

Against Street Hoodlums (CRASH), 3) Operation Hammer, 4) Operation Hard-core, 5) Correctional gang caseloads, and 6) Interagency task force. Only one could be construed as anything other than suppression efforts, namely what was called the Community Youth Gang Services, which was a "youth outreach program" based in part on the familiar detached worker programs but without having workers assigned to specific gangs. There was no evaluation, and eventually it was defunded, with the funds assigned to another program called L.A. Bridges (discussed later). The G.R.E.A.T program was just another version of D.A.R.E. (both funded and operated by law-enforcement agencies).

Gang Resistance, Education, and Training (G.R.E.A.T.)

This program was modeled in part after the famous D.A.R.E. program (Drug Awareness, Resistance, and Education), which has been praised as a cure-all for drug addictions yet a proven failure based on several evaluations over the past couple of decades (see the meta-analysis of eight evaluations by Ennett et al., 1994; see also Rosenbaum and Hanson, 1998). The difference with the G.R.E.A.T program is that it focused on gangs (instead of drugs), and it was aimed at youths who were in the seventh grade but not necessarily "at risk" of becoming gang members. Local police were in charge of the program (as they are in D.A.R.E.), and it was funded by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). A series of standardized lessons were given by police officers to seventh graders starting in 1991, and by 2000, around 3,500 officers in every state in the country were trained. The goal was to reduce gang activity and educate youth about the consequences of joining a gang. The lessons were supposed to teach kids skills that would enable them to resist gangs (just like D.A.R.E.). Evaluations sampled 22 schools and more than 3,500 students. Control groups were included (Esbensen et al., 2001).

So what have the evaluations found? Although there were some positive attitude changes among the seventh graders (but even these were negligible because out of 24 attitudinal variables, only 4 resulted in significant changes), the impact on delinquency in general and gang activity in particular was negative. This was supposed to be a gang-prevention program, but there has been no evidence that the program had any impact on the likelihood of gang involvement. One of the main reasons for the failure of this program is that it did not target those most at risk of becoming a gang member (as Klein and Maxson [2007: 101] note, about 90% of those targeted would not have become gang members whether they participated or not).

L.A. Bridges

A rather ambitious effort was undertaken in Los Angeles starting in 1997 called L.A. Bridges. The goal was for the city to fund a variety of anti-gang programs in selected areas, providing much needed services to at-risk children and youth, especially those in middle schools. After-school programs, sports programs, tutoring, counseling, anger-management classes, and parenting classes were

provided. It had included in its budget an independent evaluation. A recent report observes that after six years and \$50 million in expenditures, nothing much has changed. The program was supposed to serve 5,200 students a year in 26 middle schools, but an evaluation has shown very low participation by parents and students and, moreover, a lack of any sort of documentation of the results of these efforts. An audit concluded that the program ought to be shut down entirely because of mismanagement, high administrative costs, and even "lack of proof that it was reducing gang-related crime" (McGreevy, 2003). The program originally required each contractor to maintain a caseload of a minimum of 50 students who were high risk for becoming gang members and another 150 lower-risk youths. Further, each agency that was contracted was supposed to provide documentation that showed these youths were being served. However, 1 of the agencies had to be terminated and another 14 had serious problems.

Despite this negative evaluation, the city budgeted \$13 million during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003. Apparently nothing succeeds like failure! According to a spokesperson of the Community Development Department, which oversees the program, "The evaluation showed that certainly there are areas that need improvement, but overall we are able to quantify improvement in the performances" (McGreevy, 2003). No evidence was provided.

At the beginning, Malcolm Klein was part of a special panel that created the program. Klein wrote a strong critique of the proposal, stating that to be successful it must target specific gangs in specific parts of the city, who are actually being recruited, and then target them with services. He commented that this was "\$50 million down the drain if what the city wanted was a gang-prevention program." Since that time, Klein says he's been "out of the loop" (McGreevy, 2003). Klein and Maxson note that Klein's exclusion from the evaluation was symptomatic of the "avoidance of academic expertise in program development" (2006: 108).⁵

We suspect that L.A. Bridges is just another in a long line of programs ostensibly set up to do something about a problem but that instead serves the interests of some groups who are the recipients of the funds. McGreevy and Winton (2007) reported that more than \$100 million has been spent on L.A. Bridges, with no proven results.⁶

In March 2011, the state of California awarded 10 grants totaling about \$5 million to "expand education, job training and placement programs for 900 at-risk youth in eight counties as part of the California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention Initiative" (Employment Development Department, 2011). This money brings the total to \$20 million since the program was launched in 2007. Most of the \$5 million is going toward job training and was distributed to agencies such as the Riverside County Economic Development Agency, the Jewish Vocational Service of Los Angeles, and the Oakland Private Industry Council. It remains to be seen what the impact will be.

This is common throughout the country, as all this money is poured into these kinds of programs every year, with few positive results, while little of the money trickles down to those who need it the most. Who has benefited, other