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Youth Violence Prevention Programming in Medellín, Colombia: Five recommendations

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Abstract

This paper presents five evidence-based recommendations for youth violence prevention programming in Medellín, Colombia. The recommendations are based on youth psycho-social needs (Konopka, 1973) and prior violence prevention program analyses (Moser & van Bronkhorst, 1999; Schneidman, 1996). Recommendations will suggest that arts and sports activities could be effective programming tools (UNICEF, 2013b). Historical and contextual information about Colombia's guerrilla war and gang violence in Medellín will be used to demonstrate the importance of youth empowerment programs and explain why a violence prevention program should be implemented in Medellín. The recommendations contained in this paper could be useful for anyone seeking to develop a youth program, especially a youth empowerment program in Colombia.

Keywords: youth, youth violence, gang violence, violence prevention, Medellín, Colombia

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Introduction

It is common sense that our future lies in the hands of the world's youth, but unfortunately this is too often just a cliché. Young people must have a key role in deciding their futures because allowing youth to determine their own destinies will discourage them from engaging in negative activities, and incentivize them to contribute positively to their communities and to the world. Furthermore, when coupled with genuine guidance and support, such freedom could be developmentally appropriate for youth, especially adolescents (Konopka, 1973). Unfortunately, today's young people have few opportunities to positively impact their communities. Especially in conflict scenarios, youth are frequently blamed for violence rather than being engaged in thought leadership about how to prevent it.

The purpose of this paper is to answer to the following practitioner inquiry question: What would be the components of an effective youth-focused peacebuilding program in Medellín, Colombia? In response, this paper develops evidence-based recommendations for such a program.

Recent developments have shown that more than five decades of violence committed by armed groups in Colombia may be coming to an end. However, youth gang violence remains, especially in Medellín, although the city has drastically improved in recent years. According to Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) and Schneidman (1996), violence prevention programs, which target youth who are not engaged in violent activities, have had some success in preventing youth violence in other parts of Latin America. Medellín needs such programs in order for the city to harness the potential of its youth and continue building on recent improvements. Drawing on research about youth development, youth violence, Colombia's history, and past violence prevention initiatives, this paper will develop context-specific recommendations for Medellín

youth violence prevention programs. The recommendations were developed in regards to Medellín specifically because all cities have particular needs when it comes to youth peacebuilding programs.

The program recommendations will be developed through six distinct sections related to youth, violence, and Colombia. First, an "Overview of Youth Issues" will define the term youth and discuss why youth issues are important. Next, ”Colombia History and Context" will analyze the country's historical context and conflict and discuss key actors and drivers of youth violence. This section will also explain the need for violence prevention programs in Medellín and discuss why the city is a good candidate for such programming. The third section, "Colombian Youth" will discuss some of the issues Colombian youth face, especially in regards to educational and economic needs. "Relevant Research" will present prior research about youth development, youth violence, its causes, and past programs to demonstrate the need for, and effectiveness of, youth violence prevention programming. The "Evidence-based Program Recommendations" section will use information from each of the previous sections to develop five concrete recommendations for Medellín youth violence prevention programs. Finally, the conclusion will discuss the implications and limitations of this research.

Evidence-based programming is important to the peacebuilding field because it bridges the gap between theory and practice. Implementing evidence-based programming forces practitioners to be accountable to the theory and theories that form the basis of the peacebuilding field. As a result, practitioners are also held accountable to participants because they are more informed about proven techniques and strategies for designing and implementing effective programs. This paper will improve peacebuilding practice by contributing to the small body of existing research about youth violence prevention programs.

Overview of Youth Issues

Global definitions of the term "youth" vary. While the United Nations defined youth as between ages 15 and 24 (United Nations Youth, n.d.), many countries have adopted their own definitions, usually through a national youth policy. In Colombia's national youth policy, youth is defined as between ages 10 and 29 (*Política nacional de juventud*, 2004). According to Konopka (1973), adolescence can be defined, biologically, as the period "between the obvious onset of puberty and the completion of bone growth" (Adolescence Defined section). Based on that information, Konopka (1973) defined adolescence as between ages 12 and 22.

While official definitions regarding youth ages can be helpful, it is important to remember that age also has a cultural component. Cultural differences regarding age can have a large impact on youth experiences or the needs of the population regarded as youth. All programming should be sensitive to such differences, rather than imposing a specific age range or set of values on any community or culture.

The concepts and definitions of youth and adolescence are relatively similar and may even seem inconsequential or confusing to some. However, using specific terms, and being clear about their definitions, enhances clarity. This paper proposes recommendations for youth programs targeting Medellín youth between ages 12 and 22 who are at risk of participating in gang activities. This age group was chosen because adolescents ages 12 and 22 face similar and particular challenges regarding employment, education, and violence in their communities.

Why Invest in Youth?

Investing in youth is important because they lack sufficient opportunities to positively contribute to their communities. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2013), youth around the world are nearly three times more likely than adults to be unemployed.

It is important to develop more youth opportunities because nearly 90% of the world's 1.8 billion youth live in developing countries (Population Reference Bureau, 2013), many of which are active conflict or post-conflict states. Failing to engage youth in these countries will stagnate their development at best and, at worst, leave open the potential for future conflicts and instability.

When youth are not able to reach their full potential, regardless of whether or not they engage in violent acts, countries and communities suffer from the lack of their contributions. While employment is only one of the various ways of engaging youth, it is frequently cited by researchers seeking to quantify youth contributions and their impact. According to O'Sullivan, Mugglestone, & Allison, (2014), high youth unemployment rates left 1.5 million youth in the United States of America (USA) unemployed, costing the country's federal and state governments nearly $9 billion annually, mostly due to lost tax dollars paid by 18-34 year olds.

Global economies also lose out by not further addressing youth unemployment. According to ILO statistics (as cited in Berman, 2014), developed economies could increase their gross domestic product (GDP) by between .1 and 1.4 percent annually if they were able to decrease youth unemployment to the level of Australia, while developing countries could gain between .3 and 3.7 percent annually.

Even when youth violence prevention programs may not address unemployment directly, they can contribute to development in other ways. Increasing youth community participation promotes inter-generational understanding, contributing to community development.

Colombian History and Context

Medellín, Colombia, the country's second largest city with a population of 3.5 million, is situated within a web of mountains, which makes the climate idyllic and travelling arduous

(Abad, 2012). Medellín became the capital of Antioquia province in the early 1800s, as the local economy benefitted from a gold rush. Later in the century the textile and coffee industries contributed to the city's growth, and by 1940 Medellín had a population of 170,000 (Lowenthal & Rojas Mejia, 2010).

The 1948 assassination of the mayor of Bogotá sparked Colombia's civil war, *La Violencia*, which was waged mostly in rural areas and killed between 100,000-250,000 people. In 1957, politicians formally ended the war through the creation of the bipartisan National Front party. Widespread political discontent remained throughout the country however, and, in the 1960s and 1970s, contributed to the formation of leftist rebel groups, such as FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), and right wing paramilitary groups, like the National Liberation Army (Bushnell, 1993). The leftist guerrilla groups and right-wing paramilitaries each played a role in perpetrating and escalating violence throughout the guerrilla war, while the government frequently attempted to quell the violence by responding with excessive force.

During the period of intense guerrilla war, Medellín experienced rapid growth as its population expanded to 1.3 million by 1977 (Lowenthal & Rojas Mejia, 2010). Lowenthal & Rojas Mejia (2010) stated that Medellín's expansion was the result of Colombian's migrating to urban areas. However, the migration was almost certainly due to the guerrilla war, which was fought primarily in rural areas. According to Scruggs (2014), the urban newcomers formed informal communities, called *comunas*, which continue to define Medellín's geography.

Drugs, Gangs, and Violence

While Medellín expanded during the 1970s, drugs came to play an increasingly important role in the guerrilla war during the 1970s and 1980s, due to the growth of the cocaine trade and

the formation of drug cartels (Lowenthal & Rojas Mejia, 2010). Beginning in the 1970s and for approximately twenty years, infamous drug kingpin Pablo Escobar controlled all of the cocaine that left Colombia (Hylton, 2008). Escobar founded *Oficina de Envigado*[1] (*Oficina*) (de Llano, 2012), a drug cartel which murdered 70,000 people in Medellín between 1982 and 2002. While Hylton (2008) stated that the vast majority of the victims were young men, they also included many high level politicians (2008).

According to Hylton (2008), Escobar lost control of his organization in early 1993[2], and his former associate Don Berna ran a death squad called *Los Pepes*, which targeted guerrilla members. *Los Pepes* eliminated Escobar's infrastructure using money and resources from various groups including the Cali drug cartel and the CIA. Don Berna became the new biggest drug kingpin for many years to come. Hylton reported that Don Berna, in collaboration with other former Escobar associates and with the assistance of government-sponsored paramilitaries, had ruthlessly quelled all violence in Medellín by 2003, when he forcefully took control of all of the city's 200 gangs. However, like Escobar's reign, Don Berna's was temporary; he was unable to retain power long after he was arrested in 2005 (Hylton, 2008).

According to a recent article by de Llano (2012), Medellin had more than 5,000 gang members in about 300 different groups, making the situation almost impossible to understand without more firsthand information. de Llano (2012) reported that *Oficina* was still one of Medellín's most important gangs, although according to InSight Crime (n.d.), it is no longer a singular group but a conglomeration of smaller gangs that form alliances with street gangs to maintain control of strategic territories. InSight Crime (n.d.) also noted that *Oficina* and the gang

[1] The gang's name means Office of Envigado. It is named after Envigado, a small city outside of Medellín (InSight Crime, n.d.).
[2] Escobar was murdered later that year, in December 1993 (Hylton, 2008).

Urabeños had been fighting for control of the city since 2011, but, according to the report, in mid-2013 the two groups agreed on a truce granting each other access to a portion of the other's resources.

It would be easy to assume that such a truce would lead to decreased violence in Medellín, but Hagedorn's (2014) analysis of Chicago's gang violence suggested that the situation is likely more complex. In Hagedorn's response to claims that police reduced violence in the USA city, he noted that the 2014 homicide rates are close to the average rates of the last ten years. Hagedorn pointed to homicide data dating back to the 1990s to show that trends in Chicago's gang violence had more to do with the periodic gang wars which cause sharp spikes in murder rates. Hagedorn would encourage us to look at Medellín's homicide data in order to predict what might happen next. Medellín also experienced a large increase in the early 1990's due to the work of Escobar (Forero, 2013). According to Forero, homicides have decreased by 80% overall since 1991, although they increased temporarily in the early 2000s and in 2011.

Implications and the Road Ahead

Colombia as a whole, and Medellín in particular, face a crucial juncture. Formal negotiations between the Colombian government and FARC to end Colombia's guerilla war have been ongoing since November 2012 (BBC, 2013a). Meanwhile, violence continues to threaten Colombian civilians. Although FARC proposed that the two sides agree to a month-long ceasefire starting in December 2013, the Colombian government declined, and claimed to kill at least 10 guerrilla fighters during the period[3] (BBC, 2013b). The possibility that guerrilla war might finally come to an end is a significant positive development. While the war's peak occurred decades ago, deescalating violence between the government and armed groups in a

[3] The government asserted that FARC would use the time to strategically amass additional supplies (BBC, 2013b).

mutually agreed upon manner will be important to long-term, sustainable peace. If the parties are successful in achieving a peace agreement, they will still face significant challenges in the near future, such as the demobilization and reintegration of members of rebel groups and paramilitary forces.

Meanwhile, Medellín has the opportunity to complete its transformation from the world's most dangerous city to a model for reconciliation and development. In 1991, more than 6,000 people were murdered in Medellín, making the city's murder rate 380 per 100,000 people (Henley, 2013), more than double the homicide rate of San Pedro Sula, Honduras, the most dangerous city in 2013. Since then, Medellín's murder rate has reduced drastically, to 49 per 100,000 in 2012, although it still has one of the 25 highest murder rates in the world (Seguridad Justicia y Paz, 2013). However, Medellín has already received positive recognition for making improvements. The Colombian city was named *Innovative City of the Year* by Wall Street Journal and financial services corporation Citi, based on quality of life and sustainability improvements (Moreno, 2013). While recent reports have shown that gang violence is ongoing in Medellín (de Llano, 2012; InSight Crime, n.d.; Parkinson, 2013), the city's improving security and recent innovations show that it has the potential to become a center of South American tourism and development.

Medellín's history of violence perpetrated by drug cartels and gangs demonstrate the difficulty involved in interrupting the cycle of violence. Amidst all the historical details about gang violence in Colombia, it can be difficult to determine how to proceed with regards to developing violence prevention programs. Understanding the history of the guerrilla war and gang conflicts in Medellín will be very important to designing an effective program to target gang-involved youth. For example, when working with gang-involved youth, it could be

important to remember that drug dealing gangs were influenced by the guerrilla war, which was fueled by drug money. However, it could also be important to follow Hagedorn's (2014) advice by looking past temporary increases and decreases in violence caused by inter-group gang conflicts. While using a careful conflict analysis to identify which aspects of the conflict are most open to change, as cautious practitioners, we must also acknowledge the minimal impact we can have on any situation. In the case of Medellín youth, this means identifying which particular gangs, neighborhoods, and youth can be incentivized to act more nonviolently.

The typically informal structure and operating procedure of gangs makes it especially difficult to find accurate, not to mention impartial, information about their activities. Before any programs are implemented, the above information should be supplemented by first-hand knowledge of recent gang activity in Medellín. Such research would be especially useful in targeting the program to specific regions of the city, such as the notorious Comuna 13, or other regions with increased recent violent gang activity at the time the program is implemented.

In order to influence youth decisions to join gangs, youth programs must be able to offer feasible alternatives, or at least disincentives to gang activity. These will be discussed in the program design section below.

Colombian Youth

According to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2014), children and youth ages 0 to 25 in Colombia were 43 percent of the country's total population, with children ages 0 to 14 comprising 25 percent of Colombians, and youth ages 15 to 24 making up 18 percent of the population. Measured another way, the country's relative youth can be expressed as the average age, which CIA estimated to be 29, or 28 for males, and 30 for females. According to Population Reference Bureau (PRB) (2013), the country's youth population was expected to shrink within

the next few decades. PRB (2013) data predicted that the ratio of youth ages 10-24 to adults would decline by nearly 1.5 million to 11.6 million by the year 2050. If the predictions are correct, by 2050, the youth share of the population will decrease by 8 percent according to PRB data (Population Reference Bureau).

Educational and Employment Opportunities for Colombian Youth

Statistics paint a mixed picture of how Colombia's youth participate in the education system. While UNICEF (2013a) estimated that 98 percent of Colombian youth between ages 15 and 24 are literate, according to their statistics, only 79 percent of females, and 73 percent of males, of the applicable age, attend secondary school. PRB's (2013) more specific education data show that Colombian youth continue participating through lower secondary school, defined as between ages 10 and 15, when only 6-7 percent of youth are out of school. However, by the time they reach the age of tertiary, or post-secondary, education, most Colombians stop participating; according to PRB data, 41 percent of females and 37 percent of males are enrolled in tertiary education (2013). According to CIA (2014), youth attend school for an average of 13 years, which supports the conclusion that Colombians tend to complete secondary school without pursuing further education.

Data regarding youth and employment in Colombia show that children are often exploited for their labor, but that as adolescents, youth are often unemployed. According to CIA (2014), approximately one out of every ten Colombian children ages five to fifteen is forced into child labor. At the same time however, CIA (2014) estimated that, among youth ages 15 to 24, 17 percent of males, and 29 percent of females, were unemployed. The higher rate of female youth unemployment may be related to the country's traditional expectations of women.

According to PRB (2013), 6 percent of Colombian women are married by age 15, and 23 percent are married by age 18.

Comparing child labor and unemployment statistics raises various questions regarding the role of children in a society and the research methods used to gather the data. Regardless, various inferences can be drawn from the CIA (2014) data. The presence of a significant amount of child labor in Colombia and the country's youth unemployment rate seem to demonstrate that children and youth in Colombia are under severe economic pressures. This information suggests that more efforts are needed to better protect Colombian children from excessive and unhealthy workloads and work environments, allowing them to pursue primary and secondary educational opportunities.

However, for older youth, the situation is somewhat more complex. While unemployment rates suggest a general economic need, they have limited use for informing policy recommendations. There are many factors that could drive youth unemployment in Colombia. Seeing and experiencing violence may discourage many youth from pursuing further educational opportunities. Or, low educational qualifications may make it difficult to find formal employment opportunities. In either case, Colombian youth may have difficulty envisioning a positive future, especially if they live in a violent community, since the country has been in conflict for more than fifty years. This paper will focus on violence affecting Colombian youth, and how youth may be able to transform the situation to achieve more positive outcomes.

Relevant Research

Using an evidence-based approach to developing, implementing, and evaluating peacebuilding programs is important to ensuring the efficacy of practitioners and the field as a whole. Evidence-based program design is also in the self-interest of practitioners, as funders

often encourage or require evidence in proposals. Evidence-based programming is also one way that practitioners can be held accountable to the needs of youth; consulting prior research regarding youth and youth programming in the design stage is one way to create programs based on youth needs.

This section will review prior research about five key areas useful to developing effective youth violence prevention programming in Medellín. First, the needs of the target population, Medellín adolescents between ages 12 and 22 at risk of violence, will be explored. The second portion of this section will define and discuss the term 'youth violence'. Next, causes of youth violence will be explored. Then, recommendations from past Latin American youth violence prevention programs will be presented. Finally, this section will explain the theoretical basis for empowerment programs, which will be a main focus of this paper's recommendations.

Adolescence

The psycho-social state of participants should be a key consideration when designing youth programs. Since the focus of this paper is youth between ages 12 and 22, research regarding adolescence as a developmental growth period will influence programming recommendations. It should be noted that when discussing adolescence, we are generalizing about this period in youth's lives; each person develops differently and will have a different experience of adolescence, even in comparison to someone who lived in similar circumstances.

Konopka's research about American adolescents provides insights into the minds of youth. According to Konopka (1973), changing settings and relationships could make adolescents lonely, vulnerable, and emotionally volatile. Konopka claimed that adapting to new situations could also cause adolescents to be emotional and sometimes argumentative, as they are testing out new ideas. In addition, Konopka characterized adolescents as having an urge to

experiment, which is driven by being bold, yet uncertain. All of these factors can lead adolescents to develop a strong sense of identity, according to Konopka, as they seek belonging in the world around them. When designing youth programs targeted toward adolescents, practitioners should seek to be relevant and responsive to the needs identified by Konopka. They should also acknowledge the cultural and personality differences that exist among youth, as with any group of people.

Youth Violence

Before designing and implementing youth programs aimed at reducing youth violence, we should establish a common understanding of what 'youth violence' means. According to Backer & Guerra (2011), youth violence is any act that causes "injury, death, or psychological harm, in which individuals (the perpetrator or victim) are 10–24 years old" (p. 33). In Medellín, formal and informal groups of youth may act violently against other youth, youth groups, militias, government forces, or other people. Motives for the violent acts can include money, resources, and drugs, among others. The term youth violence is intentionally vague, in order to avoid making assumptions about the perpetrators or the cause of the violence. Investigating youth violence does not detract from the fact that this paper is focused on developing recommendations for programs that target adolescents, which is slightly more specific than Backer & Guerra's (2011) definition of youth.

Youth violence is often attributed to gangs. According to Strocka (2006), prior research has generally defined gangs by their "recurrent and systematic involvement in violent and illegal activities" (p. 134). When researching gangs, it can be important to check one's own assumptions and stereotypes because, as Hazen (2010) acknowledged, common stereotypes impede our understanding of gangs and gang activity.

Causes of Youth Violence

Understanding theoretical perspectives about possible causes of youth violence is key to designing new violence prevention initiatives. There are many angles from which youth violence can be analyzed. While academics have researched the causes of gang violence, drug wars in Medellín, and Colombia's guerrilla war, this research has yielded few concrete conclusions about how gangs, drugs, and the guerrilla war affect youth and youth violence in Medellín in 2014. Since this paper aims to make programmatic recommendations for reducing violence among gang-involved youth and youth former combatants, it may be more productive to seek insights from other fields to explain youth violence causes.

Pepler & Slaby's (1994) research sought to use cognitive growth and biological development to explain youth violence. According to the authors, cognitive-neoassociation theory and social learning theory each support the idea that violent behaviors are learned, not inherent. Cognitive-neoassociation theory, as described by Pepler & Slaby (1994), proposed that youth may learn how to react to threatening situations based on their early experiences, just as they learn other behaviors. The authors also acknowledged that youth violence, like other violent incidents, can be motivated by external influences such as money, power, and social status. Therefore, cognitive-neoassociation theory proposed that, if a young person acts violently, it is the result of early learning and external motivation, rather than inherent violent tendencies.

According to Pepler & Slaby (1994), social learning theory's three causes of youth violence include: observing violence, personally experiencing violence, and being able (or not being able) to self-regulate one's own actions. Based on these factors and related research, Pepler & Slaby (1994) concluded that experiencing or observing violence in early childhood forms the basis for similar actions throughout a person's life. Their research conclusions suggest that, as a

result of traumatic early experiences, it may be difficult to make a long-term impact on adolescents. However, the authors also noted the possibility for people to re-learn habits later in life, thus changing how they relate and respond to potentially violent situations. Pepler & Slaby's (1994) allowance that change could occur should not be overlooked; by acknowledging the potential for behavioral change, the authors left the door open for peacebuilding.

Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) developed an "integrated model" (p. 10) for the causation of gang violence, which could be useful in identifying specific causes for youth violence in Medellín. In this nested model, structural violence was represented by the largest oval, inside of which were smaller ovals for institutional, interpersonal, and individual violence. Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) listed the causes they thought applied to each type of violence alongside the ovals. According to the authors, self-esteem issues and a desire to attain higher status were the main causes of interpersonal violence. In regards to interpersonal violence, Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) stated that the causes were mostly related to family members involved in violent or delinquent activities. For institutional violence, the causes included a negative school or community environment, and a lack of available employment opportunities. According to Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999), racism and the legitimacy of violence as a way to solve problems were important causes of structural violence. While violent scenarios are unlikely to be so simple that their causes can be easily broken down into one of these four categories, Moser & van Bronkhorst's this model could be a useful way for practitioners to remain aware of the various factors that impact the lives of youth.

Past Youth Violence Prevention Programming

Very few, if any, youth violence prevention programs have been documented in Medellín, or even Colombia. In order to draw lessons from prior programs, we can look to other

parts of Latin America for similar programs. Schneidman (1996) and Barker & Fontes (1996) each did that when they used existing frameworks to assess the risk factors faced by at-risk youth. Utilizing a framework originally developed in regards to adolescents in the United States[4], Schneidman (1996) analyzed how Latin American youth arrive at negative outcomes, including violence. Schneidman (1996) explained that youth who become violent often experience difficult environmental conditions earlier in life, such as family or community conflict or poverty. Referred to as "risk antecedents" (Schneidman, 1996, p. 7) such situations can contribute to youth misbehaving in school or underperforming academically, two "risk markers" (Schneidman, 1996, p. 7). The first two categories can lead to "high-risk behaviors" (Schneidman, 1996, p. 7), like drug use or unprotected sexual activity, and eventually, "negative outcomes" (Schneidman, 1996, p. 7), such as addiction, pregnancy, or prostitution.[5] According to Schneidman (1996), at the time the article was written, the most critical outcomes for Latin America included school attendance, child labor, street children, drugs, teenage pregnancy, prostitution, and youth violence.

Schneidman (1996) reviewed more than 20 programs targeting poor, urban youth, developing a series of best practices intended for Colombia's Vice Ministry of Youth Affairs. Based on her framework as well as that of Barker & Fontes (1996), Schneidman (1996) presents the best practices of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention programs, in addition to one integrated program.

While primary prevention programs reviewed by Schneidman (1996) promoted school attendance, provided job skills trainings, offered health care services, and organized recreational

[4] The model was created by Resnick, Burt, Newmark, and Reilly (1992). Youth at Risk: Definitions, Prevalence, and Approaches to Service Delivery. Urban Institute.
[5] While the original model differentiates between these high-risk behaviors and negative outcomes, Schneidman treats them as one category.

activities for youth, secondary prevention programs focused on preventing child abuse, decreasing prostitution and improving youth working conditions. Working with youth already engaged in dangerous activities, tertiary prevention programs improved the welfare of street children, supported prostitutes, and addressed the needs of adolescent mothers. Schneidman (1996) reviewed one integrated program, which addressed drug use and school performance, while also providing recreational activities and mentoring. One interesting best practice of the integrated program included implementing what Schneidman (1996) called self-enhancing activities, allowing community members to develop solutions to their own problems.

As shown in Appendix, Schneidman (1996) identified the following components of success for youth programs: case management, multi-agency collaborations, private sector involvement, youth empowerment, replicable programming, and sustainability. These success factors will be used in developing recommendations for future Medellín youth violence prevention programs.

Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) researched youth program design and the needs of at-risk youth in Latin America and the Caribbean. Like Schneidman (1996), Moser & van Bronkhorst emphasized holistic, preventive programs, rather than ones that target so-called 'repeat offenders', in an effort to prevent future pregnancies, drug use, or violent incidents. In another similarity, Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) cited both Barker & Fontes' (1996) and Schneidman's (1996) multi-stage models for identifying at-risk youth.

Based on Moser & van Bronkhorst's (1999) "integrated model" (p. 10) for the causality of gang violence, the authors developed an "integrated framework" (p. 11), which detailed suggested interventions for each of the four levels of violence causes. In regards to individual causes of violence, Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) recommended helping youth develop pro-

social behaviors, conflict resolution skills, and self-esteem. At the interpersonal level, the intervention included supporting the family environment by helping parents and other family members improve their interactions, and supporting the family's socio-economic needs. For Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999), decreasing violence causes at the institutional level meant encouraging positive behaviors through school programs, decreasing school violence, creating positive recreational activities, and increasing the community's accountability regarding negative behaviors. Finally, at the structural level, the authors recommended promoting non-violence through the media, addressing all types of violence (such as structural, economic, social, and political), and decreasing economic inequality.

After reviewing several youth programs, Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) identified the following six factors, also listed in Appendix, as important to the development of effective youth violence reduction programming: preventive, long-term, holistic (in regards to families, peers, and neighborhoods), based on youth needs and assets, gender-sensitive, and family inclusive.

Schneidman's (1996) and Moser & van Bronkhorst's (1999) programming recommendations, as summarized in Appendix, could be very useful for designing future youth violence prevention programs because they utilized pre-existing qualitative frameworks to determine which programming strategies were most effective. Two possible drawbacks to their recommendations include: the age of the research and the lack of similarity between the various programs. Since Schneidman (1996) and Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) analyzed programs that were implemented in various countries between 15 and 20 years prior to when this paper was written, the circumstances surrounding many of the programs have changed, and this could affect the authors' recommendations. Unfortunately, since very little comparable research has been done, Schneidman (1996) and Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) analyzed various types of

programs; closely comparing similar programs implemented in similar settings could produce more interesting data about the effectiveness of specific programming techniques. The vague nature of their recommendations makes them even more difficult to implement, especially so many years later, and in different circumstances.

Empowerment as a Psycho-Social Need

Now that we have identified the needs of the intended target population, defined youth violence, acknowledged possible causes, and discussed prior programming recommendations, it is important to discuss one main focus of this paper's recommendations: youth empowerment.

Youth empowerment programs are based on the same basic idea as other empowerment programming: that people strive to be able to control their own circumstances. Maslow (1943) may have been one of the first psycho-social theorists to define empowerment; according to his definition, compassion, self-esteem, and "self-actualization" (p. 382) were central components. However, Maslow's (1943) portrayal of some needs as more essential than others seems inaccurate, especially with regards to peacebuilding[6]. Galtung (1979) identified "self-expression" (p. 14) and "self-actuation" (p. 14) as important identity components, nearly imitating Maslow's terminology. Perhaps Boyden (1987) illustrated psychosocial needs most specifically, stating that people need "an environment and lifestyle which are conducive to...: a sense of personal... involvement... purpose... belonging... responsibility... interest... excitement... challenge... satisfaction... comradeship and love... enjoyment... confidence... [and] security" (p. 79). It was Maslow (1943) however, who best expressed the importance of empowerment with the phrase, "what a man *can* be, he *must* be [emphasis original]" (p. 382).

[6] Galtung (1979, p. 16) pointed this out as well.

The writings of Maslow (1943), Galtung (1979), and Boyden (1987) each played an important role in establishing the need for self-determination and empowerment as primary to human existence. Based on Konopka's (1973) conclusions about adolescents' insecurities, bravery, and strong sense of identity reinforces the need for empowerment programming among youth and adolescents.

Implications

Complementary, and even contrasting, research can help to support program design choices by providing various theoretical perspectives for evidence-based programming. By presenting a wide range of research about youth development, youth violence and its causes, youth violence prevention programming, and youth empowerment, this section intended to provide the reader with a brief but accurate snapshot of the existing research which might influence future violence prevention programs in Medellín. While all of the research discussed above is undoubtedly important to youth programs, it can be somewhat difficult to determine how it should be applied to program design.

The most important implication of Konopka's (1973) research for youth violence prevention programs was that it identified the developmental state of adolescent participants; their psycho-social state makes adolescents simultaneously brave and vulnerable. According to Konopka, these contrasting characteristics result in a need for support, encouragement, and reinforcement, steps which will empower adolescents to improve their own lives. To borrow terminology from the field of international development, Konopka's research could be summarized by stating that youth programs should be *youth sensitive*; that is to say, they must recognize and account for the unique developmental needs of youth. Being *youth sensitive* will

make programs more engaging and effective, as youth will be more likely to participate and allow themselves to be influenced by programming.

When addressing youth violence through targeted peacebuilding programs, allowing Pepler & Slaby's (1994) conclusions about the impact of early learning and external motivation to shape program design will strengthen *youth sensitivity*. Acknowledging the influence of early learning and external motivation is important from a practitioner's perspective because it would be unfair to suggest that youth, or anyone for that matter, have complete control over any aspect of their lives. Early experiences and interactions with family members, positive or negative, can have a large impact on a child's emotional growth and development, affecting their ability to relate socially, even as an adult.

External motivation acknowledges those factors unrelated to their biological development which may be outside of a youth's control. This could include economic and social factors. While they are only briefly discussed in this paper, financial pressures on youth and their families can play a large role in their decisions to engage in violence. Participating in gangs or armed groups is sometimes the best, or only, way for youth to earn money and provide for their families. Social factors, such as peer pressure, can also result in violent youth actions, such as when youth feel it is the only way for them to make friends or maintain their social standing with peers.

Even though they contain some drawbacks Schneidman's (1996) and Moser & van Bronkhorst's (1999) program recommendations will be very useful to the formation of evidence-based program recommendations for Medellín. Utilizing their suggestions to develop Medellín violence prevention program recommendations lends credibility and accountability to the ideas discussed below. The below recommendations will build on the advice of Schneidman (1996)

and Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999), while also incorporating context-specific information from Medellín, and other relevant research.

Evidence-based Program Recommendations

Evidence-based program design is important because it has the potential to help practitioners create programs that are more responsive to youth needs. Evidence of effective violence prevention techniques strengthens project design by informing project staff about relevant research, prior programs, lessons learned, and best practice. Establishing the evidence base before implementing a program can also help staff gain implementing partners, stakeholder support, and project funding. This section will use evidence from the literature review and conflict analysis, as well as from similar programs and related sources, to make recommendations for a Medellín violence prevention program.

The recommendations discussed in this section are divided into three portions. First, a few suggestions from prior Latin American youth programming will be discussed. Next, this section will recommend an empowerment approach to youth programming. Finally, the content of youth programs will be addressed, with particular attention to the usefulness of arts and sports activities for youth violence prevention.

Implement Long-Term Programming

While Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) and Schneidman (1996) made various recommendations which could be useful for working with Medellín youth, the circumstances make it particularly important for programming to be long-term, preventive, and collaborative. According to Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999), long-term programming was important to improving youth outcomes. However, the authors recommended long-term programs generally, rather than defining the term based on a specific length of time. Long-term programming is

particularly important due to the serious and sensitive nature of the situations faced by Medellín youth. As discussed above, the developmental period of adolescence spans many years. Youth developmental needs, as well as Medellín's history of violence and development, make stability and accountability particularly important for youth programming in Medellín. As a result, programs should consider planning to be in participants' lives for at least five years. Such long-term engagements could increase youth investment and build community trust in the program. Furthermore, engaging with local youth for at least five years will allow programs to build more local leadership; stability is particularly important in programs that aim to cultivate youth empowerment, as discussed below. If this type of program is successful, all of the knowledge about managing the program should stay in the community so that youth and community leaders can design and implement additional youth development initiatives in the future.

Work Collaboratively

As demonstrated in Appendix, Schneidman (1996) recommended multi-agency initiatives would be most effective in improving youth outcomes. Multi-agency collaborations are those which involve one or more implementing partners, such as other NGOs, or community-based organizations. Advantages of involving more organizations could include broadening the program's reach. If program partners serve different sectors of the community, a multi-agency collaboration could help the program reach a diverse cross-section of the population.

Multi-sector collaborations, which are multi-agency collaborations that include organizations or companies from multiple industries, could be useful if one organization is unable to serve all the participants' needs. For example, a Medellín violence prevention program could choose to address the issue from an economic perspective. In this case, a multi-sector collaboration between NGOs and private sector companies could be the most effective method of

addressing youth violence. The private sector is particularly important to increasing youth employment. A successful partnership between one or more NGOs and private sector companies could identify and address the need for increased youth employment while also helping improve the relationship between youth and adult community members. While the private sector company may be able to create opportunities for Medellín youth to learn from apprenticeships or jobs, other issues may affect the role of youth in the community. In that case, a peacebuilding NGO able to increase inter-generational dialogue could help decrease stereotypes and improve understanding so that youth and adult community members were able to communicate more openly.

Multi-agency and multi-sector collaborations, including those that engage the private sector, all have distinct advantages. As demonstrated above, building on partners' strengths through creative collaborations can lead to more effective violence prevention programs and better outcomes for youth. Program staff should consider the potential benefits of collaboration during the program design phase, when it is most beneficial to initiate these relationships.

Focus on Prevention

Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) encouraged practitioners to focus on the prevention of violence, rather than intervention. In other words, the authors recommended that programs reach youth before they are involved in violent activities. This approach is supported by Pepler & Slaby's (1994) research, which demonstrated that it can be difficult to change the habits of an already violent person. The concept of prevention hinges on the idea that we can ensure a less violent future by teaching non-violence at a young age before children have the opportunity to learn negative behaviors. While prevention is almost always a preferable approach in an ideal world, it should be noted that intervention is also sometimes necessary. This paper focuses on

youth between ages 12 and 22. Since many Medellín youth in this age group may have already engaged in violent activities, targeted peacebuilding interventions may be the best violence prevention strategy.

Moser & van Bronkhorst's (1999) and Pepler & Slaby's (1994) preventive philosophy may be useful for targeting youth who will be receptive to violence prevention programming. In their interpretation of a Colombian national policy on child soldiers[7], UNICEF (2013b) categorized prevention based on three types of scenarios. According to UNICEF (2013b), the government policy defines the following three types of prevention: early prevention, urgent prevention, and protection-prevention. Early prevention, which can be utilized in the medium-term time frame, is used when the presence of negative factors puts youth at risk for violence. In these cases, the youth may not be in immediate danger, but engaging them in the program could be important to counteracting other influences present in their lives. Urgent prevention, used in the short-term, is for cases in which groups of children are at risk of being persuaded to engage in violent activities. Finally, protection-prevention is encouraged when the lives of youth are in immediate danger.

Within the framework of UNICEF's (2013b) prevention categories, Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) and Pepler & Slaby (1994) would likely encourage practitioners to focus on early prevention, because violence prevention would be most realistic in this environment.

Support Youth Empowerment

[7] Conpes. (2010). *Politica de prevencion del reclutamiento y utilizacion de ninos, ninas, y adolescentes por parte de los grupos armados organizados al margen de la ley y de los grupos delictivos organizados.* (Documento Conpes No. 3673). Bogota, Colombia: Departamento Nacional de Planeacion.

A combination of research about human and youth development forms the evidence base for why a youth empowerment program should be implemented in Medellín and why it will be effective in empowering youth to decrease violence in their own communities. The essential need for human self-empowerment (Boyden, 1987; Galtung, 1979; Maslow, 1943) demonstrates that communities and individuals in Medellín must be involved in resolving their own conflicts in order for peace to be feasible and sustainable. At the same time, adolescents particular psychological needs and assets (Konopka, 1973) make them more likely to benefit from, and contribute to, empowerment programming. When adolescents' unique psychological needs (Konopka, 1973), including the need for self-empowerment (Boyden, 1987; Galtung, 1979; Maslow, 1943), are considered, it is easy to understand why Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) and Schneidman (1996) recommended that programming seek to empower youth.

The overall goal of programming is to reduce youth violence by uniting youth through peacebuilding, which may be best accomplished through a youth empowerment methodology. Developing youth leadership during the program cycle will increase the likelihood that programming will support adolescents' needs and build on their assets, as recommended by Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) and Schneidman (1996). While program staff can and should be ready to provide technical support throughout all phases of implementation, organic youth leadership will only occur if young people are given decision making authority throughout the process. Youth leadership could increase community interest and youth buy-in, leading to increased program participation.

Use Arts and Sports to Teach Conflict Resolution

UNICEF (2013b) recommended using recreational activities, such as sports and arts, as a way of engaging youth in order to teach them important life skills, like conflict resolution

techniques. In addition to helping facilitate conflict transformation, arts and sports activities already play important roles in Medellín.

Music and conflict transformation. Slachmuijlder's (2005) research into drumming groups in Bujumbura, Burundi showed that even Tutsi and Hutu armed groups showed mercy for drummers during the ethnic massacre of the 1990s. According to Slachmuijlder (2005), drummers recounted many stories to her about times when music helped reconcile a dispute between militia members and musicians. In these instances, when militia members approached a group of drummers, one or more musicians of the same ethnicity would convince the militia not to attack them. As Déo, a Hutu drummer, told Slachmuijlder (2005), "They wanted to kill me because I was a Hutu. But Maurice convinced them that they shouldn't kill me because I was a drummer" (p. 7). Fellow drummer Maurice recounted similar scenarios. Regarding a 1995 massacre of about 2,000 people in Buyenzi, Burundi, Maurice told Slachmuijlder (2005), "In my neighbor's house, there were 16 people killed. It was horrible. We drummers stayed in the area, and when it became quiet again . . . We went out in teams of two or four people, always with Hutus and Tutsis mixed" (p. 7). A couple months later, the Hutu and Tutsi drummers were in a camp for displaced people where many Hutus were also staying. Maurice recounted: "During the night, they threw grenades at us. There were 4 people killed and 12 injured. But we drummers, Hutus and Tutsis alike, we stayed together" (Slachmuijlder, 2005, p. 7). However, this is not to suggest that similar scenarios would occur in Medellín. Rather, the stories collected by Slachmuijlder (2005) in Burundi demonstrate how, in some unique circumstances, the arts can function as a universal language, even reconciling potentially violent situations.

Other examples of music playing a key role in peacebuilding also exist, including among youth. Skyllstad (2008), along with Dr. Svanibor Pettan, used music to increase cross-cultural

exchange and build acceptance for multiculturalism in Europe. Working with college-age musicians, they formed a touring ensemble of Norwegian youth and Bosnian refugees. The group played music from both countries as they played in Norwegian refugee camps and throughout Europe.

Music in Medellín. Slachmuijlder's (2005) and Skyllstad's (2008) research showed that music can contribute to preventing and diffusing conflicts. According to Parkinson (2013) and Crisp (2013), music and other art forms have recently gained popularity in Medellín, particularly in the infamously dangerous Comuna 13 neighborhood. Unfortunately, crime in the neighborhood still exists and artists may even be a target; *El Duke*, a well-known rapper and community leader according to Parkinson (2013), was assassinated by a local gang in October 2013. *El Duke*'s musical partner was *Jeihhco*. Together, *Jeihhco* and *El Duke* were known as the rap group *Comando Elite de Ataque*, and they also collaborated in founding the Kolacho music school in Comuna 13. Like many Comuna 13 rappers, *El Duke* promoted a progressive and non-violent lifestyle through his music as well as through his community activities (Parkinson, 2013). According to Parkinson (2013), gangs in Comuna 13 murdered *El Duke* and nine other rappers between 2010 and 2012. Based on the information provided by Parkinson (2013), it seems likely that the gangs may have targeted the rappers because they felt the music activities would hurt their business or were worried about the rappers' political messages.

Even while Parkinson (2013) reported that many rappers feared for their lives, Crisp's (2013) article showed how valuable arts can be to a neighborhood like Comuna 13. According to Crisp (2013), graffiti is prevalent throughout Comuna 13 and it tells many stories; the paintings' subjects vary widely and include both deceased rappers and Christmas-themed figures. While Crisp (2013) acknowledged that artists may be living in danger, the community leader he quoted,

who was afraid to be named publicly, was hopeful for the children of Comuna 13 because they have opportunities for artistic expression.

According to Crisp (2013), many Medellín murals depict violence perpetrated by the military about ten years ago when the government attempted to overpower and obliterate Medellín gangs with Operation Orion. Crisp (2013) interpreted the murals as a form of activism. According to Crisp (2013), by portraying these scenes in murals a decade later, Comuna 13 artists ensure that the memories remain present in the minds of residents. The artists use memory as their weapon to fight back against violence because, if people remember the injustices that were perpetrated in the past, they won't be allowed to happen in the future.

Even while some Comuna 13 artists, such as rappers, may be silenced, art and activism seem to find a way of existing regardless. Parkinson (2013) and Crisp (2013) presented very persuasive evidence both for and against the use of arts programming in Medellín, including in Comuna 13. On one hand, the strength with which the gangs fought back against the rappers, according to Parkinson (2013), demonstrated that their activities might be effective in engaging youth, although the violence perpetrated against rappers is obviously a large deterrent to any local or foreign practitioners.

Sports and conflict resolution. According to Cárdenas (2012), sports can promote peacebuilding on the local, national, and international levels in various ways. In order to maximize on the potential peacebuilding benefits of sports, Cárdenas (2012) suggested using conflict resolution theory to develop more "sport for peace" (p. 9) projects. As an example, the author explained how Galtung's 3R (reconstruction, reconciliation, and resolution) approach to post-war development could be a useful framework for conflict resolution through sports. In regards to each of the 3Rs, Cárdenas explained how sports would contribute to that aspect of

development. Reconciliation is the most relevant to other peacebuilding projects involving sports activities because it focuses on the development of relationships.

Cárdenas' (2012) suggestion that sports activities would facilitate reconciliation among conflict-affected groups seemed to imply that the author anticipated attitude changes among participants as a result of inter-group contact theory (Allport as cited in Pettigrew, 1998). While Cárdenas (2012) provided no specific suggestions about facilitating effective conflict resolution using sports activities, Tuohey & Cognato (2011) did. Based on the success of PeacePlayers International's programs, Tuohey & Cognato (2011) recommended that sports-based conflict resolution basketball programs should work with conflicting groups separately before bringing them onto the court at the same time. By strategically designing and choosing activities for participants from mixed identities, Tuohey & Cognato (2011) offered recommendations which they believed could prevent conflicts that might have arisen in less structured, more unpredictable environments.

Tuohey & Cognato's (2011) specific recommendations for sports activity design and implementation could be very important to the success of Cárdenas' (2012) model of sports-based reconciliation. Allport's (as cited in Pettigrew, 1998) original theory of intergroup contact illustrated this point; four conditions, equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and social support, must be present in order for the interaction to produce a positive outcome. Tuohey & Cognato's (2011) recommendations could be very useful to creating a healthy sporting environment that fosters those conditions.

Golombiao. Golombiao, an existing soccer program in Colombia which is already promoting peace among youth, demonstrated the potential for future programs to do the same (Golombiao, n.d.). The program, which is run by the Colombian government, uses soccer to

teach children and youth to stay safe and have fun, while also conveying important values like respect, equality and non-violence. While the program's website stated that Golombiao is open to all ages, according to Colprensa (2013), the target population is youth. Even though at first Golombiao may seem like just another youth soccer activity, the programming principles, which include gender equality, inclusivity, respect, and taking care of the environment (Golombiao, n.d.), resemble those of a conflict resolution program. According to the website, more than 60,000 youth participate in the program, but since no reports or evaluations about Golombiao are available, it's hard to judge the program's success. However, it's still important for practitioners planning future Medellín violence prevention programs to know that Golombiao exists; the program shows that there is interest and potential for soccer-related activities in Colombia, even when they are related to conflict resolution.

Implications

The five programming suggestions discussed above fall into three categories: recommendations about youth program structure (long-term and collaborative programming), those which addressed the program's approach to reducing violence and engaging youth (violence prevention and youth empowerment), and one which addressed program content (emphasizing sports and arts activities).

While long-term, collaborative programs are more effective according to Moser & van Bronkhorst (1999) and Schneidman (1996), suggesting that programs include these two components is an incomplete programming recommendation. Program success is determined by more than just the number of years or project partners it takes to implement a given program. These suggestions are actually symptoms of what should be a much larger process of developing relationships and building community. In order for any program to be a good fit for Medellín, it

must have buy-in from youth participants and adult community members, which will come from a participatory, community-based design and implementation process. However, this oversight by Moser & van Bronkhorst and Schneidman does not completely invalidate their recommendations, which are accurate, even if incomplete. Merely being long-term and collaborative will not necessarily make a program successful, but the recommendations could be significant in building a successful youth violence prevention program in Medellín.

The recommendations discussed above determined that a Medellín youth violence prevention program should use youth empowerment strategies to engage youth at risk of gang involvement. According to Konopka (1973), an empowerment approach to youth engagement could be appropriate because it will appeal to youth psycho-social needs. Furthermore, youth empowerment should encourage youth leadership because youth know their own needs. In order to engage and empower Medellín youth in violence prevention, we should prevent, rather than intervene in violence, when possible, as indicated by Moser & van Bronkhorst's (1999), UNICEF's (2013b), and Pepler & Slaby (1994). In the context of Medellín, this could mean targeting youth at risk of gang involvement, rather than those already participating in gang activities.

Arts and sports programming can each encourage meaningful youth participation, leading to attitude changes which favor non-violent activities and peaceful conflict resolution. While Slachmuijlder's (2005) and Skyllstad's (2008) optimistic research showed that the arts can have a meaningful impact on youth and in conflict settings, Cárdenas (2012) showed that sports may encourage reconciliation, and Tuohey & Cognato (2011) found that youth from opposing groups could play on teams together, especially if they played separately first. In contrast, Parkinson (2013) and Crisp (2013) reported that recent arts programming produced in Medellín's

Comuna 13 neighborhood has led to negative, even deadly, outcomes. While these developments demonstrate the need, and possibly even the effectiveness, of arts programming, the violence showed that working with gangs definitely includes potential dangers. While the killings alone should not necessarily deter practitioners from implementing violence prevention programs in Medellín, or even in Comuna 13, they should be aware of the potential dangers. If the above recommendations are followed, the potential benefits of violence prevention programs could outweigh the possible risks. However, future initiatives should proceed with extreme caution, especially in communities such as Comuna 13.

This paper found that these five evidence-based programming recommendations for Medellín youth violence prevention could increase effectiveness. The recommendations will likely be most useful if they are considered from the program design stage, when the approach and content can still be adjusted. Implementing the recommendations may present logistical challenges and programs may find that some recommendations are more applicable than others. However, implementing the recommendations collectively will likely increase the program's potential effectiveness more than if some are implemented and others are ignored.

Conclusion

Evidence-based programming is important to peacebuilding because it forces practitioners to prove the effectiveness of their programming using existing research. The evidence-based programming recommendations presented above will serve as a guide for future practitioners implementing youth violence prevention programs in Medellín, Colombia, and possibly in other similar settings globally. If these recommendations are implemented, they could lead to more longer-term, collaborative, and preventive programs which aim to empower youth through the use of arts and sports activities. As demonstrated, these changes would positively

impact youth programming by increasing community participation and leadership, making programs more accountable to youth participants, increasing program effectiveness, and engaging and empowering more youth participants.

Two limitations of this paper could be addressed through future research. First, there needs to be more research done about youth violence prevention programming, especially to test the effectiveness of various techniques. When more research is available to the peacebuilding field, all practitioners will benefit from being able to access and learn from the studies. Secondly, due to the focus of this paper, the benefits of programs targeting youth unemployment were not addressed. More research must be done about how youth economic needs can be addressed. Implementing more youth-focused programming will benefit both youth and practitioners by meeting the needs of more youth seeking opportunities.

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Appendix

Schneidman's (1996) youth program components of success	Moser & van Bronkhorst's (1999) characteristics of effective youth programs
Case management	Prevention of negative behaviors
Multi-agency collaborations	Long-term programs
Private sector involvement	Addressing youth needs holistically through families, peer groups, and communities
Youth participation and empowerment	Based on youth needs and assets
Replicable programming	Gender sensitive
Sustainability	Incorporating youth and family participation