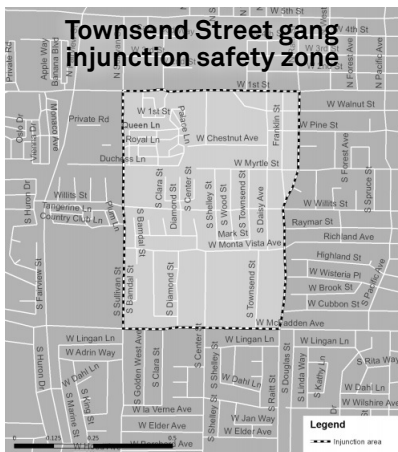


Dignified and Just Policing: Health Impact Assessment of the Townsend Street Gang Injunction in Santa Ana, CA

The Problem

The Townsend Street Gang Injunction seeks to prohibit 29 alleged gang members from associating with each other and engaging in various criminal and non-criminal activities within a defined “safety zone” in Santa Ana, CA. This is the second gang injunction in Santa Ana – the first one was put in place in 2006 – and it is currently under litigation. Since the late 1980’s, more than 60 gang injunctions have been imposed in California. Gang injunctions are a politically charged issue and opinions in the community are divided.



What We Did

Working with The California Endowment’s Santa Ana Building Healthy Communities site, Chican@s Unidos de Orange County, KidWorks, Santa Ana Boys & Men of Color, Latino Health Access, and others, HIP completed a Health Impact Assessment of the Townsend Street gang injunction. We examined the impact of the gang injunction on crime, safety, community-police relationships, education, and employment, and collected data through surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

“I am constantly asking my officers...‘Would you accept this type of policing in the schools your own kids attend?’ We have to try and understand their situation as well as the underlying conditions that generate problems and ask ourselves constantly – ‘Is there any way for us to handle this issue or situation better?’”

– Hector Rodriguez, Santa Ana Unified School District Chief of Police

What We Found

We found that the injunction is unlikely to bring about significant and lasting reduction of serious crime. On the contrary, the injunction could negatively affect safety, public health, and public trust. While the injunction might make some in the community feel more safe, this would come at the expense of youth, undocumented immigrants, transgender or queer-identified people, the homeless, and people with disabilities – communities who report feeling threatened by increased police presence and profiling.

“Instead of feeling safe, it makes you feel more unsafe when you see a police car, because you don’t know what to expect... it makes you want to hide...so that instead of the police helping you if you have a problem, they come and interrogate you and ask what you’re doing on the streets.”

– Santa Ana Resident

Impact

The study was released in October 2015 and includes recommendations for police and other law enforcement and criminal justice agencies, city officials, and the community as a whole. Partners are now using the HIA in their campaigns to promote more just and healthy policing practices and in court proceedings to determine the future of the injunction.

Visit our website to learn more about this project and access report materials: www.humanimpact.org/projects. For more information, contact: lili@humanimpact.org