



Universiteit Utrecht



## **Building a future without violence**

*An explorative study of youth's gang involvement in primary and secondary schools of St. Maarten*

Utrecht University: Faculty Social Science

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### **Master thesis**

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## Abstract

Although it is known that gangs are present in primary and secondary schools of St. Maarten, no research has been done to examine to what extent children are involved with gangs. This research provides an overview of the gang involvement from teenagers of St. Maarten, aged ten through fourteen. Additionally, this study offers an overview of parents knowledge about their children's gang involvement. This study also examines which risk and protection factors for gang involvement among these teenagers can be identified. Lastly, this study reviews which programs are in St. Maarten in place to support teenagers who are involved with gangs. To obtain the results a survey was conducted among 565 students of primary and secondary schools. Additionally, a survey was conducted among 72 parents. Several employees from schools (N=11), professionals from non-government organisations (N=7) and professionals from government organisations (N=4) were interviewed. The results confirm that gang involvement is prominently present in primary and secondary schools in St. Maarten. 10,3 % of parents are aware that their child is part of a gang, whilst 39,7% of the parents is afraid that their child will join a gang. Additionally, this research shows that risk and protective factors for youth's gang involvement exist in various elements of youth's environment. Lastly, the data shows that there are no intervention or prevention programs in place aimed at teenagers for youth's gang involvement.

**Keywords:** youth's gang involvement, gang membership, desire to join a gang, perceived pressure to join a gang, primary and secondary schools, Sint Maarten

## Samenvatting

Hoewel bekend is dat gangs aanwezig zijn in de basis- en middelbare scholen van St. Maarten, is er geen onderzoek gedaan naar de mate waarin kinderen met deze gangs betrokken zijn. Dit onderzoek geeft een overzicht van de gang betrokkenheid van tieners, tien tot en met veertien jaar, uit St. Maarten. Daarnaast geeft dit onderzoek ook een overzicht van de kennis die ouders hebben over de gangbetrokkenheid van hun kinderen. Dit onderzoek onderzoekt ook welke risico- en beschermingsfactoren onder tieners kunnen worden geïdentificeerd. Ten slotte bekijkt dit onderzoek welke programma's er in St. Maarten zijn om de tieners die betrokken zijn bij gangs te ondersteunen. Om resultaten te verkrijgen werd er een survey afgenomen onder 565 studenten van de basis- en middelbare scholen. Daarnaast werd er onder 72 ouders ook een survey afgenomen. Verschillende medewerkers van scholen (N=11), meerdere professionals van niet-overheidsorganisaties (N=7) en professionals van overheidsorganisaties (N=4) werden geïnterviewd. De resultaten bevestigen dat gangbetrokkenheid prominent aanwezig is in de basis en middelbare scholen van St. Maarten. 10,3% van de ouders is zich ervan bewust dat hun kind deel uitmaakt van een gang, terwijl 39,7% van de ouders bang is dat hun kind lid wordt van een gang. Daarnaast ondersteunt dit onderzoek de opvatting dat risico- en beschermingsfactoren voor de betrokkenheid van de gangs in verschillende elementen van het kinds leven bestaan. Ten slotte blijkt uit de data dat er geen interventies of preventieve programma's gericht op tieners gangbetrokkenheid zijn.

**Sleutelwoorden:** jeugd betrokkenheid bij gangs, gang lidmaatschap, het verlangen om bij een gang te horen, de ervaren druk om bij een gang aan te sluiten, middelbare en basis scholen, Sint Maarten

## **Research background**

### **General information of St. Maarten**

St. Maarten/Saint Martin is one of the northern island of the Antilles. The island is partly Dutch, southern side, and partly French, northern-side. The capital of the Dutch side is Philipsburg and the capital of the French side is Marigot. Dutch, English and French are the official languages on St. Maarten/Saint Martin. St. Maarten has an area of 34 km<sup>2</sup>, whereas Saint Martin has an area of 53 km<sup>2</sup> (Department of Statistics, 2014). After being part of the Netherlands Antilles for over 50 years, St. Maarten became, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2010, a constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. St. Maarten has its own government and parliament. However, the King of the Netherlands is Head of State and is represented locally by the Governor (Department of Statistics, 2014). The most recent population census from St. Maarten was conducted in 2015. In 2015 St. Maarten had a population of 39.410 residents (Department of Statistics, 2017). The island economy is primarily driven by the tourism industry. Each year, over 2 million tourist visit the island (Department of Statistics, 2014).

### **History of St. Maarten**

St. Maarten was first settled by the Arawak Indians around 800 after Christ, the original inhabitants of South America. Christopher Columbus discovered the island in 1493 on behalf of Spain. Legend states that Columbus sighted the island on November 11<sup>th</sup>, the holiday of St. Martin of Tours, and named the island after him without even setting a foot on the island (Department of Statistics, 2014). Not the Spaniards but the Dutch and the French started to extract salt from the salt ponds on the island. In 1648 the island was unofficially divided between France and the Netherlands. The borders between Dutch and French territory have been officially set in 1817 (Farnsworth, 2001). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century sugar plantations were built on St. Maarten and African slaves were brought to the island to work on these plantations. Slavery was abolished mid-19th century. As a result, the vacant work brought many workers from the United States. During the Second World War, the Americans built a few large airstrips on the island, which served as an army base. These airstrips laid the foundation for the new future of St. Maarten as a tourist destination. (Rummens, 1993).

## Introduction

Since 2006 gang involvement among youth have been a prominent subject in St. Maarten's news. After the murder on a 17 year old boy, the Chief Commissioner of the Windward Islands appealed to parents to take gang violence seriously. The death, which was linked to a fight involving a gang from Cole Bay, is an example of the danger that is impaired with youth's involvement with gangs (The Daily Herald, 2006). In 2010 Roddy Heyliger of SMN news stated that the increase of incidents show an escalation in gang activity on the island (Heyliger, 2010). Nowadays, gang involvement is still a well discussed subject in St. Maarten (SXM Talks, 2015; SXM Talks, 2016).

First of all, a distinction between gangs and non-gangs must be made. In this research the term gang is defined by using the definition from the report written by Groeneveldt and Maccow (2016). This report defines gangs in St. Maarten as "men and women grouping together and staking claims to various districts". These gangs function as a family, providing trust and support to their members. The gangs are connected to the different districts and often fight gangs from other districts (Groeneveldt & Maccow, 2016), which can even result in murder (SXM Talks, 2016; The Daily Herald, 2006). The gangs have different symbolic hand gestures that are used as a form of communication between the gang members (Groeneveldt & Maccow, 2016). Every gang has their own hand gestures that can be shown by gang members to other individuals as an indicator of their affiliation. These signs also serve as a symbol of strength when a group of members is together (Struyk, 2006). Gang affiliation is shown by the members in different ways. Colours and styles of clothing are direct methods of visually indicating membership. The colours grey, black, red and blue are in St. Maarten associated with different districts, such as Philipsburg, St. Peters, Downstreet and Dutch Quarter (Groeneveldt & Maccow, 2016).

Gang affiliation is also detected in primary and secondary schools, which indicates that even school going children in St. Maarten are involved with gangs (SXM Talks, 2015; SSSD, personal communication, February 28, 2017). Even in schools that require uniforms, gang members use clothing to identify allegiances. For example, certain buttons left unbuttoned, pockets turned inside out or coloured shoe laces (SSSD, personal communication, February 28, 2017; Struyk, 2006). Although it is known that these gangs are present in primary and secondary schools of St. Maarten (SSSD, personal communication, February 28, 2017), no research has been done to examine to what extend children are involved with gangs. In order to provide effective intervention and prevention programs for

these young people, gang involvement must be clearly profiled. In this research gang involvement is divided in three categories: (1) previous or current gang membership, (2) the desire to join a gang and (3) the perceived pressure to join a gang. The goal of this research is to provide insight into the current situation regarding youth's gang involvement. Hence, the following three research questions:

- 1. To what extent are teenagers of St. Maarten, aged ten through fourteen, involved with gangs and to what degree are parents aware of their own child's gang involvement?*
- 2. Which risk and protective factors can be identified among teenagers, aged ten through fourteen, to be involved with gangs?*
- 3. Which programs are in place to support teenagers who are involved with gangs and to what extent do these programs address the risk and protective factors?*

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Gang involvement**

During late childhood and early adolescence a critical transition takes place, regarding an increase in psychopathology and academic disengagement (Ozer, Ritterman & Wanis, 2010). In this transition phase, youth typically begins hanging out with gang members (Howell, 2010). The process of joining a gang generally takes six months to one or two years upwards from the initial association (Huff, 1998). There are several reasons why youth are involved with gangs (Carlie, 2002; Horowitz, 1983; Vigil, 1997).

There are three most popularly held notions about why youth are involved with gangs. First, youth may join gangs to promote criminal enterprise, like the sale of drugs, as an alternative to poverty. Poverty makes gang related crimes, such as drugs sale, attractive to poor youth seeking to escape from their current lifestyle (Carlie, 2002). Secondly, gangs can serve as a type of protection for a segment of society that experience a lack of protection from traditional sources like the police (Horowitz, 1983). Thirdly, youths may join gangs because gangs are present as institutions in their neighbourhoods. Due to the fact that gangs are institutionalized in certain neighbourhoods, teenagers who are living in those neighbourhoods feel obliged to join those gangs (Vigil, 1997). In those neighbourhoods gang membership becomes comparable to family traditions. It is not unlikely to see second- and third-generation gang members (Hennigan & Spanovic, 2012).

The need of protection and the feeling that teenagers are obliged to join a gang, are important factors that contribute to the perceived pressure of teenagers to join gangs (Hennigan & Spanovic, 2012; Horowitz, 1983). Research shows that another important factor youth feel pressured to join a gang are peers (Hill, Howell, Hawkins & Battin-Pearson, 1999; Hill, Lui & Hawkins, 2001; Ozer et al., 2010). Teenagers find it important to be accepted by a certain peer group and want to conform to the group norms and attitudes, a need to belong (Delfos, 2011). Gang membership gives youth a sense of belonging which gives them a sense of identity (Singleton, May, Decker, Minor & Wells, 2006). In addition, peer pressure can cause teenagers to change their behavior to conform to the group (Brown, 1982). Therefore, peers are a highly influential component for youth to feel pressured to join a gang (Hill et al., 1999; Hill et al., 2001; Ozer et al., 2010).

### **Negative effects of gang involvement**

Youth's gang involvement has considerable short term and long term effects on adolescent's life and development (Curry, Decker & Pyrooz, 2003; Hill et al., 2001; Pesce & Wilczynski, 2005; Thornberry, 2003). In the short term, compared with youth who are not gang members, those who are gang members are more likely to commit felony theft, use and sell drugs and are more often arrested. Additionally, gang members more often indulge in binge drinking, robbery and breaking and entering. Gang members are also twice as likely to carry guns (Hill et al., 2001). Teenagers involved with gangs also experience academic difficulties, are more likely to drop out, be suspended or expelled (Pesce & Wilczynski, 2005). Furthermore, gang involvement has a facilitating effect on committing violent offences. However, teenagers who are involved with gangs are not only the executer of violence, but are also more likely to be victims. Gang involvement leads to a great risk of injury and even death (Curry et al., 2003).

In the longer term, gang membership seems to be a key element in the process of distancing oneself from the conventional society. This process has consequence which still exist beyond the actual period of gang involvement. For example, youth's gang involvement often leads to premature transitions into adult roles as a result as events such as dropout from school or teenage parenthood (Thornberry, 2003).

### **Risk and protective factors for gang involvement**

Children are exposed to different risk factors that can enhance the chances of gang involvement and to protective factors that decrease the likelihood that they will get involved with a gang. Children who encounter more risk factors than protective factors have an

increased likelihood of gang involvement, whereas children who are exposed to more protective factors than risk factors are more likely to find a pathway in life without gangs (Cooper & Ward, 2008). In order to identify which risk and protective factors for gang involvement exist, the Ecological system theory of Bronfenbrenner (1977) will be used. The Ecological system theory states that the child is an individual which develops within different systems of relationships affected by multiple levels of the environment. So, adolescents decision making behavior is affected by interactions with peers, parents, schools, and social organizations. The Ecological system theory distinguishes four different layers within the child's environment: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

**Microsystem.** The Microsystem is the immediate environment of the child, which directly influences the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Five types of micro systems are distinguished: neighbourhood, school, home environment, peer relationships and social support.

*Neighbourhood.* Social disorganization in neighbourhoods is one of the oldest explanations of involvement with gangs (Bjerregaard & Smith, 1993). Some neighbourhoods within the society set universal goals for its population and offer the ability to achieve these goals to a limited number of people (Merton, 1938). This structural pressure can lead to the formation of a new subgroup, such as gangs, providing new goals which will replace the goals set by the socially disorganized communities children live in (Cohen, 1955; Papachristos & Kirk, 2006).

*School.* Low school commitment can also be seen as a risk factor among teenagers. Most students are motivated to achieve conventional values, such as high grades and a diploma, because they do not want to risk losing reputations and prospects, which are required to live in an organized society (Hirschi, 1969). However, failing tests make students aware of their low position in the academic hierarchy. As a result they reject the conventional value system and try to get higher position in the hierarchy in a different unconventional way, for example, by getting involved with gangs (Kelly & Pink, 1973). Additionally, the Public Prosecution Service of St. Maarten suspects that there is a link between low school commitment and criminal behavior (Merkx & Buurman, 2015).

*Home environment.* The connection between gang involvement and the home environment can be explained by the social learning theory (Bandura, 1969) and the socialisation theory (Oetting & Donnermeyer, 1998). The social learning theory states that



patterns of behavior can be obtained through direct experience or by observing the behavior of others. So, experiencing violence and negative behavior as a child in their home environment will result in the acquisition of this behavior in later life (Bandura, 1969). A way to express this behaviour could be by gang involvement. Domestic violence is believed to be a recurring problem in Sint Maarten. Disciplining with physical punishment is common and sexual abuse and incest reportedly take place within families (Unicef, 2013). In addition, the socialization theory (Oetting & Donnermeyer, 1998) explains that an individual not only copy the observed behavior, but also accept this behavior as the acceptable norm within the society. Therefore, children will not only copy the negative behaviour they experience at home, but accept the family norms as their own (Oetting & Donnermeyer, 1998). Another factor that can influence youth's gang involvement are the children's parents. For example, a parental attitude favourable to antisocial behavior can function as a risk factor (Hawkins et al., 2000). The way parents raise their children can also function as a risk factor (Schroeder & Mowen, 2014). In this research the influences of three different parenting styles will be examined, the authoritative parenting style, the authoritarian parenting style and the permissive parenting style. These parenting styles have been summarized by using two dimensions, namely control and warmth. The authoritative parenting style is high in control and high in warmth and is characterized by high parental affection and respectful limit setting. The authoritarian parenting style is high in control and low in warmth. This style is strict in discipline and is sometimes insensitive to the child's emotional needs. Finally, the permissive parenting style is low in control and high in warmth (Hubbs-Tait, Kennedy, Page, Topham & Harrist, 2008).

*Peer relationship.* Peer relationships can also be seen as a risk or protective factor for youth to get involved with gangs. Peers have a great influence on young people's risk and criminal behaviour. Just being around peers can cause more activity in the emotion regulation part of the brain, which alters the decision making process of teenagers in a negative way (Richards, 2011). Association with delinquent peers, who engage in problematic behavior and have favourable attitudes towards antisocial behavior, will enhance the change of youth's gang involvement (Hill et al., 1999; Hill et al., 2001). Research (Merkx & Buurman, 2015) stated that due to the absence of both parents from children in St. Maarten, children have the freedom to hang out on the street with delinquent peers. These peers can get involved in criminal activities and eventually can get drawn in a world where the use of violence is the socially accepted norm (Mesu & Stoffers, 2011).

*Social support.* Previous research (Li et al., 2002; Papachristos & Kirk, 2006; Vigil, 1988) states that social support can function as an important protective buffer against gang involvement among youth. For example, neighbourhoods where members support each other result in good behaviour towards the community (Cooper & Ward, 2008). However, the lack of social support can cause youth's gang involvement. Youth will replace their current non-existent support system with the social support system that gangs are believed to provide (Papachristos & Kirk, 2006).

**Mesosystem.** The mesosystem is the system in which one microsystem and another microsystem interact with each other and directly influence the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The cooperative connections between different groups are called 'bridging social capital' (Putnam, 2002). Bridging social capital, a good connection between parents, schools and peers, could be important for preventing the involvement with gangs in St. Maarten. As, without good connections between the different microsystems, it is impossible to empower youth as independent and valued citizens, who work and recreate the community (Onderwijs en Jongeren Samenwerkingsprogramma, 2011).

**Exosystem.** The exosystem of a child is defined as the social settings that do not contain children but nonetheless affect their experiences in immediate settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), which includes the school environment and the school policy. Research shows that a safe and positive school environment reduces school violence (Johnson, 2009). Therefore, it could function as a protective factor which can reduce youth's gang involvement. Most primary and secondary schools in St. Maarten enforce a zero tolerance policy for all offences (Ombudsman, 2015; SMN News, 2009; The Daily Herald, 2017), which is defined as a school policy that mandates predetermined consequences or punishment for specific offenses, regardless of the circumstances (Stader, 2004). However, research (Gregory & Cornell, 2009) shows that schools that have a zero tolerance policy creates a highly structured environment that ignores the need for support of students. Suspension and expulsion of students does not address the underlying cause of the problem nor teaches students alternative strategies and decision-making skills. Additionally, the suspended or expelled student is unsupervised and likely to fall further behind in school (Osher, Sandler & Nelson, 2001).

**Macrosystem.** The macrosystem is the cultural 'blueprint' of the child's environment and determines the social structure and activities that occur in other systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Factors related to the macro system are cultural values and poverty. Cultural values are

an important factor which can influence gang involvement in a positive or negative way. The approval or disapproval of certain behaviour determines the acceptable behavioral norm within the society (Cooke & Rousseau, 1988). In addition, another factor that potentially could explain youth's involvement in gangs revolves around poverty. Poverty is a huge problem in St. Maarten, which has reproduced more dangerous problems, such as crime (SMN News, 2014). Research show that due to poverty and the high unemployment rate among youth, young people in St. Maarten seek illegal ways to generate income (Merx & Buurman, 2015).

### **Intervention and prevention programs**

Intervention programs provide support and services for young people who are actively involved in gangs and try to push them away from gangs. Whereas, prevention programs target youth at risk of gang involvement and help reduce the number of young people who get involved with gangs (Howell, 2010; Welsh & Farrington, 2007). Intervention as well as prevention programs are more likely to be effective when they address the correct risk and protective factor (National Research Council, 2009). Current research distinguish three ways to implement intervention or prevention programs to support youth who are involved with gangs (Ashery, Robertson & Kumpfer, 1998; Trump, 1993; Welsh & Farrington, 2007). The first strategy is to intervene at the individual level with at risk children and particularly violent children. These are programs that focus on individual progress, for example by counselling (Welsh & Farrington, 2007). The second strategy is family prevention (Welsh & Farrington, 2007), which are programs designed specific for the home environment. These programs target risk and protective factors to the family context as well as the interactions between the family and other systems that involve and have an impact on the child (Ashery et al., 1998). The third strategy is community level prevention (Welsh & Farrington, 2007). Schools are a critical part of the community level prevention to deal with gangs. Through acknowledgement, early recognition and a balanced response within the school district and the broader community as a whole, the schools can function as a safe haven for youth who are involved with gangs (Trump, 1993).

## Method

### Design

As there is little known about teenager's gang involvement in St. Maarten, this study has a strong exploratory character. This study made use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Using a mixed method, both qualitative as quantitative methods, increases the internal validity and reliability of the research (Abowitz & Toole, 2009). The quantitative part of the research includes a survey among students (N=565) and a survey among parents (N=72). Both surveys were used to first obtain more knowledge about children's gang involvement and second to identify risk and protective factors for youth's gang involvement. The qualitative part exist of semi structured interviews with school employees (N=11) and semi structured interviews with professionals from several government and non-government organisations (N=11). The interviews were used to get more insight about the risk and protective factors of youth's gang involvement. Additionally, the interviews were used to obtain more information about the programs that are in place to support teenagers who are involved with gangs.

### Procedure and participants

**Quantitative method.** An officially signed letter from the head of the SSSD department was send to all the school boards of St. Maarten to ask for their participation in the research. After the approval of the school boards all the managers of the different primary and secondary school were contacted with a semi-structured e-mail. After the school managers agreed, the researcher visited the schools to conduct the questionnaires. In total, 78 percent of all primary schools and 83 percent of all the secondary schools from the Dutch part of the island participated in this research. The participating public primary schools were Leonard Connor School, Marie G. de Weever School, Martin Luther King, Jr. Primary and Oranje school. The participating subsidized primary schools were Hillside Christian School – Helmich Snijders, MAC: Browlia F. Maillard Campus, Seven Day Adventist, Sr. Borgia Primary, Sr. Marie Laurence, Sr. Regina Primary, St. Dominic Primary and St. Joseph Primary. The participating public secondary school was St. Maarten Vocational Training School. In addition, the participating subsidized secondary schools were Milton Peters College, Sundial School and St. Dominic High School. The surveys were conducted per class. As a result of the different reading levels of the students, the questions of the survey were, if necessary, read out loud. Afterwards, the students had a short amount of time to write down their answers. The

researcher was present as a supervisor and if needed she would read the questions out loud herself. After conducting the surveys, the schools were thanked for their participation. In total, 565 students from the sixteen different primary and secondary schools completed this survey. Parents were approached by using the schools network. 120 children of both primary and secondary schools were selected by the teachers to hand the parent survey over to their parents. The parents had to return the survey to the schools within a week. 72 parent surveys were returned, resulting in a return rate of 60,0 percent.

**Qualitative method.** Eleven employees from different schools were interviewed. In total eight teachers, one social worker and two coordinators from both primary and secondary schools participated. The interviewed school employees were appointed to the researcher by the school managers. The interviews took approximately half an hour depending on the time that was needed to obtain the relevant information.

Additionally professionals from eleven government and non-government organisations were interviewed. All organisations have been approached with an officially signed letter from the head of the SSSD department. After these letters were send, the researcher approached these organizations by a semi structured e-mail to explain more about the research and if possible to set the appointments. The four participating government departments were the Student Support Services Division, the Department of Youth, the Police Department Youth and Morals and the Court of Guardianship. The seven participating non-governmental organizations were Foundation Judicial Institutes St. Maarten, Turning Point Foundation, SXM youth Council, SXM Volleyball Association (SIMVA), SXM Pony Baseball & Softball Association, the Belvedere Community Center and Dr. J. Enterprises. The semi structured interviews were conducted locally at the participating organization. After receiving approval from the professionals, the interviews were recorded. The interviews lasted approximately one hour.

## **Instruments**

**Quantitative Method.** The questionnaire for the students was based on a survey from Katz and Fox (2010). However, several changes have been made to make the survey more culturally appropriate, see Appendix A. The questionnaires started with six general questions to collect background information of the participants. Followed by eleven questions about the child's neighbourhood, seven questions about their school commitment, twenty two questions about their home environment and six questions about the behaviour of their friends. Lastly, students needed to answer four questions about their gang involvement. Current or previous

gang membership has been measured asking participants if they have ever or are part of a group who do things that their parents or police would not approve of. This variable can be split into three groups, (1) children that never have been or are part of a group that their parents and police would not approve of, (2) children that have been or are part of a group that either the police or their parents would not approve of and (3) children that have been or are part of a group which their parents and police would not approve of. The desire to join a gang has been measured by asking students if they would like to be part of a group who do things that are wrong. Lastly, the pressure to join a gang has been measured by asking if children ever felt pressured to be part of a group who do things that are wrong. Questions needed to be answered by using a Likert scale. Respondents had to choose which option reflects best with their own opinion.

The questionnaire for parents started with eleven general open questions to collect background information about the parents. Followed by three questions about their alcohol, cigarette and drug use, on which parents needed to indicate how much they smoked cigarettes, drank alcohol or used drugs in the last month. Parents could choose from six answers, once a month (1), twice a month (2), once a week (3), two or three time a week (4), four or five times a week (5) and never (6). The second part of the survey consists of questions about the parenting style. These questions were based on the Baumrind (1971) parenting styles, including questions about authoritative, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles. However, questions have been altered to fit the cultural standards of St Maarten, see Appendix B. In addition, parents needed to fill out questions measuring parents attitude towards fighting, anti-social behavior, drugs use, alcohol use and skipping school. Lastly, parents needed to answer questions about their child's gang involvement. Questions needed to be answered by means of a five point Likert scale: never (1), once in a while (2), About half the time (3), very often (4) or always (5). Parents had to choose which option correspondents best with their own opinion.

**Qualitative Method.** Semi-structured in depth interviews with employees of schools and professionals were being conducted. The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that it provides space for discussing new subjects that have been mentioned during the interview (Schmidt, 2004). During the interviews with professionals, the topics were fixed but varied per organizations, see Appendix C. Additionally, the topics for employees of schools varied per position, see Appendix D

## Analysis

**Quantitative Method.** To examine the data obtained by the parent and student survey a multiple linear regression, using the program SPSS 24 for Windows, was conducted. The multiple linear regression shows if the independent variables significantly predict the dependent variable. The independent variables of the student survey are school environment, home environment, neighbourhood and delinquent peers. The school environment consists of the following three categories: 'school safety', 'academic performance' and 'school attachment'. The home environment consists of these nine categories: 'attachment mother', 'attachment father', 'social support mother', 'social support father', 'raised by single parent', 'family conflict', 'family attachment', 'family management' and 'sibling behaviour'. Neighbourhood consists of four categories: 'neighbourhood disorganisation', 'neighbourhood attachment', 'neighbourhood attitude', 'neighbourhood sport availability'. The independent variable delinquent peers has just one category: 'peer behaviour'. The dependent variables of the student survey is gang involvement, consisting of previous or current gang membership, the desire to join a gang and perceived pressure to join a gang.

The independent variables of the parent survey include parenting style, parent history and parental attitude towards negative behavior. Parenting style consists of a 'authoritative parenting style', 'permissive parenting style' and 'authoritarian parenting style'. Parent history consists of the following three categories 'parents history of smoking', 'parents history of alcohol use' and 'parents history of drugs use'. Parent attitude towards negative behavior consists of parents attitude towards fighting, using drugs, drinking alcohol, skipping school and engaging in anti-social behaviour. All results are controlled for the parent's level of education. The dependent variables are their child's gang involvement, their child's previous or current gang membership, their child's desire to join a gang and their perceived pressure to join a gang.

**Qualitative Method.** To analyse the data obtained from the interviews, a code-based analysis was conducted using the steps from Boeije (2005). First, the interviews are analysed by open coding, at which codes were being assigned to common recurring themes. Secondly, the interviews were being analysed by axially coding, at which the codes were being ordered and reduced. Thirdly, the interviews were being analysed by selective coding, at which codes were being combined. Lastly, the researcher organised the codes based on the research questions (Boeije, 2005).

## Results

This chapter discusses the results, which will be laid out per research question.

### Research question 1

The first research question - to what extent are teenagers of St. Maarten, aged ten through fourteen, involved with gangs and to what degree are parents aware of their own child's gang involvement? - can be divided in two parts: teenager's gang involvement and parents knowledge about it.

The data from the student survey about youth's gang involvement are shown in Table 1. The table shows that 8,3% of the children between the ages of 10 to 14 have been or are part of a gang. Boys have been or are more often part of a gang, 10,5%, than girls, 6,3%. Gang membership seems to increase when children are getting older. 81,3 % of the ten year old children have never been or are not part of a gang, in contrast to 45,7% of the fourteen years old. Additionally, the data show that 6,8 % of the youth of St. Maarten aged 10 through 14 has the desire to join a gang. The desire to join a gang does not differ very much between girls or boys. 6,8 % of all the boys wanted to join a gang, while 6,6% of the girls wanted to join a gang. More teenagers have the desire to join a gang during secondary school. 14,8% from the secondary students have the desire to join a gang, in contrast to 6,6% of the students from primary school. Lastly, the data show that almost 30 percent of the youth of St. Maarten aged 10 through 14 years old felt pressured to join a gang. 29,8% of the boys and 27,5 % of the girls felt pressured to join a gang. Again children in secondary school are feeling more pressure to join a gang, 27,1%, in comparison with children in primary school, 27,1%. See Appendix E for more extensive tables about youth's gang involvement, including the percentages of youth's gang involvement per different school board.

Gang involvement				
		Current or previous gang membership	Desire to join a gang	Perceived pressure to join a gang
Gender				
	Male	10,3	6,8	29,8
	Female	6,3	6,6	27,5
Age				
	10	5,0	3,8	29,1
	11	5,9	5,4	27,5
	12	10,2	7,4	24,6
	13	8,9	8,1	30,4



	14	17,1	17,1	48,6
School				
Primary	8,3		6,6	27,1
Secondary	9,9		14,8	39,2

*Table 1: Percentages of youth's gang involvement*

The second part of the first research question is about parent's knowledge of their child's gang involvement. The data from the parent survey shows that 20,9% of the parents indicated that they were aware that their child has been or is part of a group that does things they do not approve of. While 10,3% indicated that their child has been or is part of a group that did things that the police would not approve of. Additionally, 29,4% of the parents believe that their child feels pressure to join a gang. Lastly, it is notable to mention that 39,7% of the parents admit that they are afraid that their child will, at some point, become part of a gang.

## **Research question 2**

The results for the second research question - which risk and protective factors can be identified among teenagers, aged ten through fourteen, to be involved with gangs? - will be discussed using the four system of the Ecological system theory of Bronfenbrenner (1977), the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. The risk and protective factors within the microsystem will be discussed using the data from the student survey (Appendix F), parent survey (Appendix G), the interviews with the professionals and the interviews with employees of schools. Whereas, the risk and protective factors within the meso-, exo- and macrosystem are elaborated using the data from the interviews with professionals and the interviews with employees of schools.

**Microsystem.** The microsystem has been divided into five categories, neighbourhood, school, home environment, peer relationships and social support.

*Neighbourhood.* The data from the student survey shows that the neighbourhood only functions as a risk factor for youth's desire to join a gang. Neighbourhood attachment ( $\beta = 0,112$ ,  $p = 0,029$ ) has a significant positive effect on the desire to join a gang, which indicated that children who like their neighbourhood and do not want to move, are more likely to have the desire to join a gang. The neighbourhood has no significant effect on youth's current or previous attachment and youth's perceived pressure to join a gang. The interviews with the professionals and employees from school showed that the neighbourhood could function as a risk factor. They argue that children learn from what they see in the neighbourhood. For example, a drugs based community will make children use drugs in return.

*School.* The data from the student survey shows that school could function as a risk factor for youth's current or previous gang membership and youth's desire to join a gang. School attachment has a negative significant effect on youth's current or previous gang involvement ( $\beta = -0,154$ ,  $p = 0,004$ ) and a negative significant effect on youth's desire to join a gang ( $\beta = -0,167$ ,  $p = 0,002$ ). This means that children who do not like going to school and think most subjects are not interesting, are more likely to be a gang member or have the desire to join a gang. Some teachers talked about the danger of a low school attachment, which could even lead to drop outs. A student care coordinator of primary school said the following about drop outs:

*"Some students drop out, so they have no finished education and make gangs part of their identity."*

The student survey shows that school has no significant effect on youth's perceived pressure to join a gang.

*Home.* All professionals and employees of schools also agreed that gang engagement can be traced back to the upbringing and family circumstances. The student and parent survey support this statement. Sibling behavior, attachment to one's mother and family management all have a significant effect on youth's gang involvement. Sibling behaviour has a positive significant effect on gang involvement ( $\beta = 0,103$ ,  $p = 0,031$ ), children with siblings who engage in more delinquent behaviour, such as using drugs, fighting and being expelled from school, can lead to gang involvement. A professional mentioned that younger children copy the behaviour of older children. Therefore children who have siblings that engage in delinquent behavior, are more likely to also engage in negative behaviour. A professional mentioned the following about this issue:

*"Younger boys are copying the behavior of the older boys, who they later in life want to be. If these older boys engage in an illegal lifestyle and engage in gangs, the younger boys are more drawn toward that lifestyle when they grow up."*

In addition, attachment to one's mother has a significant negative effect on the desire to join a gang ( $\beta = -0,203$ ,  $p = 0,009$ ;  $\beta = -0,447$ ,  $p = 0,001$ ;  $\beta = -0,388$ ,  $p = 0,005$ ). Children who do not feel close to their mother and cannot share their thoughts and feelings with their mother, are more likely to have the desire to join a gang.

Lastly, Family management has a significant negative effect on youth's desire to join a gang ( $\beta = -0,248$ ,  $p = 0,001$ ) and a significant negative effect on the perceived pressure to

join a gang. Which means that youth with parents who are less likely to supervise and monitor their children's behaviour are more likely to have the desire or feel pressured to join a gang. Professionals and employees from schools agree that having no structure at home can lead to gang involvement. A professional said the following about this subject.

*“There is no proper structure in the upbringing. No structure or guidance for the children. So, they turn to the street, do what they want to do and engage in those negative groups.”*

The parent survey shows that some parenting styles influence youth's current or previous gang membership and youth's desire to join a gang. The permissive parenting style has a positive significant effect on youth's current or previous gang involvement ( $\beta = 0,298$ ,  $p = 0,014$ ). Meaning that children from parents with a permissive parenting style have more chance to engage in a gang. As, mentioned before, the permissive parenting style is low in control and high in warmth (Hubbs-Tait et al., 2008). Most of the teachers argue that parents who are not strict enough and do not discipline their children accordingly, can be the cause of gang involvement. A teacher from a primary school mentioned the following:

*“Parents just don't take care and do not discipline their children, they are just not rigid enough ”*

However, disciplining children too much, can also lead to gang involvement. An authoritarian parenting style has a positive significant effect on gang membership ( $\beta = 0,303$ ,  $p = 0,009$ ) and a positive significant effect on youth's desire to join a gang ( $\beta = 0,427$ ,  $p = 0,001$ ). Children from parents with an authoritarian parenting style have more chance to engage in a gang. The authoritarian parenting style is high in control and low in warmth, which means this style is strict in discipline (Hubbs-Tait et al., 2008). Professionals and employees from schools both agree that disciplining too harshly and domestic abuse can lead to gang involvement. The following was mentioned by a professional about the subject:

*“Sometimes parents feel frustrated and hit the child to solve problems with their child, for example when the parents hear something bad from the school. This can also lead to criminal group behaviour. For example, children learn from their parents and believe that violence is a normal way to solve their problems and try to solve their problems also with violence and get in contact with violent peers.”*

*Peer relationship.* The data of the student survey shows that peer relationship can

function as a risk factor for youth's current or previous membership and youth's desire to join a gang. Peer behaviour ( $\beta = -0,273$ ,  $p = 0,001$ ) has a significant negative effect on gang membership and a significant negative effect on youth's desire to join a gang ( $\beta = -0,110$ ,  $p = 0,030$ ). Meaning that peers who engage in more negative or delinquent behavior leads to gang membership and the desire to join a gang. Peer pressure, a need to belong and being friends with delinquent peers are mentioned as important risk factors by most professionals and employees of schools. Friends can influence and even pressure children to get involved with gangs. Additionally, children think that it is cool to be part of a gang, so they want to belong to those kind of groups. A professional mentioned the following:

*"It seems cool to be part of a gang, the children just want to be part of the 'in crowd'. Being part of certain groups makes them cool."*

**Social support.** Social support was mentioned by professionals and employees from primary and secondary as a potential protective factor on gang involvement. They argue that gangs offer children the love, attention and social support the children are not getting at home or from the society. Providing social support to those at risk children is seen as a possible solution for youth's gang involvement.

**Mesosystem.** Professionals and employees of schools argue that a good collaboration between different microsystems can function as a protective factor. The following was said by a professional about the subject:

*"The school, parents and coaches need to work together. They have to work together to ensure that the child develops as a good participant of the community."*

However, professionals argue that nowadays in St. Maarten the different microsystems within a child's live give mixed signals. For example, children are expected to behave in a certain manner when they are on the school premises. But when they get home different rules and behavioral norms exist, which confuses the children. This can cause children to act out and even lead to gang involvement.

**Exosystem.** The risk and protective factors of the exosystem are school environment and the school policy. It is argued by professionals and employees of schools that the school environment can function as a protective or risk factor. The following is said by a professional on the topic:

*"The school environment can have a positive and negative influence."*

*Because, if schools don't have a proper safety structure in place, than children can feel that at school they are not safe. If at school there are gangs and nothing is done about that, children are more likely to continue to join gangs, because the gangs help them, the gangs protect them."*

A team that can collaborate with each other in a productive way is mentioned as an important factor to ensure a positive school environment. Additionally, according to the school employees it is important that the school has a clear structure in place. So that students know what is expected from them.

As mentioned before, most schools in St. Maarten have a zero tolerance policy (Ombudsman, 2015; SMN News, 2009; The Daily Herald, 2017), which got some critic from professionals and employees from schools. However, the zero tolerance policy is not seen as a risk or protective factor for youth's gang involvement.

**Macrosystem.** The two risk factors within the macrosystem are cultural values and poverty. Cultural values is only mentioned by teachers as a potential risk factor. One teacher from secondary school argues that there is no negative stigma on gangs. Children only see the positive side of joining a gang. Additional, a social worker discussed gender roles as a cultural risk factor that influence boys to get involved with gangs.

*"Boys need to be tough. It is not normal for them to talk about their feelings, not normal for a guy to cry or show emotions. And that influences them."*

The lack of financial resources and materialism are issues that were mentioned by professionals and teachers as categories from the risk factor poverty. Minimal living facilities, unhygienic home, no electricity, only one meal a day and parents not making enough money to provide for their children are all factors that influence children's gang involvement. Professionals argue that children want to contribute money to their family and gangs provide children with a different income source. However, because the society is becoming more materialistic, children also join gangs to earn money to buy materialistic products, such as mobile phones. A teacher from a primary school argues that offering children better prospects would help them make better choices and could eventually reduce children's gang involvement.

### **Research question 3**

The third research question examines which programs are in place to support teenagers who are involved with gangs and to what extent these programs address the risk and protective

factors. In this research three types of support programs can be distinguished; programs in primary and secondary schools, programs from non-government organisations and programs from the government.

*Programs in primary and secondary schools.* The interviews with the employees from the schools showed that most primary and secondary schools have support programs in place where people from outside the school visit and talk to the children about several subjects, including violence and the justice system. For example, the police visiting the school, which gives children the chance to ask questions. Some primary schools indicated that there are anti-bullying programs in place, which contributes to a safer school environment. Additionally, in all schools there is a care team present with whom children can talk about their problems. However, employees from primary and secondary schools all indicate that there are no specific programs to prevent youth's gang involvement. A teacher from primary school mentioned the following about the subject:

*“There is no specific program in place for at risk children. But the school is watchful for gang affiliation in 4th, 5th and 6th grade. When the teachers see a trend, they warn the guidance counsellor. We try our best to speak to the children.”*

*Programs from non-government organisations.* Professionals from non-government organisations indicated that there are no programs in place specific for youth's gang involvement. Non-governmental organisations rather focus on promoting positive things to stimulate youth. A professional said the following about their programs:

*“We do not have specific programs on gang involvement. We rather prevent than cure. Cure requires a lot.”*

However, some non-governmental organisation have support programs in place for parents. For example, Turning Foundation has a family support program in place, which is aimed to create awareness among parents for their child addiction problems. Additionally, Belvedere Community center tries to get parents involved in the after school activities for their children.

*Programs from government organisations.* The interviews with professionals from government organisation showed that the government of St. Maarten has several support programs for at risk youth in place; the workshop ‘Gangs and St. Maarten's Youth: What every parent should know’, the program ‘get off the block, get on the bus, get busy’, the program ‘I am king’ and the ‘Business outreach and placement program’. The SSSD organizes a workshop called ‘Gangs and St. Maarten's Youth: What every parent should

know'. The objective of this workshop is to help parents understand why children join gangs, how to distinguish if their child is involved in a gang through symbols, initiation methods and provide tips and strategies that attendees can utilize. The program 'get off the block, get on the bus, get busy' was organized by the Department of Youth. The program was aimed at young people that were hanging on the block. The objective of the program was to get young people who were hanging on the block to be more active and eventually off the block. First, the situation had to be assessed and possible areas where those young people could be placed had to be found. Some youngsters were looking for possibilities for jobs, others wanted to be placed back in school. If possible, the young people were helped getting active. However, the program did not last very long, because it lacked structural funding. The 'I am King' program is aimed at the men of St. Maarten. The objective of the program was to learn young men how they should handle their responsibilities, relationships, emotions, how to communicate in the right way, to try to build self-esteem and to create awareness among men to be responsible. This same program was also executed on several secondary schools. Due to the fact that this program at the secondary schools was voluntary, the turnout was very small. The objective of the 'Business outreach and placement program' is to offer students an internship during the summer within their career ambition. So, some students are placed at the government and other students are placed in private sector. In addition to obtaining practical experiences, students also get a small compensation for the time they spend at the internship.

### **Conclusion and discussion**

Although it is known that these gangs are present in primary and secondary schools of St. Maarten (SSSD, personal communication, February 28, 2017), no research has been done to examine to what extent children are involved with gangs. Therefore, this research provides an overview of the gang involvement from teenagers of St. Maarten, aged ten through fourteen. Additionally, this study offers an overview of parents knowledge about their children's gang involvement. This study also examines which risk and protection factors among teenagers can be identified. Lastly, this study reviews which programs are in place to support teenagers who are involved with gangs and if these programs address the correct risk and protective factors.

This research confirms that gang involvement is prominently present in primary and secondary schools, see Table 1. On top of that, 10,3 % of parents are aware that their child is part of a gang, whilst 39,7% of the parents is afraid that their child will, at some point, join a

gang. Noteworthy about the data are the big differences between youth's gang involvement from children in primary school and children in secondary school. These differences are present in all three categories, it differs 1,6% for the current and previous membership, 8,2 % for the desire to join a gang and 12,1% for the perceived pressure to join a gang. Previous scientific research (Hill et al., 2001) shows an increase in youth's gang involvement at the age that students make the transition to high school, which is comparable with the differences this research shows between primary and secondary school. Additionally, the major differences between youth's gang involvement between teenagers from 13 and 14 year old, both in secondary school, stands out. 8,1 % of the thirteen year olds have the desire to join a gang in contrast of 17,1 percent of the fourteen year old. The percentage between these ages has been doubled. These differences are present in all three categories, it differs 8,2% for the current and previous membership, 9,0 % for the desire to join a gang and 18,2% for the perceived pressure to join a gang. No previous scientific research found differences between 13 and 14 year olds that were similar to these (Hill et al., 1999; Hill et al., 2001; Howell, 2010). The differences between boys and girls are almost non-existent and therefore negligible, which can be supported by previous research (Merckx & Buurman, 2015) that indicates both boys and girls take part in the juvenile crime of St. Maarten. Also notable is that almost 30,0 percent of the teenagers, aged ten through fourteen, feels pressured to join a gang, but only 8,3 percent actually is a gang member. This group, who feels pressure to join a gang but are not a member yet, could be a target group to develop an intervention or prevention program for.

This research supports the notion that risk and protective factors for youth's gang involvement exist in various elements of youth's environment. As expected, risk and protective factors could be identified in every system from the Ecological system theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The risk and protective factors shown by the student and parent survey matched completely with the risk and protective factors indicated by employees from schools and professionals.

Notable is that one identified risk factor contradicts the previous scientific literature, namely neighbourhood attachment. The data shows that children who like their neighbourhood and do not want to move, are more likely to have the desire to join a gang. However, research (Bjerregaard & Smith, 1993; Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1938; Papachristos & Kirk, 2006) shows that social disorganisation within a neighbourhood leads to gang involvement, not neighbourhood attachment. However, neighbourhood attachment as a risk factor can be explained by the fact that gangs in St. Maarten often claim districts, often



neighbourhoods (Groeneveldt & Maccow, 2016). Therefore, liking a neighbourhood can ensure that youth want to be part of that particularly neighbourhood gang. Another remarkable result is that youth have a stronger desire to join a gang, when they are less attached to one's mother, whilst attachment to one's father has no effect on the desire to join a gang. This can be explained by the fact that families in St. Maarten often consist of a single mother. Many teenagers in St. Maarten grow up in broken families, with no father figure present (Merkx & Buurman, 2015). Lastly, the fact that the zero tolerance policy of primary and secondary schools is not seen as a risk factor for youth's gang involvement contradicts previous research (Gregory & Cornell, 2009; Osher et al., 2001; Stader, 2004).

The data show that there are no interventions or preventive programs in place aimed at teenagers for youth's gang involvement. Due to the fact that there are no programs in place aimed at teenagers, the existing risk and protective factors are not properly addressed. The primary and secondary schools in St. Maarten all have a care team present, but there is no program or curriculum aimed at the prevention of youth's gang involvement. Having an effective program in place aimed at the prevention of youth's gang involvement at schools, can actually reduce gang involvement (Pesce & Wilczynski, 2005; Trump, 1993; Welsh & Farrington, 2007). However, some primary schools indicated that there was an anti-bullying program in place. Research (Pesce & Wilczynski, 2005) shows that anti-bullying programs can help reduce gang participation by creating a more positive school environment and decreasing incidents of victimization, which reduces the desire of students to seek protection from gangs against the bully. Another way to reduce youth's gang involvement is the use of local police officers in the classroom (Pesce & Wilczynski, 2005), which also happens in some primary and secondary schools of St. Maarten. The local police has to discuss the subject gangs in order for the program to be successful (Pesce & Wilczynski, 2005), which does not happen in the primary and secondary schools of St. Maarten.

Non-government organisations have no programs in place to prevent youth's gang involvement. They rather promote positive things, such as good academic performances or gaining more self-confidence. The informational workshop about gangs aimed to inform parents is the only program developed by the government about youth's gang involvement. The lack of gang awareness among parents is an issue that needs to be addressed when trying to reduce gang involvement among youth (Howell, 2010). As the parent survey shows that the permissive parenting style and the authoritarian parenting style leads to more gang involvement among youth, education support towards parents with those parenting styles

could help reduce gang involvement. Programs should focus on promoting an authoritative parenting style, which is characterized by high parental affection and a respectful limit setting (Hubbs-Tait et al., 2008). Previous research indicates that the authoritative parenting style is associated with the best developmental outcomes (Kim, Wang, Orozco-Lapray, Shen & Murtuza, 2013). For example, the authoritative parenting style leads to better school results, low depressive symptoms and a decrease in delinquency behavior (Talib, Abdullah & Mansor, 2011). In addition to educational support programs for parents, prevention efforts to reduce gang involvement among youth should also address other influential factors of youth's life (Hill et al., 2001).

### **Strengths and limitations**

This research has both strengths as some limitations. A strength of this research is that this it is socially relevant. Gang involvement among youth is a well discussed subject in St. Maarten's news (Heyliger, 2010; SXM Talks, 2015; SXM Talks, 2016; The Daily Herald, 2006), with serious short and long term consequences (Curry, Decker & Pyrooz, 2003; Hill et al., 2001; Pesce & Wilczynski, 2005; Thornberry, 2003). In addition, because gang involvement among teenagers in St. Maarten has not been examined before, this research has a strong explorative character. Therefore, this research can function as the foundation for future research. A recommendation for future research, is to focus on the needs and ideals of the at risk youth. This can be examined by conducting interviews with gang members or teenagers who have the desire to join a gang. Lastly, this research has a large sample size, including 78 percent of all primary schools and 83 percent of all the secondary schools. So, the information gathered from the survey can be generalized back to the population, within the limits of random error (Barlett, Kotrlik & Higgins, 2001).

A limitation of the research is that, although this research is generalizable back to the Dutch side of St. Maarten, this research is not generalizable to the French side of the island or other islands within the Dutch kingdom. Another limitation of this research refers to the way the student survey is conducted. The student survey is conducted in school classes. Since the interviews with professionals and employees showed that being part of a gang is seen by students of St. Maarten as something cool, it could be that students have bragged about their gang involvement to other students and given their answers based on this bragger. Of course, this study has tried to prevent this effect. For example, by instructing that students need to fill out the survey in silence and by instructing children to sit alone instead of in groups.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the results of this research, this research will give some implications for practice. As this research shows that children from primary and secondary schools are involved with gangs, it is important to develop intervention and prevention programs with the objective to reduce youth's gang involvement. Based on the results and previous research, it would be best to develop two new programs with regards to youth's gang involvement. One prevention program, that help reduce the number of young people who get involved with gangs, aimed at the students of the fourth or fifth grade from elementary schools and one intervention program, that provides support and services for young people who are actively involved in gangs, aimed at children from secondary schools. Due to the fact that this research shows that children in St. Maarten at the age of ten are involved with gangs, preventive programs should be aimed at younger children. Additionally, as gang involvement increases with age, an intervention program should be developed aimed at students from secondary schools.

The intervention programs are aimed at children from secondary schools that are already involved with gangs. Prevention programs aimed at children from the fifth and fourth grade from primary schools, should target youth that is exposed to multiple risk factors. Research shows that the more risk factors are present in a child's environment, more likely the chance of gang involvement (Cooper & Ward, 2008; Hill et al., 2001). Compared with youth who experienced none or only one risk factors, youth who experienced seven or more risk factors were thirteen times more likely to get involved with a gang (Hill et al., 2001). Some risk factors of gang involvement, such as factors related to the child's home environment, are subjects that should be addressed on their own. For example, a program aiming at parents to educate them about the effects of their parenting style could make significant improvements, and a program to decrease poor family management. Prevention efforts should also address all aspects of a child's live. The results of this research show that factors that influence youth's gang involvement occur in the direct environment of the child, but also in the meso-, exo- and macrosystem. There is no single solution that will prevent youth from getting involved with gangs. However, combining the multiple risk factors found in this research and expanding the existing support programs within schools, non-government and government organisations could reduce the chances that youth will be involved with gangs.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Student survey

#### Part 1. Personal Information

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name of school \_\_\_\_\_

Country of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Neighbourhood \_\_\_\_\_

Gender  Boy  Girl Age \_\_\_\_\_

I live with my:  Father  Mother  Grandmother  Grandfather  
 Aunt  Uncle  Guardian  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part 2. Questions about your neighbourhood, school, family and friends

##### Questions

##### Answers

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD

##### How much do each of the following statements describe your neighbourhood:

I like my neighbourhood.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
If I had to move, I would miss the neighbourhood I now live in.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
I feel safe in my neighbourhood.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
There are a lot of fights in my neighbourhood.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
There is a lot of crime in my neighbourhood.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
There is a lot of drug use in my neighbourhood.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
There are people in my neighbourhood who are proud of me when I do something well.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
There are sports activities available for me in my neighbourhood.	No/Yes

##### How wrong would most adults in your neighbourhood think it is for young people to:

Smoke marijuana	Very wrong / Wrong / A little wrong / Not wrong
Drink alcohol	Very wrong / Wrong / A little wrong / Not wrong
Fight	Very wrong / Wrong / A little wrong / Not wrong

#### SCHOOL

I Enjoy being in school	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
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I try to do my best in school.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
I find most subjects interesting.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
My grades were good last year.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
The things I learn in school are important for my later life.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
I feel safe at my school.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
My teacher(s) notice when I am doing a good job and tells me.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes

**FAMILY**

I feel very close to my mother	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
I share my thoughts and feelings with my mother	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
I feel very close to my father	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
I share my thoughts and feelings with my father	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
My parent(s)/guardian give me lots of chances to do fun things with them.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
My parent(s)/guardian ask me what I think before most family decisions affecting me are made.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
If I had a problem I can always ask my parent(s)/guardian for help.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
My parent(s)/guardian notice when I am doing a good job and let me know about it.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
My parent(s)/guardian ask if I've done my homework.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
My parent(s)/guardian will know if I came home late	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
When I am not at home, one of my parents/guardian know where I am and who I am with.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
The rules in my family are clear.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
My parent(s)/guardian have rules about alcohol and drug use.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes
People in my family often insult or yell at each other.	definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes

**How wrong do your parent(s)/guardian think it would be for YOU to:**

Smoke marijuana	Very wrong / Wrong / A little wrong / Not wrong
Drink alcohol	Very wrong / Wrong / A little wrong / Not wrong
Steal something	Very wrong / Wrong / A little wrong / Not wrong
Pick a fight with someone	Very wrong / Wrong / A little wrong / Not wrong

**Have any of your brothers or sisters ever:**

Smoked marijuana	No / Yes / I don't have any brothers or sisters
Drank alcohol	No / Yes / I don't have any brothers or sisters
Taken a weapon to school	No / Yes / I don't have any brothers or sisters
Been suspended or expelled from school	No / Yes / I don't have any brothers or sisters

### FRIENDS

**Think of your friends, how many times did your friends:**

Not come to school	Very often / often / not often / never
Get suspended from school	Very often / often / not often / never
Steal or try to steal something	Very often / often / not often / never
Use drug	Very often / often / not often / never
Carry a weapon	Very often / often / not often / never
Get arrested	Very often / often / not often / never

Have you ever been part of a group who did things that your parents would not approve of?

No / Yes

Have you ever been part of a group who did things that the police would not approve of?

No / Yes

Would you like to be part of a group who sometimes do things that are not allowed?

definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes

Have you ever felt pressured to be part of a group who sometimes do things that are not allowed?

definitely not/ no / yes / definitely yes

## Thank you!

### Appendix B: Parent survey

Dear parent/guardian,

My name is Ms. Julia Emmen and I am an intern at the Student Support Services Division (SSSD), of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth & Sports affairs, and a Masters student at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. I am conducting research on the identification of the associated risk and protective factors among eleven through thirteen year old children to join criminal groups/gangs.

To get a better understanding of this topic, your cooperation is important. The result of this survey would give a clearer representation of child rearing practices on the island. This survey includes questions regarding personal situation and the way of parenting. Please fill in all questions.

This survey is anonymous. To ensure the confidentiality of your survey, submit your questionnaire in the provided sealed envelope.

The survey takes 20 minutes to complete. Please return the survey one day after receipt to the secretary.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Kind regards,

Julia Emmen

## Parent Survey

### Part 1. Personal Information

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name of school \_\_\_\_\_

Country of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Gender of child  Boy  Girl

Number of children \_\_\_\_\_

Marital status  Single  Married

Divorced  Widowed

Living together

Highest level of education  No formal education  Primary  Secondary

College  University

What is your relationship to the child in question?  Father  Mother

Grandmother  Grandfather  Aunt  Uncle  Guardian  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Who else is actively involved in the daily life and upbringing of the child in question? \_\_\_\_\_

Is your child enrolled in sports or other activities?  Yes  No If so, which? \_\_\_\_\_

Is your child part of a church?  Yes  No If so, which? \_\_\_\_\_

### Please indicate how often you did the following things during the last month:

Smoke a cigarette?  once a month  twice a month  once a week

2-3 times a week  4-5 times a week  Never

Drink alcohol?  once a month  twice a month  once a week

(beer/wine/liquor)  2-3 times a week  4-5 times a week  Never

Use drugs?                     once a month             twice a month             once a week  
 (hard or soft drugs)         2-3 times a week         4-5 times a week         Never

## Part 2. Parenting

**Circle how often you experience the following behaviors.**

1 = Never 2 = Once in a while 3 = About half of the time 4 = Very often 5 = Always

I know the names of my child's friends.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I am aware of problems or concerns about my child in school.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I regularly go to school meetings.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I often help my child with his/her homework and/or projects.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I know where my child is when he/she is not at home.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I praise my child when he/she did something good.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I comfort and show understanding when my child is upset.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I express affection by hugging, kissing, and holding my child.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I encourage my child to talk about his/her troubles.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I spent quality time with my child.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I joke and play with my child.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I show patience towards my child.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I take into account my child's preferences in making plans for the family.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I apologize to my child when making a mistake in parenting.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I set strict well-established rules for my child.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
The family rules are easy to understand.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I give my child reasons why the rules should be obeyed.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I allow my child to give input into family rules.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I always explain the consequences of my child's behavior.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I help my child to understand the impact of their behavior	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5



*1 = Never 2 = Once in a while 3 = About half of the time 4 = Very often 5 = Always*

I explain to my child how I feel about his/her good and bad behavior. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

I talk it over and reason with my child when he/she misbehaves. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

**I discipline my child by...**

Yelling or shouting. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

Arguing with my child. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

Slapping my child. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

Grabbing my child. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

hitting my child. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

Shoving my child 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

using threats 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

taking privileges away 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

other

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I discipline my child with little, or no justification. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

When my child is fighting, I discipline him/her first and asks questions later. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

When my child asks why he/she has to listen, I state: because I said so/ I am your parent and I want you to, or something similar. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

When I ask my child to do something I expect it to be done immediately without any questions. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

My child will not like me as a parent, because I discipline him/her for his/her misbehaviour. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

I channel my child's misbehaviour into a more acceptable activity. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

I scold and criticize to make my child improve. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

I scold or criticize when my child's behavior doesn't meet my expectations. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

*1 = Never 2 = Once in a while 3 = About half of the time 4 = Very often 5 = Always*

I threaten my child with punishment more often than actually giving it. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

I carry out discipline after my child misbehaves.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I bribe my child with rewards so I don't have to argue.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I allow my child decide what he/she wants to do even if want him/her to do something else.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I ignore my child's misbehaviour.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I withhold scolding and/or criticism even when my child is disobedient.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I would be upset when my child hit someone	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I would be upset when my child ends up in a fight	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I would be upset when my child uses drugs	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I would be upset when my child carries a gun	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I would be upset when my child steals something	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I would be upset when my child drinks alcohol	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I would be upset when my child does not go to school	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

### **Last questions**

**Circle the answer that's most right for you.**

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= neutral, 4 = agree, 5= strongly agree

My child has been or is part of a group that does things that I do not approve of.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
My child has been or is part of a group that does things that the police do not approve of.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I think that my child wants to be part of a group that does things that are not allowed.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I think that my child feels pressured to be part of a group that does things that are not allowed.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
I am afraid that my child will be part of a group that does things that are not allowed	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

**Thank you for your cooperation!**

### **Appendix C: Topic lists interviews professionals**

*Topic list Student Support Services Division*

- What is your function
  - How long have you had this position?
- Can you tell me something about the gangs in highs schools?
  - Names? Signs/symbol?

- Why do these groups exist?
- What kind of behavior do they engage in? (criminal behavior?)
- Do you think there are differences between those gangs and criminal groups?
- How do those gangs influence the society?
  - How do gangs influence the society?
- Have you ever worked with children that are involved with gangs/groups who sometimes undertake activities against the law? (*Do you know any children that engage in those gangs or groups who sometimes undertake activities against the law?*)
  - Can you tell me about the home environment of those children?
    - Family history of antisocial behavior
    - Family conflict
    - Corporal punishment
    - Positive attitude towards drugs/alcohol/antisocial behavior
    - Social support
  - Can you tell me about the school environment of these children?
    - Did they feel safe
    - Where they not committed to school?
      - Did they skip classes a lot?
    - Did they experience academic failure
  - Did they engage with a lot of delinquent peers?
  - Did they come from specific neighbourhoods?
    - low Neighbourhood attachment
    - high Neighbourhood disorganization
    - availability of drugs
    - favourable norms toward drugs, alcohol and antisocial behavior.
- Based on your experience, do you think SSSD has an influence on the choices to get involved with gangs?
  - Can you give an example?
- Does this department have preventive intervention for youth's involvement with gangs?
  - For example: the gang workshop
    - In collaboration with schools?
  - What is the objective of this program?
  - Is the program working?
  - Why is the program (not) working?
  - How does the target group implement what you are teaching them?
- How can the government stop children from getting involved with gangs?

#### *Topic list The Department of Youth*

- Can you tell me something about the high unemployment rate among youth?
  - How does this affect children (10-14 year olds)?
  - Does this affect the engagement with gangs among 10-14 year olds?

- Can you tell me something about crime amongst 10 and 14 year old?
  - Why do they engage in crime?
  - Do boys or girls engage in a different type of crime?
- Can you tell me something about gang in St Maarten?
- Gangs in high school?
  - Which role do children play in those gangs?
  - In which kind of behavior do they anticipate?
  - Why do they join such gangs?
- In your experience what are the leading causes of children getting involved with gangs?
  - Why do you think those children are or are not in a gang?
- How does the department of youth support youth who fall into criminal activities/get involved with gangs?
- Do you have preventive programs?
  - What is the objective of this program?
  - How does it work?
  - Is the program working?
  - Why is the program (not) working?
  - How does the target group implement what you are teaching them?
- Do other departments have preventive programs that support youth to not get involved with gangs?
- In your experience, how can youth's involvement with gangs be prevented?
  - Should anything change?
  - More/different interventions?

*Topic list The Police Department Youth and Morals*

Can you tell me something about gangs?

- In which kind of behavior do they anticipate?
- How big are those gangs?
- Do you know some names of those gangs?
- With what kind of symbols do they symbolize themselves?
- How do they influence society?
- Do they involve children?
  - What is the role of children in these gangs?

Do you notice that children from certain neighbourhood engage more often in those gangs?

- Which neighbourhoods
- Why do you think that is?
- In your experience what are the leading causes of children, aged 10-14, getting involved with gangs?

- Do you believe the Sint Maarten culture plays a role in children's involvement with gangs?
- How does this police department handles youth who committed crime in gangs/groups?
  - Prosecution
  - Kind of punishment
- Does this police department have preventive programs to prevent youth's involvement with gangs?
- Does the police have supportive programs for youth who fall into criminal activities?
  - What is the objective of these programs?
  - How does it work?
  - Is the program working?
  - Why is the program (not) working?
  - How does the target group implement what you are teaching them?
- How can youth's involvement with gangs be prevented?
  - Should anything change?
  - More/different interventions?

*Topic list Court of Guardianship/Voogdijraad*

- What is the general family composition and family structure in Sint Maarten?
  - Single parents/young adulthood
- What is the role of the mother in the family?
- What is the role of the father in the family?
- When is a family referred to Voogdijraad?
- At what point does Voogdijraad intervene on behalf of the child?
  - How would you describe the demeanour of the children who live in these families?
- Are there criteria's stipulated by law that determines what happens to a child after a divorce? What are they?
- Which other organizations and or stakeholders are relevant in regards to the rights of the child in connection with the court? What do you think about the communication between the different stakeholders concerning the child?
  - How is the corporation with school?
  - How is the corporation with parents?
  - How is the corporation with other public authorities?
- In your experience what are the leading causes of children getting involved with gangs?
  - Why do you think those children are or are not in gangs
  - How was the home environment of those children?
- Do you believe other factors influence children's involvement with gangs?

- How does the Court of Guardian support the youth who fall into gangs? Do you have rehabilitation program?
  - What is the objective of this program?
  - How does it work
  - Is the program working?
  - Why is the program (not) working?
  - How does the target group implement what you are teaching them?

*Topic list Foundation Judicial Institutes St. Maarten*

- Can you tell me something about The Family Guardianship Department?
  - When is a child referred to this department?
  - How is a child referred to the department?
  - What kind of families are referred to this department?
- How would you describe the demeanour of the children who live in these families?
- How does the Foster Families Central (FFC) recruits families?
  - Are there criteria's stipulated by law that determines if adults can become foster parents?
  - Which factors are, in your experience, important for parents to succeed as foster parents?
    - Financial stability/safety/structure/history/ less conflict/negative attitude towards drugs, alcohol or antisocial behavior?
- How does the Foster Families Central prepares families for their task as foster parents?
- Can you tell me something about the Probation & Rehabilitation Department?
  - What is the age group?
- How do you Promote good behavior by clients?
- Has the organization ever worked with children who engage in gangs/groups involved with activities against the law?
  - How would you describe a child who has such tendencies?
    - (age/gender/family/friends)
- In your experience what are the leading causes of children getting involved with gangs?
  - Do you believe culture plays a role in children's involvement with gangs?
- Does this organization has an influence, either positive or negative on children's involvement with gangs?
- How does this organization support youth who get involved with gangs?
- Do you have preventive programs?
  - What is the objective of this program?
  - Is the program working?
  - Why is the program (not) working?

- How does the target group implement what you are teaching them?
- How can youth's involvement with gangs be prevented?
  - Should anything change?
  - More/different interventions?

*Topic list Turning Point Foundation*

Can you tell me something about drugs and alcohol use on the island?

- Is the drugs and alcohol use a problem in Sint Maarten?
- Can you tell me something about drug and alcohol use in high schools?
- How does drugs and alcohol use affect children 10-14?
  - Are they users themselves?
  - Drugs use among their peers/brothers/sisters/parents?
- In your experience do drugs and alcohol use influence children's involvement with gangs? → if no: criminal behavior
  - Home environment/poverty/peer pressure/family history
- In your experience what are the leading causes of children getting involved with gangs?
- Has the organization ever worked with children who are involved with gangs? → if not: criminal behaviour
  - How would you describe a child who has such tendencies?
    - (age/gender/family/friends)
  - What do you think are the reasons for getting involved with gangs?
- Can you tell me about the Family support Program?
  - How does this program affect families?
  - How does this program affect 10-14 year old
- The Turning point Facebook page said that the organization believes that Keeping our youth engaged in productive activities help to shape their bodies and mind for a bright future and keeps them away from illicit activities, can you please explain this comment?
  - Does the organization implement this comment? (drug prevention parade)

*Topic list SXM youth Council*

- Can you tell me something about the activities the SXM Youth Council organizes?
- In your experience, does SXM Youth Council has an influence, either positive or negative on children's behavior?
- When an issue occurs with children during an event, how is this issue handled?
  - How would the child be approached?
- Do you know of children who are involved with gangs/groups involved with activities against the law?

- How would you describe a child who has such tendencies?
  - (age/gender/family/friends)
- In your experience what are the leading causes of children getting involved with gangs?
  - Why do you think those children are or are not in a gang?
- Does SXM Youth Council has an influence, either positive or negative on children's involvement with gangs?
- How does SXM youth council support youth who fall into criminal activities/get involved with gangs?
- Do you have preventive programs?
  - What is the objective of this program?
  - How does it work?
  - Is the program working?
  - Why is the program (not) working?
  - How does the target group implement what you are teaching them?
- How can youth's involvement with gangs be prevented?
  - Should anything change?
  - More/different interventions?

*Topic list SXM Volleyball Association (SIMVA)*

In your experience, how does sports influence the behavior of children (gangs)?

- In your experience, have you ever worked with a child who had the tendency to be engaged in gang? → if not: violence
  - How would you describe a child who has such tendencies?
    - Age/gender/home/peers/neighbourhood/school
  - Why do you think those children are in a gang?
    - Parents/school/neighbourhood (environment)/peers?
- In your experience, does sport influence, either negative or positive a child who has such tendencies? → or violent behavior.
  - Can you give an example?
- What are consequences for not following the rules of the sports club?
  - How do you approach these children?
  - Do you talk with the parents about this issue?
- How is the collaboration between the sport club and parents?
- I saw on the Facebook site, that you also organize tournaments with the different schools, how is the collaboration with the schools?
- Would a child with a personal problem speak to a coach?
  - How would they deal with such a matter?



*Topic list SXM Pony Baseball & Softball Association*

- In your experience, how does sports influence the behavior of children (gangs)?
- In your experience, have you ever worked with a child who had the tendency to be engaged in gang? → if not: violence
  - How would you describe a child who has such tendencies?
    - Age/gender/home/peers/neighbourhood/school
  - Why do you think those children are in a gang?
    - Parents/school/neighbourhood (environment)/peers?
- In your experience, does sport influence, either negative or positive a child who has such tendencies? → or violent behavior.
  - Can you give an example?
- What are consequences for not following the rules of the sports club?
  - How do you approach these children?
  - Do you talk with the parents about this issue?
- How is the collaboration between the sport club and parents?
- I saw on the Facebook site, that you also organize tournaments with the different schools, how is the collaboration with the schools?
- Would a child with a personal problem speak to a coach?
  - How would they deal with such a matter?

*Topic list The Belvedere Community Center*

- Can you tell me something about the activities this community center organizes for children in the age group of 10-14 year old?
- In your experience, does the community center has an influence, either positive or negative on children's behavior?
- When an issue occurs with children during an event, how is this issue handled?
  - How would the child be approached?
- Do you know of children who engage in groups involved with activities against the law/ involved with gangs?
  - How would you describe a child who has such tendencies?
    - (age/gender/family/friends)
- In your experience what are the leading causes of children getting involved with gangs?
  - Why do you think those children are or are not in a gang?
- Does the community center has an influence, either positive or negative on children's involvement with gangs?

- Does the community center support youth who fall into criminal activities/get involved with gangs?
- Do you have preventive programs?
  - What is the objective of this program?
  - How does it work?
  - Is the program working?
  - Why is the program (not) working?
  - How does the target group implement what you are teaching them?
- How can youth's involvement with gangs be prevented?
  - Should anything change?
  - More/different interventions?

*Topic list Dr. J. Enterprises.*

- Can you tell me something about gangs in high school of St. Maarten?
  - Do you know some names of gangs?
  - With what kind of symbols/colours do they symbolize themselves?
  - In which kind of behavior do they anticipate?
- How do these gangs influence society?
  - How do these gangs influence the children?
- Do you know of children who engage in gangs/groups involved with activities against the law?
  - How would you describe a child who has such tendencies?
- In your experience what are the leading causes of children getting involved with gangs?
  - Do you think the culture of St. Maarten has an influence on the children to get involved with gangs?
- In your experience, how can youth's involvement with gangs be prevented?
  - Should anything change?
  - More/different interventions?

## **Appendix D: Topic lists interviews employees school**

*Topic list teacher.*

- How long have you been a teacher at this school?
- Do you know of children who are involved with gangs?
  - How would you describe a child who has such tendencies?
    - (age/gender/family/friends)
  - What do you think are the reasons getting involved with gangs?
  - Do you think the school can influence the decision of the youth to get involved with a gang?
    - Academic failure (bad grades)
    - Low school commitment (do not come to classes)
    - Child's positive attitude towards school
    - Rewards for prosocial involvement

- Positive attitude towards school importance for the future
- What rules are applied to unacceptable behavior(s) in your school?
  - Disrespect to authority?
  - Truancy?
  - Fighting?
  - Not coming to school/classes?
  - Drug use?
  - Weapon use?
- When an issue occurs in the class, such as a fight, what are your thoughts and feelings on this?
  - How do you approach the child?
- How do you commend acceptable behavior in your class? (When a child is working in a good, silent and productive way, do you provide him/her with positive feedback?)
  - What kind?
- Do you know if a child with a personal problem would speak to a teacher? How would you deal with such a matter? (When a child has a personal problem, can he/she come and talk to you about it?)
  - Does that happen often?
- Does the school have preventive intervention for troubled youth?
  - What is the objective of this program?
  - Is the program working?
  - Why is the program (not) working?
- How is the collaboration between the teacher/school and parents?
- Do parents attend school meetings?
  - What do you do when parents do not come to school meetings?
  - Do you think parents are up to date on their child's performance in school?
    - What methods are used to keep parents up to date with their child's performance
      - For example: inform parents when a child is absent from school or get into a fight?
- How would you describe a child who comes from a secure/safe home versus a child who comes from an insecure/unsafe environment?

*Topic list School Guidance Counsellor & social worker.*

- How long have you been a guidance counsellor/social worker at this school?
- Can every child who want to talk about their personal problems, problems with friends or at home, just walk into your room?
  - Do they need to make an appointment?
- Can students of the school talk to you or someone else about their academic failures and insecurities?
- How does the school handle troubled youth?
  - Do they have a program for those children?
    - What is the objective of this program?
    - Is the program working?
    - Why is the program (not) working?

- Do you know of children who engage in groups undertaking activities against the law? (Do you know any children that engage in groups who sometimes undertake activities against the law?)
  - How would you describe a child who has such tendencies?
    - (age/gender/family/friends)
  - Did they come to you to talk about their problems?
    - Why (not)?
    - Could talking about their problems have helped?
    - Do you think a good support system can prevent children from getting involved with gangs?
  - What do you think that are the reasons for joining those gangs?
  - Do you think the school can influence the decision for youth to get involved with gangs?
    - Academic failure (bad grades)
    - Low school commitment (do not come to classes)
    - Child's positive attitude towards school
    - Rewards for prosocial involvement
    - Positive attitude towards schools is important for the future
- How is the collaboration between the school and parents?
- How is the collaboration between the school and sport clubs
- How is the collaboration between the school and the government?
  - Do you think a good collaboration between the school, parents and other organizations can influence the decision for youth to get involved with gangs?

## Appendix E: Tables about youth's gang involvement

Table A: Percentage of youth's current or previous gang membership

Current or previous gang membership		1	2	3	N
Gender					
Male		68,8%	20,7%	10,5%	266
Female		81,5%	12,3%	6,3%	302
Age					
10		81,3%	13,8%	5,0%	80
11		84,8%	9,3%	5,9%	204
12		72,2%	17,6%	10,2%	176
13		65,8%	25,3%	8,9%	79
14		45,7%	37,1%	17,1%	35
Schoolboard					
PCE		68,9%	22,2%	8,9%	45

	SKOS	81,7%	11,9%	6,3%	252
	MAC	82,4%	11,8%	5,9%	51
	DPES	67,3%	20,0%	12,7%	150
	SDA	75,0%	16,7%	8,3%	36
	Svobe	65,0%	30,0%	5,0%	40
School					
	Primary	77,1%	14,6%	8,3%	507
	Secondary	58,0%	32,1%	9,9%	81

*NOTE: (1) children that never have been or are part of a group that their parents and police would not approve of, (2) children that have been or are part of a group that or the police or their parents would not approve of and (3) children that have been or are part of a group which their parents and police would not approve of.*

*Table B: Percentage of youth's desire to join a gang*

Desire to join a gang		Definitely not	No	yes	Definitely Yes	N
Gender						
	Male	54,9%	38,3%	5,3%	1,5%	264
	Female	67,8%	25,6%	5,3%	1,3%	301
Age						
	10	74,7%	21,5%	2,5%	1,3%	79
	11	66,0%	28,6%	3,9%	1,5%	203
	12	58,2%	34,3%	5,7%	1,7%	175
	13	53,2%	39,2%	6,3%	1,3%	79
	14	42,9%	40,0%	17,1%	0,0%	35
Schoolboard						
	PCE	51,1%	46,7%	2,2%	0,0%	45
	SKOS	67,2%	26,8%	4,4%	1,6%	250
	MAC	58,8%	39,2%	2,0%	0,0%	51
	DPES	55,7%	32,9%	8,7%	2,7%	149
	SDA	72,2%	25,0%	2,8%	0,0%	36
	Svobe	55,0%	35,0%	10,0%	0,0%	40
School						

Primary	62,5%	31,0%	5,0%	1,6%	504
Secondary	48,1%	37,0%	12,3%	2,5%	81

*Table C: Percentage of youth's perceived pressure to join a gang*

Perceived pressure to join a gang		Definitely not	No	yes	Definitely Yes	N
<b>Gender</b>						
Male		39,6%	30,6%	21,1%	8,7%	265
Female		52,2%	20,3%	17,9%	9,6%	301
<b>Age</b>						
10		48,1%	22,8%	19,0%	10,1%	79
11		49,5%	23,0%	16,7%	10,8%	204
12		49,1%	26,3%	17,7%	6,9%	175
13		39,2%	30,4%	21,5%	8,9%	79
14		25,7%	25,7%	40,0%	8,6%	35
<b>Schoolboard</b>						
PCE		42,2%	35,6%	15,6%	6,7%	45
SKOS		51,0%	24,7%	15,5%	8,8%	251
MAC		43,1%	27,5%	21,6%	7,8%	51
DPES		45,6%	26,2%	19,5%	8,7%	149
SDA		36,1%	13,9%	33,3%	16,7%	36
Svobe		37,5%	20,0%	32,5%	10,0%	40
<b>School</b>						
Primary		47,5%	25,3%	18,0%	9,1%	505
Secondary		33,3%	28,4%	29,6%	9,6%	81

## **Appendix F: Data multiple linear regression analyse from student survey**

*Table D: Current or previous gang membership predicted based on several risk and protective factors among youth of St. Maarten aged 10 through 14.*

Current or previous gang membership				
	B	SE	$\beta$	P
School safety; Definitely no	Reference			

No	0,048	0,058	0,062	0,406
Yes	0,022	0,054	0,036	0,682
Definitely yes	0,051	0,061	0,067	0,410
Academic performance, Definitely no	Reference			
No	0,054	0,089	0,065	0,548
Yes	-0,029	0,085	-0,047	0,734
Definitely yes	-0,050	0,087	-0,075	0,569
School attachment	-0,101	0,035	-0,154	0,004
Attachment mother Definitely no	Reference			
No	0,033	0,097	0,027	0,730
Yes	-0,014	0,086	-0,021	0,870
Definitely yes	-0,001	0,085	-0,001	0,994
Attachment father Definitely no	Reference			
No	-0,019	0,064	-0,021	0,761
Yes	-0,121	0,060	-0,191	0,044
Definitely yes	-0,059	0,061	-0,094	0,332
Social support mother Definitely no	Reference			
No	-0,012	0,041	-0,017	0,772
Yes	0,025	0,064	0,037	0,509
Definitely yes	0,010	0,054	0,010	0,871
Social support father Definitely no	Reference			
No	0,023	0,054	0,036	0,668
Yes	0,000	0,057	0,000	0,998
Definitely yes	0,017	0,061	0,022	0,783
Raised by single parent	-0,001	0,013	-0,002	0,966
Family conflict Definitely yes	Reference			
Yes	0,006	0,043	0,009	0,885
No	-0,020	0,043	-0,029	0,652
Definitely No	-0,004	0,045	-0,006	0,928
Family attachment	0,050	0,032	0,098	0,121
Family management	-0,040	0,036	-0,069	0,260
Sibling history	0,132	0,061	0,103	0,031
Neighbourhood disorganisation	0,042	0,022	0,100	0,055

Neighbourhood attachment	0,040	0,026	0,077	0,130
Neighbourhood attitude	0,019	0,022	0,048	0,381
Neighbourhood sport availability	0,012	0,028	0,019	0,674
Peer behaviour	-0,162	0,030	-0,273	0,000
Gender	-0,010	0,028	-0,016	0,730
Age	-0,004	0,014	-0,014	0,774

Note:  $R^2=0,26$ , intercept=0,33

Table E: Desire to join a gang predicted based on several risk and protective factors among youth of St. Maarten aged 10 through 14.

Desire to join a gang				
	B	SE	$\beta$	P
School safety; Definitely no	Reference			
No	-0,225	0,128	-0,129	0,080
Yes	-0,151	0,119	-0,111	0,203
Definitely yes	-0,247	0,135	-0,146	0,068
Academic performance, Definitely no	Reference			
No	0,238	0,196	0,130	0,225
Yes	-0,004	0,186	-0,003	0,983
Definitely yes	-0,046	0,192	-0,032	0,808
School attachment	-0,243	0,077	-0,167	0,002
Attachment mother Definitely no	Reference			
No	-0,563	0,215	-0,203	0,009
Yes	-0,664	0,191	-0,447	0,001
Definitely yes	-0,538	0,189	-0,388	0,005
Attachment father Definitely no	Reference			
No	0,075	0,140	0,037	0,594
Yes	0,115	0,131	0,873	0,383
Definitely yes	0,101	0,134	0,754	0,451
Social support mother Definitely no	Reference			
No	0,079	0,089	0,051	0,375
Yes	0,049	0,082	0,033	0,551



Definitely yes	0,023	0,141	0,10	0,872
Social support father Definitely no	Reference			
No	-0,101	0,119	-0,070	0,397
Yes	-0,103	0,124	-0,069	0,407
Definitely yes	-0,113	0,135	-0,067	0,403
Raised by single parent	0,006	0,028	0,010	0,826
Family conflict Definitely yes	Reference			
Yes	-0,035	0,094	-0,023	0,710
No	-0,096	0,095	-0,065	0,314
Definitely No	-0,264	0,099	-0,171	0,008
Family attachment	0,116	0,071	0,100	0,104
Family management	-0,322	0,079	-0,248	0,000
Sibling history	0,189	0,135	0,067	0,161
Neighbourhood disorganisation	-0,002	0,048	-0,002	0,974
Neighbourhood attachment	0,126	0,057	0,112	0,029
Neighbourhood attitude	0,026	0,049	0,028	0,597
Neighbourhood sport availability	0,013	0,061	0,010	0,832
Peer behaviour	-0,143	0,061	-0,110	0,030
Gender	0,035	0,062	0,026	0,566
Age	-0,014	0,030	-0,022	0,637

Note:  $R^2=0,28$ , intercept=1,69

Table F: Perceived pressure to join a gang predicted based on several risk and protective factors among youth of St. Maarten aged 10 through 14.

Perceived pressure to join a gang				
	B	SE	$\beta$	P
School safety; Definitely no	Reference			
No	0,217	0,207	0,084	0,295
Yes	-0,102	0,192	-0,051	0,595
Definitely yes	0,006	0,218	0,002	0,978
Academic performance, Definitely no	Reference			
No	0,451	0,317	0,166	0,155

Yes	0,106	0,301	0,053	0,725
Definitely yes	0,084	0,310	0,039	0,786
School attachment	0,059	0,124	0,027	0,636
Attachment mother Definitely no	Reference			
No	-0,174	0,347	-0,042	0,618
Yes	-0,353	0,310	-0,160	0,256
Definitely yes	-0,203	0,306	-0,099	0,508
Attachment father Definitely no	Reference			
No	0,170	0,227	0,056	0,454
Yes	0,216	0,212	0,104	0,309
Definitely yes	0,028	0,216	0,013	0,899
Social support mother Definitely no	Reference			
No	-0,242	0,144	-0,106	0,094
Yes	-0,169	0,133	-0,078	0,205
Definitely yes	-0,375	0,228	-0,109	0,101
Social support father Definitely no	Reference			
No	-0,089	0,193	-0,041	0,644
Yes	-0,231	0,201	-0,104	0,251
Definitely yes	-0,181	0,218	-0,073	0,405
Raised by single parent	-0,003	0,045	-0,004	0,940
Family conflict Definitely yes	Reference			
Yes	0,183	0,153	0,082	0,232
No	0,043	0,154	0,019	0,782
Definitely No	-0,115	0,160	-0,050	0,475
Family attachment	0,045	0,115	0,026	0,695
Family management	-0,433	0,127	-0,225	0,001
Sibling history	-0,285	0,217	-0,068	0,190
Neighbourhood disorganisation	0,086	0,077	0,063	0,265
Neighbourhood attachment	0,082	0,093	0,049	0,378
Neighbourhood attitude	-0,006	0,079	-0,005	0,938
Neighbourhood sport availability	-0,082	0,099	-0,041	0,406
Peer behaviour	-0,199	0,106	-0,103	0,061
Gender	0,006	0,100	0,003	0,954

Age 0,053 0,048 -0,056 0,274

Note:  $R^2=0,14$ , intercept=1,84

### Appendix G: Data multiple linear regression analyse from parent survey

Table G: Current or previous gang membership predicted based on authoritative parenting style, permissive parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, parent history and parent attitude.

Current or previous gang membership				
	B	SE	$\beta$	P
Authoritative parenting style	-0,299	0,223	-0,119	0,310
Permissive parenting style	0,531	0,209	0,298	0,014
Authoritarian parenting style	0,399	0,126	0,303	0,009
Parent history	0,116	0,091	0,145	0,207
Parent attitude	-0,154	0,152	-0,115	0,314
Level of education No formal education	Reference			
Primary	-0,866	0,497	-0,426	0,087
Secondary	-0,595	0,477	-0,416	0,217
College	-0,546	0,484	-0,356	0,264
University	-0,864	0,495	-0,479	0,086

Note:  $R^2= 0,32$ , intercept= 1,15

Table H: Desire to join a gang predicted based on authoritative parenting style, permissive parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, parent history and parent attitude.

Desire to join a gang				
	B	SE	$\beta$	P
Authoritative parenting style	-0,297	0,198	-0,167	0,139
Permissive parenting style	0,277	0,186	0,167	0,142
Authoritarian parenting style	0,444	0,112	0,427	0,000
Parent history	0,090	0,081	0,120	0,270
Parent attitude	-0,346	0,135	-0,277	0,013
Level of education No formal education	Reference			
Primary	-0,511	0,441	-0,270	0,251
Secondary	-0,257	0,423	-0,193	0,546

College	-0,222	0,430	-0,155	0,607
University	-0,278	0,439	-0,165	0,529

Note:  $R^2 = 0,39$ , intercept= 1,19

Table I: Perceived pressure to join a gang predicted based on authoritative parenting style, permissive parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, parent history and parent attitude.

Perceived pressure to join a gang				
	B	SE	$\beta$	P
Authoritative parenting style	-0,162	0,353	-0,059	0,647
Permissive parenting style	0,547	0,331	0,213	0,105
Authoritarian parenting style	0,383	0,200	0,238	0,060
Parent history	0,037	0,144	0,032	0,799
Parent attitude	-0,145	0,240	-0,075	0,548
Level of education No formal education	Reference			
Primary	-0,435	0,787	-0,149	0,583
Secondary	-0,121	0,755	-0,059	0,873
College	0,125	0,767	0,057	0,871
University	-0,460	0,784	-0,177	0,559

Note:  $R^2 = 0,18$ , intercept= 1,36