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RESILIENT INSTITUTIONS AND
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# SPRINT

LEARNING BRIEF 6

# **ABVPIs in Municipal Planning**

2021

SAFER PLACES:
RESILIENT INSTITUTIONS AND
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# SPRINT

An initiative of the South African –
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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

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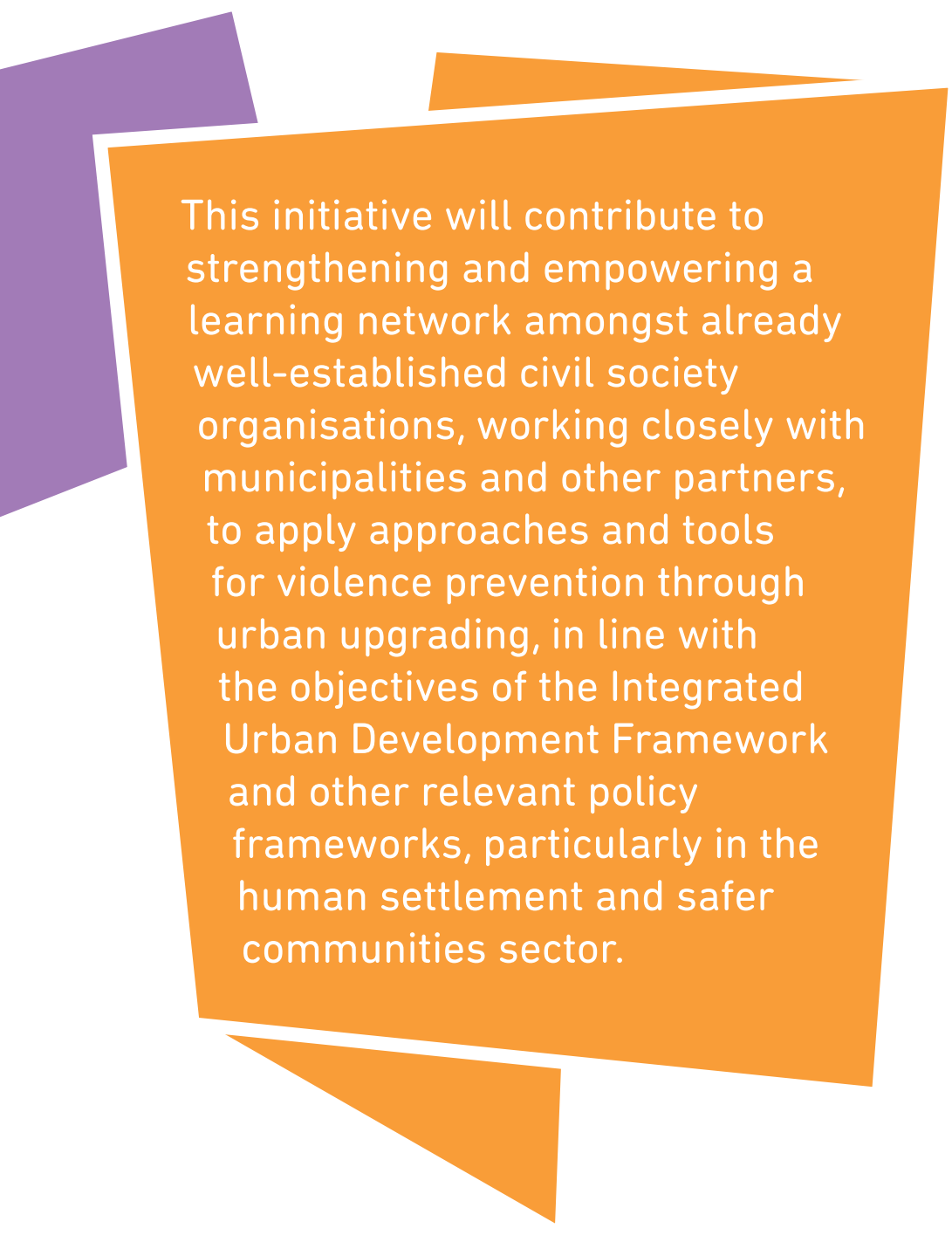für Internationale
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UPGRADING

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This initiative will contribute to strengthening and empowering a learning network amongst already well-established civil society organisations, working closely with municipalities and other partners, to apply approaches and tools for violence prevention through urban upgrading, in line with the objectives of the Integrated Urban Development Framework and other relevant policy frameworks, particularly in the human settlement and safer communities sector.

# ABOUT SPRINT

The Safer Places: Resilient Institutions and Neighbourhoods Together (SPRINT) Project is a joint initiative of the South African-German Development Cooperation with the support of the GIZ – Inclusive Violence Prevention Programme (GIZ VCP), implemented by Isandla Institute and Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU NPC). The initiative was conceptualised in response to the devasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which has amplified risk factors for violence and crime in vulnerable communities. The project aims to support and strengthen institutions and organisations working to build resilience in communities across the country by utilising and upscaling targeted, area-based violence prevention interventions (ABVPI). The project vision is the institutionalisation of effective ABVPIs in the development and management of vulnerable urban communities.

To achieve this, the SPRINT Project has two distinct, but inter-related, pathways:

**A Learning Network,** which consists of a civil society organisations (CSOs) from a cross-section of sectors, and creates opportunities for peer exchanges resulting in learning and advocacy documentation.

**A Laboratory**, which involves capacity-building processes with participating municipalities and local CSOs, and focuses on co-designing and implementing practical, area-based solutions to violence-related challenges.

The project's Steering Committee, which is led by the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG), together with the Department of Human Settlements (DHS), National Treasury and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), oversee and endorse this initiative.

**Our key objectives**

**1** To further develop the violence and crime prevention knowledge built up within the South African German Development Cooperation and its partners since 2012 and to work around area-based violence and crime prevention interventions through facilitating its practical implementation.

**2** To ensure that the knowledge, tools and practices developed by the South African German Development Cooperation and their collaborators in the field of area-based violence prevention are shared with a wide range of stakeholders.

**3** To embed area-based integrated violence prevention intervention approaches institutionally within relevant national government departments, within key municipalities and within civil society to ensure sustainability.

**4** To mobilise local violence prevention intervention thinking, in order to address community violence and crime challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

# ABOUT THE LEARNING NETWORK

In 2020/21, the thematic journey of the Learning Network is conceptualised in two parts. The first is contextual which relates to the South African ABVPI context and the impact of COVID-19 and the second part focuses on institutions and systems needed to implement ABVPI. Critical knowledge from participating organisations is drawn into the Learning Network's outputs and the multistakeholder events. The multistakeholder events bring together CSOs, municipalities and national government departments and agencies to discuss violence and crime prevention theory and practice. The deliberate and unique cross-section of CSO participants within the Learning Network and their varied experiences, knowledge and expertise is central to the success of the SPRINT Project. Participating organisations include Afesis-corplan, Masifunde, Agape Youth Movement, Ndifuna Ukwazi, Cape Development and Dialogue Centre Trust (CDDC), Open Streets Cape Town, Caritas, People's Environmental Planning (PEP), Planact, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), Project Empower, Development Action Group (DAG), Sinosizo Siyaphambili, Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU NPC) and Isandla Institute.

The long-term aim of the Learning Network is to achieve enhanced innovation and evaluation capacity to strengthen and expand violence and crime prevention solutions.

Key to the implementation of area-based violence prevention interventions (ABVPIs) is the role of municipalities . Prioritising ABVPI in municipal planning processes, enables local government to bring together the necessary community, CSO, private sector and government stakeholders to create change.
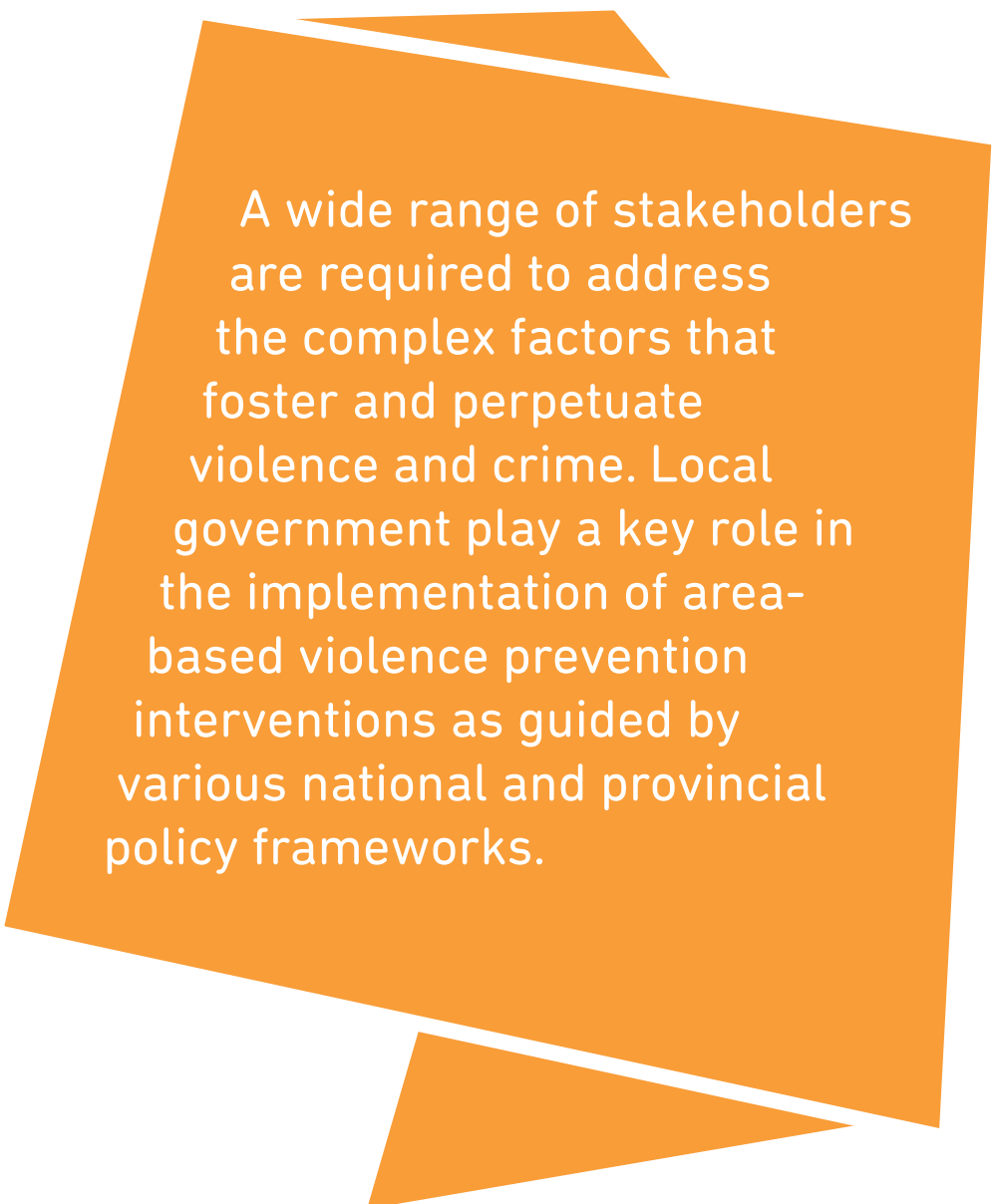
# INTRODUCTION

**This is the sixth in a series of learning briefs produced by Isandla Institute under the Safer Places: Resilient Institutions and Neighbourhoods Together (SPRINT) Project. The briefs are developed from the Learning Network sessions. The focus of this brief, based on the sixth session hosted by Isandla Institute on 22 April 2021, is 'ABVPIs in Municipal Planning'.**

This brief emphasises the urgent need for area-based violence prevention interventions (ABVPIs) in an increasingly difficult environment. Key to the implementation of ABVPIs is the role of local government, particularly municipalities. Municipal policies and frameworks are informed by various legislation and national policies and these are discussed in the brief. The roles that civil society organisations (CSOs) can play in the planning and implementation of ABVPIs are then outlined, with the Learning Network members contributing their experiences of this process. The brief ends with key messages to consider when engaging with communities, civil society and local government about ABVPIs at a local level.

A wide range of stakeholders are required to address the complex factors that foster and perpetuate violence and crime. Local government play a key role in the implementation of area-based violence prevention interventions as guided by various national and provincial policy frameworks.

# SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT AND COVID-19

**COVID-19 has impacted all communities across the country, placing incredible strain on an already strained system. The factors that contribute to violence and crime are already high in South Africa, including high unemployment rates, high levels of poverty, and high inequality. In the first quarter of 2021, the unemployment rate was 32,6% overall, and 46,3% for youth (StatsSA. 2021). In addition, South Africa has the highest level of inequality in the world (World Bank. n.d.).**

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to increase these already high levels, with the most vulnerable groups (older persons, persons with disabilities, children, women, migrants and refugees) being the hardest hit (UN. n.d). The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) notes that "in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, recent reports indicate that the livelihoods of women around the world are now worsening and gender-based violence is increasing, often exacerbated by the precarious housing conditions" (SALGA. n.d).

SALGA recognises the urgency required to respond to the risk factors contributing to violence and crime stating that "it is evident that municipalities, due to their proximity to communities, have a central role to play in the government's response to combat the spread of the virus" (SALGA. 2020). In addition, "...with lockdowns, food shortages, jobs being shed and many citizens suffering enormously – service delivery has never been more important" (George. 2020).

Local government has often been criticized for the "chronic challenges of underperformance characterised by poor financial management, political interference, corruption, poor leadership, adverse audit reports and weak oversight, among other aspects" (Kariuki. 2021). In such increasingly dire circumstances, the COVID-19 "crisis is driving home the message to government that it is vital for citizens to be able to connect to their government" (Jordaan. 2020), and that one of the vital roles that CSOs play is bridging the gap between government and communities. CSOs offer critical capacity in a number of key areas of intervention and their potential for partnering with and capacitating local government is increasingly recognized.  Influencing municipal planning to proactively and inclusively target violence and crime prevention has never been more urgent.

National policy calls for the collaborative creation of safe, liveable spaces by the State and those living in South Africa. Both community safety audits and community safety forums highlight the important role that communities play in the efforts to reduce violence and crime.

# LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT THAT INFORMS ABVPI IMPLEMENTATION

**Any efforts to address the high levels of violence and crime in South Africa require co-ordination at all levels of government – national, provincial and local. At a municipal level, where interventions are implemented directly in communities, there is a need to ensure that plans are integrated across various departments and are aligned with the relevant policies. Below are a few of the relevant policy documents that inform the implementation of ABVPIs.**

At a national level, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) outlines rights around the freedom and security of a person stating that everyone has the right "to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources". Various mechanisms have been introduced to facilitate achievement of these rights, such as the National Development Plan (NDP), of which Chapter 12, Building Safer Communities, has the following vision: "In 2030 people living in South Africa feel safe and have no fear of crime. They feel safe at home, at school and at work, and they enjoy an active community life free of fear. Women can walk freely in the street and the children can play safely outside. The police service is a well-resourced professional institution staffed by highly skilled officers who value their works, serve the community, safeguard lives and property without discrimination, protect the peaceful against violence, and respect the rights of all to equality and justice" (NPC, 2011).

In order to achieve the vision laid out in the NDP, the 2016 White Paper on Safety and Security (WPSS) was developed in order to "promote an integrated and holistic approach to safety and security, and to provide substance and direction to achieving

the NDP's objectives of 'Building Safer Communities'". The WPSS's vision builds on that of the NDP's, emphasising that collaboration that is necessary in order to achieve this. The WPSS states that not only should people live in safe environments, and feel safe in these environments, but all people should "play a role in creating and maintaining the safe environment" (Civilian Secretariat for Police Service [CSPS]. 2016) that is envisaged. "The White Paper reaffirms that building safer communities is a collective responsibility of both the state and its citizens, and is located within the broader developmental agenda of government … In this regard, the White Paper affirms the need for an active citizenry, civil society, and private sector to contribute to the on-going efforts of government in safety, crime and violence prevention" (CSPS. 2016). In addition, the WPSS outlines the importance of addressing the conditions contributing to violence and crime, particularly poverty and inequality. Recognising that exposure to violence and crime is likely in the country, the vision of the WPSS also underscores that all people should "have equal access and resources to high quality services when affected by crime and violence" (CSPS. 2016).

> Developing an active citizenry for sustainable safety must be underpinned by the co-creation of solutions from the ground up, with a particular focus on ensuring the inclusion of marginalised communities.  CSPS and SALGA (2016)

Section 152 of the Constitution outlines the responsibility of local government and accountability for ensuring this, stating that the objectives of local government include promoting a safe and healthy environment, ensuring provision of services to communities, promoting social and economic development and encouraging the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local governance.

The Municipal Systems Act no.32 of 2000 (MSA) was gazetted to respond to section 152 of the Constitution. The MSA establishes an enabling framework for the core processes of local government's planning, performance management, resource mobilisation and organisational change. The MSA requires all municipalities to produce a "single, inclusive strategic plan" or Integrated Development Plan (IDP). IDPs link, integrate and coordinate the activities of all spheres of government that happen within their space, including targeted crime prevention programmes aimed at specific problems and groups at risk. These plans are required to align resources and capacity with the relevant national and provincial plans.

**The White Paper on Safety and Security identifies six key pillars:**

1. Effective criminal justice system
2. Early intervention to prevent crime and violence, and promote safety
3. Victim support
4. Effective and integrated service delivery for safety, security and violence and crime prevention
5. Safety through environmental design
6. Active public and community participation

Specifically focussing on ABVPIs, local government's responsibilities include establishing community safety forums (CSFs) and conducting community safety audits. Both the CSFs and safety audits highlight the important role that communities play in the efforts to reduce violence and crime. In discussing the role of Municipal Councillors in building safer communities, CSPS and SALGA (2016) emphasises that "communities [are] to play an active role in identifying safety challenges and developing appropriate solutions. Developing an active citizenry for sustainable safety must be underpinned by the co-creation of solutions from the ground up, with a particular focus on ensuring the inclusion of marginalised communities". The CSPS (n.d.) encourages municipal and provincial officials to make an effort to build the knowledge and skills of communities in order to meaningfully contribute to ABVPIs. Community contribution and involvement is also required for the development of IDPs to ensure that municipal planning is informed by community input. This participation is outlined in the MSA which encourages participatory governance in municipalities, including community participation in planning, budgeting, implementation, and M&E and reporting processes (MSA. 2000).

# COMMUNITY SAFETY AUDITS

Community safety audits are fundamental to the safety planning process because they:

1  Provide a local, evidence-based assessment of the risk and protective factors present in a given community;
2  Identify priority needs and concerns, including groups of people who are most vulnerable to violence; and
3  Locate programmes and interventions currently underway, which helps identify leadership within the community, and is likely to avoid duplication and wasting of resources.

There are various steps that are undertaken in order to conduct a thorough safety audit. The first step is to develop a community profile to create an overview of the composition of the community. Such a profile can be developed using existing research and information contained in local municipality profiles on the demographics of the community such as age, population group, gender, employment levels, etc. The second step is to identify the risks to safety by collecting information on levels of crime and violence in the area through various means, including a review of data and reports such as crime statistics and CPF minutes, as well as through surveys and focus group discussions with the community.

A further step involves identifying who is already involved in crime and violence prevention activities in the community and the possible linkages and overlaps among them. After the key role players have been identified, the following step involves analysing the physical and social characteristics of the environment to determine risk and identify areas for interventions. Once these are identified, the information is organised against each type of risk/risk factors, along with possible solutions. Following on from this, key areas are prioritised and then analysed in greater detail.

When as much information as possible has been gathered, the next step involves drafting a safety audit report, which includes findings and recommendations. Finally, the report is shared with members of the community to validate the findings and secure local buy-in and support.

Book 3 of the Toolkit on Participatory Safety Planning and Making South Africa Safe: A Manual for Community-based Crime Prevention available at https://www.saferspaces.org.za/learn-how/entry/buildingsafer-communities-toolkit has a number of useful tools that can be used, not only for conducing safety audits, but for the various stages of a safety planning process.

(Adapted from CSPS. n.d.)

# COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUMS (CSFS)

CSFs are collaborative, intersectoral platforms intended to "promote the development of a community where citizens live in a safe environment and have access to high quality services at local level, through an integrated multi-agency collaboration between organs of state and various communities" (CSPS. 2011). Multi-agency collaboration includes joint planning, working towards integrated service delivery, community engagement and accountability and a commitment to sharing resources.

The CSF was developed to be complementary in function to the Community Policing Forum (CPF). The CPF was created with a specific focus on policing and associated matters, but does not have the mandate to address other factors or issues that are linked to crime, such as clearing brush or improving street lighting (CSPS. 2011). The CSFs were introduced with the recognition that a broader, more inclusive approach is required to address violence and crime, and the CSFs represent a move away from an exclusive focus on crime control (i.e. law enforcement); the CSFs and CPFs are aimed to be complementary and interdependent in order to holistically approach crime prevention (CSPS. 2011). The CSF structures aim to be the bridge between safety needs and relevant government structures that could respond to these needs.

When a CSF was initially piloted in the Western Cape, the forum's structure and activities were coordinated and financially supported by an NGO, however the CSF project ended when the NGO was unable to secure future funding. The value of the CSF in improving community safety was recognised by the Western Cape government, and the mandate for implementation of CSFs was included into government structures. The provincial departments responsible for community safety coordinate and facilitate the planning of CSFs, and the district and local municipal structures implement the CSFs in the communities in which they operate. The establishment of these forums occur based on key issues in the communities and should "be guided by specific programmes where the relevant department is expected to lead, based on its portfolio or mandate. For example, in a sub-committee on transport safety, the officials from the

Department of Transport will take the lead in programmes or initiatives relating to such" (CSPS. 2011).

According to the CSPS (2011), the main functions of the CSF include: developing a local social crime prevention capacity; conducting safety audits that will inform municipalities safety strategies and plans; facilitating linkages of the safety and crime prevention strategies with municipal IDPs, together with provincial government's crime prevention plans; and coordinating, overseeing, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the crime prevention programmes or projects. In addition, it is noted that the CSF aims to provide a means for sharing information and encouraging and coordinating interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral approaches to violence and crime prevention (CSPS and SALGA. 2016).



## SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

The Sedibeng District Municipality (SDM) is proactive in efforts towards building safer communities by coordinating safety and security networks within the region. The Sedibeng CSF (SCSF) was set up in order to catalyse development of communities and promote access to high quality services, promote safety and reduce violence in the District. The SDM (n.d.) recognises the importance of a CFS saying that "it is the responsibility of this kind of collective, to ensure that safety & security is upheld within our communities". "By coordinating efforts and mobilising people and resources towards a common vision, the highly recognized SCSF is developing violence prevention interventions often cited as a model for other municipalities" (SaferSpaces. N.d).

The SCSF has four priority areas as identified by the needs of the community including: promoting intergovernmental relations; promoting school safety; advocating for social crime prevention; and supporting community corrections programmes (SDM. N.d). Some key initiatives that are implemented by the CSF include the "Toughest Young Minds" treatment centre for addiction, the "Cycle Tour Awareness Programme" and various schools programmes.

The contributing factors to the success of the SCSF include institutional buy-in and commitment from various stakeholders, co-ordination and collaboration, and use of systems designed to monitor progress and hold role-players accountable.

# KEY LESSONS FROM THE LEARNING NETWORK

**There are various roles CSOs can play in ABVPIs at local level. These include facilitating community engagement in municipal planning, contributing towards developing a knowledge and evidence base, providing capacity development and support services for communities and municipalities and playing an oversight and accountability role. Participants emphasised that good partnerships with communities underpinned all efforts in municipal planning processes.**

The Learning Network participants felt that the most important role of CSOs was ensuring community participation in the developing and implementing of any interventions by empowering both local government and community members in those engagements. They further noted that community engagement by municipalities must be an open, honest, dynamic and ongoing process. The 'people on the ground' need to be actively involved in developing solutions as they are best positioned to identify the issues. Partnerships between municipalities and communities must allow for co-creation from the ground up. CSOs have an important role to play in ensuring that communities, who often don't have a voice in local governance and planning processes, are able to participate in such processes. Key to this is ensuring that marginalised communities and vulnerable groups are able to play a role in the creation of sustainable and safe spaces as they are often excluded or underrepresented in municipal planning processes. CSFs are a very good vehicle where this can happen.

Learning Network participants noted that there is often a 'one-size-fits-all' approach from municipalities, based on high level policy directives. Standardised approaches to implementing ABVPIs are often

not appropriate for the varying contexts. In the planning of ABVPIs, acknowledgement of different contexts, issues and needs should be reflected in the adaption of plans to suit the requirements of communities. In this way, CSOs can help to create a window into communities so that policymakers are able to gain greater insight into, and understanding of, various community contexts.

A good knowledge and/or evidence base is important for informing project implementation and bringing insight into municipal planning processes. Conducting safety audits and stakeholder mapping exercises are two useful mechanisms that respond to this. In particular, the information generated from safety audits meaningfully contributes to municipal safety plans. CSOs can play a significant role in conducting research to understand contexts and issues at a deeper level.

> CSOs play a key role in facilitating community engagements, sharing knowledge and providing capacity development. CSOs have an important role to play in ensuring that communities, who often don't have a voice in local governance and planning processes, are able to participate in such processes.

Capacity development and related support services were also identified as functions CSOs could enable. Capacity building can be beneficial for communities in terms of understanding various governance processes and entry points into participating in these. Also included in capacity building should be the different roles and responsibilities that citizens have in local governance. Improving government's understanding of the various risk factors for violence and crime, and the various ABVPIs that can be successful in reducing these, is another key role CSOs can play. Violence prevention interventions are successful when a wide range of risk factors that contribute to violence and crime are addressed (e.g., poverty, inequality, unemployment), as well as supporting protective factors that can prevent violence and crime (youth empowerment, sustainable livelihoods, economic empowerment etc.). CSOs can assist with capacity building efforts around these and reinforcing the importance of such efforts as a

holistic, integrated approach to addressing violence and crime.

Municipalities are responsible for interventions that can create safer, less violent environments for individuals to live in. Such responsibilities are mandated by the country's various policies and legislations. Overseeing the activities that contribute to these goals and holding municipalities and local government accountable for the implementation of various violence prevention interventions is an important role that CSOs play. Participating actively in CSFs, ward committees, and IDP processes are some of the different mechanisms in which to engage municipalities.

Lastly, Learning Network participants emphasised the importance of joint resourcing of initiatives, noting local government's financial constraints and the general economic climate as challenges to implementing such interventions. Partnering in interventions is a beneficial way to leverage available funds to achieve greater impact.

## CAUTIONARY NOTES

Learning Network members highlighted that CSOs often choose to work in areas that require the most assistance, for instance where municipal plans and strategies are not being carried out effectively and government interventions do not have the anticipated impacts. The lack of effective (and non-partisan) municipal and ward structures (despite enabling policies) also makes it harder for CSOs to create the changes that are needed in those spaces.

Furthermore, because CSFs are galvanized around a specific issue and by a department that is mandated to address this key area, it is difficult to easily identify who is responsible for the CSF in a particular area, or who to approach to be put in touch with the CSF. The CSF spaces, while aimed at being collaborative and integrated, are subject to the same potential for gatekeeping as other government processes. Marginalised groups are likely to remain marginalised, even within the CSFs, and it is a challenge to ensure representation within these structures and identify the right people to include. Finally, if the needs of a community shift from one key area to another, it is not clear what happens to the holding function by a now, potentially irrelevant department.

Community safety forums are a strategic platform where active joint participation between government, CSOs and communities can occur. In addition, community safety audits, responding to integrated development plans and shared research and data give municipalities insight into communities.

# KEY MESSAGES

**Working with communities and municipalities in the planning and implementation of ABVPIs requires CSOs to play a variety of roles. Some key points to note are included below in order to have a long-term impact in communities.**

**1:** Joint and active participation from a wide range of stakeholders, encompassing a variety of government structures, communities, and CSOs, will be best positioned and resourced to address the complex factors that contribute to violence and crime. The formalisation of relationships between CSOs, municipalities etc., through a memorandum of agreement that sets out roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder, will enable greater accountability for joint interventions.

**2:** Community safety forums are a strategic platform where active joint participation between government, CSOs and communities can occur. There are policies and frameworks that facilitate the development and implementation of the CSF and mandate the support of relevant government structures to lead the forums and align specific issues with the relevant departments. However, this also means that there is no one clear or specified structure mandated to hold the CSF. Advocacy and lobbying is required to develop a national mandate for municipalities to embed the CSFs as a function that is budgeted for and attended to as a key area of their work.

**3:** Two additional entry points into influencing municipal planning are community safety audits and responding to the IDPs. CSOs can play a vital role in participating in and facilitating community safety audits that are used a mechanisms to inform ABVPIs. Contributing data and research from the work undertaken with communities gives municipalities valuable insight into communities, and provides evidence bases to support efforts. Assisting with the facilitation of safety audits can ensure that relevant community stakeholders, particularly vulnerable or marginalized groups have their voices heard. In addition, the IDP outlines all interventions that will be undertaken by government. Giving input on the IDP is a key way that CSOs can ensure that ABVPIs are included on the municipal agenda.

**4:** In planning and coordinating ABVPIs with municipalities, aligning of budgets to implement complementary initiatives can be hugely beneficial in communities. When it comes to such efforts, there needs to be a clear understanding of the fiscal year and how budgets are planned by municipalities so that timelines and timeframes are identified and integrated into planning. Good communication mechanisms is a key way to ensure this occurs.

# CONCLUSION

**Local government, through municipalities are predominantly tasked with the implementation of activities that aim to achieve the priorities outlined by national government.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated already dire contexts in many communities, increasing unemployment, creating higher levels of food insecurity, as well as increasing the risk factors that contribute towards violence and crime. Targeted, strategic municipal planning is required to respond to these challenging issues. CSOs have the potential to positively shape municipal plans through providing knowledge and evidence, offering capacity development, playing an oversight and accountability role, and most importantly, ensuring that communities are able to actively contribute to their own development.

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