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Gang Resistance Education and Training Program

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to examine the effectiveness of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program in decreasing juvenile gang membership, violence, and activity. A systematic review of studies conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the G.R.E.A.T. program and outcomes indicate that the policy is effective on reducing gang membership and activity. In addition, this policy has also provided positive skills for the juveniles in attempt to decrease potential gang membership risk factors.

Introduction

- There is more than 20,000 different gangs that consist of a total of about one million members in the United States.
- Juveniles are more susceptible to join gangs.
- Youth gang related crime is drug offenses, firearm use, and property crime.
- Youth gang related membership and crime can cause many adult consequences.

(Estimated Gang Membership, 2008)

The Gang Resistance Education and Training Program (G.R.E.A.T.) is built around schools and is a local law enforcement officer-instructed classroom-based curriculum. This program focuses on preventing youth crime, violence, and gang involvement while building a juveniles' trust in law enforcement within the community (G.r.e.a.t. Home, 2021). The objective of this research is to examine studies conducted to determine if the Gang Resistance Education and Training Program reduces juvenile delinquency, violence, and gang membership.



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Studies Demonstrating Effectiveness

- Juveniles are found to be less interested in joining gangs and gang activity, after the G.R.E.A.T. program.
 - There was a 39% decrease of student desire to join gangs one year after the program (G.r.e.a.t. Home., n.d.)
- Positive outcomes in relation to knowledge about negative aspects of gang membership.
 - A study conducted by Brown et al., (1994) found that more students had bad attitudes towards gangs and the students obtained positive knowledge about the issue.
- The G.R.E.A.T. program has an effective impact on prosocial attitudes towards law enforcement. (Esbensen, 2004).
- Students who have participated in the program have lower rates of victimization. (Esbensen, 2004)
- Students who participated in the program exhibited better attachment and communication with parents and had a greater commitment to school and academic learning. (Esbensen, 2004)

Studies Demonstrating Ineffectiveness

- The G.R.E.A.T. program as character building program has largely not found support for the projected outcome of the program.
 - In one study researchers, found there was no significant differences of character development between the experimental and control group. (Ramsey, Rust, & Sobel, 2003)
- The G.R.E.A.T. program is not effective as developing gang resistance skills among participants.
 - A study by Brown, Palumbo, Lore and Snider (1994) found that there was no significant difference for resistance skills.

Summative Analysis

- Short- term impacts of G.R.E.A.T. participation indicates positive results, there are studies that critique the long-term benefits of program participation.
 - Based on a study on 31 schools in the United States and found that there was a 39% reduction of odds of gang membership and activity. Then in a four-year survey they found there was an average of 24% reduction of odds of gang membership and activity. (Esbensen et al., 2013)
- G.R.E.A.T. had multiple support from educators and parents.
 - Educators did not believe that the program reduces gang membership, but they do like having law enforcement in the schools and they do see the children learning important life skills. (Esbensen et al., 2010)

Conclusions

- Gangs are present all over the United States.
- Juvenile gang membership leads to a lot of adult consequences.
- In effort to combat youth joining gangs, G.R.E.A.T. was created.
- Research regarding the effectiveness of G.R.E.A.T. has been supported of the students obtaining good knowledge, gang interest decreased, obtaining more prosocial attitudes towards police officers, and better attachment to parents.
- Thus, the G.R.E.A.T. program is a positive mechanism for students in elementary and middle schools across the United States.

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