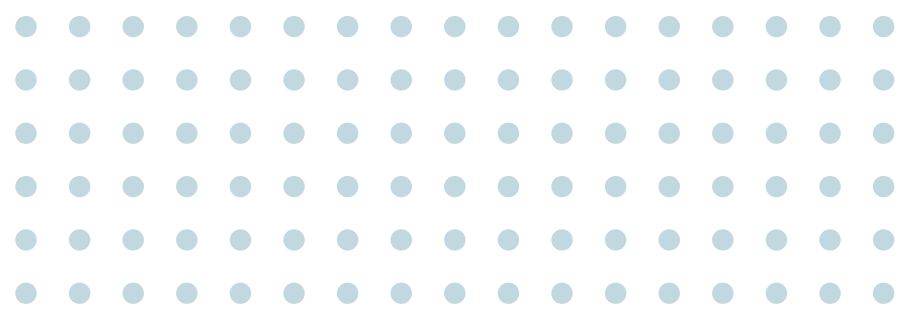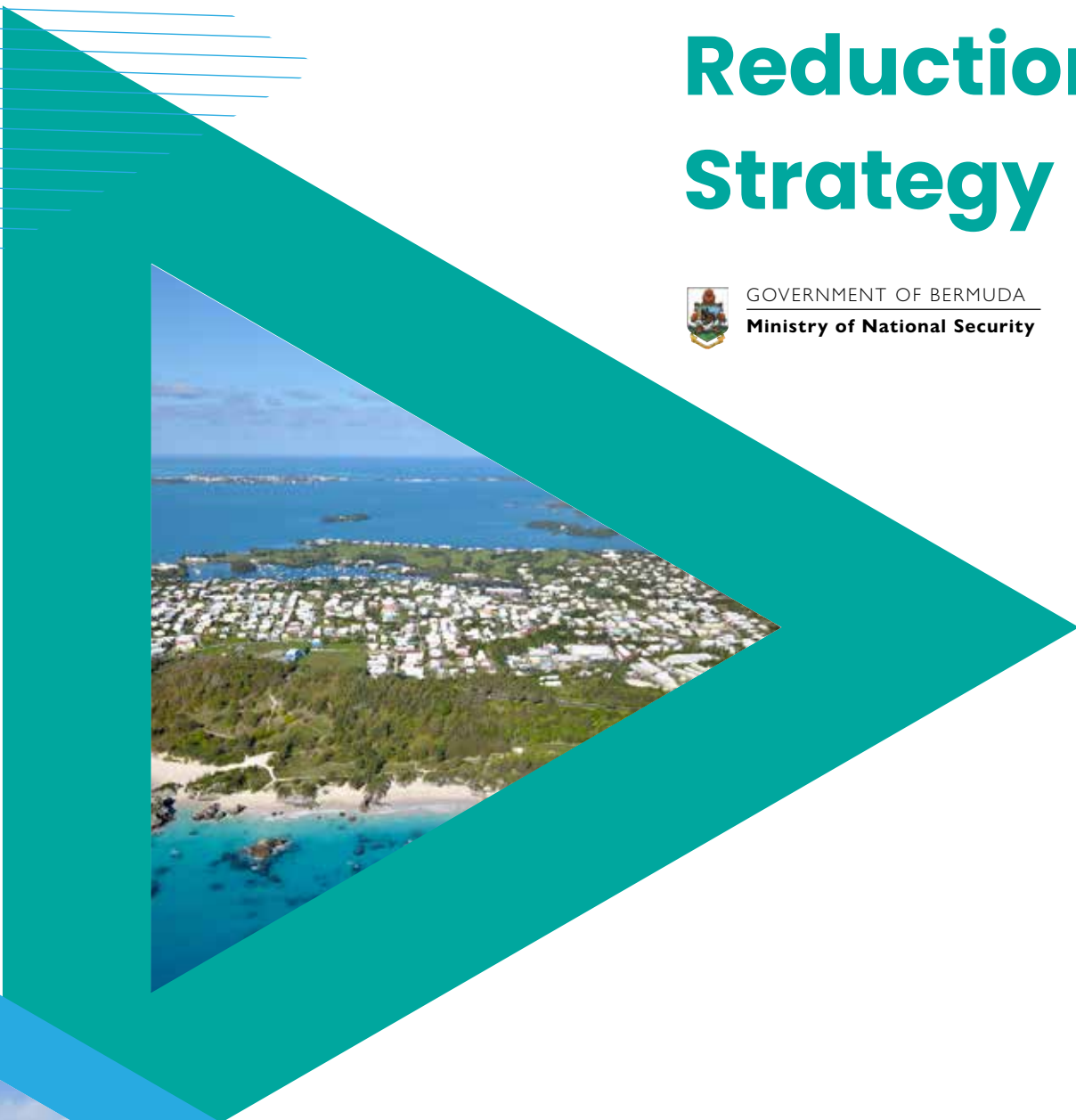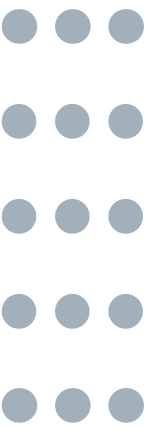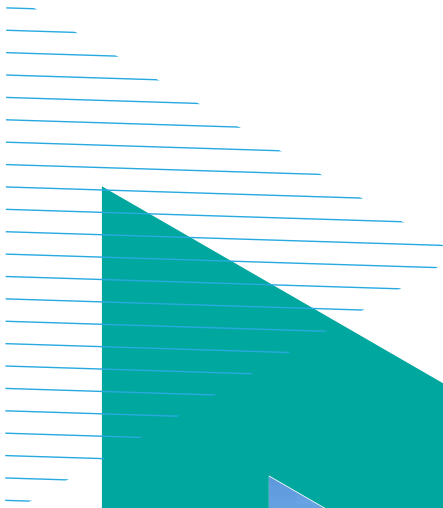# National Violence Reduction Strategy

GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of National Security

FOREWARD

As Bermuda finds itself plagued by various forms of violence, the Minister of National Security, the Honorable Michael A. Weeks JP, MP, was tasked with creating a comprehensive 'Anti-Violence National Strategy'. This strategy was born out of a two-day consultative workshop where stakeholders, both public and private, came together to brainstorm the issue of violence in our community and generate possible solutions. Exploration of what is working and any gaps found in helping services, was at the forefront of our mission. We thank those entities for their robust dialogue and valuable contributions to this National Strategy and a special thank you to the Ministry of National Security's 'Gang Violence Reduction Team'.

Bermuda, we are at a crossroads, where the scourge of violence threatens the very fabric of our island home; undermining peace, safety, security and ultimately, prosperity for all. Whether physical aggression, psychological abuse, sexual abuse or anti-social behavior – resulting in 'gang activity', violence knows no boundaries – 'no one is immune'. It affects us as individuals, families and Parishes. It is a complex and multifaceted problem that requires multifaceted solutions.

Therefore, this anti-violence strategy is not just a document, but a commitment to creating a safer, more secure Bermuda for all; a Bermuda that previous generations had the privilege of enjoying and that we will again create for future generations. This strategy is a call to action for our government, faith based, sporting, auxiliary organizations, communities, neighborhoods and each one of us, to come together, to stand up against violence in all of its forms and to work towards a future where peace and respect for one another is again the norm. This strategy recognizes the importance of identifying the root causes, promotes educational awareness and strengthens institutions and individuals. It emphasizes the need to protect the most vulnerable and to ensure that perpetrators of violence are held to account. This anti-violence strategy is a testament to the power of unity, as we work together to rebuild the constructs of our island home. I urge all Bermuda to join us in this important mission - together we can prevent this progression of violence.

Thank you for your commitment and dedication.

The Honorable Michael A. Weeks JP, MP

Minister of National Security

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a country, we are grappling with relatively high rates of violence. Whether it be youth, gang-related and/ or interpersonal. These issues have far-reaching consequences, affecting individuals, families, communities and the overall development and stability of this island. It is imperative that we, as a country, address the pervasive issue of violence and take action to break the cycle of violence and create a safer environment for all of our residents and guests. This strategic plan outlines a comprehensive approach to prevention, intervention, reintegration, relocation, enforcement, improved collaboration, and public awareness campaigns, with the ultimate goal of reduction of violence and antisocial behavior in Bermuda at all age groups. As an island, we are often challenged by limited resources, isolation and complex social dynamics. This strategy outlines, what we believe is a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to the prevention of violence and provides a path to mitigating the root causes of these violent acts, as we seek to protect our communities and foster a peacefulness and inclusivity. By engaging public and private stakeholders and implementing evidence-based strategies, we aim to create safer communities and promote positive social outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

The Violence Reduction Strategy (VRS) for Bermuda aims to address anti-social behavior and violence, particularly gun and knife violence, by promoting sustained reduction rather than total eradication. It focuses on redemption rather than punishment, offering opportunities for individuals to reintegrate into society without stigma. This approach includes policies for relocation and support for those seeking a better social and economic environment.

The VRS targets Bermuda's youth to steer them away from destructive behavior and prevent the spread of harmful mindsets. It emphasizes inclusion rather than exclusion and draws on established programs, treatments, and interventions tailored to Bermuda's needs. The strategy adopts a collaborative approach, involving both perpetrators and victims, to prevent and reduce violence through ongoing, multi-pronged efforts.

HISTORY BACKGROUND AND UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

Defining 'gangs' and 'gang violence' is vital yet complex, shaped by various cultural, social, and legal perspectives. The implications of these definitions involve law enforcement, community interventions, and public perceptions.

According to Bermuda's Criminal Code Amendment Act 2012, an unlawful gang is a group of three or more people that engages in or facilitates criminal activities, which may result in material benefits. Unlawful gang activity includes crimes such as violence committed by the gang or by individuals involved with the gang.

However, it is important to acknowledge that research indicates defining gangs primarily through their involvement in criminal activities can lead to stigmatization, especially affecting minority and economically disadvantaged youths, exacerbating social divides and leading to discriminatory practices (Curry, 2015). This intensifies in smaller, interconnected communities such as Bermuda, where social ties make it difficult to differentiate between gang members and non-members (Sánchez-Jankowski, 2003).

In Bermuda gang related activity can be traced back to the mid to late 80's so much so that in the 90's they were referred to as loosely organized groups known as (LOGS). The evolution of the pre-existing drug trade in neighborhoods was a contributing factor to gang formation. For years, the drug trade flourished in Bermuda, leading to increased antisocial behavior and eventually, the drug trade became the catalyst to increased criminal activity and gang formation in Bermuda. Despite the initial reluctance by Bermuda to acknowledge their existence, gangs developed their identity based on Bermuda's cultural and social context.

The increase in organized groups, particularly among young Black men, can be linked to specific events in 2001 and 2003 involving the murder of suspected members within particular groups. These acts were targeted violence and retaliation from two different local gangs. These incidents were the impetus to the rise in antisocial behavior that Bermuda is currently experiencing.

The homicides in 2001 and 2003 led to a gradual increase in violence and homicides in the ensuing years and culminated in the surge of murders in 2009. This increase in violence resulted in unprecedented times for Bermuda. These events gave rise to social constructs known as "gangs," which connected and defined the identity of neighborhood youth. These newly formed "gangs" operated against lawful and moral societal norms.

The period following 2003 saw a troubling escalation in violent crime, culminating in a significant surge in 2009. This year witnessed an unprecedented spike in murders, overwhelming the law enforcement, government, and community who were unprepared to manage such a drastic increase in violence. The rise in organized groups and their activities resulted in heightened social deviance and entrenched the identity of gangs within neighborhood youth.

According to data from the Bermuda Police Service, firearms have played a central role in gang-related violence. Since 2006, there have been 57 persons fatally shot and 139 incidents where individuals were shot and injured. This data underscores the lethality of firearm-related violence in Bermuda's gang conflicts.

Bladed weapons also emerged as significant tools of violence. Since 2018, there have been 106 persons injured by bladed weapons in 100 separate incidents. The data from the Bermuda Police Service shows a troubling increase in the use of bladed weapons, mirrored by a rise in arrests for possession of such articles. This trend highlights a shift in the tools of violence used by gangs, reflecting broader changes in gang tactics and availability of weapons.

The number of arrests for possession of bladed weapons and other weapons provides further insight into the law enforcement response to this surge in violence. Arrests in the Other Weapon category have been consistently high: 2020 saw 47 arrests, 2021 had 43 arrests, 2022 had 74 arrests, 2023 recorded 58 arrests, and 2024 (up to 10 July) has already seen 40 arrests. These figures indicate a sustained effort by the Bermuda Police Service to address the proliferation of weapons and reduce violent incidents. However, the persistent high numbers suggest ongoing challenges in curbing gang-related violence and weapon possession.

The Bermuda Police Service has recorded 107 murders since 2006. The most common weapon used in these murders is a firearm (57 cases), followed by knives or other bladed weapons (33 cases). The remaining cases involve other forms of violence or are classified as unknown due to various circumstances.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
FIREARM FATALITIES	1	2	0	4	7	5	5	3	2	1	5	3	3	0	2	3	5	3	3	57
FIREARM INJURIES	4	2	1	13	28	11	7	5	8	5	9	6	2	2	10	13	5	3	5	139
TOTAL FIREARM FATALITIES & INJURIES	5	4	1	17	35	16	12	8	10	6	14	9	5	2	12	16	10	6	8	196
BLADED WEAPON INJURIES													5	4	15	11	17	28	26	106
BLADED WEAPON INCIDENTS													5	4	15	11	17	25	23	100
TOTAL HOMICIDES (INC FIREARM FATALITIES)	7	3	5	6	7	8	6	5	4	4	8	5	5	0	7	7	9	4	7	107

EXPLAINING FIGURE 1:

Figure 1 below provides insight by year from 2006 (from 2018 for bladed weapons) into:

1. **firearms** (both fatalities and injuries),

2. **bladed weapons injuries** (including where the injured party may be recorded as deceased at the scene and or later, e.g. in ICU),

3. **bladed weapons incidents** (some bladed weapons incidents may involve more than 1 person being injured or killed), and

4. **total number of homicides.** The data goes back to 2006.

The statistical data paints a stark picture of a community grappling with the consequences of gang-related violence. The rise in organized crime, driven by economic and social factors, has led to a cycle of violence that has deeply affected Bermuda. The data highlights the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address the root causes of gang formation, provide support for at-risk youth, and strengthen law enforcement capabilities to manage and reduce violent crime.

It is important to acknowledge that drugs and crime are symptoms of deeper systemic issues that lead young people, particularly Black males, to engage in antisocial behavior. Addressing these root causes is essential for finding solutions to gang involvement and violent crime.

In her 2021 presentation to the Bermuda Rotary Club, Martha Dismont, MBE and Founder of The Family Centre, stated: "A large number of young Black men between the ages of 16 and 34 are getting left behind. This is more likely for young men who have experienced, or are experiencing trauma, toxic stress, and structural disadvantage. The current systems and services in place are not designed or equipped to meet the complex needs of this population and therefore risk discouraging individuals from seeking help or even retraumatizing them" (Dismont, 2021).

The Bermuda Government Department of Statistics census data from 2000 to 2016 highlights the significant disadvantages faced by young Black men in Bermuda. According to the 2016 census, 9% of Black men aged 18-34 have no formal education, and only 37% have college or university degrees, compared to higher percentages in other demographic groups. Unemployment among Black men stands at 20%, much higher than their peers, and only 26% are employed in professional careers. Their median income is $40,996, which is substantially lower than that of white men and women.

Furthermore, at the time of this report, approximately 82 young Black men between the ages of 18-34 were incarcerated—a striking disparity compared to numbers in other groups. These challenges are deeply rooted in historical trauma, systemic racism, and limited access to resources, with research underscoring how negative societal stereotypes and a lack of opportunities compound their difficulties.

Addressing the root causes of violence is complex and time-consuming. Issues such as systemic racism, economic disadvantage, and historical trauma are deeply entrenched and require sustained, multifaceted efforts to resolve. These efforts may include economic development initiatives, education reform, and policies aimed at reducing systemic inequality. The impact of these measures will take time to manifest, so patience and persistence are critical.

To effectively address gang-related violence in Bermuda, it is crucial to adopt a holistic approach. This involves comprehensive assessments of the social, economic, and psychological factors affecting young people, particularly Black males. Clear recommendations and actionable strategies are essential. These should include improving educational opportunities, increasing access to mental health services, providing job training and employment prospects, and fostering community engagement programmes. By addressing these root causes, Bermuda can develop sustainable solutions that not only reduce gang violence but also promote social cohesion and equity within the community.

A comprehensive strategy for reducing gang violence will address both root and proximate causes over the short, intermediate, and long term. While working towards long-term solutions, it is equally important to address the proximate causes of violence - those more immediate factors that can trigger violent behaviour. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Family Breakdown:** Instability within the family unit, including domestic violence and lack of parental guidance, can significantly contribute to youth involvement in gangs and other forms of violence.

- **Exposure to Violence:** Regular exposure to violence in the community or media can desensitize individuals, particularly youth, to aggressive behaviours.

- **Substance Abuse:** Drug and alcohol use are closely linked to violent behaviour, both as contributing factors and as activities that can lead to conflict.

- **Mental Health Issues:** Undiagnosed or untreated mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and trauma can drive individuals towards violent behaviour as a coping mechanism.

- **Peer Pressure:** Youth are particularly susceptible to peer pressure, which can lead them to engage in violent acts to gain acceptance or status within their peer groups.

- **Lack of Educational and Employment Opportunities:** Limited access to education and job prospects can push individuals towards gangs as alternative means of income and identity.

By addressing both root and proximate causes, Bermuda can develop sustainable solutions that not only reduce gang violence but also promote social cohesion and equity within the community.

Understanding Root Causes and Mental Health

In Bermuda, the prevalence of mental health issues intersects with gang involvement, particularly among young people facing adversity. On our small island, where everyone is interconnected, the impact of poverty, family breakdowns, and exposure to violence can be deeply felt within communities. These factors can contribute to the development of mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and trauma, which may go unrecognized or untreated due to stigma or limited access to services.

Moreover, the allure of gangs, with their promises of belonging, protection, and material gain, can further entrench individuals in cycles of violence and exacerbate underlying mental health challenges. The constant stress, fear, and trauma associated with gang life can take a severe toll on individuals' well-being, while perpetuating a cycle of violence and despair.

Addressing mental health issues within the context of gang violence in Bermuda requires a tailored approach that considers the island's unique social fabric and challenges. It involves providing accessible and culturally relevant mental health services that recognize the interconnectedness of Bermuda's communities and the importance of trust and confidentiality.

Additionally, efforts to prevent gang involvement and reduce violence must be rooted in community-driven initiatives that promote resilience, positive coping strategies, and social support networks. By empowering communities to address the underlying drivers of gang violence and prioritizing mental health and well-being, Bermuda can work towards creating safer, healthier environments for all residents.

Understanding Youth Violence

Youth violence has seen a concerning rise in our community over the past few years, marked by an increase in school fights, community violence, altercations among teenage girls, and youth knife crime. Alarmingly, there is also a significant rise in serious violent incidents involving individuals aged 17-21 that have been brought before the courts.

Research, such as the study "World Report on Violence and Health" by the World Health Organization (WHO), highlights numerous factors contributing to youth violence globally. Bermuda is not immune to these influences. Factors include health issues like conduct disorders (e.g. Oppositional Defiance Disorder) and other undiagnosed behavioral and mental health conditions, exposure to drugs and alcohol, the influence of social media and video-gaming, heightened stress levels, involvement in gang activities, societal and familial dysfunction, and low educational attainment.

Youth violence in Bermuda is increasingly evident throughout our schools. The desire to be part of gang culture can be observed as early as primary school. Children are exposed to various influences at home, through TV, games, and social media. These influences can lead to behaviors such as "repping" neighborhoods, using gang signs, bringing knives or drugs to school, bullying, making threats of harm, and boasting about gang-affiliated family members.

These behaviors become more pronounced in middle school. Some students engage in antisocial behavior, forming groups, targeting vulnerable peers, participating in schoolyard fights, selling drugs in schools and carrying weapons for protection. Recruitment by older gang members in the neighborhood often begins at this stage. Students start to "rep" their neighborhoods, gather in groups in public places, and engage in cross-school or neighborhood conflicts, often exacerbated by social media incidents. At this age, fights and community violence typically do not involve weapons.

In high school, students from various neighborhoods converge daily, leading to the formation of groups that create tension and lead to fights. This environment fosters fear, pushing some students to align with gangs for a false sense of security. At school, groups of young men from various areas separate at lunch and walk in groups from class to class, taunting, exchanging words, and creating conflicts on social media. These conflicts often escalate into group fights on school premises, after school within the community, and at community social events such as carnivals, the 24th of May celebrations, and football games. Young men and women seek respect and notoriety through violence. Over the past five years, there has been an increase in knife crime and stabbings among young people. These younger groups are usually connected to the 18-24-year-old gangs outside of school and align with older gang members.

Additionally, drug use exacerbates these issues. Beyond marijuana and alcohol, the use of ecstasy, otherwise known as "molly", and opioids, such as heroin and fentanyl, has become a devastating trend, severely impairing decision-making abilities among youth.

To effectively address youth violence in Bermuda, it is crucial to adopt a holistic approach that considers the underlying causes and systemic issues contributing to antisocial behavior. This strategy involves comprehensive assessments of the social, economic, and psychological factors affecting young people, particularly Black males. Clear recommendations and actionable strategies are essential to reduce violence. These should include improving educational opportunities, increasing access to mental health and counseling services, providing job training and employment prospects, and fostering community engagement programs. By addressing these root causes, Bermuda can develop sustainable solutions that not only reduce gang violence but also promote social cohesion and equity within the community.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision for Bermuda is: A safe, empowered community where violence is reduced to its minimum. Through collaboration and innovation, we aim for trust, opportunity, and justice for all. Together, we envision a future where understanding and connection replace violence, fostering a brighter, safer tomorrow.

MISSION STATEMENT

To implement strategies that will reduce violence in Bermuda, particularly gang violence, in collaboration with various agencies, with emphasis on Prevention, Intervention and Integration.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Ministry of National Security has devised **eight (8) strategic goals** for this strategy. They are as follows:

Goal 1: Enhance Early Intervention and Community-Based Initiatives for Violence Prevention

Goal 2: Strengthen Community Resilience and Support Systems for Gang Prevention and Rehabilitation

Goal 3: Facilitate Conflict Resolution and De-escalation through Negotiation

Goal 4: Promote Reintegration and Restoration

Goal 5: Strengthen Enforcement Measures

Goal 6: Improved Collaboration

Goal 7: Policy Advocacy for Violence Reduction

Goal 8: Improved Public Awareness Campaign

Goal 1: Enhance Early Intervention and Community-Based Initiatives for Violence Prevention

Objective: : Develop and implement a comprehensive approach to early intervention and community-based initiatives to address violence among at-risk individuals and communities in Bermuda..

Strategies:

1. **Further Implement Targeted Prevention Programs for Identified Youth:**

   a. Identify and review existing programs for at-risk youth across different sectors (government, private, grassroots, sports and schools).

   b. Evaluate the effectiveness of current programs.

   c. Implement early education and social skills programs in primary and middle schools that teach conflict resolution, empathy, emotional regulation, communication, and problem-solving skills.

   d. Partner with youth centers and afterschool programs to create safe, supervised spaces for play and interaction, and offer a variety of after-school activities (sports, arts, clubs) to engage students positively and reduce idle time.

   e. Enhance targeted vocational and career training opportunities in high schools for at-risk students with a focus on post high school career planning to give students a sense of purpose and direction.

2. **Enhance Access to Mental Health Services:**

   a. Improve accessibility to mental health services and substance abuse treatment for individuals at risk of violence.

   b. Expand availability through increased funding and resources.

   c. Increase outreach and awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking behavior.

   d. Tailor interventions within these services to specifically address the needs of youth at risk of gang involvement or seeking rehabilitation.

   e. Provide culturally competent services to ensure effectiveness and inclusivity.

   f. Increase Social Supports (social workers, counselors, guidance counselors) in the school system at all levels.

3. **Support the Implementation of National Youth Policy:**

   a. Actively support the implementation of Bermuda's National Youth Policy.

   b. Align efforts to address the needs of young people and contribute to violence prevention, with a focus on reducing gang-related activities.

   c. Collaborate with government agencies, NGOs, and community stakeholders to ensure policy objectives are met effectively.

4. **Provide Training for Community Leaders:**

   a. Identify and provide training for community leaders, teachers, sports coaches, and youth workers to recognize early signs of gang involvement and intervene effectively.

   b. Offer continuous professional development opportunities to enhance skills and knowledge in violence prevention and youth engagement.

   c. Enhance existing trauma-focused therapy and counseling services to provide specialized support for youth in processing trauma and rebuilding a sense of safety and trust.

5. **Increase School Outreach:**

   a. Partner with public and private agencies to strengthen outreach efforts within schools and identify and support at-risk students.

   b. Establish mentorship initiatives involving professionals from the private sector to provide guidance and positive role models for students.

   c. Involve private sector organizations in school-based activities and programs to foster a sense of inclusion and community support for at-risk students.

6. **Expand Peer and Adult Mentorship Opportunities:**

   a. Collaborate with agencies and programs that offer mentorship to provide support and guidance to at-risk individuals, particularly youth.

   b. Recruit and train mentors from diverse backgrounds to meet the needs of the community.

   c. Establish mentorship networks to facilitate ongoing support and relationship-building.

7. **Provide Parent Training:**

   a. Identify existing parent training groups and expand training and support programs.

   b. Amplify efforts to enhance parents' capacity in promoting positive youth development and preventing involvement in violence and gang-related activities.

   c. Provide resources and tools for parents to strengthen family relationships and communication skills.

8. **Further support structured programs that include Mentorship & Role models in Sports and Community clubs**

   a. Develop regular, structured activities that engage youth and occupy their time constructively.

   b. Provide assistance, and where possible, resources, to sports clubs to enhance their programmes.

   c. Offer a variety of programs, including sports, arts, and educational workshops, to cater to diverse interests.

   d. Establish mentorship programs where older members or successful individuals in the community mentor younger members.

   e. Highlight success stories and positive role models who can inspire young people to pursue constructive paths.

Goal 2: **Strengthen Community Resilience and Support Systems for Gang Prevention and Rehabilitation**

Objective: TTo enhance community resilience and support systems to effectively prevent gang involvement and provide rehabilitation opportunities for individuals at risk.

Strategies:

1. **Target Counseling and Mental Health Services:**

   a. Identify existing counseling and mental health services available for at-risk adults and youth who find themselves in the criminal justice system, including the Department of Child and Family Services, Child Adolescent Services, and adult mental health service providers.

   b. Provide access to counseling and mental health services to address underlying issues such as trauma, addiction, and anger management.

   c. Offer life skills training, including conflict resolution, communication skills, and emotional regulation.

   d. Tailor interventions within these services to specifically address the needs of youth at risk of gang involvement or seeking rehabilitation.

   e. Collaborate with both private and public providers to ensure comprehensive support for youth and adults in managing stressors and conflicts and promoting mental well-being.

2. **Youth and Adult Alternative Programs:**

   a. Identify existing alternative programs tailored for both youth and adults, focusing on alternatives to gang involvement through educational workshops, support groups, recreational, and skill-building activities.

   b. Collaborate with these programs to enhance their effectiveness in diverting individuals away from gang/antisocial activity and towards positive pathways.

   c. Provide additional support and resources to bolster these programs and expand their reach to at-risk youth and adults.

3. **Community Mediation and Restorative Training Programs:**

   a. Identify existing community-based mediation programs addressing interpersonal conflicts within neighborhoods, focusing on preventing escalation into gang-related violence.

   b. Partner with these programs to enhance their capacity in resolving conflicts peacefully and promoting community resilience against gang activity.

   c. Provide ongoing support and resources to sustain the effectiveness of these programs, including training for mediators and facilitators.

4. **Further expand vocational training and apprenticeship programs**

   a. Expand existing initiatives such as the Gang Violence Reduction Team Redemption Initiative and the Work Placement and Mentoring Initiative, providing additional staffing and resources.

   b. Partner with the Department of Workforce Development to create special pathways and programs for targeted at-risk youth and adults.

   c. Provide and create vocational training and apprenticeship programs that offer opportunities for youth at risk of gang involvement to develop marketable skills and pursue sustainable employment.

   d. Provide job readiness training, resume building, interview skills, vocational training, and connections to employment and educational opportunities, including GED preparation. Teach budgeting, saving, and financial management skills, and connect clients with financial assistance programs.

5. **Creating and Implementing Fathers' Support Groups**

   a. Facilitate groups led by licensed therapists or counselors focusing on mental health, emotional regulation, and trauma recovery, and offer strategies for managing anger and coping with stress.

   b. Conduct workshops aimed at improving parenting skills, understanding child development, and fostering positive family dynamics, including effective communication techniques and conflict resolution skills.

   c. Offer sessions on positive parenting techniques, child development knowledge, and strategies to strengthen relationships with children and co-parenting partners.

   d. Conduct workshops aimed at improving parenting skills, understanding child development, and fostering positive family dynamics.

   e. Teach techniques for managing anger and regulating emotions, as well as strategies for coping with stress and trauma.

   f. Provide training in effective communication techniques to resolve conflicts peacefully, including active listening and empathy-building exercises.

   g. Create support groups for fathers dealing with substance abuse, offering access to rehabilitation programs, ongoing recovery support, and financial literacy training to teach budgeting, saving, and financial management skills.

   h. Offer groups providing legal advice, assistance with legal documentation, education on legal rights, and organize recreational activities to build community, reduce isolation, and foster positive relationships.

Goal 3: **Facilitate Conflict Resolution and De-escalation through Negotiation**

Objective: To reduce gang-related violence and promote peaceful conflict resolution through effective negotiation strategies and interventions.

Strategies:

1. **Establish Negotiation Teams:**

   a. Partner with existing specialized outreach worker teams comprising trained negotiators and community leaders to handle conflicts involving gangs.

   b. Support and enhance these teams to increase their capacity in resolving conflicts peacefully and de-escalating tensions within gang-affiliated groups.

2. **Conduct Mediation and conflict resolution Workshops, training and programs:**

   a. Partner with local community organizations, schools, clubs, and conflict resolution experts to organize comprehensive mediation workshops and training sessions.

   b. Focus on equipping individuals, especially at-risk youth and adults, with essential mediation skills, conflict resolution techniques, and de-escalation strategies. Target these workshops towards community members, law enforcement personnel, and other stakeholders involved in conflict resolution efforts.

   c. Tailor these workshops to meet the specific needs of various groups within the community, including students, parents, teachers, club members, law enforcement personnel, and other stakeholders involved in conflict resolution efforts.

   d. Include practical exercises and role-playing scenarios to enhance the learning and application of mediation skills in real-life situations.

3. **Strengthen Community Engagement:**

   a. Implement Neighborhood Watch in vulnerable areas.

   b. Facilitate dialogue and collaboration between law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and gang-affiliated groups to address grievances and resolve conflicts peacefully.

   c. Provide support and resources to foster sustainable partnerships and initiatives aimed at building trust and promoting mutual understanding between these stakeholders.

4. **Coordinated Crisis Response Team:**

   a. To enhance the effectiveness of the Coordinated Crisis Response team, strategically expand the team's capacity and resources to ensure timely and comprehensive support for affected individuals and communities.

   b. Increase the size of the team to expand its capacity for providing timely and comprehensive support to affected individuals and communities.

   c. Allocate a dedicated budget for counseling services, ensuring that residents have access to professional support to cope with trauma and navigate the aftermath of violent incidents.

Goal 4: Promote Reintegration and Restoration

Objective: To facilitate the successful reintegration and restoration of individuals formerly involved in gangs in order to provide them with opportunities for personal growth, rehabilitation, and community re-engagement.

Strategies:

1. **Enhance Inmate Treatment Recovery Programs:**

   a. Collaborate with the Department of Corrections to improve access to substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and rehabilitative programs within correctional facilities.

   b. Partner with private mental health service providers to enhance the quality and availability of mental health services for incarcerated individuals with a history of gang involvement.

   c. Provide financial assistance to support the expansion and enhancement of these programs, ensuring comprehensive support for the recovery and rehabilitation of incarcerated individuals.

2. **Provide Vocational Educational Training and Apprenticeships:**

   a. Partner with Workforce Development and vocational education programs to offer tailored training programs and apprenticeship opportunities for former gang members.

   b. Collaborate with financial assistance programs to provide funding for participants' education and training expenses.

   c. Ensure alignment with industry needs and market demands to equip participants with marketable skills and pathways to sustainable employment.

3. **Support Prisoner Parole Treatment and Recovery:**

   a. Establish the various agencies in developing or strengthening comprehensive reentry programs in collaboration with Court Services, the Department of Corrections, and community organizations to support the successful reintegration of parolees.

   b. Create opportunities for persons in seeking financial assistance for transitional housing, employment assistance, counseling services, and community support to facilitate parolees' transition into society.

   c. Collaborate with necessary agencies to offer specialized support for parolees with a history of gang involvement, addressing their unique needs and challenges in the reintegration process.

4. **Provide Safe Houses:**

   a. Establish safe houses in partnership with community organizations and provide support in seeking financial assistance programs to offer temporary shelter and support to individuals seeking to leave gang involvement.

   b. Provide assistance in ascertaining counseling services, vocational training, and other necessary resources to support individuals in their transition away from gang-affiliated environments. Ensure access to resources for reintegration and rehabilitation in the new community, including job placement assistance, counseling services, and community support programs.

5. **Facilitate Relocation:**

   a. Partner with financial assistance programs and community organizations to offer relocation assistance and support to individuals seeking to distance themselves from gang-affiliated behavior and leave the island.

Goal 5: **Strengthen Enforcement Measures**

Objective: Enhance law enforcement strategies targeting gang activities and youth involvement in gang violence through increased police presence, throughout the island, with the implementation of targeted enforcement strategies, and fostering collaboration with community members to gather intelligence and disrupt gang operations.

1. **Increase Police Presence:**

   a. Deploy additional law enforcement resources throughout the island with a focus on gang activity and violence to deter criminal behavior and ensure public safety.

2. **Targeted Enforcement Strategies:**

   a. Develop and implement specific enforcement tactics designed to directly confront and disrupt gang-related activities, including drug trafficking, illegal firearms possession, and other criminal behaviors associated with gangs.

3. **Collaboration with Community Members:**

   a. Work closely with community leaders, residents, and organizations to gather intelligence, gain trust, and foster collaborative efforts to identify, report, and address gang-related issues within local neighborhoods.

4. **Multi-Ministry Efforts:**

   a. Coordinate inter-ministerial collaboration involving various government agencies, social services, and community-based organizations to develop and implement comprehensive strategies aimed at addressing the root causes of gang involvement and violence.

5. **Intelligence Gathering and Analysis:**

   a. Utilize advanced data collection methods and intelligence analysis to proactively identify and respond to emerging gang-related threats, criminal activities, and patterns of behavior.

6. **Restorative Justice Initiatives:**

   a. Implement restorative justice programs that seek to rehabilitate offenders, address the harm caused by criminal behavior, and reintegrate individuals into society with a focus on preventing recidivism and gang re-engagement.

7. **Public Awareness Campaigns:**

   a. Develop and launch public awareness campaigns focused on educating the community about the negative impacts of gang violence, promoting violence prevention, and empowering residents to take a stand against gang-related activities.

8. **Enhanced Training for Law Enforcement:**

   a. Provide specialized training for law enforcement officers to effectively address gang-related issues, including de-escalation techniques, cultural competency, and community-oriented policing approaches.

9. **Technology and Surveillance Systems:**

   a. Utilize advanced technology, surveillance systems, and analytical tools to monitor, track, and investigate gang-related activities while safeguarding individual privacy and civil liberties.

Goal 6: Improved Collaboration

Objective: Enhance coordination and communication between stakeholders to develop comprehensive strategies and interventions for violence reduction and community safety.

Strategies:

1. **Enhance the Interagency Enforcement Team (IGET) and Cross-Sector Training:**

   a. Enhance the communication and effectiveness of IGET, which includes representatives from schools, community programs, government departments, and charities.

   b. Develop cross-sector training programs to share best practices and enhance understanding.

2. **Implement Joint Intervention Programs and Facilitate Information Sharing:**

   a. Develop joint intervention programs leveraging multiple stakeholders' expertise and resources.

   b. Create platforms for sharing data, research findings, and successful intervention strategies.

3. **Establish Multi-Agency Response Teams and Foster Community Engagement Initiatives:**

   a. Form multi-agency response teams consisting of representatives from various sectors.

   b. Launch community engagement initiatives to foster trust, communication, and collaboration.

4. **Advocate for Policy Alignment:**

   a. Advocate for policies supporting collaboration among stakeholders.

   b. Engage policymakers to prioritize funding and resources for collaborative initiatives.

Goal 7: Policy Advocacy for Violence Reduction

Objective: To advocate for the development and implementation of policies that support collaboration among stakeholders and prioritize funding and resources for collaborative initiatives aimed at reducing violence.

Strategies:

1. **Inmate Information Incentive**

   a. Advocate for policies incentivizing inmates to provide crucial information on violence prevention, crime reduction, and community safety.

   b. Propose initiatives offering benefits or reduced sentences for cooperation with law enforcement.

   c. Collaborate with correctional facilities and legal experts to design effective incentive structures.

2. **Community Club and Bar Ban List (Listing):**

   a. Push for the establishment of a ban list system targeting individuals involved in violence or gangs.

   b. Advocate for measures such as restraining orders and probation conditions.

   c. Collaborate with law enforcement and community leaders to maintain an updated database for effective enforcement.

3. **Community Policing Initiatives:**

   a. Advocate for increased funding and support for community policing programs prioritizing trust-building between law enforcement and communities.

   b. Promote resource allocation for community outreach efforts.

   c. Collaborate with law enforcement on training emphasizing de-escalation and collaborative problem-solving.

4. **Legislative Support for Rehabilitation Programs:**

   a. Advocate for legislation expanding access to rehabilitation programs for incarcerated persons as well as parolees that are at risk of violence.

   b. Collaborate with experts and organizations to design comprehensive rehabilitation policies addressing root causes of violence.

Goal 8: Improved Public Awareness Campaign

Goal: To enhance public awareness and understanding of violence prevention strategies, resources, and support services available in the community.

Objective: Increase dissemination and accessibility of information regarding violence prevention measures, resources, and support services through targeted public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives.

Strategies:

1. **Develop Educational Materials:**

   a. Create informative materials through digital resources and social media campaigns explaining various violence prevention strategies, warning signs, and available support services.

2. **Implement Media Campaigns:**

   a. Launch targeted media campaigns utilizing television, radio, social media, and other platforms to raise awareness about violence prevention initiatives, community resources, and reporting mechanisms.

3. **Partner with Influential Figures:**

   a. Collaborate with community leaders, celebrities, and influencers to amplify the message of violence prevention through endorsements, public appearances, and social media engagement.

4. **Organize Public Events and Workshops:**

   a. Host public events, workshops, and seminars to educate community members about violence prevention, conflict resolution techniques, and available support networks.

5. **Engage Schools and Youth Groups, Clubs and Programs:**

   a. Partner with schools and youth organizations to integrate violence prevention education into the curriculum and extracurricular activities, empowering young people with knowledge and skills to address violence.

6. **Utilize Community Outreach Programs:**

   a. Leverage community outreach programs, such as neighborhood canvassing, health fairs, and information sessions, to disseminate information about violence prevention resources and support services directly to residents.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In developing the Implementation Plan for the Violence Reduction Strategy, the Ministry of National Security recognizes the critical importance of strategic planning, resource allocation, and collaborative efforts to achieve tangible outcomes in reducing violence and creating safer communities. This section outlines key strategies for effectively implementing the Violence Reduction Strategy, emphasizing the establishment of clear timelines, allocation of sufficient funding and resources, and recruitment and training of qualified staff.

1. **Establish Clear Timelines and Milestones:**

   - Define specific timelines for each goal and objective outlined in the Violence Reduction Strategy, collaboratively engaging stakeholders to ensure realistic expectations and alignment.

   - Break down objectives into smaller tasks with achievable milestones to monitor progress effectively, involving community representatives in the planning process to ensure relevance.

   - Ensure transparency and accountability by publishing the timelines and milestones publicly, inviting feedback and collaboration from the community to foster ownership.

2. **Allocate Sufficient Funding and Resources:**

   - Conduct a comprehensive assessment of financial requirements for implementation, involving relevant stakeholders to identify potential funding sources and cost-sharing opportunities.

   - Secure necessary funding from government budgets, grants, or partnerships with relevant organizations, leveraging collaborative networks to maximize resource allocation.

   - Allocate resources efficiently, considering the priority areas identified in the strategy and seeking input from community leaders and experts to ensure equitable distribution.

3. **Recruit and Train Staff:**

   - Identify staffing needs based on the requirements of the strategy, collaborating with human resource professionals and community leaders to identify skill gaps and recruitment strategies.

- Develop job descriptions outlining the skills and expertise required for each role, consulting with stakeholders to ensure alignment with community needs and expectations.

- Implement a robust recruitment process to attract qualified candidates, engaging community organizations and educational institutions to promote diversity and inclusivity.

- Provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities to enhance staff capacity, collaborating with relevant partners to deliver tailored programs that address specific community challenges.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation are integral to assessing the effectiveness of interventions and making necessary adjustments to optimize outcomes. This section outlines strategies for developing performance metrics, conducting regular evaluations, and soliciting feedback from community members. Collaboration with stakeholders and community organizations is emphasized to ensure the relevance and inclusivity of evaluation processes.

Develop Performance Metrics and Indicators:

- Define clear and measurable performance metrics aligned with the objectives of the strategy, collaborating with data analysts and community members to ensure relevance and accuracy.

- Establish baseline data to track progress over time, engaging community stakeholders in data collection efforts to foster transparency and accountability.

- Include indicators related to crime rates, community engagement, and socio-economic factors contributing to violence, incorporating community input to capture holistic insights.

Conduct Regular Evaluations:

- Schedule periodic evaluations to assess the effectiveness of interventions, while collaborating with research institutions and community organizations to conduct comprehensive assessments.

- Utilize quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data and insights, involving community members in evaluation processes to ensure their perspectives are considered.

- Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to inform decision-making, fostering a collaborative approach to continuous improvement.

- Adapt strategies based on evaluation findings to optimize outcomes, actively engaging with community partners and stakeholders to co-create solutions and drive positive change.

Solicit Feedback from Community Members:

- Implement mechanisms for collecting feedback from residents, community organizations, and stakeholders, and collaborate with grassroots organizations to ensure diverse perspectives are captured.

- Organize community forums, surveys, and focus groups to gather diverse perspectives, and co-design feedback mechanisms with community members to ensure accessibility and inclusivity.

- Use feedback to assess the impact of the strategy on the ground and identify areas for improvement, while collaborating with community leaders and advocates to prioritize actions and address concerns.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

The successful implementation of the Violence Reduction Strategy in Bermuda is expected to have a profound positive impact on our communities:

- **Safer Communities:** Reduced violence and crime rates will contribute to creating safer neighborhoods where residents feel secure, fostering trust and collaboration among community members.

- **Improved Social Cohesion:** By addressing underlying issues and promoting positive alternatives, the strategy will foster greater unity and cooperation within communities and build resilience and solidarity.

- **Brighter Future:** Investing in violence reduction initiatives will pave the way for a brighter future for all residents, especially the youth, by providing them with opportunities for growth and development, and collaboratively shaping a more inclusive and equitable society.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, addressing violence anti-social behavior is an urgent priority for the Bermuda community, and our National Strategy serves as a vital tool in our collaborative efforts to combat this pervasive issue. Recognizing that isolated actions are insufficient, we must demonstrate collective responsibility in addressing these issues.

Through unity and collective effort, we can effectively counter violence and anti-social behavior. By implementing strategies focused on prevention, intervention, mediation, and relocation, we can significantly reduce its prevalence, leading to a safer Bermuda of which we can all be proud. The Ministry of National Security is committed to implementing the Violence Reduction Strategy with diligence and dedication, and as previously mentioned, to continuing our collaboration with private and public stakeholders at every step of the journey.

Through effective planning, allocation of resources, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation, we aim to achieve tangible results in reducing violence and creating safer, more vibrant communities in Bermuda. We recognize the importance of community engagement and partnership in this endeavor and will continue to work closely with stakeholders to ensure the success of our efforts.

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