

# Preventing Criminality Among Young People

by

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## Introduction

### Community safety mandate

Local governments have a community safety mandate set out in the Constitution of South Africa, the National Crime Prevention Strategy, and in the White Papers on Safety and Security and Local Government.

### Overview of this resource book

This book offers local government councillors and officials:

- Information on preventing criminality among young people
- Examples of interventions that can reduce the potential for young people to engage in criminal behaviour
- Suggestions for linking crime prevention projects to local government safety strategies
- Practical guidance in implementing youth criminality prevention projects

This guide consolidates information on the successful prevention of youth crime, locally and internationally. It was developed to address the needs of local governments and the unique role that they have to play in preventing youth crime.

This book is divided into the following sections:

### Section 1: Understanding Youth Criminality Prevention

This section provides a theoretical overview of youth criminality prevention; the factors that increase criminality among youth in South Africa; and the role that local governments can play in criminality reduction.

### Section 2: Incorporating Youth Criminality Prevention into Local Government Programmes

Youth criminality reduction programmes and strategies, that lend themselves to adaptation by, and partnerships with, local government or can be incorporated into local government

development strategies, are described in this section.

### **Section 3: Implementing youth criminality prevention projects**

This final section considers how youth criminality prevention may be included in project and budget planning in local authorities. It also offers possible indicators for success of these programmes.

#### **Defining criminality prevention**

In this guide criminality prevention refers to actions, programmes and interventions that prevent a person from committing crime. The focus is on addressing the social and environmental factors that may influence people to commit crimes in the first place and then become persistent offenders.

#### **Criminality prevention and local government**

The South African approach to crime prevention requires a combination of effective criminal justice (law enforcement) and a social crime prevention approach which is developmental in nature. This guide deals with social crime prevention strategies which are focused on young people because there is a need to assist local authorities with developing their crime prevention strategies. This guide does not directly address local government law enforcement, nor does it cover the role of environmental strategies in preventing youth crime.

#### **Criminality prevention in the South African context**

This resource book suggests that comprehensive crime prevention requires a multifaceted approach, which should include:

- Social and developmental prevention (with communities, families, children and young people who have not yet begun to commit even minor offences),
- Early intervention in minor offences and behaviours predictive of involvement in crime (such as bullying at school, truancy, poor peer and family relationships) and
- Graduated sanctions for juvenile offenders in the justice system.<sup>1</sup>

A range of stakeholders in the public sector and civil society are responding to the challenge of preventing youth criminality. Successes in preventing youth criminality will increase as local governments enter into partnerships and use crosscutting approaches to address the multiple causes of youth crime.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Limitations of this resource book**

Two primary limitations were encountered in developing this resource book.

- The lack of South African information that could be included. Few South African crime prevention projects have been evaluated in terms of their impact of crime and this makes it difficult to comment on them. However, where possible the illustrations used in this guide are South African.

- Crime prevention is an evolving field. This means that new information and knowledge about effective crime prevention is continually being developed and practitioners need to update themselves with this.

## Section 1

### Understanding Youth Criminality Prevention

Crime is a priority concern in South African cities. Of particular concern are the facts that young people make up the largest group of victims of violent crime; and that they are also the majority perpetrators of crime in our cities. Indeed, some young people are themselves both victims and perpetrators of crime. Youth crime prevention programmes need to find innovative ways of addressing this duality.

This section aims to:

- Provide information on youth crime and youth criminality prevention
- Consider the role that local governments could play in responding to the challenge of preventing youth crime

#### Youth crime and youth criminality prevention

##### *Crime committed by young people*

While it is relatively easy to obtain information (e.g. from hospitals and police records) about the victims of crime, the experiences, views and motives of perpetrators are less well-documented. Talking openly about the crime they have committed increases their chances of being arrested, thus it is difficult to get information about young criminals and what motivates them to commit crime.

Added to this, the South African Police Services do not keep statistics on the age of the offender in their crime data. However, one factor which illustrates the extent of involvement by young people in crime is the high number of young people in prison. For instance in June 2002, 45 357 young people under the age of 26, including 1799 under the age of 18, accounted for 36% of the entire population of sentenced prisoners in South Africa. Amongst awaiting trial prisoners there were 27 070 people under the age of 26, including 2162 under the age of 18, accounting for 53% of the awaiting trial prisoner population.<sup>3</sup>

These statistics under-represent the contribution of young people to crime as criminal justice officials are required to avoid sending young people to jail, whether this is for the purposes of awaiting trial, or in the form of a prison sentence, wherever there are other alternatives available. In addition many older prisoners were convicted for crimes which they committed when they were younger than 26. Nevertheless they give some indication of the extent of the contribution by young people to the crime problem.

International evidence indicates that young people, particularly those who are committing first crimes, tend to get involved in a range of crimes rather than specialising in a certain type of crime. In addition, international research shows that young people who commit

crime are likely to experience other problems such as bullying, attempted suicide, drug use, lying, hostility and, unprotected sex. These are important indicators for identifying at-risk youth who may be targeted for early crime prevention programmes.<sup>4</sup>

#### ***From law enforcement to crime prevention***

It is well-recognised internationally, and in South Africa, that preventing crime is an essential and effective part of long-term crime reduction. Strict law enforcement, combined with tough criminal justice and sentencing systems, has failed to reduce crime effectively and has led to soaring rates of imprisonment at great cost to governments.

The failure of 'tough' enforcement in the developed world led to increased interest in the causes of crime and how crime could be prevented. Research revealed that a person's decision to commit crime is based on a range of complex and intersecting social, personal, and environmental factors. As mentioned above, for young people, the boundary between being a victim and a perpetrator is often blurred - young criminals have themselves often been exposed to high levels of victimisation and may live under severely adverse social and environmental conditions. It is these *social and environmental causes of crime that need to be identified and tackled* if youth crime is to be successfully reduced.

Becoming familiar with these social and environmental causes, and seeking ways to address them, are at the heart of youth crime prevention and are also the key areas for local government intervention.

In this book, we focus on only one aspect of crime prevention – 'criminality prevention' – efforts to ensure that young people do not become involved in delinquent or criminal behaviour. This type of prevention addresses the social and environmental factors that determine the choices individuals make.

#### **Exploring why young people turn to crime in South Africa**

This segment looks at those factors that give rise to youth criminality, including the social conditions that increase the potential for a young person to choose crime. These conditions may be referred to as predictors of youth crime, or risk factors for youth criminality.

Young people who get involved in petty acts of delinquency (minor crimes) at a very young age are likely to continue committing crime. It is vital that the prevention of youth violence begins at an early age, as it is more difficult to intervene once a pattern of offending has begun. The role of peers in encouraging or discouraging crime becomes more important as the child gets older.

#### ***The legacy of apartheid***

Young 'black' men in South Africa remain the primary victims and perpetrators of crime and violence in South Africa. Very few 'black' youth have escaped unscathed from the effects of apartheid - family dysfunction, poor-quality education and lack of safety. Marginalisation is common in South Africa, and among South African youth 27% could be defined as 'marginalised' while a further 43% of young people could be defined as being 'at risk' of engaging in anti-social behaviour.<sup>5</sup>

Even though many children born since 1990 have grown up in a democratic South Africa, inequality, racism, cultures of violence, machismo and militarism continue to shape their experiences.

#### *Family circumstances and care of children*

Good parenting and loving families, where respect and warm interpersonal relationships are the norm, act as buffers to protect young people against involvement in crime. This does not mean that coming from a loving family prevents young people from turning to crime, but it does add to a young person's resilience levels.

Unfortunately many young people in South Africa do not grow up in such family settings. In South Africa, in 1999, 42% of children under seven lived in single-parent, female-headed households. While women have more children to feed, clothe and nurture, their income is far below that of their male counterparts.<sup>6</sup> These are often households where stress is high, as a result of poverty, long work hours, and meeting the demands of children. This does not preclude the caregiver from being loving and supportive, but it does make providing for the emotional needs and effective supervision of children much more difficult.

Another factor to consider when analysing the causes of criminality is the ineffective discipline and poor monitoring of young people.<sup>7</sup> In addition, children's involvement in school bullying has been associated with inconsistent and harsh discipline in the family.<sup>8</sup>

It is estimated that in 1994, nearly 40% of children living in townships were left without any supervision during the day.<sup>9</sup> This suggests that parents and caregivers experience social circumstances which require them to spend much of their time on activities other than childcare; and that many children are vulnerable to abuse. This situation is exacerbated by the impact of HIV/Aids deaths on South African families.

This complex economic and social context requires communities to view childcare as a communal responsibility carried by government and citizens. Once this happens, the ways in which a range of service providers including local governments can offer support to caregivers is broadened and creative solutions can be initiated.

Partnerships with relevant players such as local and provincial departments of social development and welfare, and NGOs that focus on social development, employment creation and poverty reduction, are crucial for launching a concerted effort to improve household circumstances and reduce the conditions that may encourage criminal or abusive behaviour. For example, the provision of after-school care can reduce both child abuse and youth crime as it bridges the lack of supervision in the afternoons before parents return home.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Education and schools*

Internationally, the amount and quality of education that a young person receives, as well as their academic success, has been strongly linked to whether they choose to commit crimes or not.<sup>11</sup> Targeting 'out of school' youth<sup>12</sup> has been a popular strategy for crime prevention in South Africa. Primary reasons for people no longer attending school are:

- Poverty
- Pregnancy
- Children caring for households and younger siblings when parents or older caregivers become incapacitated with illnesses

It is interesting to note that schools were first introduced in the United States as a crime prevention project. It was suggested that schools had the most "potential agency ... to root up vice [and] to lessen crime".<sup>13</sup> Although the functions of schools have changed over the years, schools are still intended to be arenas of safety, discipline and productivity for young people.

However, much of the violence seen and perpetrated by young people takes place in schools. The nature of school violence has been alarming in the last two decades. Schools have become locations for the sale of drugs, gun violence and violence against girls. The most common form of crime that takes place in schools is petty crime such as vandalism and interpersonal conflict between pupils.<sup>14</sup> However, increasingly it is being recognised that school violence can be and has been extremely serious and that it is often indicative of young people's involvement in violence and crime outside of the school environment.

Schools do not fall within the mandate of local government, but, as schools provide a space where young people can be consistently and easily reached in order to implement criminality prevention programmes, partnerships between municipalities and schools are critical to effective youth crime prevention.

One of the most successful mechanisms for the prevention of youth involvement in crime in later life is the provision of pre-school education. However, less than one sixth of South African children from birth to seven years old attend a pre-school.

There are national plans for the rollout of Early Childhood Development (ECD), which would consist predominantly of pre-school. Many of the programmes discussed in this manual could as easily be implemented in pre- schools, with the collaboration of the Department of Education, as they could be implemented in community centres (such as municipal halls or after school centres).

### *Experience of Victimisation*

Very little is known about the implications of victimisation for young people's involvement in crime and violence and later in life; about whether victimised youth become violent themselves and why. However, research with young criminals has found that many of them were victims of violence or abuse when they were younger.<sup>15</sup> Bullying in schools<sup>16</sup> does seem to be one of the responses that some children and youth adopt in response to being victims themselves.

Refugee children and children fleeing war or community conflict are particularly vulnerable. Children who are exposed to violence may learn that violence is an acceptable way to express discontent, and that it is a way of escaping their social and economic conditions. In South Africa we all internalise this 'culture of violence' as a result of the violent legacy of apartheid. Tackling this culture will be key to the prevention of further

youth crime in South Africa.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Youth Gangs***

Gangs are very common in South African youth culture, as they are in many parts of the world. Involvement in gangs is known to increase the risk of involvement in crime.

### **The importance of resilience**

The presence of the risks or challenges identified above in a young person's life does not mean with any certainty that a young person will involve themselves in crime or violence. However, local governments should focus on the factors that best predict a young person becoming involved in delinquency, and devise ways to alter these. It is vital that perceptions of certain young people as 'destined' to commit crime are eradicated, because it is these perceptions that aggravate marginalisation and feelings of alienation among young people.

Many young people overcome severely traumatic childhood experiences and become productive and well-adjusted members of society. Where young people do make this successful adaptation despite exposure to high-risk conditions, their ability to survive and succeed (often called resilience) has been attributed to three causes:

- personal attributes such as intelligence, self-esteem or good interpersonal skills,
- a warm responsive and responsible family
- extra-familial peer or adult support.<sup>18</sup>

What this evidence suggests is that no one factor, or even a combination of factors, will definitely result in a young person being involved in crime and violence. Criminality prevention initiatives should be designed to assist young people to overcome difficult social circumstances and build resilience.

### **The role of local government in youth criminality prevention**

Local governments have a crucial role to play in preventing crime and victimisation among young people, and providing them with choices that reduce the likelihood that they will choose criminal activities. Cities are traditionally responsible for functions like health, housing and urban planning, and have close contact with education, social welfare, and other services.

Access to education, supportive and consistent parenting and meaningful community and social involvement will increase a young person's resilience to crime. One of the primary challenges facing local governments and the criminal justice system is to provide adequate alternatives - beyond law enforcement and prison-based options - for young people who are likely to commit crime. Local government can play a vital role in *creating an environment* that increases a young person's resilience to choosing the criminal option.

Both the social and environmental situation, and the local context in which crimes are committed need to be considered when planning crime reduction strategies. For local governments a *reduction in crime should form part of assessing whether overall community*

*development has been successful.* Targeting young people and building their specific needs into programmes is a key route to achieving this.

Local government can play an increasingly significant role in boosting the quality of life of all citizens by investing time, effort and resources in improving life chances of young people.

Results of crime prevention programmes, particularly youth-based programmes are often long-term and not immediately evident to the public. It is therefore vital that local governments are able to justify the value of such programmes and ensure wide support from the community. There is also a need for increased community awareness of the effectiveness of *prevention* rather than *punishment* and the role that local government can play in prevention.

The National Crime Prevention Strategy makes it clear that local government should play a primary role in working together with other agencies to improve the quality of life and the safety of all citizens. This has been recognised in South Africa, where every major city now identifies crime reduction as a priority area for development and crime reduction is often part of cities' Integrated Development Plans.

Urban local governments are strategically placed to bring together the various agents that have a role to play in crime prevention, although often the detail of how this crime prevention should take place has not been clear. This resource book aims to provide ideas to municipalities with ideas for effectively implementing crime prevention initiatives with young people.

In establishing a new vision for urban children, youth and families, the UNICEF child-friendly cities initiative stated that

A new dual role of municipal governments has emerged which has been formally recognised and strengthened. Municipalities are not only providers but also facilitators of services to families and children. Consequently, the role of the mayor has been redefined and enhanced. The Mayor is now the defender of children's rights and the facilitator of child and family development. Mayors are recognised for their concern for children and families, not only for building bridges and roads.<sup>19</sup>

#### ***Making it happen at local level***

Solutions to the needs of children are best met at the local level. City governments are well situated to respond to a range of children's needs and have a responsibility to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are not overshadowed by the desires of the wealthier members of communities.<sup>20</sup>

The South African White Paper on Safety and Security (1998) states that municipalities are well-placed to respond to the root causes of crime, such as poor family and social relationships, poverty, and lack of access to safe education. From the child-friendly cities initiative, South Africa, along with many other countries, developed National and



Provincial Plans of Action for South African children. Children who have witnessed and experienced violence (both political and criminal) are one group who are given priority in these plans.

*The importance of inter-agency collaboration*

Local government is not the only role player in the youth crime prevention in our cities.

Probably the most important community stakeholders in any crime prevention initiative are the youth themselves. In almost every part of the country, young people have already organised themselves into groups to develop projects aimed at improving their quality of life. For youth criminality interventions to be successful, they need to be linked to projects in which young people are already engaged. In addition, youth participants need to be encouraged to develop a sense of ownership of the projects.

A number of NGOs, CBOs, and local government departments have initiated youth projects in South African cities. Using existing players and networks may increase local governments' impact on crime through the efficient use of resources.

Most crime prevention expertise is found in the police and the NGO sector, which makes these essential partners for local authorities. Working with other spheres of government, such as the national department of justice and provincial departments of welfare and education, is vital to ensuring effective interventions. This can also ensure sustainability of projects through adequate funding and high-level support.

What is clear from the international experience is that crime prevention projects are most successful when many stakeholders are included in the project and when community members support and participate in them.

In implementing local crime prevention, the role that local *political leadership* play needs to be emphasised and factored into programmes. Local leaders, particularly mayors and councillors, can mobilise local partners – the police, government agencies, community organisations and young people – to develop safe, secure and vibrant communities in their cities.

Governments are responsible to their citizens for providing opportunities that improve their *quality of life*; this includes living in safe and secure communities. A safe environment is a human right in the South African Constitution.

Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution)

Freedom and security of the person

12 (1) Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person which includes the right ... to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources

Environment

24 Everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-

being.

*For information on a range of effective crime reduction approaches see:*

- If you would like to read more on some of the topics introduced in this chapter go to <http://www.unicef.org>.
- Sherman, L. W., Gottfredson, D., MacKenzie, D., Eck, J., Reuter, P., and Bushway, S. (1997). Preventing crime: what works, what doesn't, what's promising. A report to the United States congress. Prepared for the National Institute of Justice: University of Maryland. Available online <http://www.ncjrs.org/works/>
- Calgary: child and youth friendly city. at: <http://www.childfriendly.ab.ca/aboutcfc.html>

## Section 2

### **Incorporating youth crime prevention in local government programmes**

Youth crime prevention programmes need to happen where young people live, go to school, work and socialise. Local government's responsibility to provide safe and secure environments as a human right needs to be mainstreamed into all its community development initiatives. This section looks at a range of interventions that have been shown to be successful in youth crime reduction. These community-based strategies bring together local partners with local governments. These programmes signify a shift from crime prevention as "something the police do", to the broader idea of community safety, which is a community responsibility. This section is divided into segments that address three key factors that give rise to youth criminality.

1. Poverty and its impact on quality of life
2. Weak interpersonal relationships
3. Experiences of violence

When **D** appears in the text it highlights information on existing or potential local government involvement.

#### **1. Addressing poverty and its impact on quality of life**

Growing urbanisation, increasing poverty and the widening wealth gap in South African cities present huge challenges to mayors and local governments. Populations are expanding and migrating; towns and cities and their surrounding peri-urban areas are growing rapidly.

Many South African households find themselves in this situation which is unlikely to change as unemployment increases and income disparity widens. Social exclusion often permanently defines young peoples' experiences of their society and is usually accompanied by a general lack of access to good quality education, social services and employment, secure tenure and quality shelter. For people in these situations, poor health, crime, vandalism, drugs, inadequate supervision and pollution add to the lack of safety and

security in their lives.

Young people who experience these conditions of poverty are more likely to feel marginalised and excluded from their communities. Programmes that address these conditions are needed to counteract anti-social behaviour and the allure of gang membership. One of these ways is through making sure that young people are well-cared for through supervision programmes.

#### *Adequate supervision and stimulation*

One of the primary ways in which youth criminality can be prevented is through adequate supervision and by providing environments where young people are not left on their own for long periods of time. Studies indicate that youth crime is most likely to be committed in the period between school closing and parents returning home. Unsupervised young people can be lonely, fearful and prone to involvement in gangs, drugs and early sexual activity. This is compounded in a situation where youngsters are required to care for younger siblings, as is increasingly the case as more households are affected by HIV/Aids. Also, in high crime areas, young people alone are vulnerable to being victimised when left unsupervised.

Programmes to provide supervision are increasingly relevant as households often only have one parent, usually the mother, who work, and therefore is not at home when children return home in the afternoon. Extended family networks are less available to care for children as AIDS takes its toll on household support patterns. This situation means that child and youth care is becoming the responsibility of the community. By addressing the social conditions that negatively impact on young people's quality of life, local governments may reduce the desirability of crime as a source of entertainment, companionship and material support for young people.

#### *Schools and safety*

Good quality education is one of the main avenues for developing resilience to criminality. Ensuring that young people have access to consistent and good quality education is a community-wide concern and responsibility.

School safety is a priority in South Africa. In some communities, schools are so under-resourced that even basic security measures such as fencing are inadequate. Schools in very high crime areas face the danger of crime spilling over into school grounds. Improved design and management of the physical environments around schools is one approach to school violence and crime prevention.

- ▀ Local governments can assist in ensuring that new schools are appropriately located in safe areas; that lighting and road design contributes to safety, and that liquor licences are not granted in the vicinity of schools. Local governments can also contribute to fencing and lighting of the school premises, and to keeping nearby parks and open spaces clean and neat.

- ▀ Another approach to school safety, known as the 'whole school' approach, is to ensure that schools are sites where quality of life is continuously being improved, as a way of

addressing the social, economic and environmental factors that increase the chances of a young person becoming involved in crime.

School-based violence prevention has been tackled by a range of service providers in South Africa. Although education is not a local government competency, there are instances in which local governments have developed school safety programmes in their area, such as the former City of Durban and the former Centurion local council. Working with schools requires a collaborative approach with schools and district and provincial Departments of Education and the SAPS. Multi-agency co-operation is key to successful crime prevention programmes. School-based programmes may take on a range of activities in response to the specific problem. These may include conflict resolution training for learners and educators, family-based programmes, and after-school programmes.

#### *After-school care*

Programmes that offer supervision to young people before and after school hours have been successfully implemented in a range of settings. Most commonly, these programmes have been established on local government property such as community halls or in social housing communities or at schools. These may also be linked to schools, and managed by CBO's, NGO's or by community 'caregivers' in their homes.

■ After-school programmes need to be cost effective for parents, and need to be adequately funded – a point which should be considered when local councils allocate budgets. Use of volunteers, student teachers and social workers, and the use of municipal buildings such as libraries, parks and community halls can help to reduce the costs of after-school programmes.

After-school programmes traditionally focus on providing games and sports. However, programmes that offer decision-making skills, interpersonal competence, cultural awareness, self-esteem and drug and alcohol prevention have resulted in better family bonding, more pro-social behaviour, self-control and emotional awareness, assertiveness, co-operation and confidence in the young participants. Targeting these social competencies is shown to have a marked impact on reducing youth criminality.

#### **Tips for implementing an effective after-school programme**

- The hours that the programme runs should **accommodate the time schedules of working parents**.
- Programmes should take account of the transport needs of families
- Programmes should be located in safe places.
- **Welcome 'problem' children**. The more these young people are in after care programmes, the less they are involved in crime. This may require ground rules such as no weapons in the programmes, and no gang paraphernalia (such as symbols and clothing)
- After-school care should **combine homework supervision with fun**. Activities should offer a range of choices, be structured, safe and age-appropriate.
- After-school initiatives should **build on youth groups' work** and support these,

rather than replacing them. Provide incentives for youth who have taken the initiative to develop after-school activities for other young people.

- Recruit **well-trained, caring workers** and volunteers. Training should be provided for volunteers on an ongoing basis, to reduce burnout and ensure that they are well-equipped to manage the young people in the programme. Also ensure that those 'managing' a project have credibility within the community and are accountable.

In low-income areas in particular, after-school programmes have helped to counteract the effects of a range of factors that contribute to the lack of opportunities for young people and their potential to succeed academically. Many after-school programmes have resulted in improved academic achievement that is itself strongly associated with increases in quality of life and a reduction in criminality.

After-school programmes can contribute to:

Increased learning:

- Computer literacy
- Promote reading by making books more accessible through partnerships with libraries
- Technological training which is added to teaching computer skills or mathematics through puzzles, games etc.

Improved health:

- Good nutrition which is essential if young people are to cope academically and socially. In the South African context where poverty is high, after-school programmes may want to link with existing school feeding schemes, and provide afternoon snacks or meals.
- Drug and alcohol education and prevention of later substance abuse
- Issues of crime, violence and health can be discussed with young people
- Sports programmes, increasing fitness, and management of stress

Career exploration:

- By providing information on possible careers and links to employment initiatives
- Linking University and technikon students from the community who can become mentors. This can be a way of improving the chances that young people will go on to tertiary education.
- Providing information about financial support to low-income learners who show the academic potential to attend tertiary institutions
- Providing assistance with application to tertiary institutions
- Improved social and psychological development.

Children who attend after school programmes are:

- Likely to have better conflict resolution skills and interactions with adults, peers and

educators

- Likely to have increased confidence and self-esteem
- Less likely to become involved with gangs and other criminal activity

An innovative activity that was included in one after-school programme was *story-telling*. In this instance, senior citizens discussed their history or told stories with learners. This became a highly popular after-school activity and as has resulted in young people writing their own stories and printing a collection of them.

- ▀ Local governments have facilities that can be used for after-school care, such as municipal and community halls, libraries and parks. In addition to decreasing the chances of youth criminality, this makes good use of the funds and investment that local government puts into maintaining these public facilities.
- ▀ Through community development or social welfare departments, local governments can be at the forefront of encouraging the involvement of the elderly, people who are unemployed or wish to volunteer their time. This can generate community cohesion and a sense of community responsibility for the wellbeing of young people. The whole community will benefit from the lower rates of youth crime.
- ▀ In one city, abandoned buildings in the city were given to youth groups who assisted in cleaning them up and then were allowed to use them to implement after-school activities for other youth. The local libraries provided reading materials and homework assistance.
- ▀ From the above illustrations and suggestions, it is clear that good partnerships are very important for effective after-school care programmes.

#### **Good Practice Illustration**

Child and Youth Friendly Calgary, Canada

Youth exclusion is a primary motivator for young people to choose criminal behaviour. The City of Calgary developed the "Child and Youth-friendly Calgary" programme which gives youth more responsibility for all aspects of community life. This organisation was established within the local council with the following aims:

- "Creating **opportunities** for children and youth to participate, volunteer, practice philanthropy and have their voice heard in their community and in Calgary in general;
- Raising **self-esteem** in Calgary's children and youth by encouraging them to understand their capacity for growth and achievement;
- Enabling youth to be more **active and productive citizens** by encouraging the charitable and non-profit sectors to welcome youth as volunteers".

The kinds of activities they engage in include:

- a youth volunteer corps, which operates in schools and in the community more generally,
- training and assistance for youth groups in the city
- projects to improve cross-cultural communication and understanding in the city
- support to youth groups developing human rights-based projects
- a special events committee
- a mayors youth council
- youth consultation with communities on local government initiatives.<sup>21</sup>

### *Truancy reduction*

Preventing truancy is an extremely effective way of reducing young people's involvement in crime and violence. Truancy (absence from school) among young people has been linked to an increase in gang activity, burglary, substance abuse, vandalism, teenage pregnancy and serious violence in later life.<sup>22</sup>

Truancy has a number of complicated causes. Some young people lose interest in education and do not recognise its value or are influenced by their friends. Truancy may also be a result of:

- Family factors, such as lack of guidance and parental supervision, poverty, substance abuse in the home, and indifferent attitudes towards education.
- School factors, such as, large class sizes, inconsistent procedures for dealing with truancy, and problems with teachers (such as absent or abusive teachers).
- Economic factors, such as parents who work long hours or are absent, lack of affordable transport to school, or a lack of childcare which requires an older sibling to take care of a younger one.

Aspects of the journey to and from school may also be dangerous or frightening for young people, and fear may cause them to not attend school.

The causes of truancy indicate a poor quality of life, where young people are faced with difficult and troubling conditions, particularly in poor communities.

■ Mayors, councillors and top officials can, because of their status and profile, be role models to these young people and advocate for regular school attendance. They can also use a range of local projects to ensure that the conditions that give rise to truancy are adequately addressed.

Traditional approaches to the reduction of truancy have emphasised discipline and enforcement, however, increasingly, truancy-reduction programmes aim to address the causes of truancy described above. The first step in preventing truancy will often involve visiting the family and community to find out the reasons for poor school attendance.

■ Police, community and social services play a unique role in identifying possible causes

for truancy. Once identified, a range of agencies – welfare, community development, transport – could develop creative community-based solutions (For example if the problem is a lack of safety travelling to and from school, an escort system of some sort may be the solution.) Again, local government can play a pivotal role in co-ordinating and driving solutions to the problem of truancy.

### ***Youth clubs***

The South African Association of Youth Clubs (SAAYC) was started in 1937 and aims to provide leisure and recreation for young people. They offer programmes that include leadership development skills, policy and advocacy for youth work, computer labs, and youth club support. They also offer resource centres, local and international exchanges, youth camps and holiday programmes. These kinds of activities hold promise for crime prevention but have not been evaluated in terms of their impact on crime.

■ Local governments could build partnerships with youth clubs to improve their crime prevention programmes. Youth clubs can also be used as information-gathering resources to discover more about the challenges young people are encountering in their communities.

### ***Sports and recreation***

Sports and recreation facilities as a crime prevention strategy on its own, has shown mixed results. It would seem that sports and recreation activities are best incorporated into holistic programmes such as after-school programmes, if they are to reduce youth crime. Many cities have attempted to implement sports and recreation programmes to reduce crime. In Orange County, California, the local government has built skate-parks where young people can roller-skate or skateboard. It does this in conjunction with an after-school programme for children between 5 and 12 years old. In some cities in the United States, basketball courts stay open until 2am in order to keep young people busy in the evenings, instead of engaging in crime. South African cities often build sports facilities as part of township upgrading or urban renewal projects.

### ***Work with street children***

A South African project with street children offers unique ideas for working with high-risk youth in South Africa. The "Twilight Children" project in Johannesburg offers meals, counselling, family reunification and shelter to street children. In addition to these basic services, a range of creativity programmes are implemented. The craft products that the street children make are sold at local markets. After-school care is also offered, and a support service for the youth after they have been placed back into their families. It is quite possible that this creative project is reducing rates of youth crime and local government could look into supporting such projects in other cities.

### ***Job creation***

This is a very common crime prevention and youth development approach in South Africa which focuses on youth who have completed their education. Job creation projects hold enormous potential because they can provide skills development combined with mentorship. This approach is compatible with the Local Economic Development aims of



municipalities.

The CRAFT (Community Restitution and Apprenticeship Focussed Training) programme in the US offers apprenticeship training in the home-building industry and later offers job placements. This project was used both as a crime prevention project and as an alternative to incarceration. Participants in the project are given individual development plans, case management services, accredited training, substance abuse treatment, employability and life-skills training.

The Joint Enrichment Programme (JEP) In South Africa has provided young people with technical training, teaching the ethic and discipline of work, as well as restoring self-confidence and self-esteem. Their youth-work scheme gives young people on- the-job training at community sites. For further information find them at <http://www.jep.org.za>.

Junior Achievement South Africa teaches hands-on business skills. Junior Achievement and Joint Enrichment Project are currently being evaluated and these evaluations will provide useful insights into the effectiveness of providing employment skills as a way of reducing crime and violence among young people.

■ There are many opportunities for local authorities to invest in job creation initiatives for young people. Such programmes would be very compatible with the economic development goals of South African cities.

## **2. Improving interpersonal relationships**

Impoverished households are often dominated by a feeling of stress and frustration (linked to resource deprivation) and poverty often impacts on interpersonal relationships in the community more generally. Within families these feelings often translate into situations where relationships between parents and children are characterised by physical and emotional abuse. Good communication and nurturing relationships based on mutual respect are therefore absent in these situations, thus also reducing the quality of young people's personal and emotional lives.

Early interventions with young people are extremely important in preventing youth criminality. As aggressive behaviour is learned early in a child's life, education in anger management, impulse control, appreciation of diversity and conflict resolution are important for deterring anti-social and criminal behaviour. Interventions to promote good social relationships among young people and between young people and adults have also been shown to build resilience and reduce youth criminality. Young people require a range of interpersonal and social skills in order to develop optimally. These can be divided into:

- Skills used in everyday interaction: skills that prevent violence by ensuring that social interactions remain positive. They include skills such as reflecting on the consequences of actions and developing empathy for others.
- Conflict resolution skills to handle difficult or negative interactions with others.

There are several ways in which interpersonal relationships among young people or between young people and adults can be improved. The programmes below target young people and aim to equip them and their families with the skills and attitudes needed to build

and maintain positive relationships.

■ Local government interventions in this sphere are likely to be located primarily in social development and welfare-based programmes that target families and orphaned or displaced children.

### *Mentorship Programmes*

Positive relationships with adults are central to the reduction of youth violence and aggression. Mentorship is one way of facilitating these positive relationships, and can be particularly useful among disadvantaged youth that have few positive role models and little supportive adult contact. A mentorship programme can help to fill the gap where families, for a range of reasons, are unable or unwilling to provide the young person with intensive positive supervision and support. Mentoring programmes have been implemented in a range of settings such as churches, schools, communities, sports clubs etc.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters:** One of the oldest and longest running mentorship programmes in the world is the "Big Brothers Big Sisters" programme. Here young people who need socialisation, firm guidance, and connection with positive adult role models are selected and assigned a mentor. A variety of people have been used as mentors, such as emergency services personnel, university students, senior citizens, and private volunteers. This remains the largest mentoring intervention in the world and has recently been introduced in South Africa.

**Peer mentoring:** This type of mentoring has already been introduced in a number of South African schools. It involves matching a younger person with an older youth in a one-on-one relationship. Usually a high school learner is matched with a junior school learner. These programmes have been easiest to implement in schools as the young people can have easy access to one another.

Mentorship addresses some of the identified risk factors for delinquency and youth crime, including an inability to engage in healthy relationships, marginalisation of young people and the prevalence of guns, gangs, drugs and alcohol. Similarly, positive relationships with caring adults promote the resilience of young people. Resilient children have been identified as those who have at least a close bond with an adult who is supportive and caring; this does not need to be the child's biological parent.

■ Local governments could play an active role in expanding and supporting these mentorship programmes as part of reducing youth criminality. These programmes could also build local government and community relationships. These programmes do not require many resources to be initiated and maintained, while the positive benefits to communities are wide-reaching. Developing young people who have positive self-images and are equipped to be active citizens is shown to reduce the kinds of behaviour and attitudes that lead to criminality.

**Good Practice Illustration**

## RESCUE Mentorship programme

RESCUE (Reaching Each Student's Capacity Utilising Education) is a mentorship programme where fire-fighters, police officers and municipal police in the USA are paired with youth in a one-to-one relationship. The purpose of this relationship is to provide a supportive adult role model who would encourage the youth's social and emotional development, help their academic career, expand their life experiences and redirect youth away from crime.

Mentors (who are well-trained) and mentees are encouraged to meet on a weekly basis although each pair maintained their own schedule and methods of contact. The pairs participated in group activities with all members of the programme as well as individual activities with each other.

Another version of this kind of approach was tried in Los Angeles where young people who were victims of violence were subsequently trained as peer mentors. They presented workshops in schools on the causes of violence, preventing gun violence, preventing family and dating violence, and the connection between drugs, alcohol and violence.

Both these programmes offer interesting models for local government in South African cities.

By driving the process through specific departments such as emergency services and metropolitan police services, local governments could maximise resources and extend their crime prevention impact. This kind of programme may also contribute to increased staff morale and mutually rewarding relationships with the community.

### *Mediation and conflict resolution programmes*

Mediation and conflict resolution are strategies that are used to prevent violence in instances where there are already warning signs that it could break out, and to build these positive social skills in young people. Peer mediation (which is where the youth mediate the conflicts of their peers) and conflict resolution programmes have often been implemented in schools. These programmes equip young people with skills that can then be used elsewhere in the community and in all aspects of life.

In one programme youth art clubs (including dance clubs, arts centres, theatre companies etc) were used as a base, where participants explored different conflict resolution modules namely: de-escalating conflict, tools for resolving conflict, understanding conflict, negotiation processes, and group problem solving processes and integrated these skills with their own creative activities.<sup>23</sup>

Conflict resolution and mediation programmes have been particularly successful in reducing crime or violence that is motivated by prejudice.

### **Good Practice Illustration**

#### **Conflict resolution for young children**

One of the most common problems among young children is prejudice, often picked up through their interactions with adults. This is particularly the case in South Africa where racism, sexism and xenophobia can cause conflict. Play for Peace aims to bring together children from conflicting cultures and develop relationships between them.

The project is facilitated by trained youngsters who undertake daily play sessions with children. Each session focuses on topics such as self-image, community building, conflict and diversity, and creating peace and non-violence. Games are designed in such a way as to facilitate the learning of related skills. More information on Play for Peace is available at <http://www.playforpeace.org/africa.htm>

- Local governments, through social services and community development can help fund mediation and conflict resolution programmes, either through schools, youth clubs or at other youth facilities, such as loveLife Y-centres.
- Cities could collaborate with, and fund organisations that specialise in conflict resolution training.

#### **Improving family functioning**

The fast pace of life means that parents spend less time with their children. Parenting methods are strongly linked to delinquency. Supportive parent-child relationships have been shown to protect a child from delinquency, whereas parent-child relationships characterised by harsh emotional and physical punishment may encourage anti-social behaviour.

- Programmes that combine social and life-skills training for youth, as well as parenting skills for parents to improve supervision and nurturing, appear to have been most effective in reducing youth criminality. There have been examples of such "family preservation" projects in South Africa, for instance in Inanda in the Ethekwini Metropolitan area.
- Taking family conditions and relationships into account, local governments have to consider how its agencies can contribute to building strong family relations. Given the high incidence of male/father absenteeism, mayors and local governments, together with appropriate local, provincial and civil society players, could spearhead a campaign to increase the amount of quality time that fathers spend with their families. This type of campaign would need to be multi-faceted and include information (and possibly training) for fathers in developing loving relationships. While this is clearly a long-term programme, the chances are high that it will decrease criminality amongst the children who participate in it.

### *Parent education programmes*

These programmes aim to strengthen monitoring and disciplinary skills of parents and build their confidence. This is particularly important for young parents. Often these programmes are combined with education programmes for the children and sometimes the whole family will attend the programme together. The content of such programmes typically includes conflict resolution, information on how to effectively communicate with young people, helping children learn, the value of praising your children, encouragement, effective limit-setting and anger management. In South Africa, the Family Life Centre has offered some of these kinds of programmes.

### *Home visiting*

In the best home visiting programmes, professionals (most often nurses or social workers) make regular visits to the home, from when the mother is pregnant, developing a relationship with her and providing her and the rest of the family with information about health, child development, and the value of supportive family and friends. In some cases the home visits continue until the child is two years old. These programmes usually have a dual function of improving the health and the social functioning of families. These programmes have most successfully been implemented with low-income families. These programmes appear to be most useful when the child also attends a pre-school programme and this type of intervention could therefore also be implemented in collaboration with the National Department of Education's Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme.

- Home visiting has positive results in preventing criminality in the long run. The ability of local government to participate in this kind of programme will depend on active co-ordination with other players at local, provincial and national level, to ensure that early investment in children's well-being is a priority.

### *Family therapy*

This is usually aimed at families with children between the ages of 10 and 18 years old and who have displayed antisocial behaviour. Most therapy approaches have a strong emphasis on addressing the factors within the young person's social, family and environmental context that have a bearing on their delinquent or violent behaviour. This approach has shown a reduction in youth crime and in youth imprisonment in the long-term. However experienced psychologists and psychiatrists are often in short supply, especially in South Africa's more disadvantaged areas. Thus, therapy programmes that have the most reach are those where qualified therapists train community members to facilitate family support groups.

- Local government could provide resources for additional training for social workers, to ensure that they are able to use therapeutic approaches to alter the interpersonal conditions that encourage criminality.

- In some cities, incentives are provided for social workers or psychologists who provide counselling in community settings. Student psychologists have also been used to provide such services as part of their training.

### **Good Practice Illustration**

#### **The Families and Schools Together (FAST) Programme**

This programme was implemented in the USA with high-risk youth (those using drugs and alcohol) between the ages of 13 and 14, to help them avoid juvenile delinquency. Schools and educators were brought on board to help identify youth who had behavioural or developmental problems. Two to three family therapy sessions were provided per week. The programme identifies and works with existing strengths in the family, the community and the school, and aims to provide young people with a safety net of protective factors to assist them to get through difficult times.

Literature on the programme has been translated into French, German, Spanish and Japanese. The programme has been implemented in diverse urban and rural settings with great success and has been successful in many different countries.

#### ***Making young people part of the community***

Several international programmes encourage young people to get involved in community service with the expectation that a sense of community responsibility will reduce their involvement in crime. In Escondido, California, the mayor developed a Youth Commission that encourages youth to explore and implement policies that will affect the lives of young people in the city. Youth across the world have also been included in local government meetings, community consultations, fundraising activities, political campaigns and other aspects of municipal life.

Youth Advisory Councils have been set up in some cities to advise the Mayors office on youth issues. They also work on community service projects and support other youth groups. Public discussions between youth and adults have also been implemented in some cities to debate controversial topics such as curfews for young people and gun violence.<sup>24</sup>

In one programme, youth organisations provided community services to a local homeless people's shelter. They collected clothing, health care products, food and gifts. Although the evidence is anecdotal, some youth in the project felt that this prevented them from being involved in drugs and other illegal activities.

■ With schools and youth groups (such as sports, religious, social, political and youth organisations), local government can embark on creative programmes that address young peoples and the broader community's concerns. Developing solutions to youth criminality together will empower young people in decision- making processes and enable them to feel that they are part of a community, with a vested interested in stabilising and developing their communities, to make them places where they will continue to want to live.

### **3. Coping with Experiences of violence and victimisation**

The violence and stress associated with poverty and negative socio-psychological conditions may cause some young people to turn to violence. This situation is compounded

by the culture of violence that often presents itself as the norm in South Africa, and is very evident in the systemic violence against girls and women.

While improving young people's quality of life and their interpersonal relationships, specific attention needs to be paid to the violent communities in which young people may live and how this impacts upon the choices they make about their own lives.

### *Prevention of gang violence*

Gangs appear to be a problem common to all large cities, but gang problems are varied in their causes. This section reviews effective programmes, which then need careful analysis for adaptation and implementation in South African cities.

Long-term goals of gang intervention programmes typically include education, training and employment of gang members, while shorter-term solutions include suppression of violence and the provision of outreach services for gang members, particularly the younger gang members. Gang interventions can be challenging as they often require that the social and individual family conditions resulting in gang activity also be addressed.

There are also many levels of intervention with gangs. Programmes can be seen as prevention based, intervention based (working with existing gangs), suppression programmes (that reduce gang activity) and facilitating reintegration. There is a tendency to develop programmes that have all four components. For the purposes of this book, prevention programmes will be highlighted.

- Gang prevention programmes

Gang prevention programmes look specifically at young people who are at high risk of joining, or who may be at the early stages of involvement in, gang-related activity.

Community centres (such as one-stop or recreation centres) can offer a range of services to gang members such as gang conflict mediation, counselling, and other activities that "provide a sense of belonging, identity and self-worth that was previously sought through gang membership".<sup>25</sup> Leadership training, values and the importance of community service may also be included in an anti-gang community programme. Local governments are the main initiators and promoters of these programmes in the US and elsewhere, especially because local governments are often responsible for providing community centres.

In high crime areas, community centres can also be used for the early prevention of gang membership by offering young people who are at risk of joining gangs an alternative to gang life. At these centres they could learn conflict resolution, employment skills, sports and recreation and community service. These services could be integrated into existing early childhood development and after-school programmes, provided the safety of other youth participants is ensured.

**Good Practice Illustration**

### The G.R.E.A.T. programme (USA)<sup>26</sup>

The GREAT programme is an intervention programme that consists of nine 'lessons' for young people of approximately 12 years old. Specially-trained law enforcement personnel give 'lessons' once per week. The lessons are;

- Introduction: where students get to know the programme, the facilitator and each other
- Crime victims and your rights: Young people learn about crime, victims of crime and how crime affects their school and neighbourhood.
- Cultural sensitivity and prejudice: youth explore how cultural differences affect their school and neighbourhood.
- Conflict resolution: Two lessons are dedicated to learning conflict resolution skills. Students are taught how to better address problems in their environment.
- Meeting basic needs: Students learn how to meet their basic needs without joining a gang.
- Drugs and neighbourhoods: Students are educated about how drugs affect their neighbourhoods and schools
- Responsibility: Students examine the diverse responsibility of different people in their school and neighbourhood.
- Goal setting: Students learn how to establish long and short term goals.

This programme seems to reduce gang involvement although the results are modest. Initial results suggest that delinquency levels are lower among youth that attended the programme than among those who did not.

- Gang intervention programmes

One of the few successful intervention programmes with gang members appears to be the provision of employment opportunities for gang members. It is often contended that in South Africa few young people would leave gangs for low-wage jobs. Although this has not been tested in South Africa, it has not been the case in the United States, and gang members have successfully been convinced to leave gangs for secure employment, even at low wages. In achieving the goals of developmental local government, job creation is a primary strategy for improving the economic well-being of citizens and cities.

A key aspect of these kinds of programmes is helping the gang member recognise that a job can be rewarding and interesting and can provide other benefits than just a salary. Those gang members who enter the job market need support, to ensure that they do not simply quit or that they do not behave in a way that loses the job.



### **Tips for designing gang prevention programmes**

- Mobilise the community: Communities are an important source of information about what gangs exist, where they operate, who the members are. Assess the gang problem through consultations with schools, police, CPFs, NGOs and CBOs working with gangs.
- Network with key stakeholders: Especially law enforcement personnel, courts and prosecutors, in order to ensure a balance between prevention and law enforcement. Schools will also play a key role in referring gang members to prevention programmes and identifying young people who are showing signs of belonging to a gang.
- Analyse the problem: Who are the gangs, what are their activities, how do they dress, etc? What harm is being done? Is there a specific time of day or year when it takes place? What existing forms of social control could be used, such as churches, parents, teachers?
- Set goals and objectives based on the types of gang problems being faced. These should be long term (such as better education and employment) as well as short term, such as outreach services.
- Develop multi-faceted programmes that tackle a range of the risk factors associated with gangs.
- Ensure that evaluations form part of the programmes.

### ***Gun violence prevention***

Guns are a facilitator of serious violence and make the consequences of crime more severe. Young people in South Africa report that they have relatively easy access to firearms and may carry firearms for a number of reasons:

- Fear of violence from other youth.
- A lack of faith in law enforcement officers to protect them.
- Status and pride.

The programmes described earlier to prevent delinquency and gang involvement are particularly relevant to the reduction of gun violence. Programmes that teach parents about gun safety can also be helpful.

*Education and counselling* on the effects of guns and gun violence can be given to young people and parents. Health care workers and police services can give information on the results of gun violence. This may deter negligent use of firearms at home. In other programmes, young people have been used to deliver community anti-gun messages. The effect of these programmes, as well as of large-scale media campaigns against guns, is extremely difficult to evaluate effectively. Other programmes aim to change the young

person's decision to use violence; such as teaching skills for appropriate ways to express strength and masculinity, instead of the use of guns.

Counselling for victims of gun-related trauma is important and some cities have compiled directories of such services. This counselling could be coupled with training for health care workers in identifying victims of gun violence who may benefit from trauma management services. Other related programmes have involved sending trauma counsellors to hospitals to persuade teenage gunshot victims to avoid retaliation. Young people have also been taken to hospital trauma wards to see people (particularly youth) injured by guns. These youth then act as mentors for the injured and may even mediate between the victim and the perpetrator.

One of the most publicised approaches to preventing youth gun violence is *gun buy-back programmes*. In these projects, financial rewards are offered for people turning in guns (although food is also offered in some cases). Citizens are also rewarded for providing information about crime. This has also been implemented at a school level where a hotline is set up for learners to anonymously report crime. The results of these programmes are mixed and some have been more successful than others.

Law enforcement approaches are also central to the reduction of gun violence, and have included the development of safe school policies preventing gun violence at schools, training for police and community groups on gun control legislation so that youth who are illegally carrying firearms can be detected.

What seems to be central for effective gun reduction programmes is that young people's access to guns needs to be restricted and their desire to own guns reduced. Programmes containing both of these components are more likely to be successful.

### ***Drugs Abuse Prevention***

Drug abuse prevention programmes need to consider the factors that give rise to drug use and respond accordingly. Providing safe houses in high drug areas where young people can be safe from the influence of drug sellers in the community has proven effective.

■ Local government can contribute to a collaborative effort in reducing drug use by upgrading public places (like parks) that might otherwise be used for drug trade; and by enforcing by-laws against violations that are commonly committed by drug dealers and users.

One of the primary problems facing South Africa is that few drug rehabilitation programmes accept young people into their programmes. Many specify that people in the rehabilitation facility need to be over 18 years old. This is problematic when young offenders, who are economically or physiologically dependent on drugs, are given a community sentence during which time they may need help with a drug problem. Emphasis should be placed on rehabilitation and giving the young person skills to manage the difficult social and physiological space in which they find themselves.

### *Diversion and prevention of re-offending*

The majority of programmes for juvenile offenders aim to divert young people out of the criminal justice system and also prevent them from committing any more crimes. The youth justice system is mainly administered by the Welfare and Social Development departments. Most diversion programmes include skills development, individual, group and family counselling, and mentoring. Many of the counselling programmes focus on behaviour change.

- ▀ When considering working with first-time offenders, local government should think carefully through the kind of role that can be played in the programme. For example, local government may provide the opportunities for young people to do community service. They may also tailor some aspects of an after-school programme to first-time offenders.
  
- ▀ Local governments may also provide the facilities such as municipal halls for child justice activities. Whatever the level of involvement, local governments will need to work closely with agencies that already have a dedicated expertise in this area (such as Welfare & Social Development) as well as courts, prosecutors and correctional services. This is also the kind of programme that would be well suited for implementation in the municipal courts, especially for nuisance offences that young people may commit, such as vandalism or excessive noise.

#### **Good Practice Illustration NICRO diversion programme**

In South Africa, NICRO runs various different diversion programmes.

1. Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES): This six-week programme involves groups of 15 to 25 participants. The groups work through a range of issues, including conflict resolution, crime and the law, parent-child relationships and responsible decision-making. Parents are included in the early sessions. This programme therefore comprises many of the principles of effective crime prevention identified in the preceding section. These prevention principles can also be effectively applied to work with offenders.
  
2. Pre-trial community service (PTCS): This involves the offender providing a range of community service activities instead of undergoing prosecution. The number of hours of service ranges between 20 and 60. This is perhaps one of the programmes in which local government can assist through the identification and provision of community activities in collaboration with existing community upliftment programmes such as urban renewal programmes, or the provision of municipal services such as refuse removal, graffiti removal, or maintenance of parks and buildings.
  
3. Victim Offender Mediation (VOM): This programme involves the offender and the victim meeting to reach an agreement about how the offender can make some form of reparation or apology to the victim. In another version of this programme,

families are involved in the mediation process.

4. The Journey: This is an adventure programme for high-risk youth. It includes life-skills training, adventure education and vocational skills training. This approach has also been successful internationally.<sup>27</sup>

Most participants (96.7%) in the NICRO programme felt that the programme had helped them to stay 'out of trouble' with the law. Some of the most popular aspects of this programme related to the way it was run, using participatory learning, having well organised and skilled co-ordinators, and developing relationships based on friendship and mutual respect.<sup>28</sup> These success factors have emerged from many of the programmes described in this guide so far.

### *Gender violence prevention*

Violence against women is deeply-rooted in social life and in the socialisation of both boys and girls in South Africa. Gender violence is part of the relationship of inequality that exists between men and women. Gender violence (rape, sexual, physical and emotional abuse) is increasingly a feature of youth crime in South Africa. It often begins in early adolescence and meaningful prevention programmes should be aimed at pre-teen youth.

Many programmes have simply criminalised gender violence without looking at how it may be prevented. Common components of a gender violence reduction programme include:

- Defining violence against women and understanding the range of gender-based violence.
  - Changing attitudes of young people towards sexism and increasing awareness of the myths about gender violence.
  - Identifying violence-related attitudes among youth.
  - Learning non-violent relationship skills such as communication and dealing with anger.
  - Identifying community resources for victims of gender violence, such as shelters, counselling services etc.
- Local governments could play an active role in networking with local organisations who provide prevention or training on gender violence, for men and women. These may include the Gender Advocacy Project (GAP) and Genderlinks (<http://www.genderlinks.org.za>).
- Local government could spearhead advocacy campaigns at a local and community level. These programmes would require collaboration with departments such as Education, Welfare and Safety and Security. An example is the "16 Days Campaign" which raises awareness and advocates against gender-based violence in communities over a period of sixteen consecutive days each year.
- Local government can assist service providers who offer shelter, counselling and other services to victims of gender violence. Municipalities in many South African cities already fund shelters and trauma counselling services.

This section provided an overview of the kinds of programmes that alleviate youth criminality and suggested potential actions for local government. The next section will provide more practical tools for designing and implementing youth crime prevention projects.

### Section 3

## Implementing youth crime prevention

Having reviewed a range of youth crime prevention programmes and considered the potential involvement of local government in these, this section aims to:

- Provide information on implementing youth criminality prevention programmes
- Explore practical ideas around evaluation and indicators of success in youth criminality reduction

### *Practical steps to implementing your own youth-centred crime prevention project*

Decision-making about youth crime prevention programmes will often involve council committees, exco's and the police. It is most important that resources be available to implement the project/ programme that is adopted by the council.

While each intervention will be unique, there are a number of guiding principles that will enhance the success of youth criminality prevention projects. As evaluation of programmes has become more common, researchers have begun to realise that the *method of implementing* (the how) a project is as important as the *content* (the what) of the project. These 10 principles look at the methods that should be considered when planning and implementing a project:

#### *1. Develop projects according to local conditions*

Using local conditions, challenges, strengths and activities to address the unique needs of communities will ensure that projects are responsive to the target group and local realities.

Simply transferring a project that has been successful in another country or even another South African site is unlikely to be successful.

List the **key challenges** currently facing young people in your area which need to be remembered when planning and implementing criminality prevention projects.



**2. Include people from all sections of the community especially young people.**

Ongoing consultation with young people and service providers in the youth sector is essential. This consultation process will assist in conceptualising the project, making sure that project outputs are meeting the needs of its intended audience and can inform evaluations of the projects success. Consultation increases community responsibility and helps ensure the accountable management and implementation of the project by both local government and community members.

Children and youth, when consulted, have proved informative and knowledgeable about social problems and have been key to the implementation of projects to reduce crime among young people. Some projects have included the interests and ideas of children as young as five years old.<sup>29</sup>

All stakeholders in community safety, not just young people should be included in planning. Along with marginalised groups (street children, homeless people, working mothers), ratepayers and other civic associations are all important co-designers of youth criminality reduction programmes. Consulting with all these people will ensure that citizens feel included and will allow planners to design projects that have greater likelihood of success.

**3. Ensure youth community involvement and ownership of the project and respect their right to make decisions about their lives**

Youth and community ownership of the project can be encouraged in several ways.

- Making project offices and facilities accessible to young people
- Determining a manageable group size per project, so that information can be easily disseminated and regular meetings can be held with community partners
- Providing continuous updated information about processes that require an impact on general community involvement, for example, local development or urban renewal
- Showing how this project fits into broader development plans for the future of the city. These actions are likely to increase young people's feeling of inclusion and will encourage them to participate actively in their community.

Think of ways your projects (current or planned) could increase young people's ownership
--

and participation:


**4. Co-operate with local NGOs and CBOs**

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) form the fourth-largest economic sector in South Africa. This is a powerful resource that has very close links to communities. Local government can make use of their expertise and proximity to the community. Recognising and involving these structures in decisions about the prevention of youth crime will ensure that duplication of projects is minimal and that financial resources are maximised. This requires careful and sensitive co-ordination of all role-players in a community, in order to reduce duplication of services and battles for 'turf'.

Draw up a list of NGOs and CBOs that are currently involved in work on crime prevention or youth development in your area:



**5. Advocate for national funding to be allocated for youth criminality prevention**

Local government needs adequate funding to prevent youth criminality effectively.

Youth criminality prevention should be a priority for all sections of government that focus on ensuring safe living environments and healthy, thriving communities.

Youth criminality prevention programmes also need to raise funds for start-up and programme continuation. Local authorities need to lobby for crime prevention to be funded from a range of national and provincial government departments (e.g. education, social development and health). Such lobbying should include information from the evaluation of other similar projects and the testimonials of the impact of these projects on preventing youth criminality. This evidence will support the applications for project funding.

Which MPs or MPLs from your area do you think will be most supportive of ideas around youth criminality prevention?
Which Ministers, MPs or MPLs could help influence the allocation of funding to youth criminality prevention?



What justification would you offer to national and provincial representatives for start-up funding or continued funding of projects aimed at reducing youth criminality?

**6. *Sharing experiences and lessons learnt***

There is a great deal of international experience in the prevention of youth crime, much of which has been designed and implemented at the city level. There are some South African experiences that may be helpful in designing new projects. Ways need to be found to share learnings and good practices.

How can you draw on others' experiences to inform your own projects?

Which of your staff or partners could conduct research into similar crime prevention work that has been done elsewhere, especially in Africa and South Africa?

**Example of factors to consider in implementing a programme to reduce gender violence**

- Get **information and buy-in** from existing organisations. This will mean that the programme you choose can be based on sound knowledge of sexual and gender based violence.
- Identify **goals**, a clear philosophy and a means for evaluation. What should young people learn from the programme? Why? How will you know if they've learned it?
- **Involve all stakeholders**: Make sure that parents, teachers, law enforcement officials and other stakeholders who work with young people are aware of the programme and agree with its content.
- Make sure the message is **tailored** to the group with whom you are working. Information (particularly traumatic information) should be age-appropriate and understandable to all participants. Also make sure that it is culturally sensitive (avoid showing only American videos).
- **Prepare for disclosures** about experiences of violence and young people who have a crisis. A system for support and referral to counsellors and other services should be established.
- Participation in programmes such as these should have **no stigma** attached to them. Membership of programmes should be enjoyable and a desire of youth, not an obligation.

- Programmes should challenge existing forms of patriarchy and discrimination against women and should, for example, also include information about the equal responsibility of fathers in childcare.

**7. Set concrete goals and check that they are being met**

For youth criminality prevention to be adequately implemented, goals that are 'SMART' need to be determined. The goals of the project need to be:

- S** Specific      Clear and concise and related to specific project mandate
- M** Measurable    Be able to quantify the difference between the situation at the beginning and at the end of the project
- A** Achievable    Attainable given current (and planned) skills and resources
- R** Realistic      Taking local realities into account and checking that project is 'do-able'
- T** Time-bound    Schedules to chart progress of the project and ensure that goals are achieved on time

Think of a project you are working on, identify how goals of the project are SMART?

S

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M

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A

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R

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T

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Have these goals remained constant through the life of the project? What gave rise to the changes?

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**8. Collect information and advocate for SAPS collection of information on juvenile crime**

Effective crime prevention requires useful and comprehensive information. Without being able to compare to baseline information, it is almost impossible to later determine whether a project has successfully reduced crime or not. Useful starting information includes:

- the features of the primary crime problems in an area
  - the victims and perpetrators of these crimes (including age information)
  - that factors that may contribute to youth crime in the area
- Collecting baseline information before beginning the intervention will ensure that projects respond to the reality on the ground, rather than to perceptions of what the situations may be.

Community members could be included in information gathering. For example, shop owners in business areas can list the crimes that take place in that area over a particular period. This information can then be added together to find out the total number of each crime in each neighbourhood per month. If this begins before the project starts and continues throughout the time that your prevention programme is being implemented, then it will be easier to determine whether the programme is reducing crime.

List community members in your area who would be able to gather or provide information on crime trends?

**9. Allocate personal responsibility**

Requiring councillors and officials to take personal responsibility for the success of the project is important to ensuring the smooth implementation of the project. In Colombia

(South America) a campaign was initiated to increase levels of vaccination of children. It used the slogan "Mr Mayor let no child in your municipality remain without immunisation at the end of your term of office". In this way, the Mayors of cities in Colombia were directly responsible for the programme. If senior councillors with a high public profile are responsible for a youth criminality prevention project, chances of successful implementation are increased.

How can mayors and top officials be convinced of the value of investing time, funds and other resources in youth criminality prevention?

#### **Good Practice Illustration**

##### The Kwa-Mashu Youth Crime Prevention Development Programme

The City of Durban has established a youth based crime prevention project in the high-crime areas of Kwa-Mashu, Inanda and Ntuzuma. This project targets young people in a way that ensures their investment in crime reduction. This project followed many of the principles outlined above. The following process was followed in setting up this project:

- **Funding** was provided by the SAPS National Crime Prevention Office for the implementation of crime prevention projects.
- A local management committee of key **stakeholders** was formed. This committee comprised of NGOs working on crime prevention in the area and the Safer City Office of the metropolitan council.
- The committee then conducted a **situational analysis**. This research looked into 1) which areas has the highest levels of crime, 2) which crimes were the most prominent, 3) what the policy framework provided for youth crime prevention. This analysis revealed that the most prominent crimes in the area were drug and alcohol

related crime, domestic violence, firearm crimes.

- Youth groups from the areas were asked to **tender** for funding to implement crime reduction projects aimed at the problems identified. As far as possible, 'out of school' youth were specifically included in this project, because of their higher risk of committing crimes.
- A panel chose the best proposals from the tenders, and five projects were chosen, one to **address each priority crime** area. Each youth group was allocated an amount of R50 000 to run the project.
- As part of each proposal, youth were required to *identify key stakeholders* with whom they would consult. This has proved very successful. For example, the Department of Education has a mandate to implement some programmes to improve school safety. The existence of a project already running gives them an effective way of doing this. As a result, additional funding has been provided by the Department of Education to continue the Drug and Alcohol project for an additional six months.
- The youth now run the projects and **report on their progress** to the management committee.

#### *10. Evaluate the programme*

In spite of the existence of many South African projects that probably impact on crime, very few of these projects are evaluated, making it impossible to assess their impact on crime. When programmes are not evaluated, not only is it impossible to tell whether the project is worth continuing or expanding, but it is impossible to tell whether the money spent on the project was well spent.

Although evaluation is often difficult and requires some specialised skills, it should be an essential component of every programme. For example, many South African youth organisations include poverty alleviation and entrepreneurial skills in their programmes. These programmes may be evaluated in terms of how many people are employed after the programme ends, but they seldom assess whether this prevents young people from turning to crime. As a result, an effective crime reduction programme may go unnoticed.

To some extent this is understandable. One cannot evaluate every possible impact that a project may have. However, a local council interested in crime reduction may, for example, instead of developing a new crime prevention project, identify one of its current programmes with the potential to reduce crime and continue supporting it because of its crime prevention impact.

Also, Local Governments could set up evaluation mechanisms in order to determine which NGO and CBO crime prevention projects to support.

It is important to use an evaluator that project participants find trustworthy and credible. Those involved in the programme should be responsible for keeping detailed records to enable a sound evaluation afterwards.

Evaluation allows decision-makers to know:

- Whether the programme is working and why;
- What adjustments need to be made to improve effectiveness;
- Whether the project had enough of an impact to justify its expense;
- How those who took part in the project feel about its impact on their lives.

There are two main kinds of evaluations:

#### *Process evaluation*

This looks at the process of implementing the project and some of the pros and cons of how it was implemented. This information can be gathered from discussion with the participants and beneficiaries of the programme.

#### *Outcome evaluation*

An outcome evaluation measures the impact that a prevention programme has had on various crime levels. In order to assess the outcome of the programme, records need to be kept throughout the project, and for a period afterwards, about the crimes that were targeted by the programme.

### ***11. Indicators of success on youth criminality prevention programmes***

Programme success can be demonstrated in different ways:

- Cost-Benefit Analysis

Essentially, a cost-benefit analysis answers the question: "Were the results that we got from the project worth the money that we spent on it?" This type of evaluation requires that records be kept of all project expenses. These 'costs' can then be compared to the costs of other programmes that could have been implemented. Cost-benefit analysis is important because resources are limited. It is a mechanism for ensuring that the most successful project is being implemented for the least money. Other indicators of success could be:

- *Quality of life improvements*
  - Increase in school attendance
  - Decrease in teenage pregnancies
  - Decrease in graffiti and petty vandalism
  - Increase and sustained attendance at youth clubs and other community-based facilities such as loveLife Y-centres.
- *Interpersonal relationships improvements*
  - Increased involvement of fathers in school and community activities
  - Decrease in incidents of physical abuse reported to social welfare
- *Reduced levels of violence*
  - Decrease in incidence of coercive sex
  - Decrease in gang-activity
  - Decrease in crime

Evaluation findings should be taken into consideration when making changes to the project and when making decisions about the future of the project. Evaluation should be seen not as an event but a cycle. After the evaluation, the project is altered to improve it, these changes are then also evaluated, and more alterations are made to the project. In this way, projects

are continually improved and refined.

Evaluation information should also be used to inform other projects. Evaluations of programmes should be distributed as widely as possible, to ensure that others implementing similar programmes do not make similar mistakes, and are able to learn from the experience of your project.

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#### **Further resources: Websites**

Big Brothers Big Sisters, International, at: <http://www.bbbsi.org/>

Calgary: Child and Youth Friendly City at: <http://www.childfriendly.ab.ca/aboutcfc.html>

Centre for Disease Control, at: <http://www.cdc.gov>

Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence at: <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv>

CRAFT (Community Restitution and Apprenticeship Focused Training) programme in the USA, at: <http://www.ncjrs.org/textfiles/d0001.txt>

Family Life Centre, South Africa, at: <http://www.familylife.co.za/>

The Families and Schools Together (AST) Programme (USA)  
<http://www.fww.org/famnews/0330a.htm>

Genderlinks, South Africa at: <http://www.genderlinks.org.za>

International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, at: <http://www.crime-prevention-intl.org>

Joint Enrichment Programme, South Africa at <http://www.jep.org.za>

Junior Achievement South Africa, at <http://www.jasa.org.za/>

Kwa-Mashu Youth Crime Prevention Development Programme (City of Durban)  
<http://www.durban.gov.za>

LoveLife Y-centres, South Africa, at: <http://www.lovelife.org.za/kids/index.html>

National Institute For Crime Prevention And Reintegration Of Offenders (NICRO), South Africa <http://www.nicro.org.za>

National Criminal Justice Reference Service <http://www.ncjrs.org>

Play for Peace, South Africa at: <http://www.playforpeace.org/africa.htm>

Quaker Peace Centre, at: <http://www.quaker.org/capetown>

The South African Association of Youth Clubs (SAAYC)  
<http://www.ydn.org.za/memberorg./saaycpg.html>

Twilight Children project in Johannesburg  
<http://www.rotary9300.org.za/projects/twilight/twilight.html>

UNICEF: <http://www.unicef.org>

Welfare & Social Development SA <http://www.socdev.gov.za/home.htm>

Youth in Action, USA at:  
[http://www.youthlink.org/us/actionguide\\_2000.php](http://www.youthlink.org/us/actionguide_2000.php)  
[http://www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/youthbulletin/2000\\_02\\_1/8.html](http://www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/youthbulletin/2000_02_1/8.html)  
[http://www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/youthbulletin/2000\\_04\\_1/contents.html](http://www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/youthbulletin/2000_04_1/contents.html)

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<sup>2</sup> Sherman, L. W., Gottfredson, D., MacKenzie, D., Eck, J., Reuter, P., and Bushway, S. (1997). *Preventing crime: what works, what doesn't, what's promising*. A report to the United States congress. Prepared for the National Institute of Justice: University of Maryland.

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<sup>20</sup> If you would like to read more on some of the topics introduced in this chapter go to <http://www.unicef.org>. Many UNICEF documents are available online.

<sup>21</sup> Calgary: Child and Youth Friendly City at <http://www.childfriendly.ab.ca/aboutcfc.html>.

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<sup>24</sup> Youth in Action, 2000 available at [http://www.youthlink.org/us/actionguide\\_2000.php](http://www.youthlink.org/us/actionguide_2000.php)

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