

Developing a Community Safety Plan

(KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Community Police Board Toolkit)

This Chapter will help you

- Say what the different approaches to crime are
- Find out what the crime problems in your community are
- Decide which crime problems are most important
- Decide on programmes and projects for a community safety plan

1. Introduction

The SAPs Interim Regulations of Community Police Forums and Boards says every Community Police Forum must develop a community safety plan before the end of each financial year. The plan must say what the Forum wants to do in the police station area during the following year. It must include a list of the priorities and needs of the Forum. These Priorities and needs, as determined by the community, will form part of the annual operational plan of the Police station.

The Forum should ask the Station Commissioner for advice before they create a community safety plan.

The community safety plan must say:

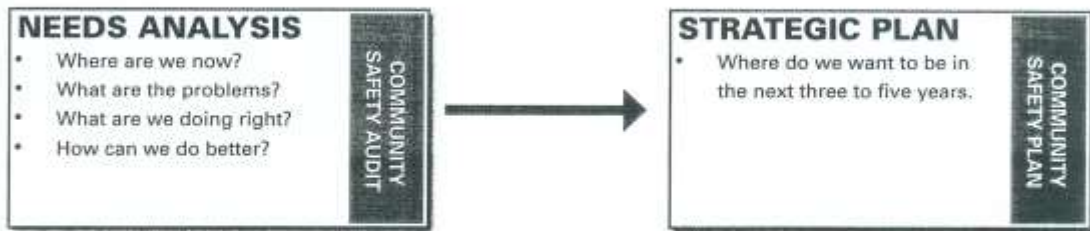
- What programmes, projects or action steps the Forum wants to implement
- Where the Forum will get funds for the project
- How the projects will promote the aims of the Forum

Planning usually goes from the biggest picture to the smallest detail, from years to one year to the next few days. The diagram on p.5-2 gives a picture of the planning process.

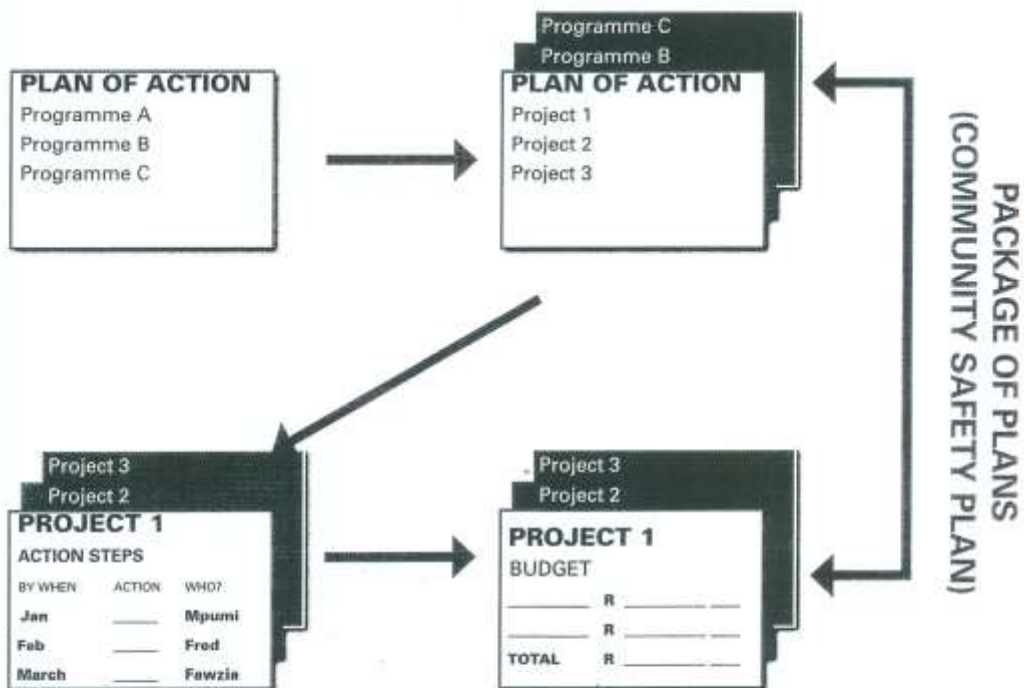
Your Forum may want to start with one or two projects only. Later on you can increase the number of programmes and projects if your resources allow it.

All the Forums in an area must give their community safety plans to the Area Board. The Area board must then develop its own plan to support and co-ordinate the plans of the different Forums in the area.

PHASE 1: LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE

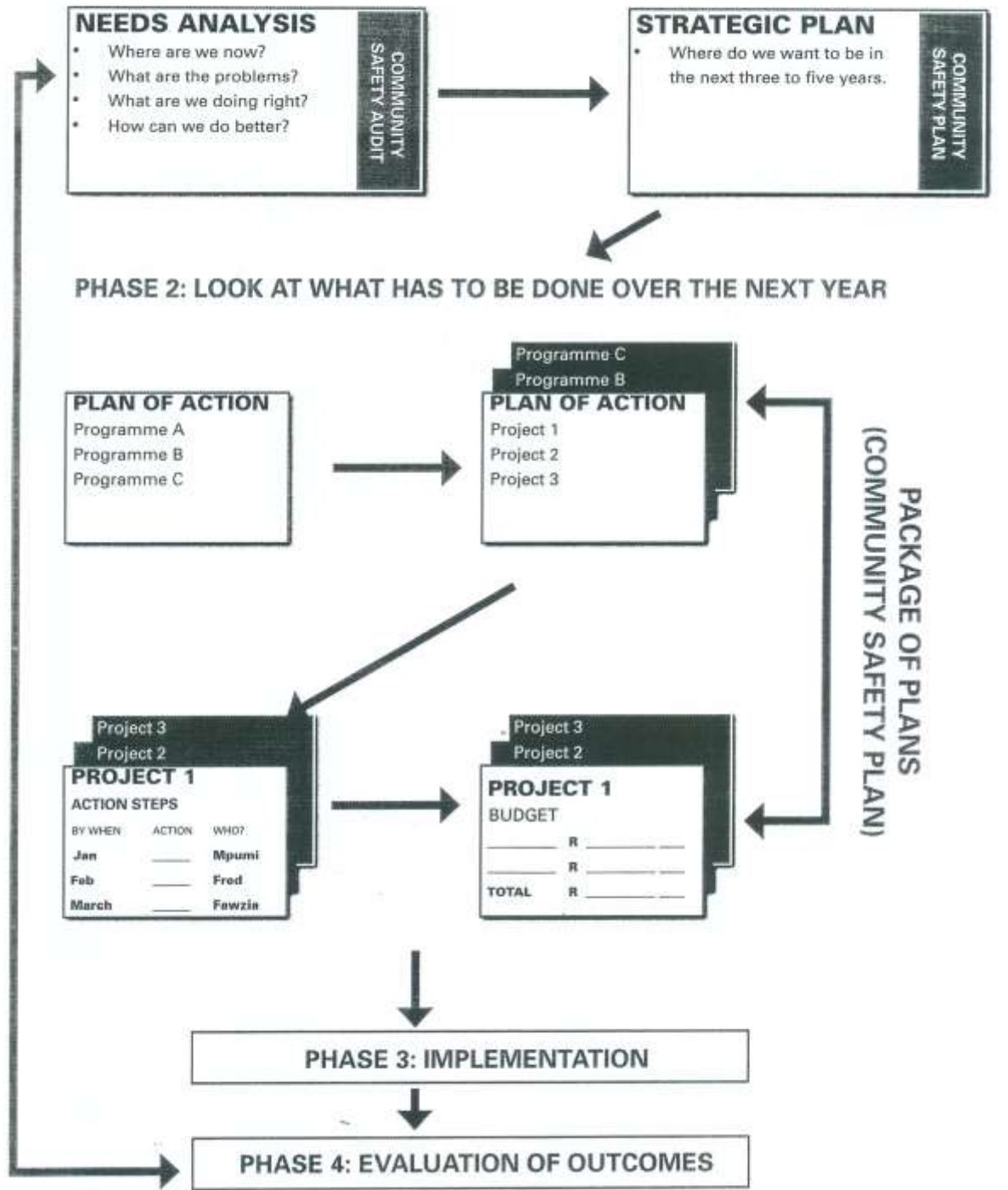


PHASE 2: LOOK AT WHAT HAS TO BE DONE OVER THE NEXT YEAR



PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION

PHASE 4: EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES



All the Area Boards in a province must then give their plans to the Provincial Board. The Provincial Board must support and co-ordinate the plans of the different Area Board in the province.

If you want to read more about community safety plans, read section 8 of the SAPS Interim Regulations for Community Police Forums and Boards in Appendix VI of this Toolkit. If you want to read more about the aims of Forums in general, read section 18.1 of the SAPS Act No.68 of 1995 in Appendix V of the Toolkit.

2. Different ways of tackling crime

When you develop a community safe plan, you need to know that there are different ways to work against crime.

The white Paper on Safety and Security (Section I in Appendix IV in this Toolkit) gives a definition of crime prevention:

Crime prevention is the total of all activities that decrease, discourage or prevent crime by:

- Providing a effective justice system to discourage crime
- Changing the environment where crime takes place
- Changing the circumstances that cause crime

From the above definition we get three ways of tackling crime:

- Law enforcement
- Situational crime prevention
- Social crime prevention

We will now look at each one in turn.

2.1 Law enforcement

The police help to enforce the law when they arrest crime suspects and take them to court with good evidence.

To enforce the law successfully the police must:

- Investigate crimes and collect evidence against suspects
- Do crime prevention operations and patrol areas(visible to Policing)
- Provide good service to victims

The police must interact with the community during patrols.

That is because they need community support to enforce the law. The community must also help with information about crimes.

When police have enough evidence, they can take a suspect to court. But the police also need the support of the prosecutor. To get a suspect convicted, the police and the prosecutor must work together.

See the Section II of the White Paper on Safety and Security (1995) in Appendix IV of this Toolkit.

2.2 Situational crime prevention

You can change the physical environment to make it more difficult and risky for people to commit a crime. We call this situational crime prevention.

For example, you can:

- Use locks, burglar bars and alarm systems to make it more difficult for criminals to enter a building
- Use gate passwords or a security guard to control access to a building
- Increase surveillance by telling employees to be more alert or by using closed-circuit television
- Search people for firearms or other weapons before they enter an area
- Provide better lighting in darker areas
- Improve the layout of urban centres
- Put valuable items in a safe

2.3 Social crime prevention

There are many circumstances that can make people commit crime. Common causes of crime are poverty, unemployment, disrupted families and drug abuse.

Social crime prevention is about projects that improve people's lives. When you improve people's lives they are less likely to commit a crime.

Social crime prevention can include the following:

- Training programmes for youth at risk
- Job creation programmes such as food gardens
- Constructive leisure activities such as sport
- Alcohol and drug education programmes
- Education about women's rights
- The provision of child-care centres

3. The stages of a community safety plan

When they work together successfully, the Forum and the police can develop a community safety plan in the following stages, one after the other:

- Do a community safety audit
- Decide on programmes and projects for the community safety plan
- Implement the community safety plan
- Monitor and evaluate the community safety plan

The next sections tell you what you have to do at each stage. The information comes from a book called *A Manual for Community-Based Crime Prevention: Making South Africa Safe*, which was developed by the National Crime Prevention Centre of the Department of Safety and Security, together with the CSIR's Crime Prevention Centre and Institute for Security Studies.

3.1 Doing a community safety audit

Before the Forum and the police can write a community safety plan, they have to do some homework. They have to find out as much as possible about the crime problems and Characteristics of the police station area. We call this a community safety audit.

A community safety audit has to:

- Identify the crime problems in the community
- Find out which people or organisations already do crime prevention
- Look at the social physical characteristics of the area
- Decide which crime problems are more important
- Look in more detail at the most important crime problems

It is important to do a good community safety audit, because it will tell you what the focus of your community safety plan should be. The Forum can approach local government to see if they are willing to do the audit or pay someone else to do the audit. In terms of the White Paper on Safety and Security, local government is also responsible for crime prevention.

Some community members may have a lot to say about the crime, but they are not always the ones who suffer most from crime. A good audit will help you identify the real needs in the community.

A good community safety audit will help you to:

- Focus on the most serious problems when you have few resources
- Give people facts when they disagree about the most serious problems
- Co-ordinate the work of different organisations to prevent duplication
- Evaluate the success of your community safety plan at a later stage

This section was adapted from A Manual for Community-Based Crime Prevention:- Making South Africa Safe. p.39.

Let us look in more detail at the five steps of a Community Safety Audit:

STEP 1: What are the crime problems?

The first step in a community safety audit is to get information about the crime problems in your community

For every type of crime, you must try and get the following information:

What is the type of crime? - For example, domestic violence.

Who are the victims? - Women between 28 and 45 years, some unemployed.

Who are the offenders? - Men between 25 and 50 years, some unemployed; Partners or acquaintances of victims.

Where does the crime take place? - In the victim's home or yard.

How is the crime committed? - With fists, household objects or knives.

Are alcohol and drugs involved? - Yes, many of the offenders are under the influence of alcohol
And some of the victims too.

To find out how much each crime occurs and how serious it is, you should try to answer the following questions :

- What is the frequency of this crime? In other words, how often does it happen? In which months and seasons? On what days? What time of the day?
- What is the crime rate? (to get the crime rate, you divide the population of the area by the number of crimes in the area).

You can get information for the community safety audit from

- Police records
 - Magistrates and prosecutors
 - Prisons
 - Private security companies, car guards and security guards
 - Victim surveys
 - Organisations such as Rape Crisis, NICRO and FAMSA
 - Social workers, counsellors, district surgeons and doctors
 - Hospitals and clinics
 - Schools and businesses
 - CMC organisations and trade unions
 - Insurance businesses and banks
 - Hawkers, taxi drivers, she been owners and bartenders
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- **What is the risk of this crime? (to get the crime risk you look at the number of crimes per potential number of targets in a specific period.)**
 - **What is the impact of this crime? For example, murder happens less than theft, but it has a more serious impact on the community.**

It is not easy to get all this information, but you should try your best. The Station commissioner must help the Forum to do a good community safety Audit. The harder the Forum works on the audit, the better the community safety plan will be in the end.

The Forum can do surveys or individual interviews to get information. You can also organise meetings to ask community members about crime problems. It can be a general community meeting or several meeting with different groups.

This section was adapted from A Manual for Community-Bases Crime Prevention: Making South Africa Safe. pp. 40-45.

STEP 2: who is already doing something?

The second step in the community safety audit is to find out which organisations or individuals are already doing crime prevention.

Some organisations may already have crime prevention projects. For example, perhaps there are already projects for street children or victims of domestic violence.

Your Forum can work with these organisations to make their projects more successful. They may also want to become members of the Forum. By working together, you share skills and resources. You also prevent duplication.

This section was adapted from A Manual for Community-Based Crime Prevention: Making South Africa Safe.p.46.

STEP 3: what are the physical and social characteristics of the area?

To understand the causes of crime in your community you must know the physical and social characteristics of the area. This information will help you decide what kind of projects your area and community need.

The physical characteristics of your area will be important for situational crime prevention.

Physical characteristics are:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Population density | Overcrowded conditions can cause crime. |
| Layout and type of housing | Some houses are easy to break into. |
| Image and infrastructure | Poor street lighting and lack of services make people vulnerable to crime. |
| Transport routes | highways and railways can provide easy escape routes for criminals. |
| Vacant land | large open spaces are often dangerous for pedestrians. |
| Commercial and industrial facilities | Some kind of business can attract crime. |

The social characteristics of your community will be important for social crime prevention.

Social characteristics are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Age | young people are often more likely to commit a crime. |
| Gender | women are more at risk of domestic violence and sexual assault. Young men are more at risk of other violent crimes. Young men are also more likely to commit crime |
| Socio-economic status | poverty and unemployment can cause crime. |
| High levels of inequality | crime is high when some people are rich and others are very poor. |

Community participation crime prevention is easier if people communicate with each other and take part in local organisations.

Security of tenure crime is higher in areas where people often change house.

you can get information about the characteristics of your area from city planners in your local council. For example, you can ask your municipality for their Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

This section was adapted from A Manual for Community-Based Crime Prevention: Making South Africa Safe.p.46-49.

STEP 4: Which problems are most important?

Your community safety plan cannot focus on all the crime problems in your community. The Forum has to start with a few problems so that people feel they can manage. To decide which problems the Forum should tackle, you use the information collected in the first three steps.

You should look at the following:

The most serious crime: which crime problems occur most?

Which crimes are increasing the fastest?

Which crimes have the biggest impact on people?

Affected places: Which areas have the most crime?

Which crimes occur in which area?

Victims at high risk: Who are the victims of each type of crime?

(repeat victimisation) Which people are victims of a crime more than once

Which crimes do victims fear most?

The most likely offenders: Who are most likely to commit a crime?

Reduction potential: Which crimes are easiest to prevent?

For example, suppose your community has the following crime problems:

Domestic violence: Occurs at moderate levels

Causes injuries and deaths

Poor response from the justice system

Low reduction potential (difficult to prevent)

Mugging: Occurs at moderate levels
Causes alot of fear
Causes few injuries
Causes disinvestment in the inner city
Moderate reduction potential

Car theft: Occurs at high levels cross the area
Causes no injuries
Some car are recovered
Moderate reduction potential

Which of these three problems do you think the community should tackle first? Remember, there is not really a right or wrong answer. Different Forums will make different decisions. But t is important that all the members of your Forum decide together which problems the Forum must tackle.

[This section was adapted from A Manual for Community-Based Crime Prevention: Making South Africa Safe.p.50-52.](#)

STEP 5: What are the most details of the most important problems?

When you Forum has decided which problems are most important, you have to look at each problem in more detail. The better you describe a problem, the easier it is to come up with a solution.

Suppose your Forum chose gang violence as one of its problems. The information the Forum collected could help you give this description:

Type of crime: Gang violence (assault)

Targets/Victims: Young Men (17-30 Years) of poor socio-economic background, unemployed, some under the influence of drugs and alcohol, members of gangs

Offenders: Young Men (17-30 Years) of poor socio-economic background, unemployed, some under the influence of drugs and alcohol, members of gangs

When: Between 18:00 and midnight, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays

Where: In bars, shebeens or on the streets in the victim and offender's neighbourhood

How: with knives and guns

Available opportunities: Poor street lighting, police station far from crime scene: high levels of intimidation, so victims and witnesses do not report crime or co-operate with police

To give such a description for every crime problem the Forum wants to tackle.

This section was adapted from A Manual for Community-Based Crime Prevention: Making South Africa Safe.p.52-53.

3.2 Deciding on a community safety plan

Let's say your Forum has identified the main crime problems it wants to solve. You also have a good description of each problem.

It is now time to decide on a community safety plan. This means you have to:

- Think of solutions for the problems
- Decide on programmes and projects to implement the solutions

(a) Finding solutions

You must use the information from the community safety audit to get ideas for solutions. The audit will help you see which actions can work and which not.

For example, perhaps your community safety audit shows that the victims of domestic violence often know or live with the offender. This already tells you that making the house more secure against intruders will not solve the problem. The audit may also show that victims and offenders keep domestic violence secret. So it will not help to have more police officers patrol the streets.

To solve the problem, you have to encourage women to speak out. You also have to give them access to legal support, counselling and support groups. And you have to provide a safe space for women to go to when they need it. Another part of the solutions is an awareness campaign to educate offenders and the community about women's rights.

When you think of solutions, you must involve organisations and individuals who can help you implement the solutions. A good solution is no use if you do not have the resources, partners or skills to implement it.

(b) Choosing programmes and projects

The Forum must choose programmes that will implement the solutions. The programmes you choose will make up the Forum's community safety plan. Each program must have a clear focus. For example, one programme can focus on a specific crime problem such as domestic violence. Another programme can focus on all the crime in a specific neighbourhood.

Usually a programme is made up of different projects. These projects tackle the same problem from different angles.

For example, let's say the Forum has a programme for domestic violence. The programme can have two different projects: one project can be to start a support centre for victims. Another project can be a campaign to educate men about women's rights.

The Forum should choose programmes and projects that:

- Enjoy the support of the community
- Use limited resources creatively
- Are achievable and realistic
- Are sustainable can continue successfully over a long a period)
- Can make a big impact
- Have measurable outcomes
- Tackle the problem at the right level (such as an area or target group)
- Do not duplicate other work

This section was adapted from A Manual for Community-Based Crime Prevention: Making South Africa Safe.p.55-62

3.3 implementing the community safety plan

A community safety plan consists of different programmes.
Programmes usually have a long-term view.

But each programme consists of one or more projects. Projects have practical short-term goals.
Each project must have a budget, time scale and action steps.

So when you implement the community safety plan, it actually means you implement the different projects.

To implement projects, the Forum needs resources – money, equipment and people. When the Executive committee of the Forum draws up a budget, they have to take into account all the needs of the different projects.

See chapter 6 of this Toolkit to find out more about designing and managing projects.

3.4 Monitoring and evaluating the community safety plan

Your Forum must measure the success of its community safety plan.

This means you have to:

- Measure if the plan is achieving its aims
- Determine the cost of the plan
- Find out if the perceptions of the community are changing
- Learn from mistakes and successes

(a) Monitoring the community safety plan

While you were implementing the community safety plan, you have to check that everything happens according to plan. This is called “monitoring” the plan.

You monitor the plan by monitoring all its programmes and projects. Monitoring must happen from the start.

For every programme and project, you should ask:

- Are we following the correct steps?
- Are the tasks carried out on time?
- Are we within budget?
- Are there any problems?
- Is the programme/project working? If not, why not?
- Do we have to adapt the programme/project?

(b) Evaluating the community safety plan

You evaluate things to see if they work or not. The Forum has to evaluate the success (impact) of:

- Each project
- Each programme
- The community safety plan as a whole

Evaluation usually happens when you have finished the implementation of a project, programme or community safety plan. You should evaluate the success of all the projects in a programme before you try and evaluate the success of the overall programme. In the same way, you should evaluate the success of all the programmes evaluate the success of the overall plan.

To measure the impact of a project, programme or plan, you can compare data (information) about the situation before the plan's implementation with the data after implementation.

For example, perhaps your Forum started a car guard project in an area where there is a lot of car theft. Thirty cars used to get stolen in the area every month. But since you started the car guard project, it is only fifteen every month. So the project decreased car theft in the area by 50 percent.

Evaluations must also show if there were any bad consequences. For example, perhaps you brought down car theft in one neighbourhood, but now there are more thefts in the neighbourhood next door.

There is a lot more we can say about implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Most of this happens at the level of projects. Chapter 6 talks in more detail about managing and evaluating projects.

This section was adapted from A Manual for Community-Based Crime Prevention: Making South Africa Safe.pp.67-75. And the Community Policing Policy Framework and Guidelines: A Manual for the SA Police Service, p.66.

EXERCISES

1. There are three approaches to crime. They are law enforcement, situational crime prevention and social crime prevention. Can you explain the difference between the approaches?
2. You are in an area with several big apartment buildings- where many families live. Many of the children are left alone after school because both parents work. Kids play on the stairs

and in the streets. The small kids often get injured and the older ones join gangs. What solution do you suggest to the Forum?

3. There is a park in your neighbourhood. People use it as a shortcut. At night the park is dark and many people get raped and mugged when walking through it. What can your Forum do about the problem?
4. Your Forum has to write a community safety plan for the next year. How do you do this?
5. What is the difference between a programme and a project? Can you give an example?
6. Your Forum has just finished its activities for the year. You have to write a report to evaluate the community safety plan that the Forum implemented over the passed year. What are some of the things you should include?