

### REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

November 14, 2008

As underpinning for its recommendations, the report of the Review of the Roots of Youth Violence sets out four pillars that describe the outcomes required to respond effectively to the roots of youth violence. They are:

- A Repaired Social Context: Social Opportunity and Anti-Racism
- A Youth Policy Framework
- A Neighbourhood Capacity and Empowerment Focus
- Integrated Governance

#### Recommendations

The report offers 30 major recommendations, along with many associated recommendations and advice to the government. Of the 30, 12 address governance, 11 deal with identified roots, four relate to associated issues and three recommend urgent action. Further, the Co-Chairs believe that the starting point for the government must be the adoption of Pillar 4, Integrated Governance, if there is to be any meaningful progress.

#### *Integrated Governance (Pillar 4)*

The Co-Chairs recommend that the government:

- Establish a means of coordinating the efforts of its ministries, other orders of government and communities
- Create a Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion and Anti-Racism (or equivalent body), supported by a Cabinet Office secretariat and Premier's advisory council, to lead the government's action
- Publish, by summer 2009, an integrated plan describing how ministries will collectively respond to this report.

#### *Dealing With The Roots (Pillar 1)*

- To repair the social context and address social opportunity and racism (Pillar 1), the government should:
- Reduce both the levels and concentrations of poverty by increasing the supply of affordable housing, enhancing the quality of government services and otherwise improving living standards in disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- Articulate more effectively its commitment to address racism, and require all public bodies to develop anti-racism plans
- Develop a methodology to collect race-based statistics in all key areas, including education and the youth criminal justice system
- Fund race-relations training for front-line officers working in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, as well as youth-police liaison committees in those same communities
- Develop an education curriculum that is racially and culturally inclusive; recruit teaching and school administration staff that are more representative of local communities; and address remaining concerns about the Safe Schools Act
- Retain outside experts to develop universal, community-based child mental health services

- Fund the delivery of after school programs in the critical 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. period, when youth are most at risk, and invest more generally in space for youth programming
- Provide training, standards and supports for mentors across the province, so that every young person has access to a caring adult
- Ensure accessible sports and arts programs are available in all disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- Work with the private sector to develop a broad strategy that would prepare disadvantaged youth for work, including the creation of sustained, meaningful employment opportunities.
- Find ways to reduce the over-criminalization of Ontario youth, compared with other large jurisdictions
- Invest more in community-based strategies to reintegrate offenders
- Appoint a Youth Justice Advisory Board to better coordinate the work of the three ministries responsible for the youth justice system (Attorney General, Children and Youth Services, Community Safety and Correctional Services).

### *A Youth Policy Framework (Pillar 2)*

The province should:

- Establish, within a year, a youth policy framework that is developed in consultation with stakeholders and includes a guiding vision, a set of principles and specific outcomes.

### *Community Capacity (Pillar 3)*

The province should:

- Adopt a place-based approach for government investments that address the roots of violence involving youth by concentrating on the most disadvantaged communities
- Use the Index of Relative Disadvantage described in the report to identify the most disadvantaged communities for priority action
- Designate a lead ministry for community building, and have that ministry engage municipalities to help define the boundaries of priority areas.
- Work with the community sector to develop a way of providing streamlined and stable funding to those agencies that meet community needs
- Fund the establishment of community hubs in under-served neighbourhoods, with such hubs to be located in or close to schools and operated by organizations with experience in community programming
- Encourage the creation of Neighbourhood Strategic Partnerships that would allow the province, other governments, community residents and service providers to develop and implement local solutions to violence involving youth
- Commit to provide additional funding that supports families, including enhanced prenatal care and early years programming
- Fund at least one youth-led organization in each of the province's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- Recognize the critical role played by youth workers by promoting stable employment and salaries to attract and retain skilled staff.

### **Other Major Issues**

The province should:

- Meet with First Nations leaders to consider how the review's advice relates to their communities, and to consider whether a further targeted inquiry should be undertaken to address their needs
- Ensure programs, services and safeguards exist for Aboriginal children and their families who must move away from home to attend high school.
- Continue to press the federal government to enact a handgun ban in Ontario, and explore avenues the province could take to minimize the risks posed by handguns.

## Priority Implementation

Among the recommendations were three that the Co-Chairs believe should receive special attention. These three, Recommendations 28, 29 and 30, would, if adopted, see the province:

- Start work on developing a universal, community-based children's mental health system for the earliest possible implementation
- Take steps to implement the anti-racism measures described in the recommendations
- Begin the process of developing community hubs by initiating consultations with municipalities most likely to be identified by the Index of Relative Disadvantage. Where necessary, make interim arrangements until permanent space is ready.

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