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Caputo, T.; Weiler, R.; Kelly, K.
Phase II of the runaways and street
youth project : the Ottawa case
study : final report



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REPORT

**PHASE II OF THE RUNAWAYS
AND STREET YOUTH PROJECT:**

THE OTTAWA CASE STUDY

Final Report

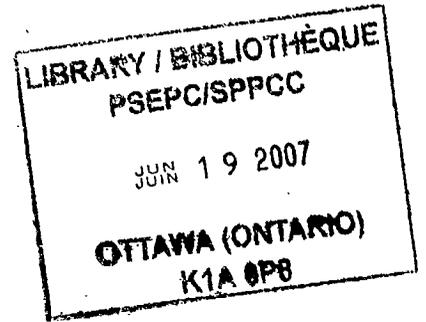
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Police Policy and Research Division

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**PHASE II OF THE RUNAWAYS
AND STREET YOUTH PROJECT:**

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1.0 Introduction

The Runaways and Street Youth Project is part of a larger initiative undertaken by the federal government's Interdepartmental Working Group on Youth-at-Risk. In Phase I, a detailed research design and literature review was completed by Dr. Augustine Brannigan and Dr. Tullio Caputo. Activities undertaken in Phase I are outlined in a report entitled "Studying Runaways and Street Youth in Canada: Conceptual and Research Design Issues," published by the Solicitor General of Canada in 1993.

Brannigan and Caputo analyzed existing research on the runaway and street youth population and made several recommendations regarding future research in this area. Specifically, they suggested that an in-depth analysis of how particular communities respond to runaways and street youth was a major requirement in expanding our knowledge. Brannigan and Caputo used various criteria to identify potential sites for such an in-depth analysis. These included: size; location; the existence of a sufficiently large runaway and street youth population to make the study feasible; the existence of special segments of the runaway and street youth population, such as aboriginal and minority youth; and whether previous research had been conducted in the community on this topic. Further, they suggested that in-depth research be undertaken in communities that had a well-developed inter-agency, community-based network addressing youth-at-risk concerns. Among other locations, Brannigan and Caputo identified Ottawa as one of the potential sites for such a project.

Phase II of the Runaways and Street Youth Project consisted of three parts. These were a general introduction and overview of the initiative and two case studies based on in-depth analyses of how specific communities have responded to the problem of runaways and street youth. The case studies for this project were conducted between February and December 1993, in Saskatoon and Ottawa. The results of the Ottawa case study are presented below.

A multi-faceted research design strategy was developed in order to conduct an in-depth analysis of how a community responds to runaways and street youth. The **research design for the Ottawa case study** included:

- i) interviews with both front-line and supervisory staff in youth-serving agencies in the fields of education, health, criminal justice, social service and community development;
- ii) interviews with young people living on the street or in marginal situations;
- iii) interviews with young people in custodial settings known to have spent time on the street;
- iv) the administration of questionnaires to average high school students from the community;
- v) focus group meetings with young people; and
- vi) a delphi meeting with agency staff who participated in the interviews.

The interviews focused on a variety of issues related to the problems faced by runaways and street youth. Specific information was sought on the characteristics of the runaway and street youth population in Ottawa-Carleton. In addition, both service providers and young people were asked about their perceptions of the operation of individual sectors of the youth services system — education, criminal justice, health, and social services. They were also asked about the operation of the overall youth service system.

For purposes of clarity and common understanding, we use the terms “service” and “service system” in three distinct ways. We refer to general services available to everyone as services. When we use the term “overall youth service system” we are referring to the constellation of services directed primarily at young people. When we refer to specific parts or sectors of the overall youth service system we identify them by name — education system, social service system, criminal justice system, and the health care system. These sectors also provide services to adults, however, we are primarily interested in their responses to young people.

Agency representatives who had been interviewed were invited to discuss the findings of the research in a delphi meeting with representatives from other youth-serving agencies. The delphi technique is a method of enhancing the validity and reliability of the data. It consists of two parts: i) providing those interviewed an opportunity to review research findings; and ii) bringing these respondents together to discuss the findings. Young people who participated in the study were invited to take part in one of two focus groups. These young people discussed the key issues identified in the case study. The results of both delphi and focus group discussions have been incorporated into the Ottawa case study report.

The specific methodological strategies employed for each component of the Ottawa case study are outlined in Section 2.0. Section 3.0 contains a summary of the perceptions of service providers of the characteristics of Ottawa’s runaway and street youth population. Section 4.0 provides an overview of the key issues identified by representatives in different sectors of the youth service system. Short summaries of individual agencies participating in this project are located in Appendix A. Issues regarding the operation of the overall youth service system are discussed in the final part of Section 4.0.

Section 5.0 contains the views of young people, including a brief description of the characteristics of the street youth we interviewed. Next, the views of the young people who participated in the Ottawa case study on the operation of the youth service system are presented. A detailed description of the data collection and analysis techniques used to document the views of young people in Ottawa is presented in Appendix B. Tables generated as part of this analysis are presented in Appendix C. In Section 6.0, we discuss the implications derived from the Ottawa case study.

1.1 The Ottawa Context

The community response to youth-at-risk has a long and dynamic history in Ottawa-Carleton. Historically, initiatives such as the Hard to Serve Committee and various inter-agency networks have emerged in response to the needs of the region’s young people. While the specific focus of activity is continually changing, the community has generally taken a comprehensive view in understanding and addressing the needs of youth-at-risk. Many consider youth-related concerns as manifestations of problems facing the larger society. In this regard, service providers in

Ottawa have often adopted a healthy communities preventative approach to their efforts focusing on the positive — young people's capabilities, accomplishments and survival skills.

Over the past five years, several themes have come to the fore in the community's response to youth-at-risk. For example, the Ottawa-Carleton Youth in Conflict with the Law Committee was established in 1988 to examine the state of youth crime in the region, and to look specifically at how Alternative Measures were being administered under the Young Offenders Act. This initiative involved the participation of representatives from more than 30 youth-serving agencies and organizations. The Youth in Conflict with the Law Committee undertook a variety of activities, such as the preparation of a Directory of Services that identified all youth-serving agencies in the region. The directory contained a brief description of the programs and services offered by each agency, and provided information on how to access these services.

The committee also sponsored a research project, in which a number of agencies kept detailed information on all clients they served during a specified period. This included data on the characteristics of the young people, whether they were or had been in conflict with the law, and detailed information on their family histories, school experiences and previous contact with the criminal justice system. This research helped service providers better understand the antecedents and consequences of youth crime. It also allowed them to develop a profile of the typical young person most likely to become chronically involved with the criminal justice or social service system. This research helped facilitate service co-ordination and the development of appropriate service responses.

The problems facing homeless/street youth became the focus of many in the region in 1991-92. A needs assessment was undertaken by a community task force with the support of the Social Services Department of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (henceforth R.M.O.C.) and the co-operation of youth-serving agencies in the community. An advisory committee was struck to oversee this initiative and assist in the research activity.

The needs assessment was based on in-depth interviews with 65 street youth or youth living in marginal situations in Ottawa-Carleton. The **interviews explored various issues**, including:

- i) the characteristics of the street youth population;
- ii) antecedents to going to the street;
- iii) the involvement of street youth in risky or illegal activities;
- iv) the street youth's knowledge, use and assessment of services available to them.

The report prepared for this project entitled, "Support Services to Homeless/Street Youth in Ottawa-Carleton: A Needs Assessment and Plan for Action," contains the research findings as well as numerous recommendations for ameliorating the situation of Ottawa-Carleton's homeless/street youth population. A major recommendation of this study was that a drop-in centre be established for homeless/street youth in the downtown core.

While the needs assessment of homeless/street youth was underway, several related initiatives were taking place in the community. The R.M.O.C. Social Services Department was developing a plan for permanent shelters for youth. At the same time, the Children's Aid Society was asked to take the lead in initiating a community-based response to address the service needs of children under 16 who are on the street. During this period, a great deal of public attention and

discussion centred around the issue of juvenile prostitution. A study of street prostitution was conducted by the Youth Services Bureau. The results of this study were released in 1991.

These initiatives reflect concerns related to the runaway and street youth population in Ottawa-Carleton. As well, a number of more general issues facing youth-at-risk were being addressed by the community during this period. These included: youth mental health needs, substance-abuse treatment, early school leaving, youth employment, racism and racially motivated violence among young people, HIV/STD testing, birth control, sexual assault and dating violence.

A strategic planning exercise known as the Social Services Planning Project was implemented in 1993 by key funders in the region, including the United Way of Ottawa-Carleton and the R.M.O.C. Some funds for this project were also provided by the provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services. The Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton administered this project. It consisted of various research activities and community consultations designed to assist in the prioritization of the health and social service needs of young people in the region.

1.2 Responding to Youth-at-Risk in Ottawa-Carleton

The needs assessment of homeless/street youth in Ottawa-Carleton was widely distributed. It received considerable publicity. Many members of the community task force who had participated in the project lobbied regional government to implement the recommendations outlined in the report. In particular, they emphasized the need for a drop-in centre in the downtown core. At the same time, the efforts of related initiatives and projects were coming to fruition. These reflected the actions of various groups in the community in business, health, social services and numerous community agencies. Program developments that have taken place focusing specifically on the street youth population include:

- The establishment of the Sexual Health Centre in the downtown Byward Market area to provide health care services to street youth and runaways. These include special programs such as STD services and birth control services.
- The Rideau Centre Youth Project was established. This agency provides employment counseling and seeks employment opportunities for street youth. The youth have already established their own downtown newspaper.
- The Rideau Bus Shelter was dismantled. This had been a major congregation area for street people in the region, including numerous street youth. However, the business community has recognized the needs of street youth, and is participating now in various efforts designed to assist these young people. This includes sponsoring literacy and employment programs.
- The establishment of The Door in Ottawa-Carleton. This is a program modeled on a New York initiative that provides a positive, multi-faceted program aimed at disadvantaged youth, including street youth.
- Plans to consolidate the operation of the Youth Services Bureau in a new facility have been announced. The Youth Services Bureau will use the new facility to

provide a range of services and programs for youth-at-risk, including runaways and street youth. A youth drop-in centre is part of this development.

- Efforts to provide second stage housing and independent living opportunities have been initiated by agencies such as the YM-YWCA and the Youth Services Bureau.
- A suburban drop-in centre has been opened in an east-end shopping mall by the YM-YWCA and the Youth Services Bureau.
- Protocols have been developed by the Children's Aid Society for dealing with runaways and street youth under sixteen.
- Student welfare has been revisited by R.M.O.C.'s Social Services Department in an attempt to better meet the needs of these young people.
- Discussions have taken place about establishing an emergency shelter and a downtown drop-in centre.

These developments indicate that Ottawa-Carleton has been very active in the past several years in its response to runaways and street youth. Indeed, there is a long history in Ottawa-Carleton of active community involvement in issues related to youth-at-risk. Undertaking the case study component of Phase II of the Runaways and Street Youth Project in this community required careful consideration of existing inter-agency networks and related initiatives. For example, it was important that the Ottawa case study be differentiated from the recently completed needs assessment of homeless/street youth so that it would not be seen as a duplication of effort. The advice of key informants was sought regarding the integration of the Runaways and Street Youth Project with existing initiatives. A co-ordinated effort was vital since the success of the Ottawa case study required the co-operation of front-line agencies dealing with runaways and street youth. The activities of the Ottawa-Carleton Youth and Violence Committee afforded the research team a means of addressing these concerns.

1.3 The Youth and Violence Initiative

In the fall of 1992, a number of individuals from key youth-serving agencies came together to address the apparent increase in youth violence in the community. Based on the continuing co-operation between the Ottawa Police and the Ottawa Board of Education, a committee was established to respond to the problems young people face as both victims and perpetrators of violence. The committee adopted a holistic approach, and sought the input and involvement of all sectors of the community, including youth-serving agencies, the business sector, various levels of government and especially young people and their parents. A community conference was held March 1, 1993 which was attended by some 475 people. The community's response was so overwhelming that an additional 200 people who asked to attend had to be turned away due to space limitations.

Dr. Fred Mathews and Dr. Tullio Caputo were key note speakers at this conference. Conference participants were divided into working groups, each with a facilitator and rapporteur. The working groups addressed various issues, and discussed ways of responding to the problem of

youth and violence. The results of this conference were summarized and sent to all conference participants.

The youth and violence conference summary report highlighted the deliberations of conference participants. While youth and violence was the issue before the community, conference participants defined this as part of a larger concern they had with youth-at-risk issues. In this context, street youth were seen as both victims — at home and on the street — as well as perpetrators of violence.

Given this context, and the fact that a member of the research team was a keynote speaker at the youth and violence conference, the research team approached the Youth and Violence Initiative steering committee about the possibility of collaborating. Specifically, the research team offered to conduct a community consultation on youth and violence issues, and seek the community's views on an organizational strategy for responding to this problem. The research team also offered to prepare a background document based on this consultation, and to organize a community conference where the findings could be discussed. In return, the research team asked for community support and co-operation in carrying out the research activities required to complete the Ottawa component of the Runaways and Street Youth Project.

Before approaching the steering committee, this proposal was discussed and approved by the funders. The research team then presented the proposal to the Youth and Violence Initiative steering committee. Both the funders and the Youth and Violence Initiative steering committee recognized the utility of combining efforts to maximize resources and avoid placing unnecessary demands on an already over-taxed youth service system. Once assured that the needs of both initiatives could be satisfied through one data-collection exercise, the Youth and Violence Initiative steering committee agreed in principle to endorse the project. However, the proposal had to be approved by the community before the project could proceed.

The research team presented a detailed outline of the proposal at a community meeting in June, 1993. This meeting was called by the Youth and Violence Initiative steering committee as a follow-up to the March 1 meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Violence and youth conference summary report, and to decide on a course of action. At the meeting, the research team provided details of the proposed research and community consultation. The benefits to the community of participating in the initiative were also outlined. These included providing a framework for keeping the initiative going, and identifying what the community deemed to be the key issues they wished to address. The research team also emphasized the need to meet the requirements of the Runaways and Street Youth Project.

After various issues were clarified, the community endorsed the proposal. The Youth and Violence Initiative steering committee met immediately following the June meeting, and re-affirmed its support for the proposal. Having secured the community's co-operation, the research team began to assemble a list of youth-serving agencies, and to develop an interview schedule that could satisfy the data requirements of both projects.

2.0 Research Design and Methodology

The Ottawa case study component of the Runaways and Street Youth Project was designed to provide in-depth information about the way a community responds to runaways and street youth, and to further test the four-quadrant model developed in Phase I. In order to accomplish this task, steps were taken to co-ordinate our efforts with those of other initiatives underway in the community. As noted above, the Youth and Violence Committee provided a vehicle for meeting the objectives of the case study. In addition, information was gathered from different segments of the youth population, to allow an assessment of the usefulness of the four-quadrant model.

The Ottawa case study built on work completed during the needs assessment of homeless/street youth in significant ways. The focus of the needs assessment was on the homeless/street youth themselves. Information was gathered about their characteristics, and the antecedents and consequences of their involvement in street life. They were also asked for their views on the availability and quality of services being provided for homeless/street youth.

While similar information was gathered in the Ottawa case study, its major focus was the youth service system. Thus, the Ottawa case study included in-depth interviews with both front-line and supervisory staff in some 30 youth-serving agencies. These individuals were asked for their perceptions of the characteristics of the runaway and street youth population. They were also asked for their perceptions of the operation of their individual sectors of the youth service system as well as the operation of the overall youth service system.

The Ottawa case study included a broader sample of youth-serving agencies than had been involved in the previous needs assessment. For example, interviews were conducted with representatives from public transportation and public housing. These types of agencies provide a different perspective of the runaway and street youth population than that offered by social service and community agencies.

The Ottawa case study included the following components:

- community participation
- establishing a sampling frame and selecting agencies
- interviews with supervisory and front-line staff
- interviews with street youth and high school youth
- preparing a background document and holding a fall conference
- holding a delphi meeting.

Each of these is described briefly below.

2.1 Community Participation

In Section 1.0, we stressed the importance of locating the Ottawa portion of the Runaways and Street Youth Project within the context of existing initiatives. We also noted that the Ottawa-Carleton Youth and Violence Initiative provided the vehicle for accomplishing this and securing community support. Members of the research team were participants in many of the initiatives in the region dealing with runaways and street youth. For example, various members

of the research team were involved in the needs-assessment study and the youth and violence initiative. This made it easier to enlist the co-operation of the community.

Another point worth considering is the benefits derived by collaborating. The flexibility and support of the federal funders allowed the research team to propose a collaborative strategy to the community. In return, access was secured for the Ottawa portion of the Runaways and Street Youth Project. For their part, the community was provided with the resources to maintain the momentum of the Youth and Violence Initiative. They also reaped the benefits of having a community consultation undertaken, including the preparation of a background document and the organization of a community conference. These activities require considerable resources, and it is doubtful that they could have been undertaken independently. In the end, everyone reaped the benefits of working collaboratively.

2.2 Establishing a Sampling Frame and Selecting Agencies

The process of selecting agencies to be included in the study centred around: i) meeting the requirements of the Ottawa case study and its focus on runaways and street youth; and ii) responding to the requirements of the local initiative on youth and violence. The **selection process** involved three stages:

- i) the compilation of a sampling frame;
- ii) categorizing agencies by sector; and
- iii) actually selecting agencies to participate in the study.

We began by developing a sampling frame of youth-serving agencies from a number of lists available to us. First, we used the list of agencies who were invited to participate in the Youth and Violence Initiative. All of these agencies were identified as being concerned with the issues of youth and violence. To this, we added agencies that participated in the homeless/street youth needs assessment conducted by the regional Social Services Department the previous summer. There was some duplication between these lists, and we used the information on involvement with street youth to flag agencies who reflected both the local concern with youth and violence and the concern of the Ottawa case study with runaways and street youth. A third list, consisting of agencies administering Alternative Measures programs, was also added. Again, there was some duplication. A fourth list, which identified judges, crown attorneys and other court officials with youth concerns, was also incorporated into the master list. Finally, a list developed by a local group on issues pertaining to the downtown core was used, since the core area is key for runaways and street youth. The master list of agencies considered for inclusion in the study, however, was selective and not exhaustive. It was developed primarily with the intention of identifying those agencies most involved with the study population.

Once a master list of youth-serving agencies had been compiled, the agencies were assigned to one of five sectors identified by the funders. These included: i) social services; ii) education; iii) criminal justice; iv) health; and v) community agencies. We classified agencies according to their involvement with runaways and street youth (the Ottawa case study criteria), and their involvement with youth and violence (the local criteria). Our aim was to ensure that we had a minimum of two or three agencies in each sector. Because agencies often have diverse mandates, they were classified according to the sector that was most important to them.

Agencies were then selected for inclusion in the study. The following **criteria** were used:

- i) agencies who were working with runaways or street youth;
- ii) agencies concerned with the Youth and Violence Initiative;
- iii) ensuring that a mixture of both front-line and traditional agencies be included; and
- iv) placing a lower limit of 20 and an upper limit of 25 on the number of agencies selected.

This decision was based on the availability of resources.

A purposive sampling frame was employed. This involved selecting agencies on the basis of the criteria that had been established for inclusion in the study. We used key informants to identify the agencies that should be included. Their decisions were based on the criteria listed above, and on their knowledge of the agencies with the greatest involvement with these young people and the issues. Because we did not have a random sample of agencies, we decided to use two checks on the sample. The first check was based on input from the Youth and Violence Initiative steering committee for the local initiative. They were asked to assess the list and to note any problems and omissions. The second check was the use of a delphi technique in which those interviewed were given an opportunity to come together to discuss the research findings. This would allow us to check if our results reflected their experiences working with young people.

2.3 Interviews With Supervisory and Front-Line Staff

Once the agencies to be included in the study were identified, a letter was sent to the Director or Chief Executive Officer, inviting them or the appropriate individuals in their organization to participate in the project. A copy of the questionnaire to be used in the interviews was also included, and they were asked to consider it prior to the interview. They were told that someone would be calling to set a mutually convenient time to conduct the requisite interviews. Since many were at the June meeting or represented their agency on the steering committee, we received a positive response to our requests.

The original research design called for two interviews to be conducted in each agency, one with a supervisory staff member and one with a front-line staff member. As noted above, many agencies requested that we meet with a group of staff members. These agencies expended considerable effort and resources completing the questionnaire we had sent them. In these cases, the researcher usually met with a supervisory staff member, and conducted an interview with this individual prior to meeting with the larger group. At the meeting, the materials prepared by agency staff in response to our questionnaire were discussed. This resulted in a de facto intra-agency delphi taking place.

Interviews were based on a semi-structured questionnaire. This instrument was based in part, on the work completed in Saskatoon. Specifically, questions dealing with runaways and street youth were based on those used in the Saskatoon Key Actor Interview Schedule. These focused on **four major issues**:

- i) who are the runaways and street youth;
- ii) how do these young people come into contact with your agency;
- iii) what is the typical pattern of service use by these young people in your agency;
and
- iv) what happens when they leave your agency, i.e. do you refer them to other agencies or programs.

The interview schedule also contained two sets of items related to the youth and violence initiative. Many of these were derived from information provided by community and agency representatives at the June meeting. The first asked about the nature and extent of youth violence. Various questions explored who was involved, and whether this phenomenon had changed during the past five, 10 or 20 years. A second series of questions was devoted to an organizational model proposed during the previous community meetings. Respondents were asked for their input on the viability of the proposed organizational model. Finally, respondents were asked to identify what they considered to be the five key issues the community should address in the youth and violence area. The results of both the violence and organizational questions were used in the preparation of a background document to be used at a community conference. The findings from the runaways and street youth questions were used in the preparation of this report.

2.4 The Views of Street Youth and High School Youth

The Ottawa case study included interviews with a broad spectrum of young people in the community. In-depth interviews were conducted with 26 young people currently living on the street or in marginal situations. Various issues were explored during these interviews, including the characteristics, experiences and behavioural patterns of these young people. A major component of the street youth interviews involved gathering information about their knowledge, use and assessment of the services available to them in Ottawa-Carleton.

Besides the interviews with street youth, in-depth interviews were also conducted with a sample of young people in custodial settings who had lived on the street or were familiar with street life. Potential subjects for these interviews were identified by institutional staff familiar with the backgrounds of these young people. The same interview schedule used with the street youth was also used with the youth in custody.

A third group of young people was included in this project primarily for comparison purposes. This consisted of a sample of "average" high school students. In order to obtain this sample, young people were approached in the food court areas of several local shopping malls. Once it was established that the potential respondents were attending high school full-time, they were invited to participate in the study and offered a token sum for their time. Those who agreed completed questionnaires either in the food court or in a separate office reserved for this purpose.

Another group of average high school students was invited to participate in focus group meetings. These young people were identified through a local community agency that offers a variety of youth programs. Two focus group meetings were held, one with a group ranging in age from 12 to 14 and one with an older group whose members were 15 to 18 years of age. Both focus groups were held in a meeting room provided by the community agency. Focus group participants were asked to complete the same questionnaire used with other average high school

students. Once this was done, discussions took place on the issues raised in the questionnaire. The results of these focus group discussions have been incorporated into this report.

2.5 The Background Document and the Fall Conference

A background document was prepared for use in a fall community conference. A copy of this document is included in Appendix E at the end of this report. The purpose of the conference was to review the results of the community consultation with regard to the nature and extent of the youth and violence issue. It was also intended as an action-focused planning event. Specific issues were to be identified for community action, including the development of a time-limited action plan. The community conference would also allow the organizational model to be considered, as the community decided whether and how they would proceed on this issue.

A conference was planned for late November. The steering committee decided to invite all the agencies that participated in original March 1 Youth and Violence Conference. However, agencies were assigned a certain number of spaces, depending on their size and the extent of their involvement in the issue. The steering committee also arranged to have various groups of young people attend the conference. In total, approximately 180 individuals took part.

The conference was held on November 19, 1993, at the main building of the R.M.O.C. It included both plenary sessions and working group sessions. Working groups were arranged on the basis of the **six key issues** identified for action by the community during the consultation. These were:

- i) the service system response;
- ii) the criminal justice system response;
- iii) zero tolerance;
- iv) what are we teaching young people about violence;
- v) community awareness and participation; and
- vi) staff training and development.

Each group included a facilitator, various resource individuals and a rapporteur. The deliberations of each group were reported in a plenary session at the end of the conference. This included their intention to continue as task groups, announcements of plans for the future and the dates of their next meetings.

2.6 The Delphi Meeting

A delphi meeting was held with representatives from 14 agencies that participated in the study. Agencies were selected for the delphi on the basis of their direct involvement with runaways and street youth. A decision to restrict the size of the group to a maximum of 14 was reached to ensure that the group remain small enough to allow participants to be involved and contribute to the discussion. The group also had representation from the five sectors of the youth service system.

A summary was prepared for delphi participants consisting of the following: i) the key issues identified during key actor interviews for each section of the youth service system; and ii) the key issues that were identified in relation to the operation of the overall youth service system.

This was sent to each participant prior to the delphi meeting. The meeting was held at the YM-YWCA. Each of the issues outlined in the summary was addressed in turn. In addition, several new issues were identified during the discussion. Some of these dealt with inter-sectoral practices and concerns such as the impact that a change in one part of the system has on the rest of the system. The results of the delphi have been incorporated into this report.

The original research design called for two delphi meetings: i) an intra-agency delphi consisting of representatives from a single agency, such as a criminal justice or education agency; and ii) an inter-agency delphi involving representatives from all sectors. A number of factors lead us to re-consider the intra-agency delphi. For example, with the exception of one or two large agencies, most agencies working with street youth have small staff complements. As a result, the viability of intra-agency delphi meetings in small agencies is questionable.

Moreover, in many agencies, our requests to conduct interviews with at least one front-line and one supervisory staff were met with considerable enthusiasm. Many requested that we meet with a group of staff members, as opposed to conducting interviews with only two representatives from their agencies. Most of the larger agencies prepared detailed reports based on the questionnaires we had sent them. In these cases, the researchers met with one or more supervisory staff members and conducted an interview before the larger meetings took place. These meetings usually included the participation of senior program staff members, as well as several front-line staff familiar with the day-to-day operations of the agency. The information prepared by agency staff was presented and discussed by the entire group. This resulted in a de facto intra-agency delphi process taking place.

3.0 Who are the Runaways and Street Youth: The Views of Service Providers

This section presents an overview of the characteristics of the runaway and street youth population in Ottawa-Carleton. It is based on interviews conducted with agency staff, and information about this population contained in the needs assessment report and the Children's Aid Study. During many of the interviews, the respondents indicated that accurate descriptions of runaway and street youth population were provided in these two documents. In addition, the findings of the street youth interviews conducted for the Ottawa case study were consistent with those presented in both earlier studies. We are confident, therefore, that this information accurately reflects the characteristics of the runaway and street youth population in Ottawa-Carleton.

3.1 The Characteristics of the Runaway and Street Youth Population

One of the difficult issues that arises in research on runaways and street youth is estimating the size of this population at any given time. Definitional problems exacerbate this problem, since these young people do not fit easily into the mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories needed to meet methodological requirements and facilitate population counts. Some are runaways, on the street for only a few hours or a few days. Others have been thrown out of their houses. Some have homes to return to but choose to spend most of their time on the street. Then there are the entrenched street youth who sleep in abandoned buildings or cars, under bridges or in other marginal circumstances. Estimating the size of this elusive and suspicious population is fraught with difficulties, since most of these young people want to remain anonymous.

The difficulties encountered in defining this population and estimating its size are examined in detail by Brannigan and Caputo in the document prepared for Phase I of this project. In their discussion, Brannigan and Caputo develop a four-quadrant model that identifies the various components of the runaway and street youth population. This model contains four quadrants created by the intersection of two axes: a horizontal axis that measures the amount of time individuals spend "on the street," and a vertical axis that measures the extent to which young people are involved in street culture. The horizontal axis forms a continuum which ranges from those young people who are on the street only occasionally, to entrenched street youth who literally live on the street. Young people who are commonly included in the street youth population can be located on the continuum depending on the length of time they actually spend on the street. For example, runaways who return home within a short time would be close to the end of the continuum that indicates little time spent on the street. Repeat runners who run for several days or several months at a time would be farther down the continuum. At the far end are the entrenched street youth who spend most of their time on the street.

The vertical axis also represents a continuum, in this case measuring the extent to which young people are involved in street culture. This continuum ranges from involvement in conventional behaviour at one end to extensive participation in the dangerous and risky activities associated with street life at the other. Those young people at the outset of their involvement in

**A MODEL FOR UNDERSTANDING RUNAWAYS
AND STREET YOUTH**

CONVENTIONAL BEHAVIOUR

I. CONVENTIONAL YOUTH

II. VICTIMIZED YOUTH

"curbsiders"

"throwaways"

AT HOME

ON STREET

"delinquents"

"homeless youth"

III. DELINQUENT YOUTH

IV. ENTRENCHED YOUTH

HAZARDOUS BEHAVIOUR

running away and being part of the street scene are less likely to be involved in the dangerous or risky activities associated with street life than are entrenched street youth who are heavily involved in street culture and activity.

The intersection of these two continua forms a four quadrant model. The young people in the top-left quadrant are primarily involved in conventional activities. As they become more involved in street culture and spend increasing amounts of time on the street, they approach the intersection of the two axes at the centre of the model. We have named this group the "conventional youth", since most live at home and are only marginally involved in the street scene. Those young people in the top-right quadrant are called "victimized youth", since many are throwaways or those young people running from intolerable situations. While they spend a considerable amount of time on the street, they are not, as yet, very involved in street life. However, their precarious living situations make them extremely vulnerable to its dangers. Quadrant III, the bottom-left quadrant, contains the conventional delinquents who we have labeled "delinquent youth". Most are not on the street to any extent, but they do participate heavily in the illegal and dangerous activities characteristic of street culture. The bottom-right quadrant contains those young people we have defined as "entrenched youth". These people spend most of their time on the street, as many are homeless most of the time. They are also extensively involved in street life.

The importance of this model for the Runaways and Street Youth Project is that it recognizes a range of behaviour that will attract a range of community responses. Moreover, the model implies that many high-risk youth have a long history of involvement with the criminal justice and/or social service system as they move from one end of a continuum to another, and from quadrant to quadrant. Whether the process begins with difficulties at home or in school, or whether it escalates from episodic running to more extensive participation in street life, those now in Quadrant IV — the entrenched street youth — show several patterns of behaviour that are well documented in the research literature, and that evoke a broad spectrum of response. This is a crucial assumption for service providers, since it suggests that early identification and prevention are part of a response continuum that includes: crisis management; the provision of maintenance services; and treatment, rehabilitation and transition programmes to help young people get off the streets.

Based on this model, the focus of population estimates was centred on two aspects of the street population. These included the entrenched street youth and the larger, more amorphous group of young people visible on the street. Most of those we interviewed estimated the size of the entrenched street youth population to be between 200 and 300 people. This estimate swells to 1,000 to 2,000 for the size of the population of young people involved in the street scene at any given time. This includes everyone from entrenched street youth to "curbsiders" and "wannabees". The size of the street youth population also varies depending on the season and the migration patterns of street youth. Ottawa is part of a migration triangle that includes Toronto and Montreal. Many street youth have contacts in all three cities and move freely between them for a change of scenery or to escape trouble.

These estimates of the size of the street youth population can be compared with available police data. Figures reported in the Children's Aid Study indicate that the Ottawa police had 972 reports of missing children in the first eight months of 1992 of which 943 were returned. The Nepean Police Service received 254 missing children reports in the same period. In the

same report, figures are presented for the Roberts/Smart Centre Crisis Unit. These statistics indicate that 201 children were placed for running behaviour between April, 1991 and February, 1992.

The ratio of females to males among the street youth population shows that in general, there are slightly more females than males on the street. However, females make up a much larger proportion of younger street youth, while males begin to dominate after age 17. Younger females are more elusive and difficult to contact. Many are taken in by older males who provide them with food, clothing and shelter in exchange for sex. The young women involved in the sex trade are carefully watched by their pimps, who restrict their freedom. This is especially the case for females under 16 who are a valuable commodity in the sex trade, and who are vulnerable to detection by police or social service outreach workers.

Most of the young people on the street in Ottawa-Carleton are caucasian. A few, however, are of aboriginal origin. Most list English as their first language, however, there are a number of street youth whose first language is French. Ottawa is a catchment basin for a large area that includes a small aboriginal component and a large French-speaking population. While elements of both groups are present in the street youth population, their numbers are not disproportionate to their size in the general population.

Some respondents suggested that the behaviour of runaways and street youth is consistent with a "fight or flight" reaction. Elements of both responses are visible in the experience of the street youth in Ottawa. Most of the young people leave home as a result of conflict in their families. A large percentage report experiencing physical, emotional or sexual abuse at home. Many of these young people are also the victims of violence on the street, reporting incidents of assault, robbery and sexual assault. However, many also report being violent themselves both while at home and once on the street.

While the externalized violence experienced by these young people is extensive, many also experience violence that is turned inward. For example, many street youth are involved in self-mutilation. This includes slashing, carving, and burning themselves or punching walls until bones are smashed. Most of the street youth have thought about suicide, while almost half of those interviewed in the needs assessment study had actually attempted suicide.

Self-destructive behaviour is also visible in the risky sexual practices of this group of young people. High-risk sex is an integral part of the street scene, as sex is often traded for money, something to eat or a place to stay. Some street youth engage in prostitution as a means of earning money to survive. While many street youth think they are invincible, others simply don't care about being infected with deadly viruses such as HIV. They routinely engage in unprotected sex. Ironically, some street youth working in the sex trade will use condoms with "johns", but not with their boyfriends or girlfriends. This amounts to a risky display of intimacy among these sexually active teens.

The flight response is what brings young people to the street in the first place. Problems at home and at school prompt many to run away. For some, running becomes a standard response to difficult, challenging or threatening situations.

The flight response is also visible in the extensive substance use by street youth. LSD is the most common drug being used, although beer, liquor, marijuana, cocaine and heroine are also used. Many street youth in the needs assessment study identified substance abuse as the biggest problem facing street youth.

The health care needs of runaways and street youth are extensive. Many lack basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothing. While males are allowed to "flop" — sleep in a house or apartment rented by other street youth — females are forced to trade sex for a place to stay. Many street youth avoid adult shelters, because they are afraid or suspicious of the individuals who frequent these places. Others do not want to be associated with the adult street inhabitants.

The lack of adequate shelter, regular hygiene and proper diet results in many health problems for street youth. Chief among these are respiratory ailments and skin problems. They also need services related to sexually transmitted diseases and birth control. As noted above, substance-abuse counseling and treatment are other health related services needed by street youth. Finally, many young people on the street require mental health services to help them deal with loneliness and depression. Some require long-term counseling, to deal with being victims of child abuse.

Information obtained about the allure of the street provides important insights for understanding these young people. Many indicated that street youth could be identified by their connections to the street scene. A pseudo "family" exists on the street, complete with street names and differentiated roles. The street names protect anonymity, while the presence of older street mothers and fathers provide the sense of security usually found in a family.

Street culture satisfies many of the unmet needs of these young people. For example, they say that people on the street listen to them, understand them and really care about them. Street youth often share similar experiences, allowing them to relate easily to each other's problems. Many refer to individuals they have just met as friends. Ironically, these same friends can easily become victimizers; street youth both support and prey on each other to obtain food, money or a place to stay. These contradictory practices of supporting and exploiting each other are found in many aspects of street culture. For example, as noted earlier, it is accepted among street youth that females trade sex for a place to stay.

4.0 The Youth Service System

In this section, the views of representatives from social services, education, criminal justice, health and youth-serving agencies are examined. The key issues identified for each sector of the youth service system are outlined briefly below. Key issues related to the operation of the overall youth service system are presented at the end of this section. An overview of individual agencies is provided in Appendix A located at the end of this report.

4.1 The Social Service System: An Overview

Street youth acquire most basic social services through street agencies. This includes food, shelter, clothing and basic counseling services. Mainstream services such as second-stage housing and more extensive counseling programs are accessible through referrals. While many mainstream services are available, street youth are often not able to benefit fully from them. In some cases, the level of support provided is insufficient to meet the needs of street youth. In others, rigid selection criteria or program requirements make them inappropriate or unavailable.

4.1.1 The Social Service System: Key Issues

i) The Suitability of Services Is a Concern

While needed, some services are simply not suited for runaways and street youth. For example, services employing an appointment system are less likely to work with runaways and street youth. Drop-in services are a much more effective way of reaching this elusive and suspicious population. Street outreach services that are sensitive to the cultural reality of the street are another way of meeting the needs of runaways and street youth. Mainstream programs have to become more flexible if they are to reach this segment of the youth population.

ii) Services Should Be Accessible to Runaways and Street Youth

Some people we interviewed noted that the manner in which services and programs are delivered makes them more accessible to runaways and street youth. The location and hours of operation of agencies providing these services is also very important.

Another problem related to accessibility is the timing of service delivery. When a young person makes a disclosure, appropriate services are required immediately. In many cases, these services are available but they have long waiting lists. While this may be seen as primarily a resource problem, the accessibility dimension related to timing should also be considered. Services should be accessible at the time they are needed.

iii) Long-Term Support Services Are Needed

Many indicated that there are a variety of front-line services available for runaways and street youth that successfully connect with these young people. The question is, What do we do

with them once we have made contact? It is often difficult to get them mainstream services. Some have long waiting lists. Others are inappropriate. Many street youth require long-term assistance, such as those provided by a support worker. This help should be available both while these young people are still at home and after they have left and live on their own.

iv) Traumatization Is a Concern

Many runaways and street youth have been traumatized as a result of experiences at home or on the street. A large proportion have been victims of sexual abuse. These young people often exhibit self-destructive behaviour such as slashing and carving. They require specialized counseling and support services. These services often have waiting lists up to six months long.

Many of these young people will not disclose to probation officers or Children's Aid Society workers, because they don't want the system to become involved. They often do disclose to workers in street agencies. However, these agencies have few resources with which to deal with these problems.

v) Employment Services Are a Concern

Those working in employment services are often caught in a quandary. They frequently become a counseling service for runaways and street youth, because they can't really deliver employment opportunities for these young people. This is due in part to the high unemployment rate among young people. It is also due to runaways' and street youths' lack of marketable skills and lifestyle. Creative and flexible employment programs are needed for this segment of the youth population.

4.2 The Education System: An Overview

The education system does not normally target street youth and runaways as a special population. Rather, they form a subset of a larger high-risk/high-needs group experiencing problems at school. Educational programs aimed at these high-risk youth are brought into play in a systematic way. Educators attempt to deal with problems in the classroom first, then in the wider school environment. Different experts, such as psychologists and social workers, can be brought in. If a more therapeutic environment is required, students can be directed to alternative schools which feature specialized programs and appropriately trained staff. Beyond this, the educational system attempts to reach runaways and street youth through different agencies that might have contact with these young people. Correspondence courses are available, and several re-entry programs have been developed to re-integrate these youth into regular school programs.

An important concern is that the requirements of the formal education system, such as punctuality and regular attendance, are often very difficult for runaways and street youth. Survival on the street and participation in street culture often precludes sustained performance in a structured program. Creative, non-structured alternatives aimed specifically at this high-risk group are required. Some evidence exists that street agencies and representatives from the business community have made strides in this direction.

4.2.1 The Education System: Key Issues

i) Runaways and Street Youth Require Support Networks

The school system depends on parental support. Many respondents noted that high-risk youth such as runaways and street youth lack this support. They need someone to motivate them and get them to follow rules like attending school and being on time.

Many of the young people living in marginal situations are on student welfare. These 16- and 17-year-old youth are in the Student Liaison Program, which requires them to attend school. Case loads are extremely high, however, and these young people have little supervision. If they fail to attend school, they are assigned a welfare worker and put on regular social assistance. Someone has to be responsible for providing supervision and support for these young people. As one respondent noted, many honours students would find life very difficult without someone to support them.

ii) Special Attention Is Needed for Students Over 16 Years of Age

While education authorities are required by law to provide an appropriate educational experience for young people up to 16 years of age, no such requirement exists for those 16 and over. In fact, few resources exist to connect these young people to the education system. Many of their needs are related to economic and employment activities. These are limited, however, in the absence of marketable skills and basic education.

iii) Suspensions Are Often Inappropriate for Runaways and Street Youth

Many questioned the reasoning behind suspending runaways or street youth for being truant. They suggested that more creative responses would better address the problems faced by runaways and street youth. The education system should attempt to keep these young people involved and connected, and avoid pushing them out.

iv) New Codes of behaviour Are Increasingly Rigid

The response of the education system to discipline problems has been the creation and implementation of rigid codes of behaviour. Many respondents disagreed with this type of response, especially for runaways and street youth. These codes of behaviour further restrict the educational opportunities of this high-risk group, since even fewer are able to handle the strict rules and zero tolerance policies.

v) Alternative Schools Are Not Designed to Meet the Needs of Most Runaways and Street Youth

Alternative schools are intended for students with learning difficulties. While students such as runaways and street youth are often assigned to alternative schools, given their usual emotional and social needs, they should be in regular classes with a child care worker

assigned to them. The number of such child care workers, however, has been cut back in most school boards.

vi) Re-Examine the Link Between the Education and Justice Systems

A number of problems were identified regarding the link between the education system and the youth justice system. Most revolve around the fact that the problems of runaways and street youth are deep-seated and require extensive intervention. In fact, negative educational experiences are part of the problem for many of these young people. Running behaviour is often a response to problems, including those at school. Despite this, the justice system routinely includes school attendance in probation orders. These orders are difficult to enforce especially with repeat runners. Furthermore, probation orders that require these students to be in school cannot be enforced if the student has been suspended. Technically, they are not in breach of their probation orders under these circumstances. However, a young person can eventually be placed in secure custody as a consequence of missing school.

Another problem is the lack of continuity for runaways and street youth who come in contact with the youth justice system. Many are forced to change schools frequently, as a result of custodial placements. In some cases these placements can be short-term lasting only several months. Nevertheless, the educational experience of the young person is disrupted. The educational experience of these young people should be given greater consideration in determining dispositions.

4.3 The Youth Justice System

Representatives of the criminal justice system typically come into contact with runaways and street youth as a result of the involvement of these young people in criminal behaviour. While the police know of their tenure on the street, this information is not normally emphasized in criminal justice processes. It may appear in police reports, the remarks of the crown attorneys or in pre-disposition reports. Street youth and runaway status is often inferred from the type of offense with which a young person is charged, the location of the offense or the fact that the young person has no fixed address.

Recognizing these people as runaways or street youth may have a number of important consequences for the way they are treated by the criminal justice system. For example, this information could be used in developing appropriate and culturally relevant dispositions. This could include establishing realistic expectations for these young people. For example, many of these young people get into trouble precisely because they find it difficult to keep appointments or maintain regular attendance. Appropriate responses would take into account the histories of these young people.

One of the difficulties with the youth justice system is that it is structured to deal with individuals on a case-by-case basis. As a result, the reality facing street youth as a group is not often taken into consideration. To do so would be difficult, however, for a variety of reasons. For example, the street youth population is not homogeneous; individual runaways and street youth do not respond in the same manner. Consequently, a standardized approach to this segment of the youth population would be difficult to develop. On the other hand,

it is important that the youth justice system recognize the reality faced by runaways and street youth in developing appropriate responses.

4.3.1 The Youth Justice System: Key Issues

i) Appropriate Dispositions for Runaways and Street Youth Are Needed

Fines are inappropriate for these young people, who earn money by panhandling or engaging in illegal activities. Also, these young people are more likely to compound their original problems because running usually results in a violation of the provisions of their probation orders. The challenge is to develop appropriate dispositions for young people known to be runners or street youth.

ii) The Revolving Door Syndrome

One of the key issues facing the youth justice system is the problem known as the revolving door syndrome — the repeated processing of young people by police and the courts. Though not limited to street youth and runaways, this segment of the youth population is especially prone to repeated processing due to their running behaviour, breaches of probation orders, and their inability to complete treatment programs. Furthermore, survival for these young people means that they will almost inevitably be involved in minor criminal activities, such as shoplifting and theft.

A consequence of the repeated processing of the revolving door syndrome is that many youth lose respect for the youth justice system. They discover that community service orders and even institutional placements are not as onerous as they thought. The respondents suggested that young people who appear before the court more than three times are much more likely to become chronically involved with the justice system.

In many cases, interventions with street youth and runaways should be pursued through the Child Welfare Act or the Child and Family Services Act. Many of these troubled youth get caught up by the criminal justice system instead of getting the type of assistance they require. It would be more effective and much less costly to provide these young people with the services they need through the social service system instead of the youth justice system.

iii) There Are Few Exits from the System

This issue is related to the first two. It addresses the fact that realistic exits from the system have to be available for runaways and street youth. Young people who have appeared before the court three or more times lose respect for the system, irrespective of the disposition handed down. The potential for any disposition to have a positive impact on these young people is minimized, while the likelihood of repeat offending is increased. The criminal justice system should avoid the desensitization that results from repeated visits to the court by these youth. It should provide them, instead, with realistic opportunities to exit from the system early in the process. Furthermore, the number of appearances in court before a disposition is made should be kept to a minimum.

iv) Intermediate Responses Are Needed

An area of concern in the criminal justice system is the absence of meaningful mid-range responses between custodial dispositions and fines and probation. These should reflect the fact that there are real consequences for unlawful behaviour. However, many also felt that these consequences should have positive benefits for young offenders. This issue is closely related to the revolving door syndrome. A range of creative responses is necessary. Those designed specifically with street youth and runaways in mind should reflect the fact that these young people often run from group homes or institutional placements. They may not do well in structured environments, and they may fail to follow restrictive probation orders that are usually designed for someone with family support and a stable living situation.

v) A Lack of Resources

An important concern of many in the criminal justice system is the lack of resources. The youth justice system is generally overtaxed. Several possibilities were discussed for improving procedures and streamlining processes. The shortage of resources, however, means that some important services or programs are either unavailable or have long waiting lists. In some cases, well-intentioned workers advise some young people to break the law in order to have access to the services they require.

vi) Court Processes, Time Delays and Effective Responses

The time between the offense and criminal justice responses should be minimal, especially in the case of young offenders. The greatest impact occurs when the response is tied directly to the offending behaviour. Various factors in the criminal justice system prevent such a process from taking place. These include a lack of courtroom space and a shortage of youth court judges.

Another important factor is the problem caused by remands. Cases often take from several weeks to several months to come to court. While this is often due to a lack of resources, it is often the result of defense counsel asking for remands. In some cases, these are legitimate requests for additional time to allow defense counsel to meet with clients and prepare for court. In other cases, however, this is due to such things as "judge shopping," or the defense counsel being over-booked or unprepared for the case.

The problems that arise as a result of delays in court proceedings are perhaps most acute when a young person is in breach of a court order. For street youth and runaways, this often involves such infractions as not returning to a group home at the appointed time. If a breach is filed for such an offense, the potential for having a positive impact on the young person is achieved when the consequence is closely tied to the original infraction. The effectiveness of any consequence is questionable, however, if the young person is not called to account for six or seven months.

vii) The Impact of Overlapping Jurisdictions Must Be Examined

There are many overlaps in jurisdictions between federal and provincial legislation such as the Young Offenders Act and provincial child welfare legislation, as well as between different pieces of provincial legislation, such as the Child Welfare Act and the Child and Family Services Act. These overlaps must be addressed both at the political level, with amendments to existing legislation, and at the implementation level. At the present time, decisions by various organizations responsible for administering legislation affecting runaways and street youth have altered the youth service system in fundamental ways. For example, shrinking budgets have caused some agencies to define their mandates very narrowly. These agencies force others to provide some of the services they used to provide in the past.

An example can illustrate an important dimension of the problem. This is the case of a 15-year-old who has run away from home. The parents may call the police and ask them to act. The police may even have had contact with the youth on the street. Little can be done by youth justice authorities, however, unless the young person violates the law. While this young person may be vulnerable in the eyes of the parents and the police, it is difficult for the police or the parents to get child welfare authorities to intervene.

viii) Grey Areas in the System Should Be Clarified

There are two areas of the criminal justice process that respondents said require attention. The first involves the split jurisdiction in Ontario between those young offenders under 15 years of age and those 16 and 17. The first group is referred to as Phase I Young Offenders, and they are dealt with by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The second group, known as Phase II Young Offenders, are the responsibility of the Ministry of Corrections. Young people are aware of these differences, and they recognize that they are likely to be treated differently by Corrections than they are by Community and Social Services. This often influences their decisions about becoming involved in certain types of criminal activity.

The second area of concern occurs near age 18, when young people enter the adult system. Many noted that runaways and street youth believe that they will get more severe treatment for similar offenses at the back end of the youth justice system than they would at the "front end" of the adult justice system. As a result, many prefer to be dealt with as adults. This belief arises because young people see evidence of the disparity in court. Adult dispositions seem to be much more lenient, even for more serious offenses.

The apparent disparity between youth and adult dispositions occurs for a variety of reasons. For example, there are no automatic mechanisms for reducing sentences in the youth justice system that are comparable to those available to adults. Also, young people start with a clean record once in the adult justice system. This would negate the impact of their youth court record. By contrast, a long history of offending would continue to influence the disposition process if the young person were dealt with in the youth justice system.

ix) Education About Runaways and Street Youth Is Required

Many working in the youth justice system are unaware of the distinct characteristics of the runaway and street youth population. They have little knowledge of the antecedents and consequences of participating in street culture. Greater understanding of this segment of the youth population would allow professionals to identify and respond to these young people earlier and with better-suited programs.

x) Legal Definitions Regarding Runaways and Street Youth Need Clarification

The law is very clear regarding the justice system's response to young people in the case of criminal offenses. In other cases, however, definitions and court-ordered dispositions are ambiguous. For example, the criminal justice system can do little about young people over age 14 who are beyond the control of their parents. Problems arise, however, if these young people run away when they are under an order to reside. In this case running away has two very different consequences from the point of view of the youth justice system. The behaviour may be exactly the same, however, in the mind of the young person involved.

Many suggested that the youth justice system has failed to come to grips from the outset with the reality of the behaviour patterns of these young people. Placing an order to reside on a chronic runner may lead to a spiral of administrative charges for breaches of probation. An alternative strategy has to be devised that takes the background of these young people into account.

4.4 The Health Care System: An Overview

A variety of mainstream health services are available to young people in the Ottawa-Carleton region. Most are offered through conventional agencies such as hospitals and clinics. However, some are provided in a street-friendly fashion through agencies that work directly with street youth such as the Youth Services Bureau. Increasingly, the health care system has tried to meet the needs of high-risk youth such as runaways and street youth through a variety of means. A needle-exchange program, STD/HIV testing and counseling, birth control services, are all available. The opening of the Sexual Health Centre in the downtown area is another example of this focus.

An area of continuing concern is the availability of mental health services for high-risk youth. There is a two year waiting list for long-term mental health beds. This is unacceptable to many working in this area. In some cases, young people end up in the youth justice system when mental health services would be more appropriate. The lack of services in this area has lead some well intentioned workers to advise clients to break the law in order to access the services they require. Though not common, this is a serious concern.

Another problem for the health system is connecting runaways and street youth with mainstream services. The lifestyle practiced by these young people makes it difficult for them to obtain health services. The location, method of delivery, hours of operation and rigid rules of many mainstream services exclude most runaways and street youth from taking

advantage of the services being offered. More street-friendly services that are sensitive to the culture and needs of these young people are required.

4.4.1 The Health Care System: Key Issues

i) Lack of Mental Health Beds

A continuing concern for the health care system is a lack of resources. This has been a recurring issue in the case of long-term mental health beds in Ottawa-Carleton. For many troubled youth, including runners who require mental health services, the wait for bed space can be as long as two years.

ii) Concern Over Connecting Front-line to Longer-term Services

There are a range of relevant health care services available to street youth and runaways, including basic medical services and special programs such as STD services, birth control services, drug abuse counseling, and needle exchange programs. These programs are accessible and generally well used by street youth. They are co-ordinated and provided by various agencies such as the Sexual Health Centre of the Health Department of the R.M.O.C. and the Youth Services Bureau. However, the front-line services have difficulty getting their clients into long-term care programs they need. These include drug abuse programs, long-term mental health programs and life skills training and support.

iii) Accessibility of Mainstream Health Care Services

A concern of front-line agencies most directly connected to runaways and street youth is that their clients find it difficult to access mainstream health care services. These youth face what are to them rigid requirements, such as possession of a provincial health card. Some agencies, however, such as the Sexual Health Centre of the health department will accept people without health cards. Other factors that limit the accessibility of mainstream medical services by street youth include: i) many street youth don't realize what exists; ii) some have to learn how to use existing services; iii) some have to be motivated to access existing services; iv) the hours of operation of mainstream services hamper their effectiveness; v) many use an appointment system as opposed to offering drop-in services; and vi) the location of these services often makes it difficult for runaways and street youth to get to them. Few are available in the downtown core. These difficulties could be addressed through outreach programs and other strategies designed to assist street youth and runaways in getting the health services they need.

4.5 Community Agencies: An Overview

Ottawa-Carleton encompasses a large metropolitan area. A variety of community agencies provide services to meet the needs of the youth population. Agencies range in size and complexity from large, regionally-based agencies, such as the YM-YWCA or the Boys and Girls Club, to those addressing neighbourhood concerns, such as the Rideau Centre Youth Project.

There is a long history of inter-agency co-operation in Ottawa-Carleton, especially on issues facing youth-at-risk. In recent years, runaways and street youth have garnered considerable attention from community agencies. The result has been the development of numerous services directed at this segment of the youth population, including outreach services, counseling, emergency housing, and a needle exchange program. Many agencies work together, often referring clients to the appropriate service or program.

The community agencies in Ottawa-Carleton face a number of challenges in responding to the needs of runaways and street youth. Chief among these is the pressure on existing agencies to meet ever increasing demands. Cutbacks and shrinking budgets have forced many agencies to limit their services. Changing regulations in other sectors have pushed many young people out of the mainstream system, leaving them few alternatives. Many young people only access those services provided by community agencies through outreach workers and related programs. The lack of emergency shelter — especially for young women — continues to be a concern among staff in community agencies. So, too, does the need for a drop-in centre in the core area. On the whole, however, community agencies continue to provide a range of street-friendly services to meet the needs of the region's runaway and street youth population.

4.5.1 Community Agencies: Key Issues

i) Safe Accommodation Is Lacking

A range of safe accommodation services is lacking. Some second-stage housing is available, but often not suited to street lifestyles. Welfare, when available, does not directly assist these young people in securing safe accommodation, as there is not much of it available. Landlords will often refuse to rent to people on welfare. These people need someone to speak for them.

ii) Difficulty Connecting Street Youth with Mainstream Programs

Street youth often have difficulties accessing mainstream services because of criteria for acceptance or lack of opportunity. Thus, for example, while employment preparation, employment counseling and education programs are available, they often cannot connect with street youth. While the Rideau Centre Youth Project is highly successful in linking street youth to employment opportunities and education, it is not sufficiently staffed to provide the full range of supports often needed to connect street youth with the educational system. The rules or hours of operation of many of these programs make it difficult for street youth to participate. Most agencies recognize these problems. Some success is being noted in the provision of more effective and street-sensitive services; examples are the new health clinic in the Byward Market area and the development of programs by the Rideau Centre Youth Project.

iii) Support of Policy Makers and Senior Staff for Co-ordinated Effort

While front-line staff often work to effectively co-ordinate activities, they can experience difficulties in obtaining the support of policy-makers and senior agency staff for their efforts. Some respondents have noticed a positive change in this area recently. Many suggested that agencies are being forced to look carefully at co-operation, due to cutbacks and a lack of resources.

iv) Concern Over Issue of Confidentiality

There is some concern regarding the issue of confidentiality among street agencies. This issue arises when requests are made for information about their clients by mainstream agencies, such as the police or other justice system agencies. There is some confusion at the present time, however, since the issue of consent under the Child and Family Services Act is being reconsidered. Many in the system are operating under different rules. Some are anticipating changes and permitting those 12 years of age and over to consent to the release of information. Others are enforcing existing provincial rules, which allow for consent from those 16 and over. There is also confusion among some agencies regarding the extent to which they are permitted to share information under the Young Offenders Act. Given different interpretations, there is consequently no consistency as to what agencies are presently prepared to share. This situation creates confusion and unfortunate irritation among those working with young offenders.

4.6 Common Issues Facing the Youth Service System

i) Responding to High Risk Youth As Runaways and Street Youth

Many suggested that early identification of frequent runners and street youth would increase the potential for more appropriate responses. This was noted in conjunction with the need to educate youth-serving professionals about the special challenges confronting this high-risk segment of the youth population.

ii) The Rules And Regulations of Mainstream Agencies Restrict Accessibility

Many mainstream organizations are becoming increasingly rigid. This situation often excludes high-risk youth such as runaways and street youth from receiving services, given the inconsistency in their lifestyles and supports available to them. These young people often need someone to advocate on their behalf and assist them in obtaining the services they require. Often, services that would be denied to a young person alone can be obtained if an adult is present. A classic example offered by respondents was the experience of trying to access mainstream services if you are young, have bright green hair and a ring through your nose. Few of the young people in this situation meet with success in accessing services.

iii) Long-Term, Consistent Support Is Needed

Young people living on their own need someone to support, encourage, motivate and assist them. This type of help is needed on a long-term basis. High-risk youth need someone who will be responsible for ensuring that they keep appointments and follow rules. Support workers could also be advocates and assist young people in securing mainstream services. Most 15 year-old youth are not expected to be mature and responsible enough to make it through life on their own. Why should we expect high-risk youth to do so?

iv) Some Young People Fall Through the Cracks in the System

There are actually few resources available for high-risk youth such as runaways and street youth. Some parts of the system exclude these young people through rigid rules and regulations. Increasingly, the only services left for runaways and street youth are street outreach services. This further marginalizes an already vulnerable group.

v) Changes in Individual Agencies Cause Systemic Changes

Youth-serving agencies have been under considerable economic and social pressure in recent years. Many have restructured their programs and redirected resources. Those interviewed pointed out that changes in one agency often have an impact across the system. For example, more rigid rules of conduct or zero tolerance policies in the school system may put larger numbers of high-risk youth on the street. This, in turn, puts added pressure on street agencies as demands for drop-in services, counseling and employment programs increase. Similarly, the decisions taken by larger agencies such as the Children's Aid Society or the Social Services Department of the R.M.O.C. affect all the agencies who work with the same client group. These changes, whether intended or unintended, should be examined from the perspective of their consequences for the entire youth service system.

5.0 The Views of Ottawa's Youth

In this section we present young people's views of the services available to them. We begin with a description of the characteristics of the street youth we interviewed. Next, we discuss young people's views of the services being provided for them. This is based on information we obtained through interviews with 26 street youth. Also included are the results of a survey of 90 average high school students in Ottawa.

5.1 Who Are the Street Youth?

We conducted interviews with 26 street youth in Ottawa; 14 were females and 12 were males. When asked to identify their racial background, the majority (73.1%) indicated they were white, 15.4% identified themselves as native and 11.5% said they were black. The street youth we interviewed ranged in age from 15 to 21 years with a mean age of 17.8.

Slightly less than one-third (30.8%) of the street youth reported living in temporary shelters. A further 19.2% indicated they lived with one or both parents. An additional 19.2% lived on their own, while 7.7% lived with friends and 23.1% lived in some other place.

Many reported leaving home to escape intolerable situations there. When asked why they left, 37.5% gave family conflict as their first reason. An additional 25% cited physical or sexual abuse as their first reason. A total of 16.7% said they were kicked out by their parents. In addition, 4.2% said that they were pregnant or suspected this. Another 4.2% said they ran for adventure. The remaining 12.4% gave other reasons for leaving home.

The running patterns of the street youth also varied. Ninety two percent (92.3%) of the youth had run away from home at least once. Only two (2) youth had never run away.

Involvement with street life began early. On average, youth were 14.0 years old when they first went to the street. One young person had gone to the street at eight years of age, and one had gone to the street at 18 years of age. Fifty percent of the youth interviewed (n=13) first went to the street when they were between 12 and 14 years of age.

5.2 The Service System: The Views of Street Youth

Our interviews with street youth showed that they have considerable knowledge and experience with the service system. For example, when we asked if they knew of places providing food, 92.3% said they did. The Salvation Army, the Shepherds of Good Hope and the Ottawa Food Bank were identified most often. When asked if they had ever received food from these agencies, 88.5% said they had. However, when we asked if they knew of places to sleep, only 11.5% said they did. Curiously, 57.7% said they had used shelter services. The Salvation Army (71.4%), the Shepherds of Good Hope (21.4%) and the YMCA (7.1%) were the shelter services most often used.

When we asked what other social services besides food and shelter were needed, 61.5% identified recreation, 42.3% said clothes, 23.1% said financial aid, and 11.5% identified counseling. The availability of other social services drew a mixed response. Only 17.4%

thought they were very available while 43.5% said they were somewhat available. However, 39.1% said they were not very available or not at all available. When asked about the quality of the social services, most (70.6%) rated them as very good or good, while 11.8% rated them as fair and 17.7% rated them as poor or very poor.

Health care services were used extensively by the street youth we interviewed. A total of 50.0% said they had seen their family doctor during the past year. Additionally, 38.5% said that they had seen a doctor at a community clinic, and 73.1% said that they had seen a doctor in a hospital emergency room.

We obtained a varied response when we asked street youth what health care or medical services they thought were most needed. In all, 52.2% said clinics were needed, 20.0% said needle exchange services and 8.7% said AIDS/STD testing. Other responses identified pregnancy tests, drug rehabilitation, and emergency care. Another 7.7% said other services were needed, while 15.4% said nothing was needed.

Perceptions of the accessibility of health care varied. While 50.0% said that health care services were very or somewhat accessible, the other 50.0% of the respondents said they were not very or not at all accessible. However, a total of 70.8% of the street youth rated the health care services they received as very good or good. Only 12.5% of the street youth rated these services as poor or very poor.

The educational experiences and aspirations of the street youth we interviewed also varied considerably. A total of 42.3% said they were currently enrolled in school. Of those reporting that they were in school, one (10%) was in Grade 8, 2 (20%) were in Grade 9, four (40%) were in Grade 10. One respondent was in Grade 11 and one was in Grade 12. Another respondent had completed one year of college. Many had experienced problems in school, and 80.8% indicated that they had been suspended at least once. When asked about how much schooling they would like to get, only 3.8% (one respondent) answered no more than they have now. A small percentage (26.9%) said they wanted to complete high school, while the majority of respondents (69.2%) wanted college or university degrees.

When asked what types of education programs were needed, the street youth provided a wide range of responses. For example, 45.9% said that high school upgrading, correspondence programs or a drop-in high school program were needed. Another 16.7% said that job/skills training was needed. A total of 20.8% wanted some other kind of education, including sex education, drug education or programs aimed at keeping/getting people off the street.

Of the street youth we interviewed, 58.3% said they had no contact with the education system. Many said they were enrolled in school but were not attending. Of those with contact, 90% rated the education programs they were in contact with as good or very good while 10% said they were fair. When asked about the accessibility of needed educational programs, 8.7% of the street youth stated that these types of programs were very accessible, a further 39.1% said they were somewhat accessible, and 52.8% said they were not very or not at all accessible.

Contact with the police was reported by 76.9% of the street youth we interviewed. Of these, 30.0% said their contact with the police was through casual conversations. When we asked

the street youth how they were supporting themselves, 23.0% identified illegal activities as their main source of support. A total of 73.1% reported being victims of a crime while on the street. Of these, 27.8% said they were victims of physical assaults, 11.1% were victims of sexual assaults, 61.1% had been robbed.

In all, 11.5% of the street youth thought the police were doing good job, and 30.8% thought they were doing a fair job. By contrast, 26.9% thought they were doing a poor job and a further 30.8% thought they were doing a very poor job. When asked to explain their responses, 32.0% said the police hassle youth, 20.0% said the police don't care or don't help, and 12.0% said the police abuse their power. Positive comments about the police were given by 8.0% of the street youth we interviewed.

The street youth were asked to identify the most important problems facing young people. Lack of money, drug and alcohol addiction and violence were seen by 15.4% each as the biggest problem facing young people on the street. This was followed by lack of food and victimization, reported by 11.5% each. When asked to identify what services street youth needed most, 50% of the respondents said recreation centres, 42.3% said clothing, 23.1% noted financial aid and 15.4% identified education as needed.

5.3 The Service System: The Views of High School Youth

In order to get the views of a broad spectrum of young people, we administered questionnaires to 90 average high school students. These young people were approached in suburban shopping malls and invited to participate in the study. Questionnaires were also administered to average high school students from a local agency who agreed to participate in focus group meetings.

Questionnaires were completed by 90 average high school students in Grades 9 through 13 (a few Grade 7 and 8 students took part in one of the focus groups and have been included). The largest percentage (29.2%) were in Grade 11, with 22.5% in Grade 10, 27.0% in Grade 9 and 6.7% in Grade twelve. In all, 51.1% of the students were male while 48.9% were female. Their ages ranged from 12 to 19. Most of the high school students (90.5%) indicated that they were caucasian, while 4.8% said they were black and 2.4% said they were aboriginal. A further 2.4% reported being asian.

Most of the high school students (90.7%) lived with one or both parents. The rest lived in a variety of places, including 2.2% who lived on their own, and 2.2% who lived with friends.

When asked whether they had ever run away from home, 21.6% said they had run away at least once. Of those that had run, 18.8% had run away more than once, and 58.1% of these running five or more times. Most had run two or three times. A small number (26.7%) said they knew of agencies providing shelter. Only 2.2% of the high school students reported using an emergency shelter. The YMCA, the Shepherds of Good Hope and the Salvation Army were identified as places they went for shelter. When asked if they knew of places providing food, 45.6% said they did. The Shepherds of Good Hope, the Salvation Army and the Food Bank were the most common agencies mentioned providing food. Very few students (12.6%) said they had used other services. Counseling, recreation, drug

rehabilitation and welfare were among the services identified. Counseling was the service most often used; 20.6% said they had used this service.

The use of health care services by the student group varied. Approximately 90% (88.1%) had seen their doctor during the past year. Half reported seeing their doctor once or twice while 38.1% said they had seen their doctor three or more times. Visits to community health centres were reported by 19.3% of the students, while an additional 41.8% said they had seen doctors in emergency wards.

The experience of these students at school appears mixed. While 74.4% reported that they had never been suspended, 25.6% had been suspended. Of the students that had been suspended, 54.2% had been suspended once and the remaining 44.8% had been suspended three or more times.

The educational aspirations of the high school students varied widely. For example, 3.4% said they wanted no more education than they now have. A further 4.5% wanted to complete high school, 13.6% wanted some college or university training, and 37.5% wanted to complete college or university. The same amount (37.5%) wanted professional training. Of the remaining students, 1.1% wanted to complete a technical or vocational training program or apprenticeship, while 2.3% wanted other training.

When asked, 42.2% of the high school students indicated they had some contact with the police. Reasons for contact with the police included: 21.1% for assault, 23.7% for property related incidents, and 10.5% for drug related offenses. Other reasons for contact with the police included 21.8% who said the police had assisted them.

6.0 Where To From Here: General Issues and Prospects for Change

This document has presented the stories we were told by young people, service providers and community representatives. It provides some insight as to who the frequent runners and street youth are, their history, and their involvement with the service system. It is clear that the majority of young people who use the existing social services are runaways and street youth. For the most part, their problems are long-term and multi-faceted. The following section outlines various developments that have taken place in Ottawa-Carleton which give an indication of the community's response to runaways and street youth. It also gives some possible answers to the question, "Where to from here?"

6.1 The Continuing Community Response to Youth-at-Risk in Ottawa-Carleton

As noted earlier, a number of initiatives and projects were either being introduced or coming to fruition in Ottawa-Carleton when the current research was started. These activities reflect the actions of various groups in the community, including the business sector, health, social services, criminal justice and numerous community agencies. Programs focusing specifically on the street youth population include:

- a Sexual Health Centre which has been established downtown;
- the Rideau Centre Youth Project which is thriving;
- dismantling the Rideau Bus Shelter;
- a permanent location for the Door -- it is operating;
- completion of a new facility for the Youth Services Bureau;
- second stage housing and independent living through the YM-YWCA and the Youth Services Bureau;
- a suburban drop-in centre in the east end operated by the YM-YWCA and the Youth Services Bureau;
- development of protocols by the Children's Aid Society for dealing with runaways and street youth under 16 years of age;
- revisions to student welfare by R.M.O.C.'s social services department; and
- continuing discussions regarding an emergency shelter and a downtown drop-in centre.

These developments indicate that Ottawa-Carleton continues to respond actively to the runaway and street youth population in the community. As has been the case in the past, however, Ottawa-Carleton takes a broader approach and identifies its youth related concerns as issues of youth-at-risk. In the current experience, the Youth and Violence Initiative has been understood from the outset as involving wider concerns related to youth in the community. While the main focus of the initiative was youth and violence, this was seen in the context of trying to understand and respond to the more general challenges facing young people in the community. Importantly, the activities described above indicate that there is a shared recognition in the community that runaways and street youth represent a high-risk portion of the youth population with specific needs. The recent concern with the well-being of these young people is visible in the extensive network of community-based, multi-disciplinary, inter-agency programs and services that have been developed for runaways

and street youth in this community. Based on this evidence, it is clear that these efforts will continue in Ottawa-Carleton as the community strives to better meet the needs of runaways and street youth.

6.2 Six Task Groups Have Been Established

The community conference held on November 19, 1993, included working-group sessions arranged to discuss each of the six key issues identified for action by the community. Those attending the conference were invited to select one of the six issues and asked to make a commitment to work on the issue for a period of one year as a member of a task group. **Six task groups** were established at the community conference **to address the following issues:**

- i) the service system response;
- ii) the criminal justice system response;
- iii) zero tolerance;
- iv) what are we teaching young people about violence;
- v) community awareness and participation; and
- vi) staff training and development.

Each task group reported tentative plans for the future and the dates of their next meetings at the end of the conference.

Since the November conference, all six task groups have continued to meet regularly. Each has submitted a detailed mission statement and list of objectives to the steering committee overseeing continuing activities of the Youth and Violence Initiative. The task groups have also addressed membership issues and, in some cases, recruited individuals from specific sectors of the community to participate. As well, the action focus of the task groups has been maintained as each pursues short-, medium- and longer-term goals.

Part of the data-collection exercise in Ottawa-Carleton involved gathering information from the community about the best way to organize and the optimal organizational structure. The research showed that the community was not in favour of establishing new structures but preferred, instead, to work within existing frameworks. To this end, the original steering committee was reconstituted, and new officers were elected. Its role as a facilitator and co-ordinating body to the task groups was affirmed. Also, its membership encompasses broad community representation. At the present time, the steering committee is pursuing activities that support task group efforts.

6.3 Securing Resources for Current and Future Activities

The community in Ottawa-Carleton is committed to continuing efforts to address the issues facing youth-at-risk including those related to runaways and street youth. As part of the Youth and Violence Initiative, efforts are underway to secure resources to support the activities of the six task groups. This includes resources to document and monitor specific programs or strategies developed by the task groups. As well, resources are being sought to provide continuing co-ordination and communication between the steering committee and the task groups so that everyone involved can be kept up to date regarding the activities of the other task groups.

Individual task groups are currently planning ways to achieving their objectives. Some require only limited resources. For example, changes to existing procedures or protocols require discussions and negotiations but little in the way of material resources. Similarly, changes being discussed to increase the effectiveness of communications among the different agencies that deal with young people will not require large financial expenditures. In other cases, however, strategies are being discussed which will result in extensive change and require considerable resources. Some task groups have considered strategies for securing municipal, provincial and federal resources to meet their objectives.

7.0 Policy Implications

The experience in Ottawa presents a number of important policy implications. These revolve around the lessons that can be gleaned from a community-based, multi-agency, inter-disciplinary response to youth-at-risk. A number of specific policy issues are outlined below.

7.1 Community-Based Approaches to Youth and Violence

Ottawa has mounted a comprehensive community-based initiative to address youth and violence concerns. This area forms part of the federal government's broader policy interest in issues of violence in society. The Ottawa experience provides valuable lessons and learning opportunities in this area. For example, the Ottawa initiative outlines how a safer communities approach can inform a broad-based response to violence that encompasses considerable community involvement. Ottawa's experience is one of the most extensive and comprehensive initiatives now underway in Canada, including the Calgary and British Columbia community initiatives.

7.2 Juvenile Justice and Legislative Reform

The Ottawa experience offers opportunities to examine developments in the juvenile justice system, including the implementation of the Young Offenders Act. The comprehensive nature of the task force working on juvenile justice issues in Ottawa provides a broad context for assessing various aspects of the juvenile justice system. The Young Offenders Act and its related policies and procedures represent one area of concern. For example, the committee may examine the way Alternative Measures are implemented in Ottawa.

The criminal justice process is another area the youth justice task group may address. This focuses on the way different parts of the youth justice system operate as well as how the different agencies work with each other. Issues such as inter-agency communication, information sharing and collaboration are of primary interest here. Another area of concern for the youth justice task force is resource allocation and availability. The task group may look at how existing resources can be better deployed or directed to maximize effectiveness. They may also explore ways of mobilizing existing but as yet untapped resources in the community.

The Ottawa experience has gone farther than those in other communities. Most do not go beyond the conference stage. Few initiatives in Canada, with the exception of Saskatoon, have mobilized resources at the community level to the extent evident in Ottawa. For this reason, Ottawa represents an ideal opportunity, too, for policy options in the juvenile justice area to be developed and tested.

7.3 Multi-Faceted Community Responses to Youth-at-Risk

An important aspect of the Ottawa experience is the organization and deployment of social development resources designed for high-risk youth. The efforts under way in Ottawa highlight the place of business in responding to the needs of runaways and street youth.

Programs such as the Rideau Centre Youth Project enjoy the support of the local business community. The efforts of programs such as this to connect high-risk youth with educational and employment opportunities reflect the impact that the co-operation of the business community can have in these initiatives. A major policy concern in Canada at this point is devising means to connect high-risk youth with our welfare and training initiatives. Little effort to date has been directed to seeking business sector support in facilitating this objective.

Ottawa's long history of responding to youth-at-risk reveals a number of developments of significance to policy development in this area. Various programs have been put in place, and other elements of the community's response to runaways and street youth are in the process of being developed, such as a drop-in centre for street youth in the downtown Byward Market area. Front-line workers in the community already work collaboratively in many areas. They are less intimidated by power brokers in the system than in the past. Their efforts have made the service-delivery system in Ottawa more responsive to the needs of the young people it serves.

A further review of the needs of youth-at-risk in Ottawa could examine a number of issues. For example, the organization component that has been developed could be evaluated to determine if it is effective in achieving the community's goals. Further improvements to programs and policies could also be reviewed. However, questions regarding support to high-risk youth continue to be raised. These often focus on areas where service gaps need to be closed. The impact of better co-operation among youth-serving agencies could be examined. Many collaborative efforts have been implemented, and their effectiveness in providing services to youth-at-risk could be examined.

These efforts have all taken place in the context of an anticipated restructuring of provincial responsibilities at the regional level. These changes are expected to include adjustments in the health care, social services and social justice responsibilities of the provincial government. This situation should be studied since it touches on all parts of the youth service system. Such a process has important implications both in Ottawa and in other jurisdictions contemplating change.

Finally, it is important to examine the way runaways and street youth are being re-integrated into the system. A great deal of effort has been directed towards meeting the basic needs of this population. Some specific needs of runaways and street youth have also been addressed. For example, efforts have been taken to meet the mental health needs of this population. Drug rehabilitation programs have also been established. The community's success in re-integrating high-risk youth through programs such as these could be examined.

7.4 Community Policing

The consequences for community policing models in communities with well-established inter-agency responses should be examined. For example, what are the implications for police when other community agencies assume responsibility for most of the non-enforcement services that police in other cities provide? How do police negotiate their community role? Questions arise regarding the sharing of information with the police in a collaborative community effort. So too, does the role of the police in challenging existing social responses

to youth-at-risk. Involvement in a community-based initiative also raises questions about the role of the police in providing support services to runaways and street youth, such as advocacy, and referrals, and input in service planning with other agencies.

APPENDIX A

DETAILED SUMMARIES OF INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES

A. DETAILED SUMMARIES OF INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES

1.0 THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

1.1 The Police

i) Contact

Police come into contact with street youth and runaways either through a formal complaint or informally during daily patrols of the downtown core. Complaints are generally of two types: a) the result of a criminal offense such as shoplifting, theft or break and enter; and b) a complaint that a young person has run from parents or the Children's Aid Society.

ii) Nature of Involvement

A number of street outreach services are available for street youth and runaways in Ottawa. These provide basic services such as food, shelter, and clothing. In addition, support services, health care, counseling, and other services are also available. As a result, the police have increasingly defined their role as primarily that of law enforcement. Young people and street youth in particular are viewed as a source of information, as witnesses or as perpetrators of criminal acts. While street youth reported being victims of crime, they acknowledged that they rarely report such incidents to police.

1.2 The Crown and the Judiciary

i) Contact

Street youth and runaways come into contact with crown attorneys and the judiciary as a result of their being charged with criminal offences. The justice system process is governed by the provisions of the Young Offenders Act. Crown attorneys and judges can learn that the young people appearing before them are street youth or runaways from the narratives on police incidence reports or from pre-disposition reports. Otherwise, they identify street youth and runaways by the type of crimes they commit, the location of these crimes, or by the fact that the young person is listed as having no fixed address.

ii) Nature of Contact

Criminal justice processing is carried out under the provisions of the Young Offenders Act. Responses to young people known to be street youth, are developed with this in mind. Dispositions may be designed to take past behaviour into account. This is particularly important in considerations for bail, or in establishing the conditions of probation orders.

1.3 Probation Services

i) Contact

Probation officers come into contact with street youth and runaways as a result of requests for pre-disposition reports and court orders. The conditions outlined in probation orders usually include mandatory contact, and requirements to report to probation officers. This can include attending meetings with probation officers several times a month or more.

ii) Nature of Involvement

Probation officers attempt to determine whether court orders are being followed. During interviews they question the young people in their care about the provisions of their probation orders. The probation officers play a dual role including both social service and law enforcement. In their service role, they provide counseling, advocacy, case management, brokerage of services and referrals. As law enforcement officers, they charge young people who fail to comply with the conditions set out in their probation orders.

They also work in concert with other agencies or parents in monitoring the probation orders. Probation officers also supervise young people who are serving open or secure custody sentences. They are the case managers within the young offenders system. Probation Services administers Foster Care services, Alternative Measures programs and other services in the community.

1.4 Corrections: Ottawa Youth Detention Centre

i) Contact

This facility has space for 14 young people who are either in detention awaiting trial or sentenced to secure custody. Spaces are available for both males and females. Young people with secure custody sentences of three to four months are kept here. An attempt is made to transfer males with longer sentences to appropriate facilities such as the St. John's School in Uxbridge, Ont. Corrections officials there do not normally transfer females sentenced to secure custody. A large percentage of the youth they work with have had some involvement with the street, while approximately 20% are entrenched street youth.

ii) Nature of Involvement

This facility offers a range of programs such as education and counseling. Youth with potential psychiatric problems are monitored very closely. A behaviour modification program is in place. Staff are trained in crisis intervention and in the delivery of programs. As a result, they have few management problems with young people in this facility.

1.5 Roberts/Smart Centre Young Offenders Program

i) Contact

The Roberts/Smart Centre Young Offenders Program consists of 18 residential beds, all of which are designated for open custody dispositions under the Young Offenders Act. Of these, 14 are available for anglophones while four are available for francophone clients. When a judge has rendered an open custody disposition, a referral is made to the Roberts/Smart Centre by Probation Services.

ii) Nature of Involvement

The Roberts/Smart Centre Young Offenders Program specializes in dealing with severely acting-out adolescents. A structured environment is provided where treatment can take place with the adolescent's consent. Plans of care are developed for each young offender by the professional staff, in collaboration with the young person, the parents, residential staff, probation officers and other concerned professionals. These may include therapeutic programs and other mental health services.

1.6 The William E. Hay Centre

i) Contact

The William E. Hay Centre provides counseling services to Phase I young offenders in Eastern Ontario. They work with young people with both open-custody and secure-custody dispositions. Access to their services is through referrals from probation officers or the Superintendent of the Youth Detention Centre. The centre deals with 50-60 young people per month of which approximately 10% are street youth. Many of these young people, however, are at risk and have been involved in running behaviour.

ii) Nature of Involvement

The primary role of the William E. Hay Centre is to provide clinical intervention and counseling services. They provide a cognitive-based program that takes a needs/risk approach in dealing with problem youth. Its Community Support Team works with both young people and their families. The William E. Hay Centre also offer programs aimed at criminal attitudes, substance abuse, and anger management. Additionally, they participated in a program for sex offenders with the Children's Aid Society. They work collaboratively with related community services, such as the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and the Roberts/Smart Centre.

2.0 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

2.1 The Education System

i) Contact

Provincial legislation requires that all youth up to age 16 be provided an appropriate educational experience. The boards of education in Ottawa-Carleton meet this requirement through a number of programs. Though not singled out, street youth and runaways form part of a larger population of high-risk youth to whom the education system provides specialized programs.

ii) Nature of Involvement

Two general strategies are followed in responding to the needs of high-risk youth, including street youth and runaways. The first consists of providing services for these young people while they remain part of the general school population. Thus, individual schools respond to the needs of high-risk students by assigning specially trained support staff to classroom teachers. Guidance personnel can be brought in, as can psychology and social work experts. If it is determined that these young people require more assistance due to learning difficulties, they may be referred to an alternative school. If they are confronted with learning as well as emotional and social challenges, they can be provided with specialized staff and therapeutic program support.

Resources are also available for young people who have dropped out of school. These include tutoring and correspondence programs. Procedures exist for re-integrating these young people in most school boards. However, they are often insufficient for connecting these young people into the school system.

2.2 Youth Employment Services

i) Contact

There is a considerable range of employment-preparation programs in the region provided by public and private agencies for young people. One of the most comprehensive services is offered by the regional Social Services Department. This program provides services to street youth where these people are referred as an eligibility criterion for welfare. They may also self-refer or be referred through other agencies.

ii) Nature of Involvement

The program provides young people either directly, or through referral, with a wide range of employment preparation services. These include personal support, such as counseling; specialized support, such as counseling to deal with the effects of sexual abuse; life skills development; job-readiness training; employment preparation; job placement; and financial training assistance. Unfortunately, the lifestyle and skills of many street youth, together with the limited availability of jobs, does not lead to success for many of these individuals. Instead, program staff often find themselves primarily involved in assisting these young

people in dealing with their anger and depression given their appreciation of their limited job opportunities.

3.0 THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

3.1 The Roberts/Smart Centre: Residential Mental Health Programs

i) Contact

The Roberts/Smart Centre operates nine residences for adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 with moderate to severe emotional or behavioural problems. Services are provided for both anglophone and francophone adolescents. Priority is given to those young people with the most serious problems, but with strong indications of potential to change. Length of stay can vary; the average is 15 months. A non-residential program is available to follow up on residential clients and to provide outreach to some of those waiting for admission.

ii) Nature of Involvement

The residential program provides a therapeutic milieu and specific programs encompassing such issues as lifestyle, education and recreation. Programs are developed for each resident by clinical staff in collaboration with the adolescent, parents, residential staff and other concerned professionals. Clinical services available include: individual as well as family and group psychotherapy; consultation; support to residential program and placement; and after-care involvement with residential clients.

3.2 The Roberts/Smart Centre: Crisis Intervention Program

i) Contact

The Roberts/Smart Centre maintains a 24 hour telephone line and a residential back-up unit for adolescents between 12 and 18 who are exhibiting severe behavioural management problems. Referrals are accepted from police, hospitals, probation services, the Children's Aid Society and the Youth Services Bureau as well as parents, schools or the youth themselves. Where the adolescent is under 16 years of age, the legal guardian must consent to the admission.

ii) Nature of Involvement

Once referred and admitted to the Crisis Intervention Program, the adolescent's behaviour is stabilized, an evaluation of the crisis is made and recommendations for further steps are provided. A structured program is provided for up to five days which includes a school component, life skills training and group activities. The purpose of the program is to provide a period of stability to the adolescent and allow his/her care givers to put additional resources and/or structures in place. Upon discharge the adolescent may return home or back to the original referring agency.

3.3 The Sexual Health Centre of the Health Department of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton

i) Contact

The Sexual Health Centre's programs are available to young people in a variety of ways. Health promotion and education outreach services are provided to youth in schools across the region. There are also a variety of health promotion services provided through outreach initiatives and clinics accessible to street youth through self-referral. Some programs such as STD testing are required by public health legislation.

ii) Nature of Involvement

The health services most required by street youth are accessible through outreach programs and clinics situated in the downtown core. The Youth Services Bureau provides health-outreach services in conjunction with public health agencies. Key services include STD services, birth control services, drug abuse counseling, and a needle exchange program.

4.0 COMMUNITY AGENCIES

4.1 Youth Services Bureau

i) Contact

The Youth Services Bureau has three drop-in programs across the region: the west end, east end and downtown Ottawa. The drop-in centres, especially the west end and downtown locations, are accessible to the high-need population between 12 and 20 years of age. Services are also available to the families of these young people. In addition to these drop-in centres, contact is also made through various outreach programs operated by the Youth Services Bureau.

ii) Nature of Involvement

The Youth Services Bureau offers a range of programs, including counseling, employment referrals, a needle exchange program and drug counseling. It also provides a safe place for marginal young people to meet and take part in numerous recreational activities. The Youth Services Bureau plays an important role as an intermediary between their clients and the justice system, the social service system and other mainstream services.

4.2 The YMCA-YWCA

i) Contact

The "Y" connects with street youth and runaways through its drop-in program in Place d'Orleans. Other services can be accessed through referrals from street agencies or other service agencies in the community. The organization averages contact with over 450 street youth and approximately 10 runaways per month.

ii) Nature of Involvement

The range of services provided to street youth include second-stage housing, emergency housing, and drop-in services. Runaways often use second-stage housing, emergency housing and counseling services. In some instances, both street youth and runaways continue using the "Y" through its primary employment-training program, recreation programs and by participating in long-term life skills development courses. Young people are often referred to other services by "Y" staff, including welfare, housing, medical services, the Children's Aid Society and street agencies.

4.3 The Children's Aid Society

i) Contact

The Children's Aid Society is involved with street youth and runaways through the Child Welfare Act that applies to youth up to age 16. They investigate allegations of child abuse, neglect or abandonment. They respond to referrals from the police, health care agencies and others in providing protection for young people at risk.

ii) Nature of Involvement

The services of the Children's Aid Society can be made available on a self-referral basis to young people at risk. These services can also be imposed through court orders, when it is determined that a young person is in need of protection. Services can include counseling, foster care, group homes, and life skills development. Often young people are referred by the Children's Aid Society to other agencies such as the Royal Ottawa Hospital, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, the Youth Services Bureau and the Roberts/Smart Centre, especially when they have specific behavioural, psychological or psychiatric difficulties.

4.4 The Salvation Army

i) Contact

The Salvation Army provides residential services to young people who are not living at home and spend much of their time on the street. They provide services to approximately 300 to 400 street youth per year, as well as 100 runaways (60 males and 40 females). The service is available on a self-referral basis, or through referrals from other agencies and outreach workers.

ii) Nature of Involvement

The Youth Resource Centre is an emergency shelter. In addition to food and shelter, it offers specific programs, including counseling, "rap sessions," recreation. An outreach welfare worker is available on site. The program usually lasts from one to two weeks, during which time residents are encouraged to identify achievable goals. The Centre also

makes referrals to other agencies in the community such as the "Y", the Youth Services Bureau, the Children's Aid Society and the Rideau Street Clinic.

4.5 Operation Go Home

i) Contact

Operation Go Home is a program that attempts to reunite runaway youth with their families. Contact is made through referrals from other agencies, through outreach, phone calls or by coming into the office. The program has an 800 number advertized across Canada. Some youth find out about the program from other young people on the street. The agency averages 65 calls per month. Of these, 10 to 12 young people are sent home. Referrals to other agencies are made for the rest, where appropriate.

ii) Nature of Involvement

The program provides transportation to youth in helping them to return home. Parents or guardians are called prior to sending a youth home, to ensure that this is acceptable and that the situation will be safe for the returning adolescent. Follow-up contacts are made after one week and one month. The agency also makes referrals to other agencies such as the Children's Aid, Youth Services Bureau, YM-YWCA, the Salvation Army, and welfare, so that the runaways will have a safe place to sleep, food, clothing and financial resources.

4.6 Rideau Centre Youth Project

i) Contact

The Rideau Centre Youth Project provides both short- and long-term work experiences for young people between 16 and 20. It was established in 1992, with the support of the business community, the United Way, area churches, and service clubs. Clients are increasingly self-referred, although other agencies can make referrals. The agency also provides community service or other opportunities for some young people.

ii) Nature of Involvement

The Rideau Centre Youth Project is quickly becoming a key resource for street youth and youth-at-risk in downtown Ottawa. The project offers young people various programs primarily intended to provide opportunities for them to connect with mainstream life situations and agencies. The project provides direct employment experiences by seeking job opportunities for clients, publishing a community newspaper, conducting special projects for community agencies and operating a furniture repair service. Support counseling and referral to other agencies is common. Financial support is provided through a share of earnings from employment programs.

APPENDIX B

**THE VIEWS OF YOUTH:
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

B. THE VIEWS OF YOUTH: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

1.0 METHODS

Data was gathered from three distinct groups of young people in Ottawa using two methods of data collection. An interview schedule, consisting of both forced choice and open-ended questions, was used with street youth and youth in custodial settings. Self-administered questionnaires were used with a sample of average high school youth who were approached at several suburban shopping malls and asked to participate in the study. All participants were given an Informed Consent Form to review with the interviewer or with their parents. Respondents were told that their answers were anonymous and confidential; that participation was strictly voluntary; and that they did not have to answer any questions if they chose not to.

1.1 Street Youth Interviews

A convenience sample of street youth was used in this study. Young people were identified as street youth by street workers familiar with Ottawa's street scene and by other street youth. Potential subjects were then asked to participate. Participants were paid a nominal fee of \$5 for their time. In addition, interviews were conducted with youth in a custodial facility. Young people known by institutional staff to have spent time on the street were invited to participate in the study. This resulted in 26 interviews with street youth, and six interviews with youth in a custodial facility.

The resulting sample is not a random selection of either street youth or youth in custody. However, given that these youth were identified by key informants as typical of the custody and street youth populations, it is likely that they accurately reflect the characteristics of these populations. Such samples are more likely to be representative than using snowball samples. This is the other available alternative, given that there are no accurate lists of street youth either in or out of custody.

The interviews were conducted between August and December, 1993. The street youth interviews were completed in August, a time period when a maximum number of young people are on the street. The expertise of the street workers who served as key informants allowed us to identify entrenched street youth, thus ensuring that these youth were representative of this population.

1.2 High School Surveys

Ninety high school youth were surveyed in September and November, 1993. Young people were approached at local suburban shopping malls and invited to participate in the study. Once it was ascertained that they were enrolled full-time in high school, those willing to take part were offered a nominal sum (\$5) to complete the questionnaire. None of the young people we approached refused to participate. In addition, youth from a community agency were invited to participate in the study. These young people were asked to complete the

questionnaires, after which a focus group meeting was held to discuss the issues raised in the research instrument. Pizza and soft drinks were provided for the focus group participants.

Besides ensuring that the average high school students included in the study were currently enrolled in school, two further criteria were used in selecting potential respondents. First, a 50/50 quota of males and females was sought in the high school sample. Second, selections were made such that students from all grades were represented in the sample.

2.0 SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

We begin with a description of the two samples. A number of characteristics are highlighted, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, and running behaviour.

2.1 Street Youth

The sample consisted of 26 youth. Ages ranged from 15 to 21, with a mean age of 17.8 years. There were 12 male and 14 female respondents. The majority of the sample (73.1%) were white, and most (30.8%) were living in temporary shelters. A further 19.2% lived with one or both parents, 19.2% lived on their own, 7.7% lived with "a friend" and 23.1% lived in some other place.

When asked to identify their racial background, 73.1% of the youth (n=19) identified themselves as white, 15.4% identified themselves as native (n=4) and 11.5% (n=3) identified themselves as black. Ethnic backgrounds identified included more categories. Most identified themselves as English-Canadians. These accounted for (40.0%) of the sample. People of British origin comprised 20.0% of the sample, aboriginal youth 20.0% (n=5), French-Canadians 4.0%, with a further 4% being youth of Western European ancestry. Jamaican ancestry was claimed by one young person (4.0%). Two others (8.0%) said that they were of Middle Eastern backgrounds.

One of the first questions we asked the street youth was whether they had ever run away from home. Ninety-two percent (92.3) of the youth had run away from home at least once. Only two (2) youth had never run away. Involvement with street life began early. On average, youth were 14.0 years old when they first went to the street. One young person went to the street as early as eight, and one had gone to the street at age 18. Fifty percent of the youth interviewed (n=13) first went to the street when they were between 12 and 14 years of age.

2.2 High School Youth

A total of 90 average high school students were surveyed. Of these students 51.1% were male and 48.9% were female. They ranged from 12 to 19 years of age with a mean age of 15. Students ranged from Grade 7 to Grade 13, though there was some difficulty identifying specific grades since most students took courses in at least two different levels each year. When asked to identify what grade they were in, a total of 29.2% reported being in Grade 11, a further 22.5% said they were in Grade 10, 27.0% were in Grade 9, 6.7% were in Grade 12, while 4.4% were in Grades 7 and 8. Only one young person did not indicate their grade.

The majority of the high school youth were white, 90.5% (n=76), with 4.8% (n=4) indicating they were black, 2.4% (n=2) were aboriginal and 2.4% were asian (n=2). This contrasts with the street youth population who were more likely to be black or aboriginal. Most of the high school youth were of British origin (39.5%), followed by those of English-Canadian background (31.4%). French-Canadians made up 5.8% of the sample, while 8.2% were of Western European background and 7.0% were Eastern Europeans. Asian students comprised 2.3% of the sample and people from other ethnic groups accounted for a further 5.9%. Four of the students did not indicate their ethnic background.

The high school sample contrasts with the street youth in their living arrangements. Most of the high school students (90.7%) lived with one or both parents. A few students lived on their own (2.2%) and a few (2.2%) lived with friends.

The contrasts between the street youth and high school students continued when we asked about running behaviour. About 20 percent (21.6%) of the high school students had run away at least once, while 92.0% of the street youth had run at least once. This suggests less involvement by the high school students than the street youth with street life. This finding will be discussed in the following sections.

3.0 KNOWLEDGE, USE AND ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES

The street youth were asked about their knowledge, use and assessment of social services, health care, educational services and the police. Social services included food services, shelter, financial aid, clothing and other services such as counseling. Health care explored visits to private physicians, school nurses, medical personnel at community health centres and medical personnel in emergency wards. Respondents were also asked about the medical services most needed by street youth, and their assessment of their accessibility. Education programs needed, contact with such programs, an assessment of programs they had contact with and their educational aspirations were also explored. Finally, respondents were asked about their contact with the police and the nature of this contact. Respondents were then asked to rate to police and to explain the basis of their assessments.

Questions asked of the high school youth were slightly different. They were also asked about agencies providing food, shelter and other social services, and about their use of these services. But, because service providers reported that average youth seldom use those services, we did not ask these youth to assess these services. High school students were not asked to assess their educational experiences, nor were they asked to assess the medical care they received. However, high school youth were asked about their contact with police and their attitudes towards the police.

The sections that follow examine young people's knowledge, use and assessment of services. This includes both street youth and average high school youth. Though their experiences differ in many ways, these youth do share a number of interesting similarities.

3.1 Social Service Knowledge, Use and Assessment

The data on knowledge and use of social services showed considerable differences for the two samples. Most of the street youth (92.3%) knew of agencies providing food, but only 45.6% of the high school youth knew of such agencies. As was expected, use was very different for the two groups. Only 3.3% (n=3) of the high school youth had used food services. In contrast, 88.5% (n=23) of the street youth had used these same services. Most of the street youth (n=21) were able to identify one or more agencies providing food. Fifty-four percent (54.4%) of high school youth knew of no agencies providing food. For the high school sample the most recognized agency was the Shepherds of Good Hope (42.1% of those high school youth who knew about such agencies and 46.3% of the street youth). The street youth reported that the Salvation Army was the place they used most often for food (57.1%), followed by the Shepherds of Good Hope (23.8%), the Ottawa Food Bank (14.3%) and 91 Murray Street (4.8%).

Shelter use showed the same pattern as food services with greater use and awareness by street youth than high school youth. However knowledge and use rates were much lower for these services. Over all, 26.7% of the high school youth and 88.5% of the street youth reported knowing about agencies providing emergency shelter. Use was much lower; 2.2% (n=2) of the high school sample had used these services and 57.7% (n=15) of the street sample had used them. Information on the services was very similar. Both groups identified the Salvation Army, the YMCA and the Shepherds of Good Hope as sources of emergency shelter. The high school youth offered some other suggestions. These included: the United Way, the Children's Aid Society, youth hostels and the Youth Services Bureau. There appear to be clear distinctions made by the two groups as to what constitutes shelter. While the high school sample did not distinguish between protective shelter and independent shelter, the street youth identified agencies providing shelter as those that deal with them as independent persons.

The young people were asked to identify any other social services that they had used. The resulting list included services from a variety of sectors. This included education services, counseling, recreation facilities, clothing, and financial support. We have referred to these as other social services, in order to reflect the definitions provided by the young people. These other social services were used by 53.4% of the street youth, and by 65.4% of the high school youth (see Tables 3 and 5).

The two groups used and identified different services. For the high school youth, recreation or drop-ins were identified as the services most used, while most of the street youth had used recreation facilities. The street youth said recreational or drop-in facilities were most needed. This was followed by clothing (42.3%), money or financial aid (23.1%), education (15.4%) and counseling (11.5%). The high school youth had also used counseling services. In contrast, the street youth used counseling, alternate education facilities and drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

In general, the services identified by the high school youth were services available to young people who are still part of conventional society. These included counseling, recreation and health facilities. The street youth identified services designed to help youth who had fallen out of conventional society. These included recreational facilities, clothing, money,

educational services and counseling. Both groups had access to and used counseling services and recreational facilities.

The street youth were asked to assess the social services they had contacted (see Table 4). Assessments were generally favourable; 70.6% of the street youth said that the services were good or very good. A further 11.8% rated them as fair, and 17.7% rated them as poor or very poor. There is considerable satisfaction with existing services. Both shelter and food services are in high demand. Additional needs include money, clothing and recreational facilities.

3.2 Knowledge, Use and Assessment of Medical Services

The street youth were asked what medical services were most needed on the street (Table 6), and their assessment of how accessible existing services are (Table 7). Clinics were identified as being needed by most (52.2%) of the street youth. This was followed by respondents who said nothing else was needed (15.4%), AIDS/STD testing (identified by 8.7%), birth control (4.3%), pregnancy tests (4.3%) and drug and alcohol rehabilitation (4.3%).

Overall, accessibility was rated as fair, 45.0% rated services as very or somewhat accessible. This must be viewed with some caution, however, since some services are easily available and others are much less so. For example, free medication was not accessible to these youth, while most knew and had used the clinics in the area.

Health service use was extensive. Only three street youth indicated they had not used any medical services in the past year (see Table 8). Patterns of use by street youth contrast with those of high school youth (see Table 10). Family physicians are the most used medical services for the high school students; 90.6% saw a family doctor; 50.0% of the street youth had done so. Street youth were more likely (73.1%) to have received care from a physician in an emergency ward. A further 38.5% saw a physician in a community health centre, 30.8% saw a nurse in an emergency ward, 30.8% saw other health care professionals and 23.1% saw a nurse in a community health centre.

Ratings of health care quality were very high; 70.8% of the street youth rated the care they received as good or very good (see Table 9). About 12% (12.5%) of the street youth felt their care was poor or very poor. This is a composite measure and it should be interpreted carefully. The identified need for more clinics (see Table 6) suggests there may be a problem accessing specific services and service centres.

3.3 Contact With and Attitudes Towards the Police

Youth in both samples were asked about contact with the police and the nature of those contacts. Forty-two percent (42.2%) of the high school youth had some contact with the police. This compares to 76.9% of the street youth who reported contact with the police (see Table 10). This may reflect the higher visibility of street youth, since a review of the nature of contact suggests that criminal behaviour is common to both groups. The most common contact with police for street youth was as a result of casual conversations (30.0%). This reflects the store-front policing that is done in the downtown area where the street youth

congregate. Assault was the next most common reason given by street youth for contact with police (20.0%), followed by shoplifting (15.0%), running away (10.0%) and drug offenses (10.0%). Assault charges and police assisting the person were the most common contacts between high school youth and the police (see Table 11). Break and enters were the next most common reason for contact with police given by high school youth (15.8%), followed by vandalism (7.9%) and other reasons (7.9%). Other reasons included being at a loud party where the police were called, being in a stolen car and being chased by an officer but not caught.

Street youth assessments of the police indicate that more than half the sample (57.7%) reported the police doing a poor or very poor job. Only 11.5% felt they were doing a good job. None of the respondents said the police were doing a very good job, 30.8% said the police were doing a fair job. Complaints about the police included that they hassled the youth (32.0%), were not helpful to them and appeared not to care (20.0%), abused their powers (12.0%) and were racist (20.0%). The assessments of police by the high school youth were less negative, though the measures are somewhat more specific. Only 25.6% of the high school sample indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that the police are as crooked as the people they arrest.

APPENDIX C

THE VIEWS OF YOUTH: TABLES

TABLE 1
STREET YOUTHS' KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF
FOOD AND SHELTER SERVICES

Know of Agencies Providing Food	Ever Used Food Agencies
YES: 92.3% (n=24) NO: 7.7% (n= 2)	YES: 88.5% (n=23) NO: 11.5% (n= 3)

Agencies	% Identified Service	% Used Service
Salvation Army	68.2 (15)	57.1 (12)
Shepherds of Good Hope	18.2 (4)	23.8 (5)
Ottawa Food Bank	13.6 (3)	14.3 (3)
91 Murray	0.0 (0)	4.8 (1)
TOTAL	100.0 (22)	100.0 (21)
Missing Non-Users (3)	(0)	(2)

Know of Agencies Providing Shelter	Ever Used Shelter
YES: 11.5% (n= 3) NO: 88.5% (n=23)	YES: 57.7% (n=15) NO: 42.3% (n=11)

Agencies	% Identified Service	% Used Service
Salvation Army	80.0 (16)	71.4 (10)
YMCA	10.0 (2)	21.4 (3)
Shepherds of Good Hope	10.0 (2)	7.1 (1)
TOTAL	100.0 (20)	100.0 (14)
Missing No Knowledge (3) Non-Users (10)	(3)	(2)

TABLE 2

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF
FOOD AND SHELTER SERVICES**

Know of Agencies Providing Food	Ever Used Food Agencies
YES: 45.6% (n=41)	YES: 3.3% (n= 3)
NO: 54.4% (n=49)	NO: 96.7% (n=87)

Agencies	% Identified Service
Salvation Army	15.8 (6)
Shepherds of Good Hope	42.1 (16)
Ottawa Food Bank	26.3 (10)
Other	15.8 (6)
TOTAL	100.0 (38)
Missing	(3)
Don't Know Any Agencies	(49)

Know of Agencies Providing Shelter	Ever Used Shelter
YES: 26.7% (n=24)	YES: 2.2% (n= 2)
NO: 73.3% (n=66)	NO: 97.8% (n=88)

Agencies	% Identified Service
Salvation Army	13.6 (3)
YMCA	31.8 (7)
Shepherds of Good Hope	22.7 (5)
Youth Services Bureau	4.5 (1)
Rideau Centre Youth Initiative	4.5 (1)
Children's Aid Society	13.6 (3)
Other	9.1 (2)
TOTAL	100.0 (22)
Missing	(3)
Don't Know Any Agencies	(65)

TABLE 3**STREET YOUTHS' KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF
OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES**

Other Services	Needed	Used
Financial Aid	23.1 (6)	7.7 (2)
Jobs/Training	7.7 (2)	0.0 (0)
Counselling	11.5 (3)	3.8 (1)
Education	15.4 (4)	3.8 (1)
Drug/Alcohol Rehab	7.7 (2)	0.0 (0)
Recreation Centres	50.0 (13)	61.5 (16)
Clothes	42.3 (11)	11.5 (3)
Health Care	0.0 (0)	3.8 (1)
Other	0.0 (0)	3.8 (1)
Missing	(8)	(0)
No Knowledge (34)		
Non-Users (59)		

Note: More than one answer per respondent was possible

Used Agencies Providing Other Services

YES: 65.4% (n=17)

NO: 34.6% (n= 9)

TABLE 4**STREET YOUTHS' ASSESSMENT OF OVERALL QUALITY
OF ALL SOCIAL SERVICES**

Very Good	41.2% (7)
Good	29.4% (5)
Fair	11.8% (2)
Poor	5.9% (1)
Very Poor	11.8% (2)
Missing	(9)

TABLE 5

**HIGH SCHOOL YOUTHS' KNOWLEDGE AND USE
OF OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES**

Other Services	Available	Used
Counselling	20.6 (14)	10.3 (3)
Drug Rehab	4.4 (3)	0.0 (0)
Welfare	8.8 (6)	0.0 (0)
Clinics/Health	1.5 (1)	0.0 (0)
Recreation	8.8 (6)	86.2 (25)
Clothes	1.5 (1)	0.0 (0)
Other	8.8 (6)	3.4 (1)
Don't KNow	10.3 (7)	0.0 (0)
TOTAL	35.3 (24)	0.0 (0)
	100.0 (68)	100.0 (29)
Missing/No Knowledge (22)		
No Use (61)		

Used Agencies Providing Other Services

YES: 12.6% (n=11)
NO: 87.4% (n=76)

TABLE 6

**STREET YOUTHS' ASSESSMENT OF MOST NEEDED
MEDICAL SERVICES**

Services Identified	% Identifying
	4.3 (1)
Pregnancy Tests	52.2 (12)
Clinics	8.7 (2)
AIDS/STD Testing	26.6 (6)
Needle Exchange	4.3 (1)
Emergency Care	4.3 (1)
Drug Rehab	7.7 (2)
Other	15.4 (4)
Nothing	

Note: More than one answer per respondent possible

TABLE 7

**STREET YOUTHS' ASSESSMENT OF ACCESSIBILITY
OF NEEDED HEALTH CARE**

Very Accessible	16.6% (3)
Somewhat Accessible	33.3% (6)
Not Very Accessible	33.3% (6)
Not At All Accessible	16.6% (3)
TOTAL	100.0% (18)
Missing	(5)
Never Used	(3)

TABLE 8

STREET YOUTHS' USE OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Service	% Using Service - Past Year
Family Doctor	50.0% (13)
School Nurse	23.1% (6)
Doctor-Community Centre	38.5% (10)
Nurse-Community Centre	23.1% (6)
Doctor Emergency	73.1% (19)
Nurse Emergency	30.8% (8)
Other	30.8% (8)

TABLE 9

**STREET YOUTHS' ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF
HEALTH CARE RECEIVED**

Very Good	8.3% (2)
Good	62.5% (15)
Fair	16.7% (4)
Poor	4.2% (1)
Very Poor	8.3% (2)
No Use	(3)

TABLE 10**HIGH SCHOOL YOUTHS' USE OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES**

Family Doctor	90.6% (77)
School Nurse	10.2% (6)
Community Centre	19.3% (11)
Emergency Ward	41.8% (28)
Other	16.7% (6)

TABLE 11**ANY CONTACT WITH POLICE?**

Street Youth		High School Youth	
YES:	76.9% (20)	YES:	42.2% (38)
NO:	23.1% (6)	NO:	57.8% (52)

TABLE 12**NATURE OF CONTACT WITH POLICE**

Offense	Street Youth	High School Youth
Assault	20.0% (4)	21.1% (8)
Vandalism	0.0% (0)	7.9% (3)
Shoplifting	15.0% (3)	2.6% (1)
Theft	0.0% (2)	5.3% (2)
Running Away	10.0% (2)	2.6% (1)
Break & Enter	5.0% (1)	15.8% (6)
Possession/Trafficking	10.0% (2)	10.5% (4)
Fighting	0.0% (0)	2.6% (1)
Partying/Drunk	0.0% (0)	2.6% (1)
Police Assisted Person	0.0% (0)	21.8% (8)
Other	30.0% (6)	5.3% (2)

TABLE 13**ASSESSMENT OF POLICE BY STREET YOUTH**

Good	11.5% (3)
Fair	30.8% (8)
Poor	26.9% (7)
Very Poor	30.8% (8)

TABLE 14**STREET YOUTHS' REASONS FOR ASSESSMENT OF POLICE**

Abuse Power	12.0% (3)
Hassle Youth	32.0% (8)
Don't Care or Help	20.0% (5)
Physically Abusive	4.0% (1)
Other	16.0% (4)
Positive Comments	8.0% (2)
Missing	(1)

TABLE 15**HIGH SCHOOL YOUTHS' RESPONSES TO:
"Police are as crooked as the people they arrest"**

Strongly Agree	6.7% (6)
Agree	18.9% (17)
Uncertain	34.4% (31)
Disagree	24.4% (22)
Strongly Disagree	15.6% (14)
Missing	(0)

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Ottawa Street Youth and Runaways Interview Schedule

Interviewer's Name: _____

Date: _____

Time Began: _____

Time Ended: _____

READ CONSENT FORM WITH RESPONDENT
--

1. How many young people do you think there are living on the street in Ottawa? _____
2. How many of these young people are under 16? _____
3. Is it different on the street for youth under sixteen than for youth over sixteen?
i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
If yes, how? _____
4. What are some of the reasons you think youth are on the street in Ottawa?

5. Where are you currently living? Are you living with:
i) ___ both natural parents
ii) ___ father alone
iii) ___ mother alone
iv) ___ father and friend / stepmother
v) ___ mother and friend / stepfather
vi) ___ with foster parents
vii) ___ in your own place
viii) ___ with relatives
ix) ___ with friends
x) ___ with people you met while living on the street
xi) ___ in a group home or other supervised residence
xii) ___ in an institution
xiii) ___ in a temporary shelter (YM/YWCA)
xiv) ___ in an emergency shelter
xv) ___ Other (specify) _____
6. How old were you when you first left home and lived on the street? _____
7. What happened that made you decide to leave home? _____

8. Have you run away from home more than once?
 i) no ii) yes
 If yes, how many times have you run away from home? _____

9. How long did your run last the first time you ran away?
 i) more than a month
 ii) less than a month but more than a week
 iii) less than a week, but more than two days
 iv) one or two days
 v) less than a day

10. Where did you go when you ran away?

	Place?	How many days were you away?
The first time ?	_____	_____
The second time?	_____	_____
The most recent time?	_____	_____

11. Have you ever run away from a group home or foster care?
 i) no ii) yes If yes, how many times in all? _____

12. Have you ever stayed at an emergency shelter in this city?
 i) no ii) yes If yes, which one ? _____

13. Have you ever stayed at an emergency shelter in another city?
 i) no ii) yes If yes, in which city/town?

	When was this?
1st city/town mentioned _____	_____
2nd city/town mentioned _____	_____

14. Have you ever slept outside at night since running away?
 i) no ii) yes If yes, how many times during the past month? _____

15. Where have you slept during the past week? [INDICATE NUMBER OF NIGHTS IN EACH PLACE]

Place	Number of Nights
At your place (own apt., etc.)	_____
At your parents' home	_____
With relatives	_____
With friends	_____
At an Emergency Shelter or YW/YMCA	_____
In a Group Home/Residence	_____
On the street	_____
Other	_____
TOTAL =	7 nights

16. What city or town is home? _____

17. How would you feel about moving back home now? If 1 means " I really want to go home badly" and 10 means " I absolutely never want to go back home" where would you put yourself? _____
18. If you want to move back home, what is preventing you? _____

19. If you don't want to go home, why not? _____

20. Have you ever gone a whole day without eating since leaving home?
i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
21. Do you know of any places providing food or meals to street youth and runaways?
i) ___ no ii) ___ yes If yes, which agencies? _____
22. Have you gotten any food or meals from any of these places during the past year?
i) ___ no ii) ___ yes If yes, which ones? _____
How often? _____
23. Where else have you eaten during the past 7 days? Have you eaten at:
[INDICATE NUMBER OF TIMES AT EACH PLACE. IF DIDN'T USE, ENTER A ZERO]
- | Place | Number of Times |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| a restaurant (McDonald's) | _____ |
| a soup kitchen | _____ |
| a drop-in centre | _____ |
| friends | _____ |
| relatives | _____ |
| your own place | _____ |
| Other (specify) | _____ |
24. How many times did you eat yesterday? _____
25. Where did you eat yesterday? _____
26. Do you know of any places providing street youth and runaways with a place to sleep?
i) ___ no ii) ___ yes If yes, which agencies? _____
27. Have you slept at any of these places during the past year?
i) ___ no ii) ___ yes If yes, which one(s)? _____
How often? _____

Where do you go if you

[IF THEY ANSWER "FRIENDS", ASK WHERE THEY MET AND HOW LONG THEY HAVE KNOWN THEM.]

28. Need a place to stay? _____

29. Get sick? _____

30. Get beaten up? _____

31. Need food? _____

32. Are Lonely? _____

33. Are Scared? _____

34. What social services besides food and shelter do runaways and street youth in Ottawa need?

35. How available are these types of services in Ottawa?

- i) very available iii) not very available
ii) somewhat available iv) not available at all

36. Have you ever used any of these services?

- i) no ii) yes If yes, which ones?

First answer _____ How often? _____

Second answer _____ How often? _____

Third answer _____ How often? _____

37. How would you describe the overall quality of the social services you received?

Would you say it was

- i) very good ii) good iii) fair
iv) poor v) very poor

38. If there was a youth shelter in the outlying areas of town, would you use it?

- i) no ii) yes If no, why not? _____

39. What types of medical services do you think are most needed by the street youth in Ottawa?

40. How accessible are these types of medical services to street youth in Ottawa?

- i) very available iii) not very available
ii) somewhat available iv) not available at all

50. Have you ever taken special education classes or classes for learning disabilities?
i) no ii) yes
51. Have you ever been suspended from school? (for a day, several days., a week or several weeks?)
i) no ii) yes If yes, how many times _____
52. Have you ever been expelled from a school? (prohibited from returning to that school?)
i) no ii) yes If yes, how many times _____
53. What types of educational or training programmes do you think are needed by street youth in Ottawa? _____

54. How accessible are these types of educational or training programmes in Ottawa?
i) very available iii) not very available
ii) somewhat available iv) not available at all
55. Since leaving home, what educational or training programs have you been in contact with?

56. How would you describe the quality of the educational or training programmes that you have been in contact with?
i) very good ii) good iii) fair iv) poor v) very poor
57. How much schooling would you like to get eventually? _____
58. How are you supporting yourself? _____

59. Do you currently have a job?
i) no, I don't have a job
ii) no, but I am looking for a job
iii) yes, I'm working part-time - ask type of job
iv) yes, I'm working full-time - ask type of job
If yes, ask type of job. Probe to see if it is a conventional job _____

60. What type of job would you like to have by the time you are 30 years old?

61. Have you ever applied for social assistance i.e. welfare? i) no ii) yes
62. Are you currently receiving social assistance, i.e. welfare? i) no ii) yes

63. What services do you think runaways and street youth in Ottawa need most at the present time?

- i) Most needed _____ Why _____
ii) Second most needed _____ Why _____
iii) Third most needed _____ Why _____

64. What type of service or programme would be most helpful to YOU at the present time?

65. Why? _____

Here are a few questions about youth and violence in Ottawa.

66. How serious a problem is youth violence in Ottawa?

- i) very serious iii) not very serious
ii) somewhat serious iv) not serious at all

67. Why do you feel this way? _____

68. During the past year, have you been assaulted or attacked by another young person(s)?

- i) no ii) yes If yes, how often _____ IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 71.

69. If yes, please describe what happened during the most recent incident _____

70. Have you changed your behaviour or activities as a result of your experience(s)?

- i) no ii) yes If yes, how? _____

71. During the past year, have any of your friends been assaulted or attacked by another young person(s)? i) no ii) yes

If yes, how often? _____

IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 74.

72. If yes, please describe what happened. during the most recent incident _____

73. Have you changed your behaviour or activities as a result of THEIR experience(s)?

- i) no ii) yes If yes, how? _____

74. Here are a few other questions about youth and violence in Ottawa. On a scale of 1 (least serious) to 5 (most serious), please rate the following for youth in Ottawa. Circle the number that best reflects your answer.

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| i) Racially motivated violence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ii) Dating violence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| iii) Gang violence (organized gangs) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| iv) Swarming and other group violence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| v) Violence against gays or lesbians | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| vi) Rape and sexual assault | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

75. How safe do you feel walking alone downtown after dark?

- i) very safe iii) neither safe or unsafe
ii) reasonably safe iv) somewhat unsafe
v) very unsafe

76. Do you ever feel afraid while you're on the street?

- i) frequently ii) sometimes iii) once in a while iv) never

77. What makes you feel this way? _____

78. Has anyone ever hurt you on the street? i) no ii) yes

79. If yes, can you tell me what happened? _____

80. Have you ever been the victim of a crime while on the street? i) no ii) yes

81. If yes, what type of crime(s)? _____

82. Have you had any contact with the police since you left home? i) no ii) yes

83. If yes, what kind of contact ? _____

84. What kind of job would you say the police are doing?

- i) very good ii) good iii) fair iv) poor v) very poor

85. Why do you feel this way? _____

86. What are the best things about living on the street? _____

87. What are the worst things about living on the street? _____

88. What are the three most important problems facing street youth in Ottawa today?

First problem identified _____

Second problem identified _____

Third problem identified _____

89. Do you want to get off the street? i) __ no ii) __ yes iii) __ don't know

90. If yes, what would you like to be doing? _____

91. What would help you do this? _____

Finally I need some information about your background to complete this interview:

92. What is your date of birth? Year? _____ Month? _____

93. Are you i) __ Male or ii) __ Female

94. When you were growing up, what language did your family usually speak at home?

i) __ English ii) __ French iii) __ both French and English iv) __ other
(specify) _____

95. How would you describe yourself? (focus is race or biological eg. White, Black, Aboriginal, Status, Non-Status, Metis, Asian etc.) _____

96. How would you describe your ethnic background? (focus is culture, eg: Scottish, Cree, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Lebanese, etc.) _____

97. How many brothers do you have? _____

98. How many sisters do you have? _____

That ends the interview, is there anything you would like to tell me about life on the street?
(Record response on back of questionnaire)

Is there anything I can do for you now? (Record response on back of questionnaire)

Ottawa Youth Survey

Enrolled for Sept. 93 in _____ High School, Grade _____

Enrolled last year in _____ High School, Grade _____

Please read each of the following questions carefully. Some questions require you to check the activities that apply to you. Others require that you write N/A next to it, which means "not applicable to me" and go on to the next question. Take your time and answer each question as best you can. Remember, your answers will help us to design better programmes and services for young people.

Here are some questions about your background.
(remember, write N/A next to a question if it doesn't apply to you)

1. What is your date of birth? Year? _____ Month? _____
2. Are you i) ___ Male or ii) ___ Female
3. When you were growing up, what language did your family usually speak at home?
i) ___ English ii) ___ French
iii) ___ both French and English iv) ___ Other (specify) _____
4. How would you describe yourself? (for example: Caucasian, Black, Aboriginal, Status, Non-Status, Metis, Asian, etc.) _____
5. How would you describe your ethnic background? (for example: Scottish, Cree, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Lebanese, etc.) _____
6. Is your father currently employed?
i) ___ yes, full time ii) ___ yes, part time iii) ___ retired iv) ___ no
7. What is your father's usual occupation? What does he do? _____
8. Is your father self-employed? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
9. Is your mother currently employed?
i) ___ yes, full time ii) ___ yes, part time iii) ___ retired iv) ___ no

10. What is your mother's usual occupation? What does she do? _____
In what type of place (large factory, small shop, office, etc.)? _____

11. Is your mother self-employed? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes

**Here are some questions about your experiences growing up
(remember, write N/A next to a question if it doesn't apply to you)**

12. How many friends do you have? (Please write a number) _____

13. How many of these do you consider close friends? (Please write a number) _____

14. How often do you associate with your close friends outside of school?
i) ___ every day ii) ___ several times a week
iii) ___ several times a month iv) ___ once a month or less v) ___ other

15. Which of the following best describes how things are now at home?
i) ___ very good - everyone gets along most of the time
ii) ___ fairly good - there are problems from time to time, but nothing serious
iii) ___ somewhat poor- there are some serious problems which need attention
iv) ___ very poor - there were many serious problems
v) ___ other (specify) _____

16. Have you ever felt so unwelcome at home that you thought that you HAD to leave?
i) ___ frequently ii) ___ quite often iii) ___ a few times iv) ___ once v) ___ never

17. Have you ever felt so mistreated at home that you thought that you HAD to leave?
i) ___ frequently ii) ___ quite often iii) ___ a few times iv) ___ once v) ___ never

18. Have you ever thought about running away from home?
i) ___ frequently ii) ___ quite often iii) ___ a few times iv) ___ once v) ___ never

19. Have you ever actually run away from home? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 28.

20. If yes, what happened that made you decide to leave? _____

21. Have you run away from home more than once? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
If yes, how many times have you run away from home? _____

22. If you have run away from home, how long did your run last the first time you ran away?
- i) ___ more than a month
 - ii) ___ less than a month, but more than a week
 - iii) ___ less than a week, but more than two days
 - iv) ___ one or two days
 - v) ___ less than a day

23. If you have run away from home, where did you go?

	Place?	How many days were you away?
The first time?	_____	_____
The second time?	_____	_____
The third time?	_____	_____
The most recent time?	_____	_____

24. Have you ever stayed at an emergency shelter in this city? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
If yes, which one? _____

25. Have you ever stayed at an emergency shelter in another city? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
If yes, in which city/town? _____ When? _____

26. Have you ever slept outside at night when you ran away? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
If yes, how many nights? _____

27. Have you ever gone a whole day without eating when you ran away?

i) ___ no ii) ___ yes

28. Do you know of any agencies providing food or meals to street youth and runaways?

i) ___ no ii) ___ yes

If yes, which agencies? _____

29. Have you used any of these food or meal services during the past year?

i) ___ no ii) ___ yes

If yes, how often? _____

30. Do you know of any agencies providing street youth and runaways with a place to sleep?

i) ___ no ii) ___ yes

If yes, which agencies? _____

31. Have you used any of these services to get a place to sleep during the past year?

i) ___ no ii) ___ yes

If yes, how often? _____

32. Have you ever applied for Welfare? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes

33. Are you currently on Welfare? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
34. What other social services besides food and shelter are available to high school students in your school or community? _____

35. Have you ever used any of these services? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
If yes, which ones? _____
36. How would you describe your overall health? Would you say you were:
i) ___ very healthy ii) ___ somewhat healthy
iii) ___ not very healthy iv) ___ not healthy at all
37. During the past year, how often have you received medial care from each of the following:
(Please write the number of times in the space provided)
i) doctor ___ ii) school nurse ___ iii) community health centre ___
iv) emergency ward of a hospital ___ v) other (please specify) _____
38. If one of your friends asked you about the following health care issues, where would you send them?

For information about

I would send them to

(you can give more than one answer)

- | | |
|--|-------|
| i) how to become healthier (diet, exercise) | _____ |
| ii) sex and sexuality | _____ |
| iii) problems with drugs or alcohol | _____ |
| iv) smoking | _____ |
| v) emotional problems | _____ |
| vi) sexually transmitted diseases
(Herpes, AIDS, etc) | _____ |
| vii) other health problems (specify) | _____ |

Here are some questions about parents

39. Which of the following best describes your home situation? Can you tell us who you live with?

- i) both natural parents
- ii) father alone
- iii) mother alone
- iv) father and friend / stepmother
- v) mother and friend / stepfather
- vi) with foster parents
- vii) in your own place
- viii) with relatives
- ix) with friends
- x) in a group home or other supervised residence
- xi) in an institution
- xii) in a temporary shelter (YM/YWCA)
- xiii) in an emergency shelter
- xiv) Other (specify) _____

40. How many brothers do you have? _____

41. How many sisters do you have? _____

Thinking about the parents you are currently living with:

		<u>Always</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Never</u>
42.	Does your mother know WHERE YOU ARE when you go out?	—	—	—	—
43.	Does your father know WHERE YOU ARE when you go out?	—	—	—	—
44.	Does your mother know WHO YOU ARE WITH when you go out?	—	—	—	—
45.	Does your father know WHO YOU ARE WITH when you go out?	—	—	—	—
46.	How often does your mother spend time talking with you about things YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT?	—	—	—	—
47.	How often does your father spend time talking with you about things YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT?	—	—	—	—
48.	How often does your mother spend time doing things with you that YOU WANT TO DO?	—	—	—	—
49.	How often does your father spend time doing things with you that YOU WANT TO DO?	—	—	—	—
50.	How often does your mother HASSLE you?	—	—	—	—
51.	How often does your father HASSLE you?	—	—	—	—
52.	How often does your mother get really angry with you?	—	—	—	—
53.	How often does your father get really angry with you?	—	—	—	—
54.	How often do you get really angry with your mother?	—	—	—	—
55.	How often do you get really angry with your father?	—	—	—	—
56.	How often do you see your parents drunk or high on drugs?	—	—	—	—
57.	How often do you see your parents arguing loudly and fighting with each other?	—	—	—	—
58.	How often do your parents (or guardians) use physical force to punish you?	—	—	—	—
59.	How often have you been intentionally struck so hard by a parent (or guardian) that it caused a bruise or bleeding?	—	—	—	—

60. Have you ever smoked (cigarettes)? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 63.
61. If yes, how old were you when you started smoking? ___
62. Do you smoke cigarettes regularly now? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
63. Do any of your friends USE alcohol? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 67.
64. If yes, what do they usually drink?
i) ___ beer ii) ___ wine iii) ___ liquor iv) ___ other
65. When they drink, how much do they drink?
i) ___ a lot ii) ___ a moderate amount iii) ___ a small amount iv) ___ very little
66. How often do they drink?
i) ___ every day ii) ___ several times a week
iii) ___ several times a month iv) ___ once a month or less v) ___ other (specify)
67. Do you USE alcohol? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 71.
68. If yes, what do you usually drink?
i) ___ beer ii) ___ wine iii) ___ liquor iv) ___ other
69. When you drink, how much do you drink?
i) ___ a lot ii) ___ a moderate amount iii) ___ a small amount iv) ___ very little
70. How often do you drink?
i) ___ every day ii) ___ several times a week
iii) ___ several times a month iv) ___ once a month or less v) ___ other (specify)
71. Do any of your friends USE drugs regularly? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 74.
72. If yes, what types of drugs do they use?
i) ___ marijuana or hashish ii) ___ LSD or chemicals
iii) ___ cocaine iv) ___ prescription drugs (to get high)
v) ___ other (specify) _____
73. How often do they use drugs?
i) ___ every day ii) ___ several times a week
iii) ___ several times a month iv) ___ once a month or less
74. Do any of your friends SELL drugs? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes

75. Have you ever USED drugs? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 79.
76. If yes, what types of drugs?
i) ___ marijuana or hashish ii) ___ LSD or chemicals
iii) ___ cocaine iv) ___ prescription drugs (to get high)
v) ___ other (specify) _____
77. How often do you use drugs?
i) ___ every day ii) ___ several times a week
iii) ___ several times a month iv) ___ once a month or less
78. If you have used drugs, how old were you when you first experimented with them? ____
79. Have you ever SOLD drugs? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
80. In the last 12 months, have you participated in any substance abuse rehabilitation programs?
i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
81. Have any of your friends every been arrested? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 83.
82. If yes, what were they arrested for?
i) ___ drugs
ii) ___ shoplifting
iii) ___ theft
iv) ___ assault
v) ___ other (specify) _____
83. Have you ever been in trouble where the police were involved?
i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
If yes, what was this for? _____
84. Do you have a criminal record? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
85. Have you every "panhandled" or begged on the street for money?
i) ___ frequently ii) ___ often iii) ___ a few times iv) ___ once v) ___ never
86. Have you ever stolen things or been involved in shoplifting?
i) ___ frequently ii) ___ often iii) ___ a few times iv) ___ once v) ___ never

Here are some questions about personal feelings and attitudes

How often would you say you felt?:

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Not Often</u>	<u>Never</u>
87. You were sad	—	—	—	—
88. You were depressed or "bummed out"	—	—	—	—
89. You felt like crying	—	—	—	—
90. You just couldn't get going	—	—	—	—
91. You had trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep	—	—	—	—
92. Everything was going wrong	—	—	—	—
93. You can't shake the blues	—	—	—	—
94. You can't keep your mind on what you are doing	—	—	—	—

**We would like to know whether you:
Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Are Uncertain (UNC),
Disagree (DIS), or Strongly Disagree (SD)
with each of the following statements.**

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Uncertain</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
95. All laws should be strictly obeyed because they are laws.	—	—	—	—	—
96. Laws are usually bad.	—	—	—	—	—
97. Life would be better with fewer police.	—	—	—	—	—
98. The police are just as crooked as the people they arrest.	—	—	—	—	—
99. A judge is a good person.	—	—	—	—	—
100. Our society could be better off if there were more police.	—	—	—	—	—
101. Police rarely try to help people.	—	—	—	—	—
102. It's all right for people to break the law if they don't get caught.	—	—	—	—	—

		<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Uncertain</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>
103.	There never is a good cause for breaking the law.	___	___	___	___	___
104.	A hungry person has a right to steal.	___	___	___	___	___
105.	I like to take risks.	___	___	___	___	___
106.	The things I like to do best are dangerous.	___	___	___	___	___
107.	To get ahead, you have to do some things that are not right.	___	___	___	___	___
108.	Most of the time, I feel good about myself.	___	___	___	___	___
109.	I consider myself a person of worth.	___	___	___	___	___
110.	I am able to do most things as well as others.	___	___	___	___	___
111.	I like to take chances.	___	___	___	___	___
112.	I like to be absolutely certain how things will turn out before I do them.	___	___	___	___	___
113.	During the past year, have you had any professional counselling for:					
	i) ___ substance abuse					
	ii) ___ personal adjustment problems					
	iii) ___ difficulties at school					
	iv) ___ other? (specify) _____					
114.	Have you ever had thoughts about committing suicide?					
	i) ___ frequently ii) ___ often iii) ___ a few times iv) ___ once v) ___ never					
115.	Have you ever attempted suicide? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes					
	IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 117.					
116.	If yes, how many times has this occurred? _____					
117.	Do you know someone who has committed suicide? i) ___ no ii) _____ yes					

Here are some questions about school and work

118. Do you currently work at a full or part time job? IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 121.
- i) ___ no, I do not work at the present time
 - ii) ___ no, but I'm looking for a job
 - iii) ___ yes, I work part time
 - iv) ___ yes, I work full time
119. If yes, approximately how many hours did you work during the past week? _____
120. Approximately how much money did you make for working during the past week? _____
121. Could you describe your school attendance? Would you say it was
- i) ___ regular - that is, you go every day unless you're sick
 - ii) ___ fairly regular - you skip school once in a while
 - iii) ___ somewhat irregular - you skip school several times a month
 - iv) ___ very irregular - you skip school frequently
 - v) ___ other (specify) _____
122. What is your average grade in school this year?
- i) ___ A ii) ___ B iii) ___ C iv) ___ D v) ___ F vi) ___ other
123. In school, how often do you find that you don't understand things?
- i) ___ frequently ii) ___ often iii) ___ a few times iv) ___ once v) ___ never
124. Have you ever taken special education classes or classes for learning disabilities?
- i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
125. How often have you had trouble with your teachers during the past year?
- i) ___ frequently ii) ___ often iii) ___ a few times iv) ___ once v) ___ never
126. During the past year, how often have you been in trouble in school in which the Principal or Vice-Principal became involved?
- i) ___ frequently ii) ___ often iii) ___ a few times iv) ___ once v) ___ never
127. Do you ever leave school to drink or get high? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
- If yes, how often does this happen?
- i) ___ every day ii) ___ several times a week
 - iii) ___ several times a month iv) ___ once a month or less
 - v) ___ other

128. Have you been involved in any of the following during the past school year?
- i) ___ swore at a teacher
 - ii) ___ got into trouble for not doing homework
 - iii) ___ got into trouble for not paying attention in class
 - iv) ___ got into fights with other students
 - v) ___ had to be disciplined by a teacher
 - vi) ___ had to be disciplined by the Principal or Vice-Principal
 - vii) ___ failed a class
 - viii) ___ other (specify) _____
129. Have you ever been suspended from school? (this means for a day or week, etc.)
- i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
- If yes, how many times has this happened? _____
130. If yes, what was it for the last time? _____
131. Have you ever been expelled from a school? (this means you weren't allowed back)
- i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
- If yes, how many times has this happened? _____
132. On average, how often did you go out on school nights this past school year? (do not count weekends)
- i) ___ 1 night ii) ___ 2 nights iii) ___ 3 nights
 - iv) ___ 4 nights v) ___ 5 nights
133. **On an average school night**, how much time would you spend doing homework during the past school year? (please record number of hours spent per night doing homework)
- _____
134. **On an average school night**, how much time would you spend watching television on school nights during the past school year? (please record number of hours spent per night watching television)
- _____
135. **On an average school night**, how much time would you spend listening to music on school nights during the past school year? (please record number of hours spent per night listening to music)
- _____
136. **On an average school night**, how much time do you spend "hanging out" with friends after school? (please record number of hours spent "hanging out" with friends)
- _____
137. During the past school year, have any of your friends been the victim of an attack by a group of young people? i) ___ no ii) ___ yes
- If yes, how often has this happened? _____

138. During the past school year, have you been the victim of an attack by a group of young people? i) no ii) yes
If yes, how often has this happened? _____
139. During the past school year, have any of your friends been involved in a "fight" in which they slapped, hit, punched or kicked another student? i) no ii) yes
If yes, how often has this happened? _____
140. During the past school year, have you been involved in a "fight" in which you slapped, hit, punched or kicked another student? i) no ii) yes
If yes, how often has this happened? _____
141. During the past school year, have any of your friends brought any weapons to school?
i) no ii) yes
If yes, how often has this happened? _____
142. If yes, what did they bring? _____
143. During the past school year, have you brought any weapons to school?
i) no ii) yes
If yes, how often has this happened? _____
144. If yes, what did you bring? _____
145. What percentage of students do you think bring weapons to school on an average day in your high school? (please write a percent) ___%
146. What do you think are the most common types of weapons brought to school? Please be specific.
i) most common _____
ii) second most common _____
iii) third most common _____
147. How much schooling would you like to get eventually?
i) no more than I currently have
ii) complete high school
iii) get into an apprenticeship program
iv) complete vocational school
v) some college or university training
vi) complete college or university
vii) professional training, such as law, medicine, accounting, teaching
viii) other (specify) _____
148. What type of job would you LIKE TO HAVE by the time you are 30 years old?

149. Realistically, what type of job do you think you WILL HAVE by the time you're 30 years old?

Here are a few questions about youth and violence in Ottawa

150. How serious a problem is youth violence in Ottawa?

- i) very serious ii) somewhat serious
iii) not very serious iv) not serious at all

151. Why do you feel this way? _____

152. During the past year, have you been assaulted or attacked by another young person(s)?

- i) no ii) yes

If yes, how often? _____

IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 155.

153. If yes, please describe what happened during the most recent incident. _____

154. Have you changed your behaviour or activities as a result of your experience(s)?

- i) no ii) yes

If yes, how? _____

155. During the past year, have any of your friends been assaulted or attacked by another young person(s)? i) no ii) yes

If yes, how often? _____

IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 158.

156. If yes, please describe what happened during the most recent incident _____

157. Have you changed your behaviour or activities as a result of **THEIR** experience(s)?

- i) no ii) yes

If yes, how? _____

158. Here are a few other questions about youth and violence in Ottawa. On a scale of 1 (least serious) to 5 (most serious), please rate the following for youth in Ottawa,. Circle the number that best reflects your answer.

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| i) racially motivated violence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ii) dating violence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| iii) gang violence (organized gangs) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| iv) swarming and other group violence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| v) violence against gays or lesbians | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| vi) rape and sexual assault | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

159. How safe would you feel walking alone in your neighbourhood after dark?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--|
| i) ___ very safe | ii) ___ reasonably safe | | |
| iii) ___ neither safe nor unsafe | iv) ___ somewhat unsafe | v) ___ very unsafe | |

160. How safe would you feel walking along downtown after dark?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--|
| i) ___ very safe | ii) ___ reasonably safe | | |
| iii) ___ neither safe nor unsafe | iv) ___ somewhat unsafe | v) ___ very unsafe | |

161. How safe would you feel waiting for a bus alone in your neighbourhood after dark?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--|
| i) ___ very safe | ii) ___ reasonably safe | | |
| iii) ___ neither safe nor unsafe | iv) ___ somewhat unsafe | v) ___ very unsafe | |

162. How safe would you feel waiting for a bus alone downtown after dark?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--|
| i) ___ very safe | ii) ___ reasonably safe | | |
| iii) ___ neither safe nor unsafe | iv) ___ somewhat unsafe | v) ___ very unsafe | |

Thanks for participating! If you have any comments or suggestions please write them down for us in the space below or on the back of this questionnaire.

Ottawa Key Actor Interview Schedule

Interviewer: _____
Time Started: _____

Date: _____
Time Completed: _____

Name of the Agency: _____
Key Contact: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Telephone Number: _____
FAX Number: _____

WHO ARE THE STREET YOUTH AND RUNAWAYS?

1. How does your agency define runaways and street youth?
2. Approximately how many runaways and street youth are there in your community?
3. What are the characteristics (age range and % in each age group, % male and female, race etc.) of the runaway and street youth population?
4. What programs or services (activities) does your agency provide for runaways and street youth?
5. Approximately how many young people receive services from your agency in an average month? _____
6. Approximately what percentage of these are runaways and street youth? _____

7. How do street youth and runaways gain access to the programs or services provided by your agency, for example, by referrals, outreach, etc?

8. What is the pattern of service utilization by these young people? (How long do you work with them? What do you do with them?)

9. Do you refer young people who have been through your program(s) to any other agencies or programs? If yes, which ones and why?

10. How does your agency define youth violence?

11. Do you think that in the Ottawa-Carleton area the following TYPES of violence are a problem in general? Please comment on who is being aggressive and who the victim(s) is/are (indicate age, gender, race, etc., of the individuals involved)
 - a. Racial Violence?
 - b. Dating Violence?
 - c. Gang Violence? (organized groups only)
 - d. Group Violence (ie: swarmings)
 - e. Street Youth Violence? (as perpetrators and victims)
 - f. Verbal Violence, Physical Violence, Sexual Violence
 - g. Is there anything we've missed?

12. Which of these types of violence does your agency deal with and how frequently?
 - a. Racial Violence?
 - b. Dating Violence?
 - c. Gang Violence? (organized groups only)
 - d. Group Violence (ie: swarmings)
 - e. Street Youth Violence? (as perpetrators and victims)
 - f. Verbal Violence, Physical Violence, Sexual Violence
 - g. Is there anything we've missed?

19. Does your agency provide services to prevent youth violence? If yes, what services?
20. How effective do you think these services are?
21. What specific action do you believe should be taken in general to prevent youth violence?
22. What actions is your agency currently undertaking to prevent youth violence?
23. What actions is your agency planning for the future to prevent youth violence?
24. What kinds of information or other input would assist you in dealing with the problems that result from youth violence?
25. Is there a need for an ongoing organizational response to youth and violence in the region? If no, would you propose some other type of response?
26. What do you see as the rationale for an inter-agency organization concerned with youth and violence?

27. What do you see as the role(s) for an inter-agency organization of youth and violence?

28. What is your response to the organizational concept as proposed? What modifications, if any, would you introduce?

29. What commitment would your organization be prepared to make to the organization (for example, research/coordinating assistance to a task force)?

30. What benefits do you expect from the work of the proposed organization?

31. What priority issues do you think should be initially addressed by the steering committee? LIST FIVE ISSUES:
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)

32. Why?

33. Do you have any other comments or concerns?

APPENDIX E

**THE YOUTH AND VIOLENCE CONFERENCE
BACKGROUND DOCUMENT**

**A COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AND YOUTH
IN OTTAWA-CARLETON**

- BACKGROUND DOCUMENT -

Prepared for: The Steering Committee
Violence and Youth Initiatives of
Ottawa-Carleton

Prepared by: Dr. Tullio Caputo
Mr. Richard Weiler

Research Support: Department of Health, Canada
Department of Justice, Canada
Solicitor General, Canada

A COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AND YOUTH IN OTTAWA-CARLETON: A BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

This document has been prepared for participants from Ottawa-Carleton attending a November conference on "Violence and Youth". The purpose of the conference is to i) examine the nature and extent of youth violence, ii) consider violence and youth related issues in the community, iii) address a proposed organizational strategy intended to establish an ongoing community response to "youth at risk" issues including violence and youth, and iv) establish "task groups" responsible for formulating action plans to respond to specific areas of concern eg. zero tolerance policies identified during the information gathering phase of this initiative.

BACKGROUND

The Violence and Youth initiative has reflected the commitment and participation of many from the Ottawa-Carleton community over the past year. Events have included a major community conference in March and a follow-up community meeting in June. The Violence and Youth steering group involving representatives from justice, the police, education, community agencies, municipal government, social housing and transportation continues to provide leadership. It has maintained ongoing communication on the issue with concerned agencies, organizations and individuals. It has also been active in planning and securing sponsorship for the November conference as well as undertaking fund raising activities for these and future activities.

The Steering Committee was encouraged by participants at the March conference and the follow-up meeting in June to develop an effective community strategy to address "youth at risk" and more specifically violence and youth concerns. This included an information gathering exercise to determine the nature and extent of violence and youth concerns in the community; identify key areas for community action; and develop a model that would facilitate effective, longer term community action on issues such as violence and youth.

The Steering Committee summarized the information needs of the community and developed a conceptual model for organizing around violence and youth on the basis of recommendations from both the March conference and the June follow-up meeting. A detailed consultation on these issues was undertaken by Richard Weiler and Dr. Tullio Caputo. In depth interviews were conducted with both supervisory and front-line staff from over 30 selected agencies and organizations. Information was also gathered from young people through interviews and focus group meetings. The initial results of this consultation are presented below. This includes an overview of the community's assessment of the nature and extent of violence and youth; the community's assessment of the organizational proposal; the identification of key issues selected for community action; and the consultant's recommendations.

1.0 VIOLENCE AND YOUTH CONCERNS

Individuals and organizations dealing with youth, experience the issue of youth violence in distinctive ways based on the nature of their contact with young persons, their mandates and their programs. Despite these differences, there is considerable agreement in the community on the characteristics of the phenomenon.

1.1 What Is Youth Violence?

Youth violence includes a wide range of behaviours or actions (verbal, psychological or physical) which result in harm, intimidation or threats to others. Some argue that threatening or undesirable situations can evoke both "fight or flight" responses from young people. They also note that self destructive behaviour should be considered since it can be understood as violence that is turned inward.

Most of those interviewed argued that youth violence must be defined more specifically if an effective and appropriate response is to be developed. There is general agreement that the following categories identify the types of violence of most concern in the community: racial violence, dating violence, gang violence, group violence and street youth violence. In creating this categorization, there is a recognition of considerable overlap between various categories. For example, much gang violence is racially motivated. Some suggested that violence against authority, eg. parents, teachers, should be recognized as a specific category. As noted, we propose that violent self-destructive behaviour also be included.

Finally, while there is general agreement on how youth violence is manifest in our community, most cautioned that it be recognized as symptomatic of more fundamental societal, familial, social and personal problems. The response to violence and youth therefore should reflect this broader understanding of the problem and include a range of responses directed at different actors and segments of the community, eg. individuals, families, and the community at large.

1.2 What Is The Extent Of Youth Violence In Our Community?

Most believe that youth violence in all of its forms is increasing in the region. This has been substantiated in official records of youth charged with violent offences. However, we were cautioned about the meaning of the official statistics. Most of those we interviewed felt that while there had been some increase, the community should not overreact to the phenomenon. Many were uncertain as to how to interpret the reported increase in youth violence. Is the increase a result of greater public awareness, less tolerance and more reporting of youth violence or is there an increase in the actual behaviour?

Much of the recent youth violence reported in the community reflects a number of incidents usually tied to specific settings, eg. certain schools, housing developments or specific groups of young persons such as certain minority groups, gangs, skinheads etc. These patterns of youth violence require careful scrutiny. While there is a sense that both individual and group related violence is increasing, there are also numerous examples which suggest otherwise. Indeed anticipated violence involving skinheads this summer did not materialize. Furthermore, the street violence that has received recent public attention is not a new phenomenon but a pattern that has persisted for many years. More importantly, OC Transpo has noted a marked decline in cases of youth violence and vandalism over the past two years. In part, they attribute this to the success of a comprehensive prevention strategy. Also, the amount and type of group and gang violence being reported in the community has changed significantly over the past two or three years. In fact, the Ottawa police have directed resources away from youth gangs and

established a bias crimes unit. This is also attributable to the success of their response to the youth gang problem a few years ago.

It is clear that most young people today are not involved in violence. Many we interviewed suggested that there was just as much if not more youth violence when they were young as there is today but we are responding differently. They also suggested, however, that the nature of the behaviour today is different. Unfortunately, little useful historical information about youth violence exists. It is difficult to assess if there is a difference between current levels of youth violence and that which existed ten, fifteen, or even twenty or more years ago.

Our awareness of and response to youth violence has also changed in recent years. Important aspects of our society and the way we deal with young people have changed dramatically. For example, the nature and implementation of legislation governing young people has undergone a fundamental transformation. The passage of the Young Offenders Act in 1984 has resulted in a more formal and legalistic youth justice system. Under this legislation, the likelihood of an informal response by the justice system has decreased significantly, especially in cases involving violence. Similarly, the way organizations deal with young people has changed. Many are increasingly inclined to report violent behaviour to police. Some organizations (notably schools) have implemented policies which inevitably result in more charges of youth violence, eg. some Zero Tolerance policies.

Public awareness may also be influencing the level of youth violence being reported. Issues such as sexual assault, child abuse and dating violence have received widespread public attention. Young people are more willing to discuss their experiences, eg. date violence, with friends and professionals. Glamorized and sensationalized media accounts of violence keep the issue at the centre of public attention. In some cases, the actions of advocacy groups and politicians have generated considerable concern. When taken together, these factors contribute to a climate of increasing public unease and fear, decreasing tolerance, increased reporting, more vocal demands for action and a greater number of charges. Thus, while it is clear that the number of charges involving youth violence have increased in recent years, what is not clear is whether the actual amount of youth violence has also increased.

1.3 What Is The Nature Of Youth Violence In Our Community?

While there is considerable debate and discussion about the amount of youth violence, there is general agreement on the characteristics of this behaviour. A number of key themes consistently emerged regarding the nature of youth violence in our community. These are outlined below:

- the violence is more vicious than in the past. Incidents often result in serious harm being inflicted on victims.
- the violence is more intense. Incidents often escalate very quickly to an extremely serious level and remain at a high level of intensity for long periods of time.

- there appear to be few limits or constraints in the use of violence. Socially understood rules about harming others or not beating up someone smaller do not seem to apply today.
- many expressed concern that young people often do not recognize certain behaviours as violent, eg. date rape, abusive verbal behaviour, etc.
- young women are increasingly involved as perpetrators of violent behaviour. In the past, violence had been primarily a male behaviour.
- there is a greater willingness on the part of young people to use weapons. Many indicated that while weapons were around when they were young, they were rarely used. Today, not only are weapons available, they are increasingly used in incidents of youth violence.
- youth violence has historically been associated with working class youth, especially those living in public housing. This is no longer the case as more and more incidents of youth violence involve young people with middle class backgrounds.

1.4 What Causes Youth Violence?

Most agree that violent behaviour needs to be interpreted according to specific circumstances. Thus, for example, a major factor which may contribute to dating violence may be learned behaviour influenced by the media, movies, music, etc. Gang behaviour also reflects a degree of mimicking media images, especially those imported from the United States, eg. reports of "Boyz in the 'Hood" gang-type behaviour. Swarming incidents in the region coincided with media reports of these events in the United States. Gang behaviour, however, may also be influenced by a young person's desire to gain a sense of self-esteem or protection or social acceptance. Thus youth gang involvement often represents an option or way of coping for young people who are unable to "fit" easily into society.

Factors precipitating youth violence vary. They often include behaviour learned in one's family and through the media. Many children who witness violence in the home learn to use violence themselves. Some have suggested that youth violence represents a means of achieving social power, standing or the acceptance of peers. Others note that some youth engage in violence as a form of protection. Finally, some youth violence can be seen as a response to a particular youth subculture, eg. street life, skinheads.

Most argued that many of the factors resulting in youth violence are new and reflect major changes in our society. Confusion exists today about sexual roles and behaviours and about what constitutes success in our society. Major changes such as two working parent families, unemployment, increasing poverty, increasing social and economic insecurity, etc. often result in increasing anger and consequent violent behaviour.

1.5 Key Issues Identified By The Community

i) The Service System Response

The service system response to many young persons prone to violent behaviour is often inadequate and indeed, can often precipitate violence-prone situations. Service responses need to be related to specific types of violence and the circumstances of the offenders and victims. Some services for young people at risk of violent behaviour are limited or unavailable. For example, as noted in previous community reports on the subject, more street friendly support services for street youth are needed. Also, few detached youth program opportunities exist, eg. drug programs. More personal support services are needed, eg. mental health counselling for young persons disclosing personal/family experiences, family violence, substance abuse, etc. Few basic accessible reaction programs exist for young persons, especially in areas where youth are at risk of violent behaviour.

Most argue that provisions of such service responses should result from the redirection of existing resources--not expanded budgets, eg. street friendly accommodation; intermediate responses to violent offenders are usually much less costly than existing institutional options.

ii) The Criminal Justice System Response

An important issue for the criminal justice system is breaking the "revolving door" syndrome. Many were concerned that it often takes repeated contact before a "serious" response is made. This is related to several other concerns about the way the criminal justice system operates. For example, there is major concern over the time it takes for the criminal justice system to process cases. In many instances, a period of six, eight or even twelve months can pass between the time a young person is charged and the time the case finally reaches the disposition stage. The result is that the young people involved do not relate the dispositions they receive (the consequence) to the original offence.

Another area of concern is the availability of certain types of services. Specifically, few intermediate, community-based options exist between probation/community service orders and a custodial disposition. Realistic and enforceable dispositions are required that balance law enforcement and treatment responses. This is particularly acute in the case of breaches to probation orders. Often, the only remaining alternative is a custodial disposition which may not directly address the young person's problems.

The availability of long-term mental health beds was identified as a serious issue for some young people involved with the criminal justice system. Many of these individuals require intensive, long-term therapeutic treatment. In some cases, relatively minor violations eg. breaching some aspect of a probation order are used to get individuals needed counselling or mental health services.

iii) Zero Tolerance

There is concern that some strategies developed to address youth violence are inappropriate. The greatest concern relates to "zero tolerance" policies, especially in schools. While there is a need to ensure young people recognize that violence is not acceptable, rigid zero tolerance practices, eg. expelling students, can be self-defeating. Where violence, in part, is a response to a person's anger in attempting to deal with family violence situations, etc. support services are required. Simply "kicking" kids out of school may result in their becoming increasingly marginalized. Moreover, the underlying factors resulting in violent behaviour are not directly addressed.

iv) What Are We Teaching Young People About Violence?

There is considerable need for the expansion of effective, relevant educational experiences for young people dealing with anger, its causes and its management. Young people also need to be educated about healthy human relationships and behaviour, including sexuality. Considerable attention is devoted to these issues in the Social Planning Council youth sector effort. The major concern is that such programs realistically explore violence and its causes; its place in emotional behaviour and means of dealing with such. Present programs are often inadequate in content and presentation.

Many realize that in this period of shrinking budgets, things have to be done differently. Scarce resources have to be allocated judiciously. Many suggested that much could be gained if people were able to share successes with others in the community. Identifying programs that work and adapting them to various service sectors was seen as an important way of maximizing existing resources.

v) Community Awareness and Participation

An extensive effort should be made to increase public awareness about the problem and solutions to youth violence. Caution was expressed to avoid sensationalizing the issue. However, a clear message should be sent to all sectors of the community that all forms of violence will not be tolerated. Included in this concern was the need to involve both young people and parents in responding to violence.

vi) Staff Training and Development

The range of experience of those working with young people varies considerably. While some have extensive training programs and well-developed staff resources, others do not. Much of the knowledge gained by those working directly with aggressive or violent youth could be shared with others in the community working with young people. Practical strategies for de-escalating or defusing explosive situations, for example, could be particularly useful.

The conference has been organized to address these issues.

2.0 ORGANIZING TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AND YOUTH CONCERNS

2.1 Towards An Organizational Model

The Steering Committee developed an organizational model based on suggestions from both the March community conference and the follow-up meeting in June. This model was presented by the consultants to selected community representatives for consideration.

2.2 Organizing Principles

Development of the organizational model was based on a number of principles. The organization should be dynamic and able to adapt to changing needs. It should be inclusive and ensure the effective participation of persons dealing with specific issues. In addition, it should be designed to ensure that the specific strategies developed do not duplicate existing efforts.

2.3 The Components of the Model

The organizational model should include the following:

i) A Regional Umbrella Organization (Regional Round Table)

This group would include 40-60 representatives from provincial and regional governments, boards of education, community, social and health agencies, representatives from the criminal justice system, youth and others. The group would meet infrequently - perhaps twice a year. Meetings could be tied to related community initiatives (e.g. a conference on a specific issue). It would assume a number of responsibilities including:

- Overall governance of the organization and its related components (see below).
- Ensuring information sharing and co-ordination of efforts among members.
- Identifying membership for the Steering Group (see below).
- Identifying major themes to be addressed.

ii) The Steering Group (Executive Group)

This group would be composed of 15-20 members identified by the umbrella group. The group would be supported by the efforts of a full-time coordinator. It would meet regularly and would be committed to fulfilling ongoing responsibilities which would include:

- Determining specific action strategies required to address the themes identified by the umbrella group and other relevant emerging community challenges. These could include events such as youth conferences.
- Establishing and responding to the recommendations of the task groups (see below).

- Managing the ongoing affairs of the organization including public relations and education, fund raising, administration, and personnel responsibilities.

iii) Working Groups

These groups would be established by the Steering Committee. They would include:

a) Ongoing Groups. These would involve representatives of similar organizations (e.g., police services, school boards, etc.). They would meet regularly to share information on common concerns and initiatives dealing with violence and youth.

b) Task Forces. These groups would be established to address specific concerns. These might be issue focused (e.g. youth racism), site focused (e.g. youth in the Downtown Core), or event focused (e.g. the recent Heritage Front Issue). Groups would be composed of relevant organizational representatives which would develop specific action strategies to address the issue of concern.

2.4 Community Response To The Model

While most consulted supported ongoing action on the violence and youth theme, a number of concerns were raised regarding the proposed model. These are described below:

i) Mandate

Many argued that violence and youth should not represent the goal or mission of a major youth organizational process. Most young persons are not involved in violent behaviour. The title might mislead the public. Further, the concept may inappropriately label youth violence as separate from an overall societal phenomena. Also, "violence and youth" could be understood as representing a negative and reactive community response to a complex concern often calling for both better understanding and preventative action.

ii) Duplication

Most do not wish to introduce a new organization which will duplicate efforts of other effective initiatives. How would the new organization link to existing inter-agency planning initiatives, e.g. the Social Planning Council Youth Sectoral Project? How would the process "connect" with the variety of front line workers and inter-agency initiatives in the region? A new organization should be designed to complement and support existing, effective activity.

iii) Inclusiveness

The proposed model does not adequately represent the interests of the parties concerned. Where are the young people, the community interest groups, the media and others? While the proposal suggests that these interests will be respected, there is a general concern that the model would in large part be controlled by the senior representatives of the service system.

iv) The Organizational Culture

Some fear the proposal is "top heavy". It could be controlled by senior representatives of organizations who in turn would call on increased support from overworked front line workers to serve the organizational leadership -- perhaps with few useful results. The organizational model is seen as overly rigid given the roles and responsibilities proposed for the regional umbrella and executive groups. How will such be supportive of and not an impediment to the crucial work of the Working Groups? The concept of "co-ordinating" may denote too much power and control over partners in the process.

v) Accountability

Who will be accountable for the actions decided upon by the Working Groups? There is some concern that these groups will operate on the basis of volunteer effort. Most are already overtaxed with work demands and previous commitments. Also, there is some question about the resources needed for supporting the activities of the Working Groups. Where will these resources come from? Who will be responsible for securing these resources? Will they threaten already existing initiatives?

3.0 PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY

3.1 Organizing Principles

Based on the results of our consultation and further discussion with the Steering Committee, we suggest the following response to meeting the violence and youth agenda:

i) The Organizational Response Should Be Strategic

The organizational response should represent a future vision or goal. Specific activities should be planned on the basis of their relevance to such. This future perspective should be "grounded" in a comprehensive, proactive and positive context, e.g. achieving a healthy community. More specific statements dealing with youth would be noted. The major interests of the "Violence and Youth Initiative" would then be established within this context, e.g. concerns for youth at risk and related youth violence behaviour; establishing targets to minimize youth and community violence; and addressing the factors which precipitate this behaviour.

The above proposed conceptual base would not diminish the pressing concern with violence and youth in the region. Rather, it offers a positive context in which to develop activities. Further, it would encourage inclusion of promotion and preventative measures as well as ameliorative actions in the development of a comprehensive regional response.

ii) The Emphasis On Violence and Youth Should Be Retained

This perspective would act as an organizing principle in identifying concerns and defining activities. It acknowledges the generally held view emphasizing the "place" of young persons as perpetrators or victims of violence in the context of related social behaviour and change in our community.

iii) The Initiative Should Be Developed As A Focused Demonstration Initiative (Perhaps 2 Years)

This will ensure that major effort is directed to action focused activity and results. It will facilitate the integration of concerns where appropriate with other ongoing community processes. It will diminish any inclination to build an ongoing, permanent organization. The future of the initiative should not be decided until the demonstration is complete. Finally, a demonstration project offers greater potential for support.

iv) The Organization Should Represent An Action Focused, Effective, Inclusive, "Front Line" Approach

This approach will support the community's concern that we "get on with it".

3.2 Organizational Components

The structure could include:

i) A Facilitation Committee

This group could include members of the present Steering Committee. It should also include young persons, representatives of key community interest groups, representatives from related inter-agency initiatives, e.g. the Social Planning Council youth planning process and front line workers. Finally, the chairpersons of Task Groups established by the Facilitation Committee could be members. The Facilitation Committee would be supported by a coordinator. Responsibilities of the Facilitation Committee would include:

- facilitating and supporting the task groups (see below), e.g. seeking resource support;
- identifying specific issues which could be addressed through the initiative, facilitating the development of appropriate task groups to address them or developing alternative strategies;
- identifying opportunities for ensuring that governments and others are aware of and encouraged to support the regional initiative, e.g. presenting the initiative to the Royal Commission on Education; and
- managing the overall strategy.

ii) Task Groups

The task groups would be established to address specific concerns identified by the community. They would be action focused. Specific efforts might be issue focused (e.g. youth racism), site focused (e.g. youth in the Downtown core), or event focused (e.g. the recent Heritage Front Issue). They would be composed of persons directly "connected" with the issue. They would usually, but not necessarily, reflect wide representation from agencies, young persons and other related interest groups.

Efforts of the Task Groups could be coordinated through the work of the coordinator and a co-ordinating body - perhaps a committee comprised of designated task groups members and the facilitating committee. The Task Groups would take responsibility for developing public awareness and participation as an element of their specific action plan.

3.3 The Revised Organizational Model

The above model varies from the organizational concept originally proposed by the Steering Committee in a number of ways.

- The responsibilities of the proposed Regional Umbrella organization will now be undertaken by the Facilitation Committee and Task Groups.
- The Facilitation Committee will now focus on supporting and assisting Task Group activities. It will also respond to community concerns.
- The Task Groups will represent the major components of the initiative. They will be inclusive in representation. They will be task- and time-focused.
- Information sharing will in part, be undertaken by Task Groups. It may also be useful to develop a regular newsletter for those involved in the initiative and other concerned organizations.

