors both lead to the same conclusion: disengaging with a school institution constitutes one of the most easily predicted factors in becoming a member of a gang and, correlatively, of entering into a spiral of delinquency and violence.

Thus, the impression of having suffered injustice or the fact of being a part of a class identified as 'difficult' may actually facilitate the process of becoming a member of a group where the young person will find recognition among their peers that they lack at school (Debarbieux, Blaya, 2009). Similarly, in an interview carried out in October 2010, Marwan Mohammed confirms that the great majority of gang members have a very negative attitude towards school, fuelled by humiliating or discriminating personal experiences, even at a very young age (Préfecture de police, 2011).

Numerous studies have attempted to establish a relation between juvenile violence and the extent of parental supervision. Debarbieux and Blaya (2009) showed that engagement in gangs and violence is inextricably linked with inadequacies within family structure. We can claim that being brought up in a disadvantaged milieu helps fuel a certain feeling of resentment among children, and that social exclusion reduces the authority of parents discredited by insecurity and the stigma in which they find themselves. For all that, as the sociologist Sébastian Roché reckons, we "*cannot hold to a vision of a link between delinquency and socio-economic conditions which is too automatic*" (Préfecture de police/Police Headquarters, 2001).

We cannot actually establish a strict causal relation between delinquency and mass unemployment, as nothing allows us to conclude that upbringing practices change according to the situation of the parents in the employment market. Conversely, we may consider that family plays a protective role, when financial considerations allow it to make choices about schools or place of residence. Alongside this we may assume that parents' supervisory ability remains linked to their 'social disadvantage' (such as unemployment or poverty) and the resulting stress and psychosocial destabilization that stems from these issues. Some of the general consequences of unemployment are that the family turns in on itself, withdraws into day to day concerns and lacks future projects, which may in turn prevent children from constructing their own future projects or being successful at school (Mucchielli, 2001).

Psycho-sociological approaches

3.1: Why do young people join gangs and misbehave

Gangs and violence

The phenomenon of gangs, which refers to the problems of juvenile violence, raises the following question: in what way does a gang promote the violence of its members? According to Éric Debarbieux, violence assumes different dimensions within delinquent groups:

- · it is a form of perverse entertainment for certain young people, which occurs more as the un-inhibiting impact of the group tends to reduce the empathy of the individuals towards victims and to facilitate the move towards such actions

- it has an identificational and integrative function. Symbolically, a gang is built up in opposition to something, and most often against institutions (first among which may be the school)
- it has a normative function within the delinquent group. The law of the strongest regulates relations among the members of the gang as well as between gang and the rest of society, so that violence is perceived as a normal, or even necessary reaction (Préfecture de police, 2011).

The self-referral delinquency survey conducted by Debarbieux and Blaya (2009) sheds light on the correlation between violence and belonging to a delinquent group. It highlights the impact of a group on the perception of violence of its members and on the ways in which they use it. It seems clear that juvenile members of delinquent gangs have a different system of values and react very differently to other young people – they legitimize the use of violence, are more impulsive and use violence more often.

Psychosocial factors in aggressiveness and violent behaviours:

Laurent Bègue (2010) defines aggression as "*behaviour designed to deliberately hurt a third party, where the latter is keen to avoid its adverse impact*". It could be a complex result of diverse factors, external and internal, which interact or are neutralized depending on the circumstances and on each individual case. There are three main categories of psycho-sociological factors that have been recognized as having influence on violent behaviour8.

- Factors associated with *theories of tension*.

Every element contributing to the nervousness of an individual, their stress, their unease or the feeling of social exclusion facilitates an increasing risk of aggression. This tension does not need to be based on fact, it can be imaginary. For instance, the image certain young people have of police action in their neighbourhood serves as a justification of their violent behaviour toward public agents. Similarly, we know that dropping out of school is an important predictive factor for
delinquency, and this is well explained through the theory of tension – it is not the school
failure itself which generates violence, but rather the failure perceived as being unjust which
is the source of aggressive tensions.

- Factors associated with *theories of learning*.

These refer to the effect of imitation which is inherent to human beings – the behaviour of our peers has strong influence over our own. The aggressiveness of younger children is reinforced through exposure to role models whose aggressive behaviour serves to systematically denigrate authority. This class of factors explains very well the appeal of the gang and the tendency of young to commit acts of violence in a group.

- Factors associated with *theories of control*.

It is suggested here, based on the model of utilitarian and rational theories that social control through the presence of a "local guardian" tends to limit the uptake of violent acts. Anonymity or absence of individuation combined with a strong lack of control facilitate violent behaviours. Internal control, which refers to the power of norms of internalized behaviour, should be added to forms of external control.

These three groups of factors are obviously not independent – they interact and sometimes neutralize one another. For instance, control which is too strict or too systematic may lead to an increase in tension, to such an extent that surveillance considered illegitimate may actually give rise to an increase in aggression.

Leaving the gang

Withdrawal refers to the process of cessation and renunciation of delinquency. It highlights not only the factors of risk, but also those which contribute to the process of leaving the gang. If in the Anglo-Saxon world the field of research opened up by "withdrawal" has been of sustained interest for over a decade (Farrall, McNeill, 2010; Kazemian, Maruna, 2010 ; Laub, Sampson, 2001 ; Maruna, 2001 ; McNeill *et al.*, 2010), it has been dealt with far less in the French context – a fact which the rare French publications on the subject seem to testify to. France (together with Belgium, Finland and Norway) is one of the countries where this area of research is still developing, under the influence of isolated researchers, who are notoriously blocked in their work by the lack of political and/or academic interest (Farrall, 2008).

Among the rare French researchers interested in this topic, Marwan Mohammed published a book dealing entirely with *Leaving delinquency*: his 2007 study based in the Ile de France charts an extrication process which is complex, slow and progressive, in which time and attrition of the street are vital factors. It is a question of "progressive detachment, by trial and error", rather than of a sudden, unexpected rupture. He summarizes this process in three successive stages which are not linear, however, but which involve pauses, re-assessment or even abandonment and a return to the previous stage:

- *awareness-raising*, "the initial stage of incorporation, acceptance and expression of an image of self outside the gang, more in accordance with social expectations", is what triggers the process of becoming aware of the need to leave the gang
- *mobilization*, "putting into action new personal resolutions", which consists in going from the known to the unknown. Fragile and uncertain, it is the transition between a reassuring social space to a new space, which will require the effort of adaptation
- *'perennization' (consolidation)*, "adoption of a new lifestyle, i.e. a new regime of social relations, new set of norms and values, and a less pessimistic attitude towards the future"

The stage of perennization implies that numerous attempts at leaving the gang have been done, but it is in fact finding the resources, the responses and the social openness which allows one to break up with the former universe of sociability. In such a process of "conversion", several elements may prove to be essential, such as obtaining regular employment, finding a life partner, becoming a parent, religious conversion, etc.

From stigma to reversal

In line with Anglo-Saxon researchers who consider withdrawal an issue of a deep identity change, the idea is that in order to change from the status provided by gang membership, one needs to obtain another status, another social position. Consequently, it is fundamental that relatives and society change their attitude toward those young people who are renouncing deviant behaviour, so that they do not remain victims of "labelling" or stigmatization. As sociologists from the Chicago School (Becker, Goffman) pointed out, individuals who are "labelled" and stigmatized cannot change their identity if their environment does not change its attitude towards them and considers them as capable of leaving deviance.

In this respect, Boucher (2009) emphasizes the fact that for many young people, "neighbourhood" is a place where the relations of mutual acquaintance are strong. It is limited space but one in which support and friendship may unite individuals. For others the 'neighbourhood' is perceived as a place of imprisonment and withdrawal. Those who are more aware of having been imprisoned are those who, at a given moment in their lives, can leave the neighbourhood or even the city, thanks to their success at school or to their career. As they

are no longer under the influence of the 'estate', of the 'neighbourhood culture' and its codes, they can engage with the wider world and experience relations with others differently. Leaving the neighbourhood can thus correspond to a new reality – entering the phase where one can integrate in new spaces of socialization.

More globally, Boucher (2009) remarks that if working-class neighbourhoods and their inhabitants have been subject to 'corrective' public policies for thirty years, it seems that we are witnessing a routinization of the process of stigmatization of council estates inhabitants, in particular, of the young people living there. Yet, this routinization of the attribution of signs of depreciation leads in certain cases to 'reification'. In this perspective, the development of a certain cynicism and the logic of secession by certain young 'rebels' corresponds first of all to the strategy of counter-stigmatization, which can paradoxically reinforce, as 'inverse segregation' (Robert, Lascoumes, 1974), interactions leading to 'inverse reification'. Denied the right to be a 'subject', i.e. to be capable of building up a relation with oneself and to produce one's own existence, these young persons may in turn de-subjectify, or even animalize their 'reificators'. In this case, violence appears to be a phenomenon in itself, corresponding to the satisfaction of the one who exerts it.

To break with these humiliating processes would mean to implement a practical 'policy of recognition', based on the mutual recognition of actors who are 'equal' and 'singular' at the same time. In practice, when police officers, social agents or teachers interact with a person living in a working-class neighbourhood, especially a young one, they should not only establish a relation internalizing the fact that the person is a fully-fledged citizen, having the same rights as all the other citizens, but also build up a specific relation aware of the fact that they are interacting with a complex and singular individual, and not only with an idealised type representative of a stigmatized category.

United Kingdom

National policy

The report below is an edited version of the original report presented to transnational partners in December 2013. It has also been up-dated in light of national developments and feedback from UK and other partners.

The UK has the most enduring gang associational problem than that evidenced by partners. English policy and the framing of interventions have little basis in evidence or evidence of 'effectiveness' for interventions currently in place and there are no comparative studies. UK (England and Wales) gang policy cannot be separated from an ideological drive (shared by all mainstream political parties) to reduce the size and role of the state in social policy alongside a drive to 'marketise' services. Most notably the current programme to privatise probation services and reduce legal aid is producing strong resistance from professionals and many commentators.

In response to a series of high-profile youth shootings and knifings deemed to be gang associated, by the late 2000s in the UK a racialised and underclass conflated discourse of gangs, guns and knife crime was being endorsed at the highest political level.

From these foundations the UK continues to pursue an approach predicated on 'risks' posed by individual (the 'risk factor paradigm'). UK (England and Wales) government ring-fenced funding to the 33 gang 'hotspot' cities and towns enduring serious gun and gang violence continues. There has been a contemporary reduction in serious incidents though the reasons are hotly disputed.

Significantly there is now a re-classification of the 'problem' and its consequential challenges in the UK for policy as the emerging scandal associated with young female exploitation in gang settings has been identified as being systemic across society and not solely reducible to 'gang' contexts. Heavily trailed in the national media in early 2014 high profile criminal cases are being deemed the 'tip of the iceberg'. Most recently UK research has exposed the significance of this problem beyond females vulnerable to gang association to a much wider problem of female sexual exploitation. This information and sources has been shared with all partners.

In a critique of the current 'risk paradigm', Armstrong acknowledges research is rarely if ever the determining factor in policy initiatives – politics, moral judgements, moral panics and ideology are as influential. (Armstrong 2004) Armstrong's critique of the risk paradigm relates to definitional questions about crime, normality and deviancy. Far from being scientifically rigorous and neutral categories, he argues, they are the result of contested historical and political processes which cannot be accepted uncritically. The second critique concerns the paradigm's preoccupation with risk factors as the properties of the individuals under analysis. This, argues Armstrong, ignores the fact that such factors are socially mediated. They are not, in other words, the deficits of individuals abstracted from wider social processes.

Armstrong's concern is with the tendency of risk factor analysis to accept as unproblematic common-sense notions of normality and abnormality, criminality and lawfulness, rather than critically unpack them. As a result, it tends towards hiding the 'contested politics and ethics of social life ... behind a masquerade of expertise' (Armstrong, 2006). In Armstrong's view, risk factor research drives policy making down the road of individual adaptation rather than far-reaching social reform noting that 'poverty, although recognised as a factor associated with high risk, is countered not by economic redistribution but by interventions aimed at supporting individuals at a micro-level with the management of their own risk' (Armstrong, 2006).

The different roles of national and local agencies operating in a gang-related environment -
Strategically the 2011 gang strategy straddles the delivery of the 'Troubled Families' programme, welfare reform, and a reduction in youth anti-social behaviour and gang activism targets vulnerable families.

The 2011 gang strategy includes the creation of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), which co-locate police and other public protection agencies, to cut bureaucracy and make it easier to share information and agree actions. Each borough has a Community Safety Strategy influenced by an audit of crime and disorder known as the 'strategic assessment'.

In framing the 2011 gang strategy the Coalition government has utilised the Centre for Social Justice definition of a gang (2009) 'as a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who:

- see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group
- engage in criminal activity and violence
- lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical but can include an illegal economy territory);
- are in conflict with other, similar, gangs.'

The national policy framework signalled in the 2011 Coalition Gangs Strategy identifies five key principles addressed through integrated service provision:

- Preventing young people becoming involved in violence in the first place with a new emphasis on early intervention and prevention
- Pathways out of violence and the gang culture for young people wanting to make a break with the past

- Punishment and enforcement to suppress the violence of those refusing to exit violent lifestyles
- Partnership working to join up the way local areas respond to gang and other youth violence
- Providing support to local areas wanting to tackle their gang or youth violence problem

Cities like Manchester have formed Integrated Gang Management Units as multi-agency teams aimed at safeguarding young people, families and communities from violent gang activity and supporting gang members exiting from the gang lifestyle. Each multi-agency network is required to produce a 3-year strategy agreeing common safeguarding protocols and a common risk assessment. Delivered through vehicles like gang management units such bodies are tasked to ensure consistency of prioritisation and agreed interventions.

In many local authorities youth work has now been outsourced; focus is on 'resilience' interventions with young people on supervision orders and other control orders placed on engagement schemes offering accredited programmes focussing on the 'desistance' model of extrication from offending behaviour. The gang strategy includes a specific commitment to roll out Multi-Systemic Therapy for young people with behavioural problems and their families to 25 sites by 2014.

Local authorities now operate early intervention and prevention teams working with youth and other services to target groups and individuals most at risk of developing problems. This work is evaluated by identifying the extent to which it builds capacity to deal with issues and problems in later life. Youth prevention programmes identify 8 capabilities that will improve 'protective factors' and include:

Resilience – Self- discipline, self-management, concentration, persistence and control

Relationships – with peers, families, adults, empathy and respect for diversity

Managing feelings – emotional well-being, self- awareness, reflection and self-acceptance

Leadership & participation – motivating others, managing others, reliability and responsibility

Creativity – alternative ways of doing things, enterprise and innovation

Planning & problem solving – organisational skills, critical thinking and evaluating risks

Confidence – self-reliance, efficacy, learning/work readiness

Communication – listening, explaining, expressing, presenting and empathy

Deployment of programmes is assessment driven against known and perceived risks with outcomes tightly structured around the primacy of increasing these 'protective factors' so decreasing risk factors associated with pathways to offending behaviours.

In those areas subject to additional government funding gang interventions are devised through a set of priorities defined by government with some flexibility devolved to local government commissioners (produced through local Community Safety Partnerships) who set out funded programmes, usually of no more than 2-years duration. Although the strategy is multi-agency the police dominate this agenda as it links to those identified as serious offenders within gangs or individuals due to leave prison who are at risk of re-offending. The shape of the current approach in Birmingham (below) is not dissimilar to other English cities covering contracted procurement through a mixture of 'providers' for example as:

- Intensive Support Programme for Young People Involved in, or at Risk of Involvement in Gangs and/or Violent Crime

- Domestic Violence and Sexual Exploitation Programme Worker for Girls and Young Women within the Birmingham Youth Offending Service
- Female Gender Specific Mentoring Service for Girls and Young Women within the Birmingham Youth Offending Service
- Specialist Intensive Support Programme for Young Males from Asian Backgrounds who are Involved in, or at Risk of Involvement in Gangs or Violent Crime
- Intensive mentoring support programme for young males involved in, or at risk of involvement in gangs and / or violent crime

Such 'programmes' can be refined to cover specific ethnic groups, specific age groups, genders or target vulnerable 'youth' through a range of resilience and diversionary activities. Note the concept of 'resilience' is becoming central across a range of gang and non-gang youth interventions where vulnerability to criminalisation is identified. Here 'resilience' is driven by some of the key socio-psychological approaches examined in the original research report. Attached as an appendix is a Birmingham Community Safety Partnership Procurement Prospectus identifying strategy and funded programme priorities.

As with all strategic interventions in UK public policy increased levels of managerialism associated with national outcome frameworks dominate the landscape of interventions with services often fragmented with a culture of risk aversion producing a lexicon of 'outcomes' (quite literally the 'expression' of 'change' verbs). Under such pressures and expectations can institutions 'care'?

Legislation relating to working with gangs or in a gang-related environment and its impact
Gang related legislation and the extension of existing statutory powers provide a further tool in preventing gang-related violence alongside a range of other prevention, detection and enforcement measures. Working with and within youth street gangs can be highly challenging and is an emerging specialism demanding recognition of safe working practices and clear boundaries. (In the UK employers have statutory duties under Health and Safety legislation (Health & Safety at Work Act 1974; Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999) to protect the wellbeing and welfare of their employees and volunteers and the public affected by their operations/activities.)

Much of the enforcement instruments associated with safeguarding children and young people pre-date the introduction of the 2011 'gangs' strategy and include:

Child Protection frameworks
The UK Government's Every Child Matters: Change for Children Programme, which includes the Children's National Service Framework (2009) and is supported by the Children Act 2004, requires all agencies to take responsibility for 'safeguarding' and promoting the welfare of every child to enable them to:

• Be healthy;
• Stay safe;
• Enjoy and achieve;
• Make a positive contribution;
• Achieve economic well-being.

Supported by the Children Act 2004, the government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF, 2006), states that 'multi and inter-agency work to safeguard and promote children's welfare starts as soon as there are concerns about a child's welfare, not just when there are questions about possible harm.' Working within this policy framework, professionals from all agencies have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children

affected by gang activity and/or serious youth violence. (A comprehensive break-down of UK policy instruments and legislation is detailed under this sub-heading in the original UK Report)

Subsequent feedback from the initial EU Gangs UK Report has accommodated the need to address the operation and relevance of:

Safeguarding, Safe-working and Interpersonal Communication in Gang-Related Contexts

In the British context safeguarding has a full recent history of government/legislative based action (which was triggered by some high profile cases and case reviews – including the deaths of Maria Colwell in the 1970s to the more recent concerns raised by Daniel Pelka's 2012 death this year after being starved and abused by his mother and her boyfriend). These have resulted in on-going discourse amongst professionals, the government and communities about the fundamental practices and policies needed to safeguard children in Britain in the face of deepening funding cuts.

In relation to the gangs' agenda and safeguarding issues (for 'clients') there have been some clear themes that have emerged through discussions with co-professionals, from the literature/research and feedback from the students on the pilot:

- The grooming of vulnerable children/young people into gangs and anti-social activities (including girls who are then also subject to sexual exploitation)
- The dangers and the social and mental health issues relating to trauma and its effects in relation to witnessing violence
- Keeping young people who wish to exit gangs 'safe'
- Issues of safety in relation to retribution and conflicts between gangs
- The causes and effects of carrying weapons
-

In regard to workers working with young people in gang-impacted environments there are also the additional issues of negotiating interpersonal communication boundaries, understanding the geography of local areas where gangs are active and ensuring that potentially illegal activity-related boundaries are respected by young people, understanding and addressing perceptions of 'partisanship' (e.g. being perceived to be pro a particular group rather than 'neutral'), working within and ensuring that appropriate policies exist and are implemented within work settings (e.g. lone working policies, calling in and call out policies, policies relating to home visits, weapons search policies and issues of confidentiality).

In relation to communication clearly all the above are 'sensitive' areas of practice with often an added dimension relating to cultural competence (given the often political, racialised gangs agenda – see Runneymede Trust Reports 2008), and therefore there is a need for practitioners to unpick the potential issues when intervening with those involved in gang-related activities/environments and also to develop a 'tool kit' for reading/understanding the issues related to communication in such circumstances. Borrowing from youth work training (which has particularly long, distinguished and distinct history in Britain), a tool kit could for example include exploring the power dynamics in relation to gangs/working in gang contexts (including exploring the theories and practices relating to individual and collective empowerment), using Emotional Intelligence and Transactional Analysis as a theories of communication and to understand communication, exploring motivation in the context of both, what may motivate young people to join gangs and why practitioners may be motivated to engage with such work (and theories of motivation may help to shed light here).

Gangs and Social structure

What is a 'gang'? A struggle in construction and response

There is no consensus on defining what a street gang is and the influence of US street gang research on defining such and offering 'solutions' is deeply problematic. The plethora of contested definitions of the 'gang' refer to groups of three or more, usually young people, with a territorial presence, who engage in illegal behaviour.

Gang terminology is problematic, though its locus in public policy is 'disaffected' largely urban street youth. The UK, following American policy, has adopted uncritically the term 'gang' into UK policy without recognising there are large differences in how groups are structured and organised; the policing practices and policy transfer that has ensued has the potential to further marginalise and isolate disempowered youth.

Most academic research into 'gangs' in Britain has remained more cautious about this supposedly new phenomenon, and critical of the unthinking importation of the American 'gang' model to such a different national, historical and geographical space.

Focus within the UK research literature identifies a range of themes:
* discussions about relative deprivation and structural determinism (social exclusion)
* ethnographic contexts: locally situated youth cultures
* social marginalisation as labelling and the impact of the standards agenda in welfare and education
* familial tensions and attachment breakdown (socio/psychological influences such as 'status anxiety' and attachment breakdown)

Social forces that shape social behaviour and form a context in which gangs can emerge

Social structural conditions (demographic change, deindustrialisation and lack of legitimate employment opportunities, poverty and racism) appear in the literature as far more influential in gang formation as family structure. A perspective largely replicated in British studies of urban street gangs.

Gangs arise in conditions of 'multiple marginality' (Vigil, 1988). The impact of de-industrialisation, globalisation, declining social mobility, urban deprivation, youth unemployment, racism and the retail drug trade has reinforced the social marginalisation of many young people.

The work of J. Pitts (2007) and his 'Reluctant Gangsters' thesis argues that over 20-years Britain has experienced an unprecedented growth in violent youth gangs whose presence on the streets is an urban phenomena with clear socio-economic markers disproportionately affecting specific sections of the population. Globalisation, the realities of post-industrial Britain whose neo-liberal social and economic policies have trapped many families in deprived neighbourhoods into a cycle of poverty and disadvantage. An underclass is emerging, particularly, though not exclusively, affecting BAME young people, resulting in their powerlessness and frustration that turns into rage and the creation of an alternative values that normalise gang membership and violence as they become immobilized at the bottom of the economic ladder and cut adrift from the values of mainstream society

These factors together have created, in certain communities, a generation of disenfranchised young people. Alienated from mainstream society these young people have created their own, alternative, society – the gang– and they live by the gang's rules: the 'code of the street' (Anderson 1999: cited in Young et al, 2012).

The 'collapse of the ghetto', Wacquant (2004) argues, is followed, by 'hyper-ghettoisation', in which material deprivation, the absence of regulating 'social relations' and the violence associated with the drugs trade leads to an intensification of intra-class and intra-racial crime and violence. J. Pitts study (2007) in Waltham Forest,

London, identified that black and mixed heritage young people are over-represented in youth gangs, white and Asian young people sharing a similar social and economic profile and living on the same estates, and in the same neighbourhoods, are also more likely to become involved. This suggests that the impetus towards gang membership is ultimately determined by the social predicament of gang members rather than their race or ethnicity.

Individuals who typically perpetrate the violence classified as 'gang related' are themselves part of what Wacquant terms the 'precariat'; the sub-proletariat that is now surplus to production in a neo -liberal order which no longer requires an organised working class in general and them in particular (Wacquant, 2009; Hallsworth and Lea, 2011).

The socio-economic location of gang related violence remains a feature of multiple deprived inner-urban areas, producing for some critics a 'gang industry' pursuing 'gang talk' resulting in what Joseph & Gunter see as:

- An over-definition of the problem
- The pathologisation and essentialisation of black youth as a peculiar social problem
- The unwitting influence on the focus of policy and practice away from effective prevention

The impact of mass/multi-media and social media on gangs and gang-related activities
In "Folk Devils and Moral Panics", S. Cohen shows how public discourse tends to blame media and popular culture for triggering, causing or stimulating violence - there is a long history of moral panics about the alleged harmful effects of exposure to popular media and cultural forms and social media. "For conservatives, the media glamorize crime, trivialize public insecurities and undermine moral authority; for liberals the media exaggerate the risks of crime and whip up moral panics to vindicate an unjust and authoritarian crime control policy" (Cohen, 1972, 2002).

The representation of youth gangs in the UK in recent years has resulted in heightened media attention of the 'problem', with sensationalised headlines appearing in newspapers relating to violent gang crimes which have led to the deaths of many young people. This has resulted in the fear of groups of young people within communities, as well as a multitude of government responses

The gang moral panic comes with a significant health warning: The media and police are likely to give delinquent groups a gang name (Gordon, 2000) and this along with the use of the word 'gang' conjures up 'stereotypical images' (Marshall et al, 2005), therefore both researchers and agencies can amplify a negative labelling processes (Hallsworth and Young, 2004).

The wider impact of youth culture on gangs and gang culture
The British academic tradition has long denied the existence of urban street gangs preferring to study the socio-economic post-16 transitions of poor working class youth (see the Birmingham School). Whilst gang research thrived in the USA, in the UK there has been until recently resistance to 'gang' focussed research. In the UK there is a disconnect between contemporary youth cultural studies and the recent rise in 'gang' research with the latter preoccupied with a narrower focus on the agendas of criminology, policing and community safety.

It is the blurring of definitional boundaries and the inability of researchers to construct any consensus around 'classification' that leads to an over-focus on 'multiple marginality' associated with deviant behaviour: behaviours and identities that are not on a continuum. The conflation between youth sub-cultures and crimo-genic gangs as problems of 'offending youth' is a research minefield - occupying distinctive theoretical paradigms - given the fact

crime is disproportionately a youthful activity and where it is claimed anti-social attitudes are among the strongest predictors of offending (Healy, 2010).

Many young people are attached to street-based groups and these are not always gangs. Without this distinction and a separation between street gangs presenting low-range 'disorder' and 'organised crime groups' or the professional elite of criminals we should not lose sight of the fact much serious youth violence happens outside of 'gang' contexts.

The representation of 'the gang' in the present debate has relied on a mixture of speculation, statistical reports by institutions with a specific remit on crime, and speculative journalistic accounts. There is very little sustained qualitative work into 'gangs' in Britain, while sociological accounts of youth cultures and identities have been excluded from the discussions. There is an urgent need for more intensive and long term empirical investigation into youth identities and violence that takes as its focus the mundane encounters of everyday life and conflict (Alexander, 2008)

The following key themes are examined in full detail in the original UK Report:

- The concept of belonging within a gang-related environment
- The relationship between gangs and crime
- The impact of family in the socialisation process of young people and the reasons for development of deviance
- The underclass thesis
- Family structure and delinquency
- Family structure and gang membership
- The parent–child relationship and its relation to delinquent behaviour
- The parent–child relationship and gang membership
- The role of familial criminality or tacit endorsement of criminality as an influential factor
- Familial gang membership
- Family influence on gang membership

Conclusion:

The Young et al (2012) study into the role of the family in facilitating gang membership, criminality and gang extrication suggests that troubles within the family can contribute to pushing some young people into street life and gangs but for the majority of young people and family members who took part in this study it was not seen as the key driver for gang formation or exit; the reality, as the literature illustrates, was more complicated.

Given the provenance of family socialisation on the 'normative' inculcation of social conventions (behaviours and shared values), the assumed causal relationship between family 'failure' and gang membership (social status) and behaviour (offending or otherwise) is problematic as most studies indicate that family risk is not present in every case of confirmed or suspected gang association, though it is acknowledged as 'a nested risk' (Shute, 2011).

The literature shows that gang members come from single-parent and dual-parent households, large and small families, illustrating that there is not one gang family type. There is a similar pattern in youth deviancy studies. There is recognition that 'gangs' are not homogeneous groups and that people who are associated with them do not all engage in the same type or level of antisocial behaviour or criminality.

Socio-psychological approaches to street gangs and serious youth offending

Why do people join gangs and 'behave badly'?

Acting 'badly' involves much more than just "what is in people's heads". It conflates agency with structure: therein lies the dichotomy at the heart of the analysis of street gang activism. Of the relatively large proportion of adolescents who display antisocial and / or offending behaviour, a small proportion become gang members, a large proportion of whom will have significantly enhanced risk of negative outcomes that are caused in part by amplificatory inter ⁄ intra-group dynamics associated with 'street culture', by both informal and formal labelling processes and complex issues associated with social exclusion. Negative outcomes accrue across a range of agents and communities at large (John, 2010; Shute, 2011).

Until recently gang research has primarily focussed on criminological and sociological perspectives, with criminological theories paying scant attention to the social psychological processes involved in joining a gang. There is a real need to understand more about the psychology of gang involvement (Wood and Alleyne, 2010).

The assertion that "people choose to act badly" is the core proposition in classical theory, popularised in the 18th Century, which put much emphasis on agency claiming that individuals act on the basis of free will (Siegal 2010). That is, people commit crime when, in their calculations, the possible rewards from that act of crime outweighs the potential punishment. However, with the development of the study of criminology, many criminologists began to consider and argue for the significance and role of structure and its influence on deviant behaviour. Ultimately, criminal behaviours are a choice. The recurring theme in youth gangs is that a large number of adolescents in gangs are from 'marginalised, highly stressful families', which create an environment in which they inevitably become peer-dependent and rely on other gang members as role models (Vigil, 2003).

Sub cultural theory, provides some theoretical explanations as to 'where and how the subculture of violence is learned and practiced' (Vigil, 2003); adolescents' disconnection from families and schools, and bond with the subcultural group of youth gangs, encourages them to participate in violent activities. The dis-functional social structure, economic pressure, group bonding and subcultural groups offer an understanding of the role of the structure, and that criminal behaviour cannot be explained wholly in terms of individual choices, free will or self-control. These structural theories argue that people do not choose to act badly to hurt others or themselves, but are influenced by the wider social and economic structures. However, structural theories as a whole still fail to provide an explanation as to why the majority of certain socio-economic groups and adolescents from problematic families do not join gangs or engage in delinquent activities (Vigil, 2003). As John (2010) postulates 'Why is it that certain young people choose lifestyles and adopt identities that compound their social exclusion and lead them to embrace a life of crime and gratuitous violence, whereas their siblings and peers living in exactly the same conditions and facing the same challenges and constraints do not so much as spit in the street'? Vigil (2003) argues that the human development stage from childhood to adulthood is an ambivalent period in which adolescents struggle to find their social and sexual identities. In this stage, dependence on peer groups increases and thus, it is easier to learn and adapt behaviours, whether they are ethnic- or cultural-specific, or gender-specific behaviours.

The significance of social psychology in understanding human groups and 'gangs'

The role of theory and research in understanding why youth join gangs has identified a large number of problematic issues that need to be identified and overcome. Research in this area is dogged by definitional difficulties and current theoretical approaches have both value and limitations.

Albert Bandura created the idea of the Social Learning Theory which focuses upon the aspect of behaviourist psychology. Behaviourist psychology draws upon the idea that external stimulus, or the effects of our environment, affect the way we behave. This suggests that we learn our behaviour through conditioning and observation (Newburn, 2007).

In relation to Bandura's theory, Sutherland also created a theory, known as Differential Association, which suggests that interaction with other like-minded persons, leads on to having the influence of their behaviour, and creating a criminal subdivision through society (Burke, 2009). Sutherland's theory departs from the pathological perspective and biological perspective by attributing the cause of crime to the social context of individuals.

Social psychology offers a myriad of theories, but the main theories associated with gang affiliation and extrication offer linkages across a range of gang phenomenon from 'pull' factors to the meanings associated with gang affiliation and offending behaviours through the prism of social identity.

Gangs, Identity and attachment

One of the necessary aspects of a gang includes how the members perceive the meanings and missions of the gang and the significance the individual gang members attach to the membership or affiliation. Social psychological approaches relate to thinking, socialising and relational and attachment processes at the individual level: the 'self' and the 'group' identified usually through a heightened sense of affiliation, identity, status, place and ritual. In the context of the 'gang' they offer insights into negative aggression.

Gangs affect individual members' motivations by meeting and sustaining their individual members' needs for social identity. Also, a group's norms, rules, and moral standards justify the actions of its individual members, particularly when these actions conflict with some established social norms. A gang affects its individual members' cognition through the majority-imposed informational influence, which makes gang members believe that the perceptions of the majority in the group must be correct. A group can also produce the diffusion of responsibility and de-individualisation. This involves a loss of personal responsibility for individual actions and less concern about the consequences. The author also argues that gang members are more vulnerable to group influences than other juveniles because they are isolated from other social environments and are more likely to have experienced various crimino-genic influences, such as violent victimisation, unemployment, and limited education.

Many of the studies reported previously were sociological in focus. These studies typically explore societal and community variables (Dutton, 2006). Decker and Van Winkel (1996) note that these variables are often interpreted as 'pushing' young people towards gang affiliation. However, they note that it is also important to recognise that gang membership can exert a strong 'pull'.

Compared with research into factors that lead to gang affiliation, there is relatively little published work on the maintenance of gang membership. In a notable exception, Aldridge and Medina (2007) provide some important

insights into the processes involved in maintaining gang affiliation. Their interviews and observations of several gangs within one English city suggest a number of factors maintaining involvement. These include the following:

- Gang affiliation providing a source of money
- loyalty and ties of reciprocity
- force of habit
- being 'stuck'
- gang membership supporting the transition from adolescence to adulthood

Social psychology is helpful in dealing with the concept of 'self', change and the 'changing self' as evolving and competing social identities over time, often associated with issues of 'maturation' and gang desistance. Social psychology and group theory offer helpful insights to the processes and importance of examining individual and collective differences in the cognitive processes that relate to gang involvement and theories such as desistence.

Desistance was described as a gradual process involving a cognitive element (wanting to get out), turning points (for example, fatherhood), and opportunities (for example, good jobs).

The basic principles of social psychological theories and their relevance to working with gangs and in gang-related environments

The purpose of working with gangs or 'interventions' is deemed important in public policy terms for social control, community safety, personal safeguarding and legal precepts surrounding property and the person. Until recently UK interventions have been largely punitive and piecemeal but the shift to adopting the desistance paradigm and incorporating preventative strategies increasingly employ psychological principles that seek to identify and treat personal problems and disorders before they translate into criminal behaviour, or the extrication from. Organisations involved in such primary prevention efforts include family therapy centres, mental health associations, school counselling programs and substance abuse clinics. School teachers, social workers, youth courts and employers frequently make referrals to these programs. Some argue that the expansion of such psychological services will ultimately reduce the level of violent crime in society (Seigel and McCormick, 2006).

Individual factors and social factors shape the youth's social perception of his/her world. The presence of gangs in the neighbourhood can help shape a youth's attitudes and beliefs about gang membership and crime. If gangs are not active in the neighbourhood, youth will develop perceptions of gang membership and crime from media images or from vicarious experience such as associating with youth from neighbourhoods where gangs are active (e.g., at school). In conjunction with perceptions of gangs will be the youth's perception of the availability of legitimate opportunities. Personal failure at school and the likely associated low self-esteem will increase a youth's negative perceptions of the chance to take advantage of available legitimate opportunities, and may lead to strain. Neighbourhoods peppered with gangs and crime may also make the youth fearful of victimisation, which coupled with perceptions of limited opportunities, may lead to perceptions that the world is a hostile place. Negative attitudes to authority may develop if youth attribute their school failure to school officials rather than the self. And if crime is high in the neighbourhood, and formal social control is low youth may develop hostile or even contemptuous perceptions of the police as see them as failing (or not bothering) to protect people in poor neighbourhoods. Perceptions of social environment and shared values such as a mutual like/dislike of school, mutual attitudes to authority, and mutual fear of victimisation will influence the youth's selection of peers.

The following theoretical perspectives are headlined only and their fuller explication is in the main UK report:

- Theory of social disorganisation
- Theory of cultural transmission
- Social learning theory: theory of differential association
- Interactional theory
- Strain Theory
- Theory of differential opportunity
- The Desistance model

Conclusion:

Why do people join gangs and 'behave badly'? They probably do so to fulfil the needs that any adolescents have: peer friendship, pride, identity development, enhancement of self-esteem, excitement, the acquisition of resources, and goals that may not, due to low-income environments, be available through legitimate means. They may offer a strong psychological sense of community, a physical and psychological neighbourhood, a social network, and social support (Goldstein, 1991). In short, gangs form for the same reasons that any other group forms; they frame a human need for social identity (Goldstein, 2002).

Social psychology offers a wealth of theories explaining the dynamics of groups and each offers the potential for fruitful research into the question of gang formation and desistance.

Community research and programme design

An Asset Based Community Development approach (ABCD)

In the UK the focus on crime management and crime control in relation to the serious problem of youth violence is showing no sign of effectively managing the 'risks' that young people apparently pose, marginalising many young people and deepening divides within communities.

An alternative view of the social and economic context in which we find ourselves suggests that, on closer examination, local communities remain rich in physical, social, financial and personal 'assets'. Indeed, there are huge spaces opening up to mobilise community resources to organise and identify collective solutions to youth violence and youth marginalisation through education and social action programmes based on negotiated and co-designed social learning models and relational power, rather than command and control statist solutions.

Within communities there are assets (people, relationships, skills, knowledge, networks, buildings, finances) with many community members viewed as trusted intermediaries with connections to external power and enlightened services and funders. Many disadvantaged communities have experienced a succession of interventions that treat young people as 'risks to be managed', whilst failing to recognise the structural and situational risks they are facing on a daily basis. Developing new educational and other interventions that are shaped by and within local communities and that mobilise local community assets are increasingly important in devising creative solutions to the challenges facing many of our young people. As a result of the politicisation of youth crime from above and the working practices of key juvenile justice agencies from below, the time is ripe for community led interventions.

A full explanation and framework for adopting ABCD resources and approaches to community consultation and stakeholder is detailed in the main UK report and in subsequent guidance notes issued to all transnational partners.

Appendices

Transnational Partners - Full Reports

Girls and Gangs: UK Centre for Social Justice Report (2014)

UK Exemplar Gang programme procurement prospectus