

## **An Evaluation of the Gauteng Department of Community Safety's Social Crime Prevention Initiatives**

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**Abstract:** *Crime in South Africa is a multifaceted phenomenon with diverse forms, causes and solutions, as recognised by the National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996) (NCPS, 1996). Despite the implementation of numerous crime prevention initiatives since 1994, crime levels remain unacceptably high, particularly in townships, informal settlements and hostel areas (Manaliyo, 2014; Altbeker & Mashele, 2019). Research indicates that effective crime reduction requires addressing the social and structural drivers of criminality, including unemployment, inequality, and social exclusion (Gould, 2009; Tshabalala, 2014). In response, the South African government has increasingly emphasised community-based and Social Crime Prevention initiatives that promote collaboration between communities and law enforcement agencies (Mzangwa, 2016). This study adopted a qualitative, phenomenological case study approach to evaluate the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives by the Gauteng Department of Community Safety (GDCS). Data was collected through purposive sampling, one-on-one interviews and document analysis, and analysed thematically using coding and categorisation techniques. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by examining stakeholder roles, policy frameworks and implementation challenges, highlighting the importance of Social Crime Prevention initiatives in addressing the root causes of crime and enhancing community safety in Gauteng Province.*

*The proposed article focused on the implementation of the Gauteng Department of Community Safety's Social Crime Prevention initiatives. Furthermore, the researcher examined the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention Initiatives implemented in the province.*

**Keywords:** *Social Crime, Social Crime Prevention, Crime Prevention.*

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### **I. Introduction**

The mission of the South African Police Service (SAPS) is to prevent anything that may threaten the safety or security of any community, ensure offenders are brought to justice, and participate in efforts to address the root causes of crime (South Africa, 1998). Thus, Community policing was identified as a way to bridge the divide between law enforcement and the community to create a sense of reciprocity and mutual trust (Bent-Goodley and Smith (2027). According to Ndlela (2020) the rise of crime rates in South Africa emerged in the mid-1980s and skyrocketed in the 90s. Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, South African communities have been characterised by socio-economic issues such as unemployment, poverty and inequality which have contributed to crime (Mzangwa, 2016). These sentiments are echoed by Ndlela (2020) who also argued that these socio-economic challenges are a cause for concern. Bhorat (2017) reiterates that property crimes and robberies are mostly influenced by high levels of inequality and unemployment within society. There is a growing perception that exists among communities that criminal activities in South Africa are influenced by these socio-economic challenges and foreign nationals (Bhorat, 2017).

In order to deal with crime effectively, initiatives that are far beyond criminal justice are required to address the problem (Newham, 2005). Law enforcement alone within society has proven to be inadequate in addressing the crime problem faced by communities (Newham, 2005). It is crucial to prioritise crime prevention initiatives that will seek to address the social, economic and environmental problems faced by South Africans (Newman, 2005). Social Crime Prevention is a unique approach because it has placed more emphasis on the reduction and elimination of the potential causes of crime (South Africa, 2011). It is an integrative approach, since many role-players are involved, including communities (South Africa, 2011). The Integrated Social Crime Prevention Strategy [ISCPS] (South Africa, 2011) allows members of the public to be actively involved in the fight against crime. It further promotes public safety through the provision of education and awareness of crime prevention issues, for example, programmes to prevent violence against children, youth safety, school and child

safety, and substance abuse (South Africa, 2011). Kerley (2000) argues community orientated policing involves police officers responsible for identifying and addressing the root causes of crime whereas traditional policing primarily entails responding to calls for service after crime has been committed. It is aimed at solving local issues before they escalate into bigger crime problems.

In the end, this article identified shortcomings that hamper the proper implementation of Social Crime Initiatives in the province. It also revealed that there are no guidelines and programmes of action compiled by the department together with the stakeholders in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention Initiatives in Gauteng. The results of the study make it clear that stakeholders focus on implementing their own initiatives which has hampered the mainstreaming and coordination of the GDCS activities.

### **1.1 The aim of the article**

It is aimed at presenting the findings of a study on evaluating the effectiveness of GDCS Social Crime Prevention initiatives with specific focus on the mainstreaming and coordination in Gauteng province.

### **1.2 Objectives**

This study sought to achieve the following objectives

- To determine different Social Crime Prevention initiatives that are implemented in the province to address the problem of crime.
- To assess the effectiveness of Social Crime Prevention initiatives implemented by the Gauteng province.
- To determine the challenges that are encountered in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives in Gauteng.
- To determine measures that could be taken to improve Social Crime Prevention initiatives in Gauteng Province.
- To determine the extent to which Social Crime Prevention measures are mainstreamed in the province.

## **II. Methodology**

The researcher applied a qualitative approach to gather data to achieve the objectives of the study. Qualitative study comprises of gathering of open-ended data through one on one and focus group interviews from the participants (Flick, 2007). The researcher employed both in-depth interview techniques as well as document analysis to gather data from the participants. In depth interviewing is a qualitative approach that involves conducting intensive individual and focus group interviews with several participants to discover their perspectives (Boyce and Neala 2006:03). Document analysis is a systematic process for reviewing or evaluating both printed and electronic documents (Bowen, 2009). A purposive sampling approach was followed to select the participants. A purposive sampling strategy was chosen to fit the purpose of the study. The researcher implemented the corridor-based model to identify police stations in the study. Gauteng province has five developmental corridors and the sampling process took cognizance of the corridor-based model. All Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) departments entrusted with the implementation of Social Crime Prevention participated in the study.

### **Data collection**

The one-on-one and focus group interviews involved asking participants questions related to the implementation of Social Crime Prevention in the province and the role played by different stakeholders in the process. Follow-up questions related to the implementation of the Social Crime Prevention initiatives and other activities by the stakeholders where responses were not clear were also asked. Document analysis was conducted to scrutinize legislation, policies, National Instructions, standing orders and guidelines related to the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives. The researcher took notes and recorded the interviews of all participants.

### **Data analysis**

Data was transcribed and classified preceding to thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was followed to analyse qualitative data. Qualitative data from the classified questions was discussed in proportion to qualitative data to display a broader analysis of the effectiveness of the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives. Moreover, the coding of data was followed as a procedure of putting together evidence and classifying ideas so that they gradually reflect a broader viewpoint. Finally, data was presented in the discussion herein.

### **III. Discussion Of Findings**

This section presents the findings of the study as well as the discussion linked to the formulation of the findings. The study found that there are challenges that led to inadequate implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives in the province. These challenges hinder the effective implementation of initiatives that are designed to ensure the elimination of crime in the Gauteng province. It should be taken into consideration that these inconsistencies caused by different stakeholders are the key problem that resulted in the derisory implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives.

#### **3.1 Stakeholders understanding of Social Crime Prevention initiatives**

According to the Australian Institute of Criminology (2006), "Social Crime Prevention addresses factors that influence an individual's likelihood of committing crime, such as poverty, unemployment, poor health and low educational performance". Stakeholders that are involved in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives are expected to understand what Social Crime Prevention entails. Hence, they were requested to share their understanding of Social Crime Prevention initiatives as implemented in their respective environments. The majority of participants asserted that they understand what Social Crime Prevention entails. The GDCS coordinators mentioned that Social Crime Prevention initiatives include community structures participation in fighting crime. Their contribution assists in curbing the effects of the underlying causes of crime and reducing the risk of becoming a victim of crime.

The SAPS coordinators indicated that Social Crime Prevention is all about working together with communities through awareness campaigns to address the problem of bullying and drug abuse within schools. The participants added that the purpose of Social Crime Prevention is to keep children and community members off the streets, away from crime and to make them aware of their surroundings. It involves both verbal and physical contact with communities. These initiatives play a major role in ensuring communities feel safe enough to engage with law enforcement with the aim of instilling a safer environment amongst themselves. The participants said that through Prevention initiatives, they are trying to reduce crime via community engagements and distribution of pamphlets with safety tips on crime and Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF).

The Gauteng Provincial Community Police Board (GPCPB) Coordinators revealed that they do not have much information, but they are learning from the GDCS coordinators as they interact with them all the time. The participants acknowledged that Social Crime Prevention initiatives have an impact on crime. The participants added through Social Crime Prevention Initiatives there is an improved interaction with communities because they now come forward to report crime due to the assistance of the CPF. The participants commented that there are other Social Crime Prevention initiatives that involve community mobilisation where they receive information about corruption, illegal firearms and other social ills happening within communities. Moreover, communities assist with the identification of crime hotspot areas where they live.

The Municipality coordinators affirmed that Social Crime Prevention involves participation of different stakeholders in which community structures and scholar patrollers work together for a common goal. The participants added that the Department of Education (DoE) visits schools to conduct crime prevention awareness campaigns to sensitise children about the crime problem around schools and their communities. This is done proactively to ensure that school children are empowered on crime related issues as well as the dangers of substance abuse and bullying. The participants mentioned that because of these initiatives police visibility has improved around schools. Additionally, the participants said that Social Crime Prevention initiatives strengthen relationships between communities and the police because it is rooted within communities and households.

The Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) coordinators stated Social Crime Prevention deals with collaboration of stakeholders during school talks, awareness campaigns and other initiatives. The participants mentioned that Social Crime Prevention initiatives should be proactive instead of reactive because these initiatives seek to address social ills and factors that render communities vulnerable to criminality. The participants pointed out that such initiatives assist in creating a link between the DSD, GDCS and the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation in order to address the social ills affecting communities negatively. These initiatives prevent crime from taking place because it keeps communities occupied and away from loitering in the streets without purpose.

Based on the above responses by the participants it is apparent they understand what Social Crime Prevention entails. This is a positive development in the fight against crime in the province.

#### **3.2 Stakeholders' roles and responsibilities**

According to the ISCPs (2011), "roles and responsibilities for specific government departments and institutions provide clear guidance from where to expand sector or specific projects and interventions". In an effort to demonstrate their understanding of their roles in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives, the participants outlined their daily duties while implementing initiatives. The GDCS coordinators alluded that daily they supervise teams of Social Crime Prevention coordinators in which each coordinator has

three to four police stations where they attend meetings. The participants said they are responsible for District Crime Combating Forums and assist GBVF brigades in their daily duties. They further asserted they manage the implementation of targets discussed at different platforms with multiple stakeholders. In addition, the participants averred that they visit schools for school talks and searches to ensure there is order therein. They also revealed that they hold meetings with communities including CPFs. For example, if there is a problem in a specific area, communities identify it and inform coordinators accordingly. The participants went further to state that sometimes coordinators, Sector Managers and Station Management are invited by communities to participate in their meetings. The participants stated if a specific crime such as carjacking has been identified in the area, they sensitize the community about the problem and try to find a solution together. The participants affirmed that stakeholders are a support structure to all initiatives because they have an important role to play. For example, the Department of Education assists with permission to access schools, the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) allows learners to visit correctional facilities, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) help with shelters when victims are referred for assistance. The participants emphasised that there should be a good relationship amongst all stakeholders in order for initiatives to be successful.

The SAPS coordinators avowed that they coordinate Social Crime Prevention initiatives within districts with coordinators from other institutions to ensure initiatives are implemented correctly. The participants said Social Crime Prevention plays an important role in ensuring that community participation in the fight against crime by stakeholders such as government departments, community structures, Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) through empowerment initiatives while trying to build healthy living conditions. Furthermore, the participants mentioned they work with communities, schools, youth desk volunteers, patrollers, CPFs and other stakeholders to address the problem of crime. The participants added that they also distribute pamphlets to various communities to raise awareness pertaining to the issues of GBVF, substance abuse, Domestic Violence (DV), child abuse, and any other form of abuse taking place.

The GPCPB coordinators stated that currently the chairperson of the board is responsible for the coordination of community structures and leads partnerships amongst communities and the SAPS. Additionally, the participants mentioned other roles they play during the implementation of these initiatives such as combating crime together with the SAPS, attending imbizos and community complaints as well as being the eyes and ears of the police.

The Municipality coordinators indicated their role is to address social issues that contribute to crime including community outreach programmes, scholar patrol programmes and awareness campaigns in the community. The participants added they engage communities about safety issues affecting them and coordinate Social Crime Prevention initiatives by bringing all stakeholders together and monitoring the impact of these initiatives.

The GPG coordinators narrated in detail the role they play in the implementation of Social Crime prevention initiatives. The participants stated that in terms of Social Crime Prevention the DoE deals mainly with children who are in conflict with the law. The participants went further to state that there are two different categories of children in conflict with the law; namely, there is what is referred to as an early intervention in terms of identification of children that are probably at risk. The risk part of it emanates from the children's background and school referral so that they can provide interventions, such as life skills programs to ensure they are equipped with mechanisms to resist peer pressure and avert bullying whilst being enabled to make informed decisions. The second category would be those that are already in the system arrested by the SAPS. The participants added that SAPS has a duty to notify the DoE within 24 hours of learners arrested in line with the Child Justice Act. In addition, the participants emphasised that DSD is mandated to ensure that a probation officer is available to assess the child before his or her appearance in court. The DSD compiles assessment reports that are shared with the courts when a child first appears. The participants averred based on the contents of the assessment reports, the courts would decide whether the child qualifies for a diversion program or is sent for residential diversion programs for the duration of the sentence depending on the type of offence committed and the schedule. The participants mentioned that DSD also deals with adults in conflict with the law by providing probation officers.

Additionally, the participants indicated that the DoE is in the process of implementing the Anti-Gang and Anti-Bullying Strategies in collaboration with other stakeholders. The participants said the department conducts outreach programs within communities to raise awareness about restorative justice amongst affected children. The DoE Social Workers are probation officers, they deal specifically with Social Crime Prevention related matters. Moreover, the participants emphasised that the DoE developed a strategy as well as a policy that defines and articulates the objectives, the role and the outcomes in line with the creation of safe schools. Basically, their role is to develop policies and standard operating procedures to support Social Crime Prevention Initiatives.

The GPG participants said they are also responsible for community development workers within the districts and work with the municipalities to enhance Community Safety Forums. The participants added that

they coordinate programs and provide supervision to all project coordinators under the Sport Development Coordination Unit at the Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation. They also assist in hiring venues to be used during events including the provision of all the required resources that would be needed.

### **3.3 The existence of implementation guidelines**

According to ISCPS (2011), the DSD was mandated to develop a framework for the management and implementation of Social Crime Prevention in all spheres of government as far back as 2010. The objective of this task was to incorporate the management and implementation of Social Crime Prevention within the existing strategic framework at national, provincial and local level (ISCPS, 2011). The above sentiments are supported by Siegelaar and Ballard (2023) who stated that the primary focus of Social Crime Prevention “is to enable individuals, communities and government at all levels to deal with social and environmental factors conducive to crime commitment”. The participants were requested to respond on whether or not there are guidelines which are followed in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives. In response to this question, GDCS and municipality coordinators firmly stated that there are no specific guidelines. The participants added generally, when planning for an event, they develop a concept note in line with the initiative they intend to implement, thereafter, the area is analysed. The participants asserted that they take into consideration an overview of crime statistics within a specific policing precinct because the main aim of the initiative is to address the problem of crime affecting a specific community.

The SAPS coordinators stated that they are guided by their yearly calendar, standing orders, National Instructions (NI), Code of Conduct and the NCPS of 1996. The participants added that they also follow crime patterns, thereafter, convene meetings with communities to discuss problems that affect them and how they could be resolved. The GPCPB coordinators stated that they have an operational plan which is informed by crime patterns. The participants said relevant stakeholders are identified based on the activities to be undertaken and the type of crime problem that needs to be addressed at the time. The participants added that the problem at hand determines the type of Social Crime Prevention initiative that should be implemented in a specific area.

The GPG coordinators bemoaned that they are mostly guided by the political terrain as accounting officers such as premiers and Members of the Executive Council (MECs) upon their appointments implement political manifestos from their political parties as their guiding documents. Additionally, the participants asserted they have their own strategy and one of the key pillars is collaboration with LEAs in the province. Furthermore, the participants said they have a policy on School Safety that guides departments on collaboration with partners including norms, standards and strategies outlined in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention. The participants also remarked that they are guided by their departmental Annual Performance Plans (APPs).

The above responses have shown that the participants do not have standardised guidelines in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives. The participants responded differently on how they implement initiatives in their respective institutions. It is concerning when stakeholders that are involved in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives do not follow the 2011 ISCPS as a guiding document. This strategy was developed by government to assist in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention.

Based on this finding, it is very clear that there is a problem in the implementation of these initiatives because the provided strategy was never followed.

It seems the stakeholders who were given the responsibility to implement Social Crime Prevention initiatives are not familiar with the contents of this strategy, even the DSD participants who were mandated to develop the Social Crime Prevention framework could not refer to it during the interviews. It is therefore not surprising that Social Crime Prevention initiatives are not yielding the required outcomes.

### **3.4 Social Crime Prevention initiatives implemented in the province**

According to the Australian Institute of Criminology (2006), Social Crime Prevention activities include school-based programs (truancy initiatives) as well as community-based programs (local resident action groups) which promote shared community ownership guardianship. These activities are premised on the notion that law enforcement focuses on crimes that are inadequate or insufficient to address crime prevention hence supplemented with strategies that reduce the root causes. Social Crime Prevention includes integrated crime prevention by individuals, communities, businesses, non-governmental organisations and all levels of government aimed at social and environmental factors that could increase crime risks (Siegelaar and Ballard, 2023). This approach is meant to address factors that influence an individual's likelihood of committing a crime, such as poverty and unemployment (Siegelaar and Ballard, 2023).

The participants were requested to identify Social Crime Prevention initiatives currently implemented by their institutions. The GDCS coordinators mentioned that at district level all stakeholders meet to discuss crime related issues affecting communities. These stakeholders help to identify crime hotspots and they participate in planning interventions that could support stations to address the problem. The participants added

that they educate communities about the importance of reporting crime to the police; hence assisting in referring cases to the police. The participants commented that recently communities were provided with E-panic buttons by the department to alert the police when they are under threat. The participants from the department, SAPS and municipalities related the following initiatives that are being implemented:

- door to door campaigns,
- imbizos (public meetings),
- distribution of pamphlets with safety tips,
- dialogues and workshops with stakeholders,
- information sharing sessions with communities,
- school and motivational talks,
- prison tours with learners namely ex-offender dialogues,
- school searches,
- school camps,
- roadblocks,
- mall patrols,
- sports against crime,
- substance/drug abuse dialogue,
- church visits for safety and Gender Based Violence and Femicide talks,
- patrol, stop and searches, and
- road safety campaigns.

Furthermore, the SAPS participants added some of the following Social Crime Prevention initiatives, such as:

- Junior Commissioner's program which focuses on grade 8 and 9 learners,
- Adopt a Cop program in which a police official adopts a school in the area,
- All commissioned officers adopt a crèche, church, tertiary institution and a primary school to give advice to learners in terms of crime related issues,
- Participation in School Safety Committees together with the DoE and Gauteng Department of Community Safety,
- Engagements with the elderly by the Provincial Commissioner at a specific venue and they have lunch together seeking to understand how the elderly are being treated within their communities, and
- Engagements with the LGBTQIA+ community to understand each other's gender.

The GPCPB coordinators indicated that as first responders to crime incidents within communities, they patrol areas ravaged by high levels of crime. The participants said they distribute pamphlets during awareness campaigns to educate communities about emerging crime trends occurring in their communities, such as GBVF.

The GPG coordinators detailed that they are currently rolling out several initiatives, namely, the anti-gang strategy, anti-bullying outreach programs, holiday programs, kasi games, club development and sport against crime amongst communities. The participants stated they are on the ground on a continuous basis implementing generic outreach programs raising awareness in communities about children that might be at risk. The participants mentioned that the DoE identifies children at risk through their family unit and the environment where the family or child would be residing, the schooling area, influential factors including the life of this individual and friends. Thereafter, all information gathered about the specific individual would inform relevant interventions as a one size fits all approach would be inappropriate. The participants added that they conduct needs analysis to determine the wishes of the child through interactions with educators from the DoE. The participants also mentioned that there are dominant matters such as gangsterism, bullying and absenteeism in the school environment. The participants asserted that the DoE has its own social workers who are deployed at schools based on their social ills. The participants went further to state, if need be, identified children are referred to external social workers who will in turn work with their families.

The GPG Coordinators avowed that there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the GDSCS as part of the scholar patrol program. In terms of this MOU, the DoE is responsible for the payment of scholar patrollers. Furthermore, the participants added currently they are looking at developing a MOU with the Chief Directorate: Provincial Secretariat to address School Safety and learner transport as primary school learners tend to get lost. As part of the MOU the Gauteng Traffic Wardens (GTWs) are expected to play an important role in that regard.

### **3.4 Collaboration of stakeholders in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives**

The ICVPS (2022) encourages the adoption of an integrated approach during the coordination and collaboration of initiatives by all three spheres of government. Social Crime Prevention requires the

involvement of different stakeholders, such as government departments, civil society structures, experts or service providers and ordinary people working as equal partners (Integrated Social Crime Prevention Strategy, 2011). The above sentiments are complemented by the White Paper on Safety and Security (1998) that implores government cooperate with local police stations to identify local safety needs and possible areas that require to be addressed by the provincial government. The narrative on collaboration, problem solving and partnerships between the police and communities has been a golden thread through police policy documents (Siegelaar and Ballard, 2023). Mokhlomole and Olutola (2023) indicated that communities should be mobilised to encourage partnerships and consultation between the police and communities. Therefore, the commitment of all stakeholders both public and private institutions within all spheres of government is needed (ICVPS, 2022).

The participants were asked to respond to questions on collaboration, integration, consultation and synergy amongst stakeholders that are involved in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives. The GDCS coordinators revealed that stakeholders meet often amongst themselves to plan ways to address social ills affecting communities. The SAPS coordinators stated they tried many times to convene meetings with stakeholders; however, it did not materialise and reasons were not provided. The participants went further to point out that there was an attempt to involve the taxi industry and security companies without success. Additionally, participants mentioned Africans have a different understanding of the concept of Social Crime Prevention in their minds and communities do not take it seriously because of a lack of understanding, however, they attend imbizos (public meetings) in large numbers to complain. Participants also bemoaned the fact that rather than contributing significantly to the projects, ward council members would attend meetings to whine about SAPS.

The municipality coordinators emphasized they participate in Social Crime Prevention initiatives to engage with all stakeholders, however, they plan initiatives in isolation. The participants added that they present public safety and performance reports to senior municipal managers, the Council and the Mayoral Committee to inform them about the activities taking place within the municipality. The GPG coordinators averred that the DoE could not convene a Social Crime Prevention indaba (discussion or conference) during 2024 due to budgetary constraints.

The GPCPB and the municipality coordinators stressed the importance of stakeholders communicating similar messages all the time without contradicting one another. The GPCPB participants added stakeholders such as the SAPS, municipalities and Traffic Police have a poor working relationship which affects service delivery to communities. Therefore, there is a need for a united front to address the challenges affecting communities. The participants in the Municipalities went further to assert the importance of engagements and sharing of ideas especially at regional and local level as they are the eyes and ears within communities.

### **3.5 Challenges encountered in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives**

The ISCPS (2011), states that there are serious challenges that crime and violence pose towards the development and attainment of a better life for all. As a result, the government recognises that reducing the current crime levels and preventing future crimes is the responsibility of all spheres of government and the social partners in our society (ISCPS, 2011). The participants were requested to identify the impediments that affect the mainstreaming and coordination of Social Crime Prevention initiatives. The GDCS coordinators identified divergent political views within communities as one of the reasons that affect the proper implementation of these initiatives. The participants lamented there are certain areas they wish to visit as part of their daily duties, however, they are unable to do so because they must first seek permission from ward councillors. When the councillors do not approve of such a request, then work cannot be carried out in that particular area. The participants from GDCS, SAPS, GPCPB and municipalities recorded some of the challenges that are experienced in the mainstreaming of Social Crime Prevention initiatives, namely

- budgetary constraints,
- shortage of vehicles,
- shortage of cell phones and computers,
- shortage of human resources,
- lack of knowledge about the Criminal Procedure Act and other laws, and
- scarcity of places of safety.

With respect to the Child Justice Act, participants felt that unbranded vehicles should be utilised to transport minors in conflict with the law. However, at station level it is only detectives and their commanders who are allocated unbranded vehicles, not Social Crime Prevention officials. The participants said that other critical stakeholders are unable to attend planned meetings due to various reasons including a lack of transportation. They mentioned that sometimes during events or community engagements there is no food to cater for stakeholders and other attendees. Furthermore, the participants remarked they experience problems whilst facilitating substance abuse initiatives and campaigns due to a lack of training on how to approach the

subject matter. The participants revealed that stakeholders lack understanding of their mandate so as a result they are unable to play a meaningful role while implementing initiatives. Moreover, the participants declared that at times stakeholders are unable to make critical decisions when required to do so, because junior employees without the requisite authority to make decisions and commitments are sent to attend meetings.

The participants averred that the CPF members work under dangerous conditions without bullet proof vests which poses a serious threat to their lives. They went further to state that some law enforcement officers are unwilling to work with CPF members during the implementation of these initiatives for various reasons. The participants mentioned that there is a lack of trust amongst stakeholders because SAPS as the custodian of crime statistics refuses to share certain information citing confidentiality. Furthermore, the CPF participants lamented they feel neglected as the GTW's are taken care of, however, they are not recognised whereas they have been involved in the fight against crime for much longer.

The municipality coordinators complained that Social Crime Prevention initiatives are not properly coordinated from provincial to local level because stakeholders participate for compliance purposes without playing a meaningful role. The participants bewailed that most SAPS Senior Managers do not fully understand Social Crime Prevention.

The GPG coordinators maintained that stakeholders are not consistent in terms of playing their role. The participants averred they encounter problems with volunteers especially CPF members because at the beginning they agree to offer their services for free, however, over time, they expect payment which was not catered for in the budget. They went further to indicate that there is insufficient person power to patrol at night and safeguard all the schools, hence, they rely on community patrollers to assist. This is therefore, concerning because there was an incident in which a patroller was brutally killed by criminals while on duty. Additionally, the participants cited that FBOs and NGOs complain about events without catering, request stipends and submit travel claims.

Additionally, the participants bemoaned that different divisions or units within municipalities are unable to participate during the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives as there is no permission granted by the City Manager. The participants added during the implementation of initiatives in certain areas where the services of a service provider were procured through supply chain management processes, business forums around those areas sabotage these events to a point where such events are cancelled. These business forums either demand to be appointed to carry on with the work or that the event should be cancelled. It is beyond the event organisers powers to replace service providers that are duly appointed through supply chain management processes.

The GPG participants lamented that there is still a lot to be done because departments continue to work independently as a result there is a disjuncture amongst stakeholders and it is worse within the GDCS units. The participants added the Social Crime Prevention, GBVF and Community Police Relations units are not communicating amongst themselves internally. Additionally, the participants added government initiatives are planned by departments without the involvement of communities where they are to be implemented hence, they fail to produce the required outcomes.

### **3.6 Suggested measures to improve the mainstreaming and coordination of Social Crime Prevention initiatives**

According to Siegelaar and Ballard (2023), a "Social Crime Prevention approach is premised on the proposition that law enforcement focuses on crime prevention policies that are inadequate or insufficient to achieve crime prevention and it should be supplemented with strategies that reduce social risk factors root causes". The objective of Social Crime Prevention reduces an individual's motivation to commit a crime through their social influence and institutions of socialisation (White Paper on Safety and Security, 1998). The participants were requested to suggest mechanisms that could improve the functioning of Social Crime Prevention initiatives implemented in Gauteng. The GDCS and SAPS coordinators maintained that committed employees are needed to participate in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives.

The GPCPB coordinators stated stakeholders should speak in a single voice and avoid sending divergent messages because they confuse themselves and communities. The participants added that stakeholders should work with one another to address the problem of crime within communities. The municipalities coordinators mentioned that it is necessary for stakeholders at local level to receive proper guidance from both the national and provincial stakeholders for initiatives to succeed. The participants said the introduction of empowerment programmes would assist in addressing the main source of crime affecting communities. They mentioned the use of podcasts to reach a wider audience since the majority of people rely on social media to receive information.

The GPG coordinators asserted that more awareness campaigns are necessary for Social Crime Prevention initiatives to produce the anticipated results. The participants stressed the importance of strengthening Victim Empowerment Programs as victims of GBVF have lost trust in the police as the criminal

justice system has failed to consolidate evidence which needs to be presented in a court of law to secure a conviction. Furthermore, in order to restore confidence in the justice system, participants mentioned that evidence collected by the investigating officers should follow due process to strengthen the state's case against perpetrators.

Additionally, the participants mentioned that the Department of Justice (DOJ) should play its part by imposing harsher sentences on offenders to ensure that justice is served. The DSD should see to it that there is moral fibre within communities and families through the introduction of different initiatives. Participants felt the economic cluster should create employment for everyone in order to dissuade people from committing crime as a result of hunger. Moreover, SAPS should address the problem of corruption to restore the confidence of communities in the police.

The GPG participants asserted the importance of expanding and merging existing initiatives to avoid duplication. Thereafter, a thorough assessment should be undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of such initiatives. The participants said this would assist in assessing whether the initiatives are effective or not and, in the process, it would help to identify areas that need to be strengthened. The participants emphasised the importance of more patrollers on the ground but with budget cuts, it may be impossible to achieve. The participants mentioned installing cameras as part of their plans to work with Business Against Crime (BAC), who will monitor such around-the-clock. For this initiative to be effective it requires a huge budget to train and appoint people to manage these cameras.

Furthermore, the participants suggested Social Crime Prevention coordinators employed at the SAPS provincial office should be deployed at night to fight crime because police stations are understaffed. They added that at station level there are approximately three officers patrolling the whole policing area with one vehicle whereas at the provincial office there are more than 15 officers working as Social Crime Prevention officers performing coordination work. The participants suggested more vehicles should be allocated to Social Crime Prevention units at station level as they are under resourced. The participants said the SAPS Senior Management should engage with other departments or stakeholders to forge strong partnerships in the fight against crime. Stakeholders should plan together to ensure Social Crime Prevention initiatives yield the desired results. Participants advocated for the prioritisation of training for Social Crime Prevention coordinators to improve their work performance.

The GPCPB coordinators asserted stakeholders should communicate consistently amongst themselves while implementing Social Crime Prevention initiatives. The municipality coordinators said specific guidelines should be put in place to enhance the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives. The participants emphasised the importance of holding workshops where all stakeholders are involved. Additionally, the participants emphasised a need for synergy between the SAPS and Metropolitan Police Departments when dealing with crime. Furthermore, the participants accentuated that sharing of information amongst LEAs should be improved. The participants revealed that continuous collaboration between government departments, civil society organisations, NGOs, community and business sectors is a necessity in the fight against crime. Furthermore, the participants asserted the importance of investigating factors such as unemployment, poverty and substance abuse as they contribute towards crime. The participants mentioned that municipalities should have a designated person that sits in the Technical Intergovernmental Service Delivery Forum to liaison with other stakeholders. The forum allows for the discussion and coordination of service delivery between different levels of government.

#### **IV. Recommendations**

The recommendations of this study are based on the findings of this report that expose the shortcomings faced in the implementation of the GDCS Social Crime Prevention initiatives. The recommendations are informed by the adverse findings that were uncovered while assessing all the data that was collected. The challenges that hinder efficient implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives are well documented. The recommendations are tabled for the consideration of all stakeholders:

##### **4.1 The introduction of Project files**

During the initial stages of the study, the research team found it difficult to obtain internally approved concept documents related to the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives by the department. It is crucial to have official records of projects undertaken by the department for various reasons such as good governance, legal compliance, policy development, financial management, institutional memory, efficient operations, accountability and transparency.

Therefore, it is recommended that every programme implemented in the department should have documents approved by the Head of Department registered by the registry and loaded in the Knowledge Hub. This will assist in ensuring that all projects or initiatives by the department are given equal status and the

required attention. In addition, record preservation bolsters institutional memory and builds a repository of information.

#### **4.2 Heightened integrated approach through institutionalisation of the Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy (ICVPS - 2022) within the Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG)**

The prevention of crime cannot be the sole responsibility of the police; it requires an integrated multi-agency approach where all relevant departments collaborate with each other. The study discovered that although stakeholders claim to be working together in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives it is not so, as there are no clear plans and milestones set. The study revealed that stakeholders only come together when there is a project they want to achieve. The ICVPS proposes sustainable mechanisms for an integrated 'whole of government' and "whole of society" approach to the prevention of crime and violence. This should be made a collective priority by all stakeholders. The Office of the Premier (OTP) is strategically positioned to coordinate implementation of safety interventions at the provincial level by ensuring the inclusion and prioritisation of safety priorities in provincial safety plans, through a monitoring and evaluation system (ICVPS, 2022).

Therefore, it is recommended that all GPG employees should be trained on the contents of the ICVPS to strengthen the fight against crime and other challenges facing communities. This will enhance their understanding of this strategy as well as that of stakeholders in the fight against crime in the province. A declaration certificate must be signed by all those who would have been trained on the ICVPS. Such certificates should be placed in their files within their respective environments as evidence. In addition, all GPG departments must include relevant aspects of the ICVPS in their Annual Performance Plans (APP) to ensure the set goals of this strategy are realised.

#### **4.3 Thorough consultation with all the stakeholders**

It is necessary for all the stakeholders to be consulted before the commencement of any project. Based on the data that was collected, it is unclear whether or not stakeholders were adequately consulted. It seems stakeholders were only invited to participate when specific initiatives were to be undertaken, for example, during school searches the police were invited to carry out that activity. It is important to involve all the stakeholders from the inception of the initiatives including a plenary. A consultation process creates an opportunity to inform stakeholders about everything including affording them an opportunity to raise issues and concerns in order to shape the objectives as well as the outcomes of such initiatives. Therefore, it is recommended that all stakeholders should be consulted prior to the implementation of any Social Crime Prevention initiatives, this would assist in obtaining buy-in from everyone including understanding roles and responsibilities.

#### **4.4 Adoption of a standardised Social Crime Prevention strategy and implementation plan**

The study revealed that there is no standardised plan crafted by the stakeholders for the purpose of implementing Social Crime Prevention initiatives. The commitment of all stakeholders is necessary to ensure the success of initiatives in the province. An implementation plan would provide clarity and direction for stakeholders, as well as detailed information about the initiatives to be implemented. It would facilitate collaborative communication, which helps identify potential risks and defines mitigation strategies. Creating an implementation plan involves several key steps to ensure your project is executed smoothly and effectively. Therefore, it is recommended that a step-by-step guide should be developed with the involvement of all the stakeholders. The guide should incorporate the following: an outline of the goals and scope, key stakeholders, task breakdown, resources needed, timelines with milestones, potential risks, contingency plans, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives and any other related information that will benefit the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives in Gauteng.

#### **4.5 The appointment of permanent Social Crime Prevention committee officials**

For Social Crime Prevention initiatives to achieve their set goals, there is a need for dedicated officials to be involved in their implementation. Trained individuals should be identified and seconded to form part of the core team to implement initiatives. This is necessary to ensure designated permanent officials are assigned for this important task to ensure consistency and continuity for the outcomes of this project to be realised. Therefore, it is recommended that permanent committee officials should be appointed to fulfil this task. This should be done as a matter of urgency.

#### **4.6 Partnerships with institutions of higher learning**

The study found that participants were not exposed to any form of training pertaining to Social Crime Prevention. This could have impacted negatively on how initiatives were implemented. Therefore, it is recommended that the department should partner with institutions of higher learning to address this

shortcoming. This partnership should involve the development of learning programmes specifically related to Social Crime Prevention. All Social Crime Prevention officials must be trained on the newly developed programme.

#### **4.7 The review of the Integrated Social Crime Prevention Strategy (ISCPS)**

The ISCPS was first adopted in 2011 to assist in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention in South Africa. Since then, this strategy has not been reviewed at all. Therefore, it is recommended that the 2011 ISCPS should be reviewed as a matter of urgency.

### **V. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study documented several challenges encountered in the evaluation of the implementation of the GDCS Social Crime Prevention initiatives in Gauteng. This study discovered that stakeholders understand what Social Crime Prevention entails, and they are familiar with their responsibilities. However, the participants acknowledge that there are challenges during the implementation of Social Crime Prevention initiatives. The study also discovered that there are no guidelines in the implementation of Social Crime Prevention in the province. The study also confirmed that stakeholders are not working together to implement this Act.

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