Home Grown Community Violence Prevention? An Analysis of the Activities Challenges of Community Police Forums and Neighbourhood Watch Organisations in the Western Cape (South Africa)

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This paper will be based on the findings of a research project undertaken by the Safety and Violence Initiative and the Centre of Criminology at the University of Cape Town that was commissioned by the Western Cape Provincial Government's Department of Community Safety in 2015. The focus of the research was on community police forums and neighbourhood watch structures in the Western Cape Province (South Africa). The aim of the research was to determine the diversity of activities that have been undertaken by these community policing groupings, as well as their successes and the challenges that they have faced. The research project made use of three research methods, namely: desktop analysis; in-depth interviews with individuals involved in the specific community organisations; and participant observation. In-depth field research was conducted in: Bergvliet/Meadowridge; Khayelitsha; Lavender Hill; Paarl East; and Vredenburg.

Provincial Policing Needs and Priorities Consultations: A Forum for Joint Planning and Accountability?

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The Constitution requires the national Minister of Police to determine policing policy after taking into account the policing needs and priorities of the provinces, as determined by provincial executives. In the Western Cape, the policing needs and priorities (PNPs) have been determined through a variety of different mechanisms. In the last two years, the Member of Provincial Executive Council, and the Department of Community Safety (DoCS) have done this through consultative workshop with key role-players in the community. During 2015, the Department helped the role-players develop a Community Safety Plan at each of the 16 policing clusters in the Province.

At each workshop, participants identified the key safety needs in their cluster, and developed a set of responses with clear roles identified for various role-players. These included the SAPS Cluster commander, station commanders, CPF Cluster Chair, the CPF chairpersons, municipalities and the Department of Community Safety. The safety plans
were intended to be driven through the cluster CPF, consisting of representatives of these key groupings.

While initially intended to influence the allocation of policing resources, the PNPs have developed into a forum for identification of a broad range of safety needs in the community and for a joint planning session. The 2016 PNP consultative meetings aim to revisit the safety plans to determine to what extent they have been put into effect and to make adjustments to meet new priorities or requirements. Role-players will also be required to report back to stakeholders on actions taken to implement the plans. This paper will explore the potential of the safety plans as a mechanism for joint problem identification and planning, as well as for holding different role-players accountable for commitments made. The paper will also explore the inherent challenges, including limited resources, dependence on volunteers and the need to align competing planning across institutions of government.

An Analysis of the Role of Local Government in Crime Prevention

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Crime and violence is unwanted in any society because it brings about fear, anger and hatred. The role of Local Government in making their communities safer is gaining increasing importance in South Africa. If crime and violence is one of the main obstacles in improving the quality of life, then surely government authorities must take responsibility for local safety. Local Government was identified in various policies as the best partner able to carry out prevention programmes. Community development and improvement is the undertaking of any municipality. Their service-delivery function comprises different political parties, various community organisations, families, police, social services and schools.

There are real incentives for municipal authorities to ensure a safe locality. The revenues are increased through, among other factors, the provision of a safe environment, and actively encouraging investments by businesses, domestic and abroad. While government has a clear responsibility in setting up a legal framework for crime and violence prevention and in providing adequate financial resources and a political lead, it is nonetheless at the local level where violence is most acutely felt and perceived and where a sense of insecurity is felt on a daily basis.

The research aim was to explore Local Government’s onus to address crime and violence to improve community safety; and to develop a partnership model that can enhance crime and violence prevention at the local level. This explanatory study adopted a quantitative method and questionnaires, non-structured interviews and statistics were used as research techniques. Findings are clear that local authorities are best able to conduct policies and approaches dealing comprehensively with crime and violence prevention which promotes alternatives to imprisonment, community policing, civic education, research and communication as well as coordinating the crime and violence prevention programmes of different partners.
Evaluating the Effectiveness of Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading in Low-Income Communities in South Africa – Case Study on Urban Management and Safety on Neighbourhood Level

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Background: South Africa has unusually high levels of interpersonal violence. Poverty, inequality and economic, social and institutional marginalization are risk factors for violence. The Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU) model focuses on working as an intermediary between the public sector and communities to improve the quality of life in low income neighbourhoods. This includes life-cycle interventions; fostering social cohesion through leadership development and economic development; facilitating area-based urban management; safety partnerships; and conducting routine monitoring and evaluation.

Research Objectives: To evaluate the effectiveness of VPUU’s area-based urban management model in reducing interpersonal violence in Khayelitsha from 2013-2015 as a stepping stone towards a cost benefit analysis.

Methodology: From 2013-2015 regular tenant surveys on urban and facility management, safety and business activity of a set group of business owners in Harare/ Khayelitsha were conducted. Parallel to this, randomised monthly resident surveys collect data on perception of safety and urban management for the Harare area. These surveys are cross referenced to an annual survey conducted by UCT on exposure to violence in randomly selected households in Khayelitsha. Data is measured either in absolute numbers or scores on scales.

Findings: VPUU’s approach in Harare resulted in almost full tenant occupancy by local businesses and NGO’s via user agreements, a 75% rental collection rate since 2014, increased tenant satisfaction of VPUU urban management, and consistent growth of employment in businesses renting in the area. There has been a substantial reduction in tenants affected by robberies during the same time. Preliminary results from the annual survey indicate a lower likelihood of becoming a victim of violence in public spaces in Harare compared to control areas in Khayelitsha. Further analysis of the outcomes of the surveys will be done in developing a cost benefit analysis.

Conclusion: Preliminary findings suggest that holistic area based investment and urban management following the VPUU strategic approach improve safety, economic activity and the quality of life of residents.