Comparative Approaches to Urban Crime Prevention Focusing on Youth

Margaret Shaw, PhD

2007

THEMATIC ANALYSIS REPORT

Comparative Approaches to Urban Crime Prevention Focusing on Youth

Margaret Shaw PhD
International Centre for the Prevention of Crime

Introduction

> The latest pistol cases have almost all been cases of boys, hardly in their teens, deliberately using pistols as weapons of aggression…those "gangs" of young ruffians who terrorize certain districts of the metropolis seem, in fact, to be provided with firearms, and to think little more of discharging them than they would throwing stones.
>
> *The Daily Graphic*, 1898[1]

> In 2000, an estimated 199,000 youth murders took place globally – equivalent to 565 children and young people aged 10-29 years dying on average each day as a result of interpersonal violence.
>
> *World Report on Violence and Health*, 2002[2]

Concern about urban safety and the involvement of young people never seems to diminish, nor does concern about youth gangs and their contribution to urban crime. They seem always to have been a feature of urban life on every continent. While in different countries and decades there may have been periods of relative calm, anxiety about increasing rates of crime, youth offending and gang membership often recur. Young people are usually identified as the main public order problem in urban areas and as a major source of insecurity.

In recent years, rapid urbanization and deteriorating social and economic urban conditions combined with increasing proportions of children and young people, especially among the urban poor, have all contributed to providing fertile ground for the recruitment of young people into groups and gangs engaged in local crime and violence. The growth of transnational organized crime, most obviously manifest in the trafficking in small arms, drugs and persons, has facilitated that recruitment and exacerbated the associated violence. The majority of perpetrators and victims of urban violence are young men who are between 15 and 25 years old, an age when both men and women are at greatest risk of exploitation, crime and victimization. In some countries, levels of violence associated with young people have reached extraordinary heights, especially in Africa and Latin America. Indeed, violence occurs at disproportionately high levels in low and middle income countries. As the above quotation of the World Health Organization indicates, some 199,000 youths worldwide were murdered in 2000, which means that about 565 children and young people aged 10-29 died each day that year.

How do we respond to this situation? In 1898, the British *Daily Graphic* suggested that if "birching and short sentences" did not work, then "more birching and longer sentences" would have to be tried. As we now know, there are many other alternatives to repressive and punitive *mano dura* approaches[3]. This paper looks at some of the concrete and effective approaches to urban crime prevention found in a range of countries in the North and the South, focusing on youth and youth gangs. These include both prevention strategies and programmes.

---

[1] The Daily Graphic, 15 February 1898, published in London, United Kingdom. Quoted in Pearson (1983), p.105.
[2] World Health Organization (2002).
[3] For example, countries like El Salvador have followed a *super mano dura* policy since 2003.

The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC) has gathered and compared information, knowledge and trends related to crime prevention from many cities, countries and regions of the world since it was established in 1994.[4] This paper draws on a range of sources, including the United Nations guidelines contained in resolution 2002/13 of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on "Action to promote effective crime prevention" and the outcomes of Workshop No. 3 on crime prevention in urban areas and for youth at risk, which took place at the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Bangkok in April 2005 (Shaw and Travers, 2007). The present paper aims to provide a brief overview of what we have learned recently about youths and their involvement in urban crime, and the experience gained from many countries on crime prevention; it looks at the principles that should guide our relations with young people with a view to preventing urban crime; and provides some examples of effective and promising strategies and practices from around the world.

A worldwide challenge

What are the concerns for urban areas and what part do young people play?

The impact of globalization, both good and bad, require all countries and regions to look beyond their borders. In 2007, a major turning point was reached when, for the first time, the world's urban population exceeded that living in rural areas (UN-HABITAT, 2006; Shaw and Travers, 2007). Rapid urbanization, especially over the past 15 years, has spurred the growth of a number of megacities with over 20 million inhabitants and brought many challenges, including the huge growth in informal settlements. Some 1 billion slum dwellers now live in extremely deprived and difficult conditions. Internal migration and immigration flows have increased the numbers of ethnic and cultural minorities living in cities. There are increasing disparities of income and access to services, housing, education, health and security, in addition to long-term poverty and unemployment. Furthermore, children and young people now represent up to 50 per cent of the population of many cities and megacities, especially in less developed countries, and constitute up to half of the urban poor.

The marginalization and exclusion of those living in poverty has coincided with the breakdown of traditional family structures or social and cultural networks; the impact of HIV/AIDS; increased crime and violence in urban areas, including organized crime; increased trafficking in drugs and small arms; sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons; youth crime and victimization; and increased fear and insecurity. City and national governments are increasingly under pressure to respond to crime with tough and repressive measures.

Many observers, even in the relatively less crowded cities in developed countries, perceive a deterioration in their quality of life and in their ability to access public spaces in urban areas. The city no longer appears to be a place in which everyone can live, work and move around easily. Other trends include the increasing use of surveillance technologies (especially closed circuit television), the privatization of public space, including the growth of gated communities, and the proliferation of private security companies and technologies. And it is the most disadvantaged of young people who tend to be surveyed or excluded the most from public and semi-private spaces. It is they who, most commonly, are the subject of repressive and deterrent responses to crime and disorder, while also being the least protected from crime and victimization.

---

[4] See www.crime-prevention-intl.org for more information on ICPC and its mission.

The seriousness of the situation is well illustrated in countries such as Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Nigeria and South Africa. In Brazil, for example, Silvia Ramos of the Centre for Studies on Public Security and Citizenship at the University of Candido Mendes notes that the number of homicides increased from some 13,000 in 1980 to over 50,000 in 2003. This increase starkly illustrates what she terms the "age of death", the "colour of death", the "gender of death" and the "geography of death" (Ramos, 2006). The increase in homicides has primarily involved young black men in the *favelas*, the crowded and poorest areas of Brazilian cities, who are being killed primarily by other young men from the same neighbourhoods. A higher proportion of them compared with their peers in other countries are also killed by the security forces, including the police.

Perhaps one important and hopeful trend, however, is that the links between crime, violence and development have recently become much more widely recognized than in the past. Security is now seen as a constraint on development, one which requires us to develop strong prevention strategies in parallel with measures to create wealth and jobs (Buvenic et al., 2005; Moser and McIlwaine, 2006; Stone and Miller, 2005; UNODC, 2005 and 2007). And there are now standards and norms to guide crime prevention strategies in urban areas.

The United Nations guidelines and principles for intervention in urban areas

Since the approval of technical guidelines on crime prevention in 1997 and the adoption of ECOSOC resolution 2002/13, countries and cities have been able to refer to norms and standards for the development of crime prevention strategies and policies. The guidelines contained in the resolution set out the basic principles for such policies, including the importance of:
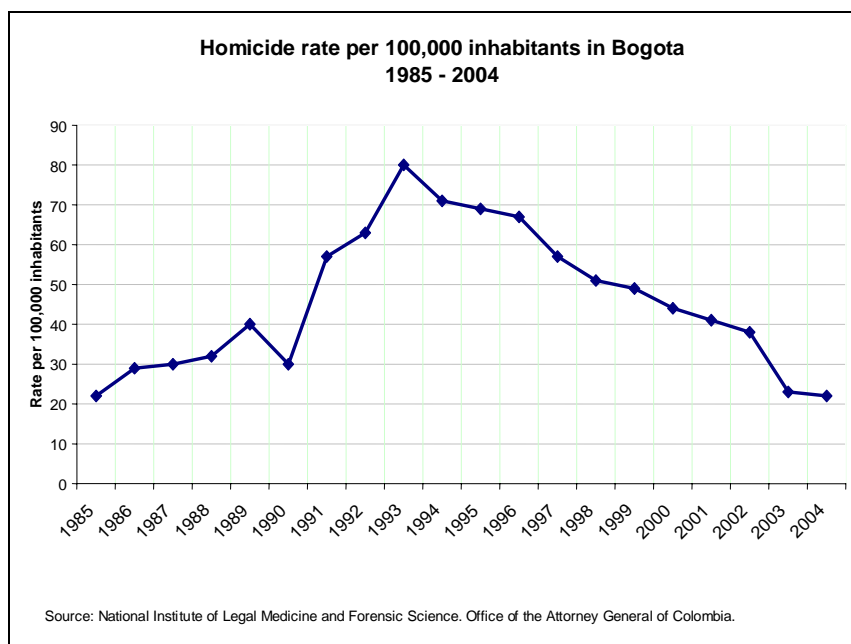
(a) Government leadership;
(b) Socio-economic development and inclusion;
(c) Cooperation and partnerships;
(d) Sustainability and accountability;
(e) Use of a knowledge base;
(f) Human rights and a culture of lawfulness;
(g) Interdependency;
(h) Differentiation.

Effective urban crime prevention strategies require: strong leadership from national and local governments; strategic planning based on sound analysis of problems and causes, and comprehensive strategies which include the whole range of services and institutions affecting the daily lives of people; community-based and problem-solving policing; and strong partnerships between policy makers, service providers and civil society. It also requires governments to uphold the human rights of citizens and to work against the exclusion of vulnerable groups including the urban poor, children and young people, women and minorities.

These principles were exemplified in many of the strategies and projects on urban crime prevention and for youth at risk presented at the crime prevention workshop at the Eleventh United Nations Congress in Bangkok in 2005 (Shaw and Travers, 2005 and 2007). This included presentations from 15 different countries from all regions of the world, as well as a Compendium of 64 promising strategies and programmes which was published for the event (Acero, 2005 and

2006; *Harvard Gazette*, 11 March 2004).[5] These examples also underline the spread of strategic crime prevention strategies in many parts of the world, and the increasing number of urban areas that have implemented good practices.

Bogota, Colombia, provides a good example of the success that strong local leadership combined with a comprehensive strategy can have in reducing urban crime and violence. Under a succession of mayors, including Antanas Mockus and Enrique Peñalosa, and combining public health and urban development approaches with citizen education, the rate of deaths from homicide and accidents fell from a peak of 80 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1994 to 22 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2004 (Acero, 2005 and 2006; *Harvard Gazette*, 11 March 2004).

**Homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants in Bogota
1985 - 2004**

Source: National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Science. Office of the Attorney General of Colombia.

The problem of youth groups

Many countries have produced reports on or discussed the apparent increases in violence caused by youth gangs or groups. These deal with a range of issues, from long-term but significant increases over decades, as in the United States (Miller, 2001), and recent increases in youth homicides associated with youth gangs in Toronto, Canada, to reports of attacks by youth street gangs on asylum seekers and refugees in countries ranging from South Africa to Scotland. In Australia, it has been argued that perceptions that youth gangs exist and are a danger to the community will almost inevitably cause the authorities to take action, and that debates about "gangs" have been racialized in most places, with young ethnic minorities being the main subjects (White, 2004).

Concerns about youth violence and crime revolve around a number of factors, including the use of alcohol and drugs, access to small arms, links with more organized adult gangs,

---

[5] The countries represented at the workshop included Belgium, Brazil, Cambodia, the Czech Republic, Japan, Madagascar, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, the Republic of Tanzania, the United Kingdom and Viet Nam. Proceedings of the workshop are available in English, French and Spanish.

increases in the number and size of gangs and in the extent of violence caused by young people. In Central America and the Caribbean, the deportation of gang members from the United States has been seen as a major factor in the recent increase in gang-formation and organized violence in that region (Arana, 2005; Dowdney, 2005). The *2006 Small Arms Survey* of the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland, has analysed the devastating impact that the traffic in small arms has had in terms of increasing the level of lethal violence among young men in countries in various regions, from sub-Saharan Africa to Latin America, from the Caribbean to Polynesia (Bevan and Florquin, 2006). In many countries, therefore, Governments are being pressured to act against real or perceived increases in youth gang activity and violence, and to use tougher laws and sentences.

In the United States, a century of research into youth gangs has gathered ample evidence not only of their existence, but also of their specific characteristics. In other developed countries, youth gangs are a more recent concern. A combination of general worries about crime, media attention and specific events have led many countries to investigate their own experience and to look for evidence of youth gang problems. In England and Wales, the first official survey of delinquent youth groups was only conducted in 2004 and a study of the links between youth groups, gangs and weapons was published in 2007 (Sharp, Aldridge and Medina, 2006; Youth Justice Board, 2007). In Scotland, the first specific study was conducted in 2001 (Smith and Bradshaw, 2005). Both England and Scotland, among others, are reluctant to label youth groups as "gangs" because of the dangers of creating or reinforcing gang identities.

The Eurogang Project, in place since 1998, has examined youth gang experiences across European countries, often in comparison with the situation in the United States (Klein et al., 2001). In most European countries, there is little evidence of the existence of widespread, serious youth gangs modelled on the highly organized, stereotypical youth gang of the United States. Nevertheless, using the definition developed by the Eurogang programme that "a street gang is any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part if their group identity", surveys of youth in the United States and the Netherlands have found that 8 per cent of the United States sample and 6 per cent of the Dutch sample could be classified as belonging to gangs or "troublesome youth groups" (Esbensen and Weerman, 2005).

In Canada, youth gangs have mainly been the subject of local city studies, in particular in cities such as Winnipeg, Montreal and Toronto (Gordon, 2000; Chatterjee, 2006; Chamandy, 2006). The only national data that exists is a national survey based on police estimates of gang presence conducted in 2002 (Astwood, 2003).[6]

Until recently, Australia had no national information on the extent or characteristics of youth gangs, although the phenomenon is perceived as an emerging problem. The Ozgang Research Network, inspired by the European example, was established in 2001 (White, 2002 and 2004).

---

[6] Since 2006, the Federal Government of Canada has announced its intention to strengthen the law to respond to youth gangs and gun use, as well as to devote more than 16 million Canadian dollars in support of youth crime prevention strategies.

From groups of friends to organized armed violence

> In spite of the apparent spread of gangs during the past 15 years,
> there is still considerable debate about what constitutes a gang.
> Esbensen and Weerman, 2005

On the basis of the many studies in different countries, while there is no general consensus on what is a youth gang, there is some agreement that there are many different types of youth groups and gangs, with varying characteristics in terms of their formation, roles, levels of crime-involvement, stability and longevity. Youth groups and gangs vary widely in their composition, life-span and characteristics, from loose groups of young people; groups and "wanna-bes", often associated with a neighbourhood or territory; more formalized and identified street gangs with a hierarchy and some criminal involvement; gangs with some links to organized crime; and institutionalized gangs using organized armed violence (Gordon, 2000; Astwood, 2003). All these youth groups and gangs primarily involve young men, who are also the majority of the victims of their activities.

A number of writers have developed typologies of youth formations, ranging from loose groups of neighbourhood friends, spontaneous youth groups occasionally involved in crime, purposive groups or gangs engaged in crime, to highly visible and structured street gangs, and organized criminal gangs (Dowdney, 2005; Klein et al., 2001; Mellor et al, 2005). In the United States, Malcolm Klein's classification of street gangs—one of the most widely used in the North—makes distinctions according to age, length of existence, size of membership, degree of organization, existence of sub-groups, territoriality and criminal versatility.

There is also some agreement that the risk factors for involvement of youth in urban crime and violence include not only personal characteristics or family circumstances and a lack of schooling or educational opportunities, but also exacerbating factors such as marginalization, poverty/relative deprivation, racism, unemployment, drug and small arms trafficking, deportation policies, government and police corruption, and connections to transnational organized crime.

Young people and organized armed violence

However, while the youth gangs of the United States have long held a fascination for Northern academics, in theory and in practice they are not necessarily the most appropriate model on which to base policies and interventions in other regions or countries. While the risk and exacerbating factors for involvement in serious youth gang violence may be similar, not just the scale of the problems but also the complexity of the links with local communities and histories can be very different. The involvement of children and youth in organized armed violence, often with devastating consequences for their communities and themselves, has been the subject of comparative case studies in a number of countries (Dowdney, 2005; Hagedorn, 2005 and 2007). Such groups have been defined as:

> Children and youth employed or otherwise participating in Organized Armed Violence where there are elements of a command structure and power over territory, local population or resources.
> Dowdney, 2005

Examples have been identified in Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, the Philippines, South Africa and parts of the United States. They range from groups

that do not openly carry arms but use them in fights with other groups or the police, to groups that are openly armed and patrol their communities. The latter tend to be found in areas without strong state police or security forces and, sometimes (for example, in the case of the Bakassi Boys of Nigeria), work with local government forces.

The complexity of such groups is well demonstrated by the experience of organized youth gangs in the Cape Flats of South Africa (Leggett, 2005; Standing, 2003, 2005 and 2006). From a series of detailed studies of the origins and characteristics of these groups, which often recruit boys as young as 10 or 12, it is evident that these groups have strong historical links to the state and that they often play a significant role in the local economy and its social and cultural life by providing locals with support and some income; in return, the youth gangs receive support from those communities. Repressing or removing such groups is neither simple nor effective, given the complex ties and the huge and growing populations of children and young people who might take their place. It is argued, therefore, that organized armed violence is a distinct problem which needs to be recognized by cities and national governments, as well as internationally. The segregation of cities, the clear links between the social exclusion of marginalized populations and the development and survival of organized armed groups, their institutionalization in some countries and cities, all point to the need to invest in other preventive approaches (Hagedorn, 2005; Standing, 2006).

Lessons learned from recent practice and evaluation

> We cannot continue as we have been with respect to gangs, gang violence, and the communities most affected by both. Gangs and our response to gangs alike have grave implications. The lives of individuals and of a community can be destroyed by gang violence. But those lives can also be destroyed by the demonization of offenders and what follows in its wake.
>
> David Kennedy, 2007

As suggested earlier in this paper, there has been an enormous expansion in terms of investment, knowledge, experience and experiments in crime prevention strategies over the past 10 or more years. Certainly since 2000, the body of knowledge about effective crime prevention has grown and increasing numbers of countries are implementing strategies and programmes which recognize the complexity of causes and the need to tailor strategies to local contexts, as well as the huge cost benefits that come from investing in prevention. This is especially the case in relation to youth crime prevention, since youth are so often identified as "the problem".

As the 2005 United Nations Congress workshop concluded, the United Nations guidelines contained in ECOSOC resolution 2002/13 provide a basis for the development of effective strategies for responding to youth violence and at-risk youth, including:

(a) Inclusive approaches which reduce youth marginalization;
(b) Participatory approaches;
(c) Integrated multisectoral strategies;
(d) Balanced strategies which include early intervention, social and educational programmes, restorative approaches and crime control;
(e) Targeted and tailored strategies and programmes to meet the needs of specific at-risk groups;
(f) Approaches which respect the rights of children and young people.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the escalation of punitive responses to youth violence in the United States, among other countries, is unsustainable. Viewing violence as a public health

problem opens up a much greater variety of responses and there are good examples of effective prevention alternatives (for example, Welsh, 2005; Shaw, 2005). Overall, the experiences of countries in the North have shown that carefully balanced and planned strategies that adhere to the above principles can help prevent and reduce youth crime. Some of these very clear examples of effective and successful strategies and programmes have been evaluated and replicated in developed countries. White (2004) concludes that the most successful interventions have involved some combination of coercive and early intervention or developmental approaches. Interventions may be universal or targeted to specific areas and populations to prevent and reduce youth crime and gang involvement, or include tertiary prevention programmes and gang-exit strategies for young people already involved.

Examples of projects and strategies targeting urban youth and gang violence

Some of the most successful initiatives are modelled on a project that was developed in Boston, United States, in the mid 1990s to respond to youth gang and gun violence (Kennedy et al., 2001). Using a logical, adapted process in conjunction with broad, city-wide partnerships and targeted interventions, Boston achieved a two-thirds reduction in youth homicides over a period of three years. In the following 10 years, some 16 or more American cities (including Minneapolis, Indianapolis and Stockton) crafted their own version of the Boston approach with similarly impressive results. These have been described by David Kennedy, one of the researchers involved over the period, as "transformational". The approach is currently being supported by Project Safe Neighbourhoods of the United States Justice Department (Kennedy, 2007).

Other examples of effective programmes implemented in the United States include the Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention and Suppression developed and evaluated by the United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Prevention in several cities. The approach involves mobilizing the community; providing academic, economic and social opportunities; social interventions involving street outreach workers; suppressing gangs; and a commitment to organizational change and development.[7]

In 2006, a network of 13 major cities in California known as the California Gang Prevention Network was created to combat gang violence and victimization. Each city is led by its mayor and police, and a five-member team of key stakeholders who meet twice yearly and interact monthly to learn from each other and exchange experiences. The network uses the key elements of successful strategies: communicating a clear commitment from city leaders to end violence, identifying the small percentage of youths who cause the most violence, using intervention services for those most at risk, and starting prevention early with families, children and youth. (California Gang Prevention Network, 2006).

In response to a serious increase in gun-related youth violence in recent years, the City of Toronto, Canada, established its Community Safety Plan in 2004.[8] The plan is multisectoral, targeted and focuses on youth engagement and cultural competence. It has four key priorities: strong neighbourhoods, youth opportunities, youth justice and community crisis response. It focuses on 13 priority neighbourhoods where most of the incidents occur, works to strengthen neighbourhood supports and works in partnerships that link the government, local communities

---

[7] United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Prevention Summary August 2000 - Youth Gangs Programs and Strategies. www.ncjrs.org

[8] www.toronto.ca/community_safety.

and the private sector. A strong emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for young people in the targeted neighbourhoods through education and apprenticeship programmes, recreation and cultural involvement, and on strengthening youth participation and engagement. The City of Montreal has similarly established an integrated plan of action called *Villes-gangs de rue*, which combines the work of local service providers, the police and researchers, and targets street gangs in the five city areas most affected by their activities (Chamandy, 2006).

In a review of violence prevention in Latin American countries, Moser and McIlwaine (2005) recommend an "integrated framework for intervention" which combines an analysis of the local context with an asset-based analysis of the causes, costs and consequences of violence. The framework brings together seven "ideal" policy approaches: criminal justice, public health, conflict transformation (for example, through peace building), human rights, citizen security, crime prevention through environmental design, and social capital/community driven development. Each of these approaches can impact different categories of urban violence.

Another example of an effective, integrated urban strategy is that of the City of Diadema in the district of Sao Paulo in Brazil, which had the highest level of homicides in the metropolitan area in 2000. Under the leadership of its mayor, José de Filippi Jr., the city established a 10-point security plan to reduce homicides (see José de Filippi Jr. in Shaw and Travers, 2007 and www.comunidadesegura.org). The plan included the creation of a municipal security department that mapped all criminal activity on a daily basis, integrated the police forces in the city, increased and developed the municipal police force, and legislated the closure of bars and restaurants between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. The department was also mandated to institute a range of social, educational and environmental policies by, for example, organizing a young apprenticeship programme, increasing support to schools and designing public education campaigns against guns and violence. The plan has resulted in an 80 per cent drop in homicides in the city. By 2004, Diadema ranked eighteenth in terms of homicide levels in the area and the number of homicides was reduced from 31 to 6 a month. The security plan, now in its second phase, has also incorporated the use of conflict mediation approaches.

Based on the experience gained by a project called Children and Youth in Organised Armed Violence and as a result of working with young people at risk of, or involved in, organized armed violence in Brazil, Dowdney (2005) suggests that it is important to develop low-level projects that build the resistance of children and youth while also undertaking longer-term work to reduce risk factors. The Fight for Peace initiative was established in 2001, in Rio de Janiero, Brazil, as a partnership project by the organization Viva Rio (see Marianna Olinger in Shaw and Travers, 2007). It began in a *favela* with serious problems of poverty, marginalization and armed gangs. The project is open to all young people in the area and offers a combination of sports (boxing), education, work, and citizenship and leadership skills training with the aim of providing participants with alternatives to youth gangs and drugs. The value and impact of involving young people directly in the development of youth gang reduction strategies has been underlined by this and other studies (for example, Winton, 2004; United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2004).

In Tasmania, Australia, the Chance on Main project targets 14 to 19 year-olds at serious risk of becoming involved in criminal activities. It was developed after extensive local consultation, including with the young people affected. The programme uses mentoring by high profile community and sporting personalities, and intensive individual support and counselling and family support (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2007).

Examples of the inclusion of children and youth in local decision-making through participatory democracy mechanisms in four cities in Brazil, Ecuador and Venezuela also provide evidence of the effectiveness of these methods in building awareness of citizenship, and of the often simple and innovative nature of young people's ideas and solutions to local problems.

> The concerns articulated by the children…demonstrate their keen awareness of their surroundings and of the problems that affect most people. Their concerns tend to be simple: young people focused on issues basic to their health and well-being. Few unrealistic demands were made. …They wanted lights in dangerous tunnels, covers for drainage ditches that threatened their safety, window repairs in schools, sports areas that could be completed for a small investment, or a doctor for a local health centre.
>
> <div align="right">Cabannes, 2006</div>

Another example of strategic interventions concerning youth violence prevention is the Gun Free Towns project supported by the United Nations Development Programme in two cities in El Salvador (San Martin and Ilopango). The project combines public education against guns (often involving youth in developing media and other campaigns), gun confiscation and restrictions on use, and cultural events aimed at reclaiming high-risk public spaces. A 41 per cent drop in homicides and a 29 per cent reduction in gun-related crimes has been reported since June 2005, and the overall crime rate has also dropped. The lessons learned from this project underscore the importance of: political will, a detailed diagnosis of gun-incidence locations, the training of national police and metropolitan agents in inspection and monitoring activities, and local community management (www.comunidadesegura.org).

The Open School Programme (Escola Aberta) implemented in the State of Pernambuco, Brazil, is another promising initiative. Based on the finding that in Brazil twice as many youth homicides were recorded over the weekend than during the week, the project, which began in 2002 with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other organizations, keeps schools open at weekends to provide cultural and educational opportunities for young people. Parents are also invited. The pilot programme was found to reduce youth crimes around the city of Recife by 30 per cent, and the programme has now been extended and consolidated into public policy and adopted in six other major cities in Brazil (www.comunidadesegura.org).

Applying lessons learned

As outlined above, urbanization is affecting all regions of the world. Urban areas are facing increasing challenges, especially for the children and young people who constitute almost half of the urban poor. The involvement of children and young people in crime and victimization is not going to go away. Youth groups and youth gangs of different kinds are found in most countries and cities. Some are ephemeral while others are more institutionalized, and many are very complex. There are dangers in cementing gang identity by labeling groups of youth as gangs, and in cementing opposition through *mano dura* approaches.

Responding to these challenges requires strong government will and determination. Cities need to provide leadership, and developing individual programmes is not sufficient. The programmes need to be part of broader local government strategies and ensure the commitment of a wide range of partners—service providers, organizations and individuals—to make sure that

they are sustainable beyond the life of one government or the length of one mayor's term of office. The United Nations guidelines for crime prevention, among others, provide a basis for developing such approaches.

The lessons are clear: projects that see youth violence and victimization as a public problem and a health problem, that are inclusive and participatory, and that use a strategic approach built on careful analysis and a balanced array of interventions are likely to be effective in the short and the long term. Local responses require a careful analysis of local contexts, and must be tailored and adapted to those contexts. In all cases, the underlying factors relating to the environment and social and economic opportunities available to young people must be addressed. There is now an impressive amount of experience that is waiting to be translated into effective strategies to prevent and reduce youth violence and gang activity.

Bibliography

Acero, Hugo (2005). *El caso Bogota – Colombia: Programa integral de seguridad ciudadana*. Presentation at the National Seminar "Seguranca Urbana: Parceiros na Prevencao do Crime e da Violencia", Brasilia, 15-17 June 2005.

_____ (2006). *Bogota's success story*. Published 8 December 2006 for www.communidadesegura.org.

Arana, Ana (2005). "How the street gangs took Central America." *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 84 No. 3. May-June, pp.98-110.

Astwood Strategy Corporation (2003). *Results of the 2002 Canadian Police Survey on Youth Gangs.* Ottawa: Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada.

Australian Institute of Criminology (2007). *Newsletter No. 28*, March 2007. Available at http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/newsletters/28/newsletter28.pdf.

Bevan, James and Nicolas Florquin (2006). "Few options but the gun: Angry young men" In *Annual Report of the Small Arms Survey 2006: Unfinished Business.* Geneva: Graduate Institute of International Studies. www.smallarmssurvey.org.

Buvenic, M., E. Alda and J. Lamas (2005). *Emphasizing Prevention in Citizen Security. The Inter-American Development Bank's Contribution to Reducing Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean.* Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank.

Dowdney, Luke, (2005). *Neither War not Peace: International Comparisons of Children and Youth in Organized Armed Violence.* Rio de Janiero: Viva Rio and Children and Youth in Organised Armed Violence.

Cabannes, Y. (2006). "Children and young people build participatory democracy in Latin American cities." *Environment and Urbanization,* 18 (1), pp.195-218.

California Gang Prevention Network (2006). *Bulletin No. 1*. September. National Council on Crime and Delinquency; National League of Cities, Institute for Youth, Education and Families. United States. www.nlc.org.

Chamandy, Anne (2006). *Comité Ville Gang de Rue. Rapport d'Étape.* Montreal: Montreal Community Police Service.

Chatterjee, Jarna (2006). *A Research Report on Youth Gangs: Problems, Perspectives and Priorities.* Ottawa: Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Esbensen, Finn-Aage (2004). *Evaluating G.R.E.A.T.: A school-based gang prevention program.* Research for Policy. National Institute of Justice, June. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Justice.

Esbensen, Finn-Aage and Frank M. Weerman (2005). "Youth gangs and troublesome youth groups in the United States and the Netherlands". *European Journal of Criminology* (2)1, pp.5-37.

Gordon, Robert M. (2000). "Criminal business organizations, street gangs and 'wanna be' groups: a Vancouver perspective". *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 42 (1), pp.39-60.

Hagedorn, John, M. (2005). "The global impact of gangs". *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice,* 21 (2), pp.153-169.

Hagedorn, John M., editor (2007). *Gangs in the Global City. Alternatives to Traditional Criminology.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Harvard Gazette (2004). "Academic turns city into a social experiment." Maria Cristina Caballero. Issue March 11th. *Harvard Gazette Archives.* www.hno.harvard.edu/gazette/archives.html

Kelling, G. (2005). "Community crime reduction: activating formal and informal control". In Tilley, N., editor, *Handbook of Crime Prevention and Community Safety.* Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

Kennedy, David M. (2007). *Making Communities Safer: Youth Violence and Gang Interventions that Work.* Prepared Testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security. 15 February. Director, Center for Crime Prevention and Control, John Jay College of Criminal Justice New York.

Kennedy, David, Anthony A. Braga and Anne Piehl. (2001). *Reducing Gun Violence. The Boston Gun Project's Operation Ceasefire.* Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.

Klein, M.W., H-J. Kerner, C.L. Maxson, and E. Weitekamp, editors, (2001). *The Eurogang Paradox. Street Gangs and Youth groups in the U.S. and Europe.* Berlin: Springer.

Leggett, Ted. (2005). "Terugskiet: Growing up on the street corners of Manenburg, South Africa." Institute for Security Studies for Children and Youth in Organized Armed Violence.

Miller, Walter B. (2001). *The Growth of Youth Gangs Problems in the United States: 1970-98.* United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Prevention Report. April. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Justice.

Moser, Caroline O.N. and Cathy McIlwaine (2006). "Latin American urban violence as a development concern: Towards a framework for violence reduction". *World development*, 34(1), pp.89-112.

Pearson, Geoffrey, (1983). *Hooligan. A History of Respectable Fears.* London: The Macmillan Press.

Ramos, Silvia (2006). *Juventude e Violencia.* Presentation at the Seminario de Prevencao a Violencia e a Criminalidade, Belo Horizonte, 9-10 November 2006.

Sharp, Clare, Judith Aldridge and Juanjo Medina (2006). *Delinquent youth groups and offending behaviour: findings from the 2004 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey.* Home Office Online Report 14/06. London: Home Office.

Shaw, Margaret (2005). *Youth and Gun Violence: The Outstanding Case for Prevention.* Montreal: International Centre for the Prevention of Crime. www.crime-prevention-intl.org

Shaw, Margaret and Travers, Kathryn, editors (2005). *Urban Crime and Youth at Risk: Compendium of Promising Strategies and Programme.* Montreal: International Centre for the Prevention of Crime. www.crime-prevention-intl.org.

_____ (2007). *Strategies and Best Practices in Crime Prevention in particular in relation to Urban Areas and Youth at Risk.* Proceedings of the Workshop held at the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Bangkok, Thailand, 18-25 April 2005. Montreal: International Centre for the Prevention of Crime. www.crime-prevention-intl.org.

Smith, David, J. and Bradshaw, Paul. (2005). *Gang Membership and Teenage Offending.* Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime. Edinburgh: Centre for Law and Society, University of Edinburgh.

Standing, André. (2003). "The social contradictions of organized crime on the Cape Flats". *ISS Paper 74.* Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

_____ (2005). "The threat of gangs and anti-gang policy". *ISS Paper 116.* Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

_____ (2006). *Organized Crime. A Study from the Cape Flats.* Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

Stone, Christopher and Miller, Joel. (2005). *Supporting Security Justice and Development: Lessons for a New Era*. Produced for the United Kingdom Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. New York: Vera Institute of Justice.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) (2004). *Youth, Children and Urban Governance*. Policy Dialogue Series No. 2. Nairobi: UN-HABITAT Global Campaign on Urban Governance.

_____ (2006). *The State of the World's Cities 2006/2007.* Earthscan Publications. Nairobi: UN-HABITAT.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2005). *Crime and Development in Africa.* Research Section. Vienna.

_____ (2007). *Crime and Development in Central America.* Research Section. Vienna.

_____ (2007). *Crime and Development in the Caribbean.* Research Section. Vienna.

Youth Justice Board (2007). *Groups, Gangs and Weapons: A summary of research into the nature and prevalence of young people's involvement in group offending, gangs and weapons.* London: Youth Justice Board. www.yjb.gov.uk.

Welsh, Brandon (2005). "Public health and the prevention of juvenile criminal violence." *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 3(1), pp. 23-40.

White, Rob (2002). "Understanding youth gangs". *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice.* No. 237. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

White, Rob (2004). "Police and community responses to youth gangs". *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice.* No. 274. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

World Health Organization. 2002. *World Report on Violence and Health.* Geneva.

Winton, Ailsa (2004). "Young people's views on how to tackle gang violence in 'post conflict' Guatemala". *Environment and Urbanization,* 16(2), pp. 83-99.

Other resources

www.coav.org Children and Adolescents in Organized Armed Violence.
www.comunidadesegura.org Latin American city prevention network
www.dojconnect.com National Institute of Justice - Gang Prevention publications