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CREATING SAFE COMMUNITIES

A study circle workbook on
dealing with crime

by Noxolo Mgudlwa and Marie Ström

NAME: _____



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dealing with crime*

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Introduction

Crime affects everyone in South Africa. This study circle is a way for ordinary people to understand the problem better, and to become part of the solution. We all want to live in peaceful communities. Creating them is not only the work of the police, but of every citizen.

Different communities have tried to address crime in different ways, and what works in one community might not work in another. But this does not mean that communities cannot learn from each other. This study circle guide contains success stories from many different communities. These are stories of hope. They show what ordinary people can do when they organise themselves and collaborate with the police and with local government to build safer communities.

This workbook contains:

- guidelines for ten study circle meetings;
- tasks to do between meetings;
- suggestions for how study circle members can take action together to address problems related to community safety.

This study circle manual was produced by Idasa, an independent African public-interest organisation that promotes sustainable democracy based on active citizenship, democratic institutions and social justice.

Idasa promotes study circles as a tool for citizens to empower themselves with knowledge and skills in order to become effective agents of change and development. Idasa believes that non-formal learning opportunities should be encouraged and valued in communities, alongside the formal education that takes place in schools and other educational institutions. For democracy to flourish, citizens need to develop the confidence and capacity to pursue learning that deepens their understanding of the world they live in and the role they can play in changing it.

Idasa's work to promote people's education through study circles is supported by Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan, a Swedish study circle association, and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) under the auspices of Forum Syd.

What is a study circle?

Important: Read this section if you have never participated in a study circle, or if you have not been trained as a study circle leader.

A study circle is a small, informal group formed by people who are interested in learning more about a particular subject together. A study circle is also for people who want to help solve public problems and build a better society.

Here are a few key facts about study circles:

- Groups meet once a week, for 10 to 12 weeks;
- Meetings last for 2½ to 3 hours;
- Members can shape the study to meet their interests;
- Members experience is the foundation for learning;
- Taking action deepens understanding and builds power.

How many people can join a study circle?

Usually a study circle has eight to ten members. It can be a little smaller or a little bigger, but it should not be too small or too big. It must be big enough so that there are lots of different ideas to share, and small enough so that everyone can participate easily.

Who can join a study circle?

Anyone can become a member of a study circle, if they are interested in the subject of the study. You do not have to be well-educated to participate in a study circle. You do not even have to be able to read. Study circles are for everyone, from any background.

Who can be a study circle leader?

Anyone can lead a study circle. The study circle manual contains instructions to guide the leader and the group. Circle members decide together what they want to do, and can share the work of leading the circle. It is possible to receive training on how to be a study circle leader. If you are interested in this, contact Idasa at (012) 392 0500.

What is the role of the study circle leader?

When people work together in a group, it is always useful for someone to take the lead. Without a leader people feel unsure about what to do and time is wasted. The study circle leader usually sets up the study circle and convenes the first meeting. The same person can lead all the study circle meetings, or other members can volunteer to lead meetings too. It is up to the group to decide.

Here are some key principles for every study circle leader to remember:

- The leader is also a learner, like all the other members of the circle;
- The leader is not a teacher or an expert;
- The leader helps members to focus on the task and keep time;
- The leader encourages everyone to take part in the discussions;
- The leader encourages members to be accountable to one another.

What is the role of a study circle member?

A study circle is different to a classroom where the teacher does all the work! Study circle members play an active role in the learning process. The success of the study circle depends on the contribution of every member.

A study circle works well when members agree to do the following things:

- Attend every meeting;
- Participate actively;
- Share questions, experiences, ideas and resources;
- Listen carefully;
- Respect the views of other members and appreciate their contributions;
- Disagree respectfully with others, and be open if they disagree with you;
- Do tasks between meetings.

Where should a study circle meet?

A study circle can meet anywhere in a place that is convenient for the members. Someone's home, a corner in a church hall, or an open space under a tree are all suitable. Ideally, the meeting place should be flexible and informal. Desks are not necessary. Arrange chairs in a circle to create a comfortable atmosphere where everyone is equal.

When do study circle meetings happen?

Study circle meetings can happen at any time that suits the members – morning, afternoon or evening. It works best to meet once a week, at the same time.

How long is a study circle meeting?

Study circle meetings usually last about 2½ to 3 hours, including a short break. The group can also decide to meet for a shorter time, but then it will cover less material.

For how long do study circles continue to meet?

It is helpful for a study circle to take a break after 10 or 12 meetings. This is a manageable commitment for most people. After this, members should be allowed to leave the group if they have other commitments. The study circle can continue working on the same topic after the break, with a new set of objectives. New study circles can also be created to study different subjects.

What resources are needed to run a study circle?

Study circles are a way for people to educate and empower themselves, using whatever resources they have. You do not need money to create a study circle. A lack of resources should never be an excuse for not running a study circle!

To run a study circle you need:

- members with a strong, shared interest in the subject of study;
- energy and commitment to discover learning resources in unexpected places;

- study circle manuals for every member, if they are available;
- other materials such as newspaper articles, booklets published by NGOs, library books, videos or DVDs that are relevant to the subject of study;
- a suitable meeting place;
- simple refreshments, if possible.

What is the origin of study circles?

People have used this approach to learning for over 150 years, especially when they have not had access to formal education. People's movements in places as far apart as Sweden, the USA, India, Brazil and South Africa have all used study circles and other similar methods to build the capacity of poor and marginalised people to play an active role in changing their society.

What makes study circles different?

Study circles promote an open, democratic approach to learning that is different to what happens in schools, colleges and universities. Study circle members set their own learning goals. They help to shape the study circle process to achieve these goals. The leader is also a learner and does not dominate the group. Everyone in the circle is equal and their experience forms the foundation of learning. Members join the study circle because they want to, not because they have to.

Why join a study circle?

Join a study circle because you are hungry to learn and you want to be an agent of change in your community. Study circles make it possible to learn about life, from life, throughout life.

How to set up a study circle

Recruit members

The most important task when setting up a study circle is to find people who are strongly motivated to learn about the chosen subject and take action with others. Take time to recruit the right people. This will help to ensure that study circle members do not drop out later.

Here are some tips for recruiting study circle members:

- Listen carefully to identify people's interests;
- Don't force people to join or ask them to do you a favour by coming along;
- Give people a clear idea of what they can expect from the study circle:
 - Explain what a study circle is, how it works and how long it lasts;
 - Explain the focus of your study circle;
- Share the vision of lifelong learning;
- Speak to all potential members yourself – don't just ask people to bring a friend;
- Try to create a diverse group, with people from different backgrounds;
- Only involve people who can commit themselves to meeting for 10 or 12 weeks in a row.

Identify a meeting place and time

Find a suitable place for the study circle to meet. Above all, it should be accessible to members. Also decide on which day of the week the circle will meet, and at what time. You should consult some members beforehand, although it might be impossible to satisfy everyone. The time and the place will influence whether people are able to join the study circle.

Obtain materials

If you plan to use a study circle manual, get copies for all members. Study circle manuals can be obtained from the Initiative for Leadership and Democracy in Africa (iLEDA) programme at Idasa by phoning (012) 392 0500. Also look out for other materials such as books, videos or newspaper articles that can guide and enrich your study.

Plan the first meeting

If you set up a study circle yourself, then usually you will run the first meeting. If not, identify a suitable leader and plan the meeting together. At the first meeting, members will discuss their expectations and agree on the goals they want to achieve together. These goals should help to shape everything else that happens in the study circle, right to the end. Make sure that the first meeting is interesting so that people are motivated to return!

How to run a study circle meeting

Prepare

All study circle members should prepare for the meeting ahead of time. The leader must read all the materials and plan the structure of the meeting. Other members must do any tasks that were allocated or suggested at the end of the previous meeting.

Adapt

The study circle manual provides a guide for the meeting. You can follow it closely, or you can adapt it. Everything depends on the goals of your group. You can decide to spend longer on certain sections than on others, or drop some sections altogether. You can also use materials from different sources to enrich the study and to help you meet your goals. Discuss these changes together and decide what will work best for your study circle.

Relax

Take a short break after about 1½ hours. Share some simple refreshments at this point, if they are available. Even a glass of water is good. Study circle members can take turns to provide simple refreshments, if they are able to do so.

Evaluate

The study circle belongs to the members. Evaluate every meeting to make sure that you are achieving your goals. It takes time and effort to learn to work together effectively in a study circle. Recognise positive contributions. Hold each other accountable to the commitments you make. Strive to make each meeting better than the one before. If you set high standards for yourselves, you will be impressed by what you can achieve together.

Meeting 1: Getting started

Suggested time for every meeting is 3 hours, including a short break.

Note: Times in brackets are just a guide.

STEP 1:

Welcome, introductions and setting the scene (15 minutes)

To get started, introduce yourselves to each other.

Read through the list of questions below and let people say their answers out loud, all together.

- Do you feel afraid when you walk alone at night?
- Do you worry about whether your house will be safe when you leave home?
- Do you worry about the safety of your children?
- Do you feel safe when you use public transport?
- Do you trust the police to keep you safe?
- Do you wish you could live in a safer area?

Don't discuss the questions in detail now. This is just to get a feeling for the mood of the group.

STEP 2:

Practical arrangements (30 minutes)

Look through the introduction to the manual, especially the following points on pages vi–vii:

- The role of the study circle leader;
- The role of the study circle members.

Ask any questions you have about these roles and clarify them for each other.

Make sure that everyone understands and agrees how the study circle will work. Confirm the practical arrangements for the study circle, and ensure that they suit all the members:

- The meeting time
- The length of meetings
- What language to use
- The venue
- The number of meetings

Questions for discussion:

- Are you able and committed to attend every meeting of the study circle?
- Do you understand why it is important to attend every meeting?
- What support can you give to each other to ensure that everyone attends the meetings?
- How will you hold each other accountable?

STEP 3:

Goals (30 minutes)

Decide on your goals for the study circle. Explain to each other why you have joined the group. Think about what you want to achieve. The following questions will help you to identify your goals as individuals and as a group.

Questions for discussion:

- Why is the topic of crime and community safety important to you?
- What do you want to learn by taking part in this study circle?
- What would you like to achieve together as a group?

After all the discussions, write the goals of your study circle in the space below. Check these goals each time you meet. Use them to help evaluate your progress.

STEP 4:

A story about Gugulethu (45 minutes)

Read the following story about Gugulethu and discuss it together afterwards. There are questions at the end of the story to guide your discussions. Feel free to add other questions if you want to do so.



Gugulethu is one of the oldest townships in Cape Town. It has approximately 60,000 people living in both formal and informal houses. Like any other South African township, crime is a challenge for the people living in this community. People live in fear of being attacked at home, in the street and at their places of work.

NY156 is one of the streets of Gugulethu where residents decided to take action and protect themselves against crime. The street consists of only 31 formal houses but there were four shebeens operating in the area. Residents suspected that the shebeens were somehow responsible for much of the crime that was taking place there. People were being robbed, assaulted and shot by strangers. There was loud music until the early hours of the morning. People were unable to get to their driveways as cars were parked everywhere. Vehicles parked outside the shebeens blocked the street. People's cars were broken into at night while they were sleeping. Residents were afraid to walk to the nearby shops or visit each other when it got dark.

The street committee decided to call all the people running the shebeens to a meeting to discuss their role in reducing the rate of crime in the area. The street committee recognised that shebeen owners were running successful businesses, providing a service that is needed by some people, and creating a source of income for themselves. They felt that this could be done in a more responsible way by considering other residents in the area as well.

It was suggested that shebeens should operate at reasonable hours. They were allowed to open until 9:00pm from Sundays until Thursdays. On Fridays and Saturdays they could work until 12 midnight but there was to be no loud music after 10:00pm. They were also asked to take responsibility for security during their business hours. Every morning, they had to make sure that bottles lying around were collected, especially those in front of other people's houses.

The new arrangement was accepted by the shebeen owners in the street. People soon saw the change in the area. Many drinkers moved away from these shebeens and went to places that were open the whole day and night. This helped to reduce activity in the street and there was less place for criminals to hide. Currently, only two shebeens are in operation. People at least feel safe to walk in their own street now.

During this time the police also launched a campaign to patrol, particularly on weekends, to improve community safety. The police made sure that shebeens

did not operate all whole night long and that under-age children were chased out of these places.

This arrangement had other positive results. The shebeen owners gave jobs to people in the neighbourhood. The people who cleaned every morning and those who acted as security guards got paid for the services they provided. A group of young people also started a business of selling vegetables and braaied meat outside the shebeens.

Questions for discussion:

- What types of crime were experienced by the community of NY156? How did this affect the lives of residents?
- Identify the steps that the street committee took to try to bring order to their street.
- How was the street committee sensitive to the needs of the shebeen owners? Why was this approach successful?
- Do you think the police could have improved the safety of NY156 on their own? Why do you say so?
- If many drinkers moved away, do you think crime got worse in other areas? Is it enough for a community to only think about their area when dealing with issues of crime?
- People often blame crime on a lack of jobs. How did the community of NY156 create jobs for some of the residents?

STEP 5:

Thinking about crime and safety in your community (20 minutes)

Divide into groups of three or four and have a brief discussion about crime in your area. Use the following questions to guide your discussion. As you talk, make a list of all the different types of crimes that are mentioned in the space below.

Questions for discussion:

- Are there any similarities between the situation in NY156 and your community? If so, what are they?
- Are there any differences? If so, what?
- What are the most common types of crime in your area?
- How does crime impact on your day-to-day life and that of your neighbours?
- Did you learn any lessons that could be useful for your community from the story about NY156 in Gugulethu?

List of crimes committed in our area:

STEP 6:

Evaluation (10 minutes)

As a group, briefly think about how well your first study circle meeting worked.

Evaluation questions:

- How do you feel about today's study circle meeting?
- For you personally, what was the most helpful thing you learnt today?
- How well did people participate? Recognise useful contributions.
- How well did you manage time?
- What can you do better or differently next time? How can each member help?



Preparation for the next meeting

It will be helpful if everyone in the study circle can gather more information about crime in the community before the next meeting. Look at the list of crimes that were mentioned during Step 5 today. Each person should go home and gather more information on one or two types of crime (depending on the size of the study circle). Write this information below.

In order to find out this information, go to your local police station and ask for their latest crime statistics for your area. You can also get information from the Community Police Forum (CPF), your local newspaper, or by talking to your neighbours. Try to get **facts** rather than just gathering **rumours**. You can do this by checking with more than one source of information.

What crime(s) will you focus on?

Try to find answers to the following questions, and write the answers in the space provided.

- How often has this crime been committed in your area
 - in the last week? _____
 - in the last month? _____
 - in the last year? _____

- What useful facts did you discover about this crime in your area?

- When is the crime generally committed? (night/day/weekend)

- Who generally commits the crime? (men/women/youth/other groups)

- Where is the crime reported? (police/CPF/other community structures)

- How often are people arrested for committing this crime?



Meeting 2: Communities responding to crime

STEP 1:

Looking at crime patterns (40 minutes)

Share the information you gathered during the past week on crime in your area, using your notes on pages 5-6. Explain where you got your the information. After everyone has reported on their findings, respond to these questions:

Questions for discussion:

- Did you find it difficult or easy to find out facts about crime in your area?
- Is the overall crime picture in your area worse than you thought, or better than you thought? How do you feel about this?
- How do rumours shape the way we think about crime?
- Apart from rumours, what are other things that shape the way we think about crime?
- Overall, how does crime affect people's mood and movements in your community?

STEP 2:

Dealing with crime in Mountain View, Mabopane (1 hour)

The story of the Mountain View community is quite long, so it is divided into two parts. Spend about half an hour on each part of the story. Read the first part of the story below and then discuss the questions that follow.



Mountain View – Part 1

Mountain View is a section of Mabopane, north-west of Pretoria. In 2003, crime seemed to be increasing in the area. Mpho Adams, a resident of Mountain View, was worried about the situation. His neighbour's house was broken into twice. This was followed by several other burglaries in houses nearby. Criminals stole pocket money from children on their way to school. But people were not talking to each other about the problem. They would

come and go without even greeting each other. Mpho felt that it was time to change this culture. 'I did not grow up like this,' he said. 'When neighbours do not talk to each other, the community is weakened. Criminals can see that we do not communicate. Then they continue to hit us hard.'

Mpho talked to his neighbours about working together to prevent crime. They were keen to find ways to protect their property and children. After a lot of informal talk among neighbours, a public meeting was held. An executive committee with six members was elected, with Mpho as the chairperson. As the organisation developed, residents of Mountain View had a strong feeling that it belonged to them. Everyone felt welcome to participate. People from different backgrounds and political parties got involved. Meetings were held where people made suggestions about the organisation's name, logo and constitution. Finally it was agreed to call it the Mountain View neighbourhood watch. Households paid a small amount to become members, and this gave the neighbourhood watch some financial resources to get going. Local businesses also came on board and gave more support.

The community gave the committee the mandate to inform local authorities about their day-to-day experiences of crime. First, they met with police officers at the local police station. After that they met with their local councillor. They complained that there were no streetlights in Mountain View and that there were too many bushy areas where criminals could hide. A lack of storm water drains meant that roads in the area were very bad, which made it difficult for emergency vehicles to reach Mountain View. The committee identified the main streets in the area that needed to be improved. Then they met with a local member of the mayoral committee and asked him to include these improvements in the next municipal budget.

It took time and patience to build relationships with all these officials. At first, the local councillor did not take the committee seriously. He made many excuses when they first invited him to a meeting. Then they sent a second letter, copying it this time to the mayor and the speaker in the local council. This time the councillor agreed to come to the meeting. The community was encouraged by this and people began to believe that the committee was achieving something. The area was divided into four sections, and the councillor started to attend the meetings that happened in each one. Young people created a newsletter to report on the meetings. The councillor added information from his office, and in this way he started to develop a healthy relationship with the residents.

Questions for discussion:

- What do you think about the Mountain View residents' decision to set up their own organisation to deal with crime in their area?
- How did they manage to get started? Identify all the things that made their efforts successful at the beginning.
- How did the committee develop relationships with local officials?

Now read the second part of the story and then answer the next set of questions.

 **Mountain View – Part 2**

People in Mountain View agreed that it was important for the youth to become involved in the neighbourhood watch. This was a way to keep them away from crime and to show that they could be part of the solution. A march was organised to draw attention to the neighbourhood watch and to reach out to youth in particular. When the committee applied for permission to hold the march and to use a local park, there was some resistance from officials. They kept asking, 'Who are these people?' Mpho Adams was questioned by the police, who wanted to understand his motives. Mpho says, 'But we were not intimidated. These obstacles never led us to fold our arms.'

Drum majorettes were invited to lead the march. Loudhailers were used to invite people to join in. Young people made banners. The committee asked South African Breweries to put up a stage in the park where the march ended. Many local bands and singers were invited to perform. It was a big success, and the community could see that their new organisation was going from strength to strength.

The neighbourhood watch started to organise foot patrols. They identified the most troublesome areas in Mountain View. Men in the community patrolled these areas in the early morning and early evening, when people were most vulnerable to crime. They were especially active at the end of the month and at weekends. Young people were also involved in the patrols, especially late at night. Local businesses donated cellphones for use during the patrols. The police asked for the patrol timetable and the names of the people on each shift. They saw that it was useful to work together with the neighbourhood watch.

As a result of the neighbourhood watch, crime went down in Mountain View, especially in the worst trouble spots. Over time, the community saw many improvements. Now the streets have proper drainage and many of them have been tarred. There are street lights across the area. People report when they are not working and they are fixed quickly. The neighbourhood watch also addresses other issues in the community. For example, when there is a death in

a family, every household contributes a set amount. They also work together to comfort and assist the family members.

Mpho Adams was the chairperson of the neighbourhood watch Committee for many years, but he decided to step down in 2008. Other committee members were ready to take the lead. Now he mentors younger committee members. Sometimes he still attends top-level meetings with officials. When the Community Police Forum (CPF) was re-established in 2008, people did not want to abandon the neighbourhood watch. They welcomed the CPF, but they understood that Mountain View neighbourhood watch could still play a unique role as the community's own organisation.

Questions for discussion:

- Do you think it was a good idea to involve young people in the neighbourhood watch? Why do you say so?
- What other activities made the neighbourhood watch successful?
- Community organisations often run into trouble when there is a change of leadership. Why didn't this happen to Mountain View neighbourhood watch?
- Does the Mountain View story give you ideas for things you could do in your own community? Give examples.

STEP 3:

Dealing with crime in Chatsworth, Umhlatuzana (40 minutes)

Read the following story about a community in KwaZulu-Natal that responded to crime in a different way.



In January 2009, Umhlatuzana residents erected booms* in their suburb after a there had been lots of hijackings and robberies in the area. Booms were installed at the entrance of two roads – 29th Avenue and 31st Avenue in Chatsworth. The community put security at each entrance. The boom gates and security guard huts were sponsored by the residents themselves. Guards armed with batons, tear gas and whistles started to patrol the streets day and night.

The boom gates are left open most of the time, but are closed if there is an emergency or a need to stop someone from leaving. Residents of the area all have special discs on their cars so that they can be easily identified by the security guards. Anyone without a disc who wishes to drive through has their registration number taken down together with details about their car. If guards see people on foot, they are escorted to the place they are visiting, especially during the evening.

Satchee Govender, chairperson of the Umhlatuzana Civic Association anti-crime forum, welcomed the move. ‘We have a constitutional right to be protected by the state and the protection that has been given is inadequate. Residents, in my view, are well within their rights to start doing something to protect themselves,’ he said.

But not everyone was happy with the action taken by the Chatsworth residents. eThekweni city manager Mike Sutcliffe said the community would have to take the boom gates down. Jody Kollapen, who was head of the Human Rights Commission at the time, said gated communities were problematic as public places had to remain public. ‘We understand the issues around crime and the desire for communities to take measures that improve safety in their neighbourhoods. However, in an open society, it is important that we don’t have a situation where we begin to close off neighbourhoods and communities that should be accessible’, he said.

**Note: A boom is a pole across the road. It lifts up on one side to allow cars to pass.*

Source: Adapted from an article that appeared in the *Sunday Times* on 9 February 2009.

Divide the study circle into two teams to prepare for a debate. One team must prepare arguments in favour of the booms. The other team must prepare arguments against the booms. Try to think of as many arguments as you can. It does not matter what you believe yourself. Rather, put yourself in the shoes of people who either agree or disagree with the booms.

After 10 minutes, come together for the debate. The study circle leader should be the moderator of the debate. Let the group that agrees with the booms present its arguments first. Then let the group that disagrees with the boom make its presentation. After these formal presentations, let the groups respond to each other’s arguments. At the end, the moderator will decide which group has won the debate. This decision should be based on the strength of the arguments, not on the moderator’s own views about the topic.

STEP 4:

Evaluation (10 minutes)

As a group, briefly think about how well your study circle meeting worked.

Evaluation questions:

- How do you feel about today’s study circle meeting?
- For you personally, what was the most helpful thing you learnt today?
- How well did people participate? Recognise useful contributions.
- How well did you manage time?
- What could you do better or differently next time? How can each member help?



Preparation for the next meeting

Before the next meeting, find out more about what people in your community think about crime. Also get information about different ways your community has responded to crime. Then interview three people, using these questions. (You can also add your own questions.) If there is not enough space to write down the answers below, use a separate piece of paper.

- Are you concerned about crime in our community? Why?

- Interview 1: _____

- Interview 2: _____

- Interview 3: _____

- As a community, have we taken any steps to protect our area from crime?

- 1: _____

- 2: _____

- 3: _____

- If we have, which of those steps have worked? Why do you think so?

- 1: _____

- 2: _____

- 3: _____

- Which steps have not worked? Why do you think so?

- 1: _____

- 2: _____

- 3: _____

- Have you personally been involved in any of the actions that have been taken? Why did you get involved, or why didn't you get involved?

- 1: _____

- 2: _____

- 3: _____

- What else do you think can be done to address crime in our community?

- 1: _____

- 2: _____

- 3: _____



Meeting 3: Do criminals have rights?

STEP 1:

Community views on crime (40 minutes)

Begin the meeting by telling each other about the interviews you conducted with people in your community. Share the information you gathered on people's feelings about crime in your area, using your notes on pages 12–13. After everyone has reported on their findings, respond to these questions:

Questions for discussion:

- What is the general mood about crime in your area?
- Are people ready to act together in positive ways to deal with crime? Why do you say so?
- Do some people believe that the community should take the law into its own hands and deal with criminals themselves? Why do you think they believe this?

STEP 2:

People's justice (35 minutes)

Read and then discuss the article below. Use the questions that follow to guide your discussion.



In Kathlehong, east of Johannesburg, more and more criminals are learning the hard way that crime does not pay. They are also learning that people in the area do not have much faith in the police any more.

On 28 August 2007 in the Silumaview section of Kathlehong, two robbers attacked Patricia Chauke (aged 32). They grabbed her cellphone at gunpoint and ran away. A man on the street grabbed the gunman from behind. He fired a shot, but that did not scare off the angry people. A big crowd gathered. Using stones and sticks, they gave the robbers the beating of their lives! Both men were rushed to hospital with serious injuries, under police guard.

On the same day elsewhere in Kathlehong, another crowd attacked a young man who was found hiding inside a house. The house owner, Siphso Cindi

(aged 54), raised the alarm. The crowd attacked the intruder and beat him so badly that he was also rushed to hospital. Cindi did not open a case because nothing was stolen from the house.

Police have repeatedly warned people against taking the law into their own hands. The cops say that if they catch anyone doing it they will arrest and charge them. According to them, people's justice is a crime. But people say, 'Who will protect us if we don't do it ourselves?'

Source: Adapted from an article that appeared in the *Daily Sun* on 29 August 2007.

Questions for discussion:

- Why do you think community members decided to beat up criminals rather than hand them over to the police?
- Were the community's actions lawful or were they against the law? Explain your answer.
- Do you think it helps to solve the crime problem when communities take the law into their own hands, as happened in Kathlehong? Why do you say so?
- Should citizens be arrested for dealing harshly with criminals?

STEP 3:

Citizens' arrest (35 minutes)



On 15 August 2007, Richard Modungwa (aged 28) smashed the window of a woman's car at a busy stop street in Industria, near Johannesburg. He grabbed her leather bag and ran away. However, motorists waiting behind the victim saw the attack and chased Modungwa. They tackled him to the ground and handed him over to the police. He was charged with theft and also for damaging the vehicle.

A month later, Modungwa appeared in the Brixton Magistrate's Court. He pleaded guilty to the charges. The lawyer defending Modungwa argued that one of the charges should be dropped. But the magistrate decided that Modungwa should be sentenced for both.

The magistrate, Norman Makhubela, sent out a strong message – the community has had enough of smash-and-grabs. He said the community which arrested him needed to see justice done. 'The police have enough work and they cannot be planted at every robot to protect motorists from smash-and-grab thieves. People should feel safe when they approach robots and stop streets,' said Makhubela. 'Even innocent beggars are suffering because of this crime. People don't know whether a genuine beggar is approaching their car or a thief.'

Makhubela said the court believed in giving people second chances when possible, but in this case he took a tough line. He said: ‘There are far too many smash-and-grabs in Johannesburg. It is difficult to catch these criminals, and when one is caught, an example should be set. Modungwa was caught by members of the public. The court owes it to the public to show them that this crime is taken seriously. The criminal cannot be let off lightly.’ Modungwa was sentenced to five years in prison.

Source: Adapted from an article that appeared in *The Star* on 12 September 2007.

Questions for discussion:

- How did members of the community respond when they saw the smash-and-grab happening? Were their actions lawful or not?
- What did the magistrate think about the community’s actions?
- Why did the magistrate decide to give Modungwa a tough sentence? Do you agree with his decision?
- What does this story tell you about how the justice system is supposed to work? Is this your experience of our justice system? Explain your answer.

STEP 4:

Rights of criminals (30 minutes)

The crime stories in Step 2 and Step 3 all took place in August 2007, but people reacted in very different ways. Now take some time to compare the two stories, using these questions to guide your discussion.

Questions for discussion:

- How did ordinary citizens react differently to the criminals in these stories?
- After reading these two articles, have your feelings changed about how communities should deal with crime? If so, how?
- Do you think criminals have rights? If not, why not? If so, what rights do they have?
- Is it possible for the rights of ordinary citizens and the rights of criminals to be respected at the same time? Explain your answer.

After the discussion, read this summary together. If time allows, briefly share your thoughts about the rights described here.



It is important for ordinary citizens to understand that even criminals have rights. As human beings they have certain basic rights, even if they commit a crime. Remembering our past can help us to understand why these rights are important. During the apartheid years many people were treated very badly by the police, the courts and the prisons. It is important not to forget this history. For this reason, the Constitution of South Africa says a lot about the rights of arrested, detained and accused persons. Here are some of the rights that are included in the Bill of Rights.

Everyone who is **arrested** has the right to remain silent. They must be informed of this right, and cannot be forced to make a confession. An arrested person must be brought to court as soon as possible, usually within 48 hours. At this first court appearance, the arrested person must be charged or released. Reasons must be given if the person has to remain in prison.

Everyone who is **detained** in prison has the right to receive help from a lawyer, at the state's expense if necessary. Prisoners must be treated with dignity. They must receive adequate food, accommodation, opportunities to exercise and medical treatment. Prisoners have the right to communicate with a family member, minister of religion and doctor.

Everyone who is **accused** of a crime has the right to a fair trial in court. They have the right to be defended by a lawyer and to have enough time to prepare for the trial. An accused person can challenge evidence that is brought before the court, but can also remain silent. The trial must be conducted in a language that the accused person understands, or a translator must be provided.

STEP 5:

Evaluation (10 minutes)

As a group, briefly think about how well your study circle meeting worked.

Evaluation questions:

- How do you feel about today's study circle meeting?
- For you personally, what was the most helpful thing you learnt today?
- How well did people participate? Recognise useful contributions.
- How well did you manage time?
- What can you do better or differently next time? How can each member help?



Preparation for the next meeting

During the coming week, gather some information on what people in your community think about how well the criminal justice system works in South Africa. Do a short survey among your friends and neighbours, using these questions to guide you. Ask at least five different people, and capture the scores and comments in the spaces below.

- How well do you think the police do their job in our community?
Give them a mark out of ten (0 is useless; 5 is OK; 10 is perfect)

- How well do you think the courts do their job?
Give them a mark out of ten

- How well do you think the prisons do their job?
Give them a mark out of ten

Meeting 4: The criminal justice system

STEP 1:

People's perceptions (15 minutes)

Start off by reporting briefly on what you heard from people during the week about their views on how well the police, courts and prisons work in South Africa. There is a lot to do in this meeting, so don't spend more than 15 minutes on this step. Just share the general feelings that came through in your discussions with your friends and neighbours.

Question for reporting back:

- Overall, do people in the community respect the work of the police, the courts and the prisons, or not? Briefly summarise what you heard.

STEP 2:

Role of the police (30 minutes)



Dealing with criminals is the work of three separate government departments: the police, the courts and the prisons. Together they form what is known as the criminal justice system. Improving the way we deal with crime means that we need to improve the **whole** system, not only one part. This is a very big and difficult challenge. All three departments need to do their work better, and also improve the way they work together.

The first branch of the criminal justice system is the police. The South African Police Service (SAPS) falls under the Ministry of Police. The police have four main responsibilities:

Patrols

The police are supposed to keep an eye on what is going on in a community by doing patrols. The presence of the police is meant to create a safer atmosphere, where people know that help is at hand if it is needed. Police patrols look out for trouble-makers, particularly in crime hot spots. Visible policing helps to

stop people from breaking the law.

Arrests

When a crime happens, it is the job of the police to arrest the person who commits it. Sometimes criminals are caught in the act and arrested immediately. If citizens see someone committing a crime and manage to catch the person, they must call the police immediately and hand him over. This is called a 'citizen's arrest'. It is important to report crime and lay charges properly, otherwise the police cannot open a case and hunt for the criminals.

Investigations

After a crime has been reported, the police open a case, take statements and investigate what happened. Police detectives gather evidence to help identify criminals so that they can be arrested. The evidence is also used in court during the trial. Detectives have to find as much evidence as possible to prove the charges that have been laid against the accused person. Before the trial begins, the evidence is handed over to the lawyers who will defend the victim. If the police investigations are not good enough, the case might end up being thrown out of court.

Victim Assistance

The police work closely with the Department of Social Development to provide support to victims of crime. This is to help them recover from the stress and trauma caused by the crime.

After reading this information about the role of the police, discuss the questions below.

Questions for discussion:

- How can the community help the police do a better job when it comes to making arrests?
- How can the community help the police do a better job of investigating crimes?

STEP 3:

Role of the courts (40 minutes)

The following reading passage is quite long. Take time to explain the ideas to each other if necessary, and then discuss the questions afterwards.



The second branch of the criminal justice system is the courts. They fall under the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Development. There are many different kinds of courts in South Africa hear different kinds of cases.

Criminal cases go to Magistrates' Courts and High Courts and sometimes to the Supreme Court of Appeal.

Bail

He or she has the right to apply for bail. This means that he or she can be released while police investigate the case. This is why accused people are sometimes out on the streets shortly after they have been arrested. The magistrate or judge decides whether or not to grant bail, and how much the accused person must pay to be released. This decision is based on preliminary evidence presented by the state prosecutor. Usually, bail is not granted if the person is considered extremely dangerous, or if there is a strong possibility that he or she will not go to court when the trial begins.

Trial

After the police have completed their investigation the prosecutor decides independently whether to take the case to court based on the evidence that has been gathered or whether to drop the charges against the accused person. At the beginning of the trial, the accused must state whether he or she is guilty or not guilty of the charges. This is called the *plea*.

Prosecution

The lawyers who support the victim on behalf of the State are called *prosecutors*. They present arguments why the accused person is guilty of the crime. Their arguments must be based on proof gathered by the police and other investigators. This proof is called *evidence*. The victim is normally the chief *witness* but the prosecutor can also bring other witnesses. The prosecutors are allowed to question the accused, unless he or she decides to remain silent. They can also question the defence witnesses.

Defence

The lawyers who support the accused person are called the *defence*. They present arguments why the accused person is not guilty. Or, if the accused has pleaded guilty of the crime, they argue why he or she should receive the lightest possible sentence. They are allowed to question the victim and the prosecution's witnesses. Their arguments must be based on evidence. Witnesses can also be brought in to support these arguments.

Verdict

The judge or magistrate's job is to listen carefully to the arguments and evidence from both sides. Then he or she must decide whether the accused person is guilty or not guilty, in terms of the law. This is called the *verdict*. The verdict must be based on law and evidence only, not on the judge's feelings about the case.

If the judge decides that the accused person is not guilty, the charges are dropped and he or she goes free. If the judge is not satisfied with the evidence that is presented by either side, he or she might not be able to reach a verdict. Then the case is often postponed or *remanded*. If the arguments are not strengthened, or if procedures are not properly followed, the case can be thrown out of court and the accused person be released.

Sentence

If the judge gives a guilty verdict, the next job is to decide on a suitable punishment. This is called the *sentence*. The sentence depends on the seriousness of the crime as well as many other issues. These include whether the criminal has committed similar or other crimes before, his or her life and family situation, and also his or her emotional state. If the crime is not too serious, the criminal may receive a *suspended sentence*. This means that he or she does not have to go to prison, provided that he or she does not commit the crime again. He or she can also be given a fine, or be instructed to do community service. If the crime is more serious, then the criminal will receive a prison sentence. Extremely serious crimes can receive a lifetime prison sentence. Nobody can be sentenced to death in South Africa.

Appeal

After the sentence has been passed a convicted criminal has the right to appeal against the verdict or sentence in a higher court. The appeal process is a way to ensure that the criminal is treated as fairly as possible. At an appeal, a new judge will examine the court case and decide whether or not he or she agrees with the verdict and sentence. Sometimes the appeal judge can re-open a case, if he or she feels that the first trial missed some important points. When this happens, a new trial takes place. The prosecutors and defence lawyers can present new evidence and new arguments, and a new verdict is passed. Sometimes this supports the first verdict, but sometimes it differs. In this way, judges keep a check on each other's decisions.

Questions for discussion:

- Do you agree with the idea of bail? Why or why not?
- Why are the victim and the accused person *both* represented by lawyers in court?
- Do you think that the appeal process is useful? Why do you say so?
- What can victims and their communities do to help the courts function well?

STEP 4:

Role of prisons (25 minutes)



The third branch of the criminal justice system is the prisons. Prisons fall under the Ministry of Correctional Services. They serve three main functions:

Security

Prisons provide a secure place where people who are a threat to society can be locked up. There are two types of prisoners – those who are awaiting trial and those who have already been tried and sentenced. They are supposed to be held separately, although this is often not possible due to a shortage of space.

Punishment

A prison sentence is a way of punishing people who have broken the law. If criminals do not believe they will be punished for their actions, then they are likely to continue committing crime. Seeing criminals go to prison can help to stop other people from doing crime.

Rehabilitation

Prisons are not only supposed to be places of punishment, but also places where criminals can learn to mend their ways or correct their behaviour. This is why prison services are called ‘correctional services’. Prisoners sometimes have opportunities to learn new skills and do positive things like making handicrafts, singing in a choir, or working in a garden. This is to prepare them to lead a better life when they leave prison.

Questions for discussion:

- Do you think people who have committed crimes should be jailed and forgotten about? Why do you say so?
- What can ordinary citizens do to help prisons with the work of rehabilitation?
- What happens after criminals have served their sentences? What can the community do to help them start a new life?

STEP 5:

Dealing with people's perceptions (30 minutes)

Here are some thoughts from a long-time community activist about how people see the criminal justice system. After reading them, have a short discussion, if time allows.



'Sometimes communities think that criminals have more rights than victims. They complain that criminals commit crimes over and over again. When they are arrested, they sometimes do not even go to court, or if they do, they do not spend enough time in prison. Communities therefore feel more comfortable to handle things their own way, which most of the time results in dangerous situations. The criminal activities then repeat themselves over and over as each one tries to take revenge for what has happened.'

'A very common response that is becoming popular in our communities is where people are beaten by crowds. This action is termed 'taking the law into your own hands'. This is a criminal act that will get the perpetrators of such acts into trouble with the law should they be caught themselves. Community members normally do not lay charges when this happens as they are afraid they will be asked questions about the beating of the criminal. The person often ends up being released as there is no one coming forward from the crowd responsible for the beating. People will most of the time justify the actions they take. They find faults with all other interest groups like police, courts and government.'

'It is important that victims lay a charge against criminals, even if the police and other people saw the crime being committed. If there is no one laying a charge, there is no way the police can keep the criminal indefinitely. The victim or accuser has to also follow up on the case and know the dates of going to court to give evidence. If, on a number of occasions, the accuser does not turn up in court, then the case might be dismissed. This might be another reason that people feel the criminals do not spend enough time in prison to pay for their sins.'

Questions for discussion:

- Have you changed the way you think about how communities should deal with criminals after this meeting? Explain your answer.
- What needs to happen in your community to build more trust in the police, courts and prisons?
- What can you do to help change the way that ordinary people respond to crime in the community?

STEP 6:

Evaluation (10 minutes)

As a group, briefly think about how well your study circle meeting worked.

Evaluation questions:

- How do you feel about today's study circle meeting?
- For you personally, what was the most helpful thing you learnt today?
- How well did people participate? Recognise useful contributions.
- What can you do better or differently next time? How can each member help?



Preparation for the next meeting

Most communities have formal participatory structures to address crime and safety issues. There can be one or more of these, including:

- Community Police Forum (CPF);
- Sector Crime Forum (SCF);
- Community Safety Forum (CSF).

Find out which of these structures exist in your community. If there is more than one, how do they relate to each other? Get information about what they do. Talk to different people to find out how they view them. Some study circle members should interview the police, some should interview citizens who belong to these structures, and others should interview people in the broader community.

If none of these structures exist in your community, try to find out the reason(s) why. Speak to different people to get their opinions.

- What is the purpose of the CPF/SCF/CSF?

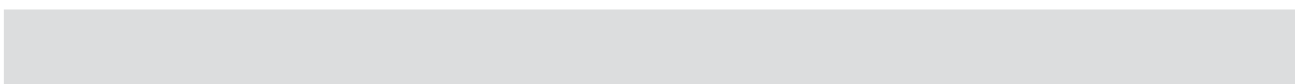
- How well is it working? What successes has it had?

- What challenges does the CPF/SCF/CSF face?

- What can be done to make this structure work better?

- How can members of the community participate in the CPF/SCF/CSF?

- Other information about the CPF/SCF/CSF:



Meeting 5: Community policing

STEP 1:

Local structures (30 minutes)

To begin the meeting, share the information and views that you have gathered about the Community Policing Forum (CPF), Sector Crime Forum (SCF) or Community Safety Forum (CSF) in your area. First discuss your notes on pages 25–26. Then answer the following questions together.

Questions for discussion:

- Was it easy or difficult to get information and opinions about the CPF, SCF or CSF in your area? Why?
- Do you understand the differences between these structures? Explain them to each other. Use the notes below to clarify, if necessary.
- Overall, are the police happy with the way these structures are working? Discuss the reasons.
- Are people in the community satisfied with these structures? Why do you say so?

Sector Crime Forum (SCF)

The area served by a police station is divided into smaller areas called *sectors*. Each sector should have its own SCF. The SCF and the SAPS sector managers help to build relationships between the police and residents within the sector, as well as with businesses, schools, churches and other organisations. Together, they identify crime issues that are specific to their sector and set up neighbourhood initiatives to address them.

Community Police Forum (CPF)

There should be a CPF at every police station, with a number of SCFs that fall under it. This means that the CPF plays more of a coordinating role. Ideally, each sector should be represented at the CPF. The CPF draws together the ideas and insights from all the sectors and helps to ensure that there is good coordination and cooperation between them.

Community Safety Forum (CSF)

This is a broader forum that addresses a wide range of safety issues, not only

policing. In most places, the CSF is driven by the municipality. It involves courts, prisons, the police, as well as community organisations. All CPFs in the area participate in the CSF, although in some places CSFs have replaced CPFs. They will be discussed further in the next meeting (see page 35).

STEP 2:

Understanding community policing (30 minutes)

Read this passage together.



In the traditional model of policing there was a big gap between citizens and the police. The ‘police force’ was seen as a professional law enforcement agency and citizens were not supposed to interfere with its work. In South Africa, during the apartheid years, this gap was worsened because most people saw the police as the enemy. After 1994, it was important to find ways of improving the relationship between citizens and the police. This is when the idea of community policing was introduced in our country.

Community policing is a completely different way of thinking about policing. It is based on the belief that the police cannot solve crime problems on their own. To succeed, the police must establish partnerships with community leaders, citizens, local businesses, schools, community organisations and other government departments. All of these groups are seen as equal partners who need to work together to improve the safety of the community.

For community policing to work, police and citizens need to change the way they think. This can be a difficult process! The police need to be willing to *share* the responsibility for creating safer communities. They must accept that they do not have all the answers, and must be open to ideas and help from the community. They must learn to trust the knowledge and experience of ordinary people and treat them with respect. Citizens also need to be willing to play a more *active role* in promoting community safety. They must cooperate with the police, and share their time and energy to create a safer environment for everyone.

Community policing is supposed to shape the way the police approach *all* their work. It is not just about setting up CPFs and SCFs. Too often these structures are pushed to the side, while the police continue with their other business in the same old way. Setting up structures is not enough. Even if an SCF exists and has regular meetings, it will not achieve much if it does not have an *empowering vision*. For an SCF or CPF to work well, it must see itself as a real channel for change in the community. This means that it needs to go beyond just consulting citizens from time to time. Instead, it must build people’s capacity and create space for them to work actively together. It is not just about talk, but about *action*. As people work together to address common

problems, they begin to feel more powerful. They also learn to appreciate each other's contributions and develop respect across differences. In this way the community becomes stronger as well as safer.

This passage is meant to get you thinking about community policing. The following questions should spark a discussion based on your own ideas. You won't find the answers to the questions in the text itself.

Questions for discussion:

- What do you think about the idea of community policing? Explain your views.
- Has community policing helped to change the way the police do their work in your area? Why, or why not?
- Are people in your area ready to work together with the police to address crime? What can be done to help them understand community policing?

STEP 3:

How you can get involved (45 minutes)



To become an executive member of a CPF or SCF, you need to be elected onto the committee at a public meeting. You can also join the CPF or SCF as a non-executive member. Many CPFs function as fairly small committees and might not need new committee members. But they need help all the time, in one way or another, so it is a good idea to start by asking them where they need support. They can also inform you about the specific needs of your police station.

Because an SCF covers a smaller area than a CPF, it is able to address very local issues. SCFs actually provide the best opportunity for citizens to collaborate with the police to build safer communities. This is where ordinary people can make the most impact.

There are many different ways you can volunteer to help by offering your skills and time. Here are some suggestions:

- Join your CPF or SCF as a member and attend regular meetings;
- Make yourself available when they need help with organising special events;
- Attend public meetings and share your ideas;
- Volunteer to help with administrative tasks, like photocopying or faxing;
- Volunteer to help the police every week, or every month;
- Help with fundraising for the CPF;

- Share your skills like training, translating, counselling, first aid or computers;
- Help with maintenance at the police station, or provide refreshments;
- Join one of the other volunteer structures linked to the CPF, listed below.

Victim support or trauma counselling unit

This volunteer unit exists at many police stations and is run by members of the community to support victims of crime. It is coordinated by the SAPS on behalf of the Department of Social Development. In some cases, training can be provided to people who would like to do this work.

Youth desk

The youth desk is a great place for teenagers and school-leavers who want to volunteer to make a difference in their community.

Residents' association

If there is an active residents' association or civic association in your area, it is likely to have a safety sub-committee. This committee has similar functions to an SCF, but it provides another channel to connect with the community.

Block watch/neighbourhood watch/street committee

Several communities have well-established neighbourhood watches that are run by members of the community. These structures provide a valuable link between the community, the CPF and the police.

Street patrols

These patrols involve volunteer residents from the community. They are similar to block watches, except that they patrol full shifts and communicate closely with the police. This is a newer type of initiative, usually running in areas where there are no private security companies.

Reservists

Your CPF will also be able to put you in touch with the reservist team at your police station if you would like to be trained as a police reservist.

If your area does not have some of these structures and you would like to help set them up, start by speaking to your CPF or your sector manager at SAPS. Organise with other citizens, build relationships with the people at your local police station, and don't give up.

Source: Information taken from a brochure produced by the CPF Partnership and used with permission, with slight adaptation. For more information, visit their website: www.cpfpartnership.co.za.

Questions for discussion:

- Do you want to follow up any of these ideas for getting involved? Tell the group what action you want to take.
- What can this study circle do to inform the community about how to get involved in local CPFs and SCFs? How can you motivate people to do so?

STEP 4:**Success stories (35 minutes)**

Here are three stories to show how creative and successful a CPF or SCF can be. Divide into three groups, and let each group read one of the stories. First discuss the questions in your small group. If time allows, get together as the whole study circle at the end to compare what you have learned.

**Naledi**

The Naledi CPF in Soweto works closely with the police station to implement special projects throughout the year. As part of their community outreach, they choose a different theme for every month. Often they make plans around a special day, like Child Protection Day or National Police Day. August is Women's Month. In 2009, they decided that September would be Men's Month. Domestic violence is a common problem in the area, and the CPF realised that men also had to get involved in addressing it. They collaborated with various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to plan the programme, including African Fathers, the Mankind Project and the One Man Can campaign. They got posters and put together a day-long event. A doctor from Baragwanath Hospital spoke about men's health. Other speakers shared their ideas on what it means to be a father and a husband. There was much discussion about how to be strong without being violent. Now the CPF has helped to set up an ongoing men's group. Four elderly women in the community put pressure on the Naledi police station to establish a counselling unit for victims of violence. For almost two months they went to the police station nearly every day to talk about their idea. Finally, they were given some space to set up a victim empowerment centre. The CPF also created a mediation team that offers services on two days a week. Mediators help couples, neighbours and others to resolve conflicts before they turn to violence.

Parkview and Sophiatown

The Johannesburg suburb of Parkview has an active CPF that responds well to the specific needs of its community. The police were becoming frustrated because residents were refusing to attend identity parades. People would report

crimes, but later, when arrests were made, they did not help to identify the criminals when they were called to do so. The police station asked the CPF to communicate with residents in the area about this problem. The CPF decided to educate the community about how an identity parade works. They organised an open day at the Parkview police station and many people attended. Some even came from surrounding suburbs. People were free to walk through the identity parade room and stand on both sides. They could ask questions and police helped them to overcome their fears about attending the parades. Not long afterwards, an identity parade took place quite nearby at the Sophiatown police station. It was very badly handled by the police and all the suspects were released. The CPF investigated and realised that the police station did not have a proper room where they could conduct identity parades. They lodged a complaint, but did not stop there. They immediately wrote to the Department of Public Works to inform them that the police station needed a proper room for identity parades and requested them to provide this as soon as possible. They understood that their role was not just to criticise, but to help the police do their job better.

Melville

Melville is a colourful old suburb in Johannesburg, close to Parkview and Sophiatown. There are two very busy streets with many restaurants, bars and shops. There are at least 70 guesthouses and bed-and-breakfast places in the suburb and a large numbers of guests and tourists visit throughout the year. Many visitors do not have their own cars but enjoy walking to the restaurants and shops. Melville is full of pedestrians. There are two primary schools with many learners who come from other parts of Johannesburg. They walk several blocks to get to school from the bus and taxi routes. The University of Johannesburg is very nearby, and many students walk from Melville to the campus. For years there have been problems with muggings and drug dealing in Melville. The criminals have targetted school children and students, as well as tourists and residents. When the Melville SCF was formed, they realised that attacks on pedestrians were a particular problem in the area. Another problem was drug dealers harrassing young people. The sector manager brought a map to show where these crimes had taken place, so it was possible to identify the worst trouble spots. He also had information about when the crimes usually happened. Security cameras were erected on a few problem corners. The SCF chose certain streets to create safe walkways for school children and students, and the police agreed to patrol these more regularly. The schools, the university and the guesthouses all worked to spread information about the safe walkways.

Questions for discussion:

- What do you think about the actions of these CPFs and SCFs? Why are they effective?
- How do the police and the CPFs support each other's work in these stories?
- Do you have ideas for how the CPF or SCF in your area can help to address local crime problems? Share your thoughts.

STEP 5:**Evaluation (10 minutes)**

As a group, briefly think about how well your study circle meeting worked.

Evaluation questions:

- How do you feel about today's study circle meeting?
- For you personally, what was the most helpful thing you learnt today?
- How well did people participate? Recognise useful contributions.
- What can you do better or differently next time? How can each member help?

**Preparation for the next meeting**

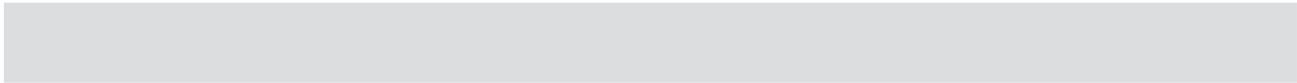
What are some of the root causes of crime in your community? If you look beyond problems with the criminal justice system (police, courts and prisons), what are some of the other problems that cause people to commit crime? Also, what are reasons that make it easier for people to become victims of crime?

Speak to three or four neighbours to get a better understanding of how people in your community understand the deeper reasons for crime. Ask them the questions below and make some notes for the next meeting.

- Who is involved in doing crime in our area? Why do you think these people turn to crime?

- Who are the main victims of crime in our area? What makes it easy for criminals to target them?

- What areas in our community are unsafe? Why is this so?



Meeting 6: Crime prevention

STEP 1:

Root causes of crime (30 minutes)

Start by talking about the different ways people in your community explain the problem of crime. Follow the questions on pages 33–34 and compare the answers you were given. After that, use the questions below to guide your discussion.

Questions for discussion:

- Do you believe that it is possible for the police to get rid of crime on their own? Why do you say so?
- Are some of the causes of crime in your community connected to each other? If so, explain how.

STEP 2:

Central Karoo case study (45 minutes)



The Central Karoo is a very dry, rural area in the Western Cape made up mostly of farms and small towns. In 2006, a group of researchers worked in towns across the district to help develop a vision for a safe Central Karoo. As they talked and listened to people, they discovered a complex cycle of crime and violence. Alcohol abuse seemed to be the root cause of many of the problems.

In all of the towns, most alcohol was sold in illegal shebeens. The shebeen owners often lent money to their customers, charging high interest. People wasted their pensions and childcare grants on drinking. Police said that almost all the violent crimes in the district were related to alcohol abuse. Alcohol made criminals bolder and victims more vulnerable. Shebeens sold alcohol to under-age boys and girls. Many girls were raped after getting drunk, resulting in unwanted pregnancies. Children born into unstable families were neglected and abused. They witnessed violence in their homes and communities from an early age and came to see it as normal. Unsupervised children would miss school and spend the afternoons feeling hungry and bored. They often joined gangs, where they found a sense of belonging. Guns and drugs were easily available. Young people became involved in petty crime and unsafe sex. By the

Next, see which team has the longest list. Get back together as one group and compare the causes. Then discuss the following questions.

Questions for discussion:

- Do the causes of crime and violence in the Central Karoo also exist in your community?
- How do you feel when you hear all these different reasons for crime?
- Can these problems be addressed by the criminal justice system alone?
- What else must change in the Central Karoo and in your community to address the causes of crime?

STEP 3:

Law enforcement versus crime prevention (45 minutes)

Read the passage below and discuss the questions that follow.



Usually, when people talk about crime, they are quick to blame the criminal justice system (police, courts and prisons) for everything that goes wrong. But crime is a complex problem, with many different causes. A complex problem needs a complex response. There are no quick and simple solutions for getting rid of crime.

The criminal justice system is responsible for enforcing laws and dealing with people who break them. But law enforcement is just one part of dealing with crime. It is about reacting to crime *after* it has happened. Arresting someone who has committed a crime does not solve the problems that led to the crime, or that result from it. It cannot bring back someone who has been killed, for example. Victims and families of victims still have to go through a long and often painful process of recovery. It is better to prevent crime from happening, than to deal with all problems it creates. Crime prevention is about addressing the causes of crime *before* more crimes are committed.

In 1996, the South African government developed the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS). This is a radically different approach to dealing with crime. It spreads responsibility for crime prevention beyond the criminal justice system. Crime prevention needs much broader participation from the government and the community. The NCPS says that the departments of social development, home affairs and defence have important roles to play in preventing crime, as well as local and provincial government. Many other government departments can also make important contributions, including the departments of education, health, labour, human settlement (housing), sport, arts and culture, and more. But government departments cannot do all the

work on their own. Citizens are essential partners, too.

The NCPS is based on the idea of *social* crime prevention. It emphasises that crime is a ‘whole society’ issue rather than just a security issue. Social crime prevention tries to address the problems in society that lead people to commit crime, or to become victims of crime. It strives to improve the environment in which crimes occur and to change the conditions that cause crime. An effective criminal justice system is also essential, but it is not enough on its own.

After reading the passage above, discuss these questions:

Questions for discussion:

- Does the idea of social crime prevention make sense to you? Explain it to each other in your own words.
- Do you think that the National Crime Prevention Strategy could help in a place like the Central Karoo, which you read about in Step 2?
- Which government departments are mentioned in this passage? What role could each of them play in building safer communities?
- Why is it impossible for government departments to build safer communities on their own? What is the role of citizens in crime prevention?

STEP 4:

The role of local government (20 minutes)



Local government is the level of government that is closest to the people. The police are not part of local government, except in big cities where metro police services exist. However, there are many things that local government can do to prevent crime in communities.

Many municipalities have established Community Safety Forums (CSFs) to coordinate crime prevention activities across their area. These forums are broader than CPFs and tackle issues beyond policing. SAPS, CPFs and SCFs all participate in municipal-driven CSFs. The forums also involve NGOs, community organisations, religious groups and business. The local Magistrate’s Court and the Department of Correctional Services are represented. Councillors and officials from all relevant municipal departments are also key roleplayers.

The core functions of local government include the delivery of basic services such as water, sewerage and sometimes electricity. Local government builds and repairs roads in its area and provides street lights. It plans the town’s development. It manages parks and picnic areas. Local government shares

some responsibilities with provincial government by providing local clinics, certain welfare services and sometimes housing. Education is the responsibility of provincial government.

If all of these services are delivered successfully, this will help to prevent crime. If there are lights on the streets and in parks, criminals will not find it easy to commit crime at night. Sometimes buildings and land belonging to the municipality are not used and become places where criminals run their criminal activities. Local government must act to clean up these places. If people feel proud of the place they live, they will also take responsibility to protect it.

Questions for discussion:

- What steps has local government taken to help prevent crime in your area?
- Do you think it can do more? If so, what?
- What can residents of your area do to ensure that local government takes crime prevention more seriously?

STEP 5:

Evaluation (10 minutes)

As a group, briefly think about how well your study circle meeting worked.

Evaluation questions:

- How do you feel about today's study circle meeting?
- For you personally, what was the most helpful thing you learnt today?
- How well did people participate? Recognise useful contributions.
- What can you do better or differently next time? How can each member help?



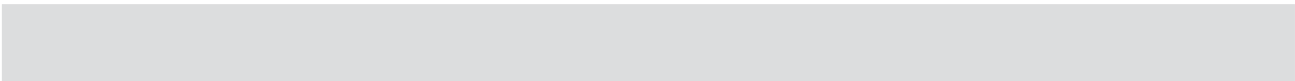
Preparation for the next meeting

During the coming week, think about what *your* community would look like if the problems of crime and violence were fixed. Also talk to your family, friends and neighbours about their vision for a safe community.

In a safe community, remember that the police are only a small part of the picture. Imagine all the other things that will be different when your community is safe, for example:

- What places feel secure?
- Where can you go without fear?
- How do people move around?
- How do different groups of people feel? (for example, children, youth, women, men, elderly, disabled, foreigners)
- How do you see your role as a member of the community, and how do others see their roles?

Put all your thoughts together and write a **Charter for a Safe Community**. Like the Freedom Charter, make a list of things that will be possible and positive in your community when it is safe. Use the space below to write your charter.



Meeting 7: Power to change

STEP 1:

Visions for a safe community (45 minutes)

One by one, each read the Charter for a Safe Community that you wrote during the week on page 40. Each person's vision is special, so listen carefully. Pay attention to ideas that are repeated, and also to surprising or unusual ideas. You can also look at the diagram at the back of this book on page 63. As a group, reflect on all the ideas you have shared about what a safe community looks like. Close the discussion by responding to the questions below.

Questions for discussion:

- Do you believe that a strong vision for a safe community can help to change the way things are now? Why do you say so?
- What was the mood in the group when people were reading their Charters?
- Does it make a difference to talk about 'safety' rather than about 'crime'? Why?
- What role can this study circle play in making this vision for a safe community become *real*?

STEP 2:

The power of citizens (20 minutes)



It is very easy to feel powerless and hopeless when talking about violence and crime. However, things can change when we begin to claim our power as citizens. Citizen power comes from acting together in an organised way. It is built by the small, everyday actions of ordinary men and women. It takes patience and hard work. There might be set-backs and disappointments, but we can build the kind of community we want to live in.

Too often we think about power in limited ways. In fact, we give away our power. We allow our rulers to exercise power over us, instead of using our power as citizens to hold them accountable. We withdraw into our homes in fear while criminals terrorise our communities. But rulers and criminals are people just like us. If they have power, we can have it too.

In 1925, a young American woman by the name of Margaret Mead went to live among the people of a small island called Samoa and studied their culture.

Through her work, she helped to give the world a new understanding of human behaviour. She believed deeply in people's capacity to learn and change and made a statement that continues to be quoted all over the world:

'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world – indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.'

Questions for discussion:

- Do you believe in Margaret Mead's statement? Describe how you feel when you read it.
- Can you think of times when taking small, positive steps with other people made you feel more powerful? Describe what happened.

STEP 3:

The power of culture and values (45 minutes)



Culture is powerful. One way of thinking about culture is to focus on traditions. These are very important, and we can tap into them to build our power. But culture is also about the spirit and character of a community. Every community has its own 'culture'. What kind of behaviour is accepted? How do people relate to each other? The answers to these questions show the values that we hold together.

Values are more powerful than the police! This is what people who have studied crime and violence in different communities say. A peaceful, safe community is built by strong relationships and common values, not by police activity. This means that positive values and a positive culture put pressure on people in the community to behave in positive ways.

Look at the chart on page 43. Working quietly on your own, think about each of the actions on the left hand side. If you think the action is acceptable, put a cross in the 'yes' column. If is not acceptable, put a cross in the 'no' column.

Is this action acceptable?	YES	NO
Breaking the speed limit		
Refusing to pay a fine for breaking the speed limit		
Buying stolen goods		
Shoplifting (taking things from a shop without paying)		
Taking things from an employer (e.g., pens, pencils, toilet paper, tea)		
Taking things from a public institution (e.g., school furniture, hospital linen, library books)		
Children taking things from each other at school		
Driving a government car for personal purposes		
Not reporting crime to the police		
Helping to hide a criminal in your home		
Turning a blind eye to small crimes		

After completing the chart individually, come together to compare your answers and discuss the following questions.

Questions for discussion:

- What values do we promote in our community if we accept these types of behaviour?
- What can be done to develop a culture of respect for each other, for the law and for public institutions?
- Does *ubuntu* still have a place in our society today?
- Can *ubuntu* help citizens understand their role in building safer communities? How?

After the discussion, read the following summary and reflect on it together.



Bad values might seem difficult to change, but it *is* possible to turn them around. We can lead by example. One person acting on his or her own is not enough. But if people act positively together they can create pressure for change. Older traditions like *ubuntu* can unite us and build our pride in being African. A sense of pride builds power.

Bad forces are always at war with good forces in our world. The law exists

to keep bad forces under control. But people only obey the law if they are motivated by deeper values of respect and the desire to build a good society. Working to create a strong, safe community together is about reviving *ubuntu*. The police cannot force us to live by these values. We need to find the motivation in ourselves and in each other. Through our actions we show each other what is possible. We can create community values and expectations that guide the behaviour of others through positive pressure. This is the power of culture.

STEP 4:

The power of hopeful stories (30 minutes)

Continue the discussion by thinking about examples from the life and history of your community that could build your power and strengthen the culture of safety. Use these questions to guide your reflections.

Questions for discussion:

- Were there times in the past when people in your community worked together to overcome a great fear and to deal with big problems? Share these stories.
- What lessons from these stories could help in building a safe community today?
- Are there people who have worked to bring about positive change in your community? Who are they? What can you learn from them?
- What ways are there to tell stories of hope in the community? How can you make good role models more visible?



There is nothing more powerful than hope. Hope creates energy. It inspires and unites people. It keeps us going even when we face obstacles and failures. It makes change possible.

Sometimes people put all their hope in outside forces, like God or the government. Faith in God can sustain us. The government can provide certain resources. But not even the best government can solve all the problems in a society. We all have to play our part.

No matter who you are or where you were born, as a human being you have talents. No matter which language you speak or where you live, as a citizen you have role to play. No matter whether you are educated or not, your ideas are valuable. No matter whether you are rich or poor, you have resources in yourself to offer the community.

If we have hope in ourselves and in each other, we will have the power to build a safer community.

STEP 5:

Evaluation (10 minutes)

As a group, briefly think about how well your study circle meeting worked.

Evaluation questions:

- How do you feel about today's study circle meeting?
- For you personally, what was the most helpful thing you learnt today?
- How well did people participate? Recognise useful contributions.
- What can you do better or differently next time? How can each member help?



Preparation for the next meeting

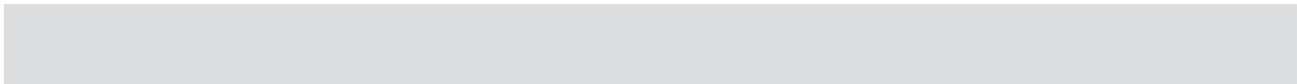
Take a closer look at the public places and open spaces in your community (like sports fields, parks, markets, shopping areas and taxi ranks). Make a list of these places and then let each member of the study circle choose one. During the coming week, spend some time in the public space you have chosen and think about the following questions to prepare for the next meeting.

- What space or place did you focus on?

- Who uses this place?

- Is it safe or unsafe? Why? Who feels comfortable there and who does not?

- What things could make this place safer? How would *you* like to see it change?



Meeting 8: Safe public spaces

STEP 1:

What is 'public space'? (30 minutes)



Public space belongs to the whole community. It is not owned by a private individual. A public place is where people gather together informally, usually outdoors. Good public places allow residents of an area to use them for a variety of activities. They are safe and welcoming to all. Public spaces include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks • Public sports grounds • Public squares • Markets • Streets, especially spaces outside shops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street corners • Pavements and walkways • Public water pumps • Bus stops and train stations • Picnic spots, river banks and beaches |
|---|---|

Tell each other about the public spaces that you looked at during the past week. Use your notes on pages 45–46. Respond to the following questions to wrap up this opening discussion.

Questions for discussion:

- What are the best public spaces in your community?
- What are the worst ones?
- What public spaces would you like in your community that are not currently there?

STEP 2:

Public space and crime prevention (45 minutes)

Read the story below and then share your thoughts about it.



Not very long ago, in the 1980s and early 1990s, New York was one of the most dangerous cities in America. Old people couldn't sit in the parks and

children couldn't ride bicycles, especially in poor parts of the city. People were attacked on the street in broad daylight. Gang wars and drug dealing were common. Most people did not leave their homes at night. In 1992, almost 650,000 serious crimes were committed in New York, including several murders a day. Then something remarkable happened. The crime rate began to go down, and in the space of five years it had halved. Today, New York is a safe city. Residents and visitors move around freely and without fear.

Leaders from cities all over the world have gone to New York to understand what made this change happen. There are many explanations, including a drop in the drug trade and less unemployment. But these improvements happened at the same time in other American cities too, without the crime rate going down. What made New York different?

Most people agree that what really changed New York was the clean-up of its subway system. The subway is an underground train system that carries more passengers than buses and taxis put together. In the 1980s the whole subway looked disgusting. The stations were dark and dirty and the trains were covered with litter and graffiti. The system was totally unreliable and trains always ran late. Some tracks were in such bad condition that certain stations were not served at all. Drug dealers were everywhere. Serious crimes occurred every day on the platforms and in the coaches. Thousands of people caught the trains without paying the fare, so the subway system lost a lot of money.

Then a new subway director was employed. His name was David Gunn. He surprised everyone by tackling the problem of litter and graffiti first. He created work teams to clean up the subway, station by station and line by line. They worked day and night to clear up the litter and remove graffiti. Once a space had been cleaned, it was not allowed to be vandalised again. If graffiti appeared, it was removed immediately. Sometimes, when youth had just finished painting graffiti, the cleaning teams would step forward and remove it right before their eyes. It took time to win the battle, but finally the youth gave up and the subway system looked clean and decent.

After this, David Gunn began to tackle the problem of fare-dodging. This was also a seemingly 'small' issue compared to the more serious crime problems in the subway system. Unofficial 'gatekeepers' took passengers' fares and kept the money for themselves. These people were identified and pushed out of the system. These small changes made a big difference. The clean environment made criminals feel unwelcome. Drug-dealing and serious crime disappeared from the subway system. Ordinary New Yorkers felt safer in the subway and began to use it more. Because of this, there were more resources to repair rails and buy better trains.

Within a few years the subway offered the most reliable, user-friendly public transport in New York. This improvement made people feel better about the city in general. They started to believe that other problems could also be solved.

Then David Gunn was appointed as the head of the New York City Police Department. He took the same approach as he had taken in the subway. First he focused on cleaning up public spaces and dealing with ‘small’ offences like littering and jaywalking. As a result, the serious crime levels in the city began to go down more quickly than anyone thought was possible. New York became an example for the world.

Questions for discussion:

- How did you feel after reading the story about New York?
- Are you surprised that tackling ‘small’ problems like litter and graffiti could make such a big difference to crime in the subway? Why?
- Do you think cleaning up public spaces in your community would help to prevent crime? If so, how can you share this vision with others?

On pages 64–65 you will find a story about another big city, Bogota in South America, which also managed to fight crime by improving public spaces and public transport. Read it when you have time.

STEP 3:

Creating safer public spaces (20 minutes)

Now debate the question below. First share your own thoughts and explore the differences between these two options. Afterwards, read the summary that follows.

Question for debate:

- To create safer public places, should we try to push people out or pull people in?



There are many things that can make a space feel unsafe. Overgrown plants provide places where criminals can hide. Darkness creates a feeling of danger. Litter and broken bottles make a place look depressing. Public places do not feel safe when most of the people who use them are involved in undesirable activities. Certain activities are less acceptable to some people than to others, but public places where there is noisy drinking, loitering, drug dealing and prostitution generally do not feel very safe, particularly to women, children and the elderly.

Very often people try to clean up a place by driving out the ‘undesirable’ people. They put up fences and spikes, and the place ends up being less accessible and less welcoming to everyone. Sometimes it stops being a public place altogether.

After creating a list together, think about what could be done to improve some of these places. Respond to the following questions.

Questions for discussion:

- If you could change one or two of the public spaces in your community, which ones would you start with? Explain your choice.
- What could be done to make these into wonderful public spaces? Dream a little! Think big!
- Who needs to get involved to improve these spaces?
- What concrete things could residents in your area do to improve the spaces?
- What can you do as a study circle to start this process?

STEP 5:

Evaluation (10 minutes)

As a group, briefly think about how well your study circle meeting worked.

Evaluation questions:

- How do you feel about today's study circle meeting?
- For you personally, what was the most helpful thing you learnt today?
- How well did people participate? Recognise useful contributions.
- What can you do better or differently next time? How can each member help?



Preparation for the next meeting

When people talk about making change happen in their communities, they almost always complain that they lack resources. This week, try to focus instead on the 'plus points' in the community. They might not be perfect, but they can make a positive contribution, or have the potential to do so. We can tap into these resources in our efforts to build a safe community.

Remember the vision for a safe community that you discussed at the beginning of Meeting 7. Take time during the coming week to think about the resources in your community that can help you achieve this vision. They might not have anything directly to do with safety issues at the moment, but think about what they could do.

Resources come in many different forms, not only money. In fact, people are the best resource, because they can do so many different things. Use the space below to write down as many resources as you can identify under the different headings.

Try to speak to those people to ask how they understand their role in building a safe community.

- People with energy and ideas (write down their names).

- Organisations in the community (including religious organisations). Name them.

- Local businesses that play a positive role in the community. Name them.

- Facilities, buildings and public places. Be specific.



Meeting 9: Building partnerships

STEP 1:

Community resources (30 minutes)

Share the resources you identified during the week and add your ideas about how they could be put to use in creating a safer community. Refer to your notes on page 52. The questions below can further guide your discussion.

Questions for discussion:

- Did you discover some surprising resources that can contribute towards building a safe community? Have these people, groups and places been involved in initiatives to promote safety before?
- Have any of these people and groups worked together before? Do you think they would find it easy or difficult to do so?
- Do these people and groups understand that safety is a 'whole community' issue? What could this study circle do to help them recognise their role?

STEP 2:

Tembisa partnership (40 minutes)

Read the following story about a successful partnership to fight crime in Tembisa, north-east of Johannesburg. Then discuss the questions as a group:



The community of Winnie Mandela Park, an informal settlement in Tembisa, has rolled up its sleeves and tackled crime head on. Their efforts have been so successful that crime statistics for the area have come down significantly.

Emperor's Palace casino, together with the South African Police Services (SAPS) and Community Monitoring Services (a private security firm), was involved in developing the Winnie Mandela Community Project. The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Council also gave its support. The project began in July 2007.

To get the project off the ground, detailed maps of the Winnie Mandela Park area had to be developed. Due to the lack of street names, easy-to-recognise landmarks had to be included on the maps. Phone booths, large buildings, taverns and even hairdressing salons were used to help people find their way around the settlement.

This project is the first of its kind in Tembisa. It uses community volunteers who are trained to patrol the streets in the Winnie Mandela area. They inform SAPS and the Community Monitoring Services' control room of any potential criminal activity. From the very beginning, the project had positive results. The following crime statistics showed a huge improvement from July 2006 to July 2007:

- Violent crimes, such as murder, attempted murder and robbery with the use of firearms, came down by 44%;
- Hijackings came down by 44%;
- Rape and assault came down by 10%;
- Theft, burglaries and house robberies came down by 52%;
- Vandalism and arson (setting fire to property) came down by an amazing 67%.

The project uses cellphones to keep all participating community members informed. They receive SMSs to tell them to be on the lookout for specific vehicles, or to avoid certain areas. These people pass the information on to their neighbours. Residents also use SMSs to alert SAPS and the control room to things happening on the ground.

The Winnie Mandela area is divided into 25 blocks, with a resident on each block taking up the position of block captain. Their job is to manage all the patrols within the boundaries of a particular block. This makes it easier to manage the whole area effectively. Emperor's Palace casino donated 25 two-way radios for the block captains. They also donated two vehicles to be used by SAPS reservists from the local community. The foot-patrollers use the two-way radios and are in constant contact with the control room. The SAPS vehicles also patrol the Winnie Mandela Park area, which improves the response time of SAPS dramatically.

Vusi Zwane, one of the directors of the company that owns Emperor's Palace, said, 'This incredibly important project not only gives the community hope, but also builds pride among residents.' He explained that his company only gets involved in projects that will have a long life and that lead to community upliftment. Emperor's Palace has built several kilometres of roads in the area. It has also worked with youth, in partnership with the East Rand Youth Trust, a black economic empowerment initiative, to stress the importance of education. They believe that better education will lead to a decrease in crime. The Winnie Mandela Community Project involves the community, thus also creating job opportunities for residents. 'Along with partners as powerful as the Ekurhuleni Metro Council and the SAPS, initiatives such as this are destined to be successful,' said Mr Zwane.

Source: Adapted from an article that appeared in *The Star* on 2 October 2007 and on the SAPS website, www.sapsjournalonline.gov.za.

Questions for discussion:

- Identify all the different partners involved in the Winnie Mandela Community Project. What does each partner contribute?
- How does this story illustrate the idea of a 'whole community' approach to promoting safety?

STEP 3:**Partnership strategies (1 hour)**

Remember that social crime prevention is about a 'whole society' approach to dealing with the causes of crime. Crime is everyone's problem. Building a safe society is everyone's business. Working alone we cannot do much, but working together we can make change happen in our communities.

Partnerships can be built around specific crime problems as well as specific solutions. There are many different kinds of crime prevention approaches that can be put in place in a community. Here are three types of strategies:

- **Criminal-based strategies** – These are strategies that focus on people who commit crime, or who are likely to commit crime. The aim is to address the problems and pressures in the community that push people towards a criminal lifestyle. These strategies also involve direct engagement with criminals (either in the community or in prisons) to help them turn their lives around.
- **Victim-based strategies** – These are strategies that focus on people who have been victims of crime, or who are most likely to become victims. Here we pay attention to the needs of vulnerable groups (like children, foreigners, the elderly, women and people with disabilities). The aim is to provide them with knowledge and skills that can help them to protect themselves from becoming victims. Research shows that many criminals were first victims of crime themselves.
- **Environmental strategies** – These strategies aim to make the environment around us safer. They include improvements such clearing bushes, providing street lights and cleaning up empty buildings where criminals can gather. They also involve strategies to deal with the availability of alcohol, drugs and guns. Environmental strategies are often the most complex ones, as they also address issues in the broader society such as the breakdown of family life, poor education and unemployment.

After reading the information above, split up into three small groups. Let each group focus on a different strategy (targetting criminals, victims or the broader environment). Take 15 minutes

to do the following tasks:

- *Think about a possible project based on your group's strategy. Just a few ideas will do. (You do not have enough time to design the project in detail.)*
- *Identify key partners who could help you develop and implement your project in your community.*

Write your project idea and the potential partners in your community in the space below.

Then let each group take five minutes to present its project and partners to the other members of the study circle.

STEP 4:

Guidelines for successful partnerships (10 minutes)

Quickly read the following guidelines together. Remember them when you begin setting up real partnerships to build a safe community.



- **Ensure that everybody 'owns' the problem**

Nobody gets deeply involved in partnerships and collaborative problem-solving to do people a favour. People will get involved in solving a problem if they feel that they 'own' it. If people blame others for crime, they will also expect others to fix it. This changes when we take joint ownership of the situation, saying, 'A safe community is everybody's business'.

- **Put citizens at the centre**

Government and other experts often feel that they are responsible for solving citizens' problems. A truly collaborative approach to community problem-solving does not ask 'What can government do *for* citizens?' but 'How can government work *with* citizens to find a solution?' In this

approach, government leaders and experts are ‘on tap, but not on top’. In a healthy partnership, they offer skills and resources, but do not dominate.

- **Seek different sources of local knowledge**
Different people see different sides of a problem. To find a good solution, it is important to bring together insights and experiences from diverse backgrounds and cultures (traditional, religious, business, male, female, youth, etc.). A solution will fit best if it is based on local knowledge. Solutions from elsewhere might not work in your community. For local projects, involve local partners. Outside partners can be helpful too, but they must respect local knowledge.
- **Build relationships**
Partnerships don’t just happen. It takes time for good working relationships to form. Sitting together in meetings does not guarantee that relationships will develop. It is important for partners in a collaborative problem-solving process to spend time getting to know each other’s interests and the resources they can offer (knowledge, skills, time, money, etc.). One-on-one interviews are a good tool for doing this.
- **Respect differences**
Different perspectives and experiences are an important resource in partnerships. However, differences can be difficult to deal with. Expect tension to arise from time to time, and don’t panic when it does. Working through tension can help to clarify important issues, even if it feels uncomfortable. Most importantly, treat difference with respect. Take time to listen and identify people’s unique contributions.
- **Spread accountability**
Taking joint responsibility for crime prevention means that accountability shifts from ‘them’ to ‘us’. Instead of criticising other people for what they are not doing, the key question should be, ‘What is each of us doing to build a safer community? If certain partners neglect their responsibilities, instead of complaining that they lack accountability, our question should be, ‘What can we do to hold them accountable?’

STEP 5:

Evaluation (10 minutes)

As a group, briefly think about how well your study circle meeting worked.

Evaluation questions:

- How do you feel about today's study circle meeting?
- For you personally, what was the most helpful thing you learnt today?
- How well did people participate? Recognise useful contributions.
- What can you do better or differently next time? How can each member help?



Preparation for the next meeting

At the next meeting, the study circle will start to make concrete plans for action towards building a safe community. Spend the coming week thinking about a project that you could tackle together. Perhaps you can build on some of the ideas that came out of this meeting. Speak to your family, friends and neighbours to find out what they think. Ask them if they would like to get involved. Also take time to think about potential partners that you could work with, especially organisations, institutions and businesses in the community. If you think local government would be a good partner, start thinking about which department you should try to involve. See if you can get information about useful contact people in the municipality.

Get ready for action!

Meeting 10: Taking action

The time for talking is over. Now it is the time for the study circle to take action.

Share some ideas about what you might do together to build on what you have learnt in this study circle. Discuss the questions below to help you develop your plan step by step. You will probably need to meet several times to do this.

- **What community safety issue do you want to work on?**

Identify a **local** problem to do with crime prevention and community safety. What do you feel passionate about? What would you like to change? Is there a gap you would like to fill? Think about all the different issues you have learnt about in the study circle. What specific problems do you see in your community that are related to these issues? Choose **one** of them to work on. Remember, have a clear, manageable goal.

- **Who else is interested in this issue?**

Think about all the other people, groups and institutions that are also interested in this issue, or that might be interested. Draw an **interest map** and keep adding names as you think of them. An interest map looks a bit like a spider. Write your issue in the middle, and add as many 'legs' to the 'spider' as you can. Here is an example:



Between meetings, take time to interview lots of different people and groups that appear on your interest map. Don't tell them what you want to do straight away. First listen and learn about how they understand the issue. Tap into their interests and ideas. This will help you to make better plans.

During your interviews, also identify specific people and groups that you would like to work with. How could you build your power by forming partnerships with them?

- **What type of action will you take?**

When you have a better understanding of the issue that you want to address, think of a suitable way of taking action. Here are some ideas, but there are also many other possibilities. Just choose **one** action to begin with.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Run workshops ◦ Run study circles ◦ Start a petition ◦ Organise a march 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Support a CPF or SCF ◦ Clean up a park ◦ Create safe walkways ◦ Organise a block watch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Create an emergency contact list ◦ Campaign against stolen goods ◦ Run a drug prevention campaign ◦ Start a victim support group
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Action plan

Now think in more detail about how you will take action. Write down your plans so that you can keep track of your progress.

- **WHO?**

Who do you want to reach with this action?

Who will your partners be?

Who in the study circle will set up these partnerships?

Who will do each of the tasks to make the action happen?

- **WHAT?**

What will the action look like?

What steps must you take to make it happen? Plan each task in detail.

What will you do to get started?

- **WHEN?**

When will you take each step? Choose dates and adjust if necessary.

When will the action end? Set a final deadline.

- **WHERE?**

Where will the focus of the action be? Decide on the area or community.

Where will events take place? Choose venues, get permission, make bookings.

Remember...

- **Have a clear, achievable goal**

From the beginning, set yourselves a clear, manageable goal. What do you want to change? Don't think too small. Remember that when small groups of people work together with others, they can change a lot. Think big, but not too big. Plan for success. This will build your sense of power, and give you confidence for your next action.

- **Hold each other accountable**

Plan carefully who will do what. Make sure that everyone in the study circle has a job to do. Then make sure that everyone does their job. If someone fails to complete a task, talk with him or her about why it was difficult. Make a new plan to get it done. Hold each other accountable for every task. Successful citizen action does not happen without participants being accountable to each other.

- **Evaluate and learn**

Evaluate every step along the way, just like you evaluated every study circle meeting. The aim of citizen action is to build power. Failures can be discouraging, but you can also learn a lot from them. By reflecting on everything you do, you will learn from your successes and from your mistakes. Then you will feel more confident to take the next action.

Good luck! Be bold! Believe in yourselves! Promote democratic citizen action!

Idasa would like to hear about your action. Phone us on (012) 392 0500 and ask to speak to someone from the iLEDA study circle project. We will call you back. Or write to us at PO Box 56950, Arcadia, 0007.

If you would like extra copies of this workbook, or materials for other study circles, also phone Idasa on (012) 392 0500. We can also give you information about training workshops for study circle leaders.

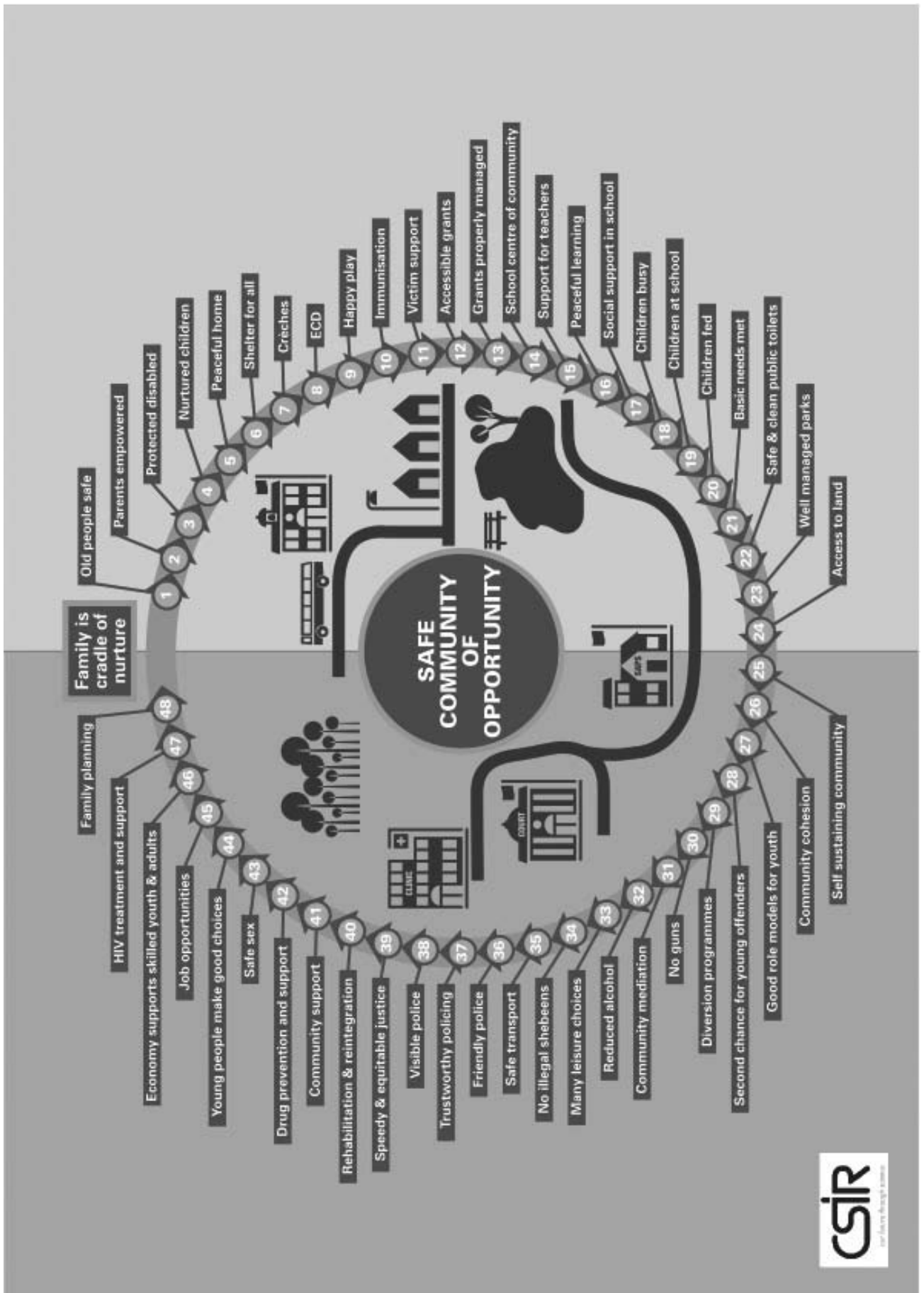
Appendix 1

The Safe Community of Opportunity Model

The diagram on the next page was developed in response to the Central Karoo study that was mentioned in Meeting 6 (see page 35) The wheel in the diagram gives 48 ideas for what is needed to break the cycle of crime and violence and build strong, safe communities. The ideas come from the visions that were developed in a number of different towns, together with recommendations from other places.

This model holds all of society and all government departments jointly responsible for crime prevention and community safety. The wheel presents a picture of what a community looks like when it is 'fixed'. This is our vision of what is possible. It is the destination we want to reach. The journey is long, but we know where we are going.

Obviously a vision on its own is not enough. We need to make concrete plans for how to achieve it. We must know the route to get to the destination we have chosen. There are many different role-players who can help us to achieve each of the points on the wheel. It is up to each community to tap into its resources and energies, in partnership with the government and others, to realise the vision of a safe community of opportunity.



Barbara Holtmann, 2009, *Safe Community of Opportunity*, CSIR Local Safety Toolkit (unpublished). Used with permission.

Appendix 2:

Bogota case study



Public space and public happiness

Bogota is the capital of Colombia in South America. It is a huge city with a population of about 7.5 million. In many ways, Bogota is like Johannesburg. Colombia is a typical developing country, with high unemployment, housing shortages and poor education. To make matters worse, the country was torn apart by civil war for over twenty years. Colombia is at the centre of the international drug trade, and drug-related violence threatens the lives of people living in the countryside. As a result, there is ongoing migration from the rural areas to the cities. Informal settlements around Bogota are expanding all the time.

According to residents, in the mid-1990s Bogota was a 'living hell'. Up to ten people were murdered every day and other serious crimes had reached a peak. This was when Enrique Peñalosa was elected as mayor. Mayor Peñalosa developed a radical plan to redesign the city. 'A city can be friendly to people, or it can be friendly to cars, but it can't be both,' he announced. He did away with plans to build a huge network of highways in Bogota and ploughed the money into developing public transport and public spaces. Instead of prioritising the needs of the minority who owned cars, he put the needs of the majority first. As a result, the city developed one of the best public transport systems in the world. During Mayor Peñalosa's term of office, 1,200 new parks were created in Bogota, as well as 310km of green bicycle paths and walkways, and a 17km pedestrian street in the city centre (the longest in the world). Cars were no longer allowed to park on pavements, and these spaces were reclaimed for pedestrians. New bus stations were surrounded by lawns and paved areas where people could gather informally.

In the years before Mayor Peñalosa was elected, inhabitants of Bogota used to stay at home during their leisure time. It was very unusual for people to relax outdoors. Parks were seen as dangerous places and most of them ended up being fenced or walled off for private use. Mayor Peñalosa broke down the walls and fences and started to integrate the parks into the cultural life of the city with outdoor concerts, sports events and fashion shows. He called this programme 'Parks for Learning how to Live'. The residents of Bogota began to share responsibility for managing the parks with the local government.

Mayor Peñalosa also encouraged people to participate in a weekly event called *ciclovía*, when all the main streets in Bogota were closed to traffic. Citizens

were allowed to use the streets to do anything they liked. Every Sunday, this gave residents an extra 100km of public space for walking, jogging, riding bicycles, doing gym or just sitting and watching all the activity. *Ciclovia* Sundays helped to popularise bike-riding and to promote equality. 'Before, cyclists were seen as a nuisance. They were the poorest of the poor,' said Peñalosa. 'Now they have respect. That's why bicycle paths are important. They show that a citizen on a \$30 bike is equally important as someone driving a \$30,000 car.'

The murder rate in Bogota fell by half during Mayor Peñalosa's three-year term of office, and it has continued to fall ever since. While improvements to schools, hospitals and other public facilities also contributed to the turn-around of Bogota, it is the improvements to public space that have gained the most attention. Mayor Peñalosa explained that public spaces that bring people together in positive activities produce happy citizens. Good public spaces build connections between people and develop public trust. These feelings of public trust and public happiness build safer communities. For Mayor Peñalosa, this is a better measure of success than wealth. Bogota is still not a rich city, but it now serves as a model for cities across the developing world.

Questions for discussion:

- What do you find most interesting in the Bogota case study?
- What is the role of citizens in this story?
- What is the role of the government?
- What ideas does this give you for improving public spaces in your community?

