

HSRC RESEARCH OUTPUTS

4769

IT FEELS LIKE IT'S THE

END OF THE WORLD

CAPE TOWN'S GANGS AND
GANGS AND COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

CATHERINE L. WARD

ISS MONOGRAPH SERIES • No 136, JULY 2007



CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	v
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	vi
ACRONYMS	vii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	viii
CHAPTER 1	1
Introduction	
CHAPTER 2	5
Methodology	
CHAPTER 3	11
Results	
CHAPTER 4	59
Discussion of the results	
NOTES	75
REFERENCES	77
APPENDIX 1	81
Interview Schedule	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ISS would like to thank Save the Children and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Pretoria for providing the funding to enable both the research for, and publication of, this monograph.

The author would like to thank the following, all of whom gave invaluable advice in the design and execution of the fieldwork, and/or contributed to the writing of this monograph:

- Lameez Alexander: Child, Youth, Family and Social Development, Human Sciences Research Council
- Karlijn Bakhuis: Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; and Child, Youth, Family and Social Development, Human Sciences Research Council
- Andy Dawes: Child, Youth, Family and Social Development, Human Sciences Research Council
- Louise Ehlers: The Open Society Foundation for South Africa
- Cheryl Frank: Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Jacqui Gallinetti: Community Law Centre, University of the Western Cape
- Malibongwe Gwele: Child, Youth, Family and Social Development, Human Sciences Research Council
- Prometheus Mabuza: Save the Children, Sweden
- Blanca Nomura: Save the Children, Sweden
- Khanyisa Phaweni: Child, Youth, Family and Social Development, Human Sciences Research Council

- Heidi Sauls: Department of Anthropology/Sociology, University of the Western Cape
- Terry Selikow: Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, University of Cape Town
- Amelia van der Merwe: Child, Youth, Family and Social Development, Human Sciences Research Council
- Liz Webster: Herschel Primary School

The author is also grateful to the fieldwork team and transcribers: Antoinette Aranes, Loraine Linden, Xolani Mkumbuzi, Leon van Wyk, and Script and Data Solutions. Their hard work was an invaluable and essential part of the success of this project.

Beyond the research team, this project was made possible by the great kindness of the teachers and shelter staff who went beyond the call of duty to assist us in setting up the focus group discussions, and who made us so welcome at the schools and shelters. We are also indebted to the children who participated so willingly in what was not always an easy discussion: they have indeed made a contribution through their honesty and vigorous engagement with the topic.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cathy Ward is a Senior Research Specialist at the Human Sciences Research Council, and a clinical-community psychologist by training. Before joining the HSRC, she was a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow and then a Research Officer in the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health at the University of Cape Town. During her five years at UCT, she was involved in several research projects and also managed a mental health clinic serving children, youth and families in Khayelitsha. Her areas of research interest include exposure to violence and its consequences for development and well-being.

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Sampling of groups

Table 2: Summary of children's views of risk and protective factors, and suggestions for intervention

Figure 1: Child-context relations

Figure 2: The social development model

ACRONYMS

AC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children
COAV	Children in Organised Armed Violence
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ISS	Institute for Security Studies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mandate and methodology

The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) subcontracted the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to undertake a child participation study on children's involvement in violence, particularly that relating to gangs and other kinds of organised armed violence in the Cape Town metropole.

Focus group discussions were to provide an avenue for exploring children's experiences of living in an environment with high levels of gang activity, their views of why children join gangs, and their views about how children's engagement in gangs may be prevented and reduced.

Four communities were chosen: two historically coloured and two historically black. The sites chosen were identified as having high levels of gang activity on the basis of a rapid assessment of children's involvement in gang activity in Cape Town, and of reports of gang activity made by children to the Safe Schools hotline.

A secondary and a primary school within each community were selected at random. Schools were then invited to participate, and to select groups of ten girls and ten boys in each of Grades 11, 9 and 6. Children who were not in regular schooling were accessed via Special Youth Care Centres and shelters for homeless children. In total 282 children were interviewed in 30 focus groups.

Results

Children reported exposure to high rates of crime and violence in their communities, and viewed gangsterism as deeply embedded in the social fabric of these areas. They had developed careful strategies for staying safe, such as walking only in certain areas and never walking alone. They described living with high levels of fear and frustration because of the restrictions that gang activity placed on their lives.

On the question of why children do or do not get involved in gangs, factors operating at the level of the individual child, the family, the school, the peer group, the neighbourhood, and the broader socio-political context within which all of these are nested, were raised. These factors might either increase risk for gang membership or protect against it: children who are exposed to more risk than protective factors are more likely to get involved in gangs, while children who are exposed to more protection than risk are more likely to follow prosocial paths in life. The table below summarises the risk and protective factors that children identified.

All the risk factors identified by the children are supported by the literature investigating risk and protection for violent behaviour among youth and the literature specific to children's involvement in gangs.

Children's views of risk and protective factors

Ecological level	Risk factors	Protective factors
Broader socio-political context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth employment opportunities
Neighbourhood and community/society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor television role models Poor policing Prison used as gang initiation High levels of drug activity in neighbourhood High levels of violence in neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community cohesion among youths No/low use and drug activity in the neighbourhood High quality of school environment High numbers of faith-based organisations
School, family and peer group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor family environment (domestic violence, drug use, family members who are gangsters) Friends who are gangsters School dropout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to recreation facilities
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug addiction Revenge for gangster Identity formation during adolescence 	

Recommendations for intervention

Preventive interventions were highest on the children's list, and included:

- Poverty alleviation, including creation of employment opportunities, improved housing, improved and free education, and good health services (including, as specific priorities, access to mental health services and substance abuse treatment).
- Interventions aimed at reducing children's exposure to criminal and drug related behaviour and to improving social norms with regard to the acceptability of violence and criminal behaviour:
 - Making policing more effective: Eradicating corruption from the police service, providing police personnel with adequate equipment, frequent neighbourhood patrols, quick responses to reports of crime, and frequent raids on known gang and drug houses in order to disrupt and ultimately weaken the gang structure.
 - Reducing drug activity in communities and enforcing current liquor laws.
 - Placing a greater emphasis on rehabilitation in correctional services, and a structuring of the service so that gang initiation inside prison becomes less possible.
 - Improving the judicial system: Reducing the apparent ease which arrestees are released on bail, and eliminating the loss of dockets.
 - Introducing more pro-social media programming.
 - Providing after school activities for children. This was a strong recommendation of every group.
 - Increasing community cohesion. Cohesion is most likely to be increased through involving neighbourhood residents in collective activities and programmes, such as youth activities at a place of worship, supervised homework sessions at school, or a neighbourhood watch.
 - Improving school safety, providing well resourced schools, and improving school management in order to prevent school dropout.

A few recommendations were also made with regard to children already involved in organised armed violence:

- Providing counselling and substance abuse treatment for such children.
- Providing a protection programme (such as removal from the community), as those who decide to leave a gang put their lives at risk in doing so.

In short, the children wanted their families, schools, and neighbourhoods to be safe and to work together to carry out the ordinary tasks of child-rearing.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The research mandate

The COAV (Children in Organised Armed Violence) Cities Project is an international cooperation project that seeks to address the involvement of children in organised armed violence. More specifically, the project seeks to develop recommendations for policy and practice in relation to the problem of children's involvement in gangs in the Cape Town Metropole. It is also hoped that the results may be applicable to children's involvement in other forms of organised armed violence in South Africa.

As part of the COAV Cities Project, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) subcontracted the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to undertake a child participation study on children's involvement in violence, particularly that relating to gangs and other kinds of organised armed violence in the Cape Town metropole. This study was intended to augment work being undertaken for the COAV Cities Project by enabling the views of children to be included in the policy recommendations that will be developed.

The HSRC was requested to conduct a child participation study involving 300 children in focus group discussions relating to the nature of violence experienced and perpetrated by children. This was to include inquiry into:

- Children's involvement in gangs.
- Their reasons for joining gangs.
- Their views about how children's engagement in gangs may be prevented and reduced.
- The kinds of policies and programmes that should be implemented to reduce children's involvement in organised armed violence in South Africa.

Research design

It was anticipated that children for the study would be accessed in three different settings, i.e. schools, institutions (such as places of safety and secure care centres) and community settings (youth groups, sports groups, etc.). It was expected that the research would involve 300 children in a total of 30 focus groups (each involving not more than ten children).

The HSRC was required to:

- Design the fieldwork and research instruments, with the advice of a reference group and the ISS.
- Conduct the fieldwork relating to the child participation study.
- Prepare a draft research report for comment by the reference group.
- Prepare a finalised research report.

In terms of ethical considerations, the HSRC was required to ensure the following:

- **Informed consent:** All the children that participated in the research were to be informed of the nature of the research and asked to consent to participation. Consent was also to be sought from parents or guardians.
- **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality was to be maintained at all times, and children were to be informed of this prior to the commencement of the focus group discussions. Children were to be informed of the risks relating to confidentiality in the context of focus group discussions.
- **Psychological support:** An experienced mental health professional was to be present in the focus group discussions to ensure that children were not traumatised by the process, and to provide a debriefing after the discussion. When necessary, children who were upset or traumatised by the discussion were to be removed from the discussion by the mental health professional and provided with immediate counselling, as well as offered further assistance (when an appropriate referral was to be made if necessary).

Structure of the monograph

The monograph begins with a description of the methodology, followed by an analysis of the children's responses (including their recommendations for

prevention and intervention). These responses are then discussed within the context of key literature on child development and delinquency.

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

Participants

Four communities were chosen as sites from which participants would be selected. Two were historically coloured communities, and two historically black communities. The distinction between the racial histories of communities was made because the histories of gang activity appear to be different in the different communities. Gangs in coloured communities reportedly date back to shortly after forced removals established these communities and involved young people from those dates (Pinnock 1982), while young people's involvement in gang activity in black communities appears to be of more recent origin (Dissel 1997). In addition, there is a broad perception in Cape Town that gangs are a 'coloured' problem. However, recent events – such as the killing of five children in an historically black township (Ndenze and SAPA 2006) – indicate that this may not be the case.

The particular sites were chosen partly on the basis of a rapid assessment of children's involvement in gang activity in Cape Town conducted by the Institute for Security Studies for the COAV Cities Project (Kagee and Frank 2005), and partly on the basis of reports of gang activity made by children to the Safe Schools hotline (Khan 2006). The particular communities in which we worked were thus identified as having high levels of gang activity involving and/or affecting children.

Once communities had been chosen, permission was obtained from the Western Cape Education Department to approach schools and Special Youth Care Centres. A secondary and a primary school within each community were selected at random. Schools were then invited to participate, and to select groups of ten girls and ten boys in each of Grades 11, 9 and 6.

Interviewing girls and boys separately allows for gendered aspects of exposure to violence to surface, while the range of grades covers the ages from which children are likely to be initiating gang involvement, through to older ages where involvement may be deeper (Leggett 2005), or children may be more affected by virtue of spending more time in the community and with peers

Table 1: Sampling of groups

	Grade 6	Grade 9	Grade 11	Children not in regular schooling
Community 1	1 girls' group 1 boys' group	1 girls' group 1 boys' group	1 girls' group 1 boys' group	
Community 2	1 girls' group 1 boys' group	1 girls' group 1 boys' group	1 girls' group 1 boys' group	
Community 3	1 girls' group 1 boys' group	1 girls' group 1 boys' group	1 girls' group 1 boys' group	
Community 4	1 girls' group 1 boys' group	1 girls' group 1 boys' group	1 girls' group 1 boys' group	
Homeless youth centre				1 girls' group 1 boys' groups
Shelter for homeless children				1 girls' group 1 boys' group

(Aber et al 1997). Children who were not in regular schooling were accessed via special youth care centres and shelters for homeless children. Table 1 shows how the groups were selected.

Within the groups, participants were selected as follows: educators or shelter staff were asked to select one child at random and to assist that child in selecting nine other children with whom that child would be comfortable discussing community violence. This method was followed in order to avoid the possibility raised by other methods (such as random selection), of placing a victim and a perpetrator in the same group. During the informed consent procedure, every child was invited to leave if s/he was not comfortable discussing these issues in that particular group of children.

Numbers of children in each group varied, but in total 282 children were interviewed. Ages of those in Grade 6 ranged from 11-14, in Grade 9 from

13-17, and in Grade 11 from 16-20. Those in special youth care centres were aged 15-18, and those in shelters for homeless children 11-22.

Interview schedule

Three different formats were used for the interviews, depending on the ages and capacities of the children. In groups of older children (Grades 9 and 11), discussions were less structured as young people of these ages are capable of sustaining a conversation about an abstract topic without specific exercises to prompt them.

In younger groups, where abstract reasoning and the ability to maintain a discussion is less developed, more structured activities such as drawing were used in order to facilitate discussion. Some of these drawings have been included in this document. In some groups where there was a range of ages and capacities, a structured drama activity was used. The full interview schedule is attached in Appendix 1.

Interviews were conducted in the language in which children were most comfortable, and the fieldwork team included an English-, Afrikaans-, or isiXhosa-speaker as necessary.

Research procedure

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the HSRC. Informed consent was sought from the parents or guardians of all children who participated and who were under the age of 18. Some of the participants (some of those in Grade 11 and in shelters for homeless children) were over the age of 18 and thus able to give informed consent themselves. Children under the age of 18 provided informed assent prior to the initiation of a group discussion. Informed consent covered the following elements:

- The context of the larger COAV study.
- The content of the discussion that was to take place.
- The procedures for maintaining anonymity of participants (removal of all names – including children's names, institutions' names and communities' names – from transcripts of the discussion and from the report).

- Confidentiality was to be maintained by the fieldworkers, and at the start of each discussion children were asked to keep its contents confidential. However, children were warned that the fieldworkers could not guarantee that the participants in the group would in fact maintain confidentiality. In addition, children were warned that if they had been involved in the commission of a crime, they were not to give any details, as knowledge of details would require the facilitators to report those details to the police.
- The voluntary nature of participation was stressed. Children were invited to leave if they were not comfortable discussing community violence in this group, or if they did not want to participate for other reasons. They were also informed that they were not required to answer any questions that made them uncomfortable. It was made clear that there would be no penalties for leaving the group or refusing to answer a question.
- Referral information about free trauma counselling services was provided to each child in case s/he was upset in any way by the conversation and wished to seek professional help. For the same reason, a mental health professional was present in each group as part of the fieldwork team. She remained behind after the discussion ended and children were encouraged to speak to her if they were in any way distressed.
- Separate informed consent was requested for tape-recording each group.

Observations of the fieldwork team

The chief observation made by the fieldwork team was the eagerness of the children to participate. This eagerness seemed to have two foci: one was to describe their living environment and the depths of their frustration with the high levels of violence with which they lived; the other was a hunger for adult attention and opportunities for involvement in something where they and their skills and knowledge were valued. These were evident in several ways.

Children participated enthusiastically in the discussions themselves. Often, when we arrived at a school the second or third time, children who had participated in the previous discussion ran up to us, asking to help set up our equipment and wanting to take part again. They were plainly disappointed when we explained that each time we came to the school a new group of

children would be interviewed. Finally, some groups were quite explicit about wanting us to come back and to conduct extra-mural activities for them. They wanted more discussions, they wanted camps, they wanted trips to universities to explore fields of study. This hunger was particularly evident among the groups in Grades 9 and 11 – the older children who were beginning to explore future plans and adult responsibilities.

However, we were also very much aware of the constant fear with which the children lived. At one of the schools, for instance, we learned that most parents had initially refused consent for their children's participation, as they were afraid that we would ask children to name individual gangsters, and they were afraid for their children's safety. The teachers had had to hold a special parents' meeting to reassure them that we would not be doing so.

These interviews were not mental health interviews, and correspondingly they did not directly elicit any symptoms of mental health problems. However, it would be naïve to imagine that children growing up in the circumstances of high violence that they described, could fail to be affected. Studies, both in Cape Town and internationally, show that such children are likely to have experienced symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression (Ward et al 2001; Seedat et al 2004; Horowitz et al 2005). Although we did not explore such symptoms with the children, there was some evidence of emotional 'blunting' – that is, children did not express the levels of distress one might expect when describing how they had seen people die violent deaths. This suppressing of emotions may well be a skill they have learned to manage their constant exposure to high levels of violence.

We were also very impressed by the resilience of the children we interviewed, and the strong determination expressed by most of them to make prosocial futures for themselves. This was particularly striking, not only because of the content of the discussions, but because we were very aware of the depth of poverty as a backdrop to these discussions. As just one example, it was the middle of winter and the weather was bitterly cold when we were conducting these interviews. Working as we were in unheated classrooms (often with windows that were broken or did not shut properly), we worked with several children wearing summer uniforms and torn jerseys.

Despite our strong awareness of the very difficult conditions faced by these young people, all four of the fieldwork teams left the discussions feeling hopeful about the children's futures. The determination and resilience of the young people was impressive.

CHAPTER 3 RESULTS

Violence and gang activity in the children's communities

One of the first questions children were asked was to give some advice about staying safe to a child who had newly started coming to the school and who did not know the community. This gave us an opportunity to learn about children's everyday lives in these areas. It was clear, in every group, that children were exposed to high rates of crime and violence in their communities, and that they viewed gangsterism as deeply embedded in the social fabric of these areas:

There where I live...there was a robbery every single night.

Daar by ons skiet hulle omtrent elke dag. Hulle rob jou daar. [There near where we live, they shoot nearly every day. They rob you there.]

Shootings. You can't go where you want to go. You can't walk where you want to walk.

Now I'm still friends with (name)... not friends, but I see him and I'll say hello. You see, everybody who is in a gang, I know them because they all live there around me. My cousin, her boyfriend also now has become like a gangster. A whole lot of people come to her house all the time.

The house next to us is like totally open because they know each other, so they come and sit there and just sell drugs.

We meet with it all around us everywhere.

And the gangs you know because you are living next to them.

Like you see it everyday. It's not something new.

It's something you witness all the time.

I live on the corner ..., and if I go outside I can see them dealing drugs right on the corner.

I also live close to people who are gangsters. It used to be very violent there. They were shooting every day and every night. The people in our environment – in the household – they are scared to go out because they could be shot or something.

Iemand is geskiet wat hier langs my geloop het. Maar jy kan niks doen daai tyd nie. [Someone was shot as they walked right next to me. But you can't do anything at the time.]

Daar is baie gevalle van kinders wat ge-rob is buitekant, tussen die winkel en die skool. [There are many instances of children who have been robbed outside (the school grounds), between the shop and the school.]

Kule veki iphelile abantu abathathu bakuthuzwa ooNike, Carvela, ngoku kunzima ukuba singa nxiba ezimpahla, kufuneka unxibe some silly clothes. [Like last week three were robbed of their Nike's and Carvela's, so we can't wear our clothes and go to these places. You must wear silly clothes all the time.]

Yinto eqhubekayo apha esitratweni, nama coloured, ayayenza, bendihamba nge Train izolo.... Sasiheleli sibayi two on a carriage le train kwangena ama coloured enxibe ibalaclavas afika akhuthuza abantu usisi wayenxibe i-ice bathi akukho bantwana banga nxiba i-ice kufuneka zinxinywe ngabo, kwakukho abantu abadala, kwicarriage, imali yathathwa kubo and ne cell phone. Babe ngahoyanga nokuba ngumama noku ngu Aunt babe thatha nje. [It's everywhere, even coloureds do it. When I was in the train yesterday, some coloureds wearing Balacavas robbed a lady who was wearing ice (*earrings*). They said no one must wear ice except for them. They didn't care whether it was adults, they just took their money and their phones.]

Ndadihamba netshomi yam ndisuka ecaweni, ndithe xa ndijika esam isitrato, ndeva ngetshomi yam indikhwaza kanti kukho abantu abandilandelayo, wayesoyika ukuthi nazi izikoli zindilandela kuba ziyakumbetha, ndaye ndabaleka ndabalekela kwenye indlu, basuka nabo bandilinda, ingathi babe sazi ukuba akusekho khaya phaya kulandlu. [I was walking home from church with a friend. When I reached my street, my friend called: there were people following me.]

She was afraid to say that gangsters were following me, because they beat people up. I ran to a house, but they waited outside as if they knew that I didn't live there.]

Ngenye imini ndadihambe nctshomi zam ezihlala e [place], sadibana nabantwana ababini babehamba betshaya, sasincokola sihleka omnye weza kuthi wafuna imali, wa search ibag zethu, sathi kubo sisuka esikolweni omnye ubhuti wafika ezokunqanda, bamdubula wafa ngoko, nangoko. [One day I was walking home from school with my friends who are living in (place). We met two boys and they were smoking, we were talking and laughing when we passed them. One of them followed us and demanded money and searched our school bags. We told the boy that we are coming from school, we do not have money. They beat us, then a guy came to stop them; they shot him and he died instantly.]

Most of our friends belong to gangs.

Asithembi even abantu esihlala nabo, nabantu begazi lethu, ndihlala nomama wam, usisi wakhe unabantwana abangamakhwenkwe. Andihlali kakhulu kuba andibathembi, kuba benza izinto ezimbi ebantwini. [We can't even trust people we live with or our blood relatives. I live with my mother, her sister has boys, I visit them but I don't stay long because I don't trust them. The reason is that they do bad things to people.]

Not only was there a sense of a high crime rate, but a sense of being marked – that gangs kept their eye on specific targets:

If you come out of school and stand by the taxi rank then they rob you and stuff. Someone will ask you the time, and as you take out your cell phone, the person might grab it and run. And if you run after him, maybe he might get you some other time.

Hulle vra vir jou geld. As jy nie geld het nie, dan is dit nou so, maar hulle gaan kyk na jou. Hulle gaan vir jou onthou. [They ask for your money. If you don't have money, that's how it is now, but they're going to watch you. They're going to remember you.]

Ukuba udlala ibhola ukhaba umntu by mistake, mhlawumbi yi member ye gangster, uzakukujonga till umdlalo uphele, uza kulandela emveni komdlalo, wena ngoku sele ulibele uza kukuattack

wena emveni koko. [If you are playing football and you kick someone by mistake, maybe he is a gangster, he will just watch you and wait until the end of the game, then he will follow you after the game and you have forgotten by then, but he will end up attacking you anyway.]

It was clear, too, that strangers to the neighbourhood were particularly marked as targets by the gangs:

- Facilitator: Ek wil net reg verstaan, as jy 'n onbekende is in 'n ander area, wat gaan met jou gebeur? [I just need to be sure I understand; if you're a stranger in another area, what's going to happen to you?]
- Participant: Hulle gaan jou rob. [They're going to rob you.]
- Participant: Hulle steek vir jou. [They'll stab you.]
- Participant: Hulle vra vir jou die tyd en dan vat hulle jou horlosie. [They ask you for the time and then they steal your watch.]
- Participant: Hulle steel jou phone. [They steal your phone.]

Of hulle gaan na die library toe want die kinders vat mos 'n taxi daarso. So hulle weet baie kinders is nie van daai area nie. [Or they go to the library because kids take a taxi there. They know many kids are not from this area.]

I know that on a certain corner there are always about four boys standing there. I know them by now, but people who don't know them will think they're gangsters. They are gangsters, but I know them and so they won't harm me You shouldn't not greet them, but just don't have a conversation with them because that gives them a second thing to go for.

Even schools were seldom described as safe:

There was this one day when the gate was not closed on that side. She was sitting and talking on her cell phone, but we didn't see the two guys come into the schoolyard. So they were like first talking with the school children that they knew. And then I don't know how they saw it, but they saw she was busy on the phone, and then suddenly one of the guys came and took the phone off her. So they got away. But it shows that it happens at school also. And that time, the friends that they were associated with, they didn't want to say

that they know those guys and what their names are. They just said, no, they spoke to us but we don't know them.

So-called gangsters, during interval, some of them walk past the children and sell drugs or cigarettes. I've seen that happening.

En ons is te bang om skool toe te loop sommige dae want hulle skiet sommer. [And some days we're too frightened to walk to school because they're just shooting.]

Hulle skiet sommer by die skool. Hulle worry nie vir hulle nie. [They just shoot near the school. It doesn't worry them.]

Izikoli zafika apha esikolweni, kwakukho omnye umntana ongeyiyo ipart yezikoli, qha yena wayephethe igun, izikoli zazi yokulanda lo gun yakhe, kwaliwa ke kwadutyulwa nokudutyulwa. [The gangsters arrived at school: there was someone who is not part of the gang, but he was carrying a gun. The mission was to take the gun from that person. There was a fight about the gun, eventually there were gunshots.]

Enye into ekufuneka uyenzc qiniseka ukuba akukho mntu ukulandelayo xa usiya e toilet. [Another thing, you must make sure that no-one follows you when you go to the toilet.]

For me, the first time I came to the school, I have never felt scared. Yes, there were these gangs who were shooting around, but it was outside in [the community] and not in the school. So in the school grounds you are safe. I never felt like that I was in danger; I always felt safe.

There are security measures at school, but kids still bring the (weapons) ... to school. They get it in somehow. So you can be unsafe at school even though they say you are safe at school.

Girls in particular were very conscious of the danger of rape, while boys mentioned the possibility of rape only in relation to girls that they knew:

Of as hulle vir jou 'n drink gee dan is daar goeters in daai wyn. Dan rape hulle miskien vir jou. Dan is dit hard om vir jou ma te sê want dit is jou vriend wat jou verkrag het. [Or if they give you a drink, then there's stuff in the wine. Then perhaps they rape you. Then it's hard to tell your mother because it's your friend who raped you.]

Facilitator: Do you know of kids who've been given drugs?

Participant: Yes.

Facilitator: What happened?

Participant: They were rapcd.

Umhlobo wam wa gang-raped esiya esikolweni, but lucky wafumaneka e negative. [My friend was gang-raped on her way to school, but luckily she tested (HIV) negative.]

Umama wandithuma kwenye indlu ebusuku, ndamxelela umama ukuba kusebusuku, wathi yena kukho into ayifunayo kulandlu. Endleleni ndadibana nomnye ubhuti wathi kum mandihambe naye ngenkani, wandixelela ukuba uyandithanda, wandiphuza ngekani. Ndafika ndamxelela umama ngento eyenzekileyo, umama wathuma obhuti ababini ukuba maba hambe bayokumbiza, wathi yena ebenxilile wacela uxolo. [My mother sent me to another house one night. I told my mother it was impossible to send me at night, but she said she needed something from that house. On my way I met a guy who said I must come with him. He said he loved me. He kissed me by force. I told my mother what happened. My mother sent two of my brothers to search for him. He told them that he was drunk and apologised.]

Despite this fear, it seemed that romances between girls and boys play a big role in initiating gang fights:

Amantombazana ngawona aqala umlo phakathi kwe gangster, kuba athandana ne gangster ezahlukeneyo, ezisuka kwindawo ezingafaniyo, umzekelo umntu abeno mntu (Community 1), asuke aye (Community 2) nalapho ebenomntu, asuke yaziwe ngulo use (Community 1) ukuba uyathandana e (Community 2), asuke ayokulwa nalo use (Community 2). [Most girls start fights among the gangsters by having relationships with guys from different gangs. For example, someone will have a boyfriend from (Community 1), and another one from (Community 2). When the one in (Community 1) hears about that, he goes and fights with the guy in (Community 2).]

Boys face different dangers from girls:

It's actually more dangerous for them because they are boys. The gangsters are more ... like mostly, they want them to get intimate with them so that they can be like more of a crew. So I think it's more dangerous for the boys.

Girls also formed their own gangs, but it seemed that these were usually offshoots of gangs of boys:

Into eyenzekayo xa emantombazana ethandana ne gangsters asuke enze eyawo igangster, ngokuba amao abo azi gangsters, ekugqibeleni ukuba affected bubomi be gangster. [Sometimes when girls are in relationships with gangsters they form their own gangs, because gangsters' girlfriends end up affected by the lives of gangsters.]

Although it was tempting to identify all violence in the neighbourhoods with gangs, this was not the case:

Facilitator: What other sorts of violence do you get in your community?

Participant: People sitting in bars, and then often they get drunk and they start fighting. Or maybe two girls are walking down the road and they ...

Participant: Jealousy.

Participant: Jealousy, and they start talking and saying bad things to each other – things like that.

Participant: And domestic violence.

Into eyenzekayo e (place) kwakukho enye ititshala cyayingambethi omnye umntana, lomntana wayezibuza ukuba kutheni le titshala ingandibethi, into yasuka yenzeka abanye abantwana bengekho eklasini lo mntana waye busy esenza I homework yakhe, latitshala ibingambethi yangena yamd lwengula. [What happened in (place), there was a teacher who did not beat a certain child, and the child was wondering why that teacher did not beat her (as he beat other children). One day the child was in the classroom. As the child was busy with schoolwork, the very same teacher who did not beat her, came into the classroom and raped her.]

Children living in these communities also demonstrated that they understood a great deal about what it is like to be a gang member:

Facilitator: What is it that you are expected to do (as a gang member)?

Participant: You must sell drugs.

Participant: Anything illegal for money.

Participant: So if you are connected with the cars, then they would expect from you to get them lots of cars.

Participant: Anything illegal for money.

Participant: And if there are other gangs in the area, you are supposed to get rid of them or you will go out of business.

Participant: Whoever is in charge of you, he will kill you if you don't get money out of that certain area.

Facilitator: En wat doen hulle met julle goeters? [And what do they do with your stuff?]

Participant: Hulle verkoop dit! [They sell it!]

Participant: Vir buttons. [For buttons (mandrax; methaqualone)].

Participant: En tik. [And tik (crystal methamphetamine).]

Clearly, children's daily lives expose them to very high levels of serious violence, and give them plenty of opportunity to become familiar with gangsters and gang activities. Given the deep entrenchment of gangs in the communities that they also described, this is not surprising.

Children uniformly described the fact that only certain areas were safe in their neighbourhoods, as gangs had clearly delineated territories. They had learned to recognise gangsters by their dress code, tattoos, and distinctive manner of walking and of talking.

If you go down the square there's a gang just here, and if you walk on there's a gang on the other side.

Like this one gang, they have split up into different places. You come from (Community A) so that's your area. You (*points one way*) look after that and that. You (*points another way*) can do (Community B). And if this one gets killed, here the whole world comes over to this side.

Kukho indawo phaya ngase khaya, awuvumelakanga ukuba ungadlula, ukuba uyadlula phaya ungabulawa, andazi ukuba kutheni. [There is a place next to my home, you are not allowed to pass it. If you pass there they might kill you, I don't know why.]

Facilitator: When you're walking in groups, do the gangs not suspect that you are perhaps a gang?

Participant: No. It depends on your attitude, your personality, your face, the way you dress – things like that. Also, the way you speak.

It was clear that children lived with high levels of fear, fear which affected both their personal lives and the likelihood of their reporting criminal activity to the police:

You [are] scared to go to your friend. I go for my hair to this girl who lives near where the (drug) merchant died, and I now [I am] scared to go there because anything can happen.

But it's also very difficult for us as peers or adults to control these things, because once you've told the police that Piet was selling drugs to Pompies, they will kill you because you are busy in their business. So it's very dangerous for me to go out and tell the police that they are selling drugs. That is why a lot of people don't go to the police even though they know where they are selling these things and what they're doing there. The community knows everything but they are too scared to go.

Abahlali ejele noba sele bebulele bahlala iveki baphinde babuye, kukubeka ubomi bakho, uzakubuya abulale abazali bakho kunye nawe. [Gangsters don't stay in jail even if they murder someone; they just stay for a week and come back. You put your life in danger because he will come and kill you and your parents.]

Not only were they afraid, but deeply frustrated by the restrictions that gang activity placed on their lives, and ashamed of their communities:

As ons miskien iewers heen loop, ons weet nie wanneer hulle dalk gaan skiet nie. Ons is jonk en ons wil loop, maar dan wil ons nie so bang wees nie dat ons altyd moet rondkyk nie. [If maybe we want to walk around somewhere here, we don't know if maybe they're going to shoot. We're young and we want to walk, but then we don't want to be so afraid that we're always looking over our shoulders.]

Dit voel amper soos 'n tronk. [It (the community) feels almost like a prison.]

Sihlala ngoloyiko ngenxa yezikoli yonke imihla. [Yes, we are living in fear of the gangs, everyday.]

You feel ashamed of yourself when they ask you where you come from – and you have to say [community name].

To cope with this fear, children had developed a clear set of safety behaviours: never walking anywhere alone, staying inside one's house after dark, and going only to places that were known to be safe. In addition, they walked a tightrope of relationships with gangsters: if one was known and

liked by a gangster, one might be safer. Their advice to their imagined new classmate reflected this:

I would tell her to speak to a group. Maybe she doesn't go home with the school transport or something like that – and then she would need to be in a group because it's dangerous.

Daar by ons, as hy daar kom en hy's nuut, ek sal sê hy moet total nie uitkom nie. [There by us, if he comes there and he's new, I'd say he should never come out.]

As jy nou verby hulle loop dan gaan hulle vir jou rob, maar as hulle van jou hou dan sal hulle nie vir jou rob nie! So jy moet net lyk asof jy van hulle hou sodat jy kan safe bly. [If you walk past them they'll rob you, but if they like you they won't rob you! So you must just look as if you like them so that you can stay safe.]

En weekends, hy moet maar bly by plekke wat hy ken. Bly uit hierdie area uit want daar is plekke wat hulle nonsense aanvang. [And on weekends, he must stay at places that he knows. Stay out of this area because there are places where they carry out nonsense.]

En by parks rook hulle dagga en so aan, so hy kan nie na parks toe gaan nie. [And at the parks they smoke dagga (cannabis) and so on, so he can't go to the parks.]

Hier by die skool, hy moet dink aan sy safety en so. Enige iemand kan iets try. Ek sal sê hy moet support hê. [Here at school, he must think about his safety and so on. Anyone could try something. I would say he must have support.]

Ungathengi ezampahla kuthiwa ngo K-Way, abantu bazakucinga ukuba uyila gangster, bazakudubula apho. Ngokuba bazakubona unxibe ezimpahla bafune ukuzithatha not ngendla e right, kukho indawo ekungafunekanga uhambe kuzo even ebusuku okanye emini. [Don't buy labels such as K-Way'. People will think that you are a gangster and they will shoot you if you are wearing those clothes because they want to rob you, and there are also places you are not supposed to be, night or day.]

Hy moenie dwelms gebruik nie. [He mustn't use drugs].

Hy moenie baklei nie want hy kan in die moeilikheid kom. [He mustn't fight, because he could get into trouble].

Makahlale ngala ndlela ebehleli ngayo ezilalini, phambi kokuba aze apha eKapa [He must behave the way he did in the rural area, before he came to Cape Town.]

Ndizakumcebisa ukuba makajoyine ezemidlalo, angathathwa zizinto zalapha phandle. [I will advise him to play sport so that he cannot be influenced by the things that are happening outside.]

Kufuneka ahambe nomntu oyaziyo lendawo akwazi ukufumana ulwazi nalapha kuba hlali. [I would say that she must make friends with someone who knows this place, so that she will have enough information about the community.]

Many children also mentioned religion as an important factor in their coping:

So I think that prayer also does help a lot. If God sits in front of the world he can also see that, no, at least there are people trying in that country trying to make it a better place.

There was also a great deal of pessimism about the likelihood of doing away with gangs and gangsterism:

I feel you can't do anything about gangsterism. It's like a pattern ... if you are here then they are there. They have connections everywhere.

Facilitator: And how would they go about (cleaning up this community)?

Participant: Get rid of the gangs.

Participant: It's impossible.

Participant: But then it will be war and everybody will be attacking everybody.

Juffrou, jy kan niks doen nie. Jy dink maar net jy's gelukking dat hulle nie na jou toe gekom het nie. [Miss, you can't do anything. You just think you've been lucky that they didn't come to you.]

Hulle sê in daai koerante dat by 2010 wil hulle niks meer gangsters hier in Suid Afrika hê nie. Nou as hulle al klaar sukkel in 2006, hoe

gaan hulle dit doen in vier jaar se tyd in 2010? Hulle sal dit nooit regkry nie. [They say in the newspapers that by 2010 they don't want to have any more gangsters here in South Africa. Now if they're already struggling in 2006, how are they going to do it in four years' time in 2010?].

Uhamba nomama wakho umama wakho une 3310 ifoni iyakhala uyasabela mhlawumbi omnye wabo uyadlula uyabona, uyabona uzakubuza ukuba wenzani ngalento, uzakubetha umama wakho ngayo, uzakucaphuka kuba ubethe umama wakho phambi kwakho, uyahamba uyaku mhlobo wakho oyi gangster uthi kuye ubani ubethe umama ngenxa ye fowuni yakhe, uthi kubo kufuneka size necebo, ndizakuza netshomi zam siye kuye simbethe. Uza kuza netshomi zakhe we end up form our group kunzima ukuyeka lento. [If you are with your mother and she has a Nokia-3310², now her phone rings and she answers it, and maybe one of them was passing by and sees it, then they will take it and they will ask 'what are we going to do with this?' Then they will beat her with it. You will be angry because he cannot beat your mother in front of you. And then you tell your friend who is a gangster, you would tell them that 'no, a so-and-so beat my mother in front of me because of her phone', then your friend will say no let's come up with a plan ... then I will bring my friends with me and end up beating him. He will then bring his group and we end up forming our own gangster group. It's difficult to end this thing.]

Imipu ikhona yonke indawo. [You see, now guns are everywhere.]

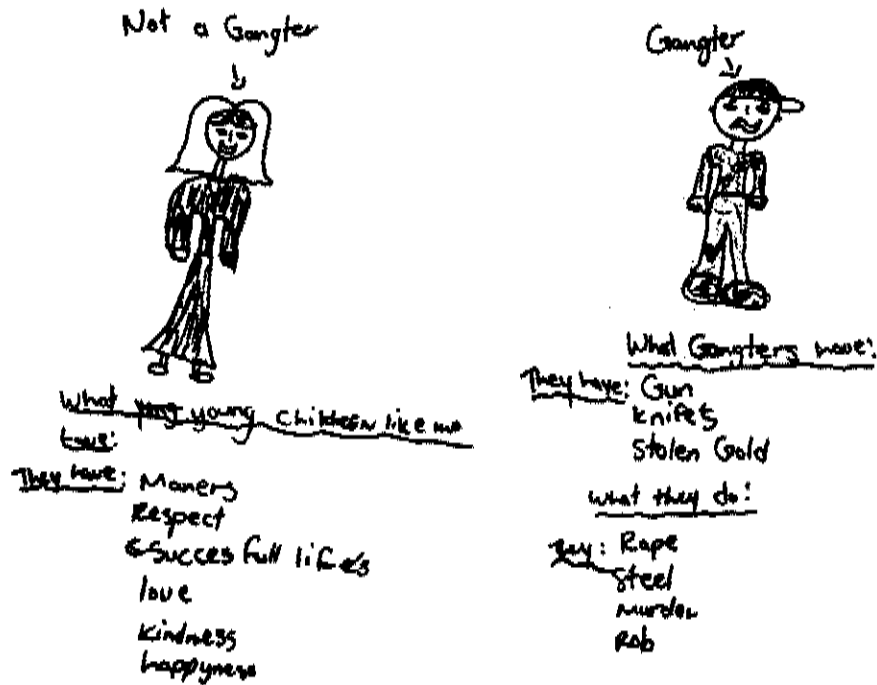
Amathuba mancinci okuphelisa igangsterism. [There is little that can be done to end gangsterism.]

This often translated into pessimism about the New South Africa:

I told my sister now the other day, it doesn't feel like we're living in a democratic world. There's no difference. And that is why there are so many crimes today – we have too many rights. Even a criminal has rights ... But now you mustn't even dare standing outside school.

It's even worse than it's ever been. It's worse now.

God sees the earth and it's dark. There's darkness. He sees this country, it's just corrupt. It's crime, it's rape, it's abuse and violence ... For us, it feels like it's the end of the world ...



I wouldn't say it's safe anywhere in South Africa.

Apha (this community) kwakukho i-hippos ezazisetyenziswa ngamajoni, amajoni mawabuye, ngelaxesha ayekhona kwakungekho crime ingaka. [Here in (this community) there were hippos that were used by the soldiers. Soldiers must come back, at that time³ there was no crime here.]

Occasionally, despite their general pessimism, children mentioned a personal optimism:

Facilitator: Do you feel like you're going to be okay? You're going to make progress and go forward with your lives? That there is a brighter future out there?

Participant: Ja. SEVERAL.

On rare occasions, there was some optimism about the possibility of gangsters changing:

Kukho abo bane kamva, like kula area yam kukho omnye usanda ukuphuma ejele, wayekhuthuza abantu sasihlala sibuza kutheni esenza lento wathi kuthi kuyalanjwa kowabo, wabanjwa ngoku waphuma, uzama ukubeka ubomi bakhe endaweni ngoku uyaphangela. [There are those with a future, like in my area there was a guy who was released from jail, he was robbing people and we asked him why he did this and he said they are starving at home, so he was caught and now he came out, now he is trying to put his life back together and he is working.]

Perceptions of why children join gangs

Groups were remarkably consistent in what they viewed as the reasons for joining gangs. Every group mentioned the greater wealth of gangs, with money, guns, brand name clothing, and nice cars being consistently mentioned as part of what made gangs attractive. For young men, one of the attractions suggested was access to women:

Participant: You drive the latest cars and wear the latest clothes. You have everything of the best.

Participant: Four or five houses.

Participant: Some gangsters also walk around with dogs.

Once you sell drugs you can even buy your own house. You can start your own business.

Hulle sê hulle gaan jou tien duisend Rand gee – dan moet jy iemand gaan skiet. Hulle gee jou 'n kar. [They say they'll give you ten thousand rand – then you must shoot someone. They give you a car.]

As jy iets wil hê dan kry jy dit sommer nou. [If you want something you get it right now.]

Miskien het hulle vrouens in die huis in. [Maybe they have women in the house.]

However, these attractions were understood as being attractive against the background of a context of deep poverty. Every group mentioned poverty and deprivation relative to others, as a key reason for children entering gangs:

Die klein kinders wat grootword in swak omstandighede, wanneer hulle sien wat die gangsters het, dan sê hulle, ek wil ook baie geld hê. [The small children who grow up in poor circumstances, when they see what the gangsters have, then they say, I also want lots of money.]

They take you off the street – the children who don't have homes. They dress the children. Then they get the children to go out and sell drugs. Not necessarily – but it does happen.

Kunzima kowenu ubone ukuba mawujoyine igangster kuba ufuna uku support femeli yakho. [If you are struggling at home, you think it's better to join a gang, so that you can support your family.]

Ngamanye maxesha usuka kwi femeli ehamba nzima, ngelinye ixesha abazali abakwazi ukunika impahla ebizayo. Uza kusuka apho athandane nesikoli, kuba esibona ukuba sinxiba kakuhle. [If it happens that some people come from a struggling family, sometimes the parents cannot afford to buy expensive clothes. And she will end up falling for a gangster because he wears nice clothes.]

Into eyenzekayo usuka kwi family ehamba nzima, and uyazixelela ukuba awusoze uye esikolweni, kuba usithi ababantwana base sikolweni banayo imali. Into ezakwenzeka uzaku kuthuza abantu kuba ufuna imali. [Sometimes it happens like this, you are coming from a struggling family and you tell yourself that you won't go to school, because those kids at school have money from their parents. What will happen is that you will end up robbing people to get money.]

Some people struggle, and maybe they don't have money to buy food and things like that, and then it's like, okay, I'll pay you if you sell my drugs. And then they also start using those drugs. Or, maybe you kill this person and they pay you for that.

If government can maybe just solve the money scarcity problem because they mainly do it because of money.

The legacy of apartheid was seen as providing a context for this poverty:

Facilitator: Tell me a bit more about that. What does apartheid have to do with gangs?

- Participant: They put many people into small communities, so people fought ... a lot of bad people fought and they started the gangs and the gangs grew.
- Participant: Ja, the splitting up of people. They put people in townships ...
- Participant: The poor people ...

Within this context of poverty, children's descriptions of conditions that place children at risk for joining a gang covered almost every aspect of the social world. Although poverty was so frequently mentioned that the children appeared to view it as the key reason for joining a gang, they also mentioned reasons that had to do with individual children and the many social contexts which affect children's development.

The media was seen as providing negative role models:

- Participant: En jy sien gangsters op TV programme ook. [And you also see gangster on TV programmes.]
- Participant: Ja, en jy sien hoe skiet hulle die polisie. [Ja, and you see how they shoot the police.]
- Participant: Ja, die laaities sien die gangster role models. [Ja, the kids see the gangster role models.]

Almost uniformly, groups expressed deep frustration and dissatisfaction with the institutions of society that are directly involved in crime prevention and intervention – the police, the justice system, and correctional services. These were identified as contributing to high rates of crime and violence through ineffective actions, through corruption, and through creating opportunities that either socialised people deeper into gangs or did not provide effective sanctions for criminal behaviour:

- And you can't trust the police. My mum saw these hobos fighting with knives and she called the police. The police came there and when they saw all the people fighting, they turned around and left. So you can't trust the police.
- We phoned the police and they said they couldn't come because they don't have vans. But we only live a few houses from the police station! They could easily walk to where we stay. But here he's telling my mummy that they don't have a van.
- The police must just go out and do whatever they're doing; they are

not doing anything. It's no use having them there. They are doing nothing for us.

There where I live, the police is like ... we've got this gangster and he is a big merchant. He controls all the police there.

Some gangsters know that when the cops drive past they must hide everything. They show that everything in the house is clean and there's nothing wrong inside the house. And they are scared of the police ... the police is doing good. They are protecting – but it's just the bad cops that spoil everything.

Of hulle vat daai mense weg, en voor daai koerant uitkom wat ons lees, dan is daai mense alweer buite. [Or they arrest the people, and before the newspaper comes out that we read, then those people are already free again.]

Die jong mense van deesdae, hulle maak dood en hulle rob net om 'n man te gaan word daar binne, en as hulle uitkom dan sal hulle maak net soos hulle wil. Dan kry hulle mos nou respek. [The young people of today, they kill and they rob just to become a man there inside (prison), and when they come out they do just as they please. Then they get respect.]

Hulle moct nie vir hulle bail gee nie, want sodra hulle uitkom, dan doen hulle dit net weer. So hulle moet baie jare kry. [They mustn't give them bail, because as soon as they come out, they just do it again. So they must get many years.]

En kry hulle vir 'n klein dingetjie en moenie wag tot hulle iemand vermoor het nie. [And get them for something small and don't wait until they've murdered someone.]

Baie gangsters doen crime net om tronk toe te gaan want dis so lekker daar in daai tronk. [Many gangsters commit crime just to go to prison, because it's so nice there in that prison.]

Participant: Amapolisa ngawo axela ukuba uFidelity uya endaweni ethile ngexesha elithile kufuneka nihambe niyo ku rob apho. [The Police are the ones who will tell you that the Fidelity will be at a certain place at a certain time, then you should go and rob it.]

Participant: They give you guns ...

Participant: And they will want a share of that money you got.

Participant: Bathatha imipu bayithathe ebantwini, bayinike abanye abantu ukuba mabenze izinto ezimbi ekuhlaleni. [They will give the guns that were taken from people and give them to you for the job ... they will supply you with guns to do wrong things in the community.]

Enye into ebuhlungu yinto yokuba u dlwengulwe namhlanje ngomso the rapist is out, andiyazi into ekufuneka ukuba maye nziwe. [Another thing I do not understand it's very painful to be raped today, and tomorrow the guy is out. I do not know what is supposed to be done.]

Umthetho awusikhuseli thina Bantu kwelilizwe ukhusela amabanjwa. [The law does not protect us as the citizens of the country, it protects the prisoner.]

Amapolisa adlala indima kwi gangster ngokuba idockets ngenjongo yokuphelisa ityala, ayikho imfihlo emapoliseni, amapolisa ayanyotywa zi gangsters ukuba a destroy idocket. [I blame the police, they are defeating the ends of justice, by stealing the docket, and there is no confidentiality in the police service. The gangsters bribe police to destroy the docket.]

Some groups did, however, acknowledge the difficulties the police face in carrying out their job:

Amapolisa njengalo nyaka uphelileyo bazama konke okusemandleni, baya kwi gangsters, mhlawumbi omnye wabo wafa, bayoyika ngoku ngo bomi babo. [The police, last year they did what they could, they went to the gangsters, maybe one of them died, so they are also afraid for their life.]

Living in a neighbourhood environment in which drugs were endemic and in which there were too few pro-social opportunities for children (such as sports or cultural activities), was also recognised as providing opportunities for children to be exposed to both drugs and violence:

Tot voor die drugs ingekom het was alles all right. Toe kom die shebeens. Nou kom hulle met tik. So dan moet hulle oorgaan want dan is daar nie nog violence nie. [Before the drugs came in everything

was fine. Then came the shebeens. Now they come with tik (crystal methamphetamine). So then they must escalate because then there was no violence.]

Participant: There is nothing for the youngsters to do – like facilities ... sport. There's nothing else to keep you busy – and that's why.

Participant: Jy sien nou daar is nie sport om te doen nie, so dan gaan jy drugs toe. En soos jy dai drugs doen dan word jy 'n gangster. [You see now there is no sport to play, so then you go to drugs. And as you do the drugs, then you become a gangster.]

The gangsters smoke their drugs in front of the children – and then the children also want to try it.

The high levels of danger in these neighbourhoods also seemed to play a role in encouraging gangsterism in the sense that being part of a gang was viewed as potentially providing security. In addition, the fear engendered in their communities by gangsters gave them what was perceived as power and respect from the community. Children also felt that gangsters perceived themselves as 'cool':

You are always safe if you're in a strong gang.

Facilitator: Okay, talk a little bit about the power. How do you get the power? What does it mean to have power?

Participant: Everybody respects you.

Participant: I'm in this gang and you won't touch me. And if you do something to me, it's not just me but the whole gang that you're doing it to.

En daar's baie mense wat jou respek as jy 'n gangster is. [And there are lots of people who respect you if you're a gangster.]

Hulle wil kwaai wees. [They want to be cool].

Enye into ebangela kukho amankwenkwe lamadala yabetha kula mancinci ayadikwa lamancinci aza ku form eyawo igangster ukulwa lamadala. [Another thing is that there are older boys who beat up smaller boys, and these young boys end up angry and form a gang of their own because they want to fight the older ones.]

Uzakujoyina igangster afumane intlonipho wonke umntu uzakwazi ngaye, kuba uzakubc chamba neyona gangster yoyikwayo. [He will join the gang to gain respect and everyone will know him because he will be walking with a feared gang.]

However, this sense of safety was also balanced against the safety costs of being in a gang:

But I don't think it's safe to be a gangster. If you part of the gang and you try to leave, the gang will get you.

It's safer to be outside (of a gang) because once you are inside you are protected, but once you have gang fights then you must fight, and bullets will fly and knives will come out. So there is more possibility of dying inside a gang than outside. But if you live in a wild neighbourhood then it's also bad – no matter what side you're on.

Ja, maar jy is ook eintlik nie safe nie. Daar is mense wat agter jou aan is. [Yes, but you're not actually safe. There are people after you.]

Uyakrokrelwa yonke imihla. [You become a suspect.]

Kunzima ngokuba uncmfihlo zakhona bazakubulala. [Once you join the gang, it's difficult (to leave) because you know their secrets and they will kill you.]

Ek dink, hoe al wou hy uit 'n gang uit wil kom, as jy jou hart vir die Here gee en bly daar, but otherwise nee dan gaan hulle vir jou kom haal. [I think, however much he wants to get out of a gang, if you give your heart to the Lord and stay there, but otherwise, no, they'll come and get you.]

Girls described a particularly gendered approach to relations with gangs in terms of both material goods and the need for protection: they described romantic involvement with gangsters as being based on their material goods or on the protection they would receive from other threats:

Ngumntu omhle uyajongeka lomntu, unxiba kakuhle lomntu, amantombi asoloko ethetha ngaye, uyakumthanda lomfo, uzakutsala ngobuhle. [He is cute, well dressed, girls are always talking about him, you will like him, you will be attracted by his looks.]

Abanye bathandana ngejongo yokufuna ukhuseleko. [Some fall in love with gangsters just for protection.]

In some cases, it appears that gang membership may be forced. In other words, living in the same neighbourhood as a gang that was weak in either numbers or physical strength may put children at risk:

Bayanyazelisa ukuba abantu bahambe nabo ngenkani, xa bebona ukuba wakhiwe utyebile kuba bayabona uzakwazi ukubamba umntu, bayanyazelisa. [When they are short in numbers they force people to join them, or maybe if they see that you are physically strong they would force you to join them because they can see that you are able to grab hold of a person. So they will force you.]

Risk factors were also identified in the more proximal social contexts that affect children's lives – the neighbourhood, the school, their friends and their family.

Children mentioned poor family environments as reasons why they might join gangs:

They feel that they don't get enough love. Their parents don't love them and the only way they can be loved is to go into a gang. It's almost like everybody has the same problems, and once you are in a gang, then all your problems are gone. You have no mother shouting at you; no one tells you what to do.

Sometimes you can also have a situation at home where the mother and the father are always fighting. So they get abused at home and then they think, I'm going to join a gang because that will make it easier.

Kweminye imizi uye ufumanise ukuba abantwana basela nabazali babo, lonto yenza ukuba abanye abantwana bafunc ukwenza lonto. [In some families you find that the mother and father drink with their children, and it is easily copied by the children.]

The mechanisms by which children joined gangs were identified as occurring through the influence of family members or friends, with membership consolidated by arrest and further initiation within prison:

If your uncle is a merchant then you are also part of that.

And sometimes, the older brother is a gangster and then the smaller brother has to do what the bigger brother tells him.

It's easy. You just get involved with someone in your area. Being seen with them makes you suspect with the other gangs. The word would be out that you are going around with one of the gangs.

You might go with your own friends to where you find these guys who are gangsters and you won't even know.

It can start with a normal conversation. He might try and convince you. He'll ask you to do things that he'll pay you for – give you things. Afterwards, you must give him back, so you sell the drugs. And once you go out and sell drugs then it's over; you are part of the gang. But you must go to jail to get tattoos of what the names of the gangs are.

They call it the history.

Jy gaan tronk toe en jy word 'n man. [You go to prison and you become a man.]

In addition, parents were also seen as playing a role in promoting gangsterism, through protecting their children who were in trouble with the law:

Mhlawumbi u Amanda aye emapoliseni ayokubeka isimangalo abanjwe, xa ebuya umama wakhe uzakuya exhweleni kuba efuna unyana wakhe aphume ejele, umama wakhe uzakuya kwi sangoma xa ephumile uzakwenza nantoni, akazukuyeka kuba umama wakhe uyamkhutaza ukuba makenze, uyamxelela ukuba you are right uza kumfunela namagqwetha, emveni aye emagqirheni. Uza kwenza nantoni kuba yi do not feel njenga banye abazali. [Maybe Amanda will go to the police to lay a charge and he might go to jail and when he comes back home his mother will go to a Xhwele (traditional healer) so that her son can be released from jail, the mother will go to a traditional healer and I do think that when he comes out he will not stop doing this because his mother is encouraging him to do this, she is telling him this is right, she will get him lawyers, advocates and go to traditional healers. She will do everything for him because that mother don't feel what other parents are feeling.]

School dropout and its associated elements (such as pregnancy) were mentioned by many groups as an initial step towards gang membership:

Participant: Because if you drop out of school you have nothing else to do but to join a gang. There is no other job without education, so they join a gang to have a source of money.

Facilitator: Between grade 8 and today, have a lot of your classmates dropped out of school?

Participant: Yes. *MANY*.

Facilitator: So when you started in grade 8, how big was your class?

Participant: We were about 50 students and now it's dropped to about 30 students.

Facilitator: And would you say you lost the students to gangsterism? Why did they drop out?

Participant: It's boys mainly.

Participant: The guys that I know ... and walking around trying to get money. They tell people, if you don't give me money I'm going to rob you. With girls, maybe they drop out because they fall pregnant or her boyfriend tells her not to go to school any more.

Participant: Sometimes girls do leave school for the boyfriend.

Participant: And if a girl has a boyfriend who is a gangster, they are like way cool, and they get the money to buy clothing and things like that.

Participant: ... You do these things because you are scared of the boyfriend. And you are also scared to leave him because they will come after you. So that is why girls drop out, and they end up living with their boyfriends. Or, they can just drop out of school and sit at home; have lekker [nice] parties.

Risk factors at the level of individual children were also mentioned. Most notable amongst these was the addiction of individual children, although other motivations were also mentioned on occasion. It was clear that drug addiction was a key reason for joining gangs:

The drugs get you into gangs. A lot of drug users are gangsters.

Because the people who do drugs, they don't have money to spend on drugs, so they try to get it from other people and that's where most of the robbery and killing take place.

Nou vat jy 'n trek nou vind jou ma jou uit, jy ruik na Dagga, dan gaan jou ma jou uitskel, 'waar het jy Dagga gerook, saam met wie

het jy Dagga gerook' en almal die goedte. Nou wil jy miskien nou nie sê saam met wic jy Dagga gerook, nou kom hulle elke dag tot daar by die skool, 'kyk hier, bunk net man vir die oggend, rook saam met ons die 'grondpyp' en so aan, almal daai goedte. [Now you take a drag and your mother finds out, you smell of dagga, then your mother scolds you, 'Where did you smoke dagga, who did you smoke it with' and all that. Now you perhaps don't want to say who you smoked dagga with, now they come every day to the school, 'look here, bunk just for the morning, smoke a pipe with us' and so on, all that stuff.]

It's easy to get involved just maybe by doing drugs also. Most of them do drugs. With drugs you get lots of friends too. Where there are drugs, gangs will be involved.

Revenge was another reason often given for joining a gang:

En dis baie so ook omdat jy raak 'n gangster omdat, miskien ... gangsters skiet jou klein broertjie dood. Soos my vriend, daai't gebeur, sy broer en sy ma het in die pad gesit, voor, dit was warm, toe kom die gangs daar verby, toe skiet hulle sy broertjie dood. Vandag, is hy, hy het eintlik sy eie gang se system. Vandag is hy 'n leader van 'n gang, sien Mevrouw. Hy, daai man wat sy broertjie dood geskiet het is al klaar dood maar hy haal dit nou op daai laaitie se familie uit Mevrouw. [And it's often this way that you become a ganster, perhaps ... gangsters shoot your little brother dead. Like my friend, that happened, his brother and his mother sat in the road, in front (of their home), it was hot. Then the gangs came past, then they shot his little brother dead. Today, he's, he has his own gang. Today he's the leader of a gang, see Miss. He, that man who shot his little brother, is already dead but now he takes it out on that man's family, Miss.]

One group mentioned the identity formation tasks of adolescence as a reason for joining a gang:

Esona sizathu sibangela abantu bajoyine gangster kukufuna ukwaziwa noku fumana udumo nentlonipho. Abantu bakhangela ububona. [The reason people join gangsters is that they want to see what is happening in a gang, and they want to be famous and to be respected. The problem is that people are searching for their own identity.]

It was equally clear that most children in these groups did not themselves condone joining gangs, and that the attractions of gangs depended on one's position in the gang:

Maar hulle wil daai easy way vat in die lewe. Hulle wil nie werk nie. Hulle wil net drugs verkoop en so. [But they want the easy way in life. They don't want to work. They just want to sell drugs and stuff like that.]

They just want to be the boss of everybody. I tell you what to do and you don't tell me what to do.

It depends if you're the leader or just a gangster or follower. Because if you're a leader you sit on top. You have everything you want and desire – except happiness.

Significant costs of belonging to a gang were also acknowledged. While the advantages of belonging to a gang were mostly material, the perceived costs were intangibles:

Jy verloor jou familie. [You lose your family.]

Jy verloor respek vir ander mense. [You lose respect for other people.]

Jy verloor jou vriende. [You lose your friends.]

En jy verloor jou emosies. [And you lose your emotions.]

As jy miskien 'n 26 of 'n 28 is, jy kan nie later verander nie. [If you're a 26 or a 28⁺, then later you can't change.]

Jy maak mense dood. [You kill people.]

Jy moet rob om te lewe. [You must rob in order to live.]

Is 'n lewe van drugs. [It's a life of drugs.]

Hulle sal spyt wees. [They will be sorry.]

Hulle weet nie hoe lank hulle nog gaan lewe nie. [They don't know how long they're going to live.]

Hulle sal al lankal in die tronk wees. [They will have been in prison long ago.]

En as jy tronk toe gaan dan verloor jy selfvertroue. [And if you go to prison you lose your self confidence.]

Jy leef soos 'n gangster. Jy het jou respek verloor vir jou familie. Nou as jy weer terug gaan, dan maak jy weer so. Miskien is dit jou ma of jou pa se begrafnis. As jy nou daar aankom dan gaan almal vir jou aankyk met ander gedagtes: hy was 'n vark met sy familie. [You live like a gangster. You lose your respect for your family. Now if you go back, then that's how it is. Perhaps it's your mother or father's funeral. When you get there then everyone looks at you with thoughts like, he was a pig with his family.]

Jy verloor alles. [You lose everything.]

En jy gaan ook die meisie verloor wat jy het. Daar verloor jy al jou selfvertroue. [And you can also lose your girlfriend. Then you lose all your self confidence.]

When it comes to worldly things they have everything. It's mostly emotional or family problems.

In a gang there's no freedom.

You are controlled by one person the whole time. It's like the German war – you can control everybody. In a gang you must be cool.

Most of them ... they are not taught properly and they don't have discipline in their houses. They don't have respect for adults or for themselves.

Jou familie kan ook betrokke raak. [Your family can also be affected.]

You yourself can get killed by other gangsters.

Hulle het van alles, maar daar's een ding wat hulle nie het nie – en dit is liefde. As hulle liefde in hulle lewe gehad het dan sou hulle nie gedoen het wat hulle doen nie. [They have everything, but there's one thing they don't have – and that is love. If they'd had love in their lives, then they wouldn't have done what they have done.]

Abanakamva ababantu. [They don't have a future, these people.]

Bafumana izifo. [They end up with diseases].

Abanye abanawo amakhaya kuba bebaleka lento yabo. [Some end up homeless because they are running away from this.]

Abanye baya zibulala. [Others commit suicide].

Kunzima ukuphuma kwi gang, ukuba uyaphuma kwi gang ezinye igang members sizakwazi ukuba wakhe wabulala, siza kulandela sizakubulala nokuba ungaphandle, nokuba you are out of the gang. [It's difficult to pull out of a gang, the other gang's members know that you have killed and then the other gang will come after you and kill you even if you are out of the gang.]

Kufuneka uzimele xa uthc wabanjwa awunokutsho ukuba ubani nobani bakhona zimele wedwa. [You have to stand alone, especially if you are arrested. You can't depend on the others (your fellow gangsters) who were there, you need to stand alone.]

Awunankululeko, awunabo ubuwena, awunafihlo yakho, awunanjongo ngobomi. [You have no personal freedom, you lose your integrity, you have no privacy. You lose your goals and ambitions in life.]

Yonke into yeye group, awunabo ubuwena, balitshintsha igama lakho, yonke into yakho yeyabo. [Everything belongs to the group, they change your name, you lose your identify, everything that was yours now belongs to them.]

Hulle maak babies maar dan kan dai babies nie staat maak op hulle nie. [They have babies but the babies can't depend on them.]

Alongside the negative effects of being in a gang, children were able to describe positive effects of not being in a gang:

As ek 'n 26 of 'n 28 is, dan is daar sekere plekke waarna ek nie to sal kan gaan nie. So jy kan na enige plek gaan. Jy kan enige plek jou goed koop. Jy kan na enige area toe gaan. [If I were a 26 or a 28, then there are certain places that I can't go to. So you can go to any place. You can buy your stuff at any place. You can go to any area.]

Mense het respek vir jou en jy het selfrespek. [People respect you and you have self respect.]

You feel safer outside a gang.

I think the strengths are: you don't have to be afraid. You don't have to hide from anybody. You can walk with your head held high.

Other gangsters won't look for you. Because if you killed one of their guys they are going to come and look for you.

You have freedom. In a gang there's no freedom.

But if they are gangsters and you know them, or maybe they're your family or your neighbours, then maybe you have a good relationship with them but you are not a gangster. They respect you because you are not a gangster. That is also how you can be protected. If they respect you, then they'll show respect by not breaking into your house.

Ek wil nie mense dood maak nie. Ek kan in die tronk beland. [I don't want to kill people. I don't want to go to prison.]

For one thing, you've got lots of love.

You can have some fun.

Your parents won't have to stress about you.

People in the community will see you for being you.

Facilitator: As julle nie in 'n gang is nie, hoe lyk die lewe oor 10 of 20 jaar vir julle? [If you're not in a gang, how does life look over the next 10 or 20 years?]

Participant: 'n straight pad. Kan miskien eendag 'n lawyer word. Jy kan daar uitkom. [A straight road. Can maybe one day be a lawyer. You can achieve that.]

You can enjoy life to the fullest.

[They have] education and freedom.



A normal child who doesn't belong in a gang has a long future ahead of him/her.

A normal child has a bright education.

A normal child has freedom.



Gangsters have the ability to rule people around.

Gangsters have guns, knives and weapons in which they kill people with.

Bayakuthanda abahlali wonke umntu ukuthatha njengo mntana wakhe. [Being loved by the community, and people will treat you as their own child.]

Unenjongo nemibono ngekamva lakho. [You have a future and goals.]

Abantu bazakunceda ngamathuba obunzima. [People will help you in times of trouble.]

Uyazithemba ... Uzibonisa abantwini ukuba ungumntu, ufumana intembeko ebantwini. [You are confident ... You behave yourself as a good person, you gain trust among the people.]

Uyaphumelela ebomini. [Achieve most in life.]

Unenfihlo zakho. [You have privacy.]

Ufumana isidima esiso, awufani ne awusifumani ngoku bulala abantu, isidima unaso ... Usisbenzele, hayi ngoku bulala abantu. [Have dignity in a good way, not by killing people. You earn dignity by working for it.]

Ungangu mzekelo kubantwana abakhulayo bantwana bajonge kuwe. [You can be a role model to small children who look up to you.]

Akukho mapolisa emveni kwakho. [There are no police after you.]

Uhlala ubomi obude. [You live a long life.]

Awunasazela uhamba ukhululekile ungoyiki nto. [No guilty conscience, walk freely.]

Preventing and intervening in gangsterism

Several groups were asked to describe what their community would be like if it were safe for young people. Although the degree to which crime and violence was viewed as endemic was highlighted in comments such as 'You can't imagine a different world', most children were very quick to come up with elements of a safe community that they deemed essential. Doing away with gangs and drugs were clearly high on their priority lists, as were instituting extra-mural activities for children.

Many suggestions were made about activities the children longed to have: entertainment, a place to play games, a place to dance. Particular emphasis was placed on the need to have something to do after school and over the weekends and holidays. Mention was also made of the need for community cohesion, for neighbours to look out for each other and for each other's children:

A park where you can go and play and shops that you can go to.

Go to the library on your own.

I can say to my mummy at ten o'clock, I'm going to visit my friend – and she won't mind.

The streets are bright and shiny.

Ja, not like with the streetlights where one works here and another one there.

No gangs.

People are friendly and you can go up to them and ask them for directions.

You can go to the movies.

Jy kan uit jou huis uitgaan en niks sal gebeur nie. [You can leave your house and nothing will happen.]

Jy kan vry wees. [You can be free].

The first thing is to get rid of the gangs because they can't get away every time with what they're doing. They can't have death in their own hands; only one person can do that – and that is God. So why must they do it? They are going to go straight to hell.

En no drugs. [And no drugs].

Mna ndisoko ndibusy sisi sport, ndidlala igolf ukuvuka kwam ngo 8:00 and ndibuya ngo seven ndiye kulala, andifuni ukuba involve kwizinto ze gangster okanye kwizinto ezinjalo, andifuni kufa. [I am always busy with sport, I play golf, I wake up early at 8:00 a.m. and come back at 7:00 p.m. and go straight to bed and sleep. I don't want to involve myself with gangsters or anything like that, I don't want to die.]

Kufuneka siphume thina bantwana sibone indawo ezi. [We young people must go out and see places.]

Abantu bazakuba nenceba ebantwini babenothando, nobuntu. [People will not be heartless any more towards each other, they will love each other and have ubuntu.]

Izinto zokudlala nezinto, like Mojo in Gauteng. [More sport centres and debating societies, like Mojo in Gauteng.]

Vula amathuba omsebenzi for abantwana, yakha indawo zabantwana for ingxoxo zabo, abantwana baza kujoyina ingxoxo hayi i-gangster. [Create more jobs for the youth, and create more opportunities for discussions of youth issues, because then children will join the discussion, not the gangs.]

Daar sal baie kerke wees. [There'll be lots of churches.]

My ma en my pa, juffrou, sommer 'n baie lekker lewe ... Om te sien dat jou kind doen nie verkeerde dinge nie en om te sien dat hy is nie involved in gangsterism nie, om te sien dat jou kind doen nie drugs nie, om te sien dat jou kind is nie 'n alkoholiek nie. [My mother

and father, miss, they'll have a very nice life ... To see that your child doesn't do wrong things and to see that he's not involved in gangsterism, to see that your child doesn't do drugs, to see that your child isn't an alcoholic.]

Everybody would have work. Everybody would go to school.

Taken together, these ideas suggest the children's view of what would effectively prevent children joining gangs: plenty of opportunities for recreation, a neighbourhood that is low in crime and drug activity, and high in cohesion, employment, school enrolment and religious institutions. These initial ideas about prevention were all essentially located in social institutions beyond the family and friendship group: the neighbourhood, school and faith organisations; and in those broader socio-political factors that influence factors such as employment rates.

When asked directly what would prevent children from joining gangs, participants identified factors that mirrored what they had identified as risk factors. As with the risk factors, chief amongst their nominations for prevention was ending poverty. Poverty was not seen simply as lack of money, however, but as multi-dimensional; as affected by the opportunities afforded people for employment, and as creating a context in which essential services were either inaccessible or of poor quality (or both):

Phelisa indlala. [Eliminate poverty.]

Abantu mabanikwe ukutya. [People must be provided with food.]

Hulle moet meerdere werk verskaf vir die mense. Nou is hulle klaar met die skool – en jy kry nie werk nie. Nou dink jy vir jouself, ek kan mos vir daai man gaan werk. Hy's 'n gangster. Ek kan vir hom gaan werk. Daar's geld daar. Ek sal meerdere kry as wannecr ek gaan werk. [They must give more work to the people. Now they're finished with school – and you don't get work. Now you think to yourself, I can just go to work for that man. He's a gangster. I can go to work for him. There's money there. I'll get more than if I went to work.]

Werk geleenthede skep vir daai mense. Bou huise. [Create work opportunities for those people. Build houses.]

Izindlu ezinkulu not matches box yendlu, indawo zokudlala for abantwana, thatha abantwana aba drug addicted ubase kwindawo

zoluleko. Lungisa indawo zempilo, ayikho icounseling eyiyo. [Big houses not matchbox houses. More parks for the children, and take children who are drug addicted to the rehabilitation centres. Improve health clinics. There is no proper counselling.]

Imfundo yamahala kubantwana aba needy, kuba kwezinye izikolo uyaxelelwa ukuba awuzukufumana ncwadi xa ungabhatali. Abanye basuka kumakhaya anga namali. [Free education for needy children, because in some schools we are told that you will not receive books if you did not pay the school fees. Sometimes children come from disadvantaged communities; there is no money at all.]

Abantwana besenza into ezimbi babethwa yinto yokuba ayikho imali yokuya esikolweni, ukuba imfundo ingayeya mahala abantwana bazakuya esikolweni. [Some children do dangerous things if they are told there is no money for school; if there were free education, they would be at school.]

Just as the media was identified as placing children at risk by providing role models for joining a gang, it was identified as possibly having a positive role in prevention. This role might be directly informational, it might provide prosocial role models, or it might provide opportunities for developing children's skills and self-esteem:

Enye into ekufuneka ziyijonge apha ekuhlaleni yi television inegalelo layo kwi gangster. Abantwana babona iviolence babone nakwi films izinto ezenzekayo, like umzekelo babona umntana ekhuthuza abantu ebhasini, abantwana bazakufuna ukwenza lanto bebeyibona on television, television mayize nezinto ezakhayo ebantwaneni, ezibonisa iziphumo ze gangster. [Another thing we must consider is that television has an influence on gangsterism in our community. Children see violence and gangsters on television, and they want to do those things. For example, I watched a film where a young guy was robbing people on the bus. The television must come up with programmes that are educational, to show the consequences of gangsterism.]

Kukho into edlalwa kwi television ekuthiwa ngojika – majika ise Rhawutini kuphela hayi apha eKapa. U Jika Majika⁵ yi program yolutsha, kuba kaloku bathi akukho bomi apha (our community), qha into ekhoyo zi gangsters. [There is a programme on television called Jika Majika, but it is only open in Gauteng, not here in Cape

Town. Jika Majika is a youth development programme. They are saying there is no life in (our community), only gangs.]

I think if, you see how they advertise all type of things, like material stuff, like wine and alcohol, cellphones ... on the billboards, why can't the government like advertise stuff like this, like problems that is really, very important.

Other media interventions that were directly educational were also mentioned as possibilities:

Like he's said, they can have a video to show how they will be if they use these drugs. Once, the police came to the school and told us what tik can do to children. We went to the morgue and you could just see on this girl's brain ... because of the tik. Her brain was soft. If you just press it like this, the dent would stay in there.

Mention was also made of educational interventions in which ex-prisoners who had gone 'straight' might serve as role models:

If I'm his brother and I go to jail, then when I come out and I don't do this any more, then I'm like an example to him. I can talk to the community about it.

Amabanjwa la sele egwetyiwe mawa thathwe eze apha esikolweni kuba zikhona gangster ezikolweni zethu ... Kufuneka babonise ukuba ubomi basejele abulunganga. [Prisoners who have been sentenced must be taken to visit the schools, and in schools there are so many gangs ... Try to show that the prison life is not good for human beings.]

Effective policing (including the use of private security guards and the army) was regarded as critical by all the groups for creating safety in communities:

Die polisie speel 'n groot rol. [The police play a big role.]

The community police or whatever you call them, pay them more so they can be there in an instant.

Die polisie moet meerder in ons area kom. Hulle patrol miskien net eenmaal 'n dag – en dan worry hulle nie meer nie. [The police must come into our area more often. They patrol maybe only once a day – and then they don't worry any more.]

Participant: En hoekom ons nie uit die gang kan uitkom nie want dan gaan jy miskien die Boere ... in die yard in, hulle vat miskien die goeters ... Hulle versprei onder mekaar uit.

Facilitator: Ek verstaan, moenie worry nie, ek verstaan wat jy sê. He's saying that if the police raid often enough ... then the gangsters will start scattering ... and in that way they are weakened ... And that is how you can get out (of a gang).

Ja, hulle is bang vir die army's, hulle is nie bang vir die polisie want hoekom hulle smokkel sommer met die polisie deesdae. [Ja, they're afraid of the soldiers, they're not afraid of the police because they smuggle with the police these days.]

To make the environment safer, at places like restaurants and pharmacies, they should keep security guards at all time.

Kufuneka kuqashwe amanye amapolisa kuba awakho apha. ekuhlaleni ambalwa kakhulu. [They must appoint more policemen, there must be more police here in the community because there are too few of them.]

Black children also frequently mentioned the role played by sangomas (traditional healers) in assisting gangsters to evade injury during gang fights, and to evade arrest, via the use of traditional herbal remedies assumed to be able to accomplish these. One of the key interventions, then, was to have sangomas assist the police rather than the gangsters.

Andiboni solution ngaphandle kokuba izangoma zinga ncedisana namapolisa. [I don't see a solution to this unless the sangomas can maybe assist the police].

Although the need for improvements to the correctional services and justice system are implicit in children's criticisms of them, and most groups did not make additional specific comments about these spheres, several groups suggested bringing back the death penalty – a reflection of their frustration with the high crime rates with which they lived⁶:

As ek sien hulle het vir hom gehang omdat hy iemand doodgeskiet het, ek gaan nie dieselfde ding wil doen nie. Ek wil nie doodgaan nie. [If I see that they hanged him because he shot someone and killed him, then I'm not going to do the same thing.]

Hulle moet sommer doodgemaak word. [They must just be killed.]

Makubuye isigwebo sentambo, ukuba ubanjiwe uzakufa. [The death sentence must be reinstated, so that when you are caught you die.]

In terms of the community, a great deal of emphasis was placed on community cohesion – cohesion that revolved around standing together, reporting criminals, and not taking sides if children from opposing gangs fight:

It must come from ourselves. We must come forward and tell them about these things. We should be proud of our community and report the gangsters to the police. Tell them where they're selling drugs and doing illegal things. Because if you don't do that, then more and more people get involved in these things and we all suffer at the end of the day.

As daar miskien 'n gang fight is of so, hulle (die ouers) moet nie mekaar afdruk nie. Miskien is dit nou my kind, en nou wil sy kind met onse kinders baklei ... ons moet mekaar saamstaan. Ons moet nie mekaar afdruk nie. [If there's perhaps a gang fight, they (the parents) mustn't fight each other. Maybe it's my child, and now her child wants to fight with our children. We mustn't fight each other.]

Die mense moet volunteer dat hulle neighbourhood watch kan doen; die community moet bymekaar staan. [The people must volunteer to do neighbourhood watch; the community must stand together.]

Just stand together to help each other with these gangs and stuff like that. Because we can't just go where we want to go. We need people to stand with us to do what we want to do.

Net iets om daai community saam te bring – maar nie marches nie – miskien iets anders. En daai kan net gebeur as daai community hulle samewerking gee. Dit kan gedoen word. [Just something to bring the community together – but not marches – maybe something else. And that can only happen if the community pulls together. It can be done.]

Ja, almal moet saamstaan soos een – met of sonder die polisie. Hulle gaan miskien na daai government toe ... [Yes, everyone must stand together as one – with or without the police. Perhaps they can go to the government.]

Boycott.

Ja, of hulle wil 'n march hou. Die mense in die ander communities kan saam met hulle die march hou. [Yes, or they can hold a march. People in other communities can join the march.]

Ukuba ubona umntu esenza into embi kufuneka uxelele amapolisa, chaza ukuba esitratweni kwenzeka lento. [When you see a person doing wrong, people must tell the police that on my street, there are these things happening.]

Om verantwoordelik vir jouself te wees en ook verantwoordelik te wees vir die mense wat rondom jou bly. [To be responsible for yourself and also to be responsible for the people that live around you.]

Community cohesion, however, had a darker side – that of vigilantism – although not all groups or children condoned vigilantism:

So the community got together one evening, and this one guy said we're going to give you tik for a cell phone and all of that stuff. So they said he must come by the house, and the whole community came out and they beat him up. They nearly chopped off his fingers ... but it wasn't totally off. It was hanging like this. They hit him over the head with a brick.

Abantu mabathathe umthetho ezandleni zabo, ikangaroo courts mazisebenze ekuhlaleni, kufuneka zibethwe igangsters ngabahlali. [People must take the law in their own hands, the kangaroo courts must be allowed in the communities. The members of the community must beat the gangsters.]

Abahlali mabathathe ababantu banga babethi babase ejele. [The community must catch these people and not beat them, just take them to jail.]

Eliminating neighbourhood drug activity and managing access to alcohol were seen as critical:

Firstly, I'll try to get rid of drugs because drugs cause gangsterism. Gangsterism is all because of drugs, so I'll try to get rid of drugs.

Raak ontslae van daai smokkel huise. [Get rid of drug houses.]

It's more over drugs, my belief is that if there wasn't drugs you know there wouldn't have been like gangsterism and stuff like that. Drugs, just think to yourself, if there wasn't drugs you know, what will the people fight for you know, because you'll always hear, 'look it here, mense baklei weer (people fight again)' you know, there's a gang fight in this area but for what are they fighting? For territory? Not at all because on that side they making more money because they've got quality over there and quantity. Their drugs is like great stuff, but now you here in your place, this is a gang, that's a gang, that gang just made name because of the drugs, you understand? We selling poison to the people ...

Ukuba abantu bangayeka ukuthengisa utywala kubantwana abangaphantsi kwe 18 years and kunye neziyobisi. [If people could follow the law not to sell alcohol to children who are under 18 years, it's the best solution, same with drugs].

Participant: Shebeens mazingavulwa kude kube sebusuku, kuba igangs zizakungena. [Shebeens must not be open 'til late, so that the gangs cannot go inside.]

Facilitator: Kufuneka umntu athenge i-take-away akufuneki zi shebeens ekuhlaleni. [Shebeens should sell take aways, must there be shebeens in our community?]

Participant: Kufuneka zivale early like 7:30. [No, there must be but close early like 7:30.]

Kufuneka kupheliswe ukuthengisa intsangu. [They must stop selling dagga (cannabis).]

At the neighbourhood level, one of the critical interventions identified was providing sufficient opportunities for children to engage in after-school activities. One group even suggested using these as an opportunity for an anti-poverty intervention:

They do it because they find life boring ... build like a centre and make exciting things.

Participant: Get more activities here.

Facilitator: What else will you tell government?

Participant: Activities and facilities.

Participant: Indoor sports.

Participant: Ja, al daai. [Yes, all that.]

Participant: Ja, because the potential is here.

Ja, making things ... drawing art. Maybe bake a cake and things like that. They make things with their hands. So if someone could start them off by giving them money to start a business after school. But give them the money as a loan so that you can keep them motivated to pay it back monthly. So they know that they would have to pay back the loan. It will keep them occupied and solve the problems of not having money.

Parents also clearly played an important role in preventing children from joining gangs, as role models, through inculcating in their children appropriate values, through monitoring children's behaviour and whereabouts, and in assisting them in making appropriate choices of friends:

Because of your parents who have been role models. My father ... before I do things ... before the community shows it to me ... they show it to me first and they ask me if I like it or not. Like with drinking and drugs, my father won't say don't drink or do drugs; he'll first show it to me and ask me, do you like it or don't you like it? And not only at this age – but at a very small age. It was like a speed talk to understand what's going on in life.

As I grew up and changed into the person that I am today ... my parents taught me actually what is wrong. Smoking is wrong. You can have alcohol but you must not abuse it – or any substance.

I want to make (my mother) proud.

I had friends, and then my mummy told me those friends were not for me. They stole my cell phone. I didn't want to listen. I got another cell phone and they took that also. And then I realised I must get rid of them. They're not really my friends and I can't trust them.

Abazali mabafundise abantwana babo imbeko. [Parents must teach their children respect.]

Kufuneka axcelele abazali bakhe ukuba uyaphi, kufuneka bazi apho ayekhona. [He must always tell his parents where he is going, so that they know where he is.]

Abazali mabadlale indima yokukhomba itshomi yakho, abazali bayazi ukuba ngobani uzakulunga beyitshomi yakho. [Their parents

can help with choosing friends for them, their parents know who can be a good friend.)

Of die mense van daai plek, sien juffrou, soos die hele communities, die ma's en die pa's dan roep hulle in, en sê 'kyk agter julle kinders' sien juffrou, en sê vir hulle hulle moet wegbly van verkeerde goedte, sien juffrou? [Or the people of that place, see Miss, like the whole communities, the ma's and the pa's, then call them in and say, 'look after your children', see Miss, and say to them that they must stay away from wrong things, see Miss?]

What keeps me going is my mother. She also advises me to do my best and to try hard. If I look at the gangsters ... sorry, I don't want to be like them. I want to have a better future.

For me, it's the situation that I live in that keeps me going. I don't live with my mum. I don't live with my dad. I live with my granny and the struggle to keep me going is because she is alone. So whatever they do, they make sure that I do have the things that I must have for school.

It seems like parents don't care what children are doing because they don't know what they are doing outside. They think their child is safe and in the house – but they don't know what their child is up to. I think the parents must start being more responsible to their children. They should be more into the children – because they come from work ... en môre weer werk toe (and tomorrow again they go to work) – but they don't know what the children are doing.

They (parents) should pay more attention to the children.

Sometimes, however, parents themselves were involved in illicit activities, and it was the role modelling and intervention of other family members that was protective:

Like my daddy was doing all this stuff before – but not any more. My uncle has spoken to him ... He locked my daddy up in the house until he listened to my uncle. He was there for ten days.

Peers, too, were very important, both in terms of staying safe and staying out of gangs:

I think it's mostly about choosing your friends – what friends do you have. If they are a bad influence then you will get a bad influence as well.

Don't get mixed up with a bad crowd.

Nou ontmoet hulle nuwe vriende wat klaar gangsters is; nou gaan hulle mos saam. Hy is nou part van hulle gang. [Now they meet new friends who are already gangsters; now they go with them. Now he is part of their gang.]

Jonga umntu ojonge incwadi, umntu olibonayo ikamva lakhe, ukuba uyaphi, andithethi nabantu abange nakamva uyabona. [Rather concentrate on someone who is also focusing on her studies, someone who sees her future, where she is heading, not people who are without a future, you see.]

Sokuvuma itshomi zakho zilawule ubomi bakho, nokuba zithi u serious ngo life. [Do not let your friends control your life, even if they say you are too serious about life.]

Most children mentioned schools as being an important location for prevention. High school fees, school dropout, lack of safety at schools, poor school management, poor infrastructure, and unmotivated educators were also viewed as playing a role in gang activity at schools:

Imfundo yamahala ingenza abantwana abancinci banga joyini igangster. [Access to free education could reduce young people's joining gangs.]

Ndizakuthi abantwana kufuneka baye esikolweni kulula ukuba akasihambi isikolo ukuba ajoyine igangster. [I would suggest that every child must be at school. If they are not at school, it is easy for them to become gangsters.]

Ndiyavuma ukuba amapolisa angambona phandle abuze ukuba ufuna ntoni ngexesha lesikolo iqala apho ke into, by bunking isikolo. [I agree that if the police see him, they must ask him what he is doing during school hours because that's where it starts, by bunking school.]

Kufuneka isecurity apha esikolweni ngenjongo yokusikhusela kwi gangsters. [There must be security here at school, to protect us from gangsters.]

Amapolisa maweze apha esikolweni yonke inyanga, abafundi banezixhobo, sifuna ize security. [The police must patrol the schools, each and every month, and search all the learners who have weapons. We must have security.]

Otitshala abangeni eziklasini, yiyo lonto abantwana be joyina igangster, kugcwele kwizikolo zalapha elokishini. [The teachers do not come to class. That is why the students end up joining the gangs, and there is overcrowding in the township schools.]

Otitshala abalulo uncedo kwaphela, abahoyi, sifuna abahloli beze ezikolweni. [Teachers are not helpful, they do not care about us. We need school inspectors to visit our schools.]

The people don't even have real technology. There are computers for only half a class. Now what must the other children do in the class?

It was clear that several factors were also important in terms of preventing individual children's involvement in gangs. These included intervening in addiction:

The government can send social workers to the people who do drugs and who are in gangs. They can talk to them.

Religion and faith-based organisations were viewed as playing an important role in prevention, ranging from providing occupations as alternatives to hanging out on street corners (going to church, attending after-school activities), through to the influence of faith on choices made by individuals:

Yiya ecaweni suka esitratweni. [It would be good if people left the street and went to church.]

Icawe mazidlale indima. [Church organisations must help.]

Mevrou sien mos die ope lug kerk, wat hulle so op die velde hou, nou ek sien, wat ek op vakansie by die huis gewees het, baie gangsters wat in die tronk gewees het, ek sien hulle is nogal nou bekeer Mevrou, so ek dink ope, as jy so op die veld kerke hou, daai's ook 'n baie goeie ding Mevrou. [Miss sees the open air church, that they hold just there on the fields, now I saw, when I was on holiday at home, many gangsters who had been in prison, I see they are

converted Miss, so I think open, if you hold church on the fields, that's also a very good thing, Miss.)

Like at our church we do keep some of the children busy. It's not all the children – but just the children who belong to our church now. Every afternoon we have different activities. Maybe we play games, or we teach them a new dance to prepare them for an upcoming concert.

[Describing someone who is not a gang member.] I le believes in Jesus.

Ukuba ufuna ukukhoza kufuneka uzibonakalise ngendlela ethile, ukuba awufuni ukusela awuzokusela. [If you tell yourself that you want to be a Christian then you will conduct yourself in a specific way, so if you don't want to drink you will not.]

Most groups discussed choices made by individual children as being important, some suggesting that choices played a role in preventing them from joining gangs, and others that eliminating gangsterism depends on the choices made by gangsters themselves. However, the idea of 'choice' should be read in concert with the children's own descriptions of the very narrow opportunities afforded them for alternative occupations and economic activity. Under these conditions, although of course individual choice does have a role to play, it may have a far more constrained role than is true of the role of choice for children who have relatively unbounded opportunities.

In essence, the children's emphasis on choice may be a way of coping with their limited opportunities: the contrast between 'good' and 'bad' choices was far more starkly described than may be true for children who have more opportunities and are not confronted with such clear opportunities for involvement in crime and violence:

There's nothing we can do. The person himself must change himself. If one person change then everybody else will start changing.

We should stay away from bad influences.

I choose the way I want to live because I choose the right friends. I've got friends who will rather go clubbing than smoking.

Certain choices bring great responsibilities at times. You always have to ask yourself, is this right what I'm doing? You have to decide that for yourself.

You should think of what's going to happen in the future if you become a gangster now.

If you want to make it a better community you have to stand up and maybe like set an example.

Nee, maar hulle moet eers self regkom. Hulle is corrupt. Hulle moet eers regkom voordat hulle die plek kan regmaak. [No, but they must first come right. They're corrupt. They must first come right before they can make this place right.]

Abazali abaninzi bathi itshomi zikwenza usele, andicingi ukuba itshomi zingakwenza ukuba usele kufuneka wena kuba life is about making decisions, funeka umazi u life thatha isigqibo ngokwakho kuba akakho umntu ozakunyanzela, ukuba uthathe isigqibo wena, ubomi ngumzamo, kufuneka uzixelele ukuba ufuna ntoni na, leya ayamkelekile. [A lot of parents say friends make you drink, I don't think that your friends force you to drink because life is about making decisions. You must know that in life I make my own decisions because there is no one who will take something and force you to do it, because you make the decision, you tell yourself to do it, you see? Life is a struggle, you must tell yourself that this is what I want and this is not acceptable.]

Akona uyayazi into azakuyifumana ekugqibeleni, uyazazi izikoli, ngumhla wakhe ukuba ajoyine izikoli akukho mntu umnyazelayo. [Akona knows his gain at the end of the day and he knows about gangs. It is his choice to join the gang, no one forced him.]

Although most of the interventions suggested were around prevention, some children suggested working with gangsters individually, through counselling interventions:

Hulle kan met die gangsters gesels oor hulle lewe. Dan kan hulle mos vir jou sê hoe hulle gevoelens is. [They can talk with the gangsters about their lives. Then they can tell them about their feelings.]

Ja, fetch them off the streets and take them to a place where they know they are safe.

The government can send social workers to the people who do drugs and who are in gangs. They can talk to them.

Gang must be counselled kuba uyabuza ngeliya xesha wawusesikolweni wawuzixelela ukuba uzakuba yilento, umbonise ukuba ufuna kuba yintoni, mhlwawumbi uzakuxelela xa umbuza, yintoni ngoku le uyenzayo ndicela ubutshintshe ubomi, bakho kule nto, mbuze. [Gangsters must be counselled; and you should ask him 'while you were at school did you tell yourself that you want to be like this', counsel him and ask him what did he want to be, maybe he will tell you and you should ask him 'now what you are doing now, can't you change your life from this'? Ask him.]

And when you walk in there they mustn't treat you like a gangster. They must treat you like a real person.

Schools were viewed as one potential location for this type of individual intervention:

Of ons kan miskien vir hom inroep na die kantoor toe, dan kan 'n paar van die onderwysers met hom praat en so wat hy kan luister. Want dis nie lekker om in 'n gang te wees nie. [Or perhaps they can call him into the office, then a few of the teachers can talk to him in a way that he can listen to. Because it isn't nice to be in a gang.]

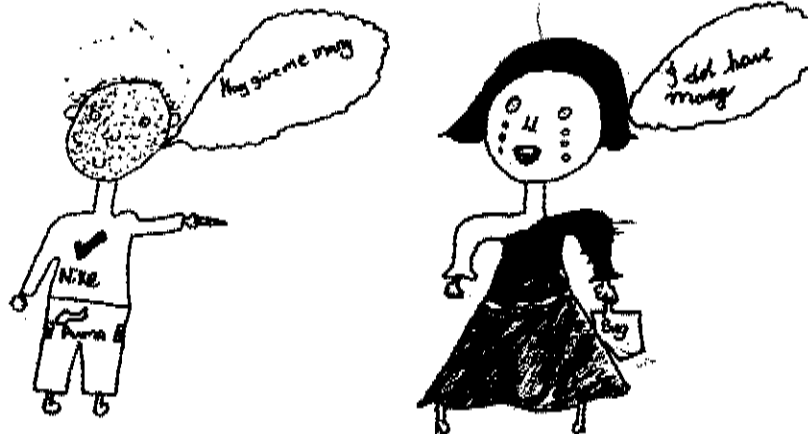
Religion was also viewed as having a role to play in intervention:

Om vir hom te bemoedig, om vir hom meestal, hoe kan ek nou sê, om met hom meestal te praat oor die woord van die Here en vir hom te bemoedig wat die Vader vir hom sal doen en ook om vir hom sê dat die dinge wat hy doen is verkeerd, dat hy ook kan beseef dat wat hy doen sal nie vir hom voorentoe laat gaan nie, dit sal vir hom agtertoe laat gaan en ... [To encourage him, and most of all, how can I now say, most of all to talk to him about the word of the Lord and to encourage him about what the Father will do for him and also to say to him that the things he's doing are wrong, that he can also understand that what he's doing won't let him move forward, it will leave him behind ...]

Several groups were quite pessimistic about intervening with children who were already in gangs. They recognised the constrained opportunities children faced in these neighbourhoods and the constant pressures towards involvement in crime and violence, and suggested removal from the community. A key reason for suggesting this was also to keep the ex-gang member safe from the reprisals of his/her former gang brothers:

If you can get them out of [this community] to maybe a boarding school or the surrounding areas where they are not known. Then they can start afresh.

But in my culture it is easier for you to get out of a gang because you can go to the Eastern Cape. Where the parents are really strict. They don't care what you say ... if you are a child then you must know your place. I mean, you don't have a say. And those people won't be able to come after you because it's a different place there; they live in a different life.



*I think this man in song he must not be do
as the as that he gets that song because he's
been the people people.*

*Live well alone + I did have what you want
you got you to a man from you got a very
person.*

Finally, one of the children handed the team this note, entirely unsolicited. That in itself indicates the strong desire of children to have authority figures (which we no doubt represented) deal with the issues of crime, violence and gangsterism. But it is worth reproducing for another reason: it captures so much of what the children had been saying about the larger social influences on crime and the struggle to develop a new South Africa of which we can all be proud:

The Crime in the places where we live
I am disappointed to say the crime rate
is increasing every day. We still wondering how
to form our country to take the right shape.
Because even on the superiors they contribute in
this large scale of corruption.

This is the time for me and you to fight against
this issue before the country experiences a lot of a
loss. Boycotts at this stage is not the solution,
The infrastructure is in the disadvantages due to this
matter.

We as South Africans we still have the great expectations
of the 2010 World Cup bid, but we still contributing
in the fall on this Country. As proudly South Africans
we suppose to put our native land to another level
as the South Africans earnestly represent us in
the foreign countries. Struggling to take our country
in the books of the global world.

Thank you

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The context of child development

It is helpful to view children as growing up within an ecology of contexts: smaller, more intimate contexts, such as family and school, that are nested within larger contexts such as the neighbourhood (Bronfenbrenner et al 1984). A conceptual illustration of this is provided in Figure 1 below.

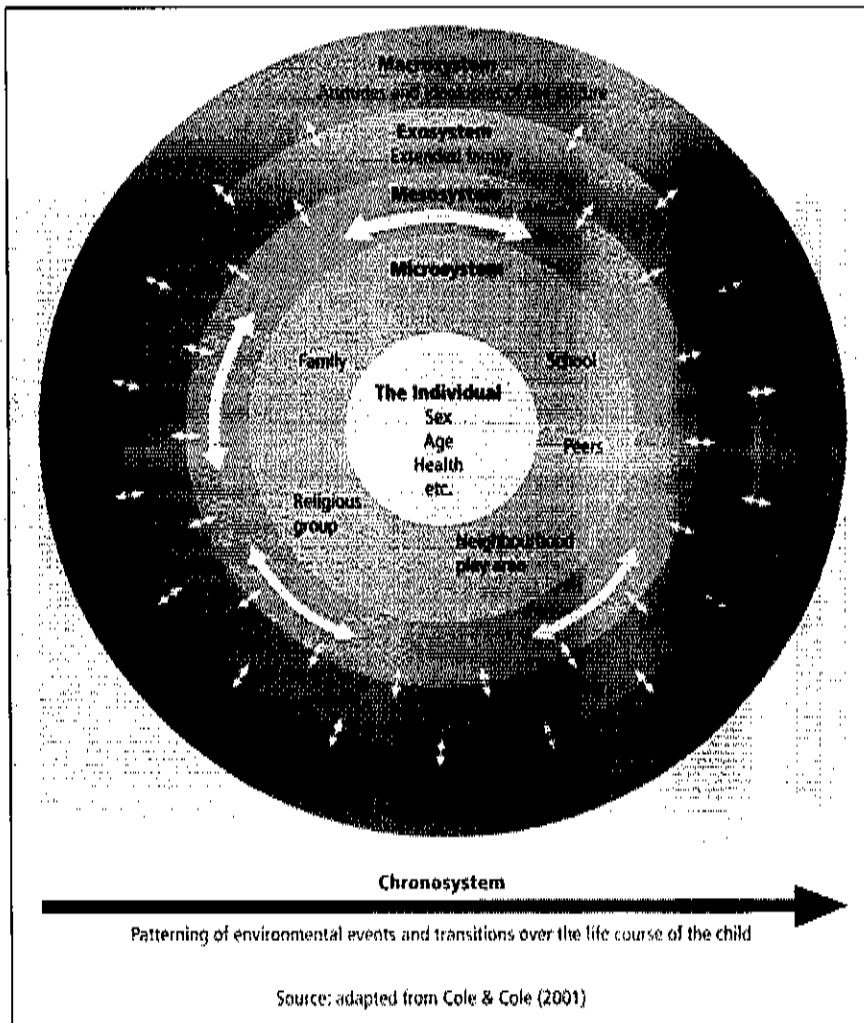
Children get involved in gangs (or do not get involved) because of factors operating at the level of the individual child, the family, the peer group, the neighbourhood, and the broader socio-political context within which all of these are nested. These factors might either increase risk for gang membership, or protect against it: children who are exposed to more risk than protective factors are more likely to get involved in gangs, while children who are exposed to more protection than risk are more likely to follow prosocial paths in life. Risk and protective factors operate at each ecological level. Table 2 summarises the risk and protective factors, as well as the corresponding interventions that the children identified at each ecological level.

Individual level

The first level of this ecology is the individual: the child's age, race, gender and temperament are likely to influence how he or she interacts with the other contexts, and the influences that those contexts bring to bear on him or her. An instance of this was the girls' reports of fear of rape, while the young men did not mention this as a fear they personally experienced (although male-male sexual activity undoubtedly occurs in the context of gangs and may include rape, as discussed by Steinberg (2004)). Similarly, boys were reportedly more at risk of involvement in gangs, although girls also reported the existence of 'girl gangs', which formed around boys' gangs as the gangsters' girlfriends formed their own gang.

Children did not pay attention to age, race or temperament as influencing gang involvement, except to mention that gang membership may begin

Figure 1: Child-context relations



as young as 11 years of age. In terms of interventions, the counselling interventions suggested as a means to bring young people out of gangsterism are essentially individual interventions, as is substance abuse treatment.

Another aspect that might be located at the individual level was the emphasis children placed on their own choices. However, choices made by individual

Table 2: Summary of children's views of risk and protective factors, and suggestions for intervention

Ecological level	Risk factors	Protective factors	Intervention
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer rejection (feeling excluded) Peer popularity Parental use of physical punishment Parental use of harsh verbal discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community cohesion among adults Active crime and drug activity in the neighbourhood Police presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Television programmes and other media campaigns that provide good role models, opportunities for youth development, and education about the consequences of delinquency and gang membership Strengthening of family relationships Parental involvement in children's school
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor family environments (domestic violence, drug use, family members who are involved in crime) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to recreation facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide recreation facilities Family interventions Eliminate school fees, improve school management
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor conditions Identity formation risks of adolescence 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose appropriate friends and activities Remove or restricts from the community

children are very much constrained by the opportunities available to them in their social contexts. In addition, children described the subtle influences of families and friends on their own behaviour, making it less likely that their choices in actual practice are as clear as they described them being. Key interventions, therefore, are those that offer opportunities for children to make prosocial choices, such as offering safe, positive extramural activities. Children also mentioned religion as offering them comfort and assisting them in developing a determination to make good choices.

Microsystems level

Individuals are nested within microsystems, systems where the child is involved in continuous, face-to-face interactions with familiar people. These proximal relationships are most influential in shaping children's development (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Examples would be parent-child relationships, relationships with peers, and relationships with teachers. Microsystems played an important role in the children's estimations of how young people got involved in gangs and how to prevent this involvement.

Parents and other family members were viewed as playing a strategic role in either protecting them from involvement in gangs, through monitoring their behaviour (such as where they went and at what time), through discussing with them choices with which they would be faced (such as to use alcohol or not), through maintaining a good relationship with them so that children did not want to disappoint them; and through providing role models and opportunities for gang involvement. Every group was also clear about the importance of having a prosocial peer group in preventing involvement in gangs.

What was equally striking was that no child mentioned school or attachment to school, or even to a teacher, as important in their current lives; rather, they typically talked about school as unsafe and as permissive of gangs and gang fights. However, the literature is clear that school is a key context for adolescent development, and attachment to and involvement in school for preventing delinquency (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Sampson and Laub 1997). Children did, nonetheless, emphasise the importance of a functioning, safe school system for preventing gangsterism. Linked to this, preventing school dropout was also seen as essential keeping children from involvement in gangs.

The lack of opportunities for prosocial activities after school – because the parks had been overtaken by gangsters and drug related activity, and because there were few other opportunities besides a limited number of

sports – played a very large role in the children’s comments about how to prevent young people from becoming involved in gangsterism.

Mesosystems level

The mesosystems refer to interactions between the microsystems, thus capturing the influence of one system on another. Again, children were not explicit about this, but interactions between systems can exert significant effects on child development. For example, children whose home lives are not happy might find alternative supports in the structure of a group of peers who later induct them into a gang.

Exosystem level

The exosystem includes those domains to which children have little direct access but which nonetheless influence those people with whom they have close relationships. It was here that children located most of the factors that played a causal role in gangsterism and it was here that children were most likely to suggest interventions.

They explicitly mentioned the embeddedness of gangs in so many aspects of their everyday lives as increasing their danger. The frequent and unavoidable interactions with gangs, coupled with the lack of opportunities for prosocial activities, and the context of poverty, undoubtedly increases children’s interactions with gangs and gangsters and hence the possibility that these systems provide role models and apparently viable alternatives to prosocial play and work.

Neighbours, and particularly interactions amongst adults in the neighbourhood, were another key element of the exosystem mentioned by most groups. They called for parents to cooperate in resolving conflict between children and in keeping an eye on the neighbourhood’s children – a form of neighbourhood cohesion that has been shown to be effective in preventing a range of negative outcomes for children, from child abuse to delinquency (Sampson 1992). Similarly, the children also wanted neighbourhood adults to work together to prevent gangsterism directly through neighbourhood watches and reporting gang activities to the police.

However, such cohesion is severely affected in a context of high violence, since – as described by the children – under such conditions neighbours

become fearful of each other (Garbarino and Sherman 1980; Furstenburg 1993). Another dynamic preventing such cohesion was the way in which gangsters seemed to protect others known to them, thus giving their neighbours an incentive at least not to report them to the authorities – an incentive given extra strength through the fear with which gangsters were viewed.

The media was seen as promoting violence and crime, by providing children with criminal role models. Correspondingly, children thought that it was important for the media to provide good role models and to educate about the dangers of involvement in gangs. One group also talked about the importance, in a context of poverty, of providing such messages via media (such as billboards) that are free to access. Other educational interventions, such as having ex-gangsters and ex-prisoners talk to children about the consequences of criminal behaviour were also nominated by the children.

All the groups called for government institutions to improve their functioning:

- For the police to act more effectively in instances of crime and to root out corruption from within their ranks.
- For the justice system to prosecute cases quickly, to refuse bail for violent offences, and not to lose dockets.
- For correctional services to punish and not to allow prisons to serve as the venue for further initiation into gangs.

Aside from government, black children were also concerned that traditional healers should work in the interests of crime prevention, rather than defeating the ends of justice through providing *muti* to accomplish release from prison or the dropping of a charge.

Macrosystem level

Finally, the children located a number of necessary interventions at the level of the macrosystem. Because they viewed relative deprivation as fuelling a desire to gain material goods by the only perceived means possible – crime – in every group, children placed a great deal of emphasis on interventions directed towards reducing or eliminating poverty. Aside from economic interventions, these included provision of housing, feeding schemes, free education, and access to a range of good health services (including mental

health services). Children also called specifically for interventions aimed at increasing employment opportunities.

A key element of the ecosystemic model is the connections between the nested layers; none of them can be viewed in isolation. Children recognised this implicitly in the emphasis they placed on poverty, as poverty affects every level of the ecosystem. Poverty does not cause violence, but it does set the conditions under which delinquency, crime, violence and substance abuse flourish (Sampson 1992; Sampson and Lauritsen 1994). Poor families are less able to send their children to fee-paying schools, thus putting them at risk of dropping out of school when most schools have fees; in poor and violent neighbourhoods this in turn increases their risk of spending time with delinquent peers and so being drawn into gangsterism.

Poor neighbourhoods are also less likely to have prosocial activities available for youth, thus increasing their chances of finding criminal activities with which to occupy their time. Being poor relative to others in a society renders material goods more attractive, while a lack of economic opportunities implies that crime is the only available means to obtain those goods. Although poverty may be regarded as a macrosystem influence, it affects almost every other risk and protective factor the children mentioned.

The chronosystem

What the children did not describe at all was the chronosystem, which reflects the passage of time and accompanying developmental changes in both the children and the systems with which they have contact. As children develop, for instance, they have more contact with community contexts and spend more time out of the family home than they do when they are younger (Aber et al 1997). Although the children did not explicitly mention this, it was clear that the primary school groups had less involvement in their communities, and less desire for such involvement, than the older groups.

All the risk factors identified by the children are supported by the literature investigating risk and protection for violent behaviour among youth (Dawes and van der Merwe 2004) and the literature specific to children's involvement in gangs (Dowdney 2005b; Dishion et al 2005; Hill et al 2006), with the exception of their emphasis on the media. However, the media undoubtedly contributes to the development and maintenance of social norms, and pro-violence norms have been found to increase risk for youth violence (Dawes and van der Merwe 2004).

This, then, describes the ecology within which children develop – a nested set of systems which interact with each other, and within which risk and protective factors operate to affect children's opportunities. What this model does not describe is the processes by which children either become involved in organised armed violence, or follow a more prosocial path.

The process of becoming a gangster

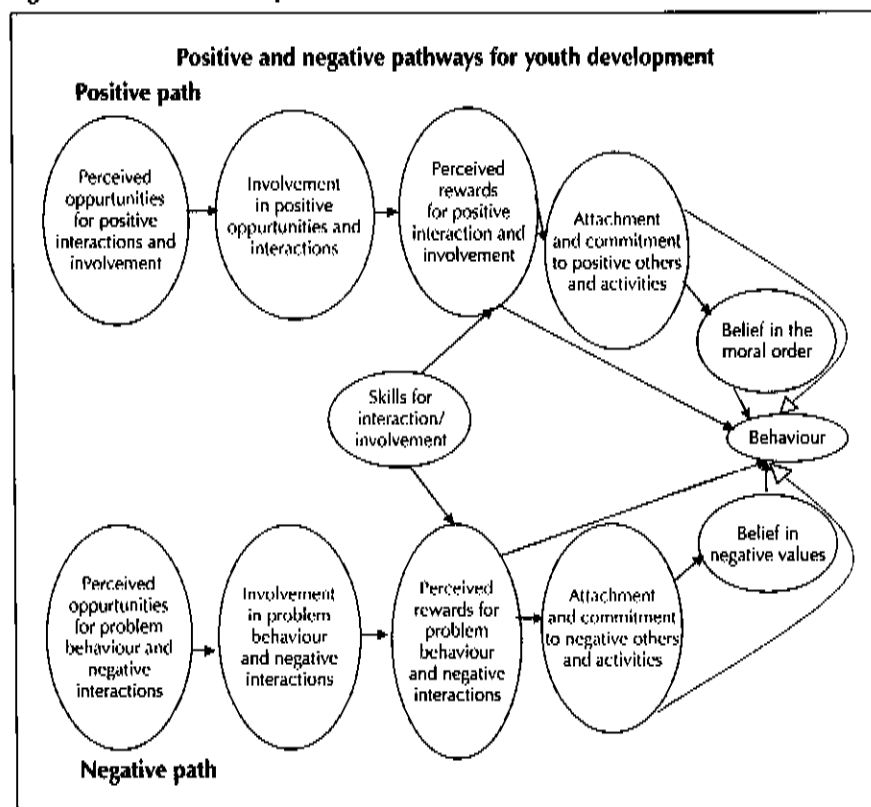
One way of understanding the processes is the social development model (Catalano and Hawkins 1996), which is based on broader criminological theory and suggests that similar paths lead to both prosocial and antisocial behaviours. The model is diagrammed in Figure 2.

Essentially, the model suggests that individual characteristics (such as race, age, and gender) influence the opportunities that are available to one. Once one has recognised that certain opportunities are available and these are taken, one becomes involved in the behaviour relevant to that opportunity, and begins to interact with the people associated with that opportunity. Thus a child who is asked to sell drugs begins to practise an antisocial behaviour and to interact with gangsters, while a child who is asked to sing in the church choir begins to practise a prosocial behaviour and to interact with church members.

As children become more involved in these opportunities, they are rewarded for that involvement, and begin to develop an attachment and commitment to the activities and to the associated people. So the child selling drugs is rewarded for doing that, perhaps with money or brand name clothing, or the attention of an uncle, and his commitment to drug sales increases, as does his attachment to his uncle. Over time, he begins to internalise a belief in antisocial values, and slowly climbs the drug selling ladder.

Similarly, the child singing in the church choir is rewarded for that, perhaps with praise and attention, perhaps with church suppers and a choir uniform, or the attention of a favourite aunt, and his commitment to the church choir increases, together with his attachment to his aunt. He then begins to internalise religious values, and becomes more involved in church activities.

The same processes are therefore involved in becoming a gangster and in following a more prosocial path. The children's implicit recognition of this was inherent in their pleas for more extramural activities, and for a reduction

Figure 2: The social development model

Source: Adapted from Catalano and Hawkins (1996).

in their exposure to antisocial activities. Prosocial extramural activities not only take up a child's time and energy (thus minimising time and energy available for antisocial activities), but provide them with opportunities for being rewarded for prosocial activities, for developing attachments to prosocial role models, and ultimately for internalising prosocial values.

It was clear, from their descriptions of the embeddedness of gangsterism in their communities, that their environments offered them many opportunities to interact with gangsters. Children uniformly complained about too few opportunities for other forms of interaction, at school or out of school. Sports were mentioned, as were parties and trips to a local ice-skating rink over the weekend, but a lack of extramural opportunities was raised in every group.

The family context also appeared to afford either opportunities for prosocial interaction, with coaching and role modelling from parents described as playing a big role in prevention; or children described how family members who were gangsters could offer opportunities for antisocial socialisation. Families characterised by conflict, violence or coldness were also described as being an incentive for children to spend more time in the community away from home, thus opening up more opportunities for interaction with gangs.

The social development model offers an heuristic for understanding how the opportunities provided by risk and protective factors operate to increase or reduce children's risk for involvement in organised armed violence. Based on this, and on the children's recommendations, it is key that more opportunities for prosocial activities should be offered at school (including encouraging children to bond to teachers and to stay in school) and in communities, and that families should support and model such activities.

Child rights and violent neighbourhoods

South Africa is a signatory to both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (AC). From the children's descriptions of their neighbourhoods, several of their rights are being infringed. The following section identifies the most relevant articles in the CRC and AC, together with the relevant duty-bearer:

- Article 6 (CRC) and Article 5 (AC) state the right to life, and the duty of the state to ensure the survival and development of the child. Article 19 (CRC) and Article 16 (AC) address the state's duty to take 'all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse'. Children in this study clearly described high levels of exposure to violence, and the failure of organs of the state (such as the police) to ensure their safety.
- Article 28 (CRC) and Article 11 (AC) describe the right to education. Trying to learn in an unsafe school is likely to interrupt education. In addition, the high school dropout rate described by the children implies that schools are failing our children.

- Article 31 (CRC) and Article 12 (AC) describe 'the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities'. In the African Charter, states are actively encouraged to provide opportunities for leisure and recreation. Neighbourhoods that do not have suitable recreation facilities for children are indicating that the state has failed in its duty to promote this right. Having safe places to play or to access other recreational activities is also likely to fulfil rights to protection and survival, as this may decrease injuries and fatalities caused by exposure to violence.
- Article 33 (CRC) and Article 28 (AC): the duty of the state to 'take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances' and to 'prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances'. Clearly, children in these communities are being exposed to high levels of drug use and trafficking.

Recommendations for intervention

Several interventions were suggested directly by the children, or by the understanding of risk and protective factors that they demonstrated. Preventive interventions were highest on the children's list, and included the following.

Macrosystem level

At the level of the macrosystem, poverty alleviation should be high on the state agenda, and should include an emphasis on creation of employment opportunities. One of the factors that protects against antisocial behaviour is having hope for the future, including the belief that schooling will be rewarded by employment (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Catalano and Hawkins 1996; O'Donnell et al 2002).

Children also nominated poverty alleviation as including improved housing, improved and free education, and good health services which should specifically include access to mental health services and substance abuse treatment. Free education would also assist in keeping children in school, thus interrupting the school dropout route to gang membership. In each case, the duty-bearer is clearly the state.

Exosystem level

At the level of the exosystem, several interventions were mentioned. These were aimed at reducing children's exposure to antisocial (criminal and drug related) behaviour and to improving social norms with regard to the acceptability of violence and criminal behaviour:

- Children placed a great deal of emphasis on effective policing. Among their recommendations were eradicating corruption from the police services, providing police personnel with adequate equipment, the necessity of frequent neighbourhood patrols and quick responses to reports of crime, and frequent raids on known gang and drug houses in order to disrupt and ultimately weaken the gang structure. Many groups thought that the army might be more effective than the police.
- Law enforcement should be aimed not only at crime, but specific interventions aimed at reducing drug activity should also be implemented. As noted by the children, drug activity is closely associated with crime and violence (Dowdney 2003; Leggett 2005). Such operations should not only target illicit substances, but alcohol too. At the least, children reported that the licensing laws for the sale of alcohol were not being enforced, and called for their enforcement by the police. Several groups thought that these laws were not strict enough.
- Children were also clear that the prison system allows for an initiation into gangs, and that, in the context of poverty, conditions in prison may be better than those outside. This implies a greater emphasis on rehabilitation through correctional services, and a structuring of the service so that gang initiation inside prison becomes less possible.
- Problems with the judicial system were also mentioned as contributing to crime: the apparent ease with which arrestees are released on bail, and the loss of dockets within the system were particular areas of concern that children felt should be addressed.
- Children wanted media agencies to introduce more pro-social programming, and to be exposed to a broader range of anti-drug and anti-gang programmes and messages. Media interventions fall within the duty of the state, which has the opportunity to regulate what is made available via the broadcast media, as well as civil society organisations that fund media. Organs of the state, such as the police, correctional services and education authorities, are also duty bearers with regard to

educational opportunities such as having ex-prisoners speak to children about the difficulties of gang life.

- The state and civil society organisations (including faith-based organisations) were clearly identified as duty bearers with regard to providing after-school activities for children. This was seen as a key intervention. Children should be offered many more opportunities for a range of involvement in extramural activities. The literature suggests that this is effective both in reducing substance use and in reducing delinquency (Catalano and Hawkins 1996). Religious involvement is also protective against substance use (Matthew et al 1998; Koenig 2001) and delinquency (Pearce et al 2003). Neighbourhood places of worship might effectively be involved in providing such extramural activities, especially when these encourage internalising of religious values so that children begin to practice their religion privately, for instance, through private prayer and scripture reading. This latter seems to be most effective in reducing children's delinquency (Pearce et al 2003).
- Children did suggest increasing community cohesion. However, no interventions that directly do this have been identified in the literature. Cohesion is, however, most likely to be increased through involving neighbourhood residents in violence prevention programmes, such as youth activities at a place of worship, supervised homework sessions at school, or a neighbourhood watch. Such activities provide neighbours with opportunities to get to know one another and to work together towards a common purpose, and in so doing to develop a common value system that they might then enforce in other neighbourhood venues.

Microsystem level

At the microsystem level, a few interventions were suggested:

- Interventions to support families might also be effective (although, because of the high level of violence, they may be difficult to implement). Such programmes have been shown to have some effect in reducing child maltreatment when they are intensive and well resourced (Garbarino et al 1998), and may similarly have effects on delinquency (Sampson 1992). Again, duty bearers here would encompass the full range of state and civil society organisations.

- Educational authorities are particularly important duty bearers when it comes to prevention. Children were clear that improving school safety, providing well resourced schools, and improving school management were key to prevention. Interventions to improve the attractiveness and safety of the school and of relationships with teachers may assist in improving children's attachment to school. Attachment to and involvement with school has been shown to increase children's resilience with regard to delinquency (O'Donnell et al 2002), and this is an important site for preventive interventions. The children also linked school dropout with the early stages of gang membership. Key prevention initiatives may be those that target the prevention of school dropout.

Individual level

Finally, at the individual level, substance abuse and mental health treatment programmes may also assist individual children in making more positive choices. This may be particularly true of substance abuse treatment programmes, since children were clear that drug use was a common route to involvement in gang activities. Children who have lost loved ones through gang violence should also be provided with therapeutic interventions to assist them to come to terms with the loss without themselves turning to gang violence for revenge.

Most of the recommendations the children made were with regard to prevention, and they paid scant attention to interventions for children already involved in organised armed violence. However, they did mention a few:

- Counselling and substance abuse treatment should be provided for such children.
- The children were clear that those who decide to leave a gang put their lives at risk in doing so, and that some form of protection programme (such as removal from the community) is essential for such children. This is echoed by international research (Dowdney 2005a).

While schools were identified as sites for preventive interventions, children were quite clear that school dropout was strongly associated with gang activity, making the school an unlikely site for reaching children who are already involved in gangs. It would be key, however, for such programmes to work towards returning children to school.

Whether interventions target prevention or children already involved in gangs, emerging best practice suggests that, rather than intervening on one level or in one way, effective interventions consider the range of influences operating in children's lives at different ecological levels, that they target as many of these influences as possible, and as early in a child's development as possible. While it may be difficult to intervene at some levels, programmes that intervene simultaneously in more than one site are more likely to be effective (Dawes and Donald 2000). Such interventions should focus on increasing children's resilience through decreasing risk and increasing protective factors (Dowdney 2005a).

In short, what the children wanted was 'ordinary magic': they wanted their families, schools, and neighbourhoods to be safe and to work together to carry out the ordinary tasks of childrearing (Masten 2001).

NOTES

- 1 In this particular community, one gang called itself the 'K-Ways' and wore K-Way hats to identify themselves.
- 2 The Nokia-3310 has no camera. Several children told us that gangsters are angry if they try to take a cellphone and it has no camera.
- 3 Under the State of Emergency imposed during the last years of the apartheid era.
- 4 '26' and '28' are the names of long established gang structures that initially operated only inside prisons, but more recently have extended their operations to include those not in prison (Steinberg 2004).
- 5 Jika Majika is a street dance programme in which the presenter coaches aspiring dancers. Each week, different dancers compete to win a prize at the end of the series (Komane 2006).
- 6 It should be noted that evidence about the effectiveness of the death penalty as a deterrent against crime is mixed, and only studies from the developed world could be identified (Sorensen et al 1999; Dezhbakhsh et al 2003; Katz et al 2003; Zimmerman 2004). There is no reason to think that it would act as a deterrent in the context of the drug trade (Bedau undated), which appears to be one of the main drivers of gang activity in Cape Town. The children's comments should be read as illustrating the depth of children's frustrations rather than as a call for the reinstatement of capital punishment.

REFERENCES

- Aber, J L, Gephart, M A, Brooks-Gunn, J, and Connell, J P 1997. Development in context: Implications for studying neighborhood effects. In J Brooks-Gunn, G J Duncan and J L Aber (eds), *Neighborhood Policy. Volume 1: Context and consequences for children*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1997, pp 44–61.
- Bedau, H A undated. *The case against the death penalty* [online]. Available from <<http://www.worldpolicy.org/globalrights/dp/bedcau.html>> [accessed 22 August 2006].
- Bronfenbrenner, U 1979. *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U, Moen, P, and Garbarino, J 1984. Child, family and community. In R Parke (ed), *Review of Child Development Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, pp 283–328.
- Catalano, R F and Hawkins, J D 1996. The social development model: A theory of antisocial behavior. In J D Hawkins (ed), *Delinquency and crime: Current theories*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp 149–197.
- Cole, M and Cole, S 2001. *The development of children*. New York: Worth Publishers.
- Dawes, A and Donald, D 2000. Improving children's chances: Developmental theory and effective interventions in community contexts. In D Donald, A Dawes and J Louw (eds), *Addressing childhood adversity*. Cape Town: David Philip, 2000, pp 1–25.
- Dawes, A and van der Merwe, A 2004. *Violent behaviour in adolescence: causal pathways, risk assessment and intervention. Report to NICRO, Cape Town*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Dezhbakhsh, H, Rubin, P H, and Shepherd, J M 2003. Does capital punishment have a deterrent effect? New evidence from postmoratorium panel data. *American Law and Economics Review*, 5: 344–376.
- Dishion, T J, Nelson, S E and Yasui M 2005. Predicting early adolescent gang involvement from middle school adaptation. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 34(1): 62–73.
- Dissel, A 1997. Youth, street gangs and violence in South Africa. In *Youth, street culture, and urban violence in Africa*. Proceedings of the international symposium held

- in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 5–7 May 1997, pp 405–411 [online]. Available from: <<http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papganga.htm>> [accessed 22 August 2006].
- Dowdney, L 2003. *Children of the drug trade: A case study of children in organised armed violence in Rio de Janeiro*. Rio de Janeiro: 7 Letras.
- Dowdney, L 2005a. Integrated strategic approaches for the prevention and rehabilitation of children and youth in organised armed violence. In L Dowdney (ed), *Neither war nor peace: international comparisons of children and youth in organised armed violence*. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: 7 Letras, 2005, pp 167–173.
- Dowdney, L 2005b. Vulnerability and resilience: Why children join armed gangs. In L Dowdney (ed), *Neither war nor peace: International comparisons of children and youth in organised armed violence*. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: 7 Letras, 2005, pp 79–95.
- Furstenburg, F F 1993. How families manage risk and opportunity in dangerous neighborhoods. In W J Wilson (ed), *Sociology and the Public Agenda*. Newbury Park: Sage, 1993, pp 231–258.
- Garbarino, J, Kostelny, K, and Barry, F D 1998. Neighborhood-based programs. In P K Trickett and C J Schellenbach (eds), *Violence against children in the family and the community*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1998, pp 287–314.
- Garbarino, J and Sherman, D 1980. High-risk neighborhoods and high-risk families: The human ecology of child maltreatment. *Child Development*, 51:188–198.
- Gottfredson, M and Hirschi, T 1990. *A general theory of crime*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hill, K G, Howell, J C, Hawkins, J D and Battin-Pearson, S R 2006. Childhood risk factors for adolescent gang membership: results from the Seattle social development project. *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency*, 26(3):300–322.
- Horowitz, K, McKay, M, and Marshall, R 2005. Community violence and urban families: Experiences, effects, and directions for intervention. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 75:356–368.
- Kagee, H and Frank, C 2005. *COAV Cities Project: Rapid assessment for Cape Town*. Pretoria, South Africa: Institute for Security Studies.
- Katz, L, Levitt, S D, and Shustorovich, E 2003. Prison conditions, capital punishment, and deterrence. *American Law and Economics Review*, 5:318–343.
- Khan N 2006, personal communication to Cheryl Frank, July 2006.
- Koenig, H G 2001. Religion and medicine III: Developing a theoretical model. *The International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, 31:199–216.
- Komanc, T 2006. Tembi gets down again. *The Citizen*, 10 December.

- Leggett, T 2005. Terugskiet (returning fire): Growing up on the street corners of Manenberg, South Africa. In *Neither war nor peace: International comparisons of children and youth in organised armed violence*. Rio de Janeiro: 7 Letras, 2005, pp 296–315.
- Masten, A S 2001. Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist*, 56: 227–238.
- Matthew, D A, McCullough, M E, Larson, D B, Koenig, H G, Swyers, J P, and Milano, M G 1998. Religious commitment and health status: A review of the research and implications for family medicine. *Archives of Family Medicine*, 7: 118–124.
- Ndenze, B and SAPA 2006. School gang feud ends in Langa murders. *Cape Times*, 26 July.
- O'Donnell, D A, Schwab-Stone, M, and Muyeed, A Z 2002. Multidimensional resilience in urban children exposed to community violence. *Child Development*, 73:1265–1282.
- Pearce, M J, Jones, S M, Schwab-Stone, M and Ruchkin, V 2003. The protective effects of religiousness and parent involvement on the development of conduct problems among youth exposed to violence. *Child Development*, 74:1682–1696.
- Pinnock, D 1982. Towards an understanding of the structure, function and cause of gang formation in Cape Town. Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.
- Sampson, R J 1992. Family management and child development: Insights from social disorganization theory. In J McCord (ed), *Facts, frameworks and forecasts: Advances in criminological theory, Vol 3*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992, pp 63–93.
- Sampson, R J and Laub, J H 1997. A life-course theory of cumulative disadvantage and stability of delinquency. In T P Thornberry (ed), *Developmental theories of Crime and Delinquency. Advances in Criminological theory: Vol 7*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997, pp 133–161.
- Sampson, R J and Lauritsen, J L 1994. Violent victimization and offending: Individual-, situational-, and community-level risk factors. In A J Reiss and J A Roth (eds), *Understanding and preventing violence, Vol 3: Social influences*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1994, pp 1–114.
- Seedat, S, Nyamai, C, Njenga, F, Vythilingum, B and Stein, D J 2004. Trauma exposure and post-traumatic stress symptoms in urban African schools. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 184:169–175.
- Sorensen, J, Wrinkle, R, Brewer, V and Marquart, J 1999. Capital punishment and deterrence: Examining the effect of executions on murder in Texas. *Crime and Delinquency*, 45:481–493.

- Steinberg, J 2004. Nongoloza's children: Western Cape prison gangs during and after apartheid. Monograph written for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation [online]. Available from <<http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papjonny.htm>> [accessed 22 August 2006].
- Ward, C L, Flisher, A J, Zissis, C, Muller, M and Lombard, C 2001. Exposure to violence and its relationship to psychopathology in adolescents. *Injury Prevention*, 7:297–301.
- Zimmerman, P R 2004. State executions, deterrence, and the incidence of murder. *Journal of Applied Economics*, 7:163–193.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Background information

In a focus group interview, children are not asked a series of highly structured, pre-defined questions as would be the case if a semi-structured or structured questionnaire were to be used. Rather, discussion is initiated and allowed to flow with some guidance from the interviewers. The goal is for children to raise what they think is important, rather than for the interviewers to impose ideas on them, and for them to discuss it amongst themselves. What one wants to avoid is a situation in which a group of children are individually interviewed in each other's presence.

A focus group discussion therefore has only two (or possibly three) questions, or areas to explore. The first typically serves as an ice-breaker that leads the discussion into the important areas, and the next one (or possibly two) explore the important areas. This method is most appropriate with older teenagers (around ages 15 and up). Younger children, who are less capable of abstract reasoning, need different methods to draw out the information in which we are interested. For that reason, the 'interview schedule' below uses a mix of methods depending on the age-groups involved.

The overarching goal of each discussion is the same: the involvement of children in organised armed violence. Although there will be some discussion of violence in general, facilitators will try to move the discussion towards organised armed violence. Each group will therefore aim:

- To have children describe how they are affected by violence, and specifically gang activities (including but not limited to violence), in their communities.
- To have children describe what they think are the essential interventions for children involved in organised armed violence.
- The 'interview schedule' below thus describes different scenarios for different groups.

For children in Grades 9 and 11

Eight such groups will be conducted, two from each high violence community. Four will be with girls, four with boys.

Materials:

- Flipchart
- Flipchart pens
- Masking tape
- Tape-recorder
- Refreshments: 4l soft drinks, muffins, chips, 12 paper cups, paper serviettes.

Hello. My name is [*interviewer name*] and this is my colleague [*other interviewer*]. We are from the Human Sciences Research Council, and we are conducting research into young people's experience of violence in their communities. This is part of a much bigger study that is currently taking place in five cities around the world, including Cape Town. Thank you for agreeing to take part in this discussion. As we said to you each earlier, results from this research will be given to government and community development organizations, and we hope that they will be able to use it to improve the programmes that they develop.

Remember, as we start talking together, my colleague and I will keep everything you say now confidential. That is, we won't talk about it in a way that makes it possible for anyone to know what you, personally, have said. We ask each of you to do that, too, for each other. Please also remember that, if you have committed a crime, not to give us any details, because if you do, we will need to report that to the police.

Although we are tape-recording the conversation, we won't mention any of your names, or even your school's name, in the final report. No-one will be able to link the words in the report to you.

Also, it is very important that each of you is comfortable talking about these issues, and with talking about them in this particular group of people. If you don't really want to talk about these things, or if you don't want to talk

about them in this group, please feel free to leave. There are no penalties for choosing not to participate.

As we explained earlier, we are interested in knowing about more about the kinds of violence young people experience in your community, how it affects you, and what you think should be done about it.

Imagine that a new kid has just started at this school. *His/her* name is *Carmen/Elton/Thandi/Sipho* [depending on context of this group]. You've decided to help *him/her* get to know this community. What would *s/he* need to know about what kids do after school? What does *s/he* need to know in order to stay safe after school and on weekends?

If it isn't mentioned, probe specifically for gang activities: Are gangs an issue in this community? If yes, is it easier to live here if you are in a gang, or not in a gang – what would you advise Carmen/Elton/Thandi/Sipho to do, to get involved, or to stay away from gangs?

Draw out: how do gang activities affect kids on their way to and from school; when they're doing leisure activities or spending time with friends; what they do on the weekends.

Keep this discussion relatively short – no more than 15 minutes.

Now let's think about kids who do get involved in gangs. We're going to look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats kids in gangs face.

On the flipchart, write the heading 'Strengths', and brainstorm around the following questions [explain that the flipcharts may be displayed in the report-back session]:

- What do kids in gangs have that other kids don't have?
- What resources do they have access to, that other kids don't have?
- What do people in your community – adults as well as other kids – see as their advantages?

Tape the sheet to a suitable wall space.

On the flipchart, write the heading 'Weaknesses', and brainstorm around the following questions:

- What are problems for kids in gangs?
- What do they need to avoid?
- What do people in your community – adults as well as other kids – see as their weaknesses, their problems?

Tape the sheet to a suitable wall space.

On the flipchart, write the heading 'Opportunities' and brainstorm around the following question:

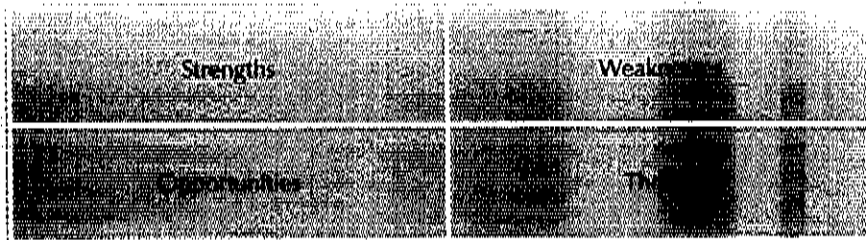
- What are the good opportunities that kids in gangs have?
- Look at the strengths we've listed – do they open up new opportunities?
- Look at the weaknesses we've listed – if any of those were eliminated, would it open up new opportunities?
- Think about these kids in 5 years' time, in 10 years' time, when they're 65: what might the future hold that could be good for them?

Tape the sheet to a suitable wall space.

On the flipchart, write the heading 'Threats', and brainstorm around the following questions:

- What obstacles do kids in gangs face?
- What do they miss out on?
- What is dangerous for them?
- Could any of the things we've listed under 'weaknesses' be a serious threat to kids in gangs?
- Think about these kids in 5 years' time, in 10 years' time, when they're 65: what does the future hold that might be bad for them?

Tape the sheet to a suitable wall space. The four sheets should be displayed in a grid:



Repeat the same exercise for kids who are not in gangs.

Now think about your younger brothers and sisters, or maybe even your children – what would make this community really safe for them? If gangs aren't mentioned specifically, ask: What about gangs – would they be a part of this new safe community?

What do you think would help to make it a better place for them? Who's responsible for making it a better place?

After some discussion, write lists from the group discussion on two pieces of flipchart paper: one headed 'What should be done to make this community safe?' and 'Who is responsible?' Check out these lists for completeness with the group. In this set of questions, ask specifically, if necessary, about gangs and interventions for preventing children from joining gangs and for exit interventions; but keep the focus on broad community dynamics.

Is there anything else that you would like to add, that you think people should know about, that would help to make this community safer?

Thank you very much indeed for giving up your time to join in this discussion. As we said to you earlier, we will have the tape transcribed, and we will remove from the transcription any of your names that may have been mentioned. We will also destroy the tape. The report from this project should be ready by the end of September, and a copy will be sent to your school.

For children in primary school (Grade 6)

Sixteen such groups will be conducted, eight in each grade in each high-violence community. Eight will be with girls, eight with boys, eight from primary school and eight from middle school. This method may also be used for those

children in De Novo Special Youth Care Centre, unless the grades contain too wide a spread of ages (in which latter case, the method below will be used).

Materials:

- Flipchart
- Flipchart pens
- Masking tape
- A4 paper
- Kokis or crayons
- Tape-recorder
- Refreshments: 4l soft drinks, muffins, chips, 12 paper cups, paper serviettes.

Hello. My name is [*interviewer name*] and this is my colleague [*other interviewer*]. We are from the Human Sciences Research Council, and we are conducting research into young people's experience of violence in their communities. This is part of a much bigger study that is currently taking place in five cities around the world, including Cape Town. Thank you for agreeing to take part in this discussion. As we said to you each earlier, results from this research will be given to government and community development organisations, and we hope that they will be able to use it to improve the programmes that they develop.

Remember, as we start talking together, my colleague and I will keep everything you say now confidential. That is, we won't talk about it in a way that makes it possible for anyone to know what you, personally, have said. We ask each of you to do that, too, for each other. Please also remember that, if you have committed a crime, not to give us any details, because if you do, we will need to report that to the police.

Although we are tape-recording the conversation, we won't mention any of your names, or even your school's name, in the final report. No-one will be able to link the words in the report to you.

Also, it is very important that each of you is comfortable talking about these issues, and with talking about them in this particular group of people. If you don't really want to talk about these things, or if you don't want to talk about them in this group, please feel free to leave. There are no penalties for choosing not to participate.

As we explained earlier, we are interested in knowing about more about the kinds of violence young people experience in your community, how it affects you, and what you think should be done about it.

Divide the group into two groups of five. Each group should have a piece of flipchart paper and some kokis.

Imagine that a new kid has just started at this school. His/her name is Carmen/Elton/Thandi/Sipho [depending on context of this group]. You've decided to help him/her get to know this community. What would s/he need to know about what kids do after school? What does s/he need to know in order to stay safe after school and on weekends?

If it isn't mentioned, probe specifically for gang activities: Are gangs an issue in this community? If yes, is it easier to live here if you are in a gang, or not in a gang – what would you advise Carmen/Elton/Thandi/Sipho to do, to get involved, or to stay away from gangs?

Draw out: how do gang activities affect kids on their way to and from school; when they're doing leisure activities or spending time with friends; what they do on the week-ends.

Keep this discussion relatively short – no more than 15 minutes.

Now, each on your own, fold this paper in half (give each child a sheet of A4 paper and a koki). On one side, draw a picture of a kid who is in a gang, and on the other side draw a kid who isn't in a gang.

On your drawings of the kid who is in the gang, jot down:

- What do kids in gangs have that other kids don't have?
- Think about things they have and things they can do.
- What are problems for kids in gangs? What do they miss out on?

Repeat the same exercise for kids who are not in gangs.

Then tape up eight blank flipchart sheets, each with one of the following four headings, in two grids – one for kids in gangs, and one for kids not in gangs:

Have the children come up one by one and tell you what they have listed on their drawings. Write them down under the headings in the grid. Now let's look at our grids. Is there anything else we need to write down, so that someone else, who isn't here now, would be able to understand what it's like to live in this community if you are in a gang, and what it's like to live in this community if you're not in a gang.

Now look at all your pictures. Think about your younger brothers and sisters – what would make this community really safe for them? *If gangs aren't mentioned specifically, ask: What about gangs – would they be a part of this new safe community?*



What do you think would help to make it a better place for them? Who's responsible for making it a better place?

After some discussion, write lists from the group discussion on two pieces of flipchart paper: one headed 'What should be done to make this community safe?' and 'Who is responsible?' Check out these lists for completeness with the group. In this set of questions, ask specifically, if necessary, about gangs and interventions for preventing children from joining gangs and for exit interventions; but keep the focus on broad community dynamics.

Is there anything else that you would like to add, that you think people should know about, that would help to make this community safer?

Thank you very much indeed for giving up your time to join in this discussion. As we said to you earlier, we will have the tape transcribed, and we will remove from the transcription any of your names that may have been mentioned. We will also destroy the tape. The report from this project should be ready by the end of September, and a copy will be sent to your school.

For children in homeless shelters and special youth care centres

Six such groups will be run: one with girls and three with boys in special youth care centres; and two in shelters for street children (one with boys and one with girls).

These groups are likely to draw children of widely differing ages. For this reason, a different method will be used, one that children of all ages can participate in.

Materials:

- Flipchart
- Prepared list on flipchart (see below)
- Flipchart pens
- Masking tape
- Tape-recorder
- Refreshments: 4l soft drinks, muffins, chips, 12 paper cups, paper serviettes.

Hello. My name is [*interviewer name*] and this is my colleague [*other interviewer*]. We are from the Human Sciences Research Council, and we are conducting research into young people's experience of violence in their communities. This is part of a much bigger study that is currently taking place in five cities around the world, including Cape Town. Thank you for agreeing to take part in this discussion. As we said to you each earlier, results from this research will be given to government and community development organizations, and we hope that they will be able to use it to improve the programmes that they develop.

Remember, as we start talking together, my colleague and I will keep everything you say now confidential. That is, we won't talk about it in a way that makes it possible for anyone to know what you, personally, have said. We ask each of you to do that, too, for each other. Please also remember that, if you have committed a crime, not to give us any details, because if you do, we will need to report that to the police.

Although we are tape-recording the conversation, we won't mention any of your names, or even your school's name, in the final report. No-one will be able to link the words in the report to you.

Also, it is very important that each of you is comfortable talking about these issues, and with talking about them in this particular group of people. If you don't really want to talk about these things, or if you don't want to talk about them in this group, please feel free to leave. There are no penalties for choosing not to participate.

As we explained earlier, we are interested in knowing about more about the kinds of violence young people experience in your community, how it

affects you, and what you think should be done about it. Specifically, we're interested in gangs in your community.

Divide the children into two groups. One group is assigned roles: The Mayor, the Chief of Police, a school principal, the local councillor for the area, a pastor or imam. Tell this group:

You have come together because there is a problem with gangs in this community. You need to figure out (put up a list on the flipchart):

- How kids get involved in gangs.
- What gangs do in the neighbourhood and how that affects other kids, kids who aren't in the gangs.
- How to get kids out of the gang.

The other group is a group of kids in the community. They are to listen to the first group, and then discuss things with them from the point of view of kids in that community.

Thank you very much indeed! Now we want to talk about this play we've just done:

In the play, it seemed to us that kids get involved in gangs because/in this way: *list on flipchart*. What are other ways and other reasons that kids might get involved in gangs? *List the new ideas on the flipchart*.

In the play, it seemed that kids in the community were affected by the gang activities in these ways: *list on flipchart*. What other ways does community violence or gang activities affect kids (after school, on the way to or from school, in school)? *List the new ideas on the flipchart*.

In the play, it seemed to us that kids might be helped by [*people/events*]. What other people might help kids get out of gangs? What other things could help? Who is responsible for those things? *List the new ideas on the flipchart*.

Is there anything else that you would like to add, that you think people should know about, that would help to make this community safer?

Thank you very much indeed for giving up your time to join in this discussion. As we said to you earlier, we will have the tape transcribed, and

we will remove from the transcription any of your names that may have been mentioned. We will also destroy the tape. The report from this project should be ready by the end of September, and a copy will be sent to your school/shelter.