

Social Crime Prevention in South Africa's Major Cities

by

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This report will examine social crime prevention activities in South Africa's four major cities during 2000, and locate these activities within an analysis of the progress that has been made in terms of the social crime prevention approach suggested for cities in the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security.

1. Punishment or Prevention: International Trends

After the Second World War, the international trend in crime prevention was to address crime through the criminal justice system, which typically included a combination of vigorous policing, and a 'tough' justice system. This was based on an individualistic approach to crime prevention, which assumed that individual motivation plays an important role in the decision to commit a crime (Travis and Weisburd, 1997). Crime was seen to be a product of particular individuals, and the model of what kind of individual committed crime was largely deduced from those that were incarcerated (Robert, 1989). Given that crime was seen as a problem of particular individuals, who lacked moral integrity, the envisaged solution was to ensure that such people were incarcerated for as long as possible, to protect society from those who did adhere to social norms (Garland 1996).

Alongside the punitive approach to crime reduction was a call for increased research into the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. This research was increasingly revealing the inadequacy of the criminal justice approach to crime prevention and was failing to identify personality and other internal characteristics of criminals (Travis and Weisburd, 1997). It was becoming evident that criminals did not significantly differ from law abiding citizens in any measurable way and the approaches to identifying people 'likely to be criminals' were often based on racist and classist stereotypes.

This crisis led Garland (1996) to refer to the belief that the police had a monopoly over crime control as the "myth of sovereign crime control" (p. 448). The consequence of this increasing pessimism about the ability to deal with crime through punishment, and the failure to identify individual characteristics associated with criminals, has led in part to the view of crime as a social problem, stemming from the socio-economic environment and facilitated through the situation in which crime occurs, that can be reduced but not eliminated.

Since the 1960s, there has been a growing international awareness of the State's lack of success in its attempts to eliminate crime; and more measured statements about controlling crime have increasingly been found in public discourse. From this period onwards, there

developed what is often referred to as the 'crisis of the criminal justice system' (Donziger, 1996). This took several forms but essentially the 'tough' approach to crime reduction had failed to make any lasting impact on crime rates, in spite of soaring rates of incarceration. The high rates of incarceration created an enormous financial burden and yet the dramatic improvements in the crime rate that were so confidently proposed never materialised (Donziger, 1996).

Alongside the view that the causes of crime are social there evolved an approach that increasingly focused on addressing the socio-economic causes of crime, and the situations that present an opportunity for crime. In this approach all people are prospective criminals, given particular circumstances and opportunities for crime. This approach to crime prevention requires collaboration between organizations providing social welfare services, government and civil society, and the protection of potential victims, rather than the search for perpetrators. Associated with this has been the 'normalisation' of crime – seeing it as something normal in society - as opposed to attributing it to a pathological minority who lack social norms.

More recent international research tends to highlight a few identifiable risk factors that contribute to high levels of crime. These include:

- Poverty and unemployment deriving from social exclusion particularly from the youth.
- Dysfunctional families with uncaring and incoherent parental attitudes, violence and parental conflicts
- Social valuation of a culture of violence
- Presence of facilitators such as firearms and drugs
- Discrimination and exclusion deriving from sexist, racist or other forms of oppression
- Degradation of urban environments and social bonds
- Inadequate surveillance of places and availability of goods that are easy to transport or sell (ICPC, 1997, pp. 20-21).

These factors alert us to two main points. Firstly, youth should be a primary and essential focus for crime prevention. Many of the factors that lead to crime are ones that require early intervention. The prevention of crime - in many instances - translates into the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Secondly, the built environment can impact on crime and can therefore be manipulated to reduce levels of crime.

It should, however, be remembered that no one risk factor or environmental opportunity leads directly to criminal activity. Rather, the complex interaction of a range of factors lead to an increase in crime. This alerts us to the possibility that not all programmes, even if they target one of the identified risk factors, will be successful. In addition there are many variables that impact on the efficacy of crime prevention interventions with different kinds of risk factors related to different kinds of crime. For example, poverty and social inequality are more strongly predictive of interpersonal violence than of other crimes (ICPC, 1997). South Africa's National Crime Prevention Strategy states that:

Crime is not one thing but many things. There are many different kinds of crime, different interests which motivate criminals and hence, many different

causes and solutions to this complex problem. The underlying causes of rape and child abuse are different to the root causes of white collar crime and corruption and both differ in origin from the problem of motor vehicle hijacking. (NCPS, 1996, p. 9)

The move to more 'social' approaches to crime prevention has, however, been met with some resistance. In many cases, governments continue to promise effective crime control through a punitive criminal justice approach. This is often linked to public pressure, which calls for stronger penalties for criminals and sees crime prevention as the sole responsibility of the government. Some governments have found that emphasising social and situational crime prevention would be politically disastrous (Garland, 1996). This has led to much debate between conservative and liberal camp with conservatives adhering to the 'tough on crime' campaigns, and liberals calling for social crime prevention (and rehabilitation or treatment in cases where incarceration is necessary). The 'tough on crime' approaches tend to prevail where there are high levels of fear of crime among the general public.

Regardless of which policy approach governments are pursuing, it is clear that the State's role in crime prevention has been drastically renegotiated, and calls for 'partnerships' have become central to global discourse on crime reduction.

2. What Is Social Crime Prevention?

The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime defines social crime prevention as

anything that reduces delinquency, violence, and insecurity by successfully tackling the scientifically identified causal factors [of crime]. (ICPC, 1997)

Similarly, the South African government's 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security states that social crime prevention [aims to]

reduce the social, economic and environmental factors conducive to particular types of crime. (1998, p. 12)

Some of the causal factors of crime in South Africa identified by the White Paper include gender inequality, the proliferation of firearms, psycho-social factors and so on. The emphasis of the social prevention approach is on targeting these underlying causes of crime, rather than focussing on the punishment of offenders. The causes of crime are seen to be social and situational in nature, rather than a result of individual deviance. The social prevention approach therefore rests heavily on a sound knowledge of the causes of crime, adequate research skills for the monitoring of crime trends, and the evaluation of intervention programmes. Clearly this is more possible in some countries and regions than others, as it requires specialised skills and resources.

The notion of social crime prevention encompasses a range of initiatives, which previously may not have been considered "crime prevention". For example, one of the causes of crime identified in the White Paper on Safety and Security is gender inequality, and a social approach to crime prevention requires women's organisations, family welfare departments and civil society to play a role. Social crime prevention is, by definition, a multi-

disciplinary approach, which requires the collaboration of a range of sectors, including health, housing, education, civil society groups and so on. It is sharply differentiated from the state-centred approaches to crime reduction which have traditionally shaped criminal justice systems.

3. Crime Prevention in South Africa

Although the public response to crime in South Africa has matched that of other countries, crime policy lagged behind international trends in crime prevention as a result of the isolation of apartheid until 1994. During the apartheid era, the system of policing strongly focused on political control and the punitive punishment of political dissenters rather than on crime control. The crime prevention role of the police was minimal in formerly 'white' areas and non-existent in 'black' areas. 74% of police stations were located in 'white' areas and police presence in 'black' areas was largely to control challenges to the apartheid system (White Paper on Safety and Security, 1998). This mode of policing relied on the extensive use of force, and a para-military, hierarchical approach to the coordination of police activities. This has led to several difficulties in implementing a new approach to crime prevention in the post-apartheid period. Firstly, there was little accountability or commitment to dealing with the safety priorities of the local community. This meant that there was almost no integrated work with other departments or organizations.¹ Secondly, little emphasis was placed on research into, and monitoring of crime. The collection and collation of information on crime was poor, making it difficult to set a clear agenda for crime prevention. Police therefore lacked the training for a new information-based approach to crime prevention. Finally, the focus on political control meant that the understanding and practice of crime prevention in South Africa was limited, and social crime *prevention* initiatives absent (NCPS, 1996).

South Africa therefore faces unique challenges in developing and implementing a social crime prevention agenda. Some of the challenges (as discussed above) include:

- The transition that the country on the whole is going through from apartheid to democratic governance
- A history of militarised apartheid policing
- Social factors conducive to high levels of crime
- A lack of expertise in crime prevention
- A public distrust in the criminal justice system and government

South Africa has seen a dramatic increase in the level of crime since 1985, with rates stabilizing since 1994 (White Paper on Safety and Security, 1998). A recent report on fatal injuries in South Africa showed homicide to be the leading cause of non-natural death (accounting for 46% of all non-natural deaths). Firearms were the leading cause of non-natural death in the age group 15-65 years (Butchart, 1999). It should be noted that although these statistics are shocking, they fail to show the marked disparities that continue to characterise crime in South African society. Those most vulnerable to crime are the poorer sectors of society which are still predominantly 'black'.

As is the situation internationally, the high levels of violent crime in South Africa have resulted in calls for harsher sentencing such as the return of the death penalty. Many South

Africans see a 'tough' justice system as the most effective method of deterring criminals and this public opinion has been reflected in the election campaign slogans of some political parties.² A recent survey showed that 70% of South Africans believed that criminals have "too many rights", and 31% of respondents felt that the police have the right to use force to extract information from suspects (Pigou et al in Hamber 1999).

In this political context, the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security reflects a sophisticated and well-conceptualised understanding of crime reduction, integrating international trends and unique local circumstances. It identifies a 'two tier' approach to crime prevention that integrates effective policing and social crime prevention. In the White Paper, local government was given substantial authority to carry out both by-law enforcement and social crime prevention through collaborations with a range of other partners such as the [South African Police Service](#) (SAPS), the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and Community Policing Forums (CPFs). The White Paper emphasised that crime prevention should, however, also take place at National and Provincial level and should take a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach (White Paper on Safety and Security, 1988).

4. Social Crime Prevention at City Level

An important aspect of the White Paper is the leading role identified for local government in social crime prevention. This has been a trend elsewhere in the world, for several reasons.

- Firstly, there has been a large-scale failure on the part of national governments to successfully prevent crime. This has been attributed primarily to national governments' lack of understanding of the nature of, and variation in, crime, from region to region, leading to universally-applied national approaches, rather than interventions based on local circumstances and needs.
- The move to situational crime prevention has alerted government officials to the importance of understanding the geographical location in which one works, if crime is to be successfully addressed.
- The multidisciplinary approach to crime prevention requires the co-operation of other service providers and civil society groups, many of whom may be locally (rather than nationally) based.

Urban local governments (city administrations) are, therefore, strategically placed to bring together the various agents that have a role to play in crime prevention. Cities are traditionally responsible for functions like health, housing and urban planning, and have contacts with education, social welfare, and other departments.

It is useful to consider the approaches that other cities have taken to crime prevention, to provide a starting point for thinking about urban crime prevention in South Africa. A few key principles for effective social crime prevention can be identified from the international experience:

- A problem solving approach should be adopted. The causes of crime should be identified and targeted and addressed, rather than simply the symptoms of crime. The problem solving approach identifies the needs most pressing to the affected communities.
- Community involvement is essential. Communities should be involved in all stages of crime prevention planning and implementation. Community driven approaches are most effective. However, this requires some capacity on the side of the community partners.
- Systematic and thorough research is necessary. This is needed at all stages of crime prevention and includes needs assessments, crime trend analysis, programme evaluations and public opinion surveys.
- Youth are a key target group. Many of the risk factors causing young people to get involved in crime are evident from early in a child's life.
- The nature of social crime prevention is long-term. For example, some of the factors underlying crime include gender inequality or the proliferation of firearms. These problems need to be addressed over long periods of time.
- Social crime prevention should take place in tandem with professional and efficient law enforcement.
- A multi-faceted plan - that does not focus exclusively on one type of crime but recognises that the causes of crime vary depending on the crime, and need to be tackled in a holistic manner – is likely to be most successful.
- A multidisciplinary crime prevention team is needed.

5. Organisation for Crime Reduction in South African Cities

The cities surveyed for this study were [Cape Town](#), [Johannesburg](#), [Pretoria](#) and [Durban](#). All four cities have (or have had) some form of Public Safety or Safety & Security co-ordinating office at the metropolitan level. Many of these offices have faced difficulties, and some of the crime prevention projects in the cities were undertaken at local, rather than metropolitan level.

5.1 "Safer cities"

Safer Cities is the name for a group of approaches to urban crime prevention, which were developed in some European cities, knowledge of which was grown through discussion and collaboration in the European Forum on Urban Safety and other national and international meetings.³ Although the Safer Cities initiatives across the globe share a common paradigm about the causes of crime and the ethos of appropriate responses to crime (for example, 'bottom-up' approaches that are partnership-driven), the actual programmes implemented in different cities vary greatly. Safer Cities programmes were initiated in line with the UN view that "governments, at all appropriate levels, including local authorities, have a

responsibility to ensure access to safety" (UNCHS, undated). South Africa played a key role in lobbying for the issues of urban violence to be put onto the Habitat II agenda. The South African safer cities initiatives were developed out of this process:

Irvin Waller told the workshop on urban violence at Prepcom (the preparatory committee for Habitat II) that Habitat II could be a turning point in the harnessing of the world's crime prevention know-how to make communities secure from crime. ...

The Ninth UN Crime Congress⁴ (Cairo, May 1995) is expected to make recommendations for action to prevent crime, through policies that will serve as a basis for national preparations for Habitat II. ... (from a Habitat Press Release dated 27 April 1995)

The "Safer Cities" approach was initiated in South Africa in 1995 by various UN agencies, as part of the preparation for Habitat II.⁵ Officials in various UN agencies concerned with urban safety aimed to build an "African Forum of Urban Justice and Safety", in order to strengthen African participation in the urban safety discussions at Habitat II in 1996.

The ICPC and the Urban Management Programme – a partnership of the UN Development Program, the UN Centre for Human Settlement (Habitat) and the World Bank – in collaboration with other UN agencies, plan to launch strategies for 'demonstration cities' (pilot projects) in Africa and Latin America. (Habitat press release, 27 April 1995)

In the course of mobilising South African support for the Safer Cities model, the UN Centre for Human Settlement funded a group of South Africans to attend an International Conference on Urban Security in December 1995.⁶ The main work of the conference was comparative discussions of city-based crime prevention models in Europe and in Africa. Subsequent to the conference and the South African government's adoption of the National Crime Prevention Strategy in 1996, Johannesburg was selected as one of the Urban Management Programme's (UMP) "demonstration cities" – referred to in the quotation above.

The Greater Johannesburg Metro Council entered into an agreement with the UMP in 1996 to commence a Safer Cities programme. Funding for the Johannesburg pilot was secured from the Royal Netherlands Embassy in South Africa. The first stage of the programme was to conduct a metro-wide crime survey (victim survey) to assess real levels of crime in the city. This survey, conducted by the Institute for Security Studies, was the first of its kind in South Africa. The second stage of the programme was to develop a strategy and set of project activities, based on the findings of the research and consultation with stakeholders in the city. The strategy for Safer Cities: Johannesburg was approved by the Council at the end of 1997. Negotiations between the UN UMP and the cities of Cape Town and Durban were happening at that time, although there were problems obtaining donor funding to support those cities and the Safer Cities programmes there did not take the same form as that in Johannesburg.

The "Safer Cities" experience in the three cities has varied.

In [Durban](#), the Safer Cities office has had full-time staff and has been located within a line function department of the Metro Council. It enjoys enjoyed collaboration with [Business Against Crime](#) (BAC), the Metropolitan Local Councils in Durban, the Durban Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the South African Police Service (SAPS). Social Crime prevention projects have been informed by an advisory group made up of researchers and practitioners in the field of crime prevention. Durban is unique in having been able to integrate the work of a variety of crime prevention experts and draw on the skills of government, NGOs, private enterprise and civil society. Several social and situational crime prevention projects have been initiated by the City of Durban's Safer Cities office and will be discussed later in this report.

The experience in [Johannesburg](#), however, has been markedly different. The office was not integrated into the line management of the Metro Council, and crime prevention projects were never properly 'owned' by the Council. Johannesburg's Safer Cities office has experienced a dramatic staff turnover with three new co-ordinators in as many years. This has resulted in a lack of implementation of many of the projects conceptualised by the safer cities office. There have also been doubts raised as to the commitment that the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council had to the Safer Cities office. The Safer Cities office has therefore, not initiated many new crime prevention projects in the last 3 years.

The [Cape Town](#) experience is in direct contrast to the Johannesburg experience. The safer cities office in Cape Town has been unique in its focus on *research* into the nature and causes of crime. Several 'safety audits' have been conducted by this office and have been used to recommend programmes for change. The changes suggested have largely focused on situational aspects of crime prevention but the importance of addressing long term structural inequalities such as poor housing and poverty have also been noted. Partnerships have been formed with planning Departments in the council to address the way that high crime areas are designed and maintained. In addition, several projects - such as life-skills training to unemployed youths, in house domestic violence workshops, sensitising communities to domestic violence through drawing murals, hosting a conference on combating crime and xenophobia and training of neighbourhood watch groups – have been delivered in partnership with NGOs in the city (the effective partnerships with NGOs is another distinguishing feature of the Cape Town initiatives). One of the difficulties that Cape Town has faced is controversy over where the Safer Cities office should be located (that is, under protection services or safety and security in the Council), because the two departments are competing for ownership of a project that has been successful and enjoyed a high profile. Cape Town has yet to develop a metro-wide city safety strategy, like Durban, but has nonetheless been able to deliver a far wider range of knowledge and prevention projects than Johannesburg.

5.2 Not-for-profit crime prevention companies

The Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council chose to set up a Section 21 (not for profit) company (The Greater Pretoria Safety and Security Association – GPSSA) to coordinate crime prevention at a Metropolitan level. It was intended that the founding of this company would enable business and other stakeholders to contribute financially to crime prevention initiatives implemented by the GPMC. The reality, however, has been that business contributions have been scarce and, given that the council agreed to match what business contributed, very few projects have been initiated from the GPSSA. In addition, all the

posts envisaged in the GPSSA were not filled, and the GPSSA was essentially being operated by two individuals who did not have the wide support of the directors. There was a resultant lack of morale and capacity from these staff, which made delivery of projects difficult.

As a result of lack of business contributions and the staffing difficulties, the GPSSA stopped functioning, and many of their crime prevention initiatives have been run instead from a metropolitan level by the GPMC. However, recently, there have been discussions about re-opening the company under new leadership.

It is noteworthy, however, that the Centurion City Council (which was a Local Council within the GPMC) has also coordinated its crime prevention initiatives by means of a Section 21 company. Business contributions have been forthcoming to this company, and it has operated successfully since 1996 with several projects emanating from its office. This is likely to be due to the relative wealth of this community, as well as to the strong commitment of a few individuals to driving the section 21 company.

5.3 Does structure matter?

Given that both the "Safer Cities" and the "Section 21" models have succeeded and failed in different cities in South Africa, it would seem that the co-ordination of social crime prevention is less influenced by the model of organisation and implementation than originally thought.

Instead, individual commitment of leadership figures, financial and political backing from the local authority, and the dedication of full-time staff to social crime prevention initiatives are the three most important variables to determine whether or not a city will succeed in delivering effective social crime prevention programmes.

6. Social Prevention in South African Cities

The White Paper on Safety and Security (1998) states that there are several ways in which social crime prevention can be achieved in the South African context. These are:

- Designing out crime
- Education
- Promoting social cohesion
- Supporting youth, families and groups at risk
- Breaking cycles of violence
- Promoting individual responsibility
- Socio-economic interventions to undercut causes of crime

Each of these, and the extent to which local government is engaged in such strategies, will be examined.

The information that follows was obtained primarily from interviews with key officials in the four metropolitan cities. The interviews were largely unstructured although specific questions were included to pursue projects that were known to be in place (from our previous research). Officials were asked to speak generally about their social crime

prevention work rather than being asked specifically about projects. In this way it was possible to gain an understanding of what they considered to be social crime prevention, rather than imposing our own definitions. The relationships between the social crime prevention projects and the enforcement projects at City level were also probed. In addition, some information was obtained from documents such as strategy documents, internal policies and mission statements. These were particularly useful in highlighting the areas of priority within departments.

6.1 Designing out crime

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) - or situational crime prevention - refers to attempts to reduce crime through appropriate planning and design of our physical environment. It frequently includes reducing the amount of vacant land or open spaces in an area, ensuring that safe pedestrian routes and trading centres exist and ensuring that public spaces such as parks are well lit. Situational approaches to crime prevention have been adopted by all four cities. The most common examples of situational crime prevention in South Africa are discussed below:

6.1.1 Closed circuit television (CCTV)

CCTV is viewed by representatives of all four cities as an effective method of managing crime hotspots in the city. In some cities it has been spearheaded by the council and in others by Business Against Crime (BAC).

- Among the Metro cities, CCTV was first initiated in the City of Cape Town in 1997/1998, and Cape Town currently has the most extensive CCTV system.
- The City of Johannesburg has implemented a pilot CCTV project and is considering the feasibility of an extended CCTV footprint.
- The GPMC undertook a pilot study into the feasibility of CCTV. Most government officials in this region felt that CCTV was an effective method of crime prevention (cities report a 47% - 64% drop in the crime rates of the region) but it is one that is extremely expensive. There is concern that CCTV may be implemented at the expense of other projects and no decision has been taken yet in the GPMC on whether it will be implemented.
- The City of Durban has a CCTV system that was developed and is managed by the Durban City Police. It is situated on densely populated areas prone to crime, such as the beach-front.

Despite the effectiveness of the system claimed by Business Against Crime (BAC), there have been difficulties in the implementation of CCTV in South African cities. Firstly, there has been controversy regarding the ownership of the system, and who is best placed to operate and manage it (BAC, the police, trained private security guards?). Tensions between City Councils and BAC have highlighted the difficulty in maintaining long-term partnerships. At the present time there is no recognised or standard training for CCTV operators, making it difficult to determine who the 'best qualified' person is to operate the system. Finally, in Pretoria where CCTV has not yet been implemented, some businesses in

the inner city have implemented their own systems. These are not linked to a police response unit, and this privatisation or fragmentation of the system may undermine the preventive potential of CCTV.

A major concern is that the CCTV systems are not being independently monitored or evaluated. Not only is it necessary to investigate the effectiveness of the systems, but it is also necessary to establish the benefits of the systems relative to their costs; as they are expensive to install and maintain. Although identified as a crime prevention initiative, the extent of the crime prevention benefit of CCTV can be debated. It is possible that the presence of cameras deters people from committing crime in the area; but it does not prevent a person from making the decision to commit crime. It is not aimed at reducing the number of people committing crime, but rather at reducing the opportunities for those who are already committing crime. It therefore needs to be operated in conjunction with projects that prevent people becoming perpetrators.

6.1.2 Visible policing

Visible policing has been a primary strategy to reduce crime in South African cities. Even the local governments themselves are involved in provision of some forms of policing –

- In many places, council officials are involved in guarding council property, and the use of uniforms and patrols in carrying out this activity can assist to increase "visibility" around council premises. In more poorly resourced cities or areas where private security cannot be hired to undertake this activity, council officials tend to perform this function.
- Increasing visibility of traffic enforcement is a fairly common way for cities to increase their "police" visibility. This is especially used over holidays, weekends and the festive season; and the traffic officers often undertake joint operations with the SAPS. This has the dual benefit of increasing the number of uniformed personnel on the streets, and also widening the range of offences for which suspects may be arrested or fined, to include traffic offences as well as criminal offences.
- Multi-agency enforcement teams have been tried in Johannesburg's inner city. This "policing" exercise was a response to the crisis in by-law infringements in Johannesburg's inner-city. It involved personnel from Health, Housing, Building, Planning and Fire Departments of the city. Although not especially visible, this team did make an impact on the communities of illegal tenants, by-law-violating building managers and owners.
- Cape Town has a particularly large visible policing capacity. Council officials such as Civic Patrol are supplemented by the Community Patrol Officers (CPOs), who are civilian reservists, trained by SAPS and are paid by council or business. This has been a system that has received a great deal of public support and councillors feel it has been a highly successful project in that it provides both visible policing and job creation simultaneously. CPOs are accountable to their local police station and the city council. There has, however, been resistance to the scheme from National government (particularly the SAPS) who say that by one donor 'buying' the services of a CPO, that officer will be expected to police selectively and will not be able to

respond to a crime that happens outside of the region he/she is paid to guard, even if they are a witness to that crime. The future of the CPO scheme hangs in the balance.

Again, it is not known the extent to which these forms of policing are successful in reducing or preventing crime, because of the lack of evaluation research. However, there is widespread public support for methods of visible policing, and it does play a role in reducing fear of crime.

6.1.3 Urban renewal and the City Improvement Districts

City improvement districts (CIDs) have been a popular approach to urban regeneration. They began in North America and have spread rapidly, now also existing in Australia, the UK and Africa. Worldwide there are over 1500 city improvement districts and in New York alone, there are over 40. CIDS have been a well-received contribution to crime prevention in the cities of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Pretoria with the first African CID being established in Johannesburg in 1994. Johannesburg currently has seven CIDs and intends to spread these out to cover the entire inner city.

Typically, CIDs are set up by the property owners in the area, who elect a board and an executive committee. A management company or individual is appointed to run the day-to-day management of the CID. Levies are paid by the property owners into a section 21 company, and this covers the costs of the CID activities.

Worldwide, CIDs vary greatly in the services they offer. The focus in the South African has been on both crime and grime. High visibility security has been prioritised, with security officials wearing brightly coloured uniforms and being based on the pavements. They are in contact with a central control room and each other. Cleaners are also highly visible and so are also intended to prevent crime. In Johannesburg, security guards are also trained to act as ambassadors for the city in order to assist tourists and make people feel more comfortable in the city. Some of the city improvement districts have also included the management of informal trade as a priority.

In central Johannesburg, crime statistics indicate that armed robberies are down by 63%, muggings by 73%, Shopliftings by 50%, pick-pocketing by 80% and malicious damage to property by 78% since the development of the CIDs.⁷

A different approach to urban renewal has been implemented by the Council in Mitchells Plein in Cape Town. Surveys were conducted with communities in order to establish crime hotspots and priorities. Situational prevention mechanisms such as lighting were then implemented. In addition, attempts have been made to upgrade the taxi ranks and the trade nearby. This is a response to the finding that large amounts of money are spent outside of Mitchells Plein every day. The aim is to ensure that people shop within Mitchells Plein in order that the area develop economically. In addition, housing is being planned close to these developing economic spheres so that they can be easily accessed. Very few projects take such a holistic approach to crime prevention taking cognisance of economic, situational and social causes of crime. This project is led by the Planning Department of the former City of Cape Town administration.

6.1.4 Regulating hawking and informal trade

All cities in this study recognise that the informal sector not only offers employment to a large number of people, but it also makes our cities distinctively African. As a result, there has been a general move away from the prosecution of informal traders towards their incorporation in council planning and development activities.

- In Pretoria's inner city, informal parking attendants have been used as intelligence gatherers - "eyes and ears" - for the council. In exchange, they are allowed to continue their activities, provided they provide the safety and security department with information on crimes taking place and on fellow car guards. This system worked particularly well in the former City of Pretoria area.
- The CID of Warwick (in the Durban Metro) has focussed on providing an environment conducive to informal traders. An organisation known as traders against crime (TAC) has been established, who watch for criminal activities in their area and report them directly to the SAPS or the Metro Police.
- In Johannesburg, a market has been built in Yeoville from which informal traders operate. Through the establishment of this market, hawkers have been provided with access to sanitation, water, freezers for meat products and security.
- In the former City of Cape Town, a structure was set up for informal traders to gain assistance with their operational needs, and settle disputes among themselves. Through this structure, they also reported crime to council officials and in return, traders were provided with formal blocks/stalls from which they operate, which improved their relationships with formal business and the council.

The collaboration with informal traders in the cities reflects a major mindshift. Informal traders are no longer seen as unemployed people who commit crime and break council by-laws. They have been identified as critical partners in the fight against crime and a valuable part of city life. This approach also allows street traders to be seen as a crime prevention resource. Consideration can be given to whether others people who spend a large amount of time on the streets (such as the homeless or sex workers) could not also be integrated into similar social crime prevention initiatives.

6.1.6 Informal settlements

The social conditions in South Africa's urban informal settlements are likely to be conducive to high levels of crime. Urban renewal strategies focussed on informal settlements have been established in the Durban Metro. Durban has developed the Cato Manor project, which is a social housing project aimed at improving the quality of life of those living in this informal settlement. The city of Durban has also introduced the Great Warwick Junction and Grey Street Urban renewal project both of which contain a social housing component. This project aims primarily to attract business and investment to the area, provide better transport to the area and provide social housing to those living in the area. Both these projects are examples of long term crime prevention strategies based on the principles of sound urban design, however, they have not been monitored specifically in terms of their impact on crime because they are seen as urban renewal projects, rather than

crime prevention projects. Initial steps are being taken to complete a victim survey on Cato Manor. Although this is extremely useful, it does not allow us to compare crime levels to those prior to the housing project. Their crime related impacts are seen as incidental and implied rather than researched. Ideally a monitoring project which compares crime and fear of crime in the area before, during and after the implementation of these projects should be established. This will help guide the city council (and other cities) when targeting other areas for social improvement.

6.2 Education

Little education directly related to crime prevention has been done by local councils. This is to be expected given that education is not a local government competency. However, in relation to crime prevention there is a role that local government can play. For example, in Pretoria, there has been education on what a council official looks like and what their various roles are. Similarly, a youth project in the Centurion Town Council has attempted educate children about what crime is and their role in reporting crime. However, given the changing nature of local councils (including the development of new services such as the MPD), there is a great deal more room for public education. This could potentially take the form of education around the role of the MPD, the procedures for reporting by-law contravention's etc. Work with community groups that raise awareness about social crime prevention would also be vital. In addition to impacting on crime, this would give safety and security departments direct contact with the public which could be used as an opportunity to improve council-public relations.

Some councils are however, engaging in educational programmes for officials. For example the CSVR has oriented the new JMPD on issues of trauma and conflict management. In terms of specialised training, NGOs and other training service providers in the field of public safety have a role to play in directing their training programmes at local government, to build the capacity envisaged in the White Paper.

6.3 Promoting social cohesion

This aspect of the White Paper is somewhat vague and potentially any project can be seen to 'promote social cohesion'. Promotion of social cohesion most likely refers to conflict resolution, reconciliation, and rebuilding the 'social fabric' of our society through the promotion of institutions that are sources of 'social capital'. Little of this work is traditionally done by city councils in South Africa, however some such projects may be run by civil society organisations or government departments (such as welfare) at national or provincial level. What is necessary is for those working on the promotion of social cohesion to identify the crime prevention benefits of their existing programmes, and the opportunities for working with cities, rather than the councils' safety and security departments inventing new programmes on social cohesion and making these their core business. Maximising the social crime prevention benefits of existing council programmes will require that council officials are well educated in social crime prevention.

6.4 Supporting youth, families and groups at risk

6.4.1 Youth crime prevention

Interventions aimed at preventing youth crime and victimisation are seen as vital to effective social crime prevention, both internationally and in South Africa. Given that many cities are now working from a social and situational paradigm, youth are a central target for crime prevention activities. In South Africa, councils devote some resources to youth development activities, but often do not maximise the crime prevention potential in these. Only a few councils have undertaken programmes that are explicitly aimed at youth crime prevention:

- The former Centurion Town Council (CTC) in Tshwane has established a safer schools project that aims to help educators, learners and the School Governing Body address safety issues in the school and identify possible safety risks due to the design of the school. Education takes place, in which children are taught what crime is, how they can prevent it and what to do if they witness a crime. They are asked to sign a pledge stating that they will not take part in crime. Ideas are given to educators about holiday activities for children to reduce their involvement in crime. This project is currently being extended to other parts of Tshwane.
- Youth crime prevention comprises a major part of the recent 'Safer City: Durban' strategy which states that:

Studies have shown that many schools within the city are unsafe and often become places for criminal activity and recruitment. Drug dealing and violence represent only two concerns which challenge the safety of some schools. Given that schools represent the places where young members of society begin their training, it is imperative that they be made safe from criminal activity. (Safer City Durban, 2000)

In response to this commitment, a youth programme has been established in the Kwa-Mashu area of Durban, in partnership with various NGO and community groups. This focuses primarily on diverting young people from crime through sports, art, cultural and literary activities and includes the development of recreational facilities and the organisation of sporting, cultural and life-skills activities. In addition, it aims to facilitate relationships between young people, the SAPS, the CPFs and other criminal justice agencies.

These two projects show how diverse youth crime prevention programmes can be at the local government level. In the absence of evaluation, it is difficult to establish which approach is likely to be more successful in the long-term.

6.4.2 Preventing crimes against women

Although most South African cities would have some sort of 'gender desk' or womens affairs department, few have initiated crime prevention programmes aimed at reducing levels of victimisation among women.

- The City of Cape Town municipality offers self-defence classes to women and provides information pamphlets on how to avoid becoming a victim of crime.
- In both Johannesburg and Cape Town, safety audits for women have been conducted in order to make environmental changes that will improve women's safety in particular parts of the city.

Many civil society organisations have a well-developed focus on women's safety issues. The relative lack of council-initiated safety projects for women may therefore be appropriate as it may be more useful for council to draw on the organisations currently working in the field, and build partnerships with NGOs and women's organisations. As yet, these potential partners have not been successfully drawn into the cities' safety strategies and programmes.

6.5 Breaking cycles of violence

The prevention of repeat victimisation, and preventing victims from becoming perpetrators of violence is relatively under-developed in South Africa. Support to victims of crime is essential because "victims of past criminal activity if untreated, frequently become perpetrators of either retributive violence or violence displaced within the social or domestic arena" (NCPS, 1996, p.20). The cities have traditionally not been involved in victim empowerment, although this is starting to change:

- The GPMC developed a victim services directory covering the entire Metro area, which is a directory of all service providers offering services to victims of crime in the Greater Pretoria area. In a similar move, the City of Durban is conducting a survey to identify best practices with regard to victim services in the Greater Durban area.
- Internally within most councils, trauma counselling is provided to council staff who have witnessed or experienced traumatic events, through internal EAP programmes. Some councils sub-contract this out to professional trauma service providers. (Councils could do more to act as a referral agency for members of the public who require trauma counselling, as Pretoria did – see below).
- In Pretoria, the provision of services to victims of crime has been the one aspect of crime prevention where partnerships have been established effectively. This is due to the fact that the council acts only as a referral agency, sending people to the service providers; and this relationship is fairly un-complex, the roles and responsibilities of the partners are not contested. The Centurion Council had a safe house in Rooihuiskraal, where victims of crime or serious accident could stay to recover. The safe house was staffed by a doctor, a psychologist and a social worker. This house was particularly used for children who are victims of rape. The Centurion Council also had a drug crisis Centre. The fact that Centurion (and not other parts of Pretoria) had these services is probably related again to the affluence of that community.

Councils have many other functions which could be utilised in victim empowerment – such as libraries, clinics, crèches and welfare services. These have yet to be mobilised for their

full crime prevention potential.

6.6 Promoting individual responsibility

Again, this is a rather vague responsibility delegated to local government in the White Paper, and it is difficult to determine the extent to which crime prevention programmes do actually promote individual responsibility. Few existing local government prevention programmes target individuals, with most focussing on urban design or the management of groups seen to be a threat to safety and security. However, aspects of crime prevention programmes that raise awareness of crime and encourage people to report crime (such as the youth project in Pretoria) can be said to incorporate this aspect of social crime prevention.

6.7 Socio-economic interventions

As described above, the Mitchells Plein urban renewal project has included a combination of CPTED, economic upliftment and social development (through provision of housing in close proximity to economic centres). In other cities, crime prevention projects that have impacted on the socio-economic causes of crime have been projects that formalise informal workers such as car guards and car washers. In the absence of thorough investigations, however, it is unclear to what extent the provision of more secure employment has impacted on crime, and whether the economic situation of people who were previously informally operating as car guards, for example, has actually improved with council regulation of their operations.

7. Conclusions: challenges facing the cities

In terms of the seven areas of intervention outlined in the White Paper on Safety and Security, the most progress has undoubtedly been made in the area of crime prevention through environmental design. This is probably because most local governments have well established planning departments that previously already undertook such work. In addition, these are projects that are relatively easier to implement, and are less complex than the purely social crime prevention initiatives.

It is the crime prevention projects aimed at addressing deeply entrenched social inequalities - such as poverty or family instability - that have not yet been tackled by South African cities. Given the complexity of these projects, it is appropriate that they are undertaken in partnership with other agencies and organisations with specialised skills in the area. Such an approach does require local government at least to be aware of the full range of crime prevention projects happening in their jurisdictions, in order to enable the most effective synergies for social prevention.

Many government and NGO projects that may have an impact on crime are not being monitored for this impact, making it difficult to determine their effectiveness. Local governments may be able to assist with such monitoring and evaluation, as they coordinate large amounts of local information. The key challenge is to establish meaningful partnerships at city level, which is extremely difficult when few other agencies operate in city-sized units.

7.1 Co-ordination of crime prevention activities

It is clear that in the two year period since the White Paper identified a role for local government in crime prevention, significant progress has been made, with many crime prevention projects being established. One of the major stumbling blocks has been the difficulty of co-ordinating social crime prevention projects. The co-ordination problem has a number of aspects:

- Often, Metro-based offices failed, and many of the former MLCs implemented their own crime prevention projects. This is admirable but problematic, as resource allocations vary markedly between the former MLCs, making crime prevention possible in some areas but not others. A key role for a Metro-wide crime prevention function would be to assist under-resourced areas of the city with crime prevention.
- City boundaries do not match the jurisdictional boundaries of other government agencies which are critical to the crime prevention enterprise – notably the SAPS and departments of Health, Education and Welfare. This makes it extremely difficult to establish city-wide leadership structures.
- There has been, in some cases, a failure to link government-initiated projects with non-government practitioners and initiatives in the field. This can lead to duplication and wastage of resources.

The complexity of managing crime prevention initiatives also points to the difficulty in establishing partnerships with groups outside of council. In many cases, investment from potential partners has not been forthcoming. In addition when crime prevention initiatives are implemented by a range of stakeholders, there are problems with the ownership and management of the projects.

7.2 The need for research and evaluation

Although many crime prevention projects have been initiated in the cities, most have not been based on adequate research. A clear research agenda is necessary in order to establish what projects are likely to have the greatest impact on crime in the city, and what the priority sites for intervention should be. It is essential, in the face of limited resources, that the projects being implemented are those that will be successful. In order to ensure this, all projects implemented by cities should have built-in monitoring and evaluation systems, to determine the costs and benefits of the project, and to respond to aspects of the project that are not as effective as anticipated. This information could also assist other cities considering South African best practices.

The main reason why monitoring and evaluation are such a necessary part of programme implementation is because the crime prevention benefits of particular projects are often assumed rather than tested. For example, it may be assumed that council officials are "doing crime prevention" because they are out patrolling. This does not provide any information about whether they are patrolling the most crime-ridden areas, and whether they have training on identifying crimes and dealing with perpetrators and victims of crime. It also does not show whether the presence of council officials is a deterrent to potential criminals or whether the general public can even identify those on patrol as council

officials.

7.3 Social crime prevention as reaction

Although there is some knowledge of social crime prevention in the various councils, and a desire to implement social crime prevention, the projects that have been developed tend to be reactive in that they are a response to problems that have been presented to council by particular interest groups. This is often the case in CPTED strategies. Often, crime prevention is not taken into account when planning a new development, and expensive strategies need to be adopted after the development has taken place, to ensure safety. This is a source of frustration to police and other officials responsible for safety in these developments. A more proactive approach to the identification of priorities for crime prevention should be taken, with the police and community being consulted about safety at the design stage.

The reactive nature of crime prevention can also be seen in the fact that few councils have done any work with youth crime prevention. If prevention is the aim, children, especially those at risk of committing crime, should be the target of interventions and should be prioritised. Internationally, there has been an extensive focus on youth and most city-wide prevention programmes are targeted at young people. Given our knowledge about the potential of victims to be re-victimised and perhaps to perpetuate crime, the area of prevention of repeat victimisation and breaking the cycles of violence should be a priority. This is particularly the case given South Africa's high crime rate, as most urban citizens have been victims of crime.

A balance needs to be found between reacting to issues that have already become problems to council, addressing issues that are not yet problems, but may develop into serious safety problems for the cities.

7.4 The status of social crime prevention

Social crime prevention needs to be understood as an activity in its own right, which is, at least in part, the responsibility of all local government departments. In order to ensure its prioritisation, it needs to be incorporated into the strategic plans of the city (as has already been done in some of the cities) and allocated adequate funding.

City leaders need to recognise that metropolitan policing (as well as any other forms of visible policing or CPTED) is only one aspect of crime prevention and that budget allocations should also be made for the more social aspects of crime prevention. A balance needs to be found between law enforcement and social crime prevention, and this balance needs to be based on thorough research into the nature of the crimes committed in our cities.

Notes:

¹ Except for 'security' purposes through the structures of the National Security Management System which placed the army or the police 'in charge'.

² For example, a recent Democratic Alliance slogan for the local government elections in December 2000 was "Nail them and jail them."

³ Such as conferences in Montreal in 1989 and Paris in 1991.

⁴ Which was attended by senior leaders of the SAPS.

⁵ Habitat II was the last of an extraordinary set of world conferences held under the auspices of the UN in the early 1990's. They had two principal themes: "Adequate Shelter for All" and "Sustainable Human Settlements Development in an Urbanizing World". Habitat II produced a Global Plan of Action aimed at achieving these goals. South Africa participated in Habitat II – the lead department for Habitat in South Africa was the National Department of Housing.

⁶ The group included Janine Rauch (then advisor to the National Minister of Safety and Security), Nomvula Mokonyane (who subsequently became the MEC for Safety and Security in Gauteng) and Dr Mark Shaw (who subsequently became the Director of Monitoring in the National Secretariat for Safety and Security, and one of the main authors of the 1998 White Paper).

⁷ Figures provided by the Central Johannesburg Partnership

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