EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING FOR SOUTH AFRICA

An introduction for police officers, researchers and communities

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Community Safety

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CIMAC	Crime Information Management and Analysis Centre
CPF	Community Policing Forum
EBP	Evidence-Based Policing
EBPRG	Evidence-Based Policing Resource Guide
EMMIE	Effect, Mechanism, Moderators, Implementation, Economic (cost)
GOALS	Ground (leader), Objectives, Analyst, Limits, Support
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OILRIG	Outcomes (achieved), Implemented (as planned), Lessons (learned), Results (acceptable), Intelligence (gained), Goals (to be revised)
PANDA	Problem (scan), Analyse (the problem), Nominate (a strategy), Deploy (strategy), Assess (the outcome)
POP	Problem Oriented Policing
SARA	Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment
SAPS	South African Police Service
UK	United Kingdom
VIPER	Victim (support), Intelligence (gaps), Prevention, Enforcement, Reassurance
VOLTAGE	Victims, Offenders, Locations, Times, Attractors, Groups, Enhancers

FOREWORD

The National Commissioner of the South African Police Service (SAPS), General KJ Sitole, expressed the need for the SAPS's Research Component to have better relations and cooperation with external research institutions and academics in the country. Therefore, on 3 December 2019, he approved that the concept of Evidence-based Policing (EBP) be marketed within the SAPS in cooperation with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). The National Commissioner further approved that an electronic platform for sharing best practices be created for further research, and for building an EBP reference source for police stations.

> New technologies, new methods and new ideas have brought significant change to the profession of policing, but at its core, evidence-based policing requires the same dedication to communities, the same sense of duty and sacrifice, and the same integrity as always.

As policing continues to evolve, it is important to look back at its history and the nine principles of policing by Sir Robert Peel, to understand where we came from and what we can do to solve our most pressing challenges. To understand those challenges, the principles of Sir Robert Peel can be a fantastic tool allowing options for creating more publishing outlets for evidence- and research-based policing, and looking forward to the future trends that will shape policing in South Africa.

The Evidence-Based Policing Resource Guide (EBPRG) is aligned with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which implies significant technological advancement for the country, but also involves substantial risk. The threat to the South African economy and population posed by the malicious and criminal targeting of cyberspace, is significant and must be countered through the appropriate development and implementation of legislative, policy, strategic and operational responses for policing, which is to be informed by ideas that are generated by all who have a vested interest in the improvement of safety and security in our country, as well as evidence and research-based policing that enhances the body of policing knowledge.

The EBPRG is about keeping society safe. So it is no surprise that as society has changed, so too policing has changed and needs to be scientific and evidence-based. New technologies, new methods and new ideas have brought significant change to the profession of policing, but at its core, evidence-based policing requires the same dedication to communities, the same sense of duty and sacrifice, and the same integrity as always.

Lastly, as the Head of Research in the SAPS, it is my hope that the EBPRG might make a meaningful contribution in assisting the SAPS to realise its vision by providing a simple overview of key concepts and methodologies, and encouraging the SAPS and its contributors to pursue evidence- and research-based policing for the improvement of policing and community safety in South Africa.

Major General (Dr) Phillip R Vuma
The Head: Research - South African Police Service

INTRODUCTION - WHAT IS EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION

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How effective is our policing?

What really works to reduce crime and build trust in police?

How do we know?

Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) places, 'How do we know?' at the centre of police policy and practice. It asks that we critically and carefully reflect on what we do in order to make policing as effective and efficient as possible. In EBP, 'evidence' is the best existing research about what police activities work, and what don't.

This guide is for three audiences:

Police officers: You work long hours, under difficult circumstances. Do your efforts improve safety, reduce crime and promote trust in police? How do you know?

Communities: Your local police tell you what they are doing to address problems in your area, but are their plans and practices likely to succeed? How do you know?

Researchers: You study crime, violence, policing, trust, governance and social interventions in South Africa. Does your work help us understand whether an activity – e.g. stop and search, rapid response, focused patrol – produces its intended outcomes? Are you sharing your findings in easily accessible ways to help police, communities and government answer the question, 'How do you know?', and so make South Africa safer?

CRITICAL THINKING

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Evidence-based policing recognises that experience and intuition are crucial, but that research, analysis and evaluation should also inform police planning and practices. This guide offers an introduction to EBP and, based on existing evidence, to what works and what doesn't in policing.

RESEARCH

For Police: It is intended to help South Africa's police services ensure that their work is informed by the best available evidence for what works and what does not. It encourages an organisational culture that supports scepticism, openness and critical thought. It equips policemen and women with the fundamentals required to test, evaluate and constantly learn from their work. Where this logic is incorporated into daily police work, officers can be confident that their conduct and their actions are based on the best knowledge of what works to reduce crime and to improve confidence in the police.

For Communities: It is intended to empower communities with a basic knowledge of EBP so that they can ask their local police to apply evidence-based thinking and practices to their work. For example, if a local commander tells a community that the police are using a particular strategy to tackle a crime problem, communities can explore whether it is based on evidence. They can ask police to explain how they identified and formulated their strategy and what indicators they will use to assess its impact. By understanding EBP, communities can support the police and hold them accountable for their activities.

For Researchers: While EBP should be police-led, an active and engaged research community can significantly strengthen the quality of evidence produced and help to identify and understand weaknesses in existing evidence. This guide will help researchers understand the kinds of research most likely to improve policing and public safety in South Africa, and lay a foundation for police-researcher partnerships.

PRACTISE   RESEARCH

Evidence-based policing encourages us to, as much as possible, base our practice on research and shape our research through practice. Over time, both practice and research are strengthened.

Source: Kriegler, 2019

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WHAT IS EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING?

Not all policing is evidence-based.

Evidence-based policing can be a confusing concept because of the word *evidence*. For police, evidence has always meant the collection of information or clues that help solve a crime. But in evidence-based policing, 'evidence' is the best existing research (proof) about what police activities work, and what don't.

Evidence-based policing is not a 'model' to replace other 'models'. Rather, it is about a shift in how we think about policing and safety. It is the recognition that if an activity or tactic is intended to achieve a particular outcome, there must be a clear link between the activity or tactic and the intended results. So, if we think that stop and search prevents street robbery by deterring would-be robbers (a hypothesis), we need to test our theory by monitoring our stop-and-search activities in relation to street robbery. We can't just assume that our efforts will work, or that a reduction in robberies is a result of our stop-and-search activities rather than something else.

RESEARCH

To produce the 'evidence' in evidence-based policing we create hypotheses based on existing data (e.g. if we hire more police crime will decline). We test the hypothesis through practice and research (e.g. allocate more police to one police station but not to another comparable station, and monitor crime and other variables), and compare the findings to other, similar experiments. Evidence-based policing is based on the accumulated knowledge (evidence) produced through such evaluations. It is a careful, intentional approach that emphasises informed practice, evaluation and learning.

How does evidence-based policing work? Here's a 3-step example: [1]

3-STEP EXAMPLE TO EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING

TARGET

TEST

TRACK

Target police activities on certain problems or places, based on what we already know from research and experience. This could be how we tackle a specific crime or how we build public trust.	Test ideas and learn what really works instead of using methods that we think will work, or what common sense tells us. If something appears to work, test it elsewhere. If it works again, the evidence becomes stronger.	Document, share and learn about what actually works and change how we work based on what we know. We must carefully evaluate practices to make sure that we only use methods that are likely to work.

Information gathered during the 3-step process can't be random or disorganised, it has to be methodical, rigorous and useful for policing. Evidence-based policing is most effective when a good mix of policing and research skills are used together.

Source: Adapted from Sherman, 2013

Evidence-based policing recognises that experience and intuition are crucial, but that policing should also be informed by research that tests our ideas or beliefs. For example, one police officer may be convinced that when they keep their blue lights on while on patrol, fewer crimes occur, or that they increase feelings of safety among the public. Another officer may believe that keeping their lights off while patrolling allows them to more easily surprise offenders and increase arrests. Both ideas make some sense and are logical. But without careful study, it is not clear if they are true.

EBP encourages us to approach such ideas as hypotheses that can be tested. For example, patrol officers can be instructed to keep their blue lights on or off throughout their shifts on alternate days for a number of weeks. By tracking reported crime or arrests, or carrying out a simple community survey, we can better judge which officer's idea (hypothesis) may be correct. Experiments such as this have been conducted in other countries.[2] When a hypothesis has been tested more than once with similar results, the 'evidence' for it gets stronger. Where we have reliable evidence on a matter, it should inform police practice. Where evidence doesn't exist, police and partners should try to generate it.

RESEARCH

This approach is important. Research shows that many of our intuitions are wrong, not because we are stupid but because without appropriate data, time and critical thinking, we don't always understand how things work.[3] Our brains filter out most information and highlight that which helps us get through each day.[4] We naturally seek out stories that we agree with or which make sense to us, and use these to guide our lives. We often believe that these stories are common sense or factual, but they are shaped by many things including some which we are not aware of.[5]

As a result, the stories we tell aren't necessarily true, even if we are convinced of them. We need to try to think critically and look at the evidence to work out what's most likely to be true.

For example, many of us believe that:

→ Vitamin C helps to prevent the common cold. It doesn't.[6]
→ We can function very well on six hours of sleep. We can't.[7]
→ Spanking children is good for them. It isn't.[8]

We know these things because people have carefully studied the impact of vitamin C, sleep and spanking in the real world. The data is available for researchers, scientists and the public to check and challenge. However, many of our assumptions about policing have never been carefully studied, or the data have not been shared widely, and so our beliefs about policing and crime may be wrong.

For example, contrary to common beliefs, research shows that:

> ➤ No, the death penalty does not deter violent offenders [9]
> ➤ No, rapid response to calls for police service do not increase arrests [10]
> ➤ No, random visible policing does not reduce general crime [11]

BUT, research also tells us what DOES work:

> ➤ Yes, the certainty of arrest or sanction can reduce crime [12]
> ➤ Yes, intentional and focused police patrols can reduce crime [13]
> ➤ Yes, when people believe police are fair, they are more likely to trust and cooperate with them and obey the law when police aren't around [14]

STRATEGY

FROM MEDICINE TO POLICING

Police training in South Africa teaches officers how to apply the law, follow procedures, and use force, among other key competencies. These are crucial to the job. But officers should also be familiar with the most reliable research about the tools, tactics and methods that are most likely to help them tackle their daily tasks and fulfil their duties. This does not mean that all officers must have a perfect understanding of crime science, but rather that the organisation ought to promote the creation and sharing of knowledge about what works and what doesn't.

It is useful to think of EBP in relation to medicine. The role of South Africa's doctors is to solve various problems - only instead of being crime-related, they are health-related. To be successful, our doctors are expected to be familiar with the latest science about which treatment is likely to be most effective in addressing a health problem. But medical science is always evolving. Our understanding of what works and what doesn't, or what works but is cheaper or causes fewer harmful side effects than something else which also works, keeps evolving.

EVALUATION

Doctors don't assume that what they learn in medical school is still relevant two, five, or ten years after they graduate. Rather, there are systems in place to help them share the lessons they learn from their work and research so that other health workers can build on their successes and failures. This was very clear during the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020, which saw medical practitioners and researchers responding rapidly to understand this unique disease, and adapting treatment and advice based on the rapidly changing evidence. Using such approaches, medicine is always improving - which leads to the overall improvement of our population's health.

Similarly, evidence-based policing recognises that policing is most effective when based on practices and strategies that have been shown to be effective based on careful evaluation. Such practices are evidence-based.

When a number of comparable tests have been carried out and produced similar results, the evidence can be considered strong. When policing is based on strategies and practices that have been carefully evaluated, officers can be confident that their efforts are backed by objective research.

CRITICAL THINKING

There now exists a good and growing evidence-base to inform policing. Most of it has been generated in wealthy countries, but much of it is relevant to South Africa. Do these practices inform daily police work in South Africa? Are South African police officers carefully evaluating their work to test whether it is effective, and sharing their findings with other police and researchers so that they can test, question, or apply it?

By promoting an evidence-based approach to policing we can: [15]

→ Make sure that the right police practice (most likely to succeed) is used to address a particular problem;

→ Avoid practices that are unlikely to work, or which are harmful;

→ Encourage the use of time, energy and resources in ways that are most likely to result in their intended outcome (i.e. promote efficiency);

→ Produce scientific 'proof' for things that 'everybody knows', in order to more easily persuade the powers that be that policies, funding or practises need to change or be better supported.

RESEARCH

Evidence-based policing encourages police to play the role of scientists, and subject their work to careful evaluation to examine its impact.
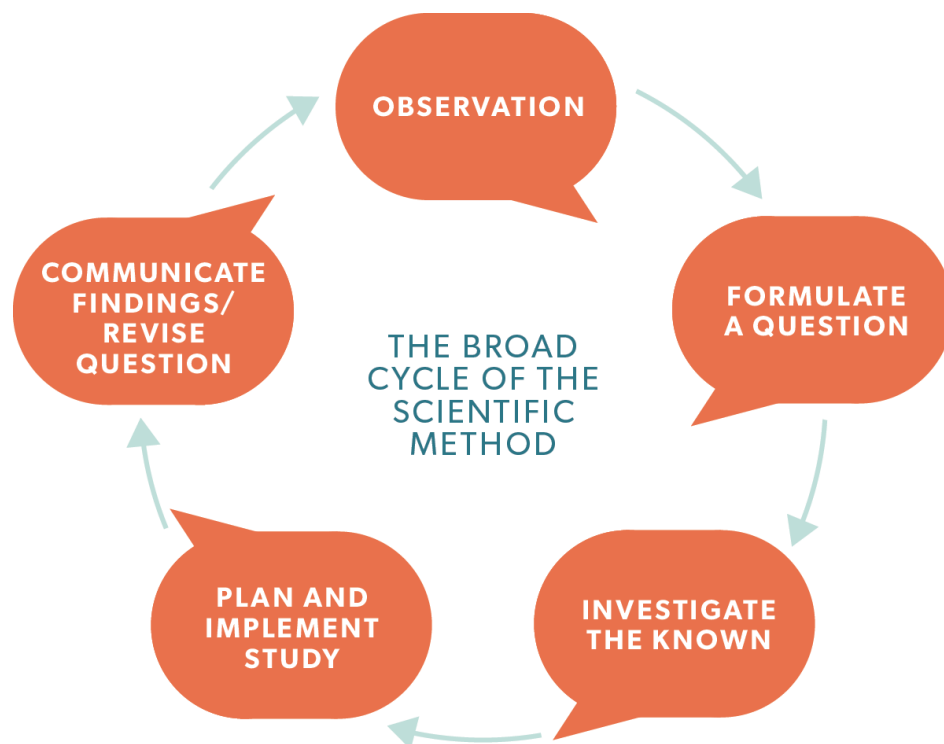
THE ETHICAL AND FINANCIAL CASE FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING

South Africa faces significant public safety challenges, including very high rates of violence.[16] Many South Africans do not feel safe at home or in public, and crime prevents the economic growth needed to lift millions of people out of poverty.[17] In this context, police have an ethical obligation to work as effectively and efficiently as possible, to promote safety and prevent harm. This can be achieved through an evidence-based approach to policing.

Doctors can be charged enormous fines or lose their medical license if they are negligent in their work. This can include using a treatment that evidence shows is more expensive or dangerous than other options. As the evidence for what works in policing and crime reduction grows, the public may increasingly demand that police demonstrate that their work is informed by good evidence. Where it isn't, and where it causes harm, police may be vulnerable to legal action. This is because some practices that aren't based on good evidence may be deemed unjustifiably harmful, wasteful, or unethical.

There are also financial imperatives to consider. In 2019 the South African government spent roughly a trillion Rand on policing, including R500 million for civil claims (law suits) linked to police abuses, accidents, negligence and other activities.[18] Police can't do everything or be everywhere, but they can do what, and be where it matters most. It makes clear financial sense that for policing to be most cost-effective, it should be guided by good evidence. Where something new is tested, it needs to be evaluated to find out if it achieves its intended outcome. If it doesn't, it should be refined or abandoned, and the lessons learned so that mistakes are not repeated.

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THE BROAD CYCLE OF THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

- OBSERVATION
- FORMULATE A QUESTION
- INVESTIGATE THE KNOWN
- PLAN AND IMPLEMENT STUDY
- COMMUNICATE FINDINGS/ REVISE QUESTION

Source: Adapted from Robinson, 2004 and Kriegler, 2019

WHAT ABOUT EXPERIENCE AND INNOVATION?

It may sound like evidence-based policing doesn't recognise the value of experience or allow for innovation. This is not true. Experience is a very important form of evidence.

Similarly, evidence-based policing does not imply that police should not be creative, follow their instincts, or innovate. Rather, when possible, they should do these things in a framework of evidence-based thinking and decision-making.

Evidence-based policing is all about testing new ideas and strategies where existing tools appear insufficient. Key to these tests, however, is intentional evaluation to confirm if and how an activity produces its intended outcome.

Where critical thinking, creativity and evidence-based approaches are encouraged in a police organisation, this can improve morale among officers who know that they can question norms, suggest new ways of working and be confident that what they do is based on good evidence.

TRADITIONAL POLICING VS PROBLEM-ORIENTED (SECTOR) POLICING

Most policing in South Africa is reactive and incident-focused. Police patrol or wait to be called to resolve a problem or attend a crime scene. Where a crime has occurred, detectives may investigate and an arrest may be made. Commanding officers ensure that response officers and detectives follow required procedures. As a result, police officers often see their work as a collection of separate actions determined by their compliance to given procedures. [19]

When not engaged with a task (e.g. taking a victim statement), police can often choose how they spend their time. This discretion also applies to how they respond to challenges as they emerge.

Where this model of policing has been carefully studied, research shows that it isn't as effective at improving public safety, compliance with the law, or trust in police, as we think.[20] In contrast, evidence-based policing offers officers the knowledge and tools through which to focus their work in ways that can make a real difference.

Evidence suggests that the traditional model of policing has limited impact on general crime.

But evidence-based policing is not a model. Rather, it is an approach to policing which in many ways aligns with the ideals of Sector Policing– an approach used in South Africa based on the tenets of Community and Problem Oriented Policing (POP).[21] Sector Policing requires that SAPS officers draw up careful plans to address priority problems in each sector (a part of a police station area/precinct), to implement their plans, and to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. When police aren't implementing a sector plan or responding to a call for service, they may patrol their sector, park at a crime hotspot, engage with community members, attend meetings, or any number of other activities. [22]

In many ways then, the SAPS already strives to implement a form of evidence-based policing. However, sector-policing is implemented as intended in very few areas, and there is no systematic attempt to document or share lessons learned through its application. Encouraging such documenting and sharing is one way in which South African police could create a culture of evidence-generation and evidence-based practice.

CHALLENGES IN EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING

Evidence-based policing is exciting. It may be the foundation of all future policing. But it must be actively promoted within a police agency.

Promoting evidence-based policing in South Africa does not need to be difficult. At its most basic level, it simply requires that police work be well-planned, monitored and evaluated, and lessons learned and shared. Where evaluations suggest that practices are effective, they should be encouraged.

However, answering some questions can be tricky for police to do alone, requiring complicated research and special skills. Other evidence can be difficult to translate into police practice. To address this, South African researchers and police should partner to effectively generate, consolidate and communicate evidence to officers and staff.

This guide is part of that effort.

OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US

A lot of policing has traditionally focused on reported crime and on policing outputs rather than outcomes.

Outputs are things that police do, such as stopping and checking vehicles or making arrests, while outcomes are the results of these activities, such as fewer vehicle accidents and increased feelings of safety. However, police have limited control over the outcome of their outputs. [23] For example, police can search thousands of cars and arrest millions of people, without improving public safety. In fact, police activities (outputs) can backfire and produce an outcome that is the opposite of what was intended. For instance, when police treat people unfairly or abusively during searches and arrests, it can damage the public's trust in police and erode community-police relations.

So, while it is important to pay attention to what police do (outputs), we learn most when we ask and answer whether police activities produce their intended results (outcomes). Do vehicle check points reduce accidents? Do arrests improve feelings of safety? We can't know unless we intentionally try to answer such questions. Striving for such answers, and using them to improve public safety, is at the heart of evidence-based policing.

WHAT COUNTS AS EVIDENCE?

There are many ways of doing police work and promoting public safety, but some are better than others. Evidence-based policing seeks to identify and promote the 'the best available' information to help policing be as effective and efficient as possible. Evidence can include personal experience, surveys, randomised controlled trials and what are called systematic reviews.

However, some types of evidence are considered more reliable than others. For example, a view that may be considered common sense, such as 'more police = less crime', may not be supported by evidence. [24] An evidence-based approach to policing encourages us to take such beliefs or observations and to test and document them, then re-test and re-document them until there is a strong enough foundation from which to state that the belief is more likely to be true or false.

However, testing beliefs and practices can be resource intensive. As a result, there are many good studies on some aspects of policing, and very few on others. Where many quality studies produce similar findings, the evidence is considered strong. Where the only evidence available is based on experience or single or problematic studies, it is weak. To help us understand whether a form of evidence is reliable or not, we can consult the evidence hierarchy in Table 1.

Table 1: The Evidence Hierarchy [25]

WHAT WORKS	**Evidence** based on the careful collection, review and summary of all relevant research to answer a clear question.	**Example:** A review of all quality evaluations of the impact of firearm crackdowns to see if they reduce violent crime.
WHAT'S PROMISING	**Information** that has been tested using three or more different methods or forms of data starts to become really useful in understanding activities that work and those that don't.	**Example:** A study that combines crime-pattern analysis with interviews with residents in hotspots, and observations of police working in hot spots.
WHAT'S INTERESTING	**Once-off research**	**Example:** The findings of a single rigorous study could provide the beginning of useful evidence, but it should be tested more than once to show the information is relevant and reliable.
	Research based on a small sample or single method	**Example:** Interviews with 20 victims.
WHAT NOT TO RELY ON	**Opinions and anecdotes**	**Example:** An anonymous officer's statement to the local newspaper is not reliable as it may be unintentionally biased and hard to test or prove.
	Poorly designed and badly managed research	**Example:** If research is not thorough and findings are not based on careful evaluation, it could be flawed and unhelpful for guiding police work.

Source: Adapted from Ratcliffe, 2019

CROSS-REFERENCE

Another useful framework through which the best quality evidence is often measured, is the EMMIE evidence rating scale, presented in Table 2. [26] Although intended for use in reviews of many different studies (systematic reviews), it can be helpful to refer to when formulating police experiments and plans (see Section Four), reflecting on past experiments and plans, and planning future research. This is because it encourages us to consider and measure the *Effect* of our work (impact), the *Mechanism* through which it works (how it works), the *Moderators* involved (where it works), what we know about its *Implementation* (how it is done), and the *Economic* cost involved.

Table 2: Thinking about evidence using the EMMIE evidence rating framework [27]

EMMIE evidence rating framework		
EFFECT	Impact on crime	Increase, decrease, no effect?
MECHANISM	How it works	What is it that makes it work?
MODERATORS	Where it works	In what circumstances is it likely to work / not work?
IMPLEMENTATION	How to do it	What local conditions need to be considered?
ECONOMIC COST	How much it costs	Is it cost effective?

Source: Adapted from Kriegler, 2019

ANALYSIS

WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE TELL US WE SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T DO IN OUR WORK?

The following key lessons emerge from existing evidence: [28]

1. Unfocused enforcement, random patrol, (general) rapid response and mandatory follow-up investigations do not effectively reduce general crime.

2. Policing that is proactive and focuses on particular people, places and behaviours is more effective. This means that where relevant, this kind of policing should be pursued (e.g. focus where people cluster in hotspots, engage in risky behaviour, or have histories of offending).

3. Some community policing strategies have been shown to reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime, but others have not. This suggests that simply doing 'community policing' does not produce positive outcomes. We need to evaluate the outcomes of such strategies and refine them.

TOOLS

4. Policing that seeks to understand and develop specific responses to the underlying causes of crime and disorder, is effective. This is called problem-oriented policing (POP). Evidence suggests that problem-oriented policing should be adopted wherever relevant. In South Africa, sector policing is a type of problem-oriented policing, but it has never been fully implemented.

GO TO SECTION FOUR → Section Four of this guide presents a clear method for implementing POP.

Most crime and violence is committed by a small percentage of offenders, often located in particular areas. Research shows that identifying, targeting and supporting such offenders can reduce offending.

LESSONS TO GUIDE OUR POLICE WORK

The above evidence can be translated into the following broad principles for crime reduction and improved public trust:

1.

POLICING SHOULD TARGET SPECIFIC PLACES AND TIMES

A large portion of crime and violence occurs in just a few areas and micro-locations. It also often occurs at predictable times, such as over weekends or during rush hour. For example, in 2017/18, 30 South African police stations recorded 20% of all murders. In 2016/17, 13% (148) recorded 50% of all murders. Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, murder increased by 1 320 incidents, 42% of which were recorded at just 30 police stations. In these precincts, most murder occurs in fairly predictable areas, at fairly predictable times. Policing which focuses on these places and times, and which tries to understand and disrupt the drivers of violence should be able to reduce murder.

2.

POLICING SHOULD BE PROACTIVE

Reactive policing is far less effective than proactive policing. Using past data to understand where, when, and how crime may occur, who might be involved, and what kind of behaviour may be associated with it, helps us intervene to prevent harm before it occurs.

3.

POLICING SHOULD STRIVE TO SOLVE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Proactive policing that seeks to understand and respond to specific problems using strategies tailored to that problem (building on the best evidence for such interventions) should be encouraged. These involve the systematic analysis and consideration of challenges, the formulation of an intervention plan, the implementation of that plan, and the monitoring and evaluation of activities to test whether they have the intended effect. If they don't, they can be refined and re-tested.

4.

ALWAYS BE FAIR, CONSISTENT AND PROFESSIONAL

All policing should aim to build and sustain trust. We can follow the previous three steps, but if police work in a way that alienates people or breaks their trust, the long-term impact may be more, not less crime.

FOOTNOTES

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[23] RC Davis, Selected International Best Practices in Police Performance Measurement, RAND Centre on Quality Policing, 2012.

[24] See for example: D Bruce, New Blood: Implications of en masse recruitment for the South African Police Service, South African Crime Quarterly (43), 2013.

[25] Adapted from J Ratcliffe, Reducing crime: a companion for police leaders, Abingdon: Routledge, 2019.

[26] SD Johnson, N Tilley & KJ Bowers, Introducing EMMIE: an evidence rating scale to encourage mixed-method crime prevention synthesis reviews, Journal of Experimental Criminology, 11(3), 2015, 459–473.

[27] A Kriegler What counts as evidence? ISS Policy Brief 134, Institute for Security Studies, 2019.

[28] C Lum and C Koper, Evidence-based policing: translating research into practice, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

WHAT WORKS IN POLICING AND CRIME REDUCTION?

RESEARCH

This section summarises some of what is currently known about what works in policing and crime reduction, based on reviews of numerous high-quality studies. With these in mind, we are able to provide a methodology through which police can determine which strategies might be most relevant to their particular safety challenges (see Sections Three and Four).

The table below lists interventions by their effect on crime (most effective at the top) and the quality and reliability of the evidence. Additional details about select interventions can be found in the Appendix to this Resource Guide.

GO TO SECTION ONE

However, details on all interventions are available from the College of Policing (www.college.police.uk) from where this work is drawn. In compiling this table, the College of Policing has applied the EMMIE framework presented in Table 2 (Section One). EMMIE stands for the Effect, Mechanism, Moderators, Implementation, and Economic cost of a police intervention. [1]

ANALYSIS

Since we are at the early stages of an evidence-based police culture in South Africa, it is important to pay attention to the *Mechanism* element of the framework. This is where we seek to identify how an activity works, beyond common sense interpretations of simple observations. So instead of thinking, 'We deployed more police over weekends, which explains why weekend murder went down,' we might propose that 'By deploying more police over weekends, restricting them to two hotspots, requiring them to keep their blue lights on and giving them clear guidance on who to interact with and how, we produced a deterrent effect among those people most likely to perpetuate violence, resulting in a decline in weekend murder.'

> Police leaders should promote an organisational culture in which creating and sharing empirical knowledge (evidence-based policing) is encouraged.

GO TO SECTION ONE

Many supporters of evidence-based policing strongly feel that certain kinds of evidence are better than others. They propose an evidence hierarchy, of the type presented in Table 1 (Section One) which can be translated into a table of the sort below. At the top of this hierarchy is evidence-based on reviews of numerous studies that have sought to answer the same or similar questions. For example, if five quality studies test the impact of directed police patrol on public violence, these can be compared to each other to test their validity (how reliable their claims are). If they have been carefully planned and carried out, and produce similar findings, then the evidence is more reliable than if the studies were poorly planned, or if they produced conflicting results.

It is important to note that most of this research has been conducted outside of South Africa. However, this does not mean that it does not apply to South Africa. Rather, we should build on the foundations produced elsewhere to strengthen the evidence and hone it to our context.

One way to do this is to take the interventions that have had the most impact elsewhere, and evaluate them in the South African context. South African police can also use this list as a source of ideas to inform police plans using the methodology presented in Section Four.

Table 3 is based on the College of Policing (UK)'s Crime Reduction Toolkit, which is regularly updated with new evidence (whatworks.college.police.uk).

KEY: Table 3

The impact scale shows what the research evidence suggests about the effect on crime.

KEY Table 3: The impact scale	
IMPACT	**DESCRIPTION**
✓✓	Overall decrease in crime.
✓	Overall, evidence suggests no impact on crime.
✗✓	Overall, evidence suggests no impact on crime (but some studies suggest either an increase or a decrease).
✓✓⚑	Overall, evidence suggests a decrease in crime but some studies suggest an increase.
⊖	No evidence to suggest an impact on crime.
✗✗	Overall increase in crime.

KEY Table 3: The quality scale	
QUALITY	**DESCRIPTION**
▰▰▰▰	Very strong quality.
▰▰▰▱	Strong quality.
▰▰▱▱	Moderate quality.
▰▱▱▱	Limited quality.

The quality scale indicates the quality of the research evidence. This ranges from no information (where quality cannot be determined) to very strong quality.

Table 3:
Some of the best-available evidence related to public safety [2]

AN OVERALL DECREASE IN CRIME (very strong quality of evidence)			
INTERVENTION	**MECHANISM** (How it works)	**IMPACT**	**QUALITY**
Hot spots policing	This strategy involves targeting resources and activities to those places where crime is most concentrated.	✔✔	▰▰▰▰
Healthcare screening for domestic abuse	The use of screening tools to identify experiences of violence and abuse of women attending primary and secondary healthcare clinics.	✔✔	▰▰▰▰
Speed cameras	Using fixed and mobile speed cameras to enforce traffic speed limits. This is used to detect speeding vehicles and reduce traffic collisions and injuries.	✔✔	▰▰▰▰
Restorative justice	A planned face to face meeting between a victim, the offenders and others to discuss the consequences of the offence and agree to how the offenders should repair the harm they have caused.	✔✔	▰▰▰▰
Alley gating	Lockable gates installed to prevent access to alleyways by potential burglars or offenders.	✔✔	▰▰▰▰
Street lighting	A form of situational crime prevention that involves improving or increasing the levels of illumination in the street and other public spaces.	✔✔	▰▰▰▰
Electronic tagging: Sex offences	Involves placing an electronic tag around the ankle or wrist of an offender which, in combination with a receiving device, can verify their whereabouts at specified times.	✔✔	▰▰▰▰
Drink-drive stops	These are sobriety checkpoints where police officers stop drivers to assess their degree of alcohol impairment using behavioural, physiological, or chemical tests, so reducing accidents and injuries.	✔✔	▰▰▰▰
Red-light cameras	A fully automated traffic light camera, which permits the remote enforcement of traffic signals to prevent crashes occurring after running a red light.	✔✔	▰▰▰▰

Source: College of Policing, 2020

AN OVERALL DECREASE IN CRIME

VERY STRONG QUALITY OF EVIDENCE

AN OVERALL DECREASE IN CRIME (strong quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
Motivational interviewing	A non-judgemental, empathic and optimistic counselling style used with offenders who have been ordered by a court to attend a standard programme for domestic violence perpetrators.	✓✓	�
Alcohol pricing	Increasing tax on alcohol, or alcohol pricing more generally, to reduce alcohol consumption and related negative outcomes.	✓✓	
Therapeutic foster care	Designed for youths who cannot live at home, usually due to behavioural problems including chronic delinquency. Foster parents receive training to provide a structured environment that promotes learning of pro-social and emotional skills.	✓✓	
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)	Targets 'criminal thinking' as a factor which contributes towards criminal behaviour for offenders. By assuming that this 'criminal thinking' is a cognitive deficit which has been learned, CBT focuses on teaching offenders to understand the thinking processes and choices that precede criminal behaviour.	✓✓	
Moral Reconation Therapy	Behavioural treatment for offenders either in custody or out on bail or probation, providing them with cognitive-behaviour skills to improve judgements.	✓✓	
Neighbourhood watch	These schemes aim to actively reduce crime by directly involving the community in activities that promote safety or assist with the prevention and detection of crime.	✓✓	
Car breathalyser lock	Alcohol ignition interlocks are intended to reduce drink driving. To operate a vehicle, the driver must breath into a device and have an acceptable blood alcohol concentration, without which the vehicle will not start.	✓✓	
Probation officer training	Probation officers are employed to supervise offenders during probation or parole. Providing formal training in core correctional practices is intended to improve their supervisory skills, reducing the likelihood of re-offending.	✓✓	
CCTV	Closed-circuit television surveillance cameras serve many functions and are used in both public and private settings. Cameras can be used to aid crime prevention, the detection of offenders, and crowd management.	✓✓	

Source: College of Policing, 2020

AN OVERALL DECREASE IN CRIME

STRONG QUALITY OF EVIDENCE

AN OVERALL DECREASE IN CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW AN INCREASE
(strong quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
Drug courts	Drug courts cater to offenders who are also drug users or drug addicts. As an alternative to the normal court system, they use a system of supervision, reward and punishment where a judge and the drug court team support the participant throughout the process.	✓ ✓ ▷	▮▮▮▯
Mentoring	Mentoring involves interactions between two individuals over an extended period. There is an inequality of experience or knowledge between the mentor and mentee, with the mentor possessing the greater share. The idea is that the mentee is in a position to imitate and benefit from the knowledge, skill, ability, or experience of the mentor.	✓ ✓ ▷	▮▮▮▯
Prison education	The provision of education and skills training programmes in correctional facilities aim to increase the education or skill levels of participants to improve their employment prospects on release.	✓ ✓ ▷	▮▮▮▯
Mediation	Victim-Offender Mediation involves a scheduled face-to-face meetings between victims and offenders. The meeting gives offenders and victims the chance to discuss the offence and its consequences and decide what the offender should do to repair the harm caused.	✓ ✓ ▷	▮▮▮▯
Problem-orientated policing	An approach to tackling crime and disorder that involves the identification of a specific problem, thorough analysis to understand it, the development of a tailored response and an assessment of the effects of the response.	✓ ✓ ▷	▮▮▮▯
Therapeutic communities	A participative, group-based approach to treat the effects of mental illness and substance abuse. Through the involvement of professionals and former substance users they aim to promote lasting behavioural change and encourage the development of positive social identities.	✓ ✓ ▷	▮▮▮▯
Firearm laws	Laws designed to limit the availability of firearms to reduce or prevent violent crime. They include the introduction of waiting periods or background checks for the purchase of firearms, safe storage laws, and weapon bans.	✓ ✓ ▷	▮▮▮▯

Source: College of Policing, 2020

AN OVERALL DECREASE IN CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW AN INCREASE

STRONG QUALITY OF EVIDENCE

OVERALL, NO IMPACT ON CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW A DECREASE
(very strong quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
Relationship violence education	Educational interventions to prevent relationship violence in adolescents and young adults by promoting an awareness of acceptable dating behaviour and an individual's rights within a relationship.	✓	▰▰▰▰
Multisystemic therapy	An intensive, home-based intervention for families with young people who have social, emotional, and behavioural problems. Qualified therapists engage with families to identify and change individual, family, and environmental factors thought to contribute to problem behaviour.	✓	▰▰▰▰

NO IMPACT ON CRIME

OVERALL, NO IMPACT ON CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW A DECREASE
(strong quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
Social skills training	Delivery of a structured programme teaching non-aggressive modes of social perception, self-control, anger management, victim empathy, interpersonal problem solving, interaction with other people and related skills.	✓	▰▰▰▱
Retail tagging	A security measure commonly used by retailers to prevent theft.	✓	▰▰▰▱
Second response to domestic abuse	Programmes typically involve a visit to victims of domestic abuse sometime between 24 hours and 14 days after the initial police response. A team, usually composed of a police officer and a victim advocate, assist the victim and sometimes the offender in order to prevent further violence and find long-term solutions to the problem.	✓	▰▰▰▱
Drink driving patrols	An increase in the number of police officers or in the frequency or duration of patrols to identify alcohol-impaired drivers through behavioural cues.	✓	▰▰▰▱
Outdoor challenges	Wilderness challenge programmes with young offenders involving physically demanding outdoor activities such as canoeing, caving, rock-climbing and survival training.	✓	▰▰▰▱

Source: College of Policing, 2020

NO IMPACT ON CRIME

STRONG QUALITY OF EVIDENCE

OVERALL, NO IMPACT ON CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW A DECREASE
(strong quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
Drink-driving courts	Modelled on drug courts (see above), these use a stick-and-carrot approach to ensure compliance with the substance abuse treatment and intense supervision conditions imposed on the offender. They usually include random or continuous testing for alcohol abuse and attendance at regular court hearings.	✓	▮▮▮▯
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for Domestic Violence	CBT interventions aim to reduce repeat violence by perpetrators of abuse, as well as changing verbally abusive behaviours, and attitudes towards victims and violence.	✓	▮▮▮▯

NO IMPACT ON CRIME

STRONG QUALITY OF EVIDENCE

OVERALL, NO IMPACT ON CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW A DECREASE
(moderate quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
School-based programmes to reduce drink driving	School-based programmes delivering knowledge about the effects of drink driving, as well as teaching participants refusal skills. Often interactive in their approach, these programmes can be delivered in isolation or as part of wider substance abuse packages.	✓	▮▮▯▯
Brief interventions for alcohol use disorders within criminal justice settings	Delivered in a criminal justice setting, including police custody, prison, or in a court environment. Sessions typically include personalised feedback on alcohol intake with recommended limits, discussion of health and social risks, and /or forms of psychological and motivational interviewing.	✓	▮▮▯▯

Source: College of Policing, 2020

NO IMPACT ON CRIME

MODERATE QUALITY OF EVIDENCE

OVERALL, NO IMPACT ON CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW A DECREASE (limited quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
Drink-driving campaigns	Mass media campaigns to persuade individuals to avoid drink driving or prevent others from doing so. They foreground themes such as fear and legal consequences of arrest, harm to self, others or property, encouraging positive social norms, and stigmatising drinkers as irresponsible.	✓	▣▢▢▢
Environmental design to prevent retail robbery	Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) refers to measures taken to reduce crime through changes to the physical environment. It outlines a set of principles designed to influence potential offenders' perceptions of the risk, effort and rewards of offending in a particular area.	✓	▣▢▢▢
Release on temporary license	Temporary release from prison, usually towards the end of an offender's sentence or when they are due for parole.	✓	▣▢▢▢

NO IMPACT ON CRIME   **LIMITED QUALITY OF EVIDENCE**

OVERALL, NO IMPACT ON CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW INCREASE OR DECREASE (very strong quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
Youth curfews	Laws used to restrict the presence of youth in certain public places during specified periods. Police are given powers to stop and question young people suspected of breaking the curfew and require them to return home or be detained if deemed appropriate.	✗ ✓	▣▣▣▣
Boot camps	Programmes for juvenile or adult offenders as an alternative to punishments such as prison or probation. They are modelled on military boot camps and involve activities such as drills, ceremony and physical training.	✗ ✓	▣▣▣▣
After school clubs	Organised activities targeted at children and young people who would otherwise be unoccupied or unsupervised. These programmes are often voluntary and can include recreation-based activities, drop-in-clubs, and tutoring services delivered after-school.	✗ ✓	▣▣▣▣
Electronic tagging for general offences	Electronic monitoring involves placing a tag around the ankle or wrist of an offender which, in combination with a receiving device, can verify their whereabouts at specified times.	✗ ✓	▣▣▣▣

Source: College of Policing, 2020

NO IMPACT ON CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW AN INCREASE OR DECREASE

OVERALL, NO IMPACT ON CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW INCREASE OR DECREASE (strong quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
Young offender aftercare	Programmes offering support to offenders under the age of 18 who are resettling in their communities following a period spent in a secure centre for young people. Aftercare programmes are typically community-based and consist of monitoring, supervision and resettlement support.	✗ ✓	▪▪▪▫
Drug substitutes	Drug substitution programmes to control the amount and type of substances consumed by drug-dependent offenders. Some drug substitution programmes focus on substituting illegal substances for legal alternatives, while others legally prescribe drugs such as heroin to prevent users from acquiring them illegally.	✗ ✓	▪▪▪▫
Pupil referral units	Alternative education programmes designed for young people who are unable or unwilling to participate in traditional education delivered through public or private schools.	✗ ✓	▪▪▪▫

STRONG QUALITY OF EVIDENCE

OVERALL, NO IMPACT ON CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW INCREASE OR DECREASE (moderate quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
Limiting alcohol sales	Policies reducing or increasing the hours or days when alcohol can be sold 'on-premises' (e.g. restaurants and bars) or 'off-premises' (e.g. bottle stores), or a combination of both.	✗ ✓	▪▪▫▫
Aggression Replacement Training (ART) for reducing antisocial behaviour	A social skills training programme which aims to replace antisocial behaviours with desirable prosocial behaviours. It consists of three components: the development of pro-social behaviours (behavioural component), anger control (affective component) and moral reasoning (cognitive component).	✗ ✓	▪▪▫▫
Domestic abuse sanctions	Criminal sanctions used against perpetrators of domestic violence in an attempt to prevent reoffending. These sanctions are delivered through the Criminal Justice System and include prosecutions, convictions, custodial sentences and severity of sentences.	✗ ✓	▪▪▫▫

Source: College of Policing, 2020

NO IMPACT ON CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW AN INCREASE OR DECREASE

MODERATE QUALITY OF EVIDENCE

OVERALL, NO IMPACT ON CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW INCREASE OR DECREASE (limited quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
Drinking age	A minimum legal drinking age policy intended to lower alcohol consumption among young people.	✕ ✓	▣☐☐☐
Psychological treatment of adults convicted of sex offences against children	Psychotherapeutic treatment of adults who have been sentenced for sexual offences against children. This involves short-term Cognitive Behavioural Therapy programmes (see above).	✕ ✓	▣☐☐☐

→ LIMITED QUALITY OF EVIDENCE

NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST AN IMPACT ON CRIME (limited quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
Music-making	Interventions that cover different activities including structured group performance, instrument tuition or exploring rap lyrics for young people at risk of offending.	−	▣☐☐☐

→ NO EVIDENCE

AN OVERALL INCREASE IN CRIME (very strong quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
"Scared Straight" programmes	Involves organised visits to prison facilities by young offenders/juvenile delinquents or children at risk of becoming offenders. Programmes include confrontational 'rap' sessions in which adult inmates share graphic stories about prison life with the young people.	✕ ✕	▣▣▣▣

→ INCREASE IN CRIME

→ VERY STRONG QUALITY OF EVIDENCE

AN OVERALL INCREASE IN CRIME (limited quality of evidence)

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM (How it works)	IMPACT	QUALITY
Trying youths as adults	Trying young offenders in standard criminal courts rather than through special youth courts.	✕ ✓	▣☐☐☐

Source: College of Policing, 2020.

→ NO IMPACT ON CRIME BUT SOME STUDIES SHOW AN INCREASE OR DECREASE

FOOTNOTES

[1] College of Policing, About the Crime Reduction Toolkit and EMMIE. https://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/About-the-Crime-Reduction-Toolkit/Pages/About.aspx; SD Johnson, N Tilley & KJ Bowers, Introducing EMMIE: an evidence rating scale to encourage mixed-method crime prevention synthesis reviews, Journal of Experimental Criminology, 11(3), 2015, 459–473.

[2] College of Policing, Crime Reduction Toolkit. https://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx

APPLYING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES TO PARTICULAR CRIME PROBLEMS

We can't expect all daily policing to be carefully researched and evaluated, but we should strive for it to be based on practices that have been studied and shown to be effective.

Once a police or public safety activity has been shown to work, we can imagine placing it in an 'evidence toolbox'. Then, when we are faced with a new challenge, such as a spate of burglaries in our area, we can reach into the toolbox to find the best initial response to the problem.

TOOLS

This section is a version of that toolbox. It presents evidence-based responses to various crime problems. They have been adapted from 'The Playbook: *Plays for law enforcement officers to help prevent crime and increase citizen trust and confidence*' by Cynthia Lum and Christopher Koper at George Mason University's Centre for Evidence-Based Crime Policy (cebcp.org). [1] Another useful source of guides for different crime problems is the Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing at Arizona State University (popcenter.asu.edu).

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The advice below should be treated as prompts, rather than as prescribed plans. Ideally, every response to a policing challenge should be tailored to the specific problem, as described in Section Four. However, some activities work better than others, and those described below may help to guide policing in your area. When formulating or reviewing an intervention plan, you may want to consult the table in Section Two and the guidelines below to improve your chances of success.

ANALYSIS

RESPONDING TO A SPATE OF BURGLARIES OR THEFTS IN AN AREA

PROBLEM
There's an increase in residential burglaries or theft in an area or block of flats.

STRATEGY

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

1. Research shows that once a residence is burgled, nearby residences are more likely to be burgled too, especially in the following two weeks.

2. When a burglary is reported, police should notify residents in the surrounding area to be careful and suggest ways in which they can secure their homes.

STRATEGY

3. If the burglaries are occurring in a block of flats or gated community, work with building and complex managers and residents to identify and address vulnerabilities in the environment, e.g. a faulty gate lock, broken light or hole in a fence. Explore long-term solutions that may promote safety, such as community WhatsApp groups, alley gating, or access control.

4. Consider other aspects of the environment that might increase vulnerability and consider ways to address them. This might require partnering with other government agencies, or business or community stakeholders.

5. Research suggests that many burglars choose targets close to their own home, or close to the places they frequently visit. Talk to residents and informants in the area, especially those previously convicted of burglary, to see what you can learn.

6. Where burglaries have become common and are focused in a relatively small area, proactively study the area to understand as much as you can about what may be driving the crime:

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GO TO SECTION FOUR

- Review crime patterns and trends with a focus on times and places (see the PANDA model in Section Four).
- Explore the kinds of people who occupy the places that are targeted; find out if they are linked to other types of crime or offences, or if they are regularly victims of crime (see VOLTAGE in Section Four).
- Check whether there are any nearby addresses that routinely require police assistance or intervention (i.e. neighbours frequently report fighting or the sale of alcohol at a house), and consider whether they may be linked to the burglaries or can provide useful information.
- Find out if there are any businesses or aspects of the environment that might attract or be vulnerable to crime, e.g. taverns, unlit informal settlements or parks.
- Identify possible allies who can assist in addressing the problem, e.g. the station crime intelligence officer, a body corporate or community leader, a university researcher, the state prosecutor, a school principal, municipal officials, etc.

Evidence suggests that the best outcomes occur when police communicate effectively

Evidence suggests that hotspot policing doesn't displace crime but instead helps reduce it in areas around targeted hotspots

RESPONDING TO CRIME HOTSPOTS
e.g. Robbery, Assault, Gangsterism, Hijacking (Hot spot policing)
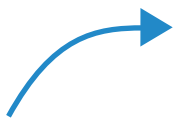
PROBLEM

Particular crimes are common in particular areas, e.g. street robbery near public transport hubs, or vehicle hijacking at particular intersections. Evidence shows that focusing police resources in such areas reduces crime without significantly displacing it to other areas. Importantly, this does not mean that the police must always be present in these areas. Instead, they can regularly visit hotspots between their other duties, or for 15 minutes each hour, and still have significant impact.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

1. Use crime analysis to identify 2-5 problem areas or hotspots (see PANDA in Section Four).

2. During your shift, when not responding to calls for service, etc., you and your team should withdraw to the pre-selected areas for 10-15 minutes per location.

3. Depending on the type of crime in the area, spend this time on foot patrol, speaking with the public, questioning suspicious people, searching suspicious vehicles, or other activities relevant to the specific problem. Remember to always engage with the public respectfully and fairly, and to let them ask questions.

4. Randomly repeat this process across problem areas throughout a shift, whenever time allows.

> FOCUSED POLICING, GUIDED BY ACCURATE CRIME DATA, CAN **REDUCE HARM** WHERE IT IS **MOST COMMON**.

> POLICE MAY BE ABLE TO **REDUCE CRIME BY VISITING HOTSPOTS FOR JUST 15 MINUTES PER HOUR**.

> POLICE MAY BE ABLE TO REDUCE CRIME BY **FOCUSING ON PROBLEMS, PEOPLE AND BEHAVIOUR IN HOTSPOTS**.

RESPONDING TO HIGH-RISK REPEAT OFFENDERS, e.g. Aggravated Robbery, Gangsterism, Domestic Abusers

ANALYSIS

PROBLEM

Most crime and violence is committed by a small percentage of offenders, often located in particular areas. Research shows that identifying, targeting and supporting such offenders can reduce offending.

STRATEGY

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO? (Focused Deterrence)

1. Establish a team of relevant stakeholders. This might include a crime analyst, probation, parole, prosecution, and social service providers, religious, school, community and business leaders, among others.

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2. Use crime analysis and intelligence to identify high-risk repeat offenders likely to be engaged in the problem you are trying to address, e.g. street robbery (see PANDA in Section Four).

3. Assign roles to various members of your team. Make sure everyone understands the problem, the goal, and their task in achieving it.

4. Reach out to identified at-risk individuals to tell them about your team's work in the area, and to let them know that offending will not be tolerated.

5. At the same time, offer them social and economic support, such as access to drug rehabilitation treatment, skills development, or social development grants.

6. Both support messages must be clear and reliable.

7. Ensure that offending by targeted individuals is responded to swiftly, but also ensure that real support is provided to those willing to accept it.

ANALYSIS

RESPONDING TO GUN CRIME IN A PARTICULAR AREA

PROBLEM

Gun violence is increasing in a particular part of your station area.

STRATEGY

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO? (Focused Deterrence)

1. Analyse crime patterns in your station area.

2. Carry out focused patrols in areas where and when gun crime is most likely, and identify people and vehicles carrying firearms.

3. Patrols and engagements with the public can borrow from the 'Focused Deterrence' response described above. This could include drawing on intelligence contacts, the firearms register and community networks to identify gun owners and those convicted of firearm-related offences in the area, and making contact with them to let them know of your focus on firearm-related offences.

4. If conducting stop and search, or otherwise engaging with the public, remember to always do so fairly, respectfully, and to give those you engage with an opportunity to speak and ask questions.

5. Following a shooting, consider the possibility of retaliatory attacks, or the chance that members of the public will start carrying weapons to keep themselves safe, resulting in more violence.

6. Consider what may be driving gun violence in specific areas. Is it related to street robbery close to a transport hub, gang violence, drug markets or domestic disputes? Apply a problem-oriented approach to understanding the drivers and develop a plan to address them. Test, evaluate and revise the plan as necessary (see PANDA in Section Four).

GO TO SECTION FOUR

> Targeted interventions are needed to reduce stubbornly high levels of murder and armed robbery in South Africa. **Evidence suggests that targeted, intentional policing is most effective.**

ANALYSIS

RESPONDING TO AN INCREASE IN THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLES

PROBLEM

Theft from and of motor-vehicles is increasing in an area.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

STRATEGY

1. Analyse crime patterns and use them to guide patrols in affected areas using the advice provided under Hot Spot Policing (see above).

2. Engage with key allies such as private security companies, city improvement patrollers, neighbourhood watch groups, community groups or building managers to create awareness and share information in the affected area.

3. Deploy CCTV and analyse footage in the affected area. Erect signs to warn offenders that CCTV is in use and to signal that you are responding to criminality in the area.

4. Use crime reports to identify victims and offenders. Contact victims with advice about how to keep vehicles safe. Contact former offenders to check in with them, gather intelligence, and let them know of your focus on vehicle crime in the area.

RESPONDING TO STREET-LEVEL DRUG-DEALING

PROBLEM

Drugs are being sold on the street. Although street-level drug markets are changing as smart technologies allow for more private exchanges of drugs and money, evidence shows that where open-air drug dealing remains, certain strategies can reduce it.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

1. The most effective ways to tackle street-level drug markets involve teams of police, city staff, community groups, and local business and residential groups working in a defined geographic area. Police interventions are significantly more effective when supported by partnerships, and seek to address underlying drivers of crime and disorder in the affected area (see PANDA in Section Four).

2. Increased police visibility and action is most impactful when focused in very small areas (micro-locations or hotspots).

3. Focused deterrence (see above) and the closure of problem spaces have also been shown to be effective.

RESPONDING TO STREET ROBBERY

PROBLEM

Street robbery is on the rise. Street robberies often occur in fairly predictable areas and at predictable times. They should, therefore, be susceptible to police intervention.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Borrow from hot spot policing, focused deterrence and problem-oriented policing (see above) to:

1. Direct officers to spend 10-15 minutes in affected locations between other tasks, repeating their visits at random times and engaging with the public in relevant ways, including with known repeat-offenders.

2. Seek to understand what makes the area and its people prone to street robberies, e.g. close to a public transport hub, poor lighting, open-air ATM, late night shebeen.

3. Identify opportunities for addressing environmental drivers and vulnerabilities, e.g. erecting fencing around a transport hub, improving lighting in pedestrian thoroughfares, working with a bank to move an ATM to a secure location, closing illegal shebeens.

4. Place warning signs in affected areas, letting people know that they should be vigilant and signalling to offenders that you are focused on the area.

ANALYSIS

THEFT OF COPPER [2]

PROBLEM

Theft of copper has exploded in recent years. These and other items are often stolen from construction sites or other unsecured areas like railway lines.

STRATEGY

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

1. Work with a crime analyst to map the places, times and types of locations where copper theft is common.

2. Work with intelligence officers and an analyst to identify and map scrap dealers and shops in relative proximity to the crime targets, (note that some dealers may be mobile).

3. Direct investigaters to scrap dealers to determine where they source their copper and respond appropriately when illegality is suspected.

4. Engage with managers responsible for targeted sites of theft to gather intelligence and discuss place-based and target-hardening solutions.

5. Increase intermittent patrols in and around vulnerable sites (see Hot spot policing above).

ANALYSIS

BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE BETWEEN POLICE AND COMMUNITIES

PROBLEM

There is tension and mistrust between communities and police in your area. This is problematic because policing is most effective when people trust the police and perceive them as legitimate authorities. When they do, they are more likely to cooperate with police and obey the law, even in their absence. Evidence shows that police can improve the degree to which the public trusts them.

STRATEGY

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO - A

1. Treat all people fairly and with respect, including suspects.

2. Give people a voice and listen to what they have to say, including those who are accused of crime.

3. Be polite. Avoid insults, swearing, threats, or flirtation.

4. Clearly explain to people who you are and why you are engaging with them, e.g. that you were called by a neighbour, or that the area has been identified as hotspot and you have been tasked with engaging with people passing through.

5. Ask people if they have questions or would like to share information or ideas.

6. Thank people for their time and assistance.

STRATEGY

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO - B

1. During officers' uncommitted time (i.e. between calls or during quiet night shifts), ask them to find out if any calls for service have yet to be responded to, or remain outstanding from the previous shift/day.

2. Contact the person who requested police service. If the matter is important or sensitive, try to visit them in person.

3. Where possible, respond to the caller's problem (e.g. by warning a local bar to abide by its business hours) and provide them with feedback once you have done so.

4. Even when police assistance is no longer needed, following up with callers to apologise, ask for more information, or express empathy can improve police-citizen relations.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO - C

1. Seek out and maintain partnerships with key allies who can assist your problem-solving work (see Section Four). Keep them abreast of your work and seek their input from time to time.

2. Partners may include: your crime analyst and intelligence officer, providers of social and community services in the area, municipal authorities servicing your area, correctional service officers responsible for local parolees, prosecutors responsible for your jurisdiction, private security companies, community and religious leaders, researchers working on crime, violence, and related topics, and others.

FOOTNOTES

[1] C Lum and C Koper, The Playbook: Plays for law enforcement officers to help prevent crime and increase citizen trust and confidence, Fairfax: Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy George Mason University, 2017.

[2] For a South African case study, see: R Goosen, Open source GIS software: supporting a geospatial intelligence approach to counter copper cable conductor theft, 2017

EMBEDDING EVIDENCE-BASED THINKING IN POLICE PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT

TOOLS

The previous section presented an example of the 'evidence toolbox' - a set of evidence-based guidelines for responding to specific categories of crime, based on the work of Lum and Koper.[1]

This section provides guidance on how to formulate plans to address chronic crime and safety problems in a station area or community.

The guidance draws heavily on problem-oriented approaches to crime and safety.

Evidence shows that this approach is far more effective than 'business as usual' policing, especially when applied to hotspots. [2]

CAREFUL OBSERVATION

When formulating or evaluating plans using this methodology, police officials and their partners should consider the evidence discussed in the previous sections, reviewed by the College of Policing (Section Two), and translated into practical guidance by Cynthia Lum and Christopher Koper (Section Three). Using this toolbox, police and communities can access the tools most likely to be effective in addressing particular problems, and adapt them to local circumstances.

GO TO SECTION TWO & THREE

EVALUATION

The methodology discussed in this section is evidence-based in two ways. First, it has been systematically reviewed and shown to be effective. [3] But it is also evidence-based in that it encourages police officials and partners to carefully monitor and evaluate the impact of their work – to generate evidence. Where plans are not having their desired effect, they should be changed. Lessons learned from this process can be shared with partners so that others can more easily replicate what works, and avoid what doesn't.

STRATEGY

The version presented here is called 'PANDA' and is based on the work of Jerry Ratcliffe – a former police officer and leader in evidence-based policing, intelligence-led policing, and problem-oriented policing. [4] The PANDA model is a version of the well-established SARA model of problem-oriented policing [5] on which the SAPS Sector Policing guidelines are based. [6]

WHY THIS MODEL IS SO IMPORTANT

ANALYSIS

Studies show that the traditional model of random patrol, rapid response and reactive investigation does not significantly reduce general crime. [7] Instead, interventions are most effective when they target specific places, people and behaviours, and when they are based on a careful, systematic analysis of the problem being addressed. [8]

A map of a crime hotspot tells us where crime clusters, but not why it clusters there. We need more information and intelligence to understand its causes, and to create an effective intervention plan to address it. Unless a local crime challenge is clearly understood and a solution specially crafted for it – ideally drawing on the best available evidence - long-term solutions are unlikely.

While most of the work for PANDA should be carried out or led by police, they will very often need to partner with others to successfully bring about the changes envisaged in their plans.

Communities can use the guidance below to encourage local police to be systematic in the ways they approach crime and safety problems in their area, and to hold them accountable to the plans they have put in place.

Researchers can also use this model to encourage systematic policing, and to support police in their analysis, monitoring and evaluation, as well as in helping police document and share the lessons learned from carefully implemented intervention plans.

THE *PANDA* METHODOLOGY

STRATEGY

PANDA is an acronym representing the core steps required for an effective crime or violence prevention intervention. As depicted in Figure 1, these are:

→ **Problem** scan to identify the priority problem
→ **Analyse** the problem
→ **Nominate** a strategy to address the problem
→ **Deploy** the strategy
→ **Assess** the outcomes

For the PANDA process to work, activities or outputs (e.g. police patrols, reporting defective street lights, expanding after school programmes) and outcomes (the objective of the activities, e.g. fewer street robberies near a taxi rank) should be stated as clearly as possible, in order to gauge the plan's effectiveness. To promote evidence-based policing and learning in South Africa, lessons should be documented, shared and re-tested/repeated so that the local evidence-base grows.

Figure 1: The PANDA model

THE
PANDA
MODEL

PROBLEM
(SCAN)

ANALYSE
(THE PROBLEM)

NOMINATE
(A STRATEGY)

DEPLOY
(THE STRATEGY)

ASSESS
(OUTCOMES)
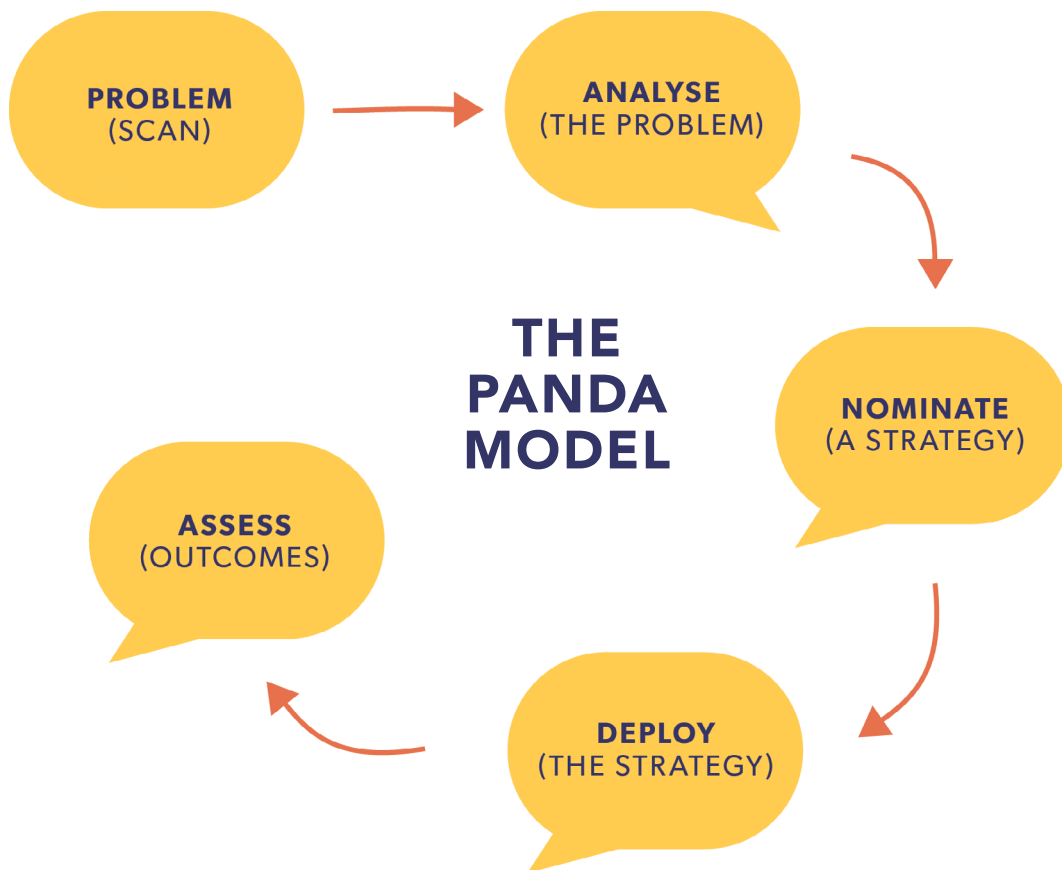
Source: Ratcliffe, 2019

PANDA Step 1: Problem Scan (P)

The first thing that police and partners should do is carry out a problem scan. This involves gathering information about the problems, challenges and threats in their area. In other circumstances, this would allow police to identify what they most urgently need to address (police can't do everything but can do what matters most). Ideally, these should be chronic problems, not those related to a sudden spike in crime.

Most crime occurs in particular places, at particular times, or involves particular people (victims or offenders). Once these have been identified, police should conduct a careful analysis to understand why these are linked to the problem at hand. The reasons can be spatial, social or purely police-related (or a combination of these).

A lot of crime and violence occurs in focused geographic areas. Evidence shows that focusing police resources in these areas reduces crime without displacing it to other areas.

PANDA Step 2: Analyse the problem (A)

It is natural for residents of high crime areas, seasoned police officers, and many others to feel that they understand the nature and causes of crime in an area. Often, they do. However, our beliefs are seldom carefully tested. Rather, we decide what we believe and then seek evidence that supports our ideas. [9]

It is important that when police and their partners analyse a problem, they: [10]

➤ Avoid preconceived ideas about causes or solutions
➤ Don't confuse 'discussion' with rigorous problem analysis
➤ Don't settle for the first promising idea without also considering others (especially those already established in the evidence-toolbox)

Instead of falling into these traps, carry out a systematic, thorough analysis. This can be achieved by following Jerry Ratcliffe's guidance, as presented in his book *Reducing Crime: a companion for police leaders*, summarised and adapted for South Africa below (www.reducingcrime.com), and by:

1. Intentionally challenging assumptions (e.g. How do we know alcohol is to blame for violence in our area?)

2. Always asking 'why' questions (e.g. Why does violence increase on Fridays?)

3. Avoiding imbedding assumptions in questions (e.g. Not 'Where should we increase patrols to reduce murder?' Rather, 'Is there a relationship between patrols and murder?')

4. Avoiding vague questions (e.g. 'What can we do to stop murders in our area?' and substitute them with questions such as 'Where in our area is murder most common and clustered?')

A useful tool to avoid these pitfalls and ensure thorough analysis is Ratcliffe's VOLTAGE framework presented in Table 3. By applying this method, police and partners are more likely to comprehensively analyse each chronic problem:

Table 1: Ratcliffe's VOLTAGE guide [11]

COMPONENT	EXAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK
VICTIMS	Does crime concentrate among a certain type of victim or target? Are there multiple victims or is a particular target the subject of repeat victimisation? Does the type of target generate particular public concern (e.g. women and children)?
OFFENDERS	Is the crime problem created by numerous offenders who are not known to each other, or by a group? Is it caused by a few repeat offenders? Are there new offenders in the area (e.g. parolees or a new gang)?
LOCATIONS	Are specific places targeted, or is crime distributed widely? What is special about the place? Is it a particular location (such as a tavern or bar), a particular street (with a troublesome family or a drug house), or an area (e.g. an informal settlement or taxi rank)?
TIMES	Is the crime problem within normal variation or explainable by annual seasonal patterns (crime will always fluctuate)? If not, are there specific times when crime is concentrated? Are new patterns evident?
ATTRACTORS	Are particular locations or places attracting offenders because of the easy criminal opportunities (attractors) or are particular places creating crime opportunities (generators)? Where are the worst places?
GROUPS	Are gangs a factor? Are school children of a particular age or sex involved either as offenders or victims? Are there disputes between taxi associations or members of different political groups?
ENHANCERS	Are drug or alcohol use factors to consider? Are groups particularly vulnerable due to poverty, values or beliefs? Are behavioural (mental) health issues part of the problem?.

Source: Ratcliffe, 2019

Using VOLTAGE as a guide, police and partners should aim to understand *why* things are the way they are. Analysis should not produce a description of the problem, but rather, seek to understand its causes. Answers to well formulated questions should be sought through:

→ Crime analysis
→ Crime intelligence
→ Community information

In some instances, community partners can be invited to participate in some or all of the PANDA process.

Answers identified through a VOLTAGE analysis form the data on which decisions and plans can be made. However, the information and data used should as much as possible be:

→ Accurate
→ Precise
→ Consistent
→ Complete
→ Reliable

If it isn't, it should be treated with caution while better or corroborating data is found.

This will allow the partners to more effectively provide the kind of information necessary to address the problem, and to feel invested in efforts to address it. Key partners may include:

→ Forensic pathology services (e.g. Can pathology data shed light on how people are dying?)

→ Emergency Medical Services (e.g. Where are ambulances being called to treat violence-related injuries that may not be reported to police?)

→ Other police and security services (e.g. Who else has databases and technology in place that can shed light on activities in the area?)

→ Community leaders/Community Policing Forum leaders (e.g. What does the community know that police do not? What can be learned from managers at schools, clinics, train stations, shopping centres, etc.?)

→ SAPS Crime Registrar (e.g. Has there been a docket analysis related to your problem?)

→ SAPS CIMAC (Crime Information Management and Analysis Centre) officers are crucial to understanding trends in reported crime.

→ SAPS crime intelligence/detectives (e.g. What information is needed from informants in the area?)

→ Other government agencies and NGOs working in the area (e.g. Social workers, prosecutors).

Data and intelligence provided by partners can support the VOLTAGE analysis and broader intervention plan. This is depicted in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2:
Intelligence and data sharing for crime & problem-solving plans
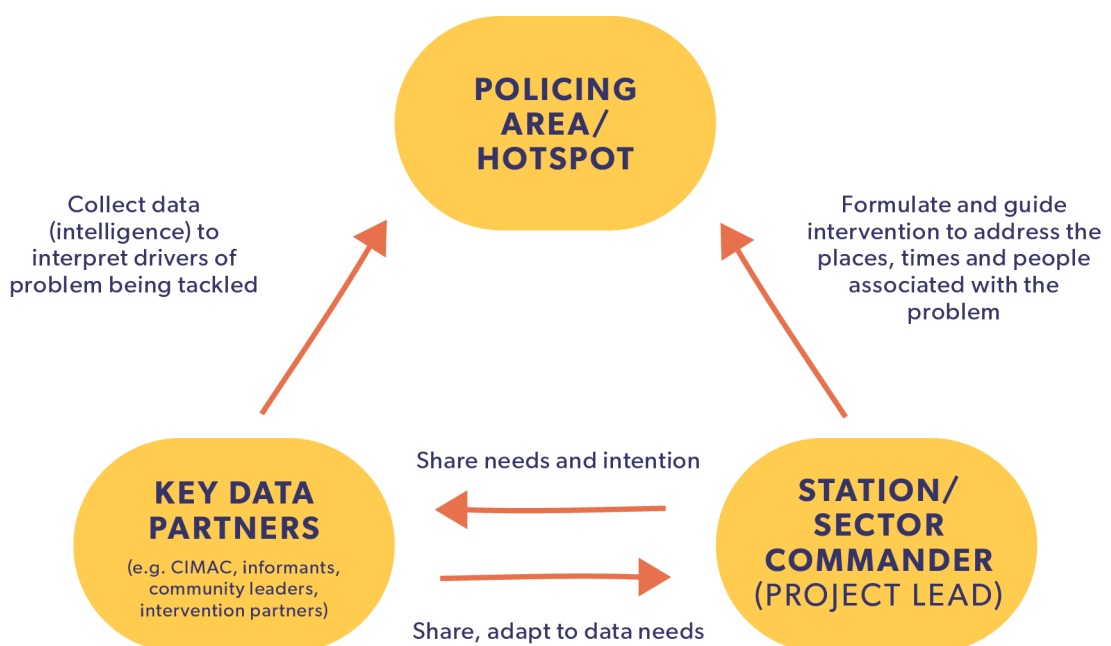
Source: Adapted from Ratcliffe, 2019

While community and CPF leaders can serve as intelligence and data partners, it can be very useful to conduct community surveys among the groups or in the area involved. These could focus on experiences of crime (victim surveys), feelings of safety, beliefs about the causes of problems, and perceptions of police, social workers, teachers, councillors and other partners. Survey samples can be relatively small but should be repeated over time to measure change.

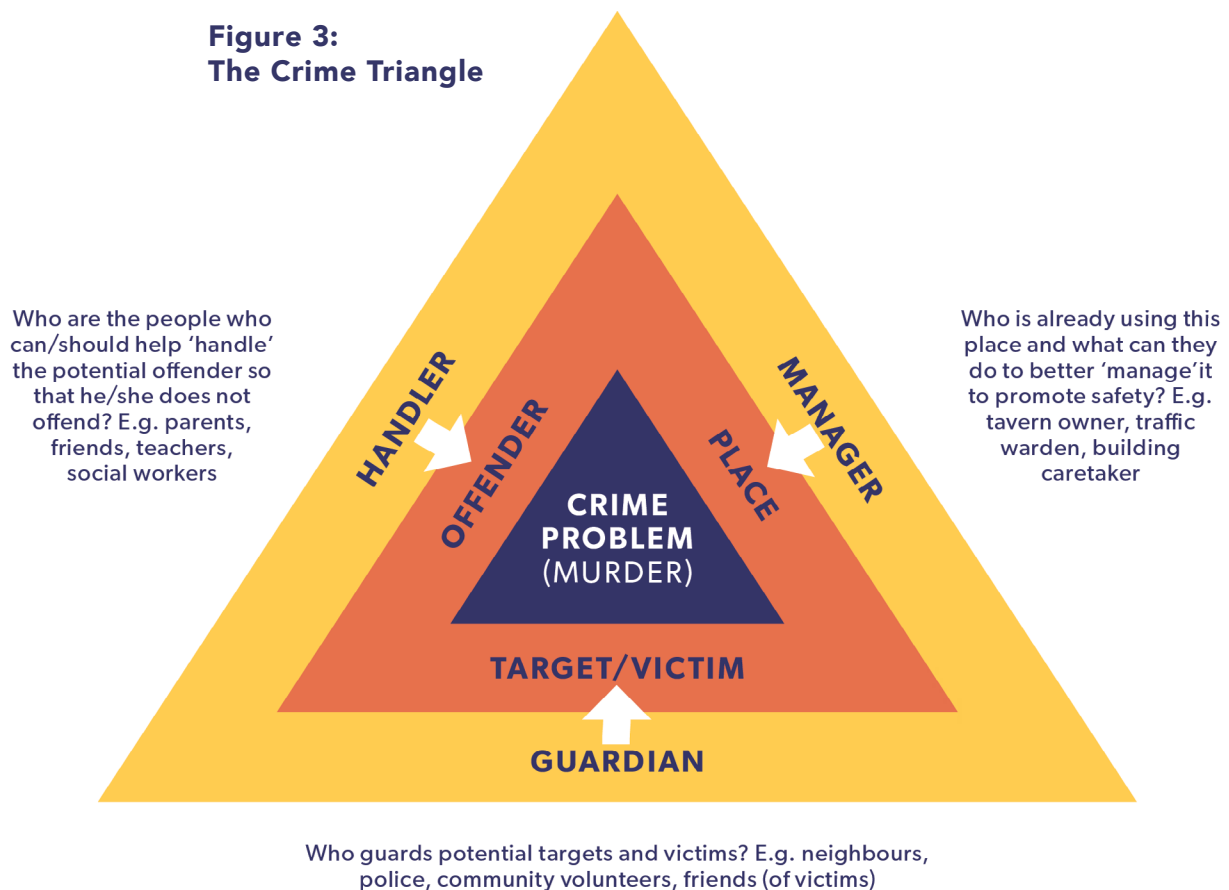### Supporting VOLTAGE analysis with the Crime Triangle
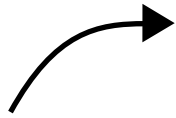
Remember, police and partners carry out their analysis in an effort to understand the nature and causes of the problem being addressed. Another helpful tool to aid this process is to think of the problem in terms of the Crime Triangle, depicted in Figure 3 below. [12] Police and partners should keep the Crime Triangle in mind when carrying out their VOLTAGE analysis.

The Crime Triangle encourages parties to think about recurring problems as a product of three variables coming together at the same place and time:

1. A likely or motivated offender (e.g. a career street robber who uses violence)
2. A suitable or vulnerable target/victim (e.g. a commuter walking home at night)
3. The absence of a suitable guardian (e.g. no other commuters or pedestrians around)

Police and partners can use the idea of the Crime Triangle to to identify partners who can help address the problem, for example: 1) place managers (e.g. tavern owners); 2) victim/target guardians (e.g. police, security guards), and; 3) offender handlers (e.g. parents, teachers).

Figure 3:
The Crime Triangle

Who are the people who can/should help 'handle' the potential offender so that he/she does not offend? E.g. parents, friends, teachers, social workers

Who is already using this place and what can they do to better 'manage'it to promote safety? E.g. tavern owner, traffic warden, building caretaker

HANDLER

OFFENDER

MANAGER

PLACE

CRIME PROBLEM (MURDER)

TARGET/VICTIM

GUARDIAN

Who guards potential targets and victims? E.g. neighbours, police, community volunteers, friends (of victims)

Other helpful tips for police and partners to keep in mind during analysis:

Victims and offenders are part of social groups and networks that influence behaviour. Understanding these networks and their influence empowers police and partners to tailor interventions to engage with the right people in the right way.

Most offenders do not travel to commit crime. Instead, crime occurs in the spaces that they already frequent, or are close to where they live. As a result, evidence suggests that most crime is not automatically displaced to another area following an effective intervention. [13]

PANDA Step 3: Nominating an intervention strategy (N)

NOMINATE

N

Analysis helps us understand the problem. Once this has been achieved, police and partners can begin designing an intervention to address it. The plan should be summarised through a clear statement that links the understanding of the problem to how it will be addressed, the tools to be used, and the outcomes expected. The intervention plan must be clear, logical, and understood by all parties. [14] It should be as specific as possible.

GO TO SECTION ONE

When planning, it is very easy to become distracted by outputs (e.g. numbers of cars stopped, people searched, or taverns visited). These are useful but tell us nothing about the impact of the activity (see Section One). Rather, police and partners should always remain outcome-focused. First ask, 'What do we want to achieve?' and only then, 'How can we achieve it?'.

An intervention (crime) plan can be thought of as a clear story that links what is being done to the expected result. The story must be logical, realistic, and acceptable to all involved. Police and partners should understand their respective roles and how their work will contribute to achieving the intended goal.

To answer the 'how', police and partners should use their analysis to identify (or theorise) the mechanism (causes) behind the crime or safety problem. In other words, 'What explains the high incidents of street robbery in this area?' Don't settle for the first good idea, or the one that comes from the most senior officer. Think creatively and broadly.

Once an answer/theory is proposed (e.g. The combination of many unemployed young men, the availability of weapons, and a large taxi rank drives street robbery during commuting hours), police and partners can consider which aspects of the Crime Triangle (for place-based interventions) can be changed to disrupt the harm-causing mechanism (e.g. offer support to unemployed men, task informers with locating illegal firearms and identifying potential offenders in the area, improve awareness and surveillance at the taxi rank). Again, this can be guided using Ratcliffe's VOLTAGE framework.

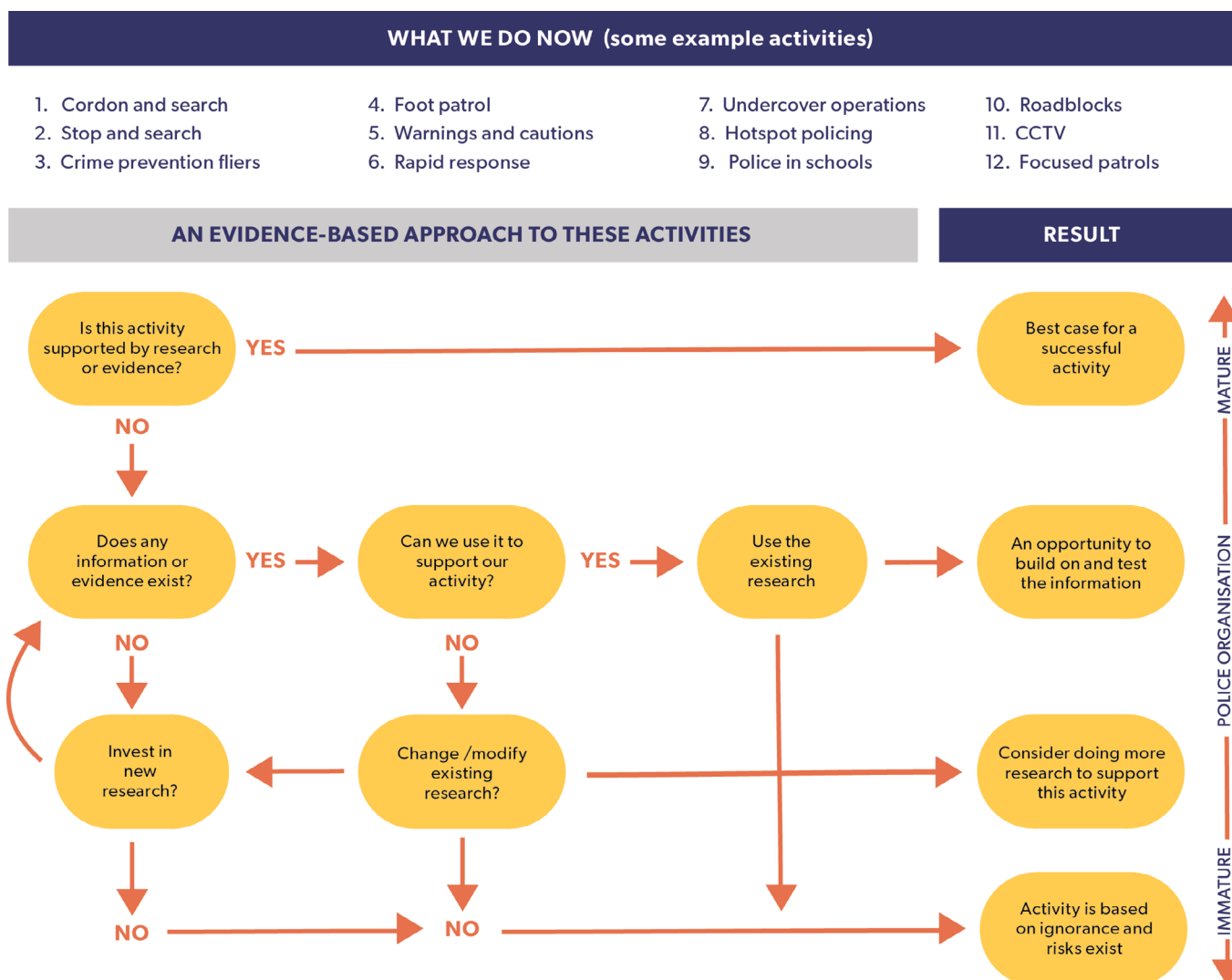Tips for formulating an intervention plan: [15]

GO TO SECTION TWO & THREE

- Don't rely on outputs but instead focus on outcomes
- Don't rely on intuition or settle for the first 'good idea' but rather consult the best available evidence (see Section Two and Three, and Figure 4 for guidance) about what works to address your kind of problem
- Use situational crime prevention techniques to increase the effort required for crime, increase the risks for offenders, reduce the rewards for crime, reduce provocations for crime, and remove excuses for crime
- Work with those already living/working/moving through the area and encourage them to take ownership of the problem or associated elements of it

GO TO SECTION THREE

- Consider focused deterrence approaches (providing both support and close policing of those most likely to offend – See Section Three)

Figure 4 provides a useful guide for thinking through, selecting and testing strategies relevant to your intervention plan.

Figure 4: How to select an intervention strategy for your plan and generate evidence [16]

WHAT WE DO NOW (some example activities)

1. Cordon and search
2. Stop and search
3. Crime prevention fliers
4. Foot patrol
5. Warnings and cautions
6. Rapid response
7. Undercover operations
8. Hotspot policing
9. Police in schools
10. Roadblocks
11. CCTV
12. Focused patrols

AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH TO THESE ACTIVITIES | **RESULT**

Is this activity supported by research or evidence? — YES → Best case for a successful activity

NO ↓

Does any information or evidence exist? — YES → Can we use it to support our activity? — YES → Use the existing research → An opportunity to build on and test the information

NO ↓ (Does any information) Invest in new research?

NO ↓ (Can we use it) Change /modify existing research? → Invest in new research?

Change /modify existing research? → Consider doing more research to support this activity

NO → NO → Activity is based on ignorance and risks exist

MATURE → POLICE ORGANISATION → IMMATURE

Source: Adapted from Peter Martin in Mitchell & Huey (eds.), 2019

Key to the intervention plan is the strategy to be used to achieve the desired outcome. Once again, Ratcliffe offers a very useful tool to guide the selection and formulation of an intervention - the VIPER checklist. As shown in Table 2, VIPER encourages police and partners to think about their interventions in terms of Victims, Intelligence (gaps), Prevention, Enforcement and Reassurance.

Table 2: The VIPER checklist [17]

VIPER Category	Example questions to guide planning
Victim Support	Police and partners should think about how the intervention plan supports victims, or those who are vulnerable to becoming victims. How does the intervention address their **safety**, how does it **support** them, how does it communicate useful **information**, how does it promote **access** to services, how does it encourage **continuity** in approach between service providers and departments, how does it give victims a **voice**, and how does it deliver **justice** to victims? All victim strategies should be tailored to the needs of the area/problem and its dynamics.
Intelligence Gaps	These are things that the police and partners do not have answers to, but can figure out if they can access the right information. They should work with others to fill these gaps while carrying out other intervention work (e.g. By tasking officers with asking key questions of the public while on patrol), or they can try to answer them before proceeding to other tasks. Intelligence gaps can be identified using the VOLTAGE analysis (Table 1).
Prevention	Prevention refers to the non-law enforcement/policing aspects of the intervention. Police and partners should think about what they can change in the area to address their priority problem.
Enforcement	Focused law enforcement offers shorter-term order maintenance and the disruption of criminality (in contrast to prevention which addresses the long-term elements of the problem). The most effective, evidence-based enforcement strategies are place-based (hotspot), problem-oriented (PANDA), person-focused (focused-deterrence), and community-based (building trust, leveraging community).
Reassurance	It is important that people living, working and passing through the intervention area feel safe and trust that police, ward councillors, municipal authorities and others are working to improve their safety. Police and partners should aim to build trust and promote feelings of safety by reassuring people of the work being carried out. This can be achieved through public demonstrations of work (e.g. visible policing in crime hotspots) and through effective communication of plans, successes, and outcomes.

Source: Ratcliffe, 2019

DEPLOY

D

PANDA Step 4: Deploying the strategy (implementation plan) (D)

Once an intervention strategy has been developed it is time to 'deploy' it. At this stage, police and partners will work to implement the plan. It is crucial that all partners understand their role in the plan, understand and accept its logic, and are accountable for carrying out their responsibilities. Ratcliffe's GOALS checklist can be used to achieve this. GOALS stands for Ground leader, Objectives, Analyst, Limits, and Support.

Table 3:
The GOALS checklist to support effective implementation of plans

GOALS Category	What do they mean?
Ground Leader	Who has overall responsibility for the implementation of the plan? This could be a sector commander or a team comprised of police, community leaders, private security and others – but they must be able to drive the process and be accountable for moving it forward. Different individuals can be responsible for different VIPER tasks (Table 2) but tasks should be clear and individuals held accountable for delivery. Ideally, one person would lead.
Objectives	Identify clear objectives linked to the VIPER analysis. Objectives should be SMART - **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic,** and **Time-bound**. Objectives are the goals to be met in order to achieve the desired outcome.
Analyst	Identify the person who will collect, track, collate and analyse data related to the intervention. Analytics are key to understanding the impact of the intervention as it unfolds (which is why objectives must be SMART), to adapting it where necessary, and to learning lessons and building evidence from the experience.
Limits	It is important that the plan is bound by limits in place, time, activities and scope. Police and partners should work according to the logic of the plan and avoid being distracted or carrying out tasks that don't fit its spatial boundaries or logic. All involved should be aware of these limits, and of how and when the plan will be assessed and revised.
Support	Ensure that both police and partners are aware of their role in the plan and of the kind of support that they are expected to provide to each other. Ideally, write down what, when, where and why support is needed.

Source: Ratcliffe, 2019

Final thoughts on the deployment of the intervention plan:

→ The person or people driving the plan should regularly visit the intervention area (where applicable) and participate in relevant engagements to demonstrate investment, provide feedback, and to check that partners understand and are working according to the plan.

→ **Avoid mission creep.** Stick to the plan, or revise it based on careful analysis and predefined intervals. Don't simply expand the size of the intervention area, or the scope of the intervention due to political or community pressure. This will undermine the whole process.

→ **Stick to a clear, regular review schedule** to gauge whether the plan is working as intended, or whether it needs to be revised.

A ᴬˢˢᴱˢˢ PANDA Step 5: Assessing intervention plan outcomes (A)

The final step in the PANDA model is to assess the outcomes of the work. This is crucial. Without it, any claims that the plan has or hasn't been effective are empty. The assessment stage is also crucial for learning what works and what doesn't - i.e. the development of an evidence base, and what needs to change in future.

Ratcliffe offers the OILRIG checklist, presented in Table 4, as a very useful guide to the assessment process.

Table 4:
The OILRIG checklist for assessing the impact of intervention plans [18]

GOALS Category	What do they mean?
Outcomes achieved	Were the stated outcomes achieved? (Don't base this solely on reported crime but rather on the SMART objectives identified during planning).
Implemented as planned	Was the intervention plan implemented as intended? Did all partners work according to their taskings, the logic of the plan, and within its limits? How is the plan currently being implemented? Where implementation did not occur as planned, why was this?
Lessons learned	What lessons can be learned so far?
Results acceptable	Are the outcomes acceptable, even if the intended outcomes were not fully achieved? The answer should be based on an outcome evaluation, crime and disorder observations, the quality of data and intelligence, the accuracy of the VOLTAGE analysis, assessment of crime displacement or a diffusion of benefits, perceptions of stakeholders and partners, sustainability and practicality of the intervention.
Intelligence gained	Was new intelligence gained which can inform future activities? If not, why not? What went wrong? What can be shared with others?
Goals to be revised	Should the intervention plan's GOALS be revised? Did the Ground leader/team steer the plan appropriately? Were Objectives SMART? Was Analysis sufficient? Were the Limits appropriate? Did the Support work as intended?

Where next in the PANDA process?

Following assessment, police and partners must consider what to do next. In an ideal but rare situation, the plan will have worked as planned, and achieved its intended goals. However, it is likely that something may not have worked as planned. If an outcome and process evaluation is properly conducted (e.g. using the OILRIG checklist), it should be apparent where things may have gone wrong. Police and partners should next consider where changes are necessary: at the 'analyse', 'nominate a strategy', or 'deploy' stages, or perhaps at all of them. This is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Where to after the assessment?

PROBLEM (SCAN)

ANALYSE (THE PROBLEM)

Success! Document the process (evidence) so that it can be shared with others. Then begin a new problem scan to address another challenge in the area or move to a new area.

Didn't achieve the desired outcomes? Why? Identify problems, revise plan and implement. Where relevant, document and share (evidence).

NOMINATE (A STRATEGY)

ASSESS (OUTCOMES)

DEPLOY (THE STRATEGY)

Source: Ratcliffe, 2019

Not only is the PANDA (problem-oriented) approach to policing supported by good evidence (i.e. it is more effective than many other approaches), but it can be used to generate evidence about what works and what doesn't in South Africa. A collection of guides based on lessons learned using related methods can be found at the Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing (popcenter.asu.edu). You can also learn more about the PANDA model at the Reducing Crime website (www.reducingcrime.com).

If South African police, researchers and communities can carefully plan, implement and monitor their work, and if we can share the lessons learned, we can more rapidly create a knowledge base from which to effectively and efficiently reduce crime, promote safety, and improve trust between police and communities.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Does hiring more police reduce crime? The evidence is unclear. What about rapidly responding to calls for assistance? Historically, no, but new evidence is challenging this. Random, visible patrol? Ineffective. Being aggressive with 'criminals'? Evidence suggests that this can make things worse. While none of these practices has been conclusively shown to work, these are some of the things that South Africans assume will make the country safer.

This is why it is important to test our assumptions.

Our beliefs about what works to reduce crime are not always accurate, even when they are based on our own experience and we're absolutely convinced of them. This is why decisions about how South Africa is policed should be informed by the best available evidence of what works to improve public safety. Using this guide as a foundation, we can improve policing, reduce crime and promote trust in police. Increased success means better morale and improved motivation and a safer South Africa for all. Working together, we can do this.

RESOURCES

Learn more about our efforts to promote evidence-based policing at: www.issafrica.org/crimehub

The following websites also offer valuable information and resources:

The Society for Evidence-Based Policing (UK): https://www.sebp.police.uk/

The American Society of Evidence-Based Policing: https://www.americansebp.org/

Australia & New Zealand Society of Evidence-Based Policing: https://www.anzsebp.com/

Crime Reduction Toolkit (College of Policing): https://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx

Centre for Evidence-Based Crime Policy (George Mason University): https://cebcp.org/

Evidence-Based Policing Matrix (CEBCP): https://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/the-matrix/

Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing (Arizona State University): https://popcenter.asu.edu/

Cambridge Centre for Evidence-Based Policing (Cambridge University): https://www.cambridge-ebp.co.uk/

Africa Centre for Evidence (University of Johannesburg): https://africacentreforevidence.org/

Crime Solutions (National Institute of Justice): https://crimesolutions.ojp.gov/

Campbell Collaboration: https://campbellcollaboration.org/better-evidence.html

FOOTNOTES

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HOTSPOT POLICING

Source: Adapted from College of Policing, 2020

QUESTION

WHAT IS IT?

Hotspot policing involves the targeting of resources and activities in places where crime is most concentrated. It includes a range of interventions, from increased police numbers and patrols to targeted problem-solving.

It recognises that most crime and disorder occurs in particular places and at certain times. By focusing resources and activities in such areas, it aims to achieve significant crime reductions in the targeted and surrounding areas.

IS IT EFFECTIVE?

Existing evidence suggests that hotspot policing can reduce crime.

Evidence suggests that hotspot policing does not simply displace or move crime to other areas. Rather, the surrounding areas that do not receive focused policing also benefit from it.

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE?

The evidence for hotspot policing is fairly strong and bias-free.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Hotspot policing assumes that crime can be reduced by concentrating resources and activities in particular places and preventing victims and offenders from being in the same place at the same time.

IN WHICH CONTEXTS DOES IT WORK BEST?

Hotspot policing varies in effectiveness for different crime types. Evidence suggests it is more effective for drug offences, violent crime and disorder, than for property crime. Problem-oriented hotspot policing is twice as effective as hotspot policing that involves more traditional policing tactics (e.g. random patrol). Problem-oriented hotspot policing is also more likely to have a positive effect on areas surrounding the targeted area.

? HOW MUCH MIGHT IT COST?

The costs of the intervention and its economic benefit have not been reviewed. However, given that hotspot policing can be implemented by shifting rather than adding resources, it need not add to policing costs.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The type of activities pursued in hotspots should vary depending on the nature of the problems within the area (e.g. types of crime, employment and environmental factors).

SUMMARY

Overall, the evidence suggests that hot spot policing reduces (and does not displace) crime. Problem-oriented hot spot policing is more effective than increased traditional policing. Evidence suggests that hotspot policing is more effective for drug offences, violent crime and disorder than for property crime.
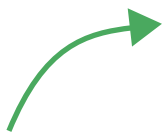
RELEVANCE TO SOUTH AFRICA

Although all South Africans are anxious about crime and violence, data reveals that residents of certain communities are far more vulnerable than others. In 2017/18, 30 of the SAPS' 1146 stations recorded 20% (4124) of all murders. In 2016/17, 13% (148) of stations recorded 50% of all murders. Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, murder increased by 1320 incidents, 42% of which were recorded at just 30 police stations. Much of this violence takes place over weekends, and in particular parts of these police precincts. By targeting the places and times where murder is most predictable, the SAPS can significantly reduce all forms of violence and save thousands of lives.

PROBLEM-ORIENTATED POLICING

Source: Adapted from College of Policing, 2020

WHAT IS IT?

Problem-orientated policing (POP) involves the identification of a specific problem, analysis to understand it, and the development of a tailored response to it. Responses are monitored to determine their impact. POP draws on the SARA model, which includes four elements:

➤ **Scanning**: identifying and prioritising crime and disorder problems
➤ **Analysis:** analysing select problems to understand their underlying causes
➤ **Response:** developing responses tailored to the specific problem
➤ **Assessment:** measuring the impact of the response to test if it had the desired effect and to make changes if required.

IS IT EFFECTIVE?

Overall, the evidence suggests that POP has reduced crime, with statistically significant effects on a range of crime and disorder problems.

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE?

The reviews are of a high standard.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

POP interventions are tailored to specific problems and achieve their goals in different ways. However, all interventions used the SARA model.

IN WHICH CONTEXTS DOES IT WORK BEST?

POP interventions are tailored to different contexts. POP approaches that include hot spot policing can be particularly effective.

IMPLEMENTING THIS INITIATIVE?

Most studies reported at least moderate success in implementing the intervention. The most common problem was insufficient resources. A lack of senior officer commitment and poor partnerships with agencies and communities also limited implementation in some cases.

HOW MUCH MIGHT IT COST?

Reviews do not answer this question.

RESEARCH

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

POP is an approach to developing specific, targeted interventions, rather than an intervention per sê. Therefore, a POP approach can be applied to any crime and disorder problem and should not be viewed as an alternative to other interventions mentioned in this guide. Rather, it should be used in conjunction with them. For a POP based intervention to have the greatest chance of success, the problem to be solved must be well understood.

RELEVANCE TO SOUTH AFRICA

Although never fully implemented or supported, the SAPS' Sector Policing model is a clear example of POP. It suggests the following guidance for Sector Commanders, which aligns with POP: [2]

Identify and analyse the key problem in your sector
- o e.g. Who are the victims and likely offenders? What impact does this problem have on the community? Where is the problem located?

Consider options and formulate an intervention plan.
- o What do we want to achieve? How will we deal with the problem? Who will be involved? When will it be done?
- o The aim and objectives should be clearly defined and understandable to all partners. They should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and planned within a realistic timeframe.

Implement the intervention.

Evaluate and adjust the intervention.
- o Evaluate the impact of the intervention, what changes?
- o Regularly evaluate progress and provide feedback to partners and community.
- o Revise activities and delegate actions where required.
- o Learn lessons for future interventions.
- o Communicate results to community, media and others.

Throughout, the guide recommends generating and utilizing accurate, timely information to guide and assess action. [3] This approach is well supported by the evidence-based policing and violence prevention literature. [4]

Identify and analyse major problem → Consult role players and stakeholders who can help address problem → Compile implementation plan to guide programme, project or partnership → Initiate programme, project or partnership to address local needs and problems → Monitor and evaluate implementation, revise and learn

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ALLEY GATES
Source: Adapted from College of Policing, 2020

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THE INTERVENTION?
Alley gates are lockable security gates installed to control and prevent access to alleyways in/from which crime may occur. Studies show that they can reduce burglaries.

IS IT EFFECTIVE?
The evidence suggests that alley gating can reduce crime, especially residential burglary. It shows no evidence that crime is displaced to surrounding areas. Instead, burglary in surrounding areas also declined.

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE?
The evidence is strong and mostly free of bias.

HOW DOES IT WORK?
Gates provide physical barriers to connected properties, making access more difficult for offenders. When residents are given access to the gates it can promote community surveillance and responsibility.

### IN WHICH CONTEXTS DOES IT WORK BEST?
➤ Alley gates are specifically designed for those crimes linked to alleyways.
➤ If residents agree on how to use alley gates, they are more likely to work as intended.
➤ Alley gates should not add to a sense of disorder, for example by allowing litter to build up in the alley. They should be designed and managed for purpose.

WHAT CAN BE SAID ABOUT IMPLEMENTING THIS INITIATIVE?
Consult with residents and relevant authorities to get buy-in. Residents must commit to how the gates are used and accept responsibility for them. Municipal and emergency workers should not be affected by the gates.

HOW MUCH MIGHT IT COST?
The costs of the gates vary depending on the location and need.
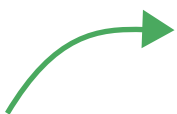
RELEVANCE TO SOUTH AFRICA
Alley gating, gated streets, parks and communities are more common in South Africa than many other countries. Such boundaries can be an effective tool to address certain types of crime, but they should not be rushed into or overused. Physical barriers can divide communities and erode the natural surveillance and support networks that they provide. Gating can unfairly affect certain groups and promote undemocratic spaces. In the long-term, South Africa wants fewer walls and boundaries.

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LIMITING ALCOHOL SALES
Source: Adapted from College of Policing, 2020

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THE INTERVENTION?
Excessive alcohol consumption can cause major crime, violence and health outcomes. This intervention aims to limit when and where alcohol is sold and consumed to reduce such harms.

IS IT EFFECTIVE?
There is some evidence that this can reduce crime. Studies show an increase in violence with long sales hours, as well as more alcohol-impaired driving and crashes.

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE?
Studies show some bias. Further studies are required to confirm that increased sales hours lead to increased harms.

HOW DOES IT WORK?
Changes in hours and days of alcohol sale are believed to change how much alcohol is purchased, and when, where and how it is consumed. This can affect alcohol-related harms.

IN WHICH CONTEXTS DOES IT WORK BEST?
The reviews include limited discussion on context. While an increase in sale hours by more than two hours led to increases in alcohol-related harms, an increase of fewer than two hours showed no significant effect.

IMPLEMENTING THIS INITIATIVE?
Implementation information is limited. Potential barriers include opposition from the alcohol industry and regulations around the enforcement of trading hours.

HOW MUCH MIGHT IT COST?
No cost data provided. Costs would include passing legislation and administering and enforcing the law.

SUMMARY

There is some evidence that the intervention has either increased or reduced crime, but overall it has not had a statistically significant effect on crime (or this was not tested). This evidence is however weak with many potential biases undermining the reliability of the findings. More high-quality evidence is needed to be certain of the impact that this intervention may have upon crime.

RELEVANCE TO SOUTH AFRICA

Alcohol has been linked to numerous harms in South Africa. It is commonly associated with victims and perpetrators of violence, as well as vehicle accidents. Enforcement of alcohol-related laws occupy quite a lot of police time in certain areas. However, South Africa also has a preponderance of 'illegal' alcohol outlets (shebeens), which police often struggle to keep closed. What's more, both legal and illegal outlets can provide families with much-needed income and offer communities spaces in which they can meet and socialise. Care should be given to balancing efforts to address alcohol-related harms and the possible negative impact on individual and community wellbeing. This does not mean that police should not enforce the law. Rather, work with partners to find the best solution for all, while fulfilling one's legal mandate and upholding the rule of law.

DRUNK DRIVING STOPS (ROADBLOCKS)

Source: Adapted from College of Policing, 2020

WHAT IS IT?

Sobriety checkpoints focus on reducing injuries and fatalities resulting from alcohol-related accidents. Police implement frequent roadblocks over a period to assess drivers' possible alcohol impairment.

IS IT EFFECTIVE?

Evidence suggests that checkpoints reduce crashes and injuries. Drivers who are above the legal limit are arrested and charged. Any contact with checkpoints reinforces people's perception of enhanced law enforcement activity and risk of sanction. Media exposure can increase awareness of such activities.

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE?

The evidence is strong.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The checkpoints are aimed at discouraging people from drinking and driving using either random or selected testing of drivers.

IN WHICH CONTEXTS DOES IT WORK BEST?

Checkpoint programmes are most effective within 3 to 6 months of the programme. This is the period in which the most reduction in crashes occurs. Other success factors include the frequency of checks and the increased number of checkpoints. Checkpoints with fewer staff are as effective as those that are highly staffed.

IMPLEMENTING DRINK DRIVING STOPS

Implementation requires staff and standardised vehicle selection to avoid bias. Programme effect is enhanced by publicity and media, and when checkpoints are highly visible. It is helpful to make officers aware of the general deterrence effect that such operations provide.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is a need for further reseach to determine the optimal configuration of checkpoints (number of officers, timing, and regularity) and optimal levels of enforcement and publicity to sustain their deterrent effect. It is worth considering how effective checkpoints are at detecting other offences such as illegal weapons.

RELEVANCE TO SOUTH AFRICA

Drunk driving is common and causes serious harm in South Africa. Alcohol-related roadblocks are fairly common in some areas but don't necessarily occur as part of a planned programme, as recommended by the above evidence. Roadblocks provide an important space in which police interact with people whom they may otherwise seldom engage. It is important to treat them politely and fairly, which can win their trust and cooperation.

QUESTION

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COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY
Source: Adapted from College of Policing, 2020

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THE INTERVENTION?

It targets patterns of thought that encourage criminal behaviour. It assumes that such thinking has been learned, and can be unlearned. CBT focuses on teaching offenders to understand the thinking processes and choices that precede criminal behaviour. CBT programmes aim to build thinking skills and restructure biased or distorted thinking. Elements of CBT for offenders may include thinking (cognitive) skills training, anger management, moral development and relapse prevention. CBT can be delivered in correctional and community settings and is used for both adults and young people.

IS IT EFFECTIVE?

The evidence suggests that CBT has reduced crime. A review of 58 studies showed a 25% reduction in reoffending amongst participants who received CBT compared to those who did not.

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE?

The evidence is reliable. Many forms of bias can be ruled out and quality control was good.

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HOW DOES IT WORK?

CBT may reduce crime in the following ways: Building thinking skills and changing how offenders' think. CBT interventions assume that offenders learn habits of thought connected to their offending (e.g. 'I have a right to other peoples' things' or 'Life has been unfair to me so I will be unfair to other people'). CBT interventions teach offenders to identify such negative thoughts when they emerge, and the thinking processes and choices that immediately precede their criminal behaviour. Offenders are taught techniques to help them identify and manage reactions to such thoughts.

IN WHICH CONTEXTS DOES IT WORK BEST?
The effect of CBT might differ according to the offender's age, offence, ethnicity, and the programme's intensity and duration.

IMPLEMENTING THIS INITIATIVE?
Evidence suggests that the most effective CBT programmes are of high-quality with low dropout rates, reliable quality of the treatment, and competent service providers.

HOW MUCH MIGHT IT COST?
Unknown.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS
All reviews showed significant reductions in reoffending for participants who were given CBT. These reductions were observed for both adults and young people, and participants of all ethnicities. There is some discrepancy among reviews as to whether dropping out of the programme has an impact on its effectiveness.

RELEVANCE TO SOUTH AFRICA
CBT is provided in some correctional centres in South Africa, as well as in other settings. It is also one of the most effective treatments for depression, anger management and other mental health challenges in the general population. Where possible, it may be valuable to explore the promotion of CBT training in high-schools, churches or youth care centres in your precinct, or partnering with healthcare providers to provide CBT training to youth and others at risk of serious offending. CBT can be useful to anybody who regularly thinks negative or harmful thoughts, including police officers.

QUESTION

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HEALTHCARE SCREENING FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE

Source: Adapted from College of Policing, 2020

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THE INTERVENTION?

This occurs at health facilities and is intended to identify violence and abuse, and to provide support to victims. Women and men attending healthcare centres are screened to see if they have experienced domestic abuse. If they report that they experienced violence and abuse, a healthcare professional decides how to respond.

IS IT EFFECTIVE?

Evidence suggests that universal screening for domestic violence and abuse in healthcare settings has been effective. Women who were screened were almost three times as likely to mention their experience of domestic violence or abuse compared to those who were not screened.

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE?

The evidence is strong and free from most forms of bias.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The use of universal screening is underpinned by the assumption that routinely asking women in healthcare settings about their experience of domestic abuse from a current or previous partner will increase its identification, improve access to services and support, and ultimately decrease exposure to violence/abuse and detrimental health consequences.

IN WHICH CONTEXTS DOES IT WORK BEST?

Domestic violence and abuse victims were four times more likely to be identified in antenatal (pregnancy) related settings compared to those receiving usual healthcare. Emergency departments and maternal health services were also more likely to identify abuse than primary hospital facilities.

IMPLEMENTING THIS INITIATIVE?

This initiative can be employed using different screening methods; e.g. by a healthcare professional or through a self-completed questionnaire.

R **HOW MUCH MIGHT IT COST?**

There is no reported data on cost-benefit. Most studies were conducted in the United States or Canada and so caution should be taken when applying to other contexts.

SUMMARY

Screening women and men in healthcare settings increase the identification of domestic violence and abuse victims. Most victims were identified in pregnancy-related settings.

RELEVANCE TO SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's violent crime begins in our homes. To end violent robberies, gang fights and murders, we must first stop violence in our homes. Addressing domestic violence in your precinct should be a priority. Many victims of domestic violence may not seek police assistance. Consider working with healthcare facilities in your area to identify women, children and men who experience abuse in the home (or elsewhere), to stop the violence.

Quality, timely information is central to joint problem identification and problem solving when it comes to crime and violence.

The White Paper on Safety and Security calls for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of violence prevention interventions based on the collection and analysis of data.

MENTAL HEALTH COURTS

Source: Adapted from College of Policing, 2020

WHAT IS IT?

Mental health courts are designed to divert offenders that are suffering from a range of severe mental health challenges, such as depression and bipolar disorder, towards treatment options rather than imprisonment. Customised sentences are given depending upon the individual's needs, with supervision by a case manager to ensure that their treatment is completed. The average length of treatment given as a sentence is 12-18 months, and upon satisfactory completion, the defendant graduates from the programme and their criminal record for that offence may be removed.

IS IT EFFECTIVE?

The evidence suggests that this intervention has reduced crime. There was significantly less reoffending amongst mental health court participants compared to control groups. The review did not test different crime types. It also did not explore the follow-up time at which reoffending was measured.

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE?

The review was sufficiently systematic that most forms of bias that could influence the study conclusions can be ruled out.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Mental health courts may work by focusing on rehabilitation. This includes the notion that the law can be applied in a therapeutic way and aid individuals. In applying the law 'therapeutically', mental health courts focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment. By positively affecting the offender's quality of life, and providing the treatment (s)he needs, this may prevent future crimes. The compassionate judge-client relationship is the key to this, alongside treating participants with respect, engagement, and actively listening to them.

IN WHICH CONTEXTS DOES IT WORK BEST?

The reviews noted several potential moderators. The potential importance of participant race, age and gender is worth mentioning. It was also noted that participants with multiple disorders for instance, who also have substance misuse problems, are significantly less likely to graduate from the treatment programme than those with a single disorder.

Neither review tested whether any of these suggested moderators affected reoffending.

IMPLEMENTING THIS INITIATIVE?

There is no overall consensus about what constitutes a mental health court, and they vary depending upon the procedures in their location and the available treatments in the area. Nevertheless, there are several common components. For one, participants must report to the court regularly to discuss their progress or revise their treatment plans, with sanctions being applied for noncompliance. All participation is voluntarily, and graduation happens once they meet their individual goals and can handle their mental illness. In some cases, monthly drug screening is required for participants who also have a substance-related disorder.

HOW MUCH MIGHT IT COST?

A full cost-benefit analysis has not been conducted. A primary study specifically noted that mental health courts had the potential to decrease the cost of the most expensive forms of treatment that participants would otherwise face, such as hospitalisation.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Mental health courts require participants to plead guilty, and there are questions as to whether individuals with mental health issues can fully understand the implications of this, and provide informed consent to their participation. They are difficult to research due to the issue of a high degree of confidentiality in participant records.

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RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
Source: Adapted from College of Policing, 2020

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THE INTERVENTION?

This refers to a planned face-to-face meeting between a victim and the offender(s). Others affected by the offence, like family or community members may also attend. It is run by a trained facilitator and aims to give the victim, offender(s) and others, the chance to discuss the consequences of the offence, and agree on how the offender(s) should repair the harm they have caused - for instance, an apology or through financial reparations. Restorative Justice conferencing may be voluntary, or court-ordered and can replace a custodial sentence or follow a period of imprisonment. Victim-offender mediation is similar in content and aim; it involves bringing the victim and offender together, but not necessarily family and community members.

IS IT EFFECTIVE?

Overall, the evidence suggests that Restorative Justice (RJ) conferencing has reduced crime.

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE?

Most forms of bias can be ruled out.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Making the offenders meet the victims face to face may reduce their ability to justify their crimes and deny its impact on victims. RJ conferencing may offer an opportunity for moral development for offenders who have had limited exposure to constructive moral experiences. Offenders and victims may find the process fairer and more collaborative than the usual criminal justice process. This can leave the victim more satisfied and the offender more likely to voluntarily comply. RJ conferencing may allow the offenders to take responsibility for their actions and express genuine remorse for wrongdoing; a process that allows easier reintegration back into the community. It may also help to reduce the negative stigmatisation often associated with more traditional sanctions, and therefore allows the offenders to have better self-perception.

IN WHICH CONTEXTS DOES IT WORK BEST?

RJ conferences can be used for juvenile offenders and adults. It may be more effective in response to violent crime rather than property crime.

IMPLEMENTING THIS INITIATIVE?

Firstly the facilitator has a one-on-one discussion with the offender/s and victim/s separately about what an RJ conference is, how it works, and asks whether they consent to participate. The facilitator then schedules a conference at the victim's convenience. Participants sit in a private space with the door closed, in settings ranging from police stations to prisons to community centres or schools. The discussion begins by asking the offender to describe the crime (s)he committed. Victims and other participants are invited to describe the harm the crime has caused. All participants are then invited to suggest how the harm may be repaired. Once consensus is reached, this agreement is written up by the facilitator and signed by the offender. The agreement is filed with a court, police unit or other institutional mechanism for encouraging compliance by the offender with the agreement. The focus is not to determine guilt or innocence, but to consider an appropriate plan of action to move forward. Participation by both offenders and victims must be voluntary.

HOW MUCH MIGHT IT COST?

Evidence suggests that RJ conferencing is cost-effective, though start-up costs may be higher than running costs.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Overall, the evidence suggests that RJ conferencing has reduced crime. It reduces reoffending of violent offences but not property offences. The initiative was found to work best when implemented as a supplement to the traditional criminal justice sanctions rather than as a replacement.
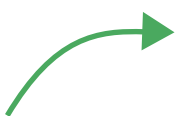
RELEVANCE TO SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's criminal justice system allows for restorative justice at every stage of the justice process:

1. Pre-charge (before a charge is laid).

2. Pre-trial (after a charge is laid and before an accused appears in court).

3. Post-charge (after charge, but before plea in court).

4. After conviction, but before sentence.

5. Post-sentence (for parole and re-integration purposes).

You may want to discuss options with your local prosecutor, or the Director of Legal Services (Department of Justice) in your province, to see if restorative justice conferencing can be used to reduce violence and other offences in your police area.

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SCARED STRAIGHT PROGRAMMES
Source: Adapted from College of Policing, 2020

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THE INTERVENTION?
Scared straight programmes aim to scare young people out of committing crime. They take young offenders or young people at risk of becoming offenders, to prison facilities where adult inmates tell them about life in prison and the choices they made that led to imprisonment.

IS IT EFFECTIVE?
Evidence suggests that the intervention has increased crime, with those exposed to the programme significantly more likely to reoffend than those who are not put through it.

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE?
Most forms of bias could be ruled out.

HOW DOES IT WORK?
These programmes are based on a belief that giving participants a realistic depiction of life in prison will deter further involvement in crime.

IN WHICH CONTEXTS DOES IT WORK BEST?
All studies were conducted in the United States.

IMPLEMENTING THIS INITIATIVE?
Sessions varied in the amount of time they took, ranging from two hours to a whole day, and the activities involved.

R

HOW MUCH MIGHT IT COST?
There is no economic analysis in the reviews.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS
Arousing fear in participants did not reduce subsequent criminal behaviour.

SUMMARY

Evidence suggests that this intervention increased juvenile offending. In most studies reviewed, on average, more juveniles who participated in the program were found to commit offences, compared to juveniles who did not participate. This evidence suggests a backfire effect of the programme. It is not clear why or how the programme encourages offending behaviour in juveniles.

RELEVANCE TO SOUTH AFRICA

Many South Africans may believe that spanking children and exposing them to life in prison, may deter them from future crime. Similarly, many people believe that the threat of the death penalty will prevent crime. But research shows that spanking does children more harm than good (and makes them more likely to be involved in violence in later life), exposure to prisons promotes future offending, and the death penalty does not deter offenders. It is important to realise that solutions do not lie in these areas.

QUESTION

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STREET LIGHTING

Source: Adapted from College of Policing, 2020

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THE INTERVENTION?

Improved street lighting is a form of situational crime prevention that increases light in public spaces. It is intended to serve many purposes, including accident and crime prevention.

IS IT EFFECTIVE?

Evidence suggests that this can reduce crime. Both violent and property crime was reduced by an average of 21 per cent in areas with improved street lighting, compared to areas without.

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE?

Most forms of bias can be ruled out.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Street lighting might reduce crime by increasing visibility and the number of people using the street. This could lead to increased natural surveillance to deter crime. It could also lead to residents caring more about their neighbourhood and taking other actions that might reduce crime in them.

IN WHICH CONTEXTS DOES IT WORK BEST?

Reductions are likely to be greater if the existing lighting is poor and if the improvement in lighting is considerable. Over 24 hours (day and night), an average of 30 fewer crimes were observed in areas with improved street lighting.

HOW MUCH MIGHT IT COST?

Unknown.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

New street lighting is more likely to have an effect where lighting is initially poor.

SUMMARY

Evidence suggests that improved street lighting can reduce crime. Crime (violent and property) reduced by an average of 21% in treatment areas where street lighting was increased, relative to comparison areas without increased street lighting. Exactly how this effect is achieved is unclear.

FOOTNOTES

[1] College of Policing, Crime Reduction Toolkit. https://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx

[2] Ratcliffe, J. Reducing Crime. Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.

[3] Ratcliffe, J. Reducing Crime. Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.

[4] Ratcliffe, J. Reducing Crime. Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.