

CSVR Project on the Community Work Programme and Violence Prevention

Working for Safety:

The Community Work Programme as a tool for preventing violence and building safer communities

The Community Work Programme

The Community Work Programme (CWP) provides two days of work per week (up to 100 days per year) to unemployed and underemployed people. During the year April 2014 to March 2015 there were 202 599 participants in the CWP at 186 CWP sites across South Africa.ⁱ

The primary purpose of the CWP is to provide an employment safety net. By working in the CWP people who are poor can obtain a basic stable income.

But the CWP also makes a big difference to life in the communities in which it is situated. Through the work that it does it contributes to community development. (See Policy Brief 1 for a discussion of the impact of the CWP on community development.)

The work that participants in the CWP do is supposed to be 'useful work'. This is work that 'contributes to the public good, community goods or social services'.ⁱⁱ

CWP participants do many different types of work. These include things like care work, support work at schools, early childhood development (ECD), and looking after the local environment by cleaning, clearing drains, and planting trees.

This Policy Brief looks in more detail at questions about how the CWP can prevent violence and crime, thereby making communities safer.

CSVR's study on the Community Work Programme

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) has been involved in research on the CWP and its impact on violence and crime prevention since 2013.

This Policy Brief looks at the role the CWP can play in preventing violence and making communities safer.

You can also read Policy Brief 1, which outlines the purpose of the CWP, including its role as an employment safety net and how it can serve as a vehicle for community development and contribute to economic and social inclusion.

Also look for other CSVR research on the CWP at www.csvr.org.za.

CWP – LAUNCHED

2007

APRIL 2015

186

SITES

APRIL 2014 TO MARCH 2015

202 599

PARTICIPANTS

CWP WORK TO PREVENT CRIME AND IMPROVE SAFETY

The work that is done at CWP sites is supposed to be identified through a process of community consultation. At sites where violence and crime have been identified as key concerns, the CWP has tried to find ways of addressing violence and crime through its work.

EXAMPLES OF WORK INTENDED TO ADDRESS CRIME

Community patrols – The presence of patrollers on the street discourages people from participating in crime and helps to make the streets safer. In some communities patrols are carried out at schools and patrollers also accompany children on their way to and from school. In areas where there is gang violence CWP members may ensure that children are taken out of harm's way when there is a clash between gangs. Patrollers often work closely with the police. In the Western Cape some patrollers receive training from the provincial Department of Community Safety. Some people say that the presence of CWP work teams in public areas also discourages crime.

Recreation and sport – At some sites participants help provide recreational activities for young people. These may be aftercare programmes or activities such as Football for Youth. (See the box on the Seriti Social Health and Education (SHE) initiative on the next page.)

Public education through drama and public speaking – At some sites participants are involved in activities intended to increase awareness about the risks of taking drugs and participating in crime. (See the box on Ex-convicts and the CWP).

Youth mentoring – Participants at some sites provide mentoring and capacity-building to young people in their communities. (Read for example about the mentoring aspect of the SHE initiative on the next page.)

Support work at police stations – At some sites participants work at the local police station providing advice or information to community members. At the Orange Farm police station they provide information to assist victims of domestic violence. In Manenberg work of this kind is also done.

Cutting grass – One of the things that has been done at many sites is cutting long grass in 'crime hotspots' where people have been attacked and feel vulnerable. This is an example of 'environmental' work done by CWP participants – but with a safety focus.

Ex-convicts and the CWP

At some sites such as Manenberg, Orange Farm and Ivory Park people who have been in prison have benefited from being able to participate in the CWP.

Ex-convicts often face challenges in finding work and being accepted back into communities. Problems finding work are one of the big reasons why former convicts re-offend, and end up returning to jail. Being able to work in the CWP therefore can have big advantages for them.

Also at some sites former convicts have become involved in activities with a specific crime prevention focus. For instance in Orange Farm participants have formed the Gateway group. The group carries out various crime prevention-orientated activities, including developing a drama group. This presents plays at schools and elsewhere intended to warn young people about the risks of crime and violence.

The Social Health and Education (SHE) initiative

Seriti has been an implementing agent in the CWP from its earliest days. The Social Health and Education (SHE) initiative was started by Seriti and the GIZ Violence and Crime Prevention programme in 2013 to strengthen the CWP's impact on safety. SHE's key objective is to increase the level, range and quality of social, health, and education activities in the CWP, to contribute to safer communities with local stakeholders.

Two of the key initiatives introduced through SHE have been Football for Youth and Youth Mentoring. Participants in the Youth Mentoring programme learn skills such as nonviolent conflict resolution (with a big emphasis on listening skills), gender awareness, mediation, community mapping (so as to be able to link in with community resources that can support their work), and how to identify a child at risk, amongst others. Youth Mentoring is implemented by Phaphama.

SHE activities have also included:

- Stakeholder workshops on systemic violence prevention
- The collection of municipal safety data using GIS
- Safety perception audits with community members at CWP sites

MARCHES AND CAMPAIGNS – COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND MOBILISATION

At some sites the CWP has become a vehicle for awareness raising and community mobilisation against crime and violence.

- In Alexandra (part of the region E site in Johannesburg) in 2010, a CWP participant was murdered by her boyfriend. This prompted the Alex CWP to start a campaign under the banner 'Today He Gave Her Flowers', involving marches and protests, to raise awareness about domestic violence and violence against women. In Orange Farm the CWP together with the CPF have implemented Domestic Violence awareness campaigns.
- After an intensification of gang violence in Manenberg in 2014, the CWP site management initiated a campaign against gang violence. Several marches took place under the banner of 'Take Back Our Streets'.
- Some CWP sites have also supported the implementation of the Soul City Phuza Wize campaign. The campaign focuses on the misuse of alcohol, a key cause of violence.
- The public education campaigns referred to above are also intended to improve community awareness.



CWP'S ROLE IN PRIMARY CRIME PREVENTION

What work by CWP participants is most useful for preventing crime and violence? While more research is needed on this, remember that there are many different tools available in the crime prevention 'toolkit'.

Primary prevention refers to activities that are intended to address the causes of violence or crime. Primary prevention programmes often focus on 'risk factors' that cause violence. Children and young people, especially in poor communities, encounter many 'risk factors' that are associated with an increased likelihood of participation in violence or crime.

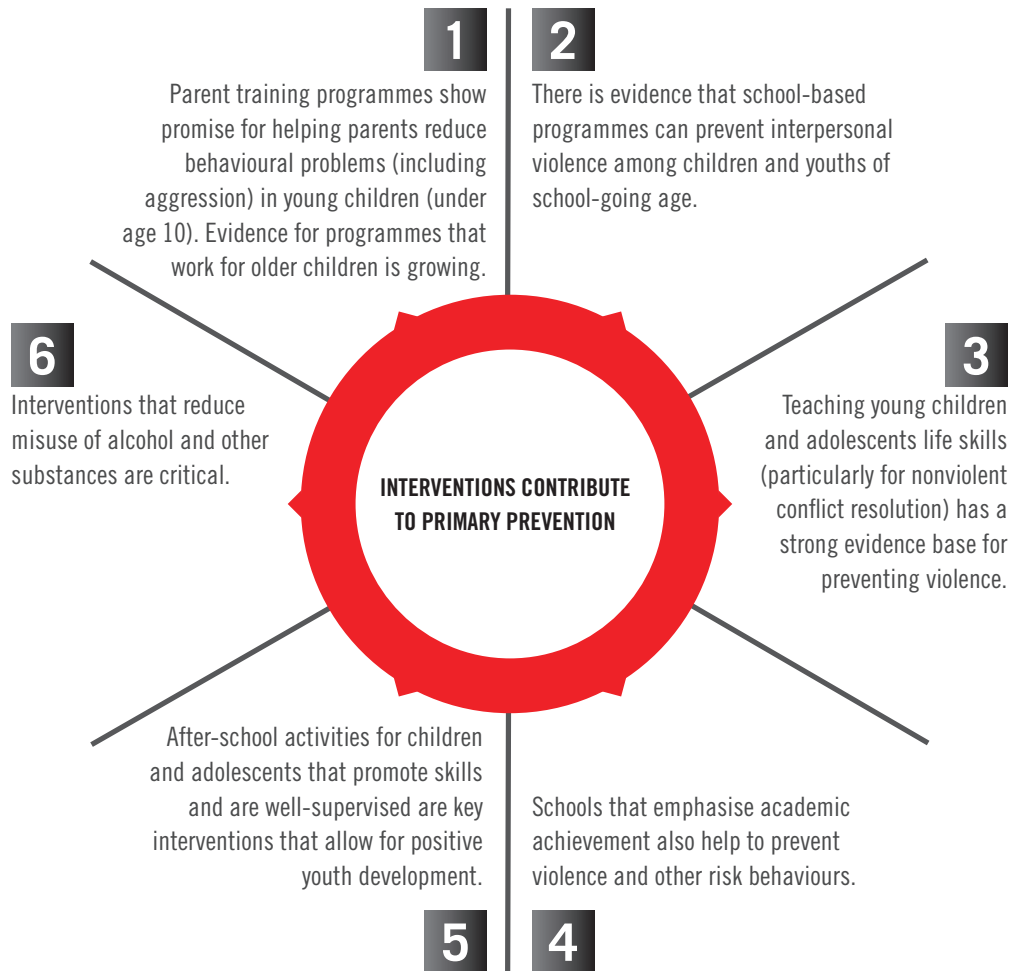
Primary prevention interventions may be targeted at parents, infants, children, and teenagers, particularly in communities where the risk that young people will become involved in violence and crime is greater. There are a wide variety of primary prevention measures that,

the evidence suggests, can help to reduce this risk. (See the box on Primary Prevention).

The CWP is extensively involved in Early Childhood Development (ECD). The main purpose of ECD is to help young people to develop and learn in a healthy way. This helps to ensure that they can get the most out of their education and other opportunities they are exposed to as they grow older. The main purpose of ECD is not to prevent violence. But ECD can have powerful violence prevention benefits.

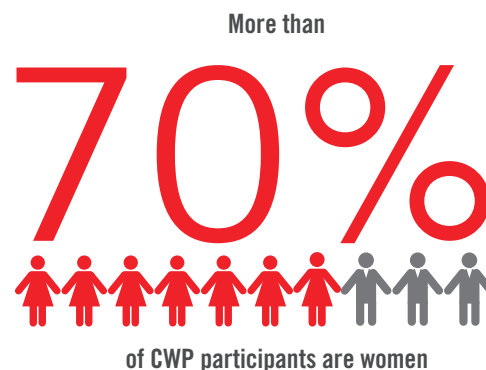
In addition to ECD work, home based care targeted at child-headed households or households in which parents are unable to look after their children due to sickness may also have primary crime prevention benefits. Work at schools can also support primary prevention. (See the box above about Seriti's SHE initiative, which aims to strengthen CWP activities to improve primary prevention.)

Examples of interventions that can contribute to primary prevention



The contribution of CWP wages to primary prevention

One way in which the CWP may contribute to primary prevention is through the wages it pays to participants. More than 70% of CWP participants are women, many of them with young children. One of factors that can increase the likelihood that children will develop an orientation towards aggressive behaviour is where parents are stressed as a result of their financial difficulties. CWP participants receive a stable, though small, income. This can enable them to better manage their households and reduce uncertainty in their lives. This is likely to reduce the stress parents experience, making home environments happier and more stable. As a result CWP wages themselves may have primary violence and crime prevention benefits.



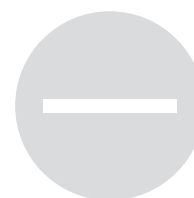
Impact of wages on power relations in the home

On the other hand there is also a possibility that some women CWP participants may face an increased risk of domestic violence. Many women in the CWP report that their home and family life has improved. But if a participant's husband or partner is unemployed, the result of her participation in the CWP may be that she is the main 'breadwinner' in the home. She may also have learned new skills through training. Her partner may feel insecure about his status in the home, possibly leading to tension and even violence. More research is required on whether women's participation in the CWP increases or decreases their exposure to domestic violence. There is mixed evidence from other countries on how economic empowerment effects women's exposure to violence.

As indicated above, in some sites the CWP does work that is intended to help women protect themselves from domestic violence. Some of the women affected by such violence may be women working in the CWP with younger female participants more likely to be at risk. The CWP should encourage participants to notify the site management, as well as the police, if they are having problems of this kind. It is important for site management to take the issue of domestic violence seriously as it can undermine women's ability to participate in the CWP. It may be worthwhile to consider 'gender empowerment' programmes for female CWP participants if female participants are affected by domestic violence.



More research is required around women's participation and or increase / decrease of domestic violence



A future Policy Brief will examine questions about women in the CWP in more detail.

Increasing participation by young men

Presently there are high levels of participation by women in the CWP, and much lower levels of participation by men, especially young men. Young men are also the people who are most likely to be perpetrators of crime and violence. Would measures to increase levels of participation by young men in the CWP help to reduce crime and violence?



Increasing levels of participation by young men

CSVR'S ANALYSIS OF THIS ISSUE SUGGESTS THAT:

Levels of participation in the CWP by young men at each site can be increased. The type of work done by the CWP and the overall status of the CWP within communities are factors that will influence levels of participation by (young) men.

However, related to the low wages that are paid, involving young men in the CWP will not by itself guarantee that 'at risk' young men are discouraged from 'doing crime'.

For the CWP to better ensure that 'at risk' young men don't participate in crime and violence it may also be helpful to support them in learning skills such as nonviolent conflict resolution, providing them with positive role models, and paying attention to the types of relationships they form within the CWP.

CWP'S ROLE IN CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS AND DYNAMICS WITHIN COMMUNITIES

CSVR's research suggests that, where the CWP is functioning effectively, it can have many benefits for relationships and broader dynamics in communities. The CWP brings people together in work teams, where they work alongside other members of their communities whilst doing work for the benefit of the community. Community members who work in the CWP are likely to increase and strengthen their social links with other community members.

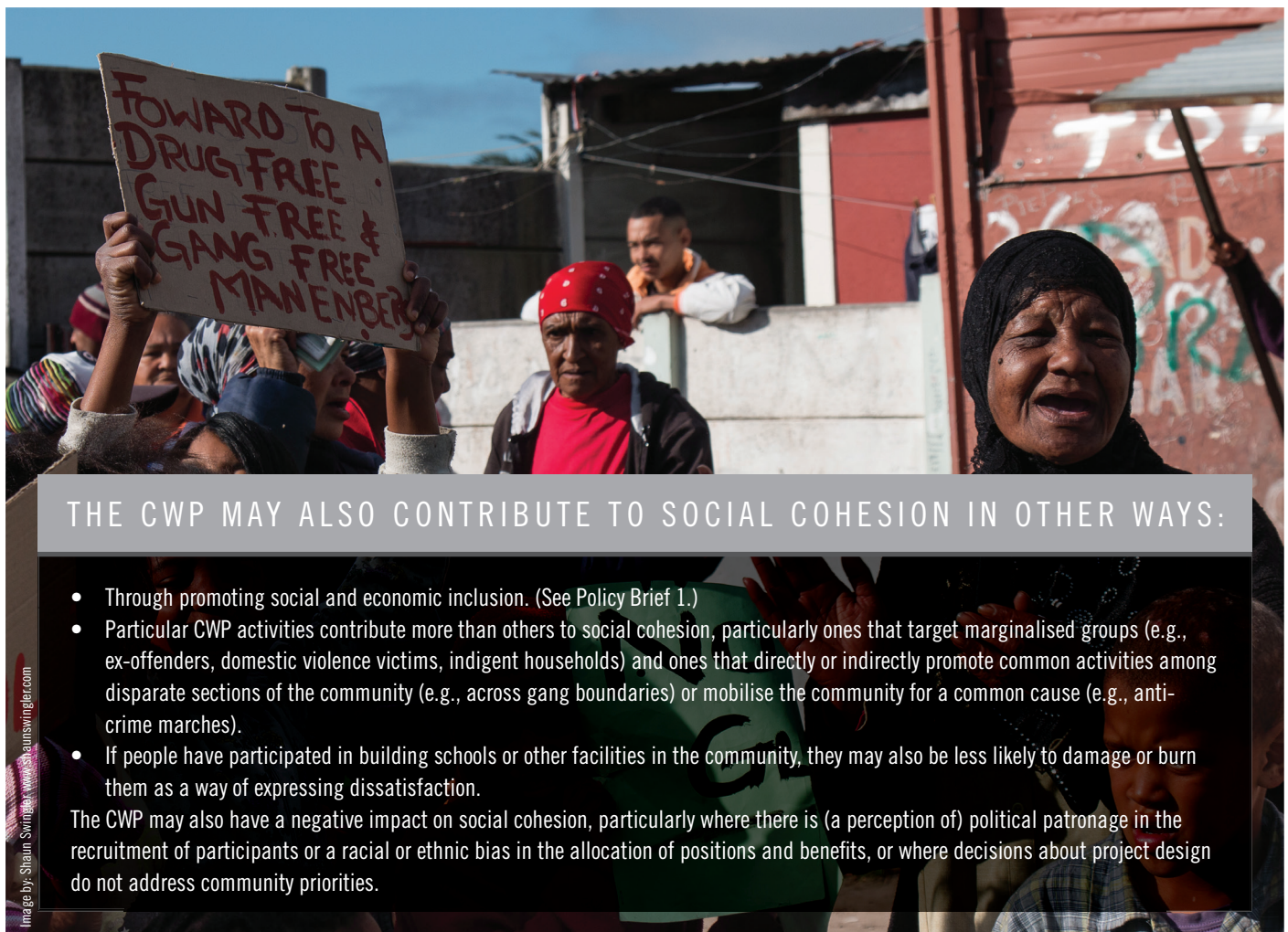
Communities where there are strong social ties can still be very vulnerable to crime. In some communities the strongest social ties may be those within gangs or other criminal networks. However the social ties that the CWP strengthens and builds are not linked to the perpetration of crime, but to work in service of the community. The CWP not only builds social cohesion within communities. It also builds a type of social cohesion that is focused on community service. The CWP provides a foundation for building relationships of mutual support, solidarity, and greater care within communities. Communities in which the quality of relationships are changed in this way are likely to be less vulnerable to conflict, violence, and crime.

In addition, by working to improve the life of the community, the CWP can send out the message that the quality of life of people in

the community is important. The CWP in effect tells people that it is worthwhile for community members to dedicate their time and energy to helping other community members. Another impact of the CWP, especially where it is operating effectively, may therefore be that it affirms and strengthens the willingness of community members to take action to advance community interests.

The CWP is a vehicle for people to improve their own communities. The choices made at each site about which work to prioritise should be based on consultation with the community. As we state in Policy Brief 1, where there is good community consultation and respected and trusted community leaders are involved in or work with the CWP, this can mean that the CWP is community owned and driven. In the process the CWP can become a vehicle for the community as a whole to take action to promote community interests.

Communities where there is a widespread willingness to take action to prevent crime and address other challenges facing the community are said to have 'collective efficacy'. Communities with collective efficacy are more likely to take action to increase safety and order, and also more likely to be communities where people respect the law. Attention to the types of relationships they form within the CWP.



THE CWP MAY ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL COHESION IN OTHER WAYS:

- Through promoting social and economic inclusion. (See Policy Brief 1.)
- Particular CWP activities contribute more than others to social cohesion, particularly ones that target marginalised groups (e.g., ex-offenders, domestic violence victims, indigent households) and ones that directly or indirectly promote common activities among disparate sections of the community (e.g., across gang boundaries) or mobilise the community for a common cause (e.g., anti-crime marches).
- If people have participated in building schools or other facilities in the community, they may also be less likely to damage or burn them as a way of expressing dissatisfaction.

The CWP may also have a negative impact on social cohesion, particularly where there is (a perception of) political patronage in the recruitment of participants or a racial or ethnic bias in the allocation of positions and benefits, or where decisions about project design do not address community priorities.

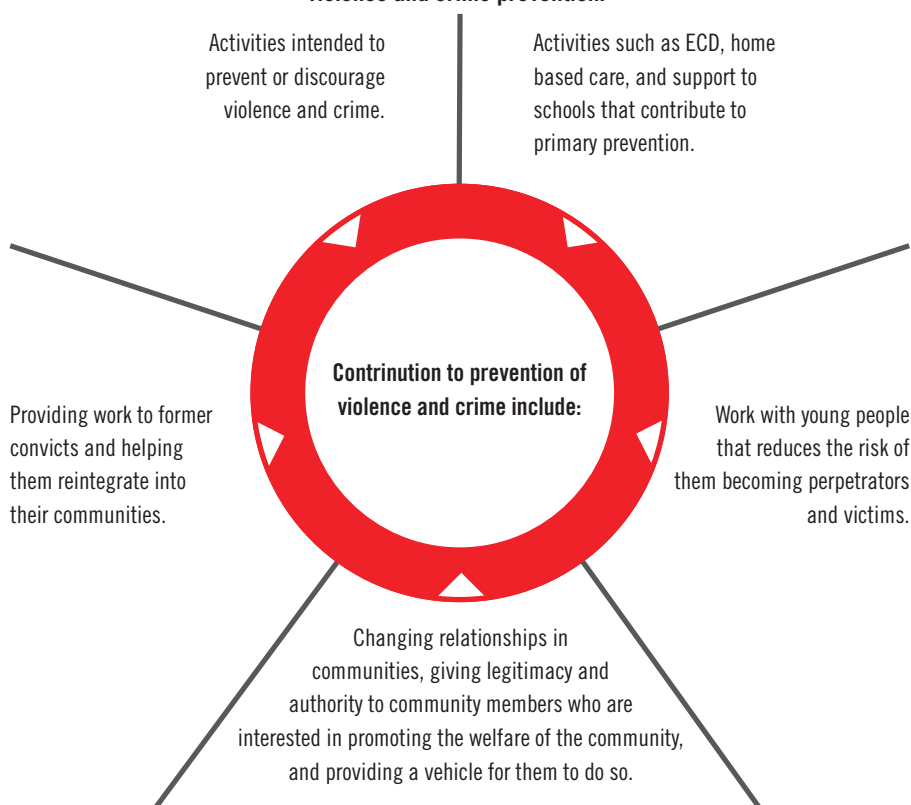
Image by: Shaun Swingle, www.shaunswingle.com

PREVENTING ABUSE OF THE CWP AND CWP RESOURCES

The CWP is funded by government and a lot of money is made available for operating local sites. The CWP presents opportunities for corruption and abuse of resources. Preventing corruption is also part of ensuring that the CWP prevents crime. As we pointed out in Policy Brief 1, ensuring that CWP resources are not abused is a key part of the basic management of CWP sites.

HOW CAN THE CWP BEST PREVENT VIOLENCE AND BUILD SAFETY?

As this Policy Brief shows, there are many ways the CWP can contribute to violence and crime prevention.



For the CWP to prevent violence it needs to be functioning effectively. Policy Brief 1 discusses what it means for a site to be functioning effectively both at the level of basic management and as an instrument of community development. Businesses and NGOs can also support CWP sites by working with them to improve the quality of their violence prevention and other work. At the same time, the CWP may increase the risk of certain forms of crime and violence if resources are abused or if it exacerbates domestic violence or community divisions. This means that basic management of CWP sites needs to be effective. It may also mean that participants need support to enable them to deal with any abuse they are facing.

It is also important to remember that the overall purpose of the CWP is to promote community development. Preventing violence and crime should not be seen as more important than other key developmental goals such as improving education and care. In fact, activities that support developmental goals, such as improving education, can also have benefits in terms of violence and crime prevention. But work that the CWP does, such as providing care to elderly and sick people, can be just as important, even if it does not directly reduce levels of violence or crime.

CSVr's work at CWP sites to strengthen understanding of violence and its consequences

CSVr has provided support to some CWP sites on understanding and addressing violence.

In Orange Farm, CSVr conducted a two-day workshop on violence with CWP coordinators and participants, including a number of the participants involved in working with victims of domestic violence. The workshop covered issues such as understandings of violence, types of violence in Orange Farm, and how to strengthen the CWP's impact in preventing violence.

Issues covered in subsequent workshops included substance abuse, crisis intervention, bereavement assistance, and self-care strategies.

CSVr also conducted a workshop in Ivory Park attended by CWP participants as well as local NGO partners. In addition to covering issues of trauma and learning, monitoring, and evaluation, participants identified key areas for intervention in addressing violence in the community. Key issues identified by participants were gender-based violence, youth violence (including teenage pregnancy), and substance abuse.

Compassion fatigue and burnout

A major focus of the workshop was understanding the symptoms of trauma and trauma management and support. Trauma affects victims, and also has a big impact on people who work with victims. A self-assessment with participants at the workshop indicated that many participants suffered from high levels of compassion fatigue and burnout. required skills



The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr) is a multi-disciplinary non-governmental organisation (NGO) involved in research, community interventions, and training. CSVr's main goal is to build reconciliation, democracy and a human rights culture and to prevent violence in South Africa and Africa.

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This work was carried out with financial support from the UK Government's Department for International Development and the International Development Research Centre, Canada. The opinions expressed in this work do not necessarily those of DFID or IDRC.

This policy brief based in part on research conducted at CWP sites by Malose Langa, Themba Masuku, Jasmina Brankovic, Fairuz Mullagee and Zukiswa Khalipha. The policy brief is written by David Bruce with editing by Hugo van der Merwe, Jasmina Brankovic and Themba Masuku. Design and layout by Carol Cole Advertising & Design. Date of publication: October 2015

The photographs in this policy brief were taken during Take Back Our Street marches against gang violence, organised and lead by the CWP in Manenberg in 2014 and 2015. Photographs courtesy of Shaun Swingler. www.shaunswingler.com

This policy brief is endorsed by the Community Work Programme, Department of Cooperative Governance.

- i Analysis of data provided by Community Work Programme, Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, April 2015.
- ii Community Work Programme Implementation Manual, 2011, 8.
- iii David Bruce, Crime prevention through work and wages: the impact of the Community Work Programme, *South African Crime Quarterly*, 52, 2015, 25-39.
- iv Seema Vyas and Charlotte Watts, How does economic empowerment affect women's risk of intimate partner violence in low and middle income countries? *Journal of International Development*, 21:5, 2009, 577-602.
- v Robert Sampson, The place of context: a theory and strategy for criminology's hard problems, *Criminology*, 51:1, 2013, 1-31, 20-21.

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FUNDERS

