

NECESSARY ACTIONS FOR CITIES TO REDUCE VIOLENCE BY 50 PERCENT BY 2030:

How to save lives, stop victimization, protect
women and children, and generate GDP

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Abstract

Cities will reduce violence by 50% by 2030 by shifting from the status quo to investing strategically in prevention that tackles the causes. Globally each year, this will save up to 250 thousand lives, stop 15 million women from rape, and protect half a billion children from violence. It will increase GDP in many countries.

Political leaders committed to significant reductions in violent crime by 2030 as part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A small but growing group of cities wants to achieve a 50% reduction by 2030.

Solid prevention science identifies actions where violent crime has been reduced by 50% better than the status quo. Some proven actions improved youth engagement, supported parenting, changed male attitudes, mitigated financial stress, and improved the physical environment. Other actions reformed policing by diverting critical incidents to other services, orienting to victims and restorative justice, enforcing alcohol and gun regulations, solving problems in hotspots, and focusing deterrence in partnerships with social agencies. The proposed *Safety Monitor Tool on Scientifically Proven Programs* will monitor the use of science.

Governments have agreed at the UN to key elements for successful implementation of effective crime prevention. These include a high-level office to plan and spearhead action led by sectors able to tackle causes. Furthermore, the planning must be inspired by science, organized by qualified talent, supported by adequate and sustained funding, and should engage the public. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require performance indicators and outcomes to be measured, such as proposed in the *Safety Monitor Tool on Keys for Successful Implementation*.

Cities in the UK, USA, and Latin America have reduced violent crime by 50 percent. More cities are initiating actions, but few will achieve significant reductions without using the keys to successful implementation – with a particular focus on adequate funding.

The case for governments to support actions by cities to reduce violence is compelling both because it reduces victimization and, in high violence countries, increases GDP. Some governments provide support, but that support is not yet proportionate to the potential benefits.

For cities to reduce violence by 50 percent by 2030, they must transform their actions now with financial support from governments and intergovernmental agencies, including:

1. Cities must implement actions now inspired by *scientifically proven programs* (see Safety Monitor Tool 1)
2. Cities must use keys to *successful implementation* to achieve measurable goals (see Safety Monitor Tool 2)
3. Governments must support cities with investments proportionate to savings in costs of both victimization and the status quo
4. Governments must support professional development so that the human capacity will make the transition to successful implementation of effective violence prevention
5. Governments must raise awareness among decision makers and the public of the benefits of reducing victimization significantly and its benefits to peaceful governance and growth in GDP.

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Introduction

UNODC stated that unless the international community takes decisive steps to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates, the targets under Sustainable Development Goal 16 for 2030 will not be met (UNODC, 2019). The stakes are big in terms of lives and trauma that can be prevented and, in turn, reduced. Reducing violence will generate significant increases in the short term – and even bigger in the long term – in gross domestic product, jobs, and prosperity.

This report is written for decision makers in all orders of government who want to take decisive action now to reduce urban violence by 50% and sustain those reductions through 2030 and beyond. It identifies some cities that have already succeeded in the UK, the US, and Latin America. The challenge is getting most cities – particularly those with high levels of violent crime – to succeed. The report builds on the comprehensive analysis and proposals in *Science and Secrets of End Violent Crime* (Waller, 2019) by highlighting conclusions, discussing successes in cities in low violence countries, as well as high violence cities in the US, Latin America and Africa, and providing lessons for cities across the world.

This report is framed around the need to reduce the number of victims of violence significantly. Violence is not merely an offence against the state, but a cause of significant harm to individual victims who suffer pain, loss, and reduced life expectancy. Violence eliminates jobs, causes trauma, and costs trillions of dollars. Much of these costs occur in – and are assumed by – cities.

Urban violence such as homicides, street violence, intimate partner and gender-based violence, and violence against children are not inevitable, but preventable. World leaders are committed to achieve significant reductions in these forms of violence by 2030. City leaders are also pledging to a 50% reduction. However, realizing these commitments by 2030 requires a decisive shift away from the status quo and toward the strategic and evidence-based use of prevention.

This report uses science, international guidelines, and success stories from cities across the world to identify what these leaders must do to achieve the 2030 targets. Current policies are primarily reactive rather than preventive and depend primarily on the status quo of policing and incarceration. The evidence shows the status quo's response to be costly to victims and taxpayers, often directed against marginalized groups, and with limited effectiveness in reducing violence.

In light of the above, what does the evidence – the solid violence prevention science – identify as the more effective ways of using policing and cost-effective ways of tackling the causes of violence? What have governments identified as the essentials for that science to be used locally and for measurable goals to be achieved? The report will answer these questions and propose two Safety Monitor Tools for guiding and evaluating actions and related performance indicators.

The report spotlights leading cities in the UK, USA, and Latin America that have already succeeded in reducing street violence by 50% as well as other cities in those regions that are initiating actions that are encouraging, but not yet enough to fully achieve the goals.

It presents the compelling evidence-based argument for governments to invest in helping cities shift from the status quo to the actions that will reduce violence by 50% by 2030. These actions will make Black, Indigenous, and other disadvantaged lives matter. Finally, the report concludes with some ways to accelerate the shift towards overdue investments to save lives, protect women and children, and generate jobs.

Making Black, Indigenous, and other Disadvantaged Lives Matter, and Protecting Women and Children

Global Rates of Violent Crime

Globally each year, half a million persons will be murdered, which is “many more deaths worldwide than armed conflict and terrorism combined” (UNODC, 2019, p. 1). Not all of these occur in cities, but too many do. Indeed, too many Latin American, African, and US cities live with murder rates that are much higher than the world average. In Latin America, some have increased significantly in the last decade. Between 2019 and 2020, homicide rates in many US cities that had decreased over the last thirty years saw increases of up to 30%. Most other cities outside the USA continued with similar homicide rates or saw their rates decline.

The victims and perpetrators of homicide are disproportionately young, disadvantaged males living in a limited number of neighborhoods. In the US, they are disproportionately Black and in Canada, Indigenous. For all of them, it is a significant cause of loss of life expectancy, quality of life, and – indeed – their freedom.

The rates of women who are murdered follow a similar geographic pattern, but at lower rates. However, an estimated twenty-five million women or more will be raped (Waller, 2019), often “behind closed doors”, and so those cases often never come to the attention of the police or even health care professionals. While there is pressure to free women from gender-based violence, much of the efforts will not succeed as they are reactive responses rather than preventive approaches to prevent victimization from happening in the first place.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has completed seminal surveys in the US on intimate partner and sexual violence and has undertaken surveys in several low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) in Africa and Central America (Waller 2019, chap. 5; Together for Girls, 2020). Some of these results form the basis for national action in LMIC to reduce violence against children, which are likely going in the right direction, but without any science as of yet to prove the policies have worked.

One billion children are victims of violence (WHO, 2019), including sexual violence against girls and boys. While some national policies claim to address the issue, so far there are few examples with convincing evidence that these numbers are being reduced on any scale.

The tragedies accumulated into these statistics ruin the lives of victims and create fear and feelings of insecurity among communities and individuals – particularly those who are most marginalized. In table 1, we show the extent to which being Indigenous in Canada and Black in the US makes individuals more likely of being a victim of homicide and being incarcerated (see table 1).

The extent of the tragedies also reduces Gross Domestic Product by several percentage points in Low- and Middle-Income countries (LMIC). The annual cost of this violence is estimated in trillions of dollars (Schippa, 2017). Preventing victimization and saving lives justifies action on its own, but the business case to be presented below for implementing solutions is convincing because the solutions, the essentials for successful implementation, and the return on investment are known.

Table 1: Comparisons of Homicide and Incarceration by Race and Gender, Canada¹ and USA² (per 100,000)

	Canada ¹²			USA ¹³		
	Total	Male	Indigenous	Total	Male	Black
Homicide Rate	1.8	2.6	8.8	5.0	6.4	14.5
Incarceration Rate	104	233	691	698	1,352	2,306

City Trends by Region

Much of this violence is concentrated in urban settings. Cities today already hold more than half of the world’s population and this will increase by 2030, yet “the growing risk of urban violence threatens the growth, development, and prosperity of entire cities and urban dwellers around the world” (+Peace, 2019).

Some cities have seen rates of violence fall steadily from a peak around 1990 to today. Los Angeles, New York City, and São Paulo illustrate this important long-term trend with rates that are currently close to the world average (Brennan, 2018; Muggah, 2019). This trend coincided with increases in jobs, more persons completing school and university, decreases in drug epidemics, and controls over alcohol.

Some cities in Latin America, Africa, and the US have homicide rates per 100,000 much higher than cities in Europe or Asia. The 50 cities with a population over 300,000 that have the highest rates in the world are identified every year and remain relatively constant (Citizen Council on Security, Justice, and Peace, 2019). Los Cabos, Mexico (111 homicides per 100,000), Caracas, Venezuela (111), and Acapulco, Mexico (107) are unfortunate leaders on this list. In Africa, Cape Town (66), Nelson Mandela Bay (39), and Durban (38) are close behind. In the USA, Baltimore (59), Detroit (40), New Orleans (36), and St. Louis (61) are also in this list. A significant reduction in urban violence in these cities will be particularly important to reducing urban violence on a world scale by 2030.

¹ <https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/canada>; <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510015601>; <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00010-eng.htm>; <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00010-eng.htm>

² <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/tables/expanded-homicide-data-table-3.xls>; <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/genderinc.html>; <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/rates.html>; [https://www.statista.com/statistics/191134/reported-murder-and-nonnegligent-manslaughter-cases-in-the-us-since-1990/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20there%20were%2016%2C425,and%20non%2Dnegligent%20manslaughter%20cases](https://www.statista.com/statistics/191134/reported-murder-and-nonnegligent-manslaughter-cases-in-the-us-since-1990/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20there%20were%2016%2C425,and%20non%2Dnegligent%20manslaughter%20cases;); <https://www.statista.com/statistics/241495/us-population-by-sex/>; <https://www.statista.com/statistics/183489/population-of-the-us-by-ethnicity-since-2000/>

Organizations Committed to 50% Reduction in Violence

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The leaders of all nations across the world committed to significantly reduce homicides and other violence, violence against women and girls, and violence against children by 2030. These are clear and measurable goals in the Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the UN in 2015. It provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. The indicators and targets for reducing street violence and homicide are in SDG 16.1, violence against women and girls in SDG 5.2, and violence against children in SDG 16.2 (UN Statistics, 2021; Waller, 2019).

The SDGs require governments to transform their ways of doing business by shifting away from the status quo to achieve measurable and measured outcomes. Indeed, “what we treasure, we can measure” and “what gets measured gets done”. In sum, these require governments to shift to evidence-based and smart preventive solutions from incremental increases in processes that are in effect more of the same – the status quo.

The new way to do so is to target what is to be achieved and subsequently develop a plan on how to get there. The plan will require innovative ways of doing things, including using evidence and a logic model that sets out how investing logically will achieve the outcomes.

City Networks

Several networks of mayors and cities have already made the commitment to achieve the 50 percent reduction in violence. As of yet, few have made the shifts in investment to achieve the target. Several examples of networks working towards reductions are outlined below, including those who have made the commitment.

The Global Network of Safer Cities (GNSC)

The GNSC is an initiative of UN-Habitat to support local authorities and urban actors to provide safety in cities. It provides an international platform for cities around the world and is active in 77 cities across 24 countries. The GNSC is developing an “Urban Safety Monitor” to measure key indicators that might contribute to significant reductions in violent crime. Similarly, the Safety Monitor Tools in this report were developed in part to provide a way for the solid science of violence prevention and the essentials for successful implementation to be part of that urban safety monitor so that cities would indeed reduce urban violence.

Peace in Our Cities Network

Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, and [Impact:Peace](#) launched the Peace in Our Cities Campaign in September 2019. Already, mayors and local officials representing over 15 million people from cities across the world have pledged to halve violent crime in their communities by 2030. These include cities from Africa ³, Latin America ⁴, the Middle East ⁵, the US, and other countries⁶. The campaign calls for

³ Hargeisa, Somalia, Kano, Nigeria, Nairobi Municipality, Kenya, Hargeisa, Somalia, Bangui, Central African Republic, Durban, South Africa

⁴ Cali, Colombia, Palmira, Colombia, Guadalajara, México, Escobedo, México, Chaguanas, Trinidad and Tobago

⁵ Amman, Jordan, Colombo, Sri Lanka, Tripoli, Libya

⁶ Oakland, Dayton, Edmonton, Canada and Kumanovo, North Macedonia

concrete, participatory, and evidence-based platforms that make progress toward SDG16 with an initial focus on SDG16.1 (+Peace, 2019). They want to share the latest evidence of effective methods for reducing urban violence and shape a city-to-city collaboration framework to develop and drive global best-practices for SDG16 (+Peace, 2019). The Safety Monitor Tools proposed in this report provide a way to compare performance indicators between these cities and increase measurable reductions in urban violence.

Global Parliament of Mayors

The Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM, 2016) adopted the resolution to halve violence by 2030. It launched the resolution worldwide, calling on all mayors, representatives of international organizations, and city networks to join the movement.

Metropolis

Metropolis is a global network of major cities and metropolitan areas that has examined how to improve urban services, social services, employment, energy, education, health, and social protection in order to achieve SDGs 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) (Gutiérrez, Llamas & Martínez-Osés, 2020). It stresses the impacts that inequality and social cohesion, lack of access to community spaces and services, educational values, and gender have on violence. Metropolis has not yet set measurable targets for the reduction of violence.

European Forum for Urban Safety (EFUS)

EFUS has championed multi-sectoral strategies to tackle causes of crime since 1989. It was influential in getting the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to commit to prevention as one of the three main thrusts for its ongoing program since 1995. While many cities in Europe have some type of community safety office and a crime prevention council that brings together key sectors such social services, employment, policing, and criminal justice, little is known about the extent to which these have successfully reduced crime.

Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention (CMNCP)

The Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention (CMNCP) is a community of practice created to build capacity and mobilize Canadian municipalities to prevent and reduce crime and foster community safety and well-being. CMNCP currently has over 80 members representing 50% of the Canadian population. CMNCP aims to increase investment in effective, evidence-based, and collaborative crime prevention strategies, including innovations in schools, housing, social and youth services, and health (CMNCP, 2016a). Edmonton has made the commitment to a 50% reduction by 2030 as part of the Peace in our Cities initiative and CMNCP is a partner.

Mayors for Smart on Crime

In the United States, mayors from 10 cities joined the Center for American Progress to launch a national network of Mayors for Smart on Crime. Its members committed to pursuing a fair, equitable, and comprehensive approach to public safety and criminal justice reform. Already it has grown to include most major cities in the USA.⁷ Mayors for Smart on Crime focuses on five core issues of which the first is violence

⁷ Baton Rouge, Birmingham, Boston, Dayton, Denver. Gary, Jackson, Los Angeles. New York City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Richmond, Seattle, St. Paul, Stockton, Washington, DC

reduction and prevention. It also includes pre-trial and bail reform, accountable community policing, opportunities for the formerly incarcerated or those involved with the justice system, and public health solutions and investments (Center for American Progress, 2018). It rejects the status quo as an outdated “tough on crime” approach because it is ineffective and disproportionate in its effect on Black and Latino communities. It has not yet made a clear commitment to halve violence by 2030.

California Cities Violence Prevention Network (CCVPN)

Established in 2007, the California Violence Prevention Network (CCVPN) brought together California cities to develop a framework for reducing youth and gang violence through comprehensive community-wide action plans. It wants to assist in developing balanced violence prevention plans, reducing gun violence, spurring youth engagement, and strengthening police/community relationships. The Network now has 14 members, including Oakland that achieved a 50% reduction in gun violence.⁸ Oakland has made the commitment to a 50% reduction by joining the Peace in our Cities Network.













What has Been Proven to Prevent Violence

Violence prevention science is solid as it is based on fifty years of scientific research and evaluations, mostly in Europe and North America, but increasingly in Africa. It identifies many strategies that have been proven to prevent crime and the results are now shared by several prestigious organizations. The bases for the science are comparisons between innovations and the status quo, often using randomized control trials.

Waller (2019) grouped the proven strategies into chapters on policing, helping youth flourish, gendering safety, and putting victims at zenith. Several of these strategies have been proven to achieve reductions of 50% or more, and some had cost-effective evidence as well.

⁸ Fresno, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, Oxnard, Richmond, Sacramento, Salinas. San Bernardino, San Diego. San Francisco, San José, Santa Rosa, Stockton

Safety Monitor Tool 1: Scientifically Proven Programs

Safety Monitor Tool: Scientifically Proven Programs			
Prevention tackling causes			
	1	Engage and support young males	
	2	Support positive parenting and early childhood	
	3	Strengthen anti-violence social norms	
	4	Mitigate financial stress	
	5	Improve physical environment	
	6	Use "logic model" but avoid solutions proven ineffective	
Using police smartly			
	1	Reduce harmful effects of the justice process	
	2	Victim orientation and restorative justice	
	3	Enforce alcohol and firearm laws	
	4	Be problem oriented and tackling hot spots	
	5	Focus deterrence	
	6	Avoid policing strategies proven ineffective	

In **Safety Monitor Tool 1**, the scientifically proven programs that tackle causes are divided between those that engage and support youth, support positive parenting and early childhood, strengthen anti-violence norms for males, mitigate financial stress, and improve physical environment. The proven programs that use policing smartly are divided between those that reduce harmful effects, control abuse of alcohol, limit use of firearms, solve problems, and focus deterrence in partnership with social services. Before explaining them more, it is important to first appreciate how solid is the evidence that supports the conclusion that these programs have prevented violence.

What makes violence prevention science solid

To show how solid is the evidence of what is scientifically proven, Waller used the knowledge readily accessible and available from prestigious sources (Waller, 2019, chap. 2), including:

- The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) has described and rated “effective” close to 100 of 625 practices and 40 out of 106 programs through a rigorous evaluation process. Their effectiveness was defined based on the achievement of outcomes that often included reduction of violent crime. More than 60% were delivered by services other than police or criminal justice, such as youth services, family support, early childhood services, schools, and health.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified evidence on violence prevention which focuses on youth and early childhood, weapons and alcohol, help to victims, and changes in the culture of violence. Pre-crime prevention strategies focusing on youth and early childhood, schools, and the health sector have reduced crime by 50%. This evidence is now available on the WHO website with over 3,000 studies worldwide.
- Other sources included National Commissions, the British College of Policing, and the project on What Works to Stop Violence Against Women.

The list in Safety Monitor Tool 1 builds on these sources and the original comprehensive analysis (Waller, 2019). However, it reflects some refinements from sources published in the last two years, including:

- The [Global Study on Homicide](#) looked at global trends in homicide and identified some “policies aimed at tackling homicide (to) address drivers of homicide” (UNODC, 2019, p. 35; Waller, 2020).
- The [World Health Organization](#) published another report that largely repeats the important lists of effective ways to tackle causes, including parenting, social norms, and economic stability (WHO, 2016).
- The [Youth Violence Commission](#) in the UK brought together parliamentarians, leaders of agencies in different sectors, and university experts to identify solutions to serious youth violence (Youth Violence Commission, 2020).
- Thomas Abt published *Bleeding Out: A Bold New Plan for Peace in the Streets* of US cities, that focused on the people and neighborhoods in the US with the highest probability of violence as well as youth outreach, cognitive learning, and focused deterrence (Abt, 2019).
- The [John Jay College on Criminal Justice](#) assembled expert US researchers into their Research Advisory Group on Preventing and Reducing Community Violence that identified seven evidence-based strategies (John Jay College, 2020, p. ii).

Limits of Status Quo

The evidence is clear from an accumulation of major studies that cities cannot achieve significant reductions in violence by doing more of the same. Indeed, “more law is not more order”. Some marginal

reductions in crime may be achieved by increasing certainty of detection with modest punishments as well as incapacitating prolific offenders behind bars. However, it is not possible to arrest our way out of violence. These analyses are referenced in Waller (2019).

Table 2: Comparisons of New York City and Chicago with London and Toronto Illustrate the Solid Science that “More Law is not More Order”⁹¹⁰¹¹

Population	8 million		2.7 million	
	New York City, USA	London, England	Chicago, USA	Toronto, Canada
Homicide Rate	5.5	1.6	28.6	2.8
Homicides	436	126	774	78
Police Officers	36,000	32,000	13,000	5,500
Incarceration Rate	443	132	564	107

A simple example in table 2 above illustrates the limits of more law and order. It compares two pairs of cities with similar populations and demographics. One pair is New York City and London, which shows that higher levels of policing and much higher levels of incarceration do not bring the New York City homicide rate close to that of London. The other pair compares Chicago and Toronto and shows similar conclusions. Whatever the reason for the differences in homicide rates, they cannot be explained by significant differences in policing and incarceration.

⁹ Homicide Rates: Estimates on December 27, 2020: <https://www.thecity.nyc/2020/12/21/22189682/why-are-shootings-up-in-new-york-city-in-2020-nypd>; <https://www.onlondon.co.uk/the-number-of-homicides-in-london-fell-in-2020-what-explains-why-these-sad-statistics-change/#:~:text=During%20the%20calendar%20year%202020,and%20the%2094%20in%202014> ; [https://chicago.suntimes.com/crime/2020/12/31/22208002/chicago-murders-2020-skyrocket-crime-violence-cpd-homicides#:~:text=As%20of%20Dec.,2020%20than%20the%20year%20before](https://chicago.suntimes.com/crime/2020/12/31/22208002/chicago-murders-2020-skyrocket-crime-violence-cpd-homicides#:~:text=As%20of%20Dec.,2020%20than%20the%20year%20before;); <https://data.torontopolice.on.ca/pages/homicide>

¹⁰ Police officers (total): <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nypd/about/about-nypd/about-nypd-landing.page>; <https://www.statista.com/statistics/864928/officer-numbers-of-the-metropolitan-police/>; https://web.archive.org/web/20200714185818if_/https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2020/06/26/how-much-money-goes-to-police-departments-in-americas-largest-cities/112004904/; <http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/careers/history.php#:~:text=Today%2C%20the%20Toronto%20Police%20Service,calls%20for%20service%20a%20year>

¹¹ Incarceration rate per 100,000 for New York State for New York City and Illinois for Chicago <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/> and National rate for Canada for Toronto and England and Wales for London <https://www.prisonstudies.org/>

What Feels Good May Not Do Good

Politicians often base their decisions on intuition rather than evidence because it *feels* good. There are many examples on crimesolutions.org – particularly of programs thought to rehabilitate offenders – where feel-good solutions fail to reduce crime. For instance, the ‘Scared Straight’ program has often been selected as a potential approach to preventing youth offending, because it feels as if exposing adolescents to the horrors of maximum-security prison would change their behavior. However, by measuring results of ‘Scared Straight’, it has been demonstrated that the program increases delinquency when compared to youth who did not participate in the program (Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino, Hollis-Peel, & Lavenberg, 2013). There are many more similar examples.

Strategies Proven to have Reduced Crime by Tackling causes

The description of the programs listed in Safety Monitor Tool 1 is relatively short as more information can be accessed from the key sources on evidence-based prevention, including Waller (2019). Most of these programs have been shown to be highly cost effective, often returning more than US \$7 for every US \$1 invested in savings to victims and to taxpayers in reduced costs related to reactive measures.

Engage and support young men

Outreach to young men at risk through initiatives inspired by [Youth Inclusion Programs](#) (in the UK) or [Cure Violence](#) (in the US) is well established, but still not widely used. In the UK, this approach consists of trustworthy street workers outreaching to young men and to include them. In the US, outreach workers aim to interrupt street gang affiliation, mediate violent conflict, and mentor at-risk individuals (Waller, 2019, p. 64; UNODC, 2019, p. 3, 6, 29, 40; John Jay College, 2020. p. 8; Abt 2019; Youth Violence Commission, 2020, p. 71). They form supportive and confidential relationships with individuals at the highest risk of becoming perpetrators or victims of violence. These programs are focused on the small group of young men most involved in a violent lifestyle.

Hospital-based violence intervention programs also use outreach social workers for a similar objective. However, it consists of intervening with victims of violence in hospital emergency rooms to deal with trauma, prevent revenge shootings, and encourage young men to abandon gang-like lifestyle (Waller, 2019, p. 72). In this regard, it is important for hospital admissions to use the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) that describes both the nature of the injury and the cause. This information informs epidemiology approaches that, in turn, lead to violence prevention (WHO, 2021).

Support positive parenting and early childhood

Programs such as [positive parenting](#), [health nurse visits](#), or [enriched pre-school](#) all reduce violence against children. [Multi-systemic therapy](#) requires therapists to work in homes, schools, and communities to provide parents with tools to transform the lives of troubled youth (Waller, 2019, p. 69; UNODC, 2019, p. 6, 54; WHO, 2016; Youth Violence Commission, 2020, p.11; Russell, 2021, p. 33). These upstream preventive programs reduce Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which lead to difficulties forming healthy and stable relationships, create struggles with school, finances, and jobs, and increase chances of committing violence in the future (Bellis, 2020).

Strengthen Anti-Violence Social Norms

Life Skills Training, *Becoming a Man*, [Stop Now and Plan](#), and other similar programs have achieved up to 50% reductions in offending (Waller, 2019, p. 70; UNODC, 2019, p. 5, 29, 54; WHO, 2016; John Jay College, 2020, p.8; Abt, 2019; Youth Violence Commission, 2020, p. 53). The basic programs are included in school

curricula and focus on emotion regulation and problem-solving to help young men develop self-management skills and reduce impulsive responses causing violence.

Male norms that foster violence against women have been reduced by a number of programs focusing on men (Waller, 2019, chap. 5), by tackling male toxicity. [Bystander intervention](#) in universities and colleges is now well known as a way to reduce violence against women by encouraging a culture where others intervene before an assault can take place. Similarly, a program designed to change attitudes of teens called [Fourth R](#) has added skills in relationships to the core school programs of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Community attitudes to violence have been shifted through interventions that are conceptually related to the [SASA!](#) program (Waller, 2018; WHO, 2016; Michau, 2008). This “deployed and supported trained community activists to implement a structured program of activities spanning awareness-raising on gender inequality and violence, supporting and enabling changes in behaviour, and extending community-wide change” (Jewkes, Willan, Heise, Washington, Shai, Kerr-Wilson, & Christofides, 2020, p. 1). Though invented in Africa, it is now being used in Central America.

Mitigate Financial Stress

Youth employment, job mentorship and training, educational supports, and behavioral interventions can improve youth outcomes and reduce violence (John Jay College, 2020, p. 14). Many sources show that short-term assistance, especially when coupled with behavioral therapy and mentoring programs, affects rates of violence (Waller, 2019; UNODC, 2019; WHO, 2016; John Jay College, 2020; Youth Violence Commission, 2020, Russell, 2021). In southern Africa, the IMAGE intervention combined help to get independent income through microfinance with a group-based intervention to train women in community activism (Pronyk et al., 2006; Jewkes et al., 2020).

Improve the Physical Environment

Designing out crime by changing the [physical environment](#) of potential victims to make crime harder, increasing risk of offenders being caught, and reducing benefits from crime have been shown to reduce crime (Waller, 2019; John Jay College, 2020, p. 3). Place-based interventions that are structural, scalable, and sustainable have been shown to reduce violence. Increasing the prevalence of green space in a neighborhood, improving the quality of neighborhood buildings and housing, and creating public spaces with ample lighting suitable for pedestrian traffic can be cost-effective ways of decreasing community violence (John Jay College, 2020, p.3).

Smart Use of Police and Justice to Reduce Crime

The second part of Safety Monitor Tool 1 shows actions where smarter use of police resources can reduce violence. Many police actions such as random police patrol, broken windows, stop and frisk, have been the subject of extensive research with the conclusion that they are not effective and they disproportionately target Indigenous, Black, and people of color. Increases and decreases in numbers of police are the subject of debate, though table 2 showed there is no simple relationship. The research has not looked at the quality of police officers or their income which can be very important in LMIC.

Reduce the Harmful Effects of the Justice Process

Crisis interventions in North America have recently got renewed interest but they have existed on the margins of policing for more than fifty years. Unfortunately, the evidence on reducing violence is not clear, as violence by mentally ill persons tends to make headlines even though it is relatively rare. In fact, some

studies show mentally ill persons in Canada to be more at risk of being victims of violence, but this indicator has not been used as an outcome yet. The logic requires both general improvements in mental health services to be the main response to mental health crises rather than policing. In this regard, [CAHOOTS](#) (Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets) has received considerable of attention as a way of saving police costs.

[Hub models](#) have spread rapidly in Canada. The community intervention is initiated through a discussion between frontline workers from various agencies and human services to identify at-risk youth and adults, share information on the individuals and families involved, and develop targeted intervention strategies (Public Safety Canada, 2018). The evidence suggests a reduction in crime of about 30%.

Finally, procedural justice that makes policing and the judicial process be viewed as legitimate for community members to engage effectively with law enforcement helps reduce violence (John Jay College, 2020, p. 16). Some evidence shows a reduction close to 30%, but not yet in clinical trials.

[Increase Women in Policing](#)

Female police in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) are associated with less gender-based domestic violence. One way to be sure of that support is by implementing all female police stations in disadvantaged neighborhoods. These stations have spread across the LMIC world (Waller, 2019, chap. 5). This is likely to also change the dominant male culture and lead to fewer deaths in police interventions. As yet, evaluations are positive but not yet definitive.

[Victim Orientation and Restorative Justice](#)

The right of victims of violent crime to information, protection, support, reparation and being heard is important. Police have a duty to provide information, orient victims to services and reparation, and so on. Treating victims with respect is likely to provide more information to police and so help in identifying and convicting offenders. This will reduce impunity that is an important way to reduce homicide and other violent crime (UNODC, 2019, p. 36)

Another way to meet the needs of victims and avoid the problems for victims with the police and criminal justice system is [restorative justice](#). The evidence supporting the satisfactory effects of restorative justice for victims is strong. There is also impressive evidence that suggests that restorative justice can reduce the likelihood of offenders committing future crimes. In addition to satisfying the needs of victims, restorative justice also offers cost savings when compared with the traditional police and criminal court process (Sherman and Strang, 2007).

[Enforce Alcohol and Gun Laws](#)

Enforcing regulations and laws designed to control abuse of alcohol and misuse of firearms are important to reducing violent crime. Focusing on alcohol and tackling the mechanisms related to homicide, such as firearms, can bring about a significant reduction in homicide rates (UNODC, 2019, p. 38). Restricting access to alcohol by raising taxes or limiting sales has been shown to decrease violent crime (John Jay College, 2020, p. 13), but these regulations and laws must be enforced. In the US, violent crime has been reduced by policy mechanisms [that limit access to guns](#) and increase restrictions for individuals with violent crime backgrounds, reduce access to guns by young people, impose waiting periods, and increase required training (John Jay College Violence, 2020, p. 17).

[Problem-Oriented Policing](#)

The evidence is strong for [problem-oriented policing](#) and focused deterrence, particularly when used in partnership with targeted social programming (Waller, 2019, p. 48-49). Problem-oriented policing

requires police to identify hot spots of high crime rates and focus their efforts to suppress the problem, using public health and police data (UNODC, 2019, p. 4, 39). This can be enhanced by the Cardiff model discussed below (Waller, 2019). Hotspot policing has been shown to be effective in repeated studies but is not necessarily sustained once the police presence is reduced (Waller, 2019; UNODC, 2019, p. 2, 3, 29, 61; John Jay College, 2020).

[Focused Deterrence](#)

Focused deterrence consists of focusing on likely offenders in order to increase deterrence using “call-in” of these young men. [Boston](#) (USA), Glasgow (UK, Scotland), Minas Gerais (Brazil), and Oakland are examples where these approaches achieved significant results by encouraging participation in targeted social programming. The strongest evidence supports [focused deterrence](#) where there are police partnerships with social services and neighborhoods (Waller, 2019, p. 48; UNODC, 2019, p. 2, 58; John Jay College, 2019, p. 1).

Safety Monitor Tool for Scientifically Proven Programs

In Safety Monitor Tool 1, the five programs that have been proven to reduce violence by tackling causes and the five that use police smartly are listed. These provide a checklist for city violence prevention planners to use. The ways to use this knowledge among the keys to successful implementation of effective strategies will be discussed later along with a second safety monitor tool.

Safety Monitor Tool 1 also includes a category that stresses the need to conduct a local diagnosis of risk factors or causes that would not be addressed through the list of proven prevention programs. This requires the city planner to develop solutions that are logical rather than intuitive or popular. The solid violence prevention science, particularly [crimesolutions.gov](#) and the British College of Policing, have identified many programs that do not reduce violence. Another common mistake is to assume that a program in a disadvantaged area that attracts those least likely to engage in violence is a violence reduction program. There is a need to get independent advice from a person familiar with literature on causes of violence in order to identify whether the proposed solution logically would stop violence.

[Essentials for Cities to Implement Successfully](#)

Cities tend to confuse a program that is funded for a limited number of years in one neighborhood with an urban violence strategy that will reduce and sustain reductions in violence across the city.

Waller identified seven essentials for successful implementation that are in common between different UN Agencies and so resolutions adopted by governments at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (2019, p. 125). Similarly, UN-Habitat adopted the United Nations System-wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements in 2019 (UN-Habitat, 2019, p. 8). UN ECOSOC has adopted two guidelines – one on urban crime in 1996, and one on effective prevention in 2002. In general, the UN ECOSOC guidelines delineate basic principles and organization, methods, and approaches that science has shown are effective solutions to ending violent crime (Waller, 2019). The World Health Organization (WHO) identified implementation considerations that apply to violence prevention strategies including scaling-up, adapting evidence-based programs, children’s participation, estimating costs, identifying sources of support, and impact and sustainability (WHO, 2016).

Though not a UN Agency, the recent report by the Youth Violence Commission placed an emphasis on the importance of public health strategies led by violence reduction units. Its recommendations were not directly inspired by the UN resolutions, but they coincide with the same essential principles (Youth

Violence Commission, 2020). In January 2019, the Canadian province of Ontario enacted into law a mandate for all municipalities to develop and implement collaborative plans for community safety and well-being (Taylor, 2019).

Office for Violence Prevention

The first essential for success is establishing a **permanent violence and crime reduction board** for the city (Waller 2019, p. 117; UN-Habitat 2019, p. 13; ECOSOC 2002, par. 1, 7, 17; WHO, 2016; Youth Violence Commission, 2020, p. 1; Ontario, 2019). This responsibility centre is the energy behind developing and implementing crime prevention plans. City-level boards mobilize local talent, facilitate information sharing between sectors, and disseminate pertinent information to key stakeholders and the public.

Comprehensive Planning Strategy Focused on Outcomes – What we Treasure, we Measure

Having an **integrated crime prevention plan** is key to coordinate and oversee crime prevention efforts (Waller, 2019, p. 118; UN-Habitat, 2019, p. 18-19; ECOSOC, 2002, par. 22, 23; WHO, 2016, p. 84-90; Youth Violence Commission, 2020, p. 3; Ontario, 2019). The UN Guidelines stress the need for a local plan that mobilizes various community and economic sectors to prevent crime.

The plan must be based on diagnoses of local crime problems and should include performance standards, targeted solutions, training protocol, and outcome evaluations. Diagnosis and assessment of the situation at the city and neighborhood level is critical. This will involve data on demographics, crime known to police, data from hospitals and from surveys, as well as identification of risk factors and causes through community engagements.

Informed by Violence Prevention Science

Going from diagnosis of risk factors and causes to solutions ensures that new investments are likely to succeed. Being **informed by violence prevention science** and data is crucial to basing crime prevention on a multidisciplinary foundation of proven knowledge about crime problems, their causes, and promising and proven practices (Waller, 2019, p. 118; UN-Habitat 2019, p. 13; ECOSOC, 2002, par. 1, 7, 17; WHO, 2016; Youth Violence Commission, 2020, p. 1). Safety Monitor Tool 1 on scientifically proven prevention provided a list of programs to consider.

Mobilizing Sectors Able to Tackle Causes

Because of the nature of the risk factors that lead to crime, the violence prevention office must **mobilize talent able to help solve the problems**. These individuals might include social workers, educators, health professionals, employment specialists, and sports figures as well as criminal justice system workers (Waller, 2019, p. 119; UN-Habitat, 2019, p. 14; ECOSOC, 2002, par. 8, 9, 19; WHO, 2016, p. 85; Youth Violence Commission, 2020, p. 7-41; Ontario, 2019).

Adequate and Sustained Funding Often Overlooked

The next essential for successful crime prevention is having **adequate and sustained funding** (Waller 2019, p. 121; UN-Habitat, 2019, p. 22; ECOSOC, 2002, par. 10, 20; WHO, 2016, p. 88-89; Youth Violence Commission, 2020, p. 1). Crime prevention requires adequate resources, including funding for structures and activities, in order to be sustained. Waller (2014) recommends that crime prevention through social development innovations should receive the equivalent of 10 percent of what is being spent on the criminal justice system in a country or a city. Without a fixed target, prevention gets crowded out by reaction. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM, 2016) has noted that the unsustainable

increases in police and public safety costs to municipalities were “crowding out” early intervention and crime prevention initiatives.

Human Talent

For innovations to be successful, they will require developing **standards and training for human talent** capable of planning and implementing effective solutions (Waller, 2019, p. 121; UN-Habitat, 2019, p. 18; ECOSOC, 2002, par. 18; WHO, 2016; p. 89; Youth Violence Commission, 2020, p. 11, 17).

The World Health Organization published a tool for violence prevention researchers, practitioners, and advocates titled *Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: Taking action and generating evidence*. The manual outlines the nature, magnitude, risks, and consequences of intimate partner and sexual violence, proposes strategies to prevent these forms of violence, and emphasizes the importance of integrating scientific evaluation into all prevention activities in order to expand current knowledge of what works (WHO, 2010). WHO has developed a training course in relation to INSPIRE (2016; 2018).

Córdoba has developed a neighborhood-based strategy where a neighborhood coordinator gets to know the problems and potential solutions and receives special training. With regards to training sessions, the CMNCP has developed an impressive training course on community safety and well-being planning. The Mexican Foundation on Safety and Governance has also developed its training course.

Public Engagement

Lastly, it is crucial to have **public support and engagement** (Waller, 2019, p. 122; UN-Habitat, 2019, p. 14; ECOSOC, 2002, par. 16; Youth Violence Commission, 2020, p. 41). The public can play many roles in applying violence prevention science. They can become mentors, take precautions, and help map crime. They can also be advocates to get the permanent board and funding needed to implement violence prevention strategies. For instance, mothers and parents of at-risk young men tend to be successful actors in effecting change at the local and national levels.

In the *Violence in the metropolis* report, the authors stress the importance of educating and engaging the public to achieve peaceful, resilient, and safer metropolitan areas. However, there is little focus on measuring results, highlighting metropolitan areas that have achieved significant reductions in violence, or calling for adequate and sustained funding for violence prevention initiatives.











Safety Monitor Tool for Successful Implementation

The UN-Habitat Safer Cities program started in the 1990’s with programs in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Dar-es-salaam, and elsewhere in Africa. While the model is based on planning and mobilization of agencies able to tackle the causes, it is not clear the extent to which it succeeded in reducing street crime or gender-based violence.

UN-Habitat is developing its “Urban Safety Monitor” to strengthen evidence-based policy for reducing urban crime, violence, and insecurity. It will expand the stock of knowledge on what makes cities safer for all (UN-Habitat, 2020). WHO and UNICEF have developed a system of monitoring and evaluation that focuses on the proven strategies (UNICEF, 2018).

For cities to be on track to achieving significant reductions in violent crime, they need to measure progress on each of the seven essentials. **Safety Monitor Tool 2** lists the first seven rows as the essentials that have been discussed above. They are posed as questions that are self explanatory.

Safety Monitor Tool 2: Keys for Successful Implementation of Effective Violence Prevention

Safety Monitor Tool: Keys for Successful Implementation of Effective Prevention of Violent Crime		
	1	Does city have an office for violence prevention?
	2	Has city undertaken a planning process to diagnose, plan, implement and evaluate?
	3	Has city explored proven strategies and logic models (see list of prevention tackling causes and using police smartly)?
	4	Is city mobilising sectors able to tackle causes?
	5	Is city investing new sustained funding to tackle causes - equivalent to 10% of police and health responder budgets?
	6	Has city trained officials in prevention planning and achievement?
	7	Has city engaged public, women and minority groups in interventions and awareness?
	8	Is city benefitting from socio-economic reforms likely to impact violence?
	9	Is the city monitoring outcome data, from police, hospital admissions, surveys by age, gender and race?
	10	Has city set measurable targets for performance indicators and outcomes for 2025 and 2030?

In addition, socio-economic policies implemented by governments for other reasons than crime control also have an impact on crime as can be seen from the comparisons between New York City and London as well as Chicago and Toronto, or the long-term reductions in homicides in New York City and Sao Paulo discussed earlier. Row 8 calls attention to shifts in socio-economic reforms. In table 2, we saw the striking differences between the two pairs of cities. The analysis of the trends in New York City from 1990 to 2000 showed that long term socio-economic trends can shift homicide rates significantly. In other words, reductions in unemployment got young people going to university and college to qualify for those jobs. Increases in taxes on alcohol reduced alcohol consumption and, in turn, violence.

Rows 9 and 10 are about the important SDG concern for outcomes to be measurable in order to achieve targets. The data must be a simple portfolio of police data, epidemiological data from hospital admissions, public surveys to measure victimization, and surveys measuring feelings of safety.¹²

Cities with Successful and Partial Implementation

Several cities show that a reduction of 50 percent in violence has been achieved. If these cities have done it, then other cities who want to achieve the reduction goal can do it and maybe learn from the pioneers. The report highlights three successful models from which cities can learn.

For cities with homicide rates equal or below the world average of 6 per 100,000 population, Glasgow has become an important model that is being replicated elsewhere. It also presents a model for cities with higher violence rates as the keys for successful implementation that are used are relevant for other cities, such as those in the US, Latin America, and Africa.

For US cities with high levels of gun violence, Boston is presented as the original model, though it did not sustain its success because it did not have a permanent office for violence prevention. The only sustained funding was for policing. The lobby group that pushed Boston to act on gun violence disappeared once the acute problem went away.

The model for Latin America is Bogota, which demonstrated reductions of 50% over a decade. Glasgow was originally inspired by the promotion of the Bogota model at a World Health Organization meeting in 2005. Bogota intentionally encouraged a lobby group to pressure successive mayors.

For each model, this report highlights some other cities that have succeeded or have started to take actions that are consistent with the essentials for successful implementation. The selection focused on cities that were starting to follow the keys to successful implementation and making use of proven programs. It does not include cities that are only claiming to reduce crime but have not taken serious action.

This section is based on reports, media coverage, and personal exchanges at conferences in different parts of the world, including those organized by UN-Habitat, UNODC, WHO, and networks such as the German Crime Prevention Congress and the European Forum for Urban Safety. Therefore, it is possible that strategies have changed since the analysis. It is also possible that there are other cities that have been

¹² Police data on homicides are reliable in many countries. Coroners data may be better in others. Trends in police statistics for other violent crimes such as robberies and assault are less reliable but still useful. Trends in victims of intentional violence going to hospital emergency rooms and doctors' offices are essential for street violence and violence that is "behind closed doors" like intimate partner and much sexual violence. Victimization surveys including specialized surveys on violence against women, children and disadvantaged minorities, and surveys to measure feelings of community safety. Not all these data are easily available in LMIC but are in reality more important in LMIC as police data are less reliable for many reasons including lower rates of reporting by victims to police. Surveys like the CDC surveys on violence against women and children in LMIC show what is possible.

successful, though success requires a demonstrated significant reduction in violence and the measurement of that important outcome is not yet part of the strategies of most cities.¹³

Glasgow and Low Violence Cities

Glasgow achieved a 50 percent reduction in violent crime and homicides within three years of starting to implement solutions and has sustained further reductions ever since. It established a violence reduction unit (VRU) in 2005, which makes it very different from actions in US cities, but similar to Bogota. Glasgow had achieved a 66 percent reduction between 2005 and 2017, bringing the homicide rate down from 5.6 per 100,000 to 1.9 per 100,000.

The VRU implemented a diagnosis of the city's crime problems and their location and causes. The VRU then instituted the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) to tackle the risk factors identified in the diagnosis. Those efforts took a three-pronged approach similar to Boston's approach, including a "zero-tolerance police warning that, if the violence doesn't stop, life is going to get very tough for every single gang member"; mobilizing the agencies and charities that can support youth with education, training, job-finding if they do renounce violence; and the public was engaged. It came with "a powerful, personal message" from mothers and community members (Waller, 2019, p. 166; Henley, 2011). Whether funding was adequate is not clear, but it was sustained as part of the government policy. They had the training to do the planning.

Leaders of Glasgow's efforts also prioritized measurement of the results. They measured outcomes in terms of fewer acts of violence, not by how many arrests or convictions occurred or did not occur each year (Waller, 2019).

The Glasgow Violence Reduction Unit continues to run today and is being replicated in London and in 18 regions of the UK, because it was recommended as the number one priority by the Youth Violence Commission (2020). The UK government is providing some funding; however, the Youth Violence Commission recommends enhanced funding immediately for a minimum of 10 years. Finally, the YVC (2020) also recommends that VRUs should be given a more ambitious and expansive role, acting as a network to identify and promote the national level policy changes that are equally crucial in securing lasting reductions in violence.

The Cardiff model was started in 1996. Evaluations of the Cardiff Model indicated a 32 percent reduction in police-recorded injuries and a 42 percent reduction in hospital admissions for violence-related injuries within a year. It does an epidemiological analysis of police and hospital data to better understand where violence occurs by combining and mapping data related to violence. It provided the analysis to an existing multi-sectoral committee, including hospitals, law enforcement agencies, public health agencies, and community groups. This group worked together to address violence through collaborative and multi-sectoral strategies. The Cardiff model did not get additional funding but did have sustained funding for government agencies and private sector actions.

This model does an epidemiological analysis of the context of the victimization intentional injuries arriving at a hospital emergency room. The source of these data is one element in their success story. More than half of violent crime goes unreported to police, which undermines the ability of communities to have a

¹³ The senior author is interested in information about developments in these cities and data on other cities where progress is being made

full understanding of violent crime from police data and, in turn, implement adapted solutions (Mercer Kollar, Jacoby, Ridgeway & Summer, 2018).

The Mayor of London established its Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in October 2018. It was inspired by Glasgow and brought together leaders from health, police, local government, probation, and community organizations to tackle violent crime and its underlying causes (City of London, 2019). It has 15 or more staff, including a small research team, and a budget of \$20 million with \$10 million from the city and the remainder from central government.

London is one of 18 VRUs which have been set up in a bid to tackle violent crime across England and Wales. For instance, a new multi-million-dollar taskforce was launched in 2019 to tackle violent crime across Greater Manchester (GMCA, 2019). West Yorkshire launched its Violence Reduction Unit in 2020. The unit has been set up with more than \$5 million following a successful bid by the Office of the Police and Crime Commission for funding from the Home Office's Serious Violence Fund (Police & Crime Commissioner, 2020).

The national government has undertaken a Process Evaluation of the Violence Reduction Units, which was published in August 2020 (Craston, Balfour, Henley, Baxendale, & Fullick, 2020). The evaluation concludes that the VRUs have had positive progress in the first year of their implementation, but that it is still too early to comment on the effectiveness of their interventions. The evaluation suggests conducting mapping exercises to understand local priorities, starting to think about high-risk groups in the community, and considering potential staff and leadership structures for future VRU activities. Finally, consistent with the essentials for effective implementation, the evaluators call on the government to allocate adequate and sustained funding to support the effective implementation of VRU activities, develop guidance to enable more effective data sharing, and to provide guidance to support alignment with existing structures (Craston, Balfour, Henley, Baxendale, & Fullick, 2020, p. 7). With regards to lessons learned, the process evaluation highlighted the importance of stabilizing staff teams and staffing models to ensure long-term sustainability, creating ongoing partnerships and engagement with all relevant sectors, ensuring that interventions are rooted in evidence to meet local priorities, and having clear communication strategies with all stakeholders involved (Craston, Balfour, Henley, Baxendale, & Fullick, 2020, p. 6).

In Canada, initiatives by Waterloo Region and Edmonton have set the pace. In 2008, the Mayor of Edmonton commissioned a Taskforce on Community Safety with the goal of producing an action plan with recommendations and implementation strategies. With a focus on preventative rather than punitive solutions, the goal was to create a long-term community safety strategy with partners that makes Edmonton a safer place for all (City of Edmonton, 2012). The Taskforce recognized the need for systemic change in how social service agencies, police, schools, health care, business, and community members worked together to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of the community.

The community told the Taskforce that a strong "responsibility center" should be established with four vital duties: inspiring leadership, strategic imperative, cultural shift, and integration. The Taskforce made nine comprehensive recommendations that were presented to city council and unanimously approved. It started well as the Province had set up a leadership group to shift funding into proven prevention but unfortunately in 2013, the funding for the leadership group was cut from the base budget.

In Ontario since 2019, every municipality is required to develop a Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan by July 1st, 2021 (Taylor, 2019; Ontario, 2019). Several smaller cities and regions were early adopters of Community Safety and Well-Being Plans. A number of additional communities in

other provinces are starting to develop strategies, including the Cariboo Chilcotin Region (British Columbia), the City of Chilliwack (British Columbia), the City of Halifax (Nova Scotia), and the City of Regina (Saskatchewan).

The process of developing a local Community Safety and Well-Being Plan includes a safety assessment to diagnose risks. This involves data from a variety of sources such as police, hospitals, and surveys as well as consultation with community members and local stakeholders. The diagnosis must determine the selection of prevention strategies, including considering those listed in the safety monitor tool on scientifically proven programs. It also encourages cities to mobilize key sectors who can address the root causes of community safety-related issues. While no training is provided by the province as part of the legislative mandate, a number of communities are receiving training through the Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention, who has trained over 300 individuals since 2017. The planning process also requires identifying indicators and monitoring outcome data. Most cities who are undertaking the development of CSWB plans do not have a specific office for violence prevention and are often not investing new and sustained funding to tackle causes.

In 2017, Cordoba, Argentina started a model strategy similar to Glasgow. The Governor of the Province of Cordoba established a city-wide approach to the prevention of crime centred on neighborhoods. It started with an office for violence prevention that maps the socio-demographic and crime characteristics of neighborhoods and coordinates innovations in social development, urban planning, and community policing. In each neighborhood, there is a coordinator to identify local issues and drive services to solve these problems. To date, Cordoba has introduced a positive parenting program and the coordinators have been trained by the central office.

We can assess the likelihood for success using the safety monitor tool for keys to successful implementations. All have an office for violence prevention and a plan; they use some of the scientifically proven programs and smarter policing; funding may be adequate and much of it sustained, they are hiring persons in key positions with relevant background and using some training; and some engagement of the public.

[Boston and Urban Gun Violence in the USA](#)

From 1990 to 2000, many US cities saw significant decreases in rates of homicide. For instance, rates of homicide per 100,000 for New York City dropped from 31 to 5 and those in Los Angeles went from 28 to 8. Unfortunately, from 2019 to 2020, significant increases occurred. Both New York City and Los Angeles saw increases over 30 percent. Chicago and Philadelphia had larger percentage increases bringing their rates back to levels similar to 1990 of 28 and 31.

A careful evidence-based analysis of the decline in New York City over a decade (from 30 to 9 per 100,000) stresses the importance of increases in jobs, the number of young persons going back to college, increases in taxes on alcohol, and incarceration. It did not have to do with changes in policing like Compstat or Broken Windows (Karmen, 2000).

In Boston, declines were more intentional. Rates went from an average of 44 persons per year murdered in the period of 1991 to 1995, to 15 in 1998; and none of those 15 homicides involved youth gun violence” (Waller, 2019, p. 165). In 2012, it reinvented the same programs with similar success. Boston has no office for violence prevention, which meant that it did not have a comprehensive plan and – despite initial success – violence came back. The mayor got action.

Its strategy used analysis of police data to focus deterrence and arrest those most involved in carrying guns (Kennedy, 2011). It used analysis of public health data to innovate outreach services to, and create jobs for, youth at risk of using handguns (Prothrow & Styth, 2006; 2019). It used a logic model of taking actions that were likely to reduce violence. Boston was not using proven strategies, though evaluations of its focused deterrence strategy were shown to be effective (Brage et al., 2019; Waller, 2019).

Boston mobilized policing and social service sectors, but not additional key sectors such as schools. Its funding was solely project-based and therefore, was not sustained. Furthermore, Boston did not train officials. With regards to public engagement, it involved mothers and others. It may have benefitted from some socio-economic improvements. It monitored youth homicide data but did not set targets. Boston did not sustain the process and had to reinvent it a decade later.

Boston's approach has inspired other initiatives and joined with momentum around Cure Violence to some success. The clearest example is Oakland, where homicides dropped from 32 per 100,000 in 2012 to 17 in 2019. CrimeSolutions.gov has rated the combination of focused deterrence and community outreach in Oakland as effective in reducing gang related shootings by 20 percent. The main strategy is called the Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS) which focuses on the small group of young men primarily involved in using guns in violence. It got some project funding and trained the key implementers. However, it did not engage the public beyond how they were already engaged and did not benefit from socio-economic reforms. With regards to performance measurement, Boston and Oakland monitored homicides and shootings but did not set targets. Boston reduced nonfatal gun assaults by 55% (Abt, 2019a, p. 89).

Recently, Oakland has created an office for violence prevention at the same level as the police department in the city hierarchy. It did not undertake a comprehensive planning process, though it has undertaken safety diagnoses to identify local community safety priorities and addressing social determinants of health and risk factors that may lead to violence.

Richmond created an Office for Neighborhood Safety (ONS) that identified the men and boys at risk for being the worst offenders and reached out to them, offering them a stipend rather than a job to turn their lives around. The amount, which ranged up to \$1,000 per month, depends upon the young man's progress following a "life map" of personal and professional goals, including staying out of trouble (ONS, 2009; Waller, 2019).

Stockton achieved a homicide reduction from a rate of 24 in 2012 to 8 in 2019. It is not possible to know to what extent these reductions were due to intentional policies such as outreach to youth or cash transfers, focused deterrence, or indeed the existence of an office for neighborhood safety.

New mayors elected after 2015 are shifting the discourse towards public health strategies and community policing to end street violence. The justification for these strategies is that violence will be prevented and contained not only by the efforts of law enforcement, but also by its health, housing availability, employment opportunities, educational quality, recreational outlets, the physical conditions in the community, and resident involvement. Some are appealing to State and Federal government sources for funding. They do not focus on parenting and early childhood.

In 2017, the mayor of New York City created its Office to Prevent Gun Violence. Though the city has low rates of gun violence by US standards, it wanted to do better. The Office is the backbone of city-wide efforts to increase safety. It coordinates anti-gun violence initiatives, amplifies community-based intervention and prevention services, and introduces technological solutions to prevent gun violence. The

office has six staff, including an Executive Director, a Director of Financial Planning, and Community Coordinators. The Office has offered small grants to incentivize resident leaders and organizations to promote peace in communities, has developed a Public Safety Toolkit, and created an Anti-Gun Violence Film Series. It is evaluating outcomes from programs, such as its Crisis Management System and Wrap Around Supportive Systems.

In 2016, the new mayor of Baltimore began a comprehensive set of violence and crime reduction strategies. The *Violence Reduction Update* Report (Pugh, 2017) identifies four overarching goals: 1. Making Baltimore Safe by strengthening the BPD and increasing its community engagement; 2. Keeping Baltimore Healthy by expanding resources and opportunities for people in need; 3. Engaging Baltimore Youth by giving young people additional paths for achievement with investments in education and community programs and; 4. Moving Baltimore Forward by increasing jobs and providing business opportunities with significant focus on neighborhoods (Pugh, 2017).

In 2019, the new mayor of Chicago pledged to combat gun violence, particularly for the South and West Sides, “where bullet holes can outnumber potholes and guns can be easier to find than a job” (Freskos, 2019). She carved out a public safety office to elevate public health approaches to curbing violence and stacked her administration with experts on community-based violence prevention programs and police reform (Freskos, 2019). The 3-year plan treats violence as a public health crisis with actions to empower and heal, protect and secure places, and improve policing. The plan recognizes underlying systems of inequality and racism that fuel social issues, including the increase in violence. It also includes a component to monitor progress.

In 2019, the new mayor of Dallas wanted violence reduction goals to be more aggressive with performance measurement indicators (Jaramillo, 2020). He formed a Task Force on Safe Communities to identify solutions to reduce violent crime, using proven strategies driven by data and supported by communities elsewhere. The key priorities included several that have evidence to back their effectiveness, including hiring and training violence interrupters to prevent conflicts from escalating into gun violence, utilizing schools to deliver group support that teaches kids to pause before they act, restoring blighted buildings and abandoned lots in high violence locations, and adding outdoor lighting where violence has been most severe during the night (Mayor’s Task Force on Safe Communities, 2019).

In January 2019, the mayor of Philadelphia accepted the recommendations of The Philadelphia Roadmap to Safer Communities “that incorporates and aligns intelligence-based and community-oriented policing with targeted social services and community empowerment” (City of Philadelphia, 2019, p. 4). They recognize that they cannot police their way out of this problem, nor is there any magic solution or one program alone that can solve this issue. It engaged many to reflect the needs and hopes of the neighborhoods and individuals most affected by community gun violence, particularly young men of color between the ages of 16 to 34 (City of Philadelphia, 2019). Philadelphia is “taking a public health approach to gun violence” by addressing the physical and programmatic inequities that exist in the communities at the highest risk of violence and investing in intelligence-based and community-oriented policing (City of Philadelphia, 2019, p. 15).

We can assess the likelihood for success using the safety monitor tool for keys to successful implementations. Some of the mayors have created an office for violence prevention; some had a plan proposed by a task force with some input from scientifically proven programs and smarter policing; one

insisted on performance measures; none have adequate and sustained funding, and only few hire or train coordinators for implementing planned actions.

Generally, they are a small step in the right direction that falls far short of robust programs to reduce violent street crime by 50%. Unfortunately, the investments are inadequate to the task of significant reductions.

[Bogota and Violent Cities in Latin America](#)

In 1992, Antanas Mockus was elected mayor of Bogotá in Colombia. In that year, there were 4,452 murders. By 2001 and two different mayors later, the number of murders had been reduced to 1,993. Mockus took the actions that ECOSOC recommends for governments (Waller, 2006; 2019). He set up a crime prevention office to analyze why and where Bogotá had so many murders and to propose solutions. The analysis led the city to programs controlling access to alcohol and guns as well as to persuading victims of violence not to retaliate (Siddons, 2018).

How could this program last through the three administrations with different political philosophies? The answer is that Mockus encouraged a constituency of mothers who wanted their sons to live and this group lobbied to keep the violence prevention programs in place in successive elections (Waller, 2019). The Bogota model had a unit established to analyse the epidemiology of homicides in 1992, which led to actions to control firearms, alcohol, and revenge killings. The unit was continued through three different mayors and demonstrated a 50% reduction in homicides over ten years.

Bogota has sustained the process and the reductions. Coahuila, Recife, and Diadema all have some elements of the Bogota model and were successful in achieving significant reductions in violent crime. For instance, Coahuila achieved a 70 percent reduction between 2012 and 2018. Ciudad Juarez involved a different model and achieved a 92 percent reduction between 2010 and 2015.

Diadema in Brazil reduced rates of homicide from 100 per 100,000 in 2000 to 34 per 100,000 by 2004 (Waller, 2019). Their strategy included targeting. At the turn of the century, the mayor of Diadema established a public safety and social justice group to look at how to address the loss of life to violence in Diadema. They recruited an academic institute to analyze the situation. The results of the study showed that one of the main causes of the high number of homicides in Diadema was alcohol abuse (Duailibi, Ponicki, Grube, Pinsky, Laranjeira and Raw, 2007). Diadema passed a law to restrict the availability of alcohol after 23:00 (Ley Seca [Dry Law]), and police strictly enforced the law. As in Bogotá, there was also significant public support for the law, with members of the public reporting violations (Duailibi et al., 2007; Waller, 2019).

In 2000, Recife in Brazil had a homicide rate of 97 per 100,000 and was considered the most dangerous state capital in Brazil. In 2012, this rate dropped to 52 homicides per 100,000 (Waiselfisz, 2012). The program called Pact for Life began in 2007 – the year before the reduction in homicide in the City of Recife. Sixteen technical groups were put together and organized by issue, where experts, academics, civil society advocates and federal, state and municipal public managers discussed issues relevant to each area. Based on this discussion they drafted intervention projects, following a standardized model (Ratton, Galvao, & Fernandez, 2014). The Pact for Life involves “138 projects grouped along six lines of structuring actions: qualified repression, institutional improvement, information and knowledge management, training and capacity, social prevention of crime and violence, and democratic management” (Pereira, Mota, & Andresen). These programs include investments in policing and holistic treatment with the engagement of multiple sectors.

Coahuila, Mexico implemented a strategy to prevent alcohol-related tragedies. In 2012, this state adopted a special law to control the sale and consumption of alcohol, which was enforced by the police. The law resulted in “the confiscation of 37,000 liters of alcohol, the closure of 1,600 establishments, and 30,000 arrests for public consumption of alcohol” (Waller, 2019, p. 175). Not only did the law reduce traffic crashes, but it resulted in more than 70 percent fewer homicides related to alcohol and to 70 percent fewer street gang-related homicides (UNODC and Government of Coahuila, 2017; Waller, 2019).

Guadalajara has a mayor committed to reducing rates of homicide, street violence and violence against women. With help from UN Habitat, it has undertaken an important diagnosis using a mapping system it adopted from Rotterdam. It has involved the public in consultations. At this point, it has not gone the important step of reviewing programs that have been effective or mobilized the different sectors, such as schools and health to invest in proven or logical programs.

We can assess the likelihood for success using the safety monitor tool for keys to successful implementations. All have an office for violence prevention and a plan with a diagnosis; some are using scientifically proven programs and smarter policing but unfortunately some are not yet; funding is not yet balanced between tackling causes and smarter policing with the latter an issue often of pay scales and calibre of policing; they are not hiring enough persons in key positions with relevant background and using training to increase human talent; and are somewhat engaging of the public.

Compelling Case for Investment in Prevention

The compelling case for investing in proven prevention strategies has two components. The first is that many lives can be saved, many women and children protected, and many tragedies prevented by investing in innovations that are effective and cost-effective. The second is that reducing violence generates economic activity and investment and, in turn, growth in gross domestic product, particularly in high violence countries in Africa and Latin America.

For the equivalent of 10 percent of what is spent on police, courts and incarceration, Waller argues that we can reduce the number of victims of violent crime by 50 percent and increase GDP by much more than the original investment (Waller, 2019). Less violence means growth in business activity, and in low- and middle-income countries, will lead to growth of several percentage points in GDP. In turn this reduction could lead to reductions in the police, hospital, court, and incarceration system, thus saving taxes.

The costs of reaction have been escalating and crowding out early intervention and prevention. The science shows in national surveys and opinion polls that the public and families of victims want prevention (Waller, 2019). It is a practical proposition as we have seen that some cities have achieved these reductions in the UK, US, and Latin America. Politicians get elected on the promise of reducing crime by tackling causes alongside the status quo - tough on crime, tough on causes. It is logical as over time it will not only save lives but taxes.

Public pressure to get actions that save lives and stop violence have been growing, particularly in the USA. March for our lives, #MeToo and Black Lives Matter are all calling for victimization prevention. Some of this public pressure is increased by movements on social media.

Governments have increased expenditures on reactive security which too often threatens the human rights of suspect and offenders without reducing impunity. It diverts scarce resources from investment in health care, education, and economic development. In the US, there has been a longstanding movement

against the overuse of incarceration and importantly the drop in violent crime in New York City has gone along with a significant decrease in incarceration. The movement to defund the police in North America includes arguments that some funds can be better spent than on more policing (Vitale, 2018).

Cities and governments should be able to save tax dollars by investing in proven prevention practices, rather than investing in costly reactive measures such as policing, courts, and corrections. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2015) and other such institutions have analyzed the social returns from different investments in prevention initiatives. Generally, the social return on investment is up to \$18 per dollar invested (CMNCP, 2016c).

The Youth Violence Commission recommends that VRUs should receive enhanced funding immediately, accompanied by funding projections for a minimum of 10 years. Regional VRUs have been given insufficient, short-term funding (2020). In Chicago, Creating Real Economic Destiney (CRED) and partners called for an investment equivalent to 10% of the police budget (Chicago CRED, 2020). The Inter-American Development Bank completed a seminal analysis to show that violence could be reduced, and money saved across Latin America and the Caribbean (Serrano, 2018). This report provides a compelling case for its region that is just as true for other regions.

Too often in Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC), the security forces are not well trained, organized or equipped and certainly not well paid. The failure to use evidence-based successes in Brazil, for instance, allows over 60,000 homicides each year, and another 10,000 persons are killed by security forces (Muggah, 2019). In the US, one thousand persons are killed by police close to five percent of persons killed because of common crime.

The World Bank (2011) has drawn attention to another cost because of the dangers of violence to democracy. The lack of use of violence prevention science and effective strategies to curb violence have led to destabilization of governments.

Government Support for Cities

European Governments

Cities are the order of government most able to collaborate with local agencies and neighborhoods to identify the needs for service and so tackle the multiple causes of crime in their areas most in need. Most countries in Western Europe have realized this. Unfortunately, their financial support is not enough to gain the significant prevention dividend of saved lives, protected women and children, or growth in GDP.

In the summer of 2019, the Home Office in the UK announced that 18 Police and Crime Commissioners in the areas most affected by violent crime would share £35 million to establish Violence Reduction Units (VRU) similar to Glasgow. The cost of running the 18 regional VRUs for 10 years is £350 million. The costs associated with serious violence between young people are £10 billion over the next 10 years. The VRUs would need to reduce youth violence by a mere 3 percent to be cost-effective, and serious violence more generally by less than 1 percent (Youth Violence Commission, 2020).

The CDC evaluation of the Cardiff model showed it saved over \$19 in criminal justice costs and nearly \$15 in health system costs for every dollar spent (Mercer Kollar, Jacoby, Ridgeway & Summer, 2018).

Belgium provides municipalities with \$5 per citizen for community safety planning and action (CMNCP, 2009). Indeed, Belgium has nearly 20 years of experience of requiring municipalities to develop a

comprehensive community safety strategy, which is the basis for a contract between the municipality and their federal government. It created a central crime prevention centre that contracts with cities to develop an analysis or audit of the crime problem, develop a plan to tackle it, implement and then evaluate the plan (CMNCP, 2016d). In the past few decades, the Belgian Council of Ministers approved hundreds of programs targeting at-risk populations and communities. Through evaluations of these initiatives, they conclude that they have met over 90% of the project objectives but it is not yet clear how much crime has been reduced as national programs do not have an easy way of comparing the innovation with the status quo (CMNCP, 2016d).

In 1986, France supported six of its cities to pioneer comprehensive community safety strategies. By 2014, almost every municipality had some form of community crime prevention council undertaking plans. Today, France continues national support for these multi-sectoral strategies. This includes the *Stratégie nationale de prévention de la délinquance* (2015), a detailed action plan and a multisectoral strategy aiming to improve public safety by targeting at-risk youth, violence against women, and reducing fear of crime (CMNCP, 2016).

US Federal Support for Cities

In the US, federal funding for the prevention of violence has been “insufficient, unfocused, and sometimes harmful, contributing to (extraordinary) rates of mass incarceration” (Giffords Law Center, 2020, p. 1).

Recently, the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) has funded hospital-based violence intervention services. Nine programs in New Jersey have been funded out of \$30 million in VOCA funds. This means VOCA is embracing victimization prevention as well as victim assistance and rights after victimization. It has advanced funding and services for victims of crime, particularly state and local programs of victim assistance and compensation, by using fines on rich federal offenders some of whom are corporations who have paid fines of over \$1 billion dollars (Office for Victims of Crime, 2002).

Funds from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program and the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) could also be used to fund more community-based organization that are implementing public healthy strategies to reduce violence, rather than focusing on prosecution of gun possession and offenses that exacerbate mass incarceration. An Office on Community Violence (modeled after the Office on Violence Against Women) would direct grants to communities, build technical assistance capacity, and set a research agenda for the community violence field and help disseminate best practices (Giffords Law Center, 2020).

The Reverse Mass Incarceration Act introduced in 2019 would provide incentives for states that reduce crime and incarceration at the same time. This is based on a 2015 proposal by the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law (2019). Just as the federal government once encouraged states to incarcerate, the aim of this bill is to encourage them to reduce incarceration while keeping crime rates down. According to the bill, “states would be eligible to apply for federal grants if the total number of people behind bars in the state decreased by 7 percent or more in three years, and there is no substantial increase in the overall crime rate within the state”.

US States Support for Cities

There are concrete ways state leaders could support and scale community-driven solutions that have a real and lasting impact on saving lives from gun violence while also generating cost savings for taxpayers and lifting communities.

In Massachusetts, a state-wide initiative is cutting violence and incarceration rates by offering critical services to the young men most likely to pick up a gun, providing non-violent alternatives, and saving taxpayers seven dollars for each dollar invested. Between 2010 and 2015, gun homicide rates in the state fell by 35 percent, while gun homicide rates nationally increased 14 percent during that same period (Waller, 2019).

In Connecticut, the state-wide gun homicide rate fell by 16 percent in the same period. In addition, violence rates have dropped by more than 50 percent in three of Connecticut's major cities since 2011, with help from a state-funded violence intervention program that brings together a powerful partnership of law enforcement officers, community members, and social service providers. At a total cost of less than \$1 million per year, "this program has prevented shootings while generating an annual savings of \$7 million" (Waller, 2019, p. 144).

Meanwhile, in the State of New York, gun homicide rates fell 23 percent in those years. With the number of evidence-based violence reduction programs increasing in the state – programs funded and coordinated in part by the state – New York gun violence rates continue to plunge, especially in New York City. Interestingly, the state's \$20 million investment in its gun violence reduction effort pales in comparison to the overall cost of gun violence in New York State – an estimated \$5.6 billion per year. According to Waller (2019, p. 144), "increasing the \$20 million investment likely would increase the reductions in gun violence even further".

In May 2020, Joe Biden released his plan for Black America. This includes a focus on addressing the daily acts of gun violence that disproportionately impact communities of color. Biden promises to create a \$900 million, eight-year initiative to fund evidence-based interventions in 40 cities across the country – the 20 cities with the highest number of homicides, and 20 cities with the highest number of homicides per capita. This proposal is estimated to save more than 12,000 lives over the eight-year program (Biden, 2020).

[Development Funding in Latin America and Africa](#)

The [Inter-American Development Bank](#) showed upstream and smart investments could be used to reduce violence and save money (Serrano, 2018). Some actions have started in Costa Rica and Mexico to support cities in their actions to reduce violence. Overseas development agencies have also funded some projects, but no overarching program or model has developed yet. The World Bank has provided some significant support to the Province of Cordoba. Overseas development agencies from countries such as The Netherlands and Sweden have funded some modest projects in African cities.

[UN Sustainable Development Goal 17 on Implementation](#)

When world leaders committed to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, they committed to SDG17 to "strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development". This is an SDG that is about the implementation of all the SDGs, including 5.2, 16.1 and 16.2.

Some of these reinforce essentials for successful implementation already identified above but puts them in the context of governments and other financial support. For instance, SDG 17 calls for support for national plans (target 17.9), points to access to science, technology, and innovation (target 17.6), stresses the issues of adequate and sustained financial support from governments in rich countries and from a variety of sources in LMIC, and looks to public, public-private, and civil society partnerships (target 17.17). Furthermore, it points to targeted capacity building (target 17.9) and stresses the issues of data monitoring and accountability (target 17.18).

Transformation from Punishment to Saving Lives

We have seen that there are evidence-based strategies that would achieve the significant reductions in homicide, violent crime, gender-based violence, and violence against children. These require investment in tackling causes and using policing more smartly. This requires a transformation from the status quo. We have the science. We have the keys to successful implementation. Now we need the decisive action.

Raising Awareness and Developing Human Capacity

We need to shift from the status quo based on punishment of disadvantaged offenders to a prevention agenda based on saving lives, protecting women and children, generating jobs, and investing in the futures of young, disadvantaged men. The challenge is to change status quo political culture that pays more for more of the same does not save lives or protect women and children to using evidence to invest in saving lives and protect women – victimization prevention.

As highlighted above, we know many solutions that have been proven effective to prevent violence and victimization. A key challenge is to share these solutions and their benefits with the public and decision-makers. Several organizations are actively working to spread the word, and there is an opportunity to build on their commitment and momentum created by campaigns and agencies across the world by interesting them in the evidence and cost benefit arguments.

This shift requires interesting traditional media in the evidence but also using the influential social media tools with campaigns, videos, webinars and more. Events at the UN such as the UNODC quinquennial congress also provide opportunities for evidence to be shared.

Moreover, there is an opportunity to build on the commitment of the communities of practice and violence prevention networks presented at the beginning of the article to spread the word. The Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention, for example, delivers crime prevention training sessions to municipal staff and decisions-makers from cities across Canada. The interactive training provides learners with information, skills, and capacity in comprehensive community safety strategies and upstream crime prevention. A key goal of the training is to teach participants to identify, select, adopt, and implement evidence-based and promising prevention programs. The Peace in Our Cities Campaign is also spreading the word by sharing a statement of solidarity, developing press releases, and encouraging members to communicate their commitment to halving violence by 2030.

Managing Job Security

This transformation requires a new way of thinking and implies shifts in employment within the status quo. Policing accounts for many of the jobs in the status quo of the criminal justice system. The fairest way to transition from a punishment to a prevention framework is to halt the hiring of new officers (except for gender). Criminal courts in many countries are hopelessly overburdened with justice delay, so reductions in cases may soften this problem. Lawyers will be able to shift their practice towards similar specialties as well as other non-criminal related fields. The need for prison staff, particularly in the USA, will also be lessened. Some of this can be managed through retirement, while other individuals will require new training in other fields.

Conclusion

UNODC said that unless the international community takes decisive steps, targets under Sustainable Development Goal 16 to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates by 2030 will not be met (UNODC, 2019).

The stakes are big. A 50 percent reduction saves a quarter of a million fewer persons murdered each year as well as fifteen million fewer women raped and up to half a billion fewer children who are victims of violence. It will also increase GDP in low- and middle-income countries by several percentage points. Success in cities will contribute to more than half of these reductions and increases in employment.

This report is written for city, regional, and national politicians who want to take decisive action now to reduce violent crime in cities by 50 percent and sustain those reductions through 2030 and beyond. Political leaders are committed to significant reductions in violent crime. In 2015, they called for these reductions by 2030 as part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. A small but growing group of mayors want to achieve a 50 percent reduction by 2030.

Solid prevention science identifies actions where violent crime has been reduced by 50 percent better than the status quo. The actions require new investments such as improving youth engagement, support for parents and early years, changing male attitudes to violence, mitigating financial stress, and improving the physical environment. They also require a shift in the use of current police resources such as diverting critical incidents to other services, victim orientation and restorative justice, enforcing alcohol and gun regulations, problem solving in hotspots, and focused deterrence in partnerships. These key evidence-based programs can be listed in a safety monitor tool so that decision makers can monitor whether cities are using evidence-based programs known to have reduced violent crime.

The likelihood of achieving reductions in violence across a city is about much more than evidence-based programs. The keys to successful implementation can be reduced to whether cities are using ten metrics. Cities must have leadership from a high-level office to plan and spearhead action by sectors able to tackle causes. The planning must be inspired by evidence-based programs, organized by qualified planners and implementers, supported by adequate and sustained funding, and engaging the public. It must focus on getting measurable results. These can be listed in the safety monitor tool on keys to successful implementation.

We have some examples of cities in Europe, the US, and Latin America, that have achieved a 50 percent reduction in violent crime, which confirms that this goal is achievable. Some other cities are beginning to be inspired by these successes but need to go much further guided by the safety monitor tool on Key Evidence Based Programs and Keys for Successful Implementation.

The logic is compelling that the goals of significant reductions in violent crime will be achieved by the shift to investment using evidence-based programs and keys for successful implementation. Making the shift is feasible as cities are showing. It is popular as surveys show. Decision makers are elected who balance both the status quo and the shift in investment in reduction, but success is important. Pressure groups and influential partners are calling for a just transition for persons from working in the status quo of the current system.

The actions for cities to reduce violent crime by 50 percent by 2030 require a shift by cities and financial support from governments and intergovernmental agencies now, including:

1. Cities must implement actions now inspired by *scientifically proven programs* (see Safety Monitor Tool 1)
2. Cities must use keys to *successful implementation* to achieve measurable goals (see Safety Monitor Tool 2)
3. Governments must support cities with investments proportionate to savings in costs of both victimization and the status quo
4. Governments must support professional development so that the human capacity will make the transition to successful implementation of effective violence prevention
5. Governments must raise awareness among decision makers and the public of the benefits of reducing victimization significantly and its benefits to peaceful governance and growth in GDP.

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