



URBAN SAFETY BRIEF No. 2/2022

The Potential of the Expanded Public Works Programme to Promote Community Safety

This Urban Safety Brief considers the imperative of partnership policing for ensuring safer cities in South Africa. It looks at how partnership policing can be used to address the complex crime and safety challenges faced by cities.

The SA Cities Urban Safety Reference Group's Briefs Series is designed to distil the state of current knowledge on urban safety-related topics for a policy and planning audience. It is presented quarterly to the City Budget Forum and other key stakeholders.



BACKGROUND

The State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report of 2018/19 illustrates that crime and violence is mostly concentrated within cities due to social, economic, spatial, and cultural risk factors resulting from extreme poverty and inequality in South African cities¹. Thus, the high rates of crime and violence seen in South Africa's metros and major cities, including contact crimes, property-related crimes, and other serious crimes, demonstrate a relationship between urban poverty and violence.²

Several studies indicate that high levels of unemployment and poverty are closely linked to increased levels of violence in certain South African metros.³ Similarly, some international studies confirm this link, although the specific causal relationship remains disputed⁴. Nonetheless, poverty's role as a major risk factor contributing to violence is generally accepted among policy makers. Consequently, the establishment of public employment programmes is viewed as a form of crime and violence prevention based on the assumption that if young people in high-crime areas are given employment opportunities, they will be at a reduced risk of becoming involved in criminal activities associated with violence.⁵ Public employment also provides avenues for social development and strengthening of social cohesion, which are also directly linked to violence prevention. Thus, public employment programmes have the potential to deliver violence prevention projects that can be expanded or replicated at scale.

Research by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV) provides evidence that South African public employment programmes such as the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and the Community Work Programme (CWP) can play a role in violence prevention through activities that directly and indirectly prevent violence and by promoting social cohesion. This potential for contributing to violence prevention is however not usually effectively mobilised at a grand scale.⁶

The focus of this policy brief is to explore the potential of EPWP projects to promote urban safety and prevent violence. In South Africa, the EPWP emerges in 2003 as a nation-wide public employment initiative implementing state-owned enterprises in response to the theme of, "decent employment through inclusive economic growth," that emerged out of the Growth and Development Summit (GDS) of the same year. The programme is located

under the Department of Public Works (DPW) and is divided across 4 sectors: Infrastructure; Non-State; Environment and Culture; and Social; and is implemented throughout government and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). The EPWP broadly is designed to “provide work opportunities and income support to poor and unemployed people through the delivery of public and community assets and services, thereby contributing to development... Its central principle is to use labour intensive methods in optimising job opportunities and skills development, whilst encouraging participants to enter the job market.”⁷ It is therefore seen as a short- to medium-term initiative aimed at bringing more people into the economy by providing job opportunities and skills development. Participants in the EPWP are employed on a temporary basis with a minimum wage rate per project. EPWP participants may not be employed for more than 24 months in a five-year cycle, as the programme is designed as a gateway initiative. The EPWP creates work opportunities by providing employment through government-funded projects in government departments, non-profit organisations and the CWP.⁸

The Department of Public Works, Department of Environmental Affairs, Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and the Department of Social Development are the leading sector departments responsible for the implementation of the EPWP.⁹ The EPWP creates work opportunities in four sectors, namely Infrastructure, Environment and Culture, Economic, and Social by: 1) increasing the labour intensity of government-funded infrastructure projects, 2) creating work opportunities through NPOs and CWPs, 3) creating work opportunities in public environment and culture programmes, and 4) creating work opportunities in public social programmes.¹⁰ Since its inception, the EPWP has gone through three phases of five year intervals, and is currently in Phase four as of April 2019.¹¹

The EPWP phase four is intended to build on lessons from the past fifteen years as well as draw on international experience in order to identify measures that will address emerged weaknesses of the programme, whilst maximising on developmental opportunities.¹² The job creation targets for the four implemented EPWP phases are as follows: one million for Phase one (2004-2009), two million for Phase two (2009-2014), six million for Phase three (2014-2019), and five million for Phase four (2019-2024).¹³ In the 2019/20 annual review, it is reported that 994 699 work opportunities were achieved against the annual target of 981 497.¹⁴ These figures demonstrate that the EPWP provides a valuable source of employment in South African cities, with its total budget increasing from R2.7 billion in 2019/20

to R2.9 billion in 2020/21.¹⁵ The EPWP in the 2019/20 financial year further transferred R12 billion as income support to participants.¹⁶ Within this same financial year, it was found that 80% of paid wages to the EPWP participants was transferred to rural municipalities as compared to urban municipalities, demonstrating that the wages earned by participants contributes to a reduced levels of poverty.¹⁷ Over the years, EPWP has been engaging in projects that potentially may contribute crime and violence prevention directly or indirectly. Some of these projects include community safety projects, parks management, sports, early childhood programmes, home-based care services, substance abuse interventions, extra school support programmes, live hood initiatives, and environmental/waste management.

The 2019/20 annual report illustrates that 13 407 projects were implemented across all the EPWP sectors across the country.¹⁸ These implemented EPWP projects are intended to equip participants with training and work experience to optimise their abilities and to enter the job market. In the 2019/20 financial year, through the EPWP Enterprise Development function, EPWP participants were supported to start and operate businesses, resulting in 320 entities supported.¹⁹ A further 5320 participants underwent a capacity building training in partnership with the Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA), to improve their financial literacy and to address issues relating to money management and budget planning.²⁰ Through the National Skills Fund (NSF), the EPWP has also received training funds from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to train participants on various skills and programmes.²¹ Moreover, the focus across all EPWP projects is to increase women participation and attract the youth, specifically those who are unemployed, without education, or not in the training sector.²² Through the National Youth Service (NYS) programme, a total of 909 youth were recruited from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.²³ Further, the work opportunities recorded in the EPWP, as reported in the annual report of 2019/20, illustrates that 679 693 (68%) of women participated in the EPWP projects, and 417 194 (42%) of the youth participated in the EPWP projects, demonstrating the impact of the EPWP’s focus on participation of Youth, Women, and People Living with Disabilities.²⁴ From the work opportunities reported, the following demographics have been achieved 679 693 (68% vs 60% target) for women, 417 194 Youth (42% vs 55% youth target) and 9 562 (1% vs 2% target). The impact of the EPWP is more than just the work opportunities created. The programme also transferred R12 billion as income support to the participants in the financial year of 2020/2021.²⁵

This research draws on consultation meetings held with the South African Cities Network Reference Group, interviews with EPWP representatives (including managers and participants) and a review of policy documents to explore the potential of EPWP to promote urban safety in different cities in South Africa.

Table 1: List of Participants- EPWP representatives and beneficiaries

Position	City	Project
Four representatives	City of Johannesburg	Park Activation Project
Three EPWP participants	City of Johannesburg	Park Activation Project
One representative	City of Johannesburg	Community Emergency Response Teams
One representative	City of Johannesburg	Joburg City Safety Programme
One representative	eThekweni	Project Empower
One representative	City of Tshwane	Audit Safety Project
Area Based Management lead	City of Cape Town	Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU)
Director of Safety Promotion and partnerships at the Western Cape Department of Community Safety	City of Cape Town	Western Cape Department of Community Safety
One representative	City of Cape Town	Youth Safety Ambassadors Programme
Eight YSAP participants	City of Cape Town	Youth Safety Ambassadors Programme
Manager of Safety and Security	City of Cape Town	Cape Town City Central Improvement District
Manager of the Peace Officer Program	City of Cape Town and various district municipalities in the Western Cape	Peace Officer Program

DISCUSSION

01 The Interplay between Public Employment and the potential for Violence Prevention

Literature on the relationship between public employment programs and violence prevention is typically grounded in the greed hypothesis²⁶ which holds that people will engage in violent activities such as crime when it offers more income than anything else available to them. This suggests that in conditions of extreme poverty and unemployment, individuals will turn to crime as the easiest source of income. Since the late 1990s this theory of violence has gained international prominence with international aid agencies increasingly distributing funds toward public employment programs in high-risk contexts so as to provide alternative sources of income to address crime, insurgency and violence.²⁷ Nonetheless, there remains relatively little evidence on whether public employment can be used effectively in this manner. However, a recent randomized control trial study indicates that when young Liberians engaged in criminal activity were given capital inputs and job training, they shifted some of their working hours away from illicit activity.²⁸

A second way that public employment can impact on safety is through hiring individuals to engage in urban safety initiatives. Such initiatives may be broken down into two broad categories.. Firstly, public employment programs may hire individuals to perform a range of safety activities in cities including crime reporting or

or administration. Secondly, social interventions may be developed as part of public employment programs to work with high-risk individuals, families, and communities. Examples of social interventions which target high-risk individuals/families include early childhood development policies which assist single parents in gang-ravaged low-income areas. It can also include social interventions which target environmental safety measures such as increasing public visibility through street lighting and cutting of long grasses.

A third avenue of impact is through a focus on social cohesion. Public employment programs have been found to facilitate social cohesion, which is defined as a sense of trust within communities to facilitate collective actions aimed at maintaining public order and promoting safety.²⁹ CSVr's research on the Community Work Program (CWP) has found this potential, which is that public employment programs may have a role in facilitating social cohesion.³⁰ The CWP is a public employment program in South Africa run by the Department of Cooperative Governance. The CWP hires individuals to engage in work which is identified by community members in collaboration with other local stakeholders. CSVr's research indicates that CWP has had a positive role in promoting social cohesion by bringing individuals from a variety of backgrounds together to engage in socially uplifting work within their communities in a way that strengthens community bonds and community efficacy.³¹ Social cohesion is enhanced when community members come together to discuss ways to build safer cities, as envisaged in the National Development Plan and the White Paper on Safety and Security.

It is against this background that case examples of the EPWP projects which attempt to address urban safety in the section below. It is against this background that Section 2 details some of the EPWP projects which attempt to address urban safety. Section 3 presents the individual case studies, as well as our findings on these programs, while section 4 considers whether these programs can be used for violence prevention, with a particular focus on the three channels discussed above (reducing poverty, urban safety activities, social cohesion).

02 Case Studies on Urban Safety, Crime, and Violence Initiatives

2.1 Park Activation Coordinators

To transform unsafe public parks into safe and inclusive spaces, the Cities of Johannesburg and eThekweni recruited EPWP volunteers who were mainly unemployed women to work as park 'activators. Their tasks included monitoring and regulating movements of the public, creating conducive spaces for children to play, and coordinating sporting activities.³² The German development agency, GIZ, partnered with the Cities of Johannesburg and eThekweni to provide training for the activators, which included learning exchanges between the two metros.

Amongst the key lessons from this project is that parks can be transformed into safe spaces, and in turn serve to promote social cohesion amongst urban residents in dense built-up areas.

2.2 Project Empower

In eThekweni, Project Empower is a non-governmental organisation worked with the EPWP to identify non-governmental organisations working to reduce gender-based violence using the Steppingstone and Creating Futures (SSCF) model, which has demonstrated a positive impact on GBV prevention in other settings. Male and female participants were trained to provide workshops on gender-based violence in their communities. Participants reflect that this training had impacted on their attitudes towards gender-based violence and had effectively capacitated them to facilitate workshops in their communities. The project also provided participants with business skills training, which empowered them to find better employment opportunities. This intervention also demonstrates how the EPWP can be used as a financing model for implementing SSCF through training EPWPs within grassroots organisations.

2.3 Youth Safety Ambassadors Programme

The Youth Safety Ambassador Programme (YSAP) was launched by the Western Cape Department of Community Safety in 2021 as part of the Provincial Safety Plan. The programme deployed 1,000 young people to under-resourced schools and institutions in high-crime areas to act as violence prevention facilitators. Additionally, facilitators were trained to impart practical skills to participants. Our research at one school indicated that ambassadors felt that they were contributing positively in creating a conducive learning environment in under-resourced school.

2.4 Peace and Traffic Officer Programme

The Peace and Traffic Officer Programme trains young people to assist with law enforcement in their local communities. The programme is connected to the Western Cape Safety Plan and the safety plans of various Western Cape municipalities. Employed on EPWP contracts, the young officers work closely with the South African Police Service (SAPS) to reduce local crime and violence in rural communities with limited law enforcement budgets. EPWP peace officers undergo training and complete voluntary hours before being deployed. The training is accredited by the South African Qualification Authority, and thus can potentially advance their careers following their work on the programme. Individuals with criminal records are however excluded from this process (for understandable reasons), limiting the opportunities for employment for high-risk individuals.

2.5 Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading

In 2005, the Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU) programme was established as a partnership between the City

of Cape Town, the German Development Bank and the Khayelitsha community to build safe and sustainable city neighbourhoods. The VPUU programme seeks to reduce violent crime through urban upgrading and social interventions. One study found that a VPUU intervention in Khayelitsha was associated with reduced exposure to interpersonal violence relative to non-targeted areas.

After initially using an open application process, VPUU switched to recruiting fieldworkers through the EPWP. Relying on EPWP has contributed to institutional stability in terms of budgets, stipends, and standardised procedures. It has however increased bureaucratic requirements and limited the ability to develop participants beyond the 12-month scope of EPWP contracts.

2.6 Community Safety Audit

The City of Tshwane plans to recruit Public Employment Programme (PEP) participants in 2022 who will be hired over a period of 6 months to conduct community safety audits, which entails getting basic information about community members' experiences of crime and violence in their communities. The participants will be trained on the concept of safety, risk and protective factors. It is hoped that this project will increase community participation in crime and violence prevention as well as a mechanism to capacitate local communities to participate in safety planning. A similar project is also being implemented at eThekweni municipality.

2.7 Cape Town Central Improvement District (CCID)

The CCID is a public-private partnership which works with SAPS and the City of Cape Town to improve safety in the city's central business district. The CCID aims to do this through deploying trained safety officers and through clean-up projects and social development initiatives.

The CCID have hired individuals through the EPWP for several projects.

which some included 20 homeless people hired to implement street clean-ups, 30 tourism ambassadors hired to monitor crime in tourism hotspots, and educate tourists on avoiding fraud and other crimes, and 40 individuals hired to report crime in popular public areas. A CCID representative argued that EPWP assistance saved the CCID money and bolstered their capacity to keep the city safe.

03 EPWP Impact on Urban Safety

The case studies above provide clear examples of how municipalities and provincial governments have attempted to use existing state programmes such as the EPWP to promote urban safety. In many of these cases, initiatives have attempted to address the risk factors

have attempted to address the risk factors contributing to the rise of crime and violence in cities. Notably, most of these programmes appear to be participatory and consultative in their design and engagement with communities.

Whether these programmes can be ultimately effective in providing sustainable solutions to urban safety challenges depends on a range of factors that require careful consideration. As noted in Section two, public employment programmes like the EPWP can contribute to urban safety and violence prevention through three potential avenues: i) poverty reduction/ increasing youth employment; ii) strengthening specific violence-prevention and law-enforcement activities; and c) building social cohesion.

3.1 Increasing Youth Employment/Income

A range of government documents – including the White Paper on Safety and Security, the Western Cape Safety Plan and the Gauteng Community Safety Guideline – emphasise the importance of generating economic development and employment to reduce the economic rationale for crime. This rationale was also shared by several staff involved in the design and management of the projects reviewed above.

Whether the EPWP can contribute to violence prevention through generating income will ultimately depend on whether it can target significant numbers of high-risk youth for employment and provide them with adequate training and supervision. Targeting youth-at-risk for employment in such projects does not appear to be a strategy specifically employed by any of the projects above. For some projects, such a strategy may indeed not be feasible as they employ participants to work with vulnerable groups or in very sensitive situations. They also seek participants with a basic educational foundation who may be more suitable for certain tasks.

The investment in both hard and soft skills development provided by some EPWP programmes, and the potential of large-scale recruitment does however make some of these programmes potentially suitable for an approach that targets at-risk-youth. The CWP has indeed provided some illustration of how its model can be utilised to target ex-offenders.

3.2 .Specific Violence Prevention and Law Enforcement Activities

As the case studies reveal, several EPWP funded projects engage in violence-prevention activities. These projects draw on EPWP to expand the human resources available to do their work more effectively. EPWP holds the benefit of expanding the scope and reach of these projects, particularly through its ability to recruit efficiently and transparently within local communities where these projects operate.

This approach to strengthening violence prevention projects demonstrates strong potential for impact and expansion. Their value is however ultimately dependent on the effectiveness of these programmes in addressing community safety, which has generally not been sufficiently evaluated. Calibrating the EPWP systems with the needs of the local projects (e.g., recruitment criteria and length of contracts) would also require further consideration to ensure greater complementarity.

3.3 Social Cohesion

Many of the programmes discussed above facilitated social cohesion. Social cohesion is strengthened when EPWP participants worked with other community and state stakeholders to achieve common goals. The Park Activation Activators is a good example of how community members can be engaged to collaboratively enhance community assets. Strengthening working relationships is particularly critical in urban spaces that are often characterised by high levels of suspicion and discrimination based on race, class, gender, and nationality. Social cohesion incorporates both the social forces that bring people together to engage in collective action to promote safety, and the network of caring relationships that reduces vulnerability and risks for offending.

04 Recommendations

The research described in this policy brief has demonstrated numerous ways that municipalities and provincial governments can play a role in preventing urban violence. The integration of community safety efforts under the EPWP has a clear potential to promote violence and crime prevention initiatives. The various implemented projects provide exciting pilot projects that highlight the potential and challenges faced in utilising EPWP for this purpose.

The fact that these initiatives have arisen without clear coordination or coherent planning also raises serious concerns about systematic and institutional weaknesses in design and implementation that undermine their potential contribution. The current initiatives are fragmented, lacking coordinated and sustained interventions anchored in an integrated approach to urban safety, more specifically on how community safety strategies are conceptualised by metros, how they are budgeted, and the streamlining of data sources such as regular safety audits to inform responsive safety strategies and plans.

A. Improved Coherent Programme Design

To reduce violence, EPWP programmes should be designed with clear plans on how to achieve desired social and developmental impacts. Some programmes operated in ways that contradicted the professed aims of public officials. For example, one programme reviewed sought to reduce violence by creating employment for people with high risk of becoming perpetrators, but the programme only hired low-risk individuals.

This highlights the importance of developing programmes that are clear in their design and have a clearly conceptualised understanding of the link between their activities and participants and the expected impact EPWP projects are by design focused on recruitment of large numbers of participants. While this often leaves fewer resources for capacity building of participants, this element of the programme requires serious attention including exit strategies for the participants to attain long-term job opportunities beyond the EPWP, which provides short-term opportunities. Some of the projects reviewed in this brief have the potential (e.g., peace and traffic officer project) to create more decent and longer-term jobs demonstrating the cognizance of the link between employment, poverty reduction and safety that it is connected to provincial and municipal safety plans. Programme design concerns also extended to other aspects of the recruitment process.

Recruitment of the EPWP participants

The process of recruiting EPWP participants must be reasonably equal, fair, and transparent. It must be clear that potential participants cannot be discriminated against based on gender, age, race, disability, sexual orientation etc. Good reasons need to be given in cases where certain requirements need to be met before the participants are recruited in the EPWP. Some programmes required that participants have a matric and no criminal record. Although this is understandable in many instances, it is also important that high risk individuals are targeted and recruited within EPWP projects as this may reduce their risk of involvement in criminal activities

More Flexible EPWP Assistance for Pre-existing Programmes

The VPUU case indicates that when EPWP assistance is provided to pre-existing programmes, it faces challenges in meeting the needs of implementing organisations and their programme designs. The 12-month limit on EPWP contracts for the VPUU, for instance, ultimately prevented the further development of its fieldworkers. While VPUU has sought adapted to the EPWP process, EPWP flexibility may be needed to serve such programmes better (or linking to CWP which has a more long-term employment approach).

It is also important that community members who possess specific skills on community work development, and violence prevention are recruited to assist and help in designing and implementing EPWP safety initiatives. Recruitment of these skilled local individuals may assist in ensuring that these programmes become sustainable and long-term after EPWP funds are no longer provided. These individuals may also share their skills with newly recruited individuals and provide supervision and support in their work.

Community Participation

While some programmes utilised a very collaborative community engagement approach in conceptualising and implementing their projects, this was not always evident. Many of the benefits of public employment projects are only effectively realised when there is significant community engagement and buy-in, especially if the impact on safety is dependent on greater social cohesion. Strengthening this aspect of the projects has the potential of significantly increasing their impact. In the 2020-21 financial year, additional EPWP projects are set to increase the number of youths recruited through developing best practices targeting the youth. Most of the urban safety EPWP projects have a strong community-engagement element, which can encourage youth participants to take responsibility in fostering social cohesion and citizen participation. Moreover, EPWP related projects can increase the awareness of youth to risk factors that contribute to crime and violence within their community. While many of the programmes reviewed target youth (a core demographic for high-risk behaviour), none of them target high-risk individuals, and some programmes actively bar people with criminal records. If metros are to prevent criminality through employment, it will need to develop programmes which specifically target high-risk youth, instead of actively excluding them

The EPWP's mandate is to provide work opportunities to the most vulnerable population groups such as women who often carry the financial burden for their families. In the programmes reviewed most participants are women, demonstrating that women are given opportunities (at times) to actively engage in leadership roles in these programmes. While this appears to be a general feature of the programmes, it should be more explicitly and consistently included in the design.

Inclusion of Youth

The value of increasing the participation of youth categories while considering levels of vulnerability in EPWP programmes was highlighted by participants in the study. In the 2020/21 financial year, additional EPWP projects are set to increase the number of youths recruited through developing best practices targeting the youth. Most of the urban safety EPWP projects have a strong community-engagement element, which can encourage youth participants to take responsibility in fostering social cohesion and citizen participation. Moreover, EPWP related projects can increase the awareness of youth to risk factors that contribute to crime and violence within their community.

As noted, several policy documents emphasise the importance of expanding employment to draw young people away from a life of violence and crime.

Community Participation

While many of the programmes reviewed target youth (a core demographic for high-risk behaviour), none of them target high-risk individuals, and some programmes actively bar people with criminal records. If metros are to prevent criminality through employment, it will need to develop programmes which specifically target high-risk youth, instead of actively excluding them.

In all the violence-prevention projects reviewed, the participation of young men as compared to women was low. More young men need to be recruited to work on the EPWP violence-prevention initiatives given their involvement as both perpetrators and victims of violence. EPWP violence-prevention projects hold the potential for teaching young men non-violent conflict resolution skills and training them to facilitate workshops with other young men that challenge the negative masculinities that promote the use of violence.

Inclusion of Women

Women in South Africa are amongst the most vulnerable and the most affected by increasing levels of poverty and unemployment. The EPWP's mandate is to provide work opportunities to the most vulnerable population groups such as women who often carry the financial burden for their families. In the programmes reviewed most participants are women, demonstrating that women are given opportunities (at times) to actively engage in leadership roles in these programmes. While this appears to be a general feature of the programmes, it should be more explicitly and consistently included in the design.

The benefits to involving women in EPWP urban safety projects include regular income increases financial independence and consequent reduced vulnerability to violence; enabling women to contribute and manage the overall household budget; building social cohesion through participation and the inclusion of women's voices in community affairs. The EPWP Phase III Impact Report released in November 2019 confirms that despite the fact that the EPWP offers short term employment, the income support provided contributed towards reducing poverty levels. For women, this provides much needed income in taking care of their households and members of the extended families. This income not only empowers women but also reduces poverty in communities. It is therefore important that many women get recruited in the infrastructure sector as many cities did not meet the set targets for women due to general gender bias of the sector (being male dominated). The cities must raise awareness about the opportunities in the infrastructure sector available for women and continue to expand on the current social sector projects which appear to be creating employment opportunities for many women.

Survivor Support and Counselling Services

EPWP programmes that seek to promote safety regularly also interact with the survivors of violence. While some programmes actively seek to support survivors, others do not have a clear engagement strategy to address such individuals. It is vital that survivors of violence are supported rather than subjected to potential secondary victimisation. Key elements of victim support include emotional support, practical support and providing information on and referrals to professional support services. Given that perpetrators of violence are likely to have been victims of violence themselves, this can help break the vicious cycle. EPWP programmes that engage directly with survivors of violence need to have appropriate skills and strategies to respond to their needs.

B. Strengthened knowledge and communications systems

While many of the projects provided anecdotal evidence of significant impact, there remains a huge gap in relation to systematic monitoring and evaluation, sharing of lessons and disseminating information about the work and achievements of these programmes

Monitoring and evaluation

Numerous EPWP violence-prevention initiatives have been developed across the country with very limited systematic assessment and knowledge sharing. It is therefore important that the effectiveness of existing initiatives be evaluated and assessed so that policymakers and implementation agencies can determine how projects that prove effective can be upscaled and implemented in other cities. Evidence of successes and a review of challenges must be well documented as part of the Learning, Monitoring and Evaluation (LME) process for developing evidence-based EPWP violence-prevention initiatives. Currently, little is known about the effectiveness of existing EPWP urban safety interventions reviewed in this policy brief. Many key informants were not able to offer any tangible evidence on how their respective projects were contributing to violence prevention, and some admitted to a complete lack of monitoring and evaluation systems. Only anecdotal evidence about what worked and what did not was given in the interviews.

Scaling up violence-prevention interventions without clear guidelines, policies, support strategies, the relevant skills, staff capacity or risk analysis could present very serious problems. If the programmes are to function as viable urban safety initiatives, tailored LME systems and instruments would be needed to support such an investment of resources.

Building internal LME capacity and developing participatory LME processes would also strengthen the capacity of these programmes to learn from their experience and more effectively share their knowledge.

Improve outreach and media coverage

Stories of crime and violence dominate headlines, positive stories about the current EPWP initiatives often go unnoticed and the role they play to contribute to safer communities. It is therefore important that these initiatives systematically shared and covered to sensitize and provide more ideas to municipalities of how EPWPs can be used within their own spaces. The success of many initiatives is also dependent on community awareness of their purpose and publicity about the opportunities for participants and partners to become involved. Recognition of their contribution is also very significant in motivating many participants who see themselves as servants of the community.

It is important that these initiatives are reported on and communicated locally and nationally to improve the EPWP's image as a tool to prevent violence, strengthen the dignity associated with EPWP work, and to counter the dominant perception of cities as hostile environments.

C. Capacity Building

EPWP projects are by design focused on recruitment of large numbers of participants. While this often leaves fewer resources for capacity building of participants, this element of the programme requires serious attention

Training on Violence Prevention

While most of the EPWP projects reviewed above directly engage violence prevention, it was however evident that many staff and participants were not sufficiently trained to deal with the complex challenges they face. Some projects could be significantly strengthened if guided by better knowledge about violence prevention strategies, and exposure to additional learning opportunities. Specific workshops and training manuals for EPWP participants could be developed to address subjects such as young men at risk, toxic masculinities, male homicide, gun violence, gender-based violence, school violence, gangsterism, xenophobia, hate crime (especially against the LGBTQI+ community), alcohol and drug abuse, parenting skills, and self-care initiatives. Where targeted training was provided, participants spoke highly of its value in assisting them do their work more effectively and build their self-esteem.

Development of primary prevention initiatives

EPWP hold great potential to provide as primary prevention i.e., address the risk factors that cause violence. Children and young people, especially in poor communities, encounter many of the risk factors associated with an increased likelihood of participation in violence or crime. Primary prevention interventions therefore need to target parents, infants, children, and teenagers, particularly in communities where the risk of young people being involved in violence is high.

Evidence suggests that investing in a variety of primary prevention measures that can help to reduce this risk. Examples of EPWP primary prevention work include working in early childhood development initiatives and conducting safety ambassadors' programmes in schools to prevent violence between learners and to address 'risky' behaviour such as substance abuse and selling drugs. Other programmes facilitate recreational activities and provide mentoring for children and young people, such as the park activation programme.

As such, many of the EPWP programmes can be seen as primary prevention initiatives addressing the risk factors that contribute to violence and crime in cities. However, it is important that such a preventative approach is more clearly articulated and planned and that more evidence is gathered to assess these programmes' effectiveness.

D. Civil Society and Government Partnerships

It is important that state departments partner with civil society organisations and independent research institutions to offer guidance and support on new and existing EPWP violence-prevention interventions. Broadening the roll-out of EPWP participants to new and existing projects holds important potential to develop new projects and strengthening existing ones. Some of these institutions can also assist by providing training on violence-prevention skills to EPWP participants, while others are well placed to support LME processes. The GIZ's training workshop for the park activation coordinators was cited as having a positive impact on their work – and was the direct result of a civil society and government partnership.

Such partnerships would add value at programme and municipal level but is also essential for integrating the knowledge arising from EPWP projects with the community of practice that already exists around violence prevention in South Africa. The potential contained in this model of partnership is a potential game changer in framing a new architecture of violence prevention in South Africa.



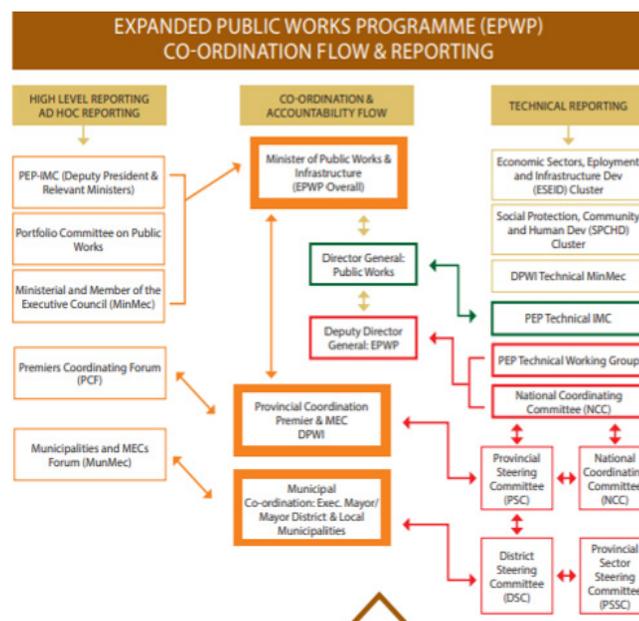
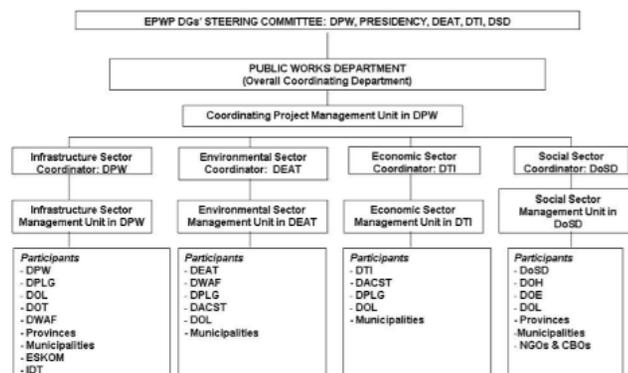
CONCLUSION

This policy brief has provided examples of how municipalities and provincial governments have attempted to use existing state programmes such as the EPWP to promote urban safety. In many of these cases, initiatives have attempted to address the risk factors contributing to the rise of crime and violence in cities. Notably, most of these programmes appear to be participatory and consultative in their design and engagement with communities. Many of the urban safety projects covered in this policy brief are also good examples of how community members can be engaged to collaboratively enhance community assets.

Whether these programmes can be ultimately effective in providing sustainable solutions to urban safety challenges depends on a range of factors that require careful consideration. The EPWP contracts are limited to 6 months, but some urban safety projects were flexible to absorb participants over a long period of time. EPWP holds the benefit of expanding the scope and reach of these projects, particularly through its ability to recruit efficiently and transparently within local communities where these projects operate. Calibrating the EPWP systems with the needs of the local projects (e.g., recruitment criteria and length of contracts) would also require further consideration to ensure greater complementarity. This approach to strengthening violence prevention projects demonstrates strong potential for impact and expansion. Their value is however ultimately dependent on the effectiveness of these programmes in addressing community safety, which has generally not been sufficiently evaluated. It is concluded in this policy brief that public employment programmes like the EPWP can contribute to urban safety and violence prevention through three potential avenues: i) poverty reduction/ increasing youth employment; ii) strengthening specific violence-prevention and law-enforcement activities; and c) building social cohesion. Many of the EPWP programmes can be seen as primary prevention initiatives addressing the risk factors that contribute to violence and crime in cities. However, it is important that such a preventative approach is more clearly articulated and planned and that more evidence is gathered to assess these programmes' effectiveness.

05 Appendix

In its conceptualisation the EPWP programme factors in institutional arrangements with varying participants of other departments while the funding for the EPWP programmes is allocated to national departments, provinces and municipalities through the normal budgeting processes leveraging on equitable share and public agency budgets. The implementing public bodies are expected to use their line function budgets to implement the EPWP projects. Moreover, incentive grants were introduced with the aim of providing the programme with additional funding to maximise labour intensive delivery methods, and reward performance with respect to the creation of FTE. There are several EPWP sector-specific Conditional Grants, each with its own characteristics and focus. The images below show the EPWP structure and reporting processes which has implications for cross-departmental budget both with provincial and local implementers that could further be strengthened towards improving resource allocation on violence prevention and safety interventions.



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The brief was compiled by the SA Cities Urban Safety Reference Group.

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