

Defining the Youth Gang Issues of the 90's and Strategies for the Future

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In recent years youth gangs growth from small farming towns to metropolitan cities has escalated at an alarming rate. Delinquent and criminal youth gangs appear to be more prevalent and they are developing in all regions of the country. Nationwide, arrests of youth for violent crimes increased by 29 percent during the past ten years. The youth gang problem has become more complex as well. At-risk youths who are vulnerable to youth gang recruitment are increasing in numbers across the nation. Our lack of knowledge as to the scope of the problem is due in large measure to the absence of a standard definition for the terms "gang" and "gang crime incident." The ways to measure the impact of youth gangs and their criminal patterns differ across cities. Law enforcement agents must first assess the youth gang problem in their community and identify specific objectives. Based on my experience and review of the literature I have developed a law enforcement strategy model. Multiple program strategies are necessary for law enforcement to be effective. These approaches need to be integrated with a special focus on community mobilization and targeted social