Poverty alleviation and urban violence prevention: Exploring the impact of the Community Work Programme on urban violence

Malose Langa, and David Bruce
(Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation)
Structure of my presentation

• CSVR – non-governmental organisation
• Research background
• Benefits of CWP
• Challenges of CWP
• Concluding remarks
The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR)

- CSVR is an NGO that works to build reconciliation, democracy and a human rights culture and prevent violence in South Africa and in other countries in Africa. NGO
- Established in 1989.
- Offices in Johannesburg in Cape Town.
Research in Kagiso - background

- CSVR and Wits Society Work and Development Institute (SWOP) published report the ‘The Smoke that Calls’ in 2011.
- Report provides seven case studies, 6 dealing with communities affected by collective violence
  - Not just issues of ‘service delivery’ (root causes).
- The 7th case study deals with a community called Bokfontein in North West - community suffers from ‘lack of basic services’ but no collective violence.
- Research in Bokfontein finds that the Community Work Programme (CWP) was key in ensuring the communities resilience against violence.
Community Work Programme (CWP) is government’s programme to alleviate poverty and unemployment through providing work opportunities to unemployed individuals.

- Participatory in its orientation.
- Employment Safety net
- 8 days per month and earn R67 rand per day
Some of the CWP projects
CWP project
Some of CWP projects
Benefits of CWP:

– Work: cleaning, food for those in need, home based care, support to schools.
– Social cohesion – more networks of support between people in each ward
– Incomes mean families are better able to raise children
– Environmental change (clean streets)
– Community development
Challenges of CWP

• No proper reference committee = no proper community leadership and accountability

• Councillors and ward committees main influence on CWP in each ward - sometimes problems of favouritism and nepotism in recruitment

• Many community members – lack understanding of CWP and have negative attitudes towards it
  – However many people in community look down on the CWP.
  – Many young people, even if unemployed, often reject idea of working in CWP.
  – Also CWP seen as not suitable for men.
Concluding remarks

– We anticipate that the CWP may enhance social cohesion by increasing socialization, social capital and the capacity to care

– In turn, social cohesion may have an impact on interpersonal violence by enhancing the community’s capacity to exert social control over violence.
Concluding remarks

• CWP was largely channeling resources to women many of whom have young children. In doing so it channels resources to the people who are most likely to use these resources to the benefit of their families. There is a possible crime prevention benefit in that this may support a sustainable and stable family environment for raising children. As a result crime prevention benefits of CWP should not simply be equated with participation of young men.
The end

THANKS YOU