

MISSING LINK TO PREVENT VIOLENCE IN POOR AND INEQUITABLE COUNTRIES?

What is social cohesion?

The factors that hold societies and individuals together

- Do people feel they belong?
- Do people trust each other?
- Do they work together?

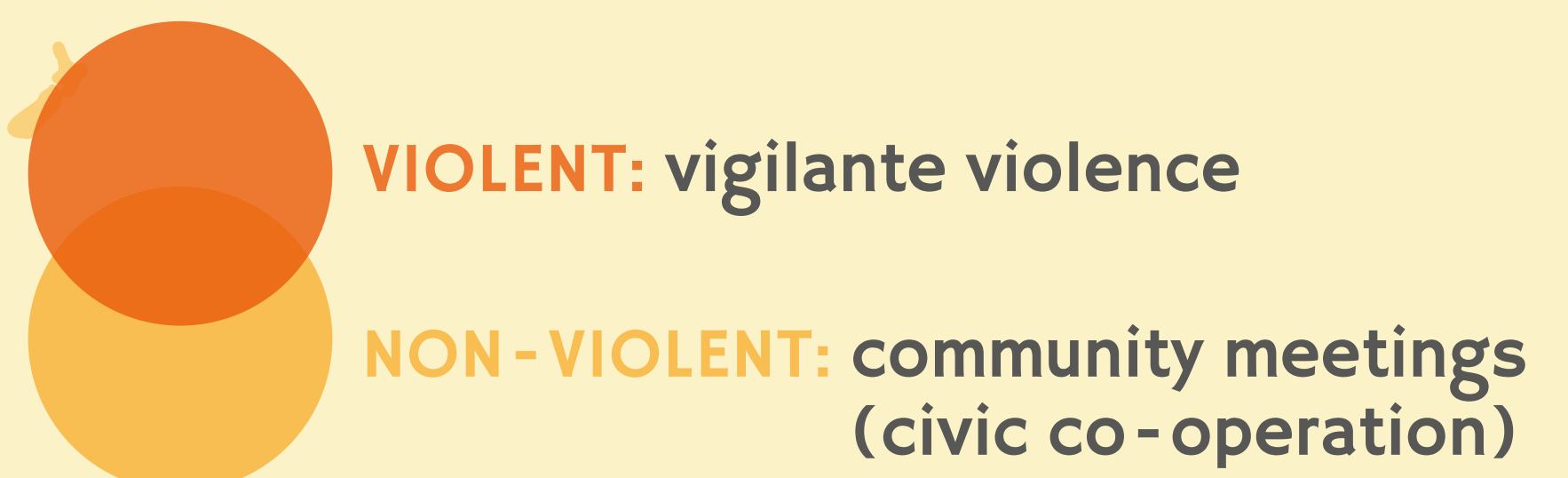


A study in SOUTH AFRICA and BRAZIL found that:

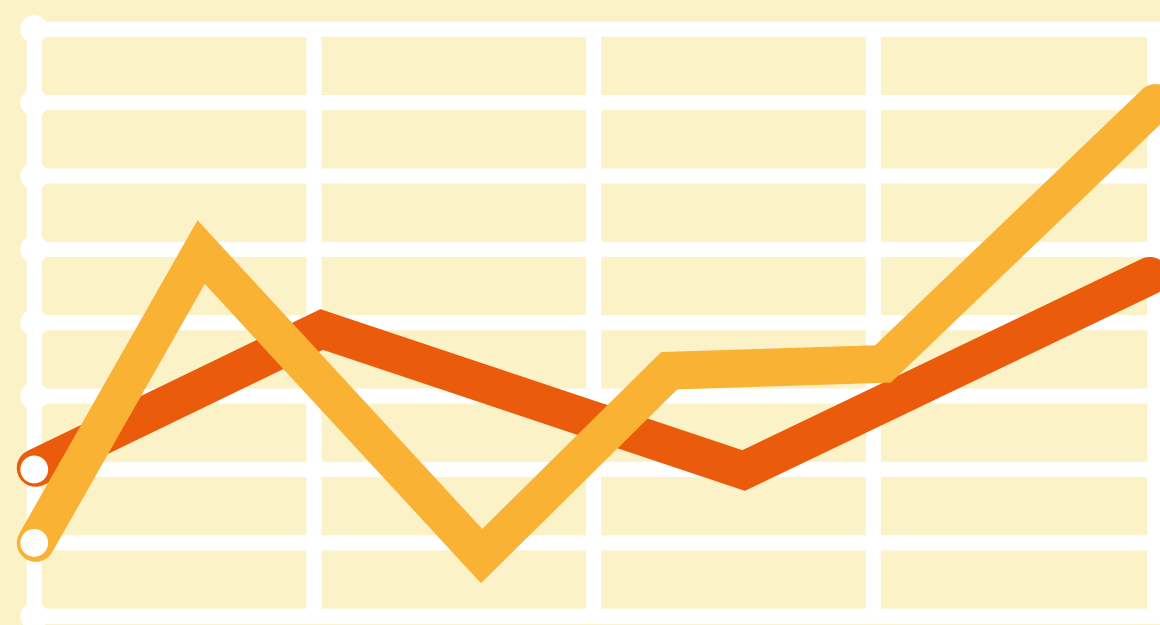
- Social cohesion **co-exists** with violence and can either **prevent** or **increase** it.
- Social cohesion takes **different** forms in the **global south** and **north**.
- People living in **poor communities** are the **most vulnerable** to all types of violence.
- **Interventions** by government and non-governmental actors can **reduce violence** at the same time as **undermining social cohesion**.

Findings on Social cohesion and violence

Social cohesion can take **VIOLENT** and **NON-VIOLENT** forms.



Violence, inequality and poverty



- Poverty and a daily experience of inequality is linked to social unrest and violent crime in South Africa.
- In Brazil communities who experienced extreme poverty and low high school education 20 years ago have the highest homicide rates now.

Social cohesion and fear of crime

- Fear of crime does not have a significant impact on interracial trust in South Africa. It has the most impact on confidence in government performance.
- High levels of social cohesion do not reduce fear of crime in Brazil. Social cohesion can increase fear of crime through talk about crime in social networks.



Community level cohesion

- Disadvantaged communities in South Africa and Brazil have close social networks
- People come together to help each other
- People also come together to help each other by committing violence
- People often regulate disputes informally without the state

VIOLENCE PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS

- Violence prevention interventions **must address social cohesion** or they may have a **negative impact**.
- Communities need to be **involved democratically** in interventions.
- **Local types of cohesion** and **community norms** should **inform interventions**.
- **Initiatives** ought to take into account **informal means of social regulation** like popular justice.
- **More research** is required in the **global south** to understand **social cohesion**. This will help support **violence prevention interventions** that reduce violence **and** build social cohesion.

For more information download the Research Brief or go to www.saferspaces.org.za