

Ottawa Gang Strategy A Roadmap for Action 2013–2016

1 Year Progress Report



PURPOSE

This report provides an update to the Crime Prevention Ottawa (CPO) Board of Directors on the *Ottawa Gang Strategy: A Roadmap for Action 2013-2015* (OGS). It covers the period from June 2013 to June 2014 and includes activities undertaken, progress to date, challenges and opportunities.

We have built a strong partnership. Our collective approach has helped us achieve progress and encourage a growing dialogue on enforcement, intervention, prevention, and community resilience issues related to gangs.

The OGS Steering Committee (SC) has shown commitment and demonstrated results through the initiatives outlined in this report. Our insights will guide the strategy's focus over the coming years.

ABOUT THE STRATEGY

The OGS is a multi-year, multi-stakeholder plan for action to achieve collective impact on the issues surrounding gangs in the City of Ottawa. Approved by the CPO Board in June 2013, the plan aims to:

- build resilient children, families and communities through positive relationships in gang-affected neighbourhoods;
- take inclusive and preventative approaches through social development, situational measures, education, awareness and community policing;
- identify intervention opportunities for children, youth and adults, including those at-risk, on the edge of joining a gang, or looking to leave gang life; and
- conduct targeted, sustained and effective enforcement.

FACT SHEET

Although this report is focused on providing a qualitative summary of the OGS progress, the following statistics provided by the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) helps put this report into context.

	Reporting Period (Jan to Dec)	
	2012	2013
# Street Gangs(1)	15-19	15-19
# Gang Members and Associates(1)	473	485
Shootings (total)	32	30
- Gang-related	- 15	- 12
- Non-gang related	- 9	- 4
- Unknown	- 8	- 14
Guns Seized (OPS-wide)	64	34
- Shotguns/rifles	- 44	- 25
- Handguns	- 20	- 9
- Pixels for Pistols Amnesty (2)	n/a	1035
Gang members deported by CBSA	7 (program started in April 2012)	4
DART(3) Compliance Checks	163	127
DART Public Presentations	9	5
DART Arrests	122	130
DART Street Checks	103	80
DART Drug Seizures	47	37
Crime Prevention / Intervention (OPS)	106	219

- (1) Gangs are not static entities, making it difficult to track them with absolute certainty. This number reflects the best available information and should be considered as an indicator.
- (2) Pixels for Pistols is a program where anyone who turns in a firearm is given an Olympus digital camera and a Henry's School of Imaging Course valued at \$175. The program collected a total of 735 long guns, 178 handguns, 104 air guns and other replica firearms.
- (3) D.A.R.T=Direct Action Response Team funded in part through the Provincial Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy grant to focus on anti-street gang activities.

GOVERNANCE – OGS STEERING COMMITTEE

The OGS is not a “top-down” initiative. It gives organizations that have a role to play in addressing gangs in our City a place to share their efforts and collaborate with one another to achieve collective impact on the gang issue. Building on the engagement of local stakeholders through the Ottawa Youth Gang Prevention Initiative (OYGPI), the OGS SC was assembled following the 2012 Symposium: *“Taking Action Together: Addressing Gangs in Our City”* to review key findings, identify opportunities for action and together develop the OGS.

The OGS SC includes representatives from:

- Crime Prevention Ottawa (CPO)
- Ottawa Police Service (OPS)
- Youth Services Bureau (YSB)
- Ottawa Community Housing (OCH)
- YOUTURN Youth Support Services (youturn)
- Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres (CHRCs)
- School boards
- The Children’s Aid Society of Ottawa (CASO)
- John Howard Society of Ottawa (JHS)
- LASI World Skills (LASI)

The Committee meets regularly. Members initially focused on guiding the strategy and the work plan, helping to establish shared measurement tools, support community engagement and mobilize funding and resources. The group now meets to discuss challenges and opportunities, solve problems collectively, leverage each other’s knowledge and resources, and reach into each other’s networks to assist when the need arises.

This work has allowed for greater information sharing, engagement and resource leveraging between participating organizations.

The OGS SC will continue to play a pivotal role in implementing the strategy by identifying resources, opportunities and initiatives to build on the work accomplished to date. As this is a ‘corner of the desk’ activity for everyone on the committee with minimal to no new funding, there is commitment to continue to support the work of the SC and seek out other community partners for new initiative and as members of the committee to ensure representative and inclusive oversight and engagement.

YEAR 1 RESULTS

The Ottawa Gang Strategy’s 3 Year Work Plan identified 8 projects under four pillars: Neighbourhood Cohesion, Prevention, Intervention and Enforcement/Suppression. Each of these projects are at varying levels of implementation. In the first year, they benefitted from successes, challenges and lessons learned along the way.

The OGS and its supporting work plan were built within the realities of the 2012–2013 fiscal climate, which remains tight. The strategy has continued to build on modest funding from CPO and initiatives underway or ones that had been resourced and were in the early stages of planning. The following section provides an update on the key activities for each initiative and offers guidance on next steps.



A. OUR GOAL: Neighbourhood Cohesion

Build positive relationships in gang affected neighbourhoods to reduce fear; strengthen relationships; increase evidence of positive social interactions; and, increase community capacity to recognize and address unacceptable activities.

A1. INITIATIVE 1: Community Leadership Network for Families

Lead Organization(s): LASI World Skills

Community Partners/Contributors: CPO (project oversight and grant funding of \$67,680), Criminal Justice Services and Agencies (9), LASI Coalition Settlement Agencies (11), Community Agencies/Services/Groups (7), Immigrant Community Leaders (Faith leaders, community service workers, cultural association leaders)

Stakeholders: Settlement Workers, Community Service Workers, Faith Leaders and Cultural Association Members

Desired Outcomes:

- To increase the trust and understanding between immigrant communities and the Canadian justice system
- To enhance engagement and collaboration between agencies
- To increase understanding and relationships between settlement and justice service agencies
- To increase the level of awareness of available resources between agencies and within immigrant communities
- To increase newcomer parents' understanding of the rights and responsibilities in the youth criminal justice system, with a focus on the criminal court process

Key Activities to Date:

In its first year, this initiative has engaged 272 participants representing 53 agencies and community groups, including frontline workers, faith leaders, cultural association members, and other members of the immigrant community. Other key activities included:

- Establishing the Project Steering Committee membership (19 member agencies) and Terms of Reference
- Conducting a series of stakeholder focus groups and online surveys
- Assembling two Planning Sub-Committees with 28 members and held a total of 7 meetings
- Designing and delivering a series of workshops and “Train the Trainer” sessions with a total of 178 participants
- Holding four (4) community consultations reaching a total of 108 participants
- Holding seven (7) information sessions to a total of 177 participants
- Coordinating site visits for 70 participants of the W.E.H Centre and the Ottawa Courthouse
- Developing materials for a community workshop and Train the trainer workshop titled: *“Youth Criminal Justice: What Parents Should Know”*

Progress / Impact to Date

The Community Leadership Network for Families initiative has been successful in engaging ALL LASI agencies. Self-assessment surveys consistently show positive feedback on their degree of satisfaction and learning. The initiative has successfully trained 50 community trainers to deliver a workshop titled *“Youth Criminal Justice: What Parents Should Know”*.

“Now I know more about this justice system and can share this with my coworkers and clients alike.”

-Settlement Worker, Ottawa Court House Event

“Very informative, especially the panel and working through the case scenario at different steps of the system. Was very helpful in providing a good overview of options and what potentially could happen.”

-Community Worker, “Train the Trainer” Workshop

A2. INITIATIVE 2: Develop a post-incident neighbourhood support protocol

Lead Organization(s): OCH and the CHRCs

Community Partners/Contributors: OPS, CPO (grant funding of \$17,642)

Stakeholders: Staff within OCH, CHRCs and OPS; OCH Residents, community members of various demographic and residing in higher risk communities

Desired Outcomes:

- To support and reassure neighbourhoods affected by tragic or frightening events
- To increase trust between the affected neighbourhood and service providers, especially the police
- Enhance and better coordinate post-incident response of community stakeholders to major incidents (e.g. drive by shootings, murder, home takeovers and major arrests) that are potentially gang related
- By taking a community-based approach and looking at current practices, identify gaps and opportunities to enhance the communications and community engagement activities immediately following first response, by:
 - building relationships in neighbourhoods between citizens, police, and other community services
 - opening lines of communication and reducing negative impact of major incidents on neighbourhoods through timely and accurate information
 - mobilizing residents of neighbourhoods
 - reducing level of fear post-incident (first few hours)
 - building mutual trust

Key Activities to Date:

- Assembled a Project Planning Committee
- Designed, planned and facilitated a half-day exercise with over 50 key community stakeholders, including:
 - First responders (police, fire, paramedics)
 - OPS Community Police Centre Officers
 - OCH
 - CHRCs (Community Developers)

- Community leaders
- Developed and circulated a summary of the exercise with key recommendations
- Explored synergistic initiatives among key stakeholder organizations to potentially leverage concurrent initiatives of complementary scope

Progress / Impact to Date

The exercise in December 2013 was very well attended and the feedback from participants was positive. There is a shared desire among OPS, OCH and CHRCs to better coordinate individual and collective efforts post-incident to ultimately reduce fear in communities in the aftermaths of a major incident that is perceived or actually gang related. Most of the recommendations stemming from the exercise require minimal to no funding and primarily revolved around building a trusted network between OPS, OCH and CHRCs so that timely and accurate information can be shared and so that resources in post-incident community efforts are better coordinated.

Next Steps

- To further disseminate the recommendations from the exercise
- To engage organizations with synergistic and complementary initiatives in order to explore opportunities
- To scope a pilot project in a higher risk neighbourhood in partnership with OCH, OPS and the local CHRC

B. OUR GOAL: Prevention

Seek to positively engage young people with their families, their schools and their community by addressing risk factors before they are attracted to gang life.

B1. INITIATIVE 3: Enhance risk identification tools and processes building on existing methods and tools with flags for gang involvement with enhanced information sharing

Lead Organization(s): OPS

Community Partners/Contributors: YSB, JHS, youturn, CASO, School Boards

Stakeholders: Vulnerable youth and families needing support

Desired Outcomes:

- To identify the early indicators of a young person at risk of gang involvement
- Increased awareness of officers and service providers around gang indicators and youth strengths
- Increase in information available to assess youth needs and refer to resources
- Increase in families feeling supported due to identification

Key Activities and Impact to Date:

- Sought and received input from police services (Ontario, Canada and U.S) on risk assessment tool used. There is consensus on the use of the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) assessment tool
- Met with the developer of YLS/CMI and received agreement to supplement YLS/CMI to include gang risk factors and strengths indicators
- Amended tool to be piloted in Project B2
- This enhanced approach provides officers with reinforcing and positive points for engagement with the youth by shifting the conversation from their negative behaviours to the positive strengths of the youth

Next Steps

- Integrate the findings and the enhanced tool to project B2
- Review the results of B2 and consider further enhancements to the tool and potential next steps to expand its use

B2. INITIATIVE 4: Supporting Families: A Coordinated Response to Preventing Gang Involvement for Siblings at Risk

Lead Organization(s): JHS, youturn Youth Support Services

Community Partners/Contributors: CASO, OPS, Youth Justice Services, Probation Services, Crossroads Children's Centre, CPO (grant funding of \$36,000)

Stakeholders: Parents/legal guardians, Siblings at risk, Youth gang member, Organizations working with families

Desired Outcomes:

As having a family member, specifically a sibling, involved in gang activity is one of numerous risk factors that contribute to youth gang membership, this initiative aims to ultimately prevent young people from making the same choices as their gang-involved sibling(s). To support this initiative, CPO funded a Risk Factors and Best Practices review conducted by the University of Ottawa. The findings support that police, schools, family and community organizations need to work closely together and share information for early identification and to implement prevention and intervention programs that account for family and community supports.

Key Activities and Impact to Date:

As a starting point, the following activities have been completed or are underway and will leverage the tool identified in B1 as it moves forward:

- Developed a shared recognition by key community partners to transcend service mandates to meet the needs of families
- Established shared commitment to increase sharing of information between providers to benefit families
- Improved service coordination

- Build bridges and relationships between service providers and the community supported by a consent form and referral form to enable information sharing
- Engagement of a broad group of eight organizations to scope pilot project and develop the framework for the pilot and the evaluation
- Addressed operational questions and developed tools
- Developed and approved the framework for pilot project
- Developed the evaluation framework and completed an ethics review
- Developed tools to support the implementation

Organizations (law enforcement, child welfare, youth justice, mental health) are committed to working across mandates in an effort to provide appropriate support for families. Key documentation and framework are in place to support the next phase of the initiative.

Next Steps

- Implement the pilot project
- Merge this initiative with the work completed in the previous project (B1)

B3. INITIATIVE 5: Host shared training events for service agencies and community-based organizations

Lead Organization(s): YSB

Community Partners/Contributors: OPS, YSB, University of Ottawa, CPO (grant funding of \$3,180)

Stakeholders: Front line staff, non-custody and in custody programs

Desired Outcomes:

- Improve shared/common knowledge base in the community
- Build stronger relationships/networks of workers
- Make best use of training resources and funding

Key Activities and Impact to Date:

- CPO funded the “*Connecting Transitions: Working with Ottawa’s Youth from High-Risk Environments Outreach to Diversion through to Reintegration*” workshop attended by front-line workers in Ottawa. By working through scenarios and engaging in cross-sectorial dialogue on key issues, participants started the conversation on developing connections through the various transition processes.
- Held 3 in-service session with Youth Justice staff and community partners with a total of approximately 75 participants.
- Conducted a gang training needs assessment. The findings will inform the planning of future training opportunities

Next Steps

- A conference for upwards of 250 representatives from justice, community partners and front line workers is planned for early 2015

Top priorities identified by front line workers attending the “Connecting Transitions” workshop:

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS / KEY ACTIONS	NUMBER OF VOTES (DOTS)
Youth input (this style of conference, schools and community)	15
Network of services (kept up-to-date)	15
Comprehensive contact list	12
Starting with early intervention	11
Policy for better information sharing	10
Updated and efficient access to resources and key players for youth	10

C. OUR GOAL: Intervention

Engage youth and adults who are involved or beginning to be involved in gang activity, or who are in correctional institutions or under court-ordered conditions to support those wishing to leave gang life.

C1. INITIATIVE 6: Provincial Gang Asset Mapping Initiative – “Making Connections”: Map assets across all services in four regions in Ontario, led by four regional partners

Lead Organization(s): YSB (for local scope of the project)

Community Partners/Contributors: various through the Government of Ontario

Stakeholders: Many service organizations with the Ottawa Region

Desired Outcomes:

- To identify opportunities to collectively improve outreach to affected communities
- To promote existing services and resources
- To explore mechanisms to collectively report on outcomes of existing services

Key Activities and Impact to Date:

- Through the engagement of regional partners, community stakeholders and youth, the Ministry engaged in an extensive data collection exercise from mid-2013 to early 2014, which informed the development of regional and provincial reports that capture the regional and provincial assets. A total of 250 services that specifically work with children and youth have been inventoried and contact information for each will be available as a resource.
- The final project report has been completed and is pending approval for public release

Next Steps

- Once released, the findings will be shared with the OGS SC for further discussion and to assess potential next steps within the context of the OGS

C2. INITIATIVE 7: Engage Criminal Justice and education stakeholders in exploratory discussions on exit strategies during incarceration (e.g. employment or life skills training) and after release and under probationary conditions (e.g. completion of high school diploma)

Lead Organization(s): CPO, YSB and others

Community Partners/Contributors: various community partners if and as appropriate

Stakeholders: Criminally involved youth, either during incarceration or under probationary conditions

Desired Outcomes:

- Assisting gang members willing to exit overcome obstacles to exit through various means, such as:
 - education, training and employment programs;
 - social skills and healthy lifestyle counselling, coaching and mentoring
 - providing exiting members with a safe place to go
 - monitoring and supervision

Key Activities to Date:

- Numerous discussions with key stakeholders to identify possible sources of funding, possible decision points and strategic approaches to the development of an exit strategy for Ottawa
- A critical timeframe is when gang members are identified as leaving detention. Strategic discussions with regards to tying together an exit strategy with the new YSB Trades Training Centre because income replacement is identified as a key issue to keeping gang involved young people out, once they decide they want to exit
- Discussions with the Ottawa Hospital Trauma Centre on engaging with criminally involved youth who may be ready to change their lives following a critical injury from a shooting, stabbing or beating. In the

early planning stages of offering in-service training for trauma center and emergency staff

Progress / Impact to Date

Through the OGS SC meetings, there has been improvement in referrals to existing services for current gang members who were leaving prison (e.g. OPS referral to JHS). CPO has published a research paper on gang exit best practices to inform next steps. Research is underway on hospital based programming.

Next Steps

- Work with YSB to further explore opportunities through the Trades Training Centre
- Further explore training needs at the Ottawa Hospital Trauma Centre for those who are involved youth entering their services following a critical injury that may be gang related

D. OUR GOAL: Enforcement and Suppression

Continue targeted, sustained and effective enforcement aimed at criminal gang activity with law enforcement and community partners, including the prosecution, sentencing, incarceration and court-ordered community supervision after release.

D1. INITIATIVE 8: Ottawa Police Service - Guns & Gangs Strategy and Direct Action Response Team (DART) Program

Lead Organization(s): OPS

Community Partners/Contributors: various community partners if and as appropriate

Stakeholders: City-wide and regional efforts

Desired Outcomes:

- mobilize communities and partner agencies in helping prevent gang formation and reduce gang activity
- deter violence and criminal behaviours associated with gangs
- targeted enforcement of gang members and their illicit criminal activities
- successful prosecution and criminal conviction of gang members

Key Activities:

- Continued focus of the DART Team with the assistance of provincial funding to target enforcement of street gang members and their illicit criminal activities through aggressive enforcement of Municipal / Provincial and Federal Laws, through the use of targeted strategies against street gangs, including:
 - offender oriented enforcement where officers maintain communication links with community leaders in identified high risk communities known to be subject to gang related activity; to be familiar and responsive to emerging issues while maintaining statistics in relation to community contacts, compliance checks, and seizures
 - event oriented enforcement where members of DART partake in proactive enforcement measures during events and concerts where street gang members are in attendance or acts of violence (gun) are anticipated compliance checks targeting known street gang members who have been charged with previous criminal offences, to ensure their compliance to any conditions of judicial release. This also increases police visibility in higher risk areas
 - intelligence led enforcement by monitoring and targeting high risk offenders and youth that may gravitate towards street gangs and gun violence. This has been reinforced by specialized training and leveraging human sources
 - integrated services and information sharing within OPS through co-location of DART with the Guns and Gangs Section and the engagement of other OPS units on ongoing operations

- Build, foster and sustain partnerships, including:
 - continued collaborative working agreement with Canada Border Services Agencies (CBSA) to remove foreign nationals and permanent residents from Canada who pose a risk to the safety and security of Canadian society as per the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) and related regulations and to interdict the illegal cross border movement of firearms, drugs and contraband
 - continued collaboration between DART, Neighbourhood Officers (NHO), OPS Patrol Services, OCH, CBSA, and all affected stakeholders and community agencies on Home Takeovers
 - continued collaboration with the Provincial Weapons Unit on firearm matters
 - continued collaboration with local police agencies and non-police agencies in the city of Ottawa in the collection, dissemination, and analysis of information surrounding gang activity

- Prevention activities, such as:
 - continued collaboration with local police agencies and non-police agencies in the city of Ottawa in the collection, dissemination, and analysis of information surrounding gang activity continued compliance checks by DART members to suppress street gang activity through the strict enforcement of release conditions imposed on gang members and their associates in the form of an evening supervision program
 - Provide a high visibility and on-going presence in those communities particularly affected by street gang violence and drug activity. The on-going presence serves as a deterrent. This assists in reducing the opportunity for individuals to commit crimes. This strategy allows DART officers to maintain contact with the community and encourages cooperation and trust between these officers and community members. Being visible and active within the community further provides an effective and timely response to street gang related crimes and disturbances as they occur
 - participation of OPS on a number of committees and ongoing communication with key local partners

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Steering Committee Members

Bev Gibas	City of Ottawa- City Operations DCM Office
Frempon Bafi-Yebo*	City of Ottawa - Parks and Recreation
Michael Justinich	Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
Nancy Worsfold	Crime Prevention Ottawa
Sharmaarke Abdullahi	Crime Prevention Ottawa
Christine MacIntosh	John Howard Society
Laili Yazdani	LASI World Skills Inc.
Mengistab Tsegaye	LASI World Skills Inc.
Wendy Dehler	Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition
Brett Reynolds	Ottawa Carleton District School Board
Mary Ellen Agnel	Ottawa Catholic School Board
Joe Veryard*	Ottawa Catholic School Board
Brian Gilligan	Ottawa Community Housing
John Medeiros*	Ottawa Police Service
Mark Patterson*	Ottawa Police Service
Jessica Ripley	Ottawa Police Service
Kenneth Bryden	Ottawa Police Service
Andrew Buchan	Ottawa Police Service
Catherine Dubois*	Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres
Laura Dunbar	University of Ottawa
Ross Hastings	University of Ottawa
Kathy Neff	yourn
Gord Boyd	Youth Services Bureau

**member has since resigned from the Steering Committee*