

***Community participation in violence prevention –
some examples from Latin America and South Africa***

by

ROLAND ZISS

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Violence prevention – a new area of development cooperation

Violence prevention is a relatively new area of development cooperation. Based on the principle of sustainable development, all development cooperation must ultimately help reduce poverty in a broad multidimensional sense. In 2001, donor and developing countries adopted the Millennium Development Goals to be the basis of development cooperation. The three main focus areas of German development cooperation are: securing peace, combating poverty and shaping globalisation. Violence prevention is key to all these three areas.

According to the definition of the WHO, violence prevention means “to stop acts of interpersonal violence from occurring by intervening to eliminate or reduce the underlying risk factors and shore up protective factors, or to reduce the recurrence of further violence and its ill-effects.”¹

I would like to present experiences from violence prevention projects in three countries, all carried out in cooperation with the German government through KfW:

- Colombia – Proyecto SUR con Bogotá, an urban upgrading project by the Municipality of Bogotá;²
- El Salvador – Los Manantiales, a settlement upgrading project by the NGO FUNDASAL;³
- South Africa – violence prevention through urban upgrading.

For the presentation of the work experiences in the three countries, first the context and situation of violence which originated the project will be briefly explained. Then the violence prevention measures will be set out, with special consideration given to community involvement. The results and impact achieved will be reported. Finally, some general conclusions will be drawn about lessons learnt from the various experiences, especially with regard to a realistic approach to community participation as a *conditio sine qua non* of violence prevention, the limits of community policing, the importance of focusing on working with children and young people, and the role of the state.

¹ WHO (2004): Handbook for the Documentation of Interpersonal Violence Prevention Programmes, Geneva, S 7

² I would like to thank Michael Kleinekathöfer, resident adviser, for providing the information on the project.

³ Thanks to Joanna Kotowski, social development expert of the consulting team, for preparing the information on the project.

Development cooperation in violence prevention is not a one-way street. It is one of those areas where by necessity some developing countries have produced exciting innovations and accumulated more experience than many developed countries. Researchers and practitioners in developed countries are invited to take a careful look at these innovations; they may get insights they never expected.

1. Colombia - violence prevention through urban upgrading in Bogotá

Manifestations of violence in Bogotá

Colombia has a long history of different types of political, economic and social violence which are interrelated and often reinforce each other. Former guerrilla groups which turned into the hard core of a kidnapping industry, paramilitary groups which commit massacres of social cleansing, and the never-ending settling of accounts between drug dealers are just the tip of the iceberg of the manifestations of violence.

The state is part of and, according to some violentologists⁴, the single most important contributor to the ubiquitous phenomenon of violence in Colombia. The government armed forces of police and military are responsible for grave and systematic violations of human rights and frequent cases of abusing public power. Since 2002, a hard line towards the insurgency and a number of harsh security measures have been adopted under the new President, Alvaro Uribe Velez. Illegal ties and cooperation between armed forces and paramilitary groups – the number of arbitrary arrests increased dramatically, with more than 1,200 killings and disappearances directly perpetrated by state agents and almost 1,000 illegal executions in the last five years - a blatant disregard for international humanitarian law, and the lack of political will to confront impunity, are just some examples of complicity and the active role played by the state in the production and perpetuation of violence.

Violence is spread throughout the entire country and is directly related to territorial control. There are vast areas given up by the government and under the control of armed groups. They offer employment to young people and often recruit youngsters forcefully. Many families therefore leave the villages and look for a more peaceful way of life in the informal settlements around the large cities.

Bogotá - with its 7 million inhabitants one of the biggest urban agglomerations in South America - is a focal point for the different types of violence in the country. Many families driven out of their villages by violence flock to the informal settlements, mainly in the southern parts of the capital where approximately a third of Bogotá's population lives. Usme and Ciudad Bolívar are considered the main border areas where both paramilitary and guerrilla groups try to control the influx of people.

⁴ Violentology is a neologism developed in the nineties in Colombia, standing for a new scientific discipline around the understanding of violence; it is nurtured by contributions from various traditional disciplines incl. medicine, law, political sciences, sociology, ethnology, political economy, urban planning and some others.

In 2004, the overall murder rate in Bogotá was 24 victims per 100,000 inhabitants; however, in the southern parts of Bogotá it was approx. 50. Most of the killings occur during the night, at weekends, and under influence of alcohol. Both victims and perpetrators are predominantly young males aged between 15 and 25. The rate of family violence is alarmingly high: 22% of surveyed adults, mostly females, reported to have personally experienced violence within their families. People do not usually report crimes to the police, either because they fear reprisal or do not trust the police - one of the reasons why most of the crimes remain unpunished.

The visible acts of violence are often geographically associated with certain hot spots: dark areas with little public lighting, overgrown abandoned areas, neglected parks, undefined open areas and around congested bus stations. It is here where most assaults and drug dealing take place, where girls are raped, where street gangs fight for their territories and most murder victims are found. The permanent exposure to high levels of violence and impunity create a “culture of violence”, hamper the citizen’s capacity for peaceful conflict resolution and generate an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among the people.

Integrated approach to violence prevention through urban upgrading

In the late nineties the Municipality of Bogotá realised the importance of upgrading informal settlements and requested German financial cooperation. *Proyecto SUR* was designed to improve the social fabric and the living conditions in the southern periphery of Bogotá. From the beginning there was a focus on involving the community and promoting joint decision-making among the main stakeholders involved: the local administration, the different departments of the Municipality, private sector companies and the communities.

From 2001 – 2006 Proyecto SUR was successfully implemented as an integrated urban upgrading project in 41 settlements with a total population of approx. 100,000. Total project costs were approx. US\$ 50 million, of which 15% was co-financed by German financial cooperation through KfW. The bulk of the costs were financed by the Municipality of Bogotá; major shares were covered by the private sector, mainly through the Chamber of Commerce, and the community. The investments were concentrated in the areas of infrastructure and community facilities, mainly roads and schools, but also in community development and violence prevention activities.

Originally there was no special focus on violence prevention. Only when the individual projects were planned and the community leaders were directly involved in the planning process, did their concern about violence and the lack of safety become apparent. In the basic needs survey and the participatory problem analysis, the residents identified violence, crime and their feeling of insecurity as their major problem; they appealed for suitable strategies of environmental upgrading to reduce the opportunity for crime and for conflict mediation training as their top priorities. Simultaneously

with the design of the construction projects, special projects were designed to improve the community's capacity for handling conflicts, including the following:

- A community safety observation centre, community conflict resolution and reconciliation centres, and special units for training peaceful conflict management in schools in association with the Chamber of Commerce;
- A 'healthy and safer schools' programme, plus adult education about good behaviour in association with the Health Department;
- Development of mechanisms for reporting cases of domestic violence in association with the police and other public institutions;
- Conflict mediation and reconciliation centres, conflict management training, community conflict assessment, training of school and community conflict mediators and family violence centres in association with the Public Security Department and the Chamber of Commerce;
- Redesign and improvement of public spaces, with community participation, as neighbourhood meeting points and locations for sport and leisure activities;
- Programmes for specific vulnerable groups incl. young people, boys, girls and women: e.g. ecological and youth projects in association with the Social Development Department, working with young people at high risk and with violent behaviour, enhancing the protection of vulnerable groups and the care of victims;
- Promotion of social networks between neighbourhood organisations and training of community leaders in conflict management techniques;
- Physical upgrading of hot spots and organising community activities to transform hotspots into lively and peaceful meeting places;
- Improvement of public services like water, sewerage, transportation and schools, and of markets;
- Promotion of income-generating activities;
- Strengthening the capacities and competencies of representative community structures,
- Creation of a social development fund to enhance the decision-making power of community organisations and their project management capacities; Food distribution programme for children and the very poor, directly organised by the Project Management Unit of the Municipal Housing Bank, the project coordinating agency;
- The Football for Peace Project, an initiative of peace education and conflict management, involving more than 2,000 boys and girls and leading to the revival and appropriation of unused or misused public space, usually after physical improvement.

Results and impact achieved

- The social relationships between the community and its leaders were strengthened. They now cooperate better and have created special networks to increase their negotiation power with public authorities.
- Incidences of the killing of political leaders have drastically dropped. Political leaders now usually resolve their conflicts peacefully. Many of them have become proud of their neighbourhood and want to stay there; previously most leaders considered their involvement as a step on the career ladder and would usually move to a more affluent neighbourhood when they had the opportunity to do so.
- More than 6,000 young people and adults were trained in conflict mediation, both in schools and in the neighbourhoods. In the schools they help solve conflicts between pupils and between their classmates and teachers. In the neighbourhoods their advice is appreciated when there is a conflict between neighbours. Various mediation and reconciliation centres are run by different governmental and non-governmental organisations.
- More citizens participate in public affairs than before. They go to community meetings, contribute to the planning of public projects and follow up their implementation. Coordination mechanisms have been established to improve the communication and cooperation between communities and public entities.
- 43 community projects were implemented focusing on empowerment, health and nutrition, employment and environmental protection. They were all based on community initiative and financed with funds from the project's small Social Development Fund. With a total investment of approx. US\$ 300,000 they reached more than 8,000 beneficiaries and contributed significantly to improving the management capacity of community organisations.
- People appreciate the improved provision of public services and infrastructure in their neighbourhoods. While previously many of them felt abandoned and marginalised, they now have a stronger sense of citizenship, of belonging to the city of Bogotá. Many of them have improved their employment situation and their income.
- An overall slight reduction in crime and incidences of violence has been observed; in some areas more than in others. Even more important is the change in perception: whereas before most people felt unsafe, now they feel safer and have a better opinion of public institutions.

After completion of this project, the wider scale *Programa Sur de Convivencia* was prepared for implementation from 2008 – 2011, covering an area housing more than 500,000 people. The explicit goal is to reduce violence and to develop both community and local government conflict management structures. The work is organised in four components:

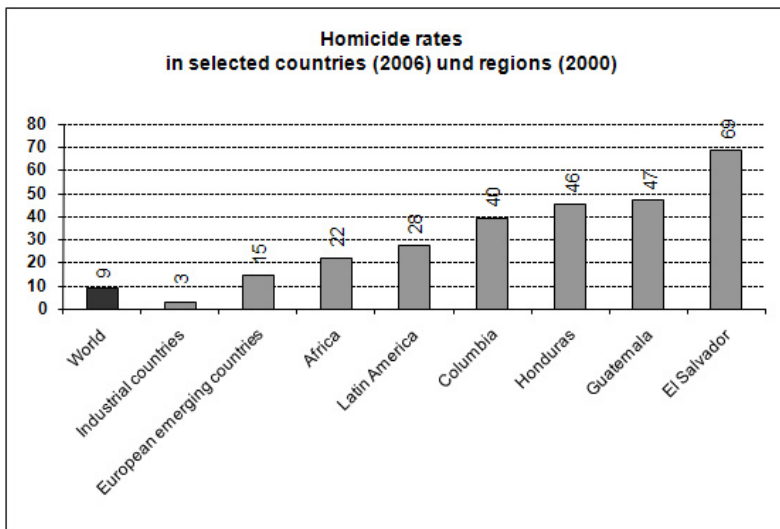
- Conflict mediation and management and working with young people;
- Improvement and better social control of public space;
- Reduction of family violence and
- Inter-institutional cooperation and joint impact assessment.

To facilitate the last component, a special impact monitoring system has been introduced. The point of departure is the logical planning framework of the Programme. The objectives and expected result have been translated into the following 7 impacts: reduction in violence, change of attitudes towards managing conflicts, peaceful use of public space and community facilities, integration of young people into community life, greater awareness about domestic violence, more income opportunities and assistance to vulnerable groups, recognition of local government action, and increased government authority. These impacts are specified by 21 indicators and 66 quantitative variables, most of which are provided by the cooperating institutions. It is expected that by contributing regularly to the system and by jointly analysing the impacts, the participating institutions will better coordinate their activities and the interventions will become more and more cohesive over time.

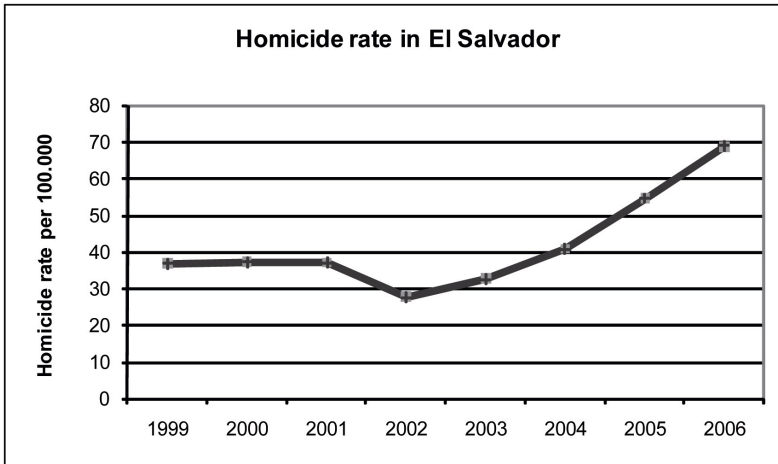
2. El Salvador - settlement upgrading with a violence prevention focus in San Salvador

Manifestations of violence in El Salvador

El Salvador is one of the most violent countries in Latin America. The Salvadorian homicide rate is among the highest in the world; in 2006, a total of 4,000 people were murdered, i.e. 69 victims per 100,000 inhabitants.



In the 14 years between the 1992 peace treaty and 2006, more than 60,000 people were killed, only slightly fewer than the 75,000 victims of the 12-year civil war from 1980 to 1992. After a decline during the nineties, the homicide rate has been steadily increasing since 2002.



Violence has a long tradition in this Central American country. High murder rates were reported back in the sixties and seventies, mainly caused by authoritarian regimes and social inequalities. Nowadays, social inequalities continue; 40% of Salvadorian families subsist in conditions of poverty. Since the mid nineties, the type of violence has been changing; violence rates are often directly related to the upcoming youth gangs. In those days young people with criminal records had been deported from the United States, many of them members of one of the two big gangs: *Mara Salvatrucha (MS or MS 13)* and *Mara Dieciocho (M 18)*.

Local organisations estimate the current number of gang members in El Salvador at 15,000, around 1% of the population aged between 15 and 24. They practice their own rites, invent their own codes of conduct and are involved in delinquent or criminal activities. Some have contacts with organised crime groups; the international links between *maras* in Central America, Mexico and the USA are increasing.

Although *mara* violence is highly present in Salvadorian life, above all in the media, they are responsible for only 8% - 10% of the homicides, according to forensic medical evidence; some police sources, however, attribute 80% of homicides to *mareros*. Exact data is lacking and only 4% of violent crime is resolved. Violence is concentrated in the poor urban areas of the country, particularly in the slums of the capital San Salvador and of the surrounding municipalities.

Salvador suffers from youth violence: the majority of both crime victims and perpetrators are young men aged between 15 and 29, with one exception - the victims of domestic violence are mainly girls and young women between 5 and 19. Youth violence has many causes, mostly related to *machismo* and the traditionally high levels of violence in the family, the community and society in general. Public institutions in

charge of crime and violence are weak; the state has limited powers to enforce law and justice effectively. Police response is usually characterised by simple repression, thus fuelling the vicious circle of violence. By taking over a substantial part of police jobs, private security companies erode the authority and contribute to legal uncertainty.

Integrated approach to violence prevention through urban upgrading

In the capital of San Salvador, youth gang violence is concentrated in the poor communities, particularly in the eastern parts of the urban agglomeration. The local NGO FUNDASAL (*Fundación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo y Vivienda Mínima*) has been supporting community development activities there since the mid nineties and implemented the upgrading project *Los Manantiales* between 2003 and 2006. The project contributed to the improvement of infrastructure, services and public space (water and sewage pipes, public lighting and private electricity connections, road paving, waste disposal, credits for housing improvement) and simultaneously helped build up a democratic community organisation, encouraging particularly women and young people to strive for better economic and social options.

Total project costs were approx. US\$ 6 million, of which US\$ 4.24 million was funded through German financial cooperation (70%). The other sources of finance were FUNDASAL (10%), the Municipality (5%), the water supply company ANDA (6%), the electric power supply company CAESS (1%), and the beneficiaries themselves through sweat equity and other contributions in kind (7%).

The upgrading area accommodates around 1,500 households, a total of 7,500 people. So the costs amount to US\$800 per person or US\$4,000 per household. If the surrounding communities which also participated in the social measures are taken into account, the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries almost doubles. More than half of the population is below 25 years of age. There are five people per family on average, but many households have ten or more members. More than half of the households are headed by women.

The two *maras* controlled specific sectors and subdivided the community into very conflict-ridden and less conflict-ridden parts. According to local people, they mainly fought amongst themselves and did not necessarily threaten their neighbours. But uninvolved bystanders often became victims of these fights. Young people who would habitually hang around the streets were attracted by the *maras*. The project offered them options other than no future, delinquency and gangsterism.

FUNDASAL perceives urban upgrading merely as a social and empowerment process. Social workers work closely alongside the communities over a number of years, gain confidence, identify the project together with the beneficiaries, inform them about their new responsibilities and prepare them to contribute their manpower to construction works. FUNDASAL's principle is helping people to help themselves.

The more complex construction works like river-bank reinforcement, retaining walls, or sewage or electricity ducts are the responsibility of specialised construction workers and firms. But trench excavation for water pipes, brick laying for manholes, foot-path surfacing, and road paving are organised and carried out by construction brigades drawn from amongst the beneficiaries.

Working in the construction brigades is an essential educational part of urban upgrading. People learn how to structure the work, they feel more responsible for the project, and are able to carry out repairs and maintenance in future. The collective aspect of the work also contributes to dispute resolution and to stress relief. Many neighbours reported knowing each other better after working jointly in the construction brigade. Additionally, FUNDASAL offers assistance and conflict management training, not only to those who are already fighting, but to all interested community members.

Conflict management, organisational support and life skills training are the important elements of working with young people. FUNDASAL initiated this type of youth work in association with the District Municipality, aiming at better integration of young people into the community. The young people learn to identify and analyse their priority needs and to present suggestions to community representatives. They also participate in construction work, supervise younger children's school homework and are involved in local elections.

To summarise, the following activities were carried out to improve social cohesion and the community's capacity for handling conflicts, in addition to the physical improvement of infrastructure, services and housing:

- Organisation of 104 construction brigades and implementation of training and sensitisation workshops with the members of these brigades;
- Strengthening the capacities and competencies of representative community structures;
- Establishment of inter-institutional coordination mechanisms in the area of violence prevention;
- Physical upgrading of abandoned areas and garbage dumps converting them into meeting places, sports fields and playgrounds;
- Education (parent classes) in parental responsibility and behaviour (training courses), together with teachers and municipal social workers;
- Formation of youth leadership, starting from a small seed group;
- Support for young people in the self-assessment of youth-related needs and priorities, elaboration of risk maps together with them;
- Support for young people in their participation in youth camps (for poor and

middle class young people), where training was given in life skills, job skills, HIV/AIDS and violence prevention (in cooperation with GTZ and Scouts El Salvador);

- Organisation of school work groups with primary school children supervised by adolescents and young adults, partly from a middle-income secondary school outside;
- Promotion of income-generating activities, especially for women and young people;
- Creation of a social development fund to enhance the decision-making power of community organisations and their project management capacities;
- Creation of a fund for small-scale youth initiatives to enhance participation of young people in cultural and community activities;
- Assistance to youth and community leaders in formulation of preventive projects and in fund-raising;
- Organisation of food distribution for children, together with the municipal health department;
- Tidiness and cleanliness campaigns with children and young people;
- Participatory evaluation of results and first impacts with youth and community leaders.

Results and impacts achieved

The first impact evaluation was carried out together with members of the youth group and with community representatives. The following results have been achieved so far:

- All inhabitants now have access to safe drinking water compared with only 32% at the beginning of the project; all are connected to a sewage system and almost all to a rainwater drainage system; all have electricity.
- All public paths and streets have been paved with concrete or stones.
- Eight small community centres or meeting rooms were improved and equipped.
- Nineteen larger and smaller public areas were refurbished and converted into meeting points, playgrounds, sports fields or green spaces.
- Almost 100% of the beneficiaries participated in the construction brigades, of which 55% were women and 5% young people (up to 24 years of age).
- More than half of the interviewed families perceive that health conditions improved; there are fewer digestive and respiratory diseases.
- 84% of the interviewees think the project contributed to the improvement of educational levels.

- About half of the beneficiaries think that peaceful co-existence improved due to the project; 75% believe that there is more common identity among the community members and 70% confirm that social relations improved.
- With reference to the violence level, however, 49% of the interviewed families perceive it to be higher now than before; only 32% are convinced that it has been reduced. This apparently contradictory result might be explained by the generally higher violence level in San Salvador as a result of police repression; it could also be attributed to a stronger involvement of the community members in matters of violence: now they talk and know more about these issues, which they did not care about before.
- Social workers observe an increase in the participation of young people in community organisations and community-related activities; a second generation of youth organisations is emerging, many of them drawn from the previous participants in extra-curricular classes.
- People report less vandalism and more tidiness in the area.

3. South Africa - violence prevention through urban upgrading

Context and situation of violence in post-apartheid townships

Some 14 years after the apartheid regime was abolished, South Africa still suffers from severe manifestations of violence and crime. In former townships, annual homicide rates of 50 – 150 and 100 – 150 cases of rape⁵ per 100,000 inhabitants are reported. Taxi organisations frequently fight violent turf wars when competing for the custom of commuters. There are numerous incidents of drive-by assassinations, with many innocent passengers and passers-by killed in the crossfire. In May 2008, a wave of violence motivated by xenophobia swept over the townships, leaving 62 people dead, several hundred injured and some 30,000 displaced. Violence has become part of daily life in many townships

There are many underlying structural causes for the high levels of township violence:

- ***Unemployment and economic hardship.*** High expectations after the end of apartheid, fuelled by governmental promises, and a widening gap between the economically successful and those who have not managed to integrate themselves into the labour market and to define their place in society exacerbate their socio-economic situation, increasing the pressure and aggravating the feeling of uselessness.
- ***Emasculation.*** Changing power relations between men and women conflict with traditional gender roles, in which men are dominant and women are expected to

⁵ Though the readiness of reporting rape has increased – a positive impact of post-apartheid policy on safety issues - there is still significant under-reporting of gender-based violence.

be subordinate. As young men perceive their inability to live up to that role, they lose pride and self-respect. The arising frustrations are reinforced by poverty and unemployment.

- ***Traditions unable to cope with new challenges.*** Through the challenges of development and modernisation, through changing gender roles and particularly through HIV/AIDS, traditional structures are collapsing and the number of vulnerable members of society increasing. Some traditions impact directly on violence, e.g. the belief that sex with a virgin is a remedy for HIV/AIDS.
- ***Inheritance of apartheid.*** The decades spent living as second-class citizens have impacted on self-esteem and social behaviour. Despite all the efforts to dismantle the violent structures and impacts of the apartheid system, the realisation of personal interests by means of force and violence has become a part of the shared consciousness which parents pass on to their children through their behaviour.
- ***Reorientation after apartheid.*** The police force of the apartheid regime used violence to stifle opposition and subjugate the masses. In its aftermath, the relationship between the community and the police was tense and strained for a long time. After the legalisation of the ANC and other political organisations in 1990, various political fractions wrestled for ascendancy and tried to stamp their authority on the areas, not least through politically-motivated murders.

In addition to these structural causes, there are risk-triggering factors such as drug and alcohol abuse which loosen human behavioural controls and deficient urban services that provide easy opportunities for crime and convey a general feeling of neglect.

Integrated approach to violence prevention through urban upgrading

Since 2005, the first German development cooperation programme with a clear focus on violence prevention through urban upgrading in South Africa has been undergoing implementation in Khayelitsha, the largest township of the City of Cape Town. Under this programme, three urban sub-centres are being built, small-scale neighbourhood-based projects are being supported by a social development fund, and various types of training are being organised around violence prevention, conflict management and related matters.

A second German development cooperation programme has been planned for implementation in Mdantsane, the largest township of Buffalo City situated between East London and King Williams Town. While most of the investments in the Khayelitsha programme are still concentrated on construction projects, the investments under the Mdantsane programme predominantly address direct violence prevention measures.

The overall goal of the proposed Mdantsane programme is to „improve the living conditions and thus reduce the causes of social conflict and violence in Mdantsane”. The programme objective is to develop, test and establish community-based mechanisms of peaceful conflict resolution. To achieve this goal, six components have been defined for addressing the different aspects of violence in different ways:

- The ***violence prevention in schools*** component aims to involve both teachers and pupils at around 50 of the 110 schools in Mdantsane in violence prevention activities.
- The ***gender-based violence prevention*** component will focus on domestic violence mitigation, the establishment of at least 3 safe houses for women and their children, the establishment of victim support centres and an emergency hotline and the development of a new role model for men.
- The ***community violence prevention*** component addresses the community as a whole. Awareness will be raised around issues of violence through information campaigns and workshops. A special project will work towards achieving an understanding of alcohol and drug abuse as triggers of violence. Selected community members will be trained in conflict mediation and special centres will be established to provide this service. This component will also mobilise efforts to develop community-based care facilities for the most vulnerable groups, including orphans and elderly people abandoned without the support of their families.
- The projects of the ***sports, culture and economic development*** component (“Soccer for Peace”, “Boxing against Violence”, martial arts and “Kwaito against Crime”) will directly mobilise the young people. Through youth skills training, urban gardening, animal husbandry and business-creation counselling, productive self-employment in areas which tap into the specific potential of Mdantsane will be encouraged.
- The ***public space*** component is intended to improve public safety, e.g. through the installation of closed-circuit TV in daytime crime hotspots, the upgrading of streetlights and taxi facilities, young people’s participation in foot patrols around night time hotspots (e.g. around *shebeens* - local pubs where home-brewed beer is served) and regular grass cutting to improve the safety of pedestrians using footpaths. Safety measures are also envisaged for children on their way to and from schools and for pensioners on their way home from pension payout points. One project will promote pride in and identification with various parts of Mdantsane by the development of unique landmarks and the provision of public signs to improve orientation and increase the tourism potential of the area.
- A ***community development fund*** will provide funding for community initiatives which contribute directly or indirectly to violence prevention.

Expected impact

- ***Social development:*** The programme will have a strong impact on daily life and community cohesion in Mdantsane. It will strengthen neighbourhoods and help young people to identify with the area, so they will stay and continue developing what their parents have started. It will facilitate the transition from a rural to an urban lifestyle and sharpen the responsibilities of citizens. It will lead to new forms of community involvement in urban life. The more vulnerable members of the community, especially children, women and the aged, will be strengthened; they will also benefit most from direct violence prevention and the expected reduction in domestic violence.
- ***More safety and security:*** The programme will strengthen business confidence. In places where crime and violence are related to the concentrated movement of goods and people, overcrowding and lack of orientation, and around taxi ranks, the programme will help channel the flow of these goods and people in order to facilitate self-sustaining control mechanisms. Where crime and violence are related to remote locations and lack of exposure, e.g. in dark corners and bushy areas, and around abandoned structures and *shebeens* at night, the programme will encourage better use and social control of public space.
- ***Local economic development:*** The expected reduction in crime and violence will lead to an improved perception of Mdantsane as an area of potential business and will eventually attract direct investments. Business people will appreciate the quick and cost-efficient conflict mediation services. Urban gardening will help complement the income of the poorest. The programme will stimulate the local economy and create new business perspectives, especially for the production of products and services to meet local demand, such as fresh produce, gardening services, car repair and electrical appliances workshops, arts and crafts workshops, childcare and aftercare facilities, internet cafés, computer sales and maintenance facilities.
- ***Institutional development:*** The programme will help improve the relationship between the Mdantsane inhabitants and the municipal administration. It will also improve relations with the police and make policing more effective. In fact, perhaps the most important impact will be to collectively harness prevention and enforcement for the improvement of living conditions in Mdantsane. By enhancing the community structures to control violence and providing community-based mechanisms of self-regulation, all public institutions are expected to benefit.
- ***Environment:*** As the Mdantsane area becomes progressively more attractive, it will lead to higher residential densities. In the short term this may overstretch the capacity of existing infrastructure networks, especially of the sewers. However, in the long term higher densities are necessary and will provide a practical means of rationalising land use and allowing the sustainable operation and the maintenance of infrastructure networks.

4. Lessons learnt

The following lessons can be learnt from the various experiences of violence prevention in poor urban settlements of developing countries:

Violence prevention through urban upgrading

- Violence prevention through urban upgrading is an appropriate strategy where private investments are seriously hampered by the lack of public safety, repressive strategies are bound to fail and the community is actively involved. Upgrading the living conditions of the poor through a combination of physical and social improvements is a sophisticated strategy for showing local government's commitment to attracting private investments.
- As it is difficult and complex, urban upgrading is not a very easy area for local governments at the outset. Populist leaders tend to prefer new housing projects in which they can cut ribbons rather than upgrading existing settlements. While the introduction and improvement of infrastructure and services is challenging enough in comparison to new development, urban upgrading projects with a violence prevention focus are even more complex.
- Urban upgrading starts to become an interesting approach once urban growth rates show signs of decline. Then political leaders are ready to change their policies and to re-assign funds from developing open land to increasing the value of occupied land. Urban upgrading is a viable financial strategy if the share of public investments triggers a higher share of private investments and, in the end, increases public revenue through taxes and contributions.
- Violence prevention through urban upgrading implies the coordination and cooperation of various municipal departments. Coordination requires a very sensitive management effort and can only be accomplished effectively if the coordinating body maintains a modest profile, rejecting any kind of protagonist approach and referring success to the cooperating partners and the communities.
- While in most countries municipalities take the lead in urban upgrading, it is strategically important to have private organisations as project partners. They are often not only more reliable and better organised than local government departments, but their participation also has a disciplinary effect and makes local government departments work harder.
- The sustainability of the violence prevention through urban upgrading approach depends on active community involvement, institutional back-up, secure financing and political support. The continuity of municipal policies is a must. If violence prevention through urban upgrading is seen as a flagship programme of one particular local government, there is a considerable risk that the fluctuation of staff and changing priorities of the new mayor will jeopardise the sustainability of the approach.

Community participation

- Key to any violence prevention activities in poor urban neighbourhoods is the active participation of the communities in planning and implementation. Necessary community contributions include the identification of hot spots and of violence prevention measures, direct involvement in public safety and violence prevention activities and participation in monitoring sessions and review meetings. It is important that both men and women, as well as the different age groups within the community, and particularly the young people, are represented. Violence prevention measures require age-related and gender-specific design.
- The term community participation is often mythicised. It starts with the notion of community. Usually the settlements of the urban poor are places of conflict with different groups of opposing interests, and with little tradition of democratic decision-making. People are busily struggling to survive and often do not have time to attend meetings or to do community work. They can only be mobilised if they are really interested and the project produces clear benefits for them. It is therefore essential for community mobilisation to spell out the benefits of violence prevention in detail, not only in terms of an expected reduction in crime and violence, but also stressing short-term achievements and the steps to reach the medium-term goal.
- Community participation is easier to achieve when the roles of the project partners are clear and well understood from the very beginning. The community not only represents the target group and the prominent project partner, it is also the owner of the violence prevention project and responsible for its success. Government agencies and the police should support the community in the planning and implementation of its violence prevention project; instead of violence prevention *for* the community government agencies and police would be better advised to organise violence prevention *with* the community.

Community policing

- Community policing is a controversial concept. Where it works, unemployed young people can be mobilised to carry out unarmed foot patrols in hot spots at times when conflicts often turn into violence e.g. on Friday evenings or at weekends or after the local football match. In well-organised and relatively homogeneous neighbourhoods, citizens can increase security in close contact with the police by, for instance, intervening in cases of domestic violence and by reducing petty crime. In these cases, community policing is a manifestation of the civil courage to stand up for one's belief and for neighbours who need help.

- However, in many developing and rapidly industrialising countries with problems of governance, police forces often do not enjoy the confidence of the public and corruption is widespread. Then civic groups assuming police functions sooner or later succumb to the temptation of misusing the assumed power and may turn into vigilante groups, spreading fear and terror.
- The discussions around the concept of community policing help to illustrate the distribution of powers between civil society and the state. They show clearly what citizens expect from the state and under what conditions they respect the monopoly of state power. They also demonstrate what citizens are expected to do to ensure safety and security in their neighbourhoods and where the limits and interfaces of private and public responsibilities are.

Integrated approach to violence prevention

- Violence prevention is a cross-cutting issue of public policy. The promotion of violence prevention should never be allocated to one agency or sector; it should be the common concern of various sectors. It requires multi-agency cooperation and networking between different stakeholders.
- Transparency, credibility and accountability are essential for building up trust and constructive relationships between community and public stakeholders. If the state provides an appropriate framework, ensuring good governance, a reliable legal system and effective law enforcement, the community is usually committed to social control of the neighbourhood. Restoring the lost power monopoly of the state is a long and painful process, as the Colombian example shows, but the only way to sustainable peace development.
- Public investments in violence prevention are economically justified twofold: they help reduce private security expenses and they help attract or leverage private sector investments. Safety and security are among the least tangible and most sensitive elements which determine the investment climate; private companies appreciate these collective goods and public investments to deliver or ensure them.
- There is an unsolved discrepancy between comprehension of the necessity for violence prevention and willingness to finance the corresponding measures. Everybody knows that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, but people are reluctant to pay for prevention, and would rather wait until they are obliged to pay for the consequences of no prevention. The governments of countries with emerging economies, as seen in the cases of Colombia and South Africa, seem to be particularly willing to overcome this reluctance and to adopt integrated approaches to violence prevention because they are convinced of the long-term economic and social benefits.

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