



SAFER PLACES:  
RESILIENT INSTITUTIONS AND  
NEIGHBOURHOODS TOGETHER

# SPRINT

LEARNING BRIEF 10

## **Gender-based vulnerability and the built environment**

2022



SAFER PLACES:  
RESILIENT INSTITUTIONS AND  
NEIGHBOURHOODS TOGETHER

# SPRINT

An initiative of the South African -  
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german  
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DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

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The intelligence of change



VIOLENCE  
PREVENTION  
THROUGH URBAN  
UPGRADING

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# ABOUT THIS LEARNING BRIEF


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**Area-based violence prevention interventions (ABVPI)<sup>1</sup>** are targeted approaches to bring about improved safety within a specific geographic area. They are designed to reduce crime and violence and address the root causes by using a combination of spatial, social and institutional interventions. ABVPI are a key preventative mechanism in reducing the incidence and impact of violence and crime. The predominant response to crime and violence is to pursue security initiatives, but there is growing evidence of a shift to include more preventative safety measures which focus on underlying risk and protective factors. Risk factors are those factors that increase risk or susceptibility while protective factors are those that encourage healthy and safe outcomes. These factors interplay with one another and can influence violence and crime at the individual, relationship, community or societal level – as seen in the socio-ecological model.<sup>2</sup>



The intersections of gender, violence and crime are complex. This learning brief examines how gender intersects with violence and crime, particularly in the public realm, and how inclusive ABPVI can contribute to improved safety outcomes for women, girls and LGBTQIA+ communities. The learning brief is the result of the Community of Practice learning event “Gender and ABPVI”, which was hosted by Isandla Institute on 4 August 2022 as part of the Safer Places: Resilient Institutions and Neighbourhoods Together (SPRINT) Project Community of Practice (CoP). The CoP is comprised of civil society organisations and representatives from different spheres of government. The learning brief draws on the presentation by Sonke Gender Justice and the reflections and experiences shared by the participants, without directly attributing contributions to participants.





Types of violence  
can be – and almost  
always are – gendered  
in nature, because  
of how gendered  
power inequalities  
are entrenched in our  
society.

# INTRODUCTION

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Crime and violence are major issues that plague South African cities and affect people throughout the country. They stem from a complex web of social, economic and political factors from the environment in which they occur.<sup>3</sup> High levels of inequality, poverty and power imbalances in South Africa mean that the impact of crime and violence affect some more than others. Some groups, in particular women, youth and the LGBTQIA+ communities are disproportionately more vulnerable to experiencing crime and violence than others. They are particularly at risk due to their gender identity. As the Sexual Violence Research Initiative and Joint Gender Fund note, “types of violence can be – and almost always are – gendered in nature, because of how gendered power inequalities are entrenched in our society”.<sup>4</sup>

The built environment can influence gender-based vulnerability to violence and crime as characteristics of a space, such as clear entrance and exit points or vibrancy, will determine whether that space feels inclusive and safe, or unsafe to particular social groups. This brief considers some of the factors that create unsafety for women, girls and gender non-conforming people. It identifies actions that can reduce the gendered experience of risk and vulnerability to violence and create a safer environment. It proposes gender actions associated with the SPRINT key ingredients for Area Based Violence Prevention Interventions (ABVPI)<sup>5</sup> and distils key lessons from practice in using ABVPI to prevent gender-based violence and crime. The learning brief concludes with four critical actions that can help bring about more inclusive public space and address vulnerability and risk to violence and crime for women, girls and the LGBTQIA+ community.

The background features several large, overlapping orange geometric shapes, primarily parallelograms and trapezoids, creating a modern, abstract design. The text is centered within one of these shapes.

Many people feel and are unsafe in South Africa. The reported incidences of violence and crime don't fully reflect the lived experience - as many acts go unreported.



# GENDER, CRIME AND VIOLENCE

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GBV is an issue that is deeply entrenched within South Africa, being noted as the country's second pandemic.<sup>6</sup> GBV is described as "harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms".<sup>7</sup> These incidences of violence and crime can manifest anywhere, such as in the home, places of work, places of worship, places of learning and in the public realm. Gender-based violence and crime can take many different forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, financial or structural and can be perpetrated by intimate partners, acquaintances, strangers as well as institutions.<sup>8</sup> Most acts of interpersonal GBV are committed by men against women, which stems from the unequal gender power dynamics and harmful norms that are deeply rooted within our society.<sup>9</sup>

In the period between April and June 2022, a total of 142 915 contact crimes were recorded which included 6 424 murders and 11 855 reported sexual offenses. Of the 11 855 reported sexual offenses, 9 516 were rape cases.<sup>10</sup> This is only a fraction of the incidences occurring in South Africa as it is a well-known fact that the majority of assaults go unreported. A 2017 Gauteng study found that only 1 in 23 women who experienced sexual abuse also reported it to the police.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, according to the same study, up to 1 in 3 women reported experiencing emotional and/or economic abuse in the past year.<sup>12</sup> While these incidences can occur anywhere, including behind closed doors and in the private sphere, much of this violence can manifest in the public realm where the built environment contributes to risk and vulnerability to violence and crime. Recent crime statistics for the period April to June 2022

confirm this: while 40% of the 9 516 reported rape cases took place in the home, one in six (16%) took place in public spaces such as streets, parks and beaches, recreational centres, abandoned buildings, etc. while the rest occurred in a mix of spaces including in liquor outlets, public transport premises such as stations and a number of other locations.<sup>13</sup> This is also evident from the 2016 Community Survey which asked respondents about their feelings of safety in the day and in the night. Invariably, women across all population groups (including women-headed households) felt less safe during daytime and after dark, compared to men. Perceptions and feelings of safety also differed significantly among different population groups, suggesting that living conditions and the built environment are key contributors to experiences of safety. For example, in the metropolitan areas of Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg between 49 and 61% of white men reported to feel unsafe walking after dark, compared to 67 to 89% of African women.<sup>14</sup>

Ffion Middleton, an assistant planner at a planning and development consultancy in the United Kingdom, importantly notes “cities don’t produce gender-based violence, but they create situations that make women more vulnerable to violence and harassment due to poor design”.<sup>15</sup> Aspects of the physical environment such as limited street lighting, lack of community surveillance or “eyes on the street”, and unmanaged public spaces can provide opportunities for crime to thrive. This is particularly evident in informal settlements, where making use of a toilet is one of the most dangerous activities, particularly for women and children, as observed by Axolile Notywala, a member of the Social Justice Coalition.<sup>16</sup> For example, in 2015 635 sexual assaults were reported in Khayelitsha just travelling to and from the bathrooms.<sup>17</sup> This indicates that the location of, and the journey to and from, communal toilets create an environment of risk and fear for women and girls.







Aspects of the physical environment such as limited street lighting, lack of community surveillance or “eyes on the street”, and unmanaged public spaces can provide opportunities for crime to thrive.

# GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND VULNERABILITY IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

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Space is not neutral. The way it is designed, shaped and maintained affects the experience of people who use it and their vulnerability to crime and violence. Factors like thick vegetation/bush, quiet bus stops, poor lighting, blind corners and pedestrian routes going over or under bridges are some of the spatial factors that make women particularly feel unsafe, and provide opportunities for crime and violence to thrive.<sup>18</sup> Youth involved in Sonke Gender Justice's programmes also noted that their environment can create circumstances that allow crime and violence to thrive. For example, a lack of street lights mean people do not feel safe to move around at night, restricting their movement, and empty houses are being used to sell drugs, making it unsafe to walk by. They also noted that there are many taverns in their communities, which foster unwanted behaviour from patrons, such as fighting and selling alcohol to minors.

Even if these factors do not directly contribute to increased incidences of crime and violence, they can add to fear and perceptions of unsafety around the space. As a result, people may start to retract from using the space, which in turn may increase the chance of something happening, as use of the space decreases.

The maintenance and management of public spaces is therefore critical, to encourage the use of the space and to prevent certain social groups withdrawing from those spaces. For example, in Johannesburg, it was found that the lack of maintenance of public parks and playparks resulted in a deterioration. As a result, intended users, such as children, stopped using the park. Their mothers seemed to consider the park no longer safe or suitable as a place to play and connect. The lack of use of this space then opened it up for drug dealers and vagrants, which further added to perceptions of unsafety and use of the space. In the case of eThekwin, it was found

that poorly maintained and poor-quality (possibly abandoned) buildings can become hideouts for criminals and places where GBV is perpetrated.

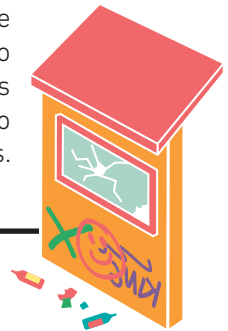
Of course, spaces can be experienced differently by different people. For example, a man may not perceive a street with no lights as dangerous. This could be because he believes that he will not be approached or that he could ward off anyone who might pose a threat. However, other groups, such as women, girls and gender non-conforming individuals may feel more likely to be approached or less likely to be able to defend themselves. This unsafety, or perception of unsafety, impacts engagement with the space and may cause these particular social groups to avoid it.

When people opt to avoid an area or to restrict their movements out of safety concerns, it can have broader implications, such as preventing them access to economic opportunities, education or social occasions. Lack of access to these resources is already unequal for women and further lack of access will only perpetuate gender inequality.<sup>19</sup> Having women exercise and enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms enables their full development and advancement.<sup>20</sup>

Alternatively, those who refuse to be restricted in their movements and possibly miss out, run the risk of being blamed or challenged when they find themselves in a dangerous situation.

A key insight is that spaces are gendered and need to be (re-) designed with inputs from all relevant social groups, including women, to ensure that those spaces (streets, precincts, taxi ranks, transport hubs, parks, etc.) meets their needs and aspirations. This is particularly the case if the design team is not diverse and subsequently less likely to consider or understand the needs of people different to them.

Despite the recognition that GBV is a social and national crisis, it is not prioritised in key local government frameworks and plans, such as the integrated development plans (IDPs). Municipalities are expected to 'localise' the objectives and actions



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### **The broken window theory**

James Q. Wilson and George Kelling  
"used broken windows as a metaphor  
for disorder within neighbourhoods".

This disorder creates fear which in turn makes people feel unsafe and withdraw from a space. As they withdraw, social controls are weakened and crime and disorder increase.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/broken-windows-theory>

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## INTERSECTIONS: WORKING WITH YOUTH TO TACKLE GBV

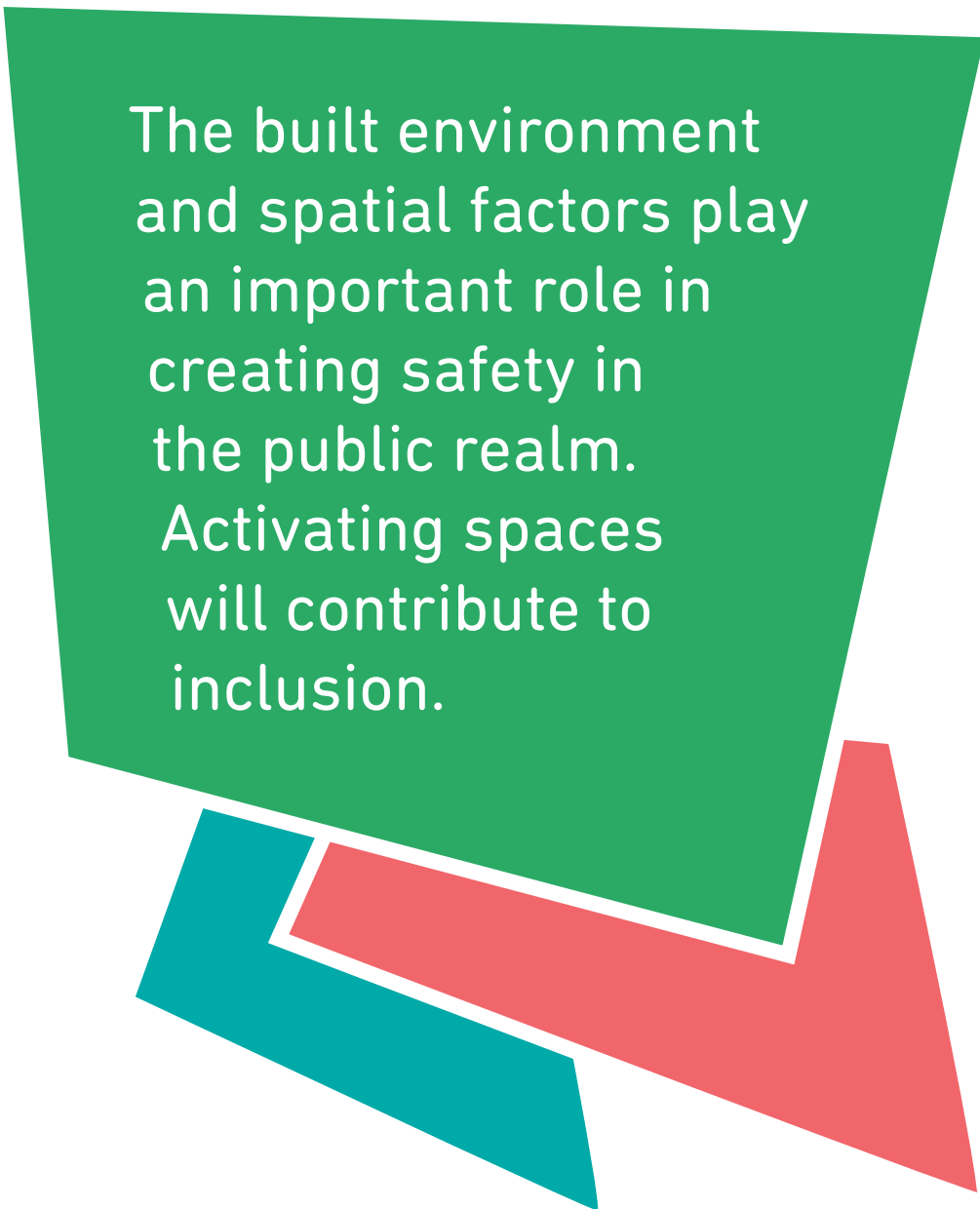


During school holidays, Sonke Gender Justice (Sonke) work with learners in schools around issues of GBV prevention and sexual and reproductive health rights. Part of this work includes working with learners to understand their space and to grow their awareness of their rights. The first component of this is a group exercise on how to build safer communities. Learners map out where they live and look at the challenges they are experiencing. They then take turns to discuss these challenges and make suggestions on how things can be addressed. Some common emerging issues include no street lights; houses that are empty and used by criminals; as well as harassment of pedestrians by people sitting in the road. Once the issues have been discussed, Sonke leads a discussion about who is responsible for which related services. This helps the learners understand the

issues in their community and the related responsible persons.

Another exercise learners undertake is to map their community, crime hotspots or safe and unsafe areas such as where gangs operate or where police are stationed. Learners will also be asked whether they have been inside a police station before and whether they know what services are offered or which organisations work with the local police. The final component of this project is to work with the learners to grow advocacy efforts. In this Sonke will take the learners through the process that needs to be followed when they want to start a campaign. They will look at the importance of collaboration and forming alliances; understanding one's opponent; how to develop the campaign and time frame and factors for evaluation. The learners then use this to reflect and create a campaign which is shared with the group.

of the 2020 National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide (NSP GBVF). This includes the use of relevant and disaggregated data on GBV and "adequate resourcing [to] be available in a sustained way over the next five to ten years to facilitate systemic change."<sup>21</sup> The prioritisation of GBV prevention is essential and an area of intervention where municipalities can play a particular role. This includes infrastructure and built environment interventions to reduce risk and vulnerability to violence and crime in the public realm.



The built environment  
and spatial factors play  
an important role in  
creating safety in  
the public realm.  
Activating spaces  
will contribute to  
inclusion.



# BUILDING RESILIENCE: REDUCING GENDER-BASED RISK AND VULNERABILITY TO VIOLENCE AND CRIME IN SOUTH AFRICAN SPACES

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A city that is free from violence – including physical, psychological, verbal, material and symbolic violence – in both public and private spheres is a city which “ensures the safe use and enjoyment of public spaces and common goods and guarantees freedom of mobility”.<sup>22</sup> It is also one in which women enjoy political participation, economic autonomy and opportunities, inclusion and equality.<sup>23</sup>

As noted above, the built environment and spatial factors play an important role in creating safety in the public realm. Thus, it is important to examine and address infrastructure deficiencies and urban design interventions. Some characteristics of safe and inclusive spaces include spaces that are well-lit; clean; have dedicated spaces and activities for women and children; have clear lines of sight, are spatially legible with clear entries and exits; have nowhere where criminals can hide; have visible signage and suitable facilities including ablution or play areas for children. Additionally, spaces that are dynamic with mixed land uses, both residential and commercial, ensure the space is occupied during the day, at night and on weekends.

Activating the space through integrating multiple activities will ensure the space is rarely empty and will contribute to inclusion.<sup>24</sup> Here it is important to reflect on how activation initiatives can, perhaps inadvertently, be gender-biased or exclusive. For example, often when municipalities invest in sports facilities, they create soccer fields, which are more often than not used by boys and young men. It is therefore important to focus on activities that create opportunities for social connection, learning, skills development and economic empowerment for women, girls and gender non-conforming people, as these contribute to their resilience and human

freedom. These could vary from operating an informal street market for women entrepreneurs to offering a women's self-defence course that teaches basic safety and defence, for example. Equally important are programmes and activities for people at risk of perpetrating GBV, including identity programmes that promote progressive masculinity.

One of the critical factors shaping gender dynamics and power imbalances in South Africa are persistent stereotypes. Examples of gender stereotypes are 'women are nurturers', 'women are homemakers', 'men are breadwinners' or 'men/boys don't cry'. Stereotypes result from deeply ingrained norms, values, prejudices and attitudes, which are often limiting and can even be harmful. They can create invisible barriers for girls to pursue a career in science, law or medicine, for example. Suggesting that women are natural caregivers means that child rearing responsibilities often fall exclusively only women. In addition, seeing women as the sexual property of their husbands or partners means women can't exert choice or get recourse in the case of marital/partner rape. Gender stereotypes can be very hard to change and can also be internalised by women, girls and gender non-conforming people.

For example, when reflecting on their work with youth about GBV and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), Sonke Gender Justice shared an exchange between two young women, where the one stated that she wants to be able to come home at night without having to worry about her safety. Her peer challenged her, asking why she would want to do that when she knows she will be harassed. This comment sheds light on the conditioning that is happening in the minds of youth and is illustrative of how deeply entrenched and normalised GBV is within our society. This is also related to the issue of victim blaming in which a survivor is made to feel that they are to blame for what happened to them because of something they did – such as being somewhere “unsafe”, dressing “inappropriately” or speaking back to someone. It is also linked to the bystander approach in which a bystander sees or hears something inappropriate or illegal, but does not intervene. Addressing these stereotypes requires more than simple consultations.



## WORKING WITH TAXIS TO INCREASE SAFETY FOR COMMUTERS

Sonke Gender Justice (Sonke) argues “Making public transport [which includes the routes in between them] safe for women and children safe will not only contribute to Government’s commitment to eradicating gender-based violence, but will also make it safe for other vulnerable groups, such as: children commuting alone, persons with disabilities, LGBTQIA+, the elderly, pregnant women and women commuting with children, adolescents, youth, migrants, refugees and persons’ from poor households...Overall improving everyone’s access to important amenities and services”.<sup>25</sup>

Sonke, in partnership with TransAID, Durham University, the University of Cape Town and the South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) have been working together to look at how to make commuters safer.

This intervention started with workshops with female commuters about their experiences when commuting which was then shared with the drivers. Commuters shared about harassment and various forms of GBV they had experienced including rape and other crimes such as robberies. They shared that as women, they do not feel safe while commuting. In addition, many shared that they did not feel that the vehicles were safe to get into, they reported issues with the road including potholes and that there are not enough safe places to get onto or off the taxi. This includes when people are dropped far away because the drivers are afraid of the gangs in the area meaning commuters must walk the rest of the way and possibly be exposed to more crime and/or violence.

After speaking to the commuters, Sonke spoke to the drivers while they were waiting at the rank to fill up their taxis and during dedicated sessions facilitated by the taxi associations. Sonke spoke to the drivers about sexual harassment, GBV, rape and consent. This included the bystander approach that if drivers do not say anything when something is happening in their taxi, they are condoning that behaviour. While commuters had said not all

continued...

taxi drivers are the same, they also mentioned that the majority of drivers contributed to the challenges. Drivers shared that they really enjoyed the learning session and having a chance to share their experiences.

Other than raising awareness and understanding around these issues, there are a number of actions which can be taken to increase safety. This includes encouraging commuters to know their taxi ranks, its systems and hierarchy and where you can report harassment when it happens. It is also important that commuters know their route, what time they got onto or left the taxi, the registration of the vehicle and the face of the driver and guard so that they can be identified. Additionally, it is important that taxi ranks have clearly marked facilities for commuters, such as security offices, and that facilities are maintained. For example, having regular, good lighting throughout.

When reflecting on this process, Sonke noted that behaviour change is based in people's attitudes and background and that this change takes time. Given this, it is also critical to look at how to ensure the work is sustained and that there are sufficient resources so that survivors continue to receive the necessary support.

**Sonke Gender Justice** ([www.genderjustice.org.za](http://www.genderjustice.org.za)).

Please see the links below to some resources around this work

- **Sonke Gender Justice. 2020. Combatting Gender-Based Violence Through Safer Public Transport: A Policy Shift. Cape Town:** [www.genderjustice.org.za/publication/combating-gender-based-violence-through-safer-public-transport/](http://www.genderjustice.org.za/publication/combating-gender-based-violence-through-safer-public-transport/)
- **Sonke Gender Justice. 2021. Safe Ride: Preventing Gender-Based Violence in Taxis.** Pretoria: SaferSpaces. [www.saferspaces.org.za/be-inspired/entry/safe-ride-preventing-gender-based-violence-in-taxis#:~:text=The%20Safe%20Ride%20campaign's%20objective,and%20harassment%2C%20and%20promote%20gender](http://www.saferspaces.org.za/be-inspired/entry/safe-ride-preventing-gender-based-violence-in-taxis#:~:text=The%20Safe%20Ride%20campaign's%20objective,and%20harassment%2C%20and%20promote%20gender)
- **Sonke Gender Justice. N.d. Safe Ride: Preventing Gender-Based Violence in Taxis.** Pretoria: SaferSpaces. <https://www.saferspaces.org.za/resources/entry/safe-ride-preventing-gender-based-violence-in-taxis>

To create safe and inclusive spaces, it is necessary that local communities, civil society organisations and the private sector (including local business owners) come together, with their municipality, to co-create safer spaces and ensure that *all* voices are heard and *all* users are considered. To encourage co-creation, it is necessary to grow active citizenship. Active citizenship is based on the idea that change starts with the individual. In thinking about gender issues, this can be seen in the ways we behave and relate to one another. Additionally, the commitment to inclusive co-creation helps us to work through individual perceptions and experiences together and ultimately to better understand one another's lived reality. One of the most critical components of this co-creation is working with women, girls and the LGBTQIA+ community to understand how they experience a space and what opportunities they want to see. It is also critical that there is supportive, capable community leadership and that this leadership is diverse and inclusive to ensure it represents the community it serves.

The commitment to inclusive co-creation helps us to work through individual perceptions and experiences together and ultimately to better understand one another's lived reality.



## **LESSONS FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH: MAKING PUBLIC SPACES SAFER FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS INTERNATIONALLY** <sup>26</sup>

The UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces is a global initiative aimed at creating safe public spaces for women and girls that are free from sexual harassment and sexual violence. Participating cities use an evidence-based approach to develop solutions that include strengthening law and policy, investment in safe and economically viable public spaces and transforming social norms that underpin violence and unsafety in public spaces.

### **CO-CREATING SAFE PUBLIC SPACES FOR AND WITH WOMEN AND GIRLS IN CAIRO, EGYPT**

In the neighbourhood of Imababa, Cairo safety audits were conducted with the women and girl residents around their constraints in terms of safety, accessibility and mobility in their area. They reported that aspects of the built environment such as dead-ends, poor street lighting, isolated spaces, tall trees and an accumulation of rubbish creating enclosures caused unsafe spaces where sexual harassment and forms of violence against women would thrive. Other issues reported included a lack of recreational facilities and activities for the community, particularly at night and over the weekends, as well as a lack of social cohesion and presence of security or police in the area. Participants went on to report a specific open space surrounding an all-girls school that was being used as a car repair business, increasing the number of males in the area which created an intimidating environment for the young schoolgirls and increased verbal sexual remarks as they exited school. This resulted in some students avoiding the open space as they did not feel safe. Others revealed that they opted to take a longer, safer route when leaving school.

To address the issues raised, a participatory design workshop was held in each of the sites of intervention. The findings of the safety audit were shared with the residents; they were asked for their feedback and then tasked to draw what a safe public space for women and girls would look like. A detailed action plan with various possible evidence-based interventions, with associated budgets and time frames, was then developed for the neighbourhood. These interventions were then presented and together, the residents, authorities and other stakeholders and partners discussed how to take it forward. This resulted in changes to the built environment which included separating the open space area outside of the school into a recreational pedestrian space for the safety of the school girls and shifting the vehicular parking zone (used for the car repair business) across the street, away from the school. The new recreation space was created to serve a mix of genders and ages. In addition, economic activities were encouraged in the space to promote a mixed use area with constant passive surveillance. On weekends the space is used by women entrepreneurs to sell their handmade products. Cultural activities have also been promoted to ensure the space is active at all times of the day and week.

Overall, this example shows us how various aspects of an ABVPI approach, such as evidence-led interventions that are spatially targeted and co-produced with a variety of stakeholders, have contributed to creating safer spaces and streets, resulting in increased social/community cohesion and economic empowerment of women and girls in the area.

**Evidence-led interventions that are spatially targeted and co-produced with a variety of stakeholders, have contributed to creating safer spaces and streets, resulting in increased social/community cohesion and economic empowerment of women and girls in the area.**

# TOWARDS GOOD PRACTICE

The SPRINT project has identified eight key ingredients for successful ABVPI. Each of these ingredients can be interpreted through a gender lens, resulting in a set of gender actions. The proposed gender actions are not necessarily comprehensive.

## 1 Adopt a community-centred approach that puts people first

- Prioritise violence and crime interventions that focus on improving safety for women, girls and the LGBTQIA+ community
- Create direct and indirect engagement mechanisms with women, girls and LGBTQIA+ communities and their organisations, including focus groups, platforms, (anonymous) feedback systems, etc.

## 3 Use the critical emerging information to develop a joint vision for the intervention

- Ensure that there is common knowledge and understanding of the nature and manifestations of crime and violence in the community, including how women and gender non-conforming people experience and perceive neighbourhood streets and spaces
- Ensure that the voices, experiences and aspirations of women, girls and gender non-conforming people related to public safety are reflected in the vision (and the Community Safety Plan)



## **2 Assemble the various stakeholders and partners who will be crucial to the intervention**

- Reach out to women, girls and gender non-conforming people through existing structures, including women's groups, faith-based organisations, informal traders' associations, etc. and ensure their consistent participation/representation in the process (from consultation to implementation and monitoring/evaluation)
- Be sensitive about power dynamics and issues of representation/exclusion when deciding on who convenes and who facilitates processes of engagement
- Consider the importance (and challenges) of including those with 'negative power' who may have a dubious influence in the community as they may need to be part of the solution
- Identify/employ women developers, planners, designers and engineers to co-design and co-implement interventions

## **4 Assign roles and responsibilities within the group**

- Ensure the allocation of responsibilities is fair and equal, avoiding a gendered division of labour (where men are in decision-making roles and women have less visible implementation roles) or gender imbalances in remuneration
- Ensure women are included in leadership roles and in Community Safety Forums

## **5 Have an evidence-based, community-informed approach**

- Collect and use gender (and age) disaggregated data about socio-economic realities
- Collect and analyse data on women's experiences and perceptions of safety (e.g. safety in/en route to toilets) to inform appropriate interventions
- Include local GBV data, where it exists, and be sensitive in collecting, using and managing data on GBV
- Speak to/have focus groups with women, girls and LGBTQIA+ groups to hear their experiences, needs and aspirations

## **7 Develop a budget and allocate sufficient resources**

- Allocate sufficient resources to gender-specific and gender-inclusive projects and initiatives
- Invest in GBV prevention (awareness raising campaigns, initiatives and projects aimed at built environment improvements and community development)
- Allocate sufficient capacity for targeted engagement with women, girls, LGBTQIA+ and their organisations
- Recognise the non-monetary contribution by women, girls and gender non-conforming people in actions that promote public safety (including care work)

## **6 Prioritise the issues of activation, maintenance and management throughout the project life**

- Include projects and initiatives that target women and girls for skills development, economic empowerment and social opportunity
- Create and implement social awareness programmes to address gender stereotypes and GBV
- Develop and implement projects for youth and men focused on positive/progressive masculinity and that build their capacity to make positive choices that contribute to improved safety
- Invest in maintenance and management of streets, parks, buildings and precincts to avoid them falling into disuse or disrepair

## **8 Have a flexible and adaptive monitoring, evaluation and learning system**

- Develop methods and metrics to monitor progress and assess the impact of interventions on men, women and LGBTQIA+ people of different ages (and, where appropriate, socio-economic backgrounds)
- Involve women in the collection and review of performance monitoring data
- Consider confidential reporting mechanisms for GBV to help identify unsafe spaces in the neighbourhood

Marginalised groups need to be part of the design, implementation and evaluation of projects and leadership structures, with clear accountability to enable inclusivity.

# KEY LESSONS

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Violence and crime plague South Africa and cause unnecessary stress, harm and death. Some groups are more impacted than others. To build the safe, inclusive communities we envision, we need to shift our thinking and actions. There are five emerging key lessons for gender-inclusive and gender-responsive ABVPI.

**1: The scale and nature of risk and vulnerability to crime and violence on the basis of gender needs to be understood and drive action.**

The impact of gender based violence is felt across the country in stress, harm and death. Violence and crime not only infringe on the rights of each individual to safety, but have broader social and economic impacts. Because women, youth and the LGBTQIA+ community are disproportionately vulnerable to experiencing crime and violence it is critical that data on the gender-specific experiences and manifestations of risk and vulnerability to crime and violence is collected and analysed to inform an evidence-based and effective response.

**2: The quality of the built environment contributes to experiences and perceptions of safety of different social groups.**

Space is not neutral and a place of relative safety for one (e.g. men) can be a space of fear, exclusion and/or danger for another (e.g. women). ABVPI can be utilised to assess and design interventions that increase safety for women, girls and the LGBTQIA+ community.

**3: Consultative processes need to be inclusive and targeted at social groups at risk of, and vulnerable to, crime and violence because of specific characteristics, i.e. gender.**

Women, girls and the LGBTQIA+ community need to be included and empowered to participate so that their lived experiences, fears and aspirations are understood, prioritised and responded to.

**4: Action to address gender-based risk and vulnerability to violence and crime needs to be prioritised.** Action is not just interventions but ensuring that marginalised groups are part of the design, implementation and evaluation of projects, such as hiring women engineers. It is also about including these groups in leadership and ensuring there is clear accountability to enable inclusivity.

**5: Sustainability and perseverance is a critical issue to facilitate the systemic change needed.** The behaviour change needed to stem GBV is not quick or easy and so there needs to be sufficient resources and energy to maintain the momentum.



Space is not neutral. A place of relative safety for one can be a space of fear, exclusion and/or danger for another.

# KEY STARTING POINTS

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**Some groups, in particular women, young girls and the LGBTQIA+ communities are disproportionately more vulnerable to experiencing crime and violence than others.**

Space is not neutral. The way it is planned, designed and shaped affects the vulnerability of the people who use it or experience it. The built environment therefore has a critical role to play in reducing gender based violence and fostering inclusion. Urban design and infrastructure interventions need to be complemented by inclusive cultural, social, economic and recreational activities and programmes that give further life to collective spaces – whether streets, parks, squares, buildings, transport hubs or precincts.

There are four actions which can be taken to start to bring about more inclusive public space and address vulnerability and risk to violence and crime for women, girls and the LGBTQIA+ community:

- 1:** Collect and use gender disaggregated data to understand the lives and realities of women, girls and the LGBTQIA+ community;
- 2:** Directly engage women, girls, gender non-conforming persons and the LGBTQIA+ community (and their representative organisations) to understand their lives and for them to be part of initiatives;
- 3:** Ensure local projects and initiatives target women and girls and their needs such as recreational initiatives, economic empowerment programmes and confidence-building activities (e.g. self-defense classes);
- 4:** Improve the quality of the built environment through urban design and infrastructure investment to create safe, inclusive spaces.

## NOTES

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1

Adopt a community-centred approach that puts people first.

2

Assemble the various stakeholders and partners who will be crucial to the intervention.

3

Use the critical emerging information to develop a joint vision for the intervention.

4

Assign roles and responsibilities to stakeholders and partners.



### SPRINT 8 key ingredients for ABVPI

8

Have a flexible and adaptive monitoring, evaluation and learning system.

7


Develop a budget and allocate sufficient resources.

6

Prioritise the issues of activation, maintenance and management throughout the project life.

5

Have an evidence-based, community-informed approach.



The SPRINT Project is a joint initiative of the South African-German Development Cooperation with the support of the Violence and Crime Prevention (VCP) Programme, implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) as the commissioning party and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) as co-financing partner. The SPRINT Project is implemented by Isandla Institute and Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU).

The primary objective of the SPRINT Project is to institutionalise area-based violence prevention intervention (ABVPI) approaches in public policy, programmes and practices in order to upscale them and have a sustainable impact.



SAFER PLACES:  
RESILIENT INSTITUTIONS AND  
NEIGHBOURHOODS TOGETHER

# SPRINT

An initiative of the South African -  
German Development Cooperation:



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The intelligence of change

