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ACTIONING SOCIAL INTERVENTIONS IN JAMAICA'S NATIONAL CONSENSUS ON CRIME

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAMP	Child Abuse Mitigation Project
CBP	community-based policing
CRP	Community Renewal Programme
CSJP	Citizen Security and Justice Programme
ICRP	Inner City Renewal Programme
JCF	Jamaican Constabulary Force
PMI	Peace Management Initiative
PNVCC	National Plan for Community Policing by Quadrants (Colombia)
PPP	public-private partnership
SOE	state of emergency
STAE	Sacred Tribe Atahualpa of Ecuador
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
UPPs	Pacifying Police Units programme (Brazil)
UWI	University of the West Indies
VIs	Violence Interrupters
VPA	Violence Prevention Alliance
ZOSO	zone of special operations



INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the new millennium, successive Jamaican governments – both those formed by the Jamaica Labour Party and the People’s National Party – have devoted considerable political capital and resources to reducing the high and chronic levels of violence and crime in the country.

In October 2019, the government, opposition, civil society and the private sector agreed to develop a National Consensus on Crime to support Jamaica’s transformation into a safe, secure and investment-friendly society that can deliver development to all of its people. The Consensus, signed in August 2020, has brought a spirit of cautious optimism to the discourse, as well as reflecting the recognition that major policy changes needed to be agreed upon by both political parties if implementation is to be sustained over time. But it will be the responsibility of the present government, with the electoral mandate with which it was charged in September 2020, to realize this potential and make tangible the transformation.

Since 2018, a portion of the Jamaican population have been living under protracted states of emergency (SOEs) and in zones of special operations (ZOSOs). These curtail constitutional rights and allow security personnel to impose curfews and cordons; conduct searches of people and property; and detain and arrest citizens where ‘there are reasonable grounds to believe that due to rampant criminality, gang warfare, escalating violence and murder and the threat to the rule of law and public order, it is necessary to do so’.¹

▲
View of Kingston, Jamaica. Since 2018, parts of the country’s population have been living under states of emergency and in zones of special operations in the name of security. © Valery Sharifulin/TASS via Getty Images



In Jamaica, a sustainable reduction in violence can be achieved through both law enforcement reform, and social and community programmes. © David Danelo

Although the SOEs were lifted in the months leading up to the 2020 election, it is broadly accepted that this level of militarized intervention will continue to be required in the short to medium term. The primary issue that the re-elected government will now have to address is how to achieve a sustainable exit from the SOEs and to allow a return to civilian policing.

Decades-long experience of police reform in Jamaica has shown that developing an effective, professional Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF) capable of shouldering this challenge is not exclusively a technical process, but also a profoundly political endeavour – and the fact that the new government will be empowered by the new bipartisan Consensus is an important step.

To achieve this, addressing corruption and promoting accountability will remain critical priorities, given that shortcomings in both these endeavours undermine both the integrity of the police force and broader investigations into serious and organized crime. However, the Consensus rightly recognizes that in addition to police reform, there are other issues and approaches that are crucial to ensuring a sustainable reduction in violence in the country.

Lessons learned from examples around the world show that responding in a successful way to crime and violence can be by no means the sole domain of the criminal-justice and security sphere. Living in an intergenerational cycle of chronic violence affects every aspect of human, social and civic development. The dynamics of contemporary violence may have their roots in the legacies of social and political conflict, poverty, marginalization, inequality and injustice – and these issues must also be addressed if the drivers and enablers of crime and violence are to be quashed, and long-term peace and development to be found. In this regard, Jamaica is no exception.

Purpose of the paper

The National Consensus on Crime provides a detailed, though not comprehensive, set of actions to implement the priorities and principles it sets out. These are focused predominantly on legislative and criminal-justice reform; meanwhile, however, the broader framework of actions to address the enabling environment and drivers of crime remains undefined.

In addition to the security and justice principles, the Consensus states that 'priority must be given to social and community programmes'. Here, the specific focus is on six areas:

1. Community regeneration.
2. Reordering gender norms for peaceful coexistence.
3. Paying special attention to at-risk and unattached youth.
4. Ensuring that children attend school and are engaged after school.
5. Providing jobs and opportunities for youth.
6. Embedding policing within the community as the core approach of the JCF.²

There is little detail, however, in the document about how these six points will be achieved, and no mention of decisions, priorities or action areas for taking these stated priorities forward. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to offer a response to the Consensus, and to propose a means by which the six priority areas can be actioned.

Jamaica does have ongoing initiatives with components that address these areas. The Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP), for example, has been running for several years, implementing a range of activities intended to reduce risk levels of at-risk and unattached youth; to increase their readiness for and access to jobs and to create other opportunities for youth; and to correct antisocial behaviours. Although the evidence and evaluations are limited, this paper briefly outlines and considers some of Jamaica's experiences with social and community approaches and activities.

There are also lessons that can be considered and applied from the international experience of attempting to achieve similar goals in addressing crime and violence, and how the two phenomena interact. For example, global experience suggests that a number of these social interventions are overlapping and mutually reinforcing. For example, a focus on gender norms for peaceful coexistence will, in turn, address some of the challenges of at-risk youth, as will school enrolment and enrichment activities.

The paper is intended to provide an initial framework for discussion and debate among interested and concerned Jamaican stakeholders about the six priority areas. It draws on the experience and evidence base for responses to organized crime and gang violence from a global perspective, as well as recommendations from recent studies conducted by regional universities and Caribbean think tanks.

The paper benefits from information provided by two expert-group meetings that were held in November 2020, in which 25 Jamaican and non-Jamaican experts and practitioners reviewed the key findings of the report and offered the additional benefits of their experience. It is structured to:

1. Present the **Jamaican experience followed by an international case study** in each of the six areas of social intervention prioritized by the Consensus, highlighting key lessons learned from those experiences as well as the expert-group consultations.
2. Consider **indicators to measure progress** in social interventions.
3. Draw together an easy-to-access set of the **10 overarching principles** that can be used as tools to respond to chronic violence, drawn from the Jamaican context and global best practices.

Responding in a successful way to crime and violence can be by no means the sole domain of the criminal-justice and security sphere.



EXAMINING VIOLENT CRIME IN JAMAICA AND PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSES

▲
Jamaica's high homicide rate
is attributed predominantly to
gangs. © Shaun Swingler

Jamaica has the highest homicide rate among the English-speaking Caribbean countries, and it is more than three times greater than the average for Latin America and the Caribbean and seven times higher than the global rate, as identified in the UNODC Global Homicide Report 2019.³ Despite some 20 years of investment on the part of successive Jamaican governments, there has been no appreciable or sustainable improvement in the murder rate (see Figure 1).

Since the late 1960s, the high homicide rates, as well as other forms of violence, have been attributed predominantly to gang activities. Street gangs – or 'pos-ses', as they are known locally – have been responsible for an estimated 70% or more of murders committed in Jamaica in the past half a century. The highly fragmented nature of gang composition has led to frequent violent competition, incursions and reprisals between rival groups.⁴



Over the past decade, Jamaica has undertaken a number of social and community interventions to address crime. Above, a 'Violence Interrupter' – responsible for reducing crime in the area – in St. James, a suburban parish in the north-west of the country. © David Danelo

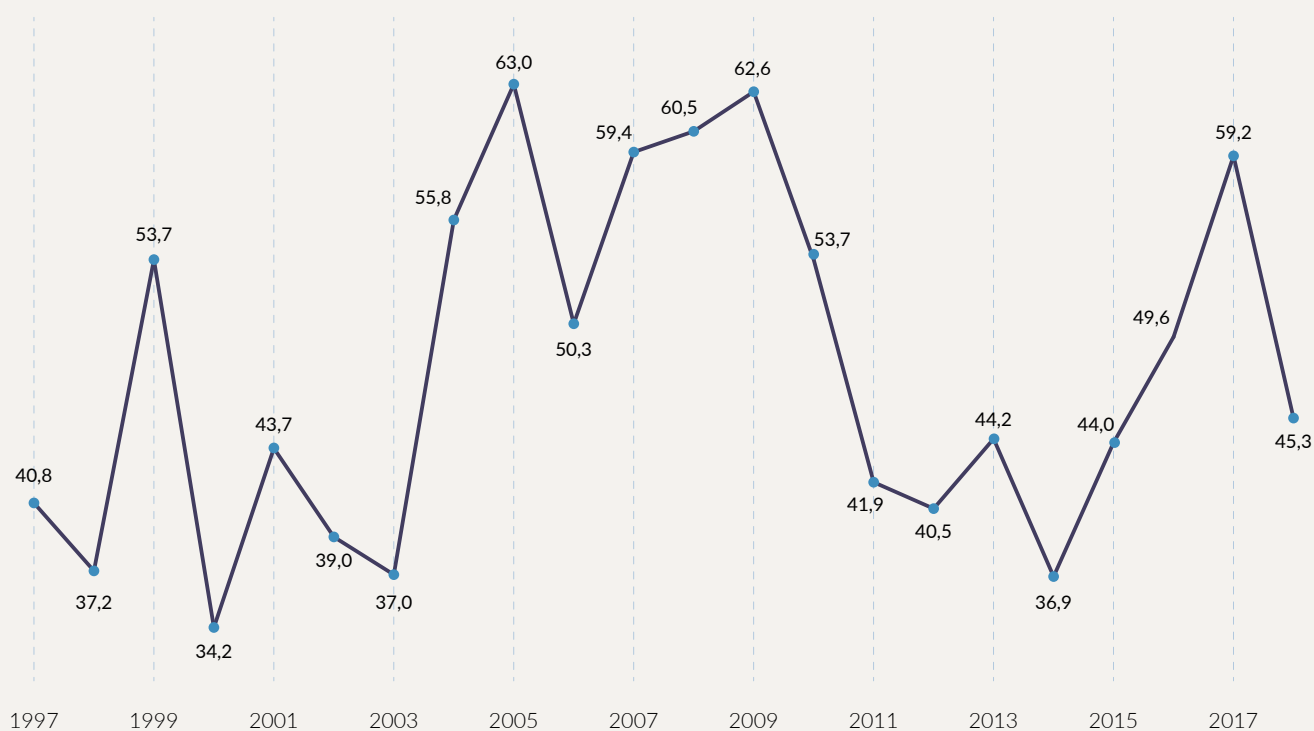


FIGURE 1 National homicide rate, Jamaica (1997–2018).

Note: The values shown are intentional murders per 100 000 inhabitants.

SOURCE: JCF Statistics and Information Unit.

The gang phenomenon and typologies

The government estimates that there are 381 gangs in the country, though the composition changes frequently, with that total gang membership standing at approximately 9 000 people (it should be noted that the figure has not been updated since 2017).⁵ Estimating the number of gangs and their membership in Jamaica has long been a contentious issue because of the once sweeping approach used by the police to ‘scrape up’ people in inner communities and bring them to police stations for processing. Anyone rounded up in that process would be attributed as a gang member, thus potentially swelling the 9 000 estimate.

Unlike certain other countries that have identified group criminality as a problem, Jamaica does not conduct annual gang surveys in order to better inform appropriate interventions that would influence gang membership and disrupt gang violence. The only database on gangs in the country is produced by the JCF, and it is not subject to oversight at either the police divisional or parish level,⁶ so there is limited capacity to verify the numbers or to gain a more nuanced understanding of gang prevalence. Other studies using qualitative assessments suggest that core gang members represent between 2.5–5% of the population of the garrison communities,⁷ and only 1% of the country’s 3 million total population.⁸

Moreover, not all gangs are created equal. There have been a number of efforts to typologize or categorize the gangs in Jamaica – by level of organization, level of involvement in drug trafficking or by scope of territorial control.⁹ The JCF classifies gangs according to three generations: first, second and third generation. This classification is heavily reliant on the organizational characteristics ascribed to gangs and is broadly based on structural patterns observable in the gangs. In a first-generation gang, ties between members are described as loose and there is no management or leadership evident in the behaviour of gang members. Second-generation gangs exhibit some organizational capacity, including membership expectation and rules for governance that members are expected to observe. Third-generation gangs, at the top of the organizational pyramid, operate

both locally and transnationally; they rely on local cells and networks to undertake activities and tasks that ultimately fulfil a global distribution of illicit goods and services. The networks and processes are coordinated by the gangs’ leadership.¹⁰

In reality, however, this generational typology has proven difficult to reconcile with investigative efforts, and ethnographic and qualitative research that has been conducted largely by civil society groups suggests a more complex, fluid and fractured reality of gang membership than the three-generation framework allows. Gangs collaborate with one another, and more sophisticated, transnationally connected ‘third generation’ groups can delegate activities down the hierarchical command chain to smaller, less structured gangs, usually for distribution to local markets. Research led by the University of the West Indies (UWI) between 2012 and 2019 found a number of examples of this collaboration, including drugs trafficked from Latin America by third-generation gangs, which were distributed to tourism hotspots by lower-level street gangs; the redistribution of counterfeit goods, such as cigarettes and petrol; and the distribution of small arms, light weapons and ammunition sourced from Haiti and Central America, and fenced or rented to local groups.¹¹

Research by the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) found that recruitment into gangs often begins with the lower classification community gangs, and that only a small fraction of those recruited may ever move up the ranks into the more organized, sophisticated criminal groups. Studies have also shown that because gangs are not static, there is fluidity in and out of different gangs – and in and out of the gang culture altogether. In the lower-classified gangs, few progress to systematic involvement in higher-value crimes or become involved in transnational organized crime that characterizes the third generation gangs. Using data from a VPA study and validation of gang numbers, it was found that most gang members retire from criminality as they get older and the number of gang members who continue to work in the criminal economy into their 30s typically tapers off. However, they may maintain

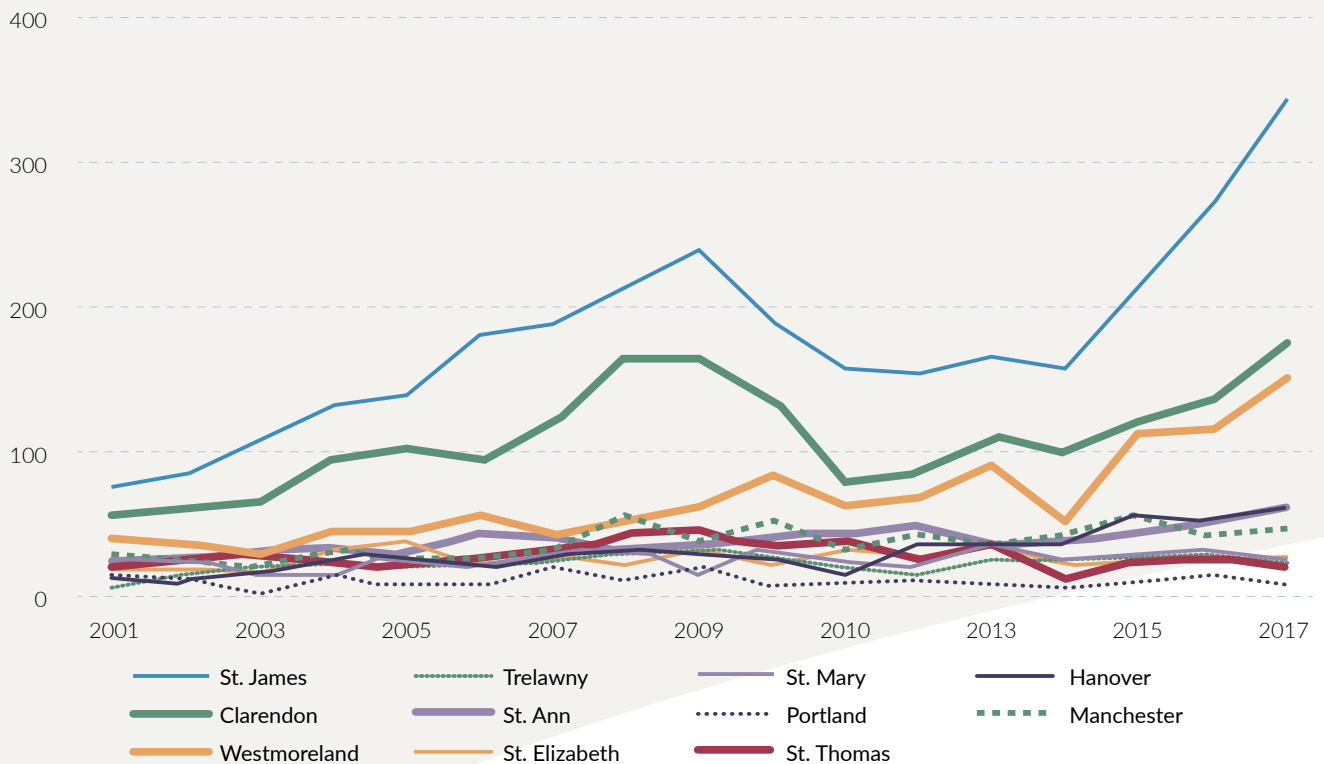


FIGURE 2 Homicide counts for select police divisions, 2001–2017.

SOURCE: JCF Statistics and Information Unit.

ties with their former gangs, creating a fluidity that again poses a challenge to making a reliable estimate of the size of the gang phenomenon.¹²

Compounding the difficulty of quantifying the problem, criminal-justice data on arrests, cases and investigations is out of date,¹³ and the data framework that does exist lacks the nuance needed to understand the drivers of homicides, and the distinctions between different forms of crime.¹⁴

Over the last 10 years, there has been significant spatial displacement in Jamaica's geography of violence. What was once a Kingston-dominated phenomenon is now largely a problem in two major centres – downtown Kingston and Montego Bay, in St. James parish. However, violence has been spreading across the country more generally. Since 2001, homicide data reported by the JCF has suggested consistently that homicides occur predominantly in three hotspot police divisions: St. James, Clarendon and Westmoreland.

While criminal gangs are known to have strong ties to certain neighbourhoods, they are increasingly expanding and commuting to seize and defend turf, causing patterns of violence to spread. Gang members cite the splintering of existing groups due to internal feuds and social ties to other communities as reasons for their movement, although they also return to fiercely defend their original communities from rivals.¹⁵

There is, in fact, no single or simplistic explanation for Jamaica's acute crime and violence challenges, and national aggregates oversimplify what is increasingly being understood as a highly nuanced and complex set of realities concentrated in a discrete number of specific localities.

An overview of social interventions

Jamaica has experienced various social and community interventions to address crime over the past decade, including programmes that have been government-led, civil society-driven, or a combination of the two. Some of these have been evaluated, offering some insights into the challenges these programmes have encountered. One of the most compelling of these has been that they were too uncoordinated and fragmented, scattered across different communities, or lacking sustained funding.

In 2010, the Community Renewal Programme (CRP), run by the Planning Institute of Jamaica, identified 100 vulnerable and volatile communities across the country. Much effort has subsequently gone into encouraging violence-prevention organizations to align their interventions with a selected set of 50 of the communities that the CRP identified. These are concentrated in the five hotspot police divisions mentioned above. Structures such as inter-agency networks have been formed, and organizations have worked collaboratively around shared work plans.

This consolidated, coordinated approach has allowed some qualitative policy learning around implementation of social interventions. However, studies using data to explore offender profiles, correctional action taken, crime incidents and crime opportunity structures are still lacking. Without this more systematic, longitudinal and empirical data on crime and violence, the knowledge basis to design evidence-based interventions and the baselines against which to assess progress has been lacking.

Consequently, Jamaica is still broadly unable to answer some fundamental questions about the patterns of its violent-crime phenomenon, or the impact of responses in the community, including:

- Are ongoing efforts influencing the concentration of crime, and at what levels?
- Are efforts reducing the pool of youth who become involved in group crimes?
- Do such interventions cater to youth who persist beyond tapering points, and how is this being approached?

The following sections provide an overview of a selection of the most notable social interventions around violence prevention undertaken in Jamaica.

Government-led

The Citizen Security and Justice Programme was the largest non-law-enforcement intervention in Jamaica. The latter phase 3 of the programme (CSJP III) is the main focus here. What makes the programme significant in the discussion of attention to at-risk and unattached youth is the case management approach it has used since 2014. This approach has encouraged a mix of interventions to address high-risk youth. According to one assessment, case management was implemented to 'improve the behaviour of clients through identifying and reducing their risk factors while building their protective factors'.¹⁶ The attention to youth starts with a diagnostic of each individual, followed by tailored interventions to address each person's needs.¹⁷

The CSJP also spearheaded a parenting programme in CSJP communities across the Kingston Metropolitan Area. The programme was designed to improve the capacity of parents to avoid using coercion in their parenting practices. Parents in the programme reported that they had been exposed to high levels of aggression and anger in their youth, which they then transmitted in their parenting practices.¹⁸ The intervention made use of pre- and post-assessments of parent performance, and home visits by community parent trainers (although participation by fathers in the programme was deemed to be low). One observation made by programme coordinators was the continued need to provide information to parents to inform the building of healthy relationships with their children.

CSJP III intervened in 50 communities, and the programme was received positively by residents and beneficiaries. However, while the intervention was running, its target communities continued to experience violent crimes, such as shooting and homicides. Among the findings of a mid-term

evaluation of CSJP III, 'low-income children were more exposed to serious violence: 44,7% have had a family or friend die by murder, 48% have witnessed stabbings, and 31% have witnessed gang wars.'¹⁹

Quasi-governmental

One approach aimed at addressing the high-crime environments of at-risk youth in Jamaica has been the work of Violence Interrupters (VIs) coordinated through the Peace Management Initiative (PMI) based in Kingston and St. James. The efficacy of this programme is mixed.

Between 2015 and 2018, the PMI East and PMI West were contracted by the CSJP III to work in 48 communities and deployed 60 VIs.²⁰ VIs are responsible for detecting and interrupting potential shootings; mediation of other conflicts that may lead to violence; identification and treatment of individuals at highest risk of involvement in criminal activities; changing community norms supportive of violence; and collection and utilization of data to inform strategies and interventions.

One study claimed that a PMI intervention in 2005 in a downtown Kingston community of 15 000 residents reduced the homicide rate by 89.2% in the first year and by even more after five years since start of the intervention.²¹ The homicide rate for that community fell from 433 per 100 000 inhabitants in 2005 to 13 per 100 000 in 2009.

By contrast, despite these promising results, assessments of the VI programme have suggested that the results have been uneven and that the scale of the programme was unequal to the level of the challenge in the most troubled communities. VIs found themselves burdened with caseloads and unable to provide the level of outreach and support required, to the detriment of the participants. A 2018 evaluation of the programme found that VIs required more training.²²

In particular, the VI engagement and experience with truce or peace agreements between gangs requires closer examination in order to understand its contribution to sustainable violence reduction. As of November 2019, peace agreements were holding for six months or more in several communities across

the Kingston Metropolitan Area and Clarendon. In Trench Town three truces were negotiated at different points and among different factions. Despite these apparent truces, data on homicides and shootings shared by the JCF show year-on-year increases in both these categories of crime in Trench Town between 2015 and 2017, followed by a fall in 2018 but an increase in 2019. This suggests that there is not an immediate correlation between the truces and the levels of violence.

Non-governmental

The Child Abuse Mitigation Project (CAMP) is a hospital-based intervention involving the counselling and referral of individuals admitted for accident and emergency services. The intervention sought to identify follow-up risk to the victims admitted with injuries and to coordinate psychosocial support.²³

CAMP was resurrected by the VPA Jamaica chapter (a non-governmental organization). It initially focused on young children but this was extended in 2018 to clients up to 29 years of age. The intervention directly targets changes in the context of the injured victim, which could be within the family, school or broader community. The collaboration with the VPA has led to the production of violence-related injury data that supplements reported violent-crime statistics by area, facilitating the early identification of possible retaliatory violence and allowing social workers to be deployed for home and school visits. The data allows targeted education campaigns to be deployed in relevant communities and with the most appropriate stakeholder groups. In an effort to change norm responses involving aggression and violence, community education campaigns are used.

CAMP has deepened its collaboration in parishes such as St. James to include PMI Violence Interruptors. It has also included the Child Protection and Family Support Agency.²⁴ A 2019 report showed a promising declining trend in cases of violence-related injuries at the Cornwall Regional Hospital in the parish for the period 2014 to 2018. However, consistent with national data on youth involvement in violence, there was an over-representation of youth between 18 and 24 for the period.



Criminality, violence and underdevelopment in Jamaica can only be countered through an evidence-based holistic approach. © Tuesday Reitano

Evaluating impact

While the overview of Jamaica's experiences with social interventions over the past few decades presented here is relatively cursory, it presents a mixed picture of results for target beneficiary communities. Both nationally and at a programmatic level, the lack of an effective framework to measure causality, impact and results have meant that decisions on interventions – both in the security sector and for development activities – have remained insufficiently grounded in evidence and leave them at risk of politicization.

The intertwined challenges of criminality, violence and underdevelopment are not easy to counter, and even while examining global experience – as we shall do in the section to come – there are no sparkling, unqualified success stories. But what is clearly required is a more structured means by which to capture both quantitative and qualitative insights and lessons learned, and for those to be fed into a national dialogue process that can take and prioritize a holistic approach in which security, criminal justice and social interventions can be planned and implemented.



COMMUNITY REGENERATION

The concept of urban sustainability is receiving increasing attention worldwide, given the rapid pace of urbanization globally and the acute problems faced in many cities, where resources for urban management have not kept pace with the rate of population growth. Urban renewal is the planning framework meant to improve the quality of life for those communities affected by limited and poor service delivery, and chronic housing shortages. Critically overstretched services in metropolises worldwide have environmental, economic and social impacts, leading often to violent governance, criminal gangs and public insecurity. However, urban renewal recognizes that simply improving the built environment is not enough: it is also necessary to improve life opportunities for residents and promote social cohesion.²⁵

The experiments with social initiatives in Jamaica, such as those outlined in the previous section, are part of a global call to reposition urban renewal as a public-health challenge to reduce crime and violence, especially for the urban poor and urban youth. A six-country study showed that the most sustainable initiatives that offered the greatest return were those in which communities actually controlled key investment decisions and took on part of the development cost.²⁶ A similar study in South Africa showed that community involvement in design, management, monitoring and oversight was able to reduce the cost per beneficiary by 50%, as it reduced theft, misuse and inefficiency.²⁷

▲
More than half of Jamaica's population live in urban areas marred by crime and violence.
© Andrzej Brown via Unsplash

Over 50% of Jamaica's population are resident in urban areas, a significant proportion of whom live in urban slums marred by crime and violence. This has a significant impact on the socio-economic experiences and development opportunities, both for the residents of those communities and the wider population. A commitment to urban renewal and community regeneration in the worst-affected areas has been a priority since the late 1960s, yet even with such long-standing policy attention, large portions of the population resident in squatter settlements remain without access to basic services. A 2008 report providing a rapid assessment of squatter settlements in Jamaica found that 20% of the country's population resided in squatter settlements. That percentage is estimated to have subsequently grown – in spite of policies that provide enhanced access to finance under the government's National Housing Trust (which makes low-interest loans available for housing).²⁸

Community regeneration is important because of the persistent concentration of crime and violence in specific communities. In Jamaica, community regeneration means more than just service provision – it also requires changing the mindset of residents who have become conditioned to believe that access to services is garnered through their support for a political party. Strategies to implement community regeneration have been the shared objective of implementing agencies such as the Jamaica Social Investment Fund and the National Housing Trust.

Jamaica has attempted an integrated model for urban renewal, including through the Inner City Renewal Programme (ICRP) launched in 2000 for the purpose of redeveloping certain neighbourhoods in the Kingston metropolitan area. An objective of the programme is 'to facilitate sustainable improvements in the quality of life of persons in these areas through the improvement of physical and social infrastructure, reducing the levels of crime and violence and stimulating economic and employment opportunities'. An assessment of the ICRP, however, highlighted gaps in agency coordination and accountability; a lack of community buy-in; insufficient funding to achieve project goals; and a lack of a sustainability plan. It also showed that infrastructure investments needed to be balanced with and complemented by social services in order to ensure facilities are maintained in working order, and that measures are in place to ensure that the community has continued access.

Later, the Inner City Basic Services for the Poor Project was approved in 2006 and came to an end in 2013. It was supported by a US\$29.3 million World Bank loan and supported attempts to reduce inner-city violence. This programme was considered innovative for Jamaica, as it took an integrated approach to crime and violence prevention using infrastructure improvements and public-safety methodologies. The project invested in the upgrading of public space and improvement of roads to facilitate more effective delivery of services and policing. It also incorporated social and community-focused components, such as targeting premature exit from the school system, skills training and job placement, and the strengthening of community-based organizations, among others. Residents and participants received the programme favourably.

A 2019 project performance assessment report of the Inner City Basic Services for the Poor Project observed that the project had mixed reviews. The development objective was to improve the quality of life in 12 communities, but the metric for quality of life was not clearly defined and the assessment argued that this broad scope detracted from keeping a focus on crime prevention and reduction by improving public safety, the core rationale for the project. The assessment also found that implementing agencies did not demonstrate enough ownership and support for the maintenance of physical assets and resources to support promising activities in the project. It was also unclear what effects on crime and violence could be attributed to the infrastructure improvements and which could be the effect of the community–social interventions.

The experience gained from these kinds of urban-renewal programmes suggests that while new approaches to conceptualizing impact and measuring efficacy offer some value, they need to be better defined in order to properly estimate success.²⁹ More importantly, experience has shown that, in Jamaica, such programmes have not been able to sustain their impact once project funding is exhausted – in part because the government faces resource constraints, but also because government commitment to social interventions has been variable.

Rocinha, the largest *favela* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Rio's *favelas*, like many informal settlements in the developing world, have experienced long-standing overcrowding and poverty, and scarce or substandard public services. © Shutterstock



The Pacifying Police Units programme, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The 'pacification' strategy, implemented in the Brazilian metropolis of Rio de Janeiro, was one of Latin America's most ambitious attempts at community regeneration in recent times. It was loosely inspired by security and development projects implemented in Medellín, Colombia (approximately 2 million inhabitants), and was rolled out in the Rio metropolitan area (12 million inhabitants) in December 2008.

The main innovation and source of popular support for the pacification strategy lay in its road map for integrating the *favelas* (Rio's many marginalized high-density communities) into the broader urban and societal fabric. Notably, this integration was pursued not only through small-scale cosmetic street improvements, but also by implementing basic public services, rule of law and infrastructure upgrades. Despite its many initial achievements, the pacification programme declined in performance and scope from 2014 onwards as economic and fiscal crises in Rio's state government led to a reduced public-investment capacity.

INTRODUCTION TO THE UPP PROGRAMME

The Pacifying Police Units (UPPs) programme (the strategy's official name) was first implemented in December 2008 in the small Santa Marta *favela* in the south of Rio. The state government's Security Secretariat intended to permanently displace drug-trafficking criminal groups that were in control of several of the city's *favelas*, starting with Santa Marta. It set out to do so through a combination of a permanent police presence – as opposed to the sporadic incursions into the *favelas*, which often resulted in gunfights with the criminal groups – and a social-development and regeneration project called UPP Social. The establishment of state control in urban territories previously dominated by predatory drug gangs was symbolically displayed by the raising of the Brazilian flag over the *favelas* after the arrival of the UPP officers.

The permanent presence of well-trained police officers in the *favelas*, complemented by social-development projects, helped the UPPs to achieve impressive and very concrete results. Between 2008

and 2014, incidents of intentional homicides declined by 65% in *favelas* where there were UPPs and by 42.5% in the entire city.³⁰ At its peak, the programme comprised 39 hubs, with officers patrolling 264 *favelas* (though these varied greatly in geographic and population size).³¹

Achieving this permanent state presence in the *favelas* was a whole-of-government challenge. From its onset, the programme's leaders at Rio state's Security Secretariat struggled to get other government secretariats and agencies to contribute, which was particularly challenging given the need to implement social-regeneration projects under UPP Social. One way that the state government achieved this was by using data, collected by researchers under the coordination of UPP Social, to identify the most acute needs, which often varied from *favela* to *favela*.

The state government, encouraged by the popular support (both inside and outside *favelas*) for the UPPs, made significant resources available for key basic services, introducing health centres, sewerage systems, internet access and others, which would ensue after the police operations had set up the UPP bases. The programme gained a strong positive image; it was seen as ambitious and well managed, and private-sector companies partnered with the state government to invest in some of these services.

The programme reached its peak around 2010 and 2011 as its success encouraged the state government to expand it to other *favelas* – particularly the largest ones such as Complexo do Alemão (approximately 100 000 inhabitants). This upscaling, however, would prove to place onerous coordination and budgetary pressures on the state and local governments. Public-service delivery became less frequent in the newly established UPP areas. Alongside a deterioration in the federal and state governments' fiscal situations, caused by the fall in global commodity prices (including oil, an important commodity in Rio), budgetary pressures to service the increased number of *favelas* mounted. The project is still in place today, but in a much reduced number of *favelas* (30).

SOCIAL REGENERATION AND SECURITY: A MULTI-PRONGED EFFORT

Rio's *favelas*, in common with many informal settlements in the developing world, have experienced long-standing overcrowding and poverty, and scarce or substandard public services. The UPP programme was not the first public-policy attempt to regenerate physical infrastructure and social development in *favelas*. Previous projects, such as the Favela Bairro (which aimed to turn the slums into integrated neighbourhoods) and Morar Carioca (a *favela* housing upgrade programme), had been undertaken between the late 1990s and early years of the new millennium, with support from international development banks. But their aims were much more modest in scope, either focused specifically on housing (in the case of Morar Carioca) or ad hoc infrastructure improvements, which ignored deeper security problems.

In contrast, the UPP programme was not only more ambitious (by addressing both security and public services) but also more comprehensive in its understanding of social development. In addition to small-scale improvements to infrastructure (e.g. sewerage, street lighting or roads), the UPP-linked projects aimed to improve the accessibility of *favela* residents to state institutions and opportunities. For example, UPP Social facilitated and regulated public transport (including the introduction of a cable car system in one *favela*); formalized small businesses; introduced private and state-run companies to provide electricity and rubbish collection (services that had hitherto largely been controlled by gangs); and granted property titles to residents.³²

The main architect of the strategy, then security secretary José Mariano Beltrame, said that past governments had tended to 'confuse security and policing'. Security, he said, is 'made up of 80% preventive work and 20% repression, but everybody talks only about the police'. Beltrame repeatedly underlined the core importance of social programmes and *favela*-regeneration initiatives for the ultimate achievement of these goals: 'The UPP's objective is not to end drug trafficking, but to bring to the people the freedom to come and go as they will.'³³

The UPP programme's social-development efforts were usually referred to as UPP Social, though this

was the name of a specific programme created in 2010 to coordinate the provision of public services and promote a participatory approach, hearing the local communities' demands and needs. The studies and conclusions coming out of UPP Social were designed to guide the state government to invest in public infrastructure, service provision and to adopt policies that would reinforce the effort. These improvements were more efficiently implemented in the first few *favelas* to receive UPPs, before the programme's later rapid expansion. Many of these improvements are still visible. For instance, large areas of Santa Marta have underground sewerage systems, whereas before the programme sewage ran untreated on the streets. The *favela* also has health clinics that were set up after the arrival of the UPP.³⁴ The improved houses are safer and more resistant to the weather than the wooden shacks that are common in Rio's *favelas*.

Even before public investments were made, the UPP programme had acquired the goodwill of many local communities through its participatory approach. Researchers from UPP Social conducted surveys and organized frequent roundtables in *favelas* in partnership with local community associations. The data gathered from these events would be analyzed and coordinated with other government agencies, so that it could 'spark transformation,' as one of its directors said.³⁵

Though some of the demands voiced by *favela* residents resulted in successful public-infrastructure improvements and other changes in service provision by the local authorities, the most challenging part of the UPP effort was clearly the implementation of social-development projects. Residents pointed to lack of action taken in response to their frequently voiced demands and complaints. The slowness and inefficiency in implementing projects, compounded by the mounting economic pressures faced by the government, contributed to a waning in public support for the project.

Nevertheless, the positive impact that both the UPP and its social arm have had is still visible. For example, it is remarkable that the UPP programme is still in place, following several changes in Rio's state government. Few security or social-regeneration policies have been so enduring in Rio in recent times.

Selected conditions for success in Jamaica

1. A whole-of-government approach to community regeneration is needed, and has been employed, in Jamaica. But this approach has to be guarded against elite capture and other transparency measures that ensure that decision making is clear. Stronger subordination to and representation of checks and balances, along with transparency, is required within oversight mechanisms, and bipartisan representation is essential.
2. The UPP experience in Rio and lessons from Jamaica's CSJP implementation indicate that the government requires both external support and local buy-in to undertake violence and crime prevention alone, not only because programmes lack sustainable funding if international donors withdraw but, more importantly, because community ownership can often sustain programme momentum even without funding.
3. The CSJP experience suggests that central coordination greatly improves strategic management and resource allocation – particularly where communities are involved in the direction of resources. But coordination and oversight committees must be designed with transparent, balanced, bipartisan and independent membership for all community and infrastructure projects if they are to be sustainable. It is important that projects are not perceived as exclusively government-centralized or -owned, and a system of checks and balances for integrity of membership should be placed under the purview of a suitable statutory body.
4. For the purpose of the Consensus, community regeneration goals should be defined so that the key performance indicators tied to crime and violence reduction are also distinct and do not become confused with activities that may be more in line with the well-being of individuals. Where community regeneration projects are designed with the objective of reducing crime and violence, indicators related to their impact on crime reduction need to be built into the project design from the outset.
5. Building the project management and implementation skills of local actors, such as community development committee representatives, and fostering ownership from the beginning of community interventions are critical to the sustainability of resource mobilization.
6. Considerations for different needs and expectations of children, youth and adults living in a community should be factored into designs for community interventions. If youth are expected to be involved in more unstructured activities than adults, creating spaces for structured supervised activity is important. These spaces should contain information and facilities to reinforce pro-social pathways and transformations.



REORDERING GENDER NORMS

Chronic violence is transmitted intergenerationally, often by dynamics in violent societies, broken homes or through children witnessing and experiencing domestic violence. Gangs have a tendency to generate cultures of hypermasculinity, which translate into gender-based and domestic violence.

The evidence suggests that Jamaica has a widespread and chronic problem of gender-based violence. A survey by UN Women in 2016 showed that one in four women in Jamaica experience intimate partner physical and sexual violence in their lifetime, regardless of education or income level. Severe violence was experienced by nearly one in five women.³⁶

The debate on the role of gender has evolved in the domain of responses to insecurity, as global evidence has shown that aggression and violence are transmitted within and down through generations, and that women are as much a vector of this transmission as men. Although men make up the vast proportion of both perpetrators and victims of homicide, women perpetuate cycles of violence through their domestic circumstances or personal relationships. Despite this, the focus of both criminal justice and social interventions has tended to concentrate on men.

Newer thinking suggests that reinforcing the socio-economic resilience of women also allows them to serve as change agents who can powerfully and positively impact the local paradigm, and prevent the inter-generational transfer of trauma.³⁷ In efforts to achieve transformational social change, women are emerging as figureheads in building community resilience, enabling social cohesion and driving transformation.³⁸

▲
Women police officers on patrol, Jamaica. The country has a widespread problem of gender-based violence. © Valery Sharifulin/TASS via Getty Images

Altering gender norms means mainstreaming behavioural change initiatives into people's way of life, with more sustained and focused resources for programmes addressing gender relations. The focus of this kind of intervention has to occur in the household predominantly, reflecting that this is most frequently where the most acute violations of gender norms take place. However, the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women, noting that 'systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the implementation of the agenda is crucial'.³⁹ It is important to recognize, however, that gender inequality is a systemic factor that delimits the rights and resources of women and girls, while often multiplying their responsibilities and ultimately eroding their resilience capacities. Consequently, when analyzing how to leverage women's potential, it is necessary to consider whether resilience frameworks entrench existing inequalities and create layered burdens on women as change-makers. Grassroots, demand-led approaches are central to mitigating this risk.

The UN Habitat 2012 Annual Report, for example, argues for gender-sensitive urban planning. This includes appropriate legislation to support the allocation of human and financial resources to support physical planning. This has implications for the design and use of roads, walkways and ramps for wheelchair users and prams; building codes and creation of green spaces and parks; and transport infrastructure. Urban renewal should integrate gender considerations to create safe spaces for women and girls who are at risk of gender-based violence.⁴⁰

In Jamaica, under-reporting is particularly problematic in regard to gender-based violence, which has been well-documented as being an acute and endemic problem across the country.⁴¹ Under-reporting is largely a reflection of how the police deal with gender-based violence – it is often not taken seriously, there is significant revictimization and there is little follow-up on incidents of violence.⁴² Victims are likely to see justice done more swiftly if they seek adjudication for cases

of gender-based violence, and particularly rape, by going to their local crime lord.⁴³ Moreover, in the intensely male society of gang communities, violence against women is a form of targeted violence: sisters, girlfriends or daughters may be subjected to abuse to settle a score, or as a tribute demanded by a more powerful gang leader.⁴⁴

Jamaica has some experience with programmes aimed at empowering women and girls as agents of change in violent areas. For example, there is a considerable number of cases of women-led female groups at the community level and of women taking part in dispute-resolution advocacy in violent areas. Unfortunately, however, there is little data on these experiences, and a more rigorous approach is needed with regard to such efforts by women, as well as to their impact.

Despite the deep-rooted nature of cultures of masculinity, social interventions to change male behaviour have had a clearly positive impact globally and should be considered as part of the public security effort in Jamaica. Much of the focus of these types of initiatives work on strengthening domestic relations, building healthier relationships between men and women, and transmitting positive modelling and care to children. In Jamaica, a 2018 experiment to train men and women in parenting skills in communities targeted by the CSJP resulted in improvements: parents and children were found to have made gains in terms of their communication and conduct. But this project remained limited in its geographic reach and has not been scaled up to become a more ambitious undertaking, such as the Bandedereho example in Rwanda (see the case study). As in Rwanda, violence against women – and indeed overall violent behaviour – by men in the home is linked to a deeply engrained culture of masculinity in Jamaica. The Bandedereho case provides an illustration of a more impactful programme that engaged young men by training them on parenthood, intimate relations and power dynamics in family environments.

The home and family unit, however, are not the only place where discussions about gender, power and the role of women need to take place. They need

to be repeated, reiterated and reinforced in all social contexts – at school, in the workplace, in community dialogue and in engagements with the state.

At a dissemination seminar for the Pilot Study of Males, Community and Crime in Jamaica, more gender programming was recommended. The study also recommended using arts and social programmes to build on 'positive messages on changing masculinities'. For example, football is popular in Jamaica and when the sport is included as a structured activity it can also be harnessed to influence positive gender perception and practice. International Peace Day events in Jamaica have made use of football matches to raise awareness for conflict resolution. This was achieved through music, with popular artistes, whom young people view as role models, communicating messages on the theme of violence prevention. Football has also been seen to support violence prevention in other ways, with cases of Jamaican football authorities having sanctioned team members or fans who condone or engage in violence.

Another response to reordering gender norms comes in the form of programmes that build the capacity of parents to employ best practices in child-rearing. The family is an important nucleus of reference and learning during development and the transition from childhood to adolescence and adulthood. Inculcating good parenting practices and healthy norms around family behaviour can have a long-lasting impact on children's ability to navigate social relationships, and to manage stress and trauma.

In Jamaica, there have been several interventions targeting parents in communities across the island, which have been hosted with multi-sectoral involvement and which bring parents together in workshops for skills training.⁴⁵ In 2018, a randomized controlled parenting programme was rolled out, in which parents from 50 of the intervention communities, with children between the age of six and 15, were targeted for parent skills training that included home visits by a social worker. In a follow-up evaluation, children of participants reported improved communication with their parents, while parents demonstrated improvements in their conduct.

So-called 'second chance' programming interventions, aimed at young offenders, are increasingly encompassing training that supports overall healthy family dynamics, addressing parent-child relationships (through open communication, voluntary information sharing, and listening and monitoring) and reintegrating troublesome youths into pro-social family environments.⁴⁶

Regrettably, however, despite these promising initiatives, children in Jamaica continue to both witness and experience forms of sexual, physical and emotional abuse and violence. Exposure to such domestic abuse and gender-based violence can leave an imprint on individuals in their adult years.

A parallel challenge in Jamaica is the widespread experience of intimate-partner violence, which a large proportion of women are subjected to. Facilities such as shelters for women seeking to escape from violent situations are lacking, and victim-support services are in need of strengthening. Until recently, there was only one shelter for women victims, run privately. However, thanks to provisions set out in the 2017 National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence in Jamaica,⁴⁹

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in November 2020, one of three planned state-run shelters for women became operational; the others are in the process of being refurbished.

Despite the fact that, in the 50 communities in which it worked, the CSJP III was more explicit than its previous iterations in using a public-health model, focusing on risk and protective factors, and building resilience at individual, family and community levels, unfortunately, the targeted communities showed sluggish change. And one programme review found that the communities in which the project worked experienced greater increases in murders and shootings than in others that did not receive programming.

Based on consultations with stakeholders and the 2018 mid-term evaluation of the programme, three explanations emerged for such surprising findings. Firstly, the programme was not targeted at the most persistent and high-risk offenders. Secondly, this kind of pro-social-change initiative offers effective dividends for participating communities more slowly than the returns that can be made from violent crime and the status that gang membership provides. Finally, it was found that the programme focused too heavily on preventive action and not enough on protective action. In particular, the evaluation emphasized the need for better protection for victims of gender-based or domestic violence.

More generally, this form of programming has shown that, as with social interventions in other sectors, state funding for such initiatives is predominantly donor-driven, or with loans from the development bank, and when left to the resources of government often falls by the wayside in the face of other priorities.

Prevention+ to address domestic violence in Rwanda

The Instituto Promundo, an NGO based in Brazil working to engage men and boys for gender equality, has developed a series of international initiatives to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence by addressing its root causes, namely the social, economic, religious and cultural contexts that shape attitudes and behaviours. Promundo's Prevention+ programme takes a multi-level approach, targeting four spheres of society – individual, community, institutional and government – with the goal of achieving a long-lasting impact and comprehensively transforming the social and cultural environment that enables gender-based violence.

A two-year programme initiated in Rwanda in 2014 resulted in a 40% drop in gender-based violence in the families of the programme graduates. The project, known locally as *Bandebereho* – meaning 'role model' – was targeted at men and helped them alongside their families to build the skills needed to have stronger, more equal and non-violent relationships. The target group comprised expectant couples and fathers aged between 21 and 35 with young children. The programme used a 15-session curriculum that provides activities and frameworks to engage men actively in

fatherhood. It covered issues such as power dynamics, decision-making, communication, violence and its impact, child development and care-giving. The goal was to transform thinking and ideas around power, appropriate roles and intimate relations.

Just 15 weeks of programming showed evidence of lower rates of domestic violence and sexual violence against women and children, greater contraceptive use, greater sharing of childcare tasks in the home and greater involvement of women in decision-making.

Making programmes such as *Bandebereho* work at the community level requires considerable thought and planning, and needs a gender-mainstreamed approach to all aspects of project implementation, including in the choice of subjects, how men are approached and brought to the table, and the choice of facilitator and how they engage with the issues.⁵⁰ Gender-sensitive audits and gender analysis can help to increase understanding of the causes, characteristics and consequences of social problems and gender-based violence in particular – as well as help provide solutions to them.⁵¹

Women assist in a session of the *Bandebereho* project in Rwanda. © Seth Chase for *Bandebereho*



Selected conditions for success in Jamaica

Reordering gender norms should be defined through further consultation to also take into account views on gender sensitivity. Here, we have confined its scope to the context of crime prevention and violence, criminal-justice outcomes, and intimate-partner and gender-based violence.

1. Parent home-visit interventions that seek to influence parent communication for reduced acts of aggression between parents and towards children, especially boys, should be better resourced.
2. There has to be increased awareness of and provision for family therapy services as a component of prevention.
3. Programme evaluations should have built-in gender sensitivity to factor for differential impact.
4. Training and education programmes that target schools, communities and work settings are important to the prevention component of violence attributed to gender/no gender.
5. It is key to ensure prosecutorial processes are non-traumatic for victims and survivors of violence due to gender/non gender.
6. There should be gradual expansion in provisions for the protection of victims and survivors of violence attributable to gender or intimate-partner relations.



REACHING AT-RISK YOUTH

Youth, typically referred to as those aged between 15 and 24, are considered at risk when they face 'environmental, social and family conditions that may hinder their personal development and successful integration in society as productive citizens'.⁵² At-risk and unattached youth require focused attention, necessitated by a several potential negative outcomes and anti-social behaviours that can result from their vulnerabilities. These range from minor drug consumption to gang involvement and repeated contact with the criminal justice system.⁵³

Global studies generally show a progressive trajectory from adolescent groups, which tend to resemble fluid social networks, towards more serious groupings of criminality and more entrenched gang involvement (see Figure 3).⁵⁴

▲
Jamaican youth, particularly those in urban areas, are frequently exposed to violence and crime. © Jim Rankin/Toronto Star via Getty Images

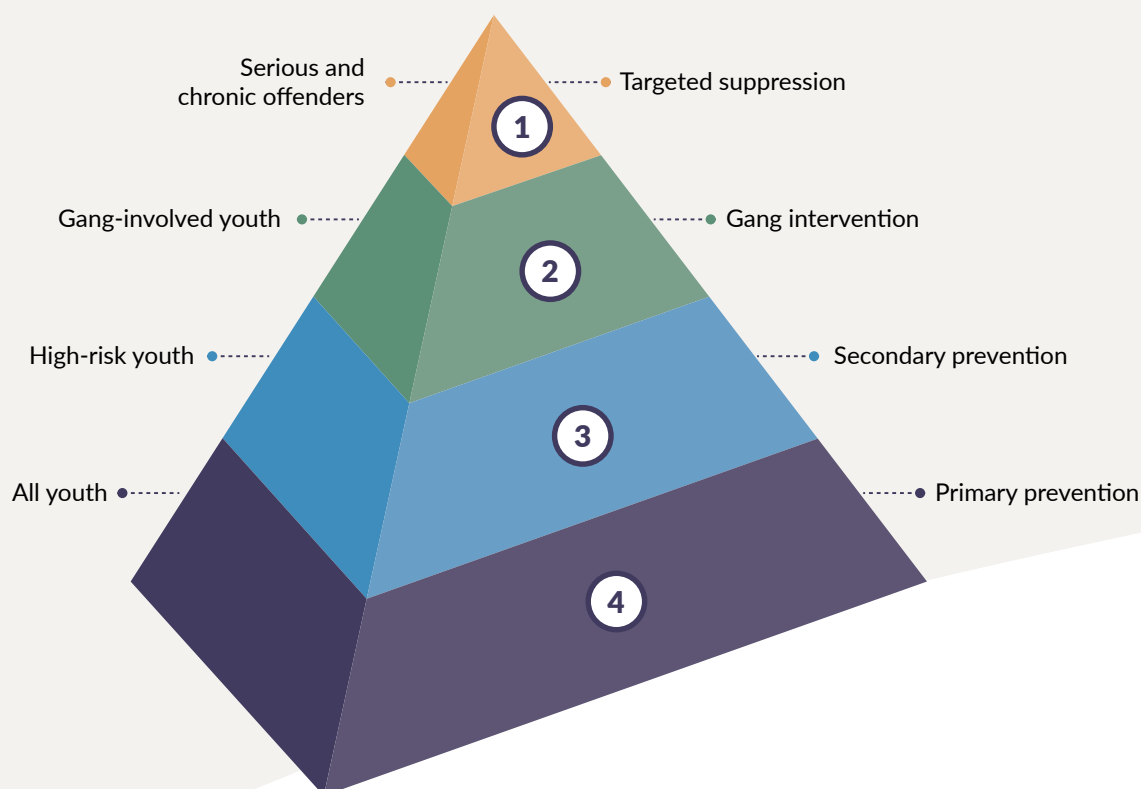


FIGURE 3 Gang prevention and intervention strategies.

As with most interventions, successfully addressing gang cultures and at-risk youth begins with the need for a detailed assessment that must define gangs, locate them and identify the youth who are at the greatest risk of joining gangs. For example, the UK Metropolitan Police Service uses a gang matrix to identify and risk-assess the most harmful gang members by collating and using data about individuals' involvement in serious crime, violence and weapons offences. The aim of the matrix, in line with Figure 3, is to ensure that enforcement action is taken against the most violent gang members, and to divert those most at risk of being drawn into gang violence.⁵⁵ For the lower categories in the risk hierarchy, other interventions (such as those described in the other areas of this report) work on a preventative basis.

Jamaican youth, particularly those in urban areas, are frequently exposed to violence and crime as witnesses and victims. Exposure to violence in childhood is associated with aggression, while anti-social behaviour in childhood is associated with offending in adulthood. A 2004 study with 1 674 children living in Jamaican cities found that a quarter of them had witnessed physical violence, such as robbery, shooting and gang wars; one-fifth had been victims of 'severe acts of physical violence such as robbery'; and one in twelve had been stabbed. The study also revealed that 73.4% of children had participated in fights over their lifetime, and the proportion was significantly higher among boys. The study noted that although there is generally a high level of exposure to violence among urban Jamaican children of both sexes, boys had significantly higher exposure than girls to 'almost all forms of violence as witnesses and victims'.⁵⁶

Other studies support the finding that violence tends to be a frequent feature in the lives of young Jamaican boys in urban areas. A 2007 survey of Kingston boys in grades 5 to 6 showed that 47% had seen a dead body, while 38% had witnessed fighting with knives and guns. The study reported that 'most men carried a weapon for protection, as did a high proportion of [carers] in both groups'.

The experiences of Jamaica and other Caribbean nations are aligned to global trends that show higher rates of youth-on-youth violence, and higher male involvement than females as both victims and perpetrators in violent crime trends. As the intervention pyramid above shows, the Jamaican experience also suggests that interventions geared to interrupt involvement in delinquency before onset of adolescence start with changing conduct norms in the family and household, early school environment and community.⁵⁷ Experiences with violence by adolescents also give support for policing interventions that focus on persistent hotspots for crimes, removing opportunities to offend and the creation of programmes that divert youth away from incarceration.

Successive Jamaican governments and civil society organizations have implemented several projects over the years to address violent behaviour among young people. These have usually focused on special attention to at-risk youth. Despite some promising results – and like other social interventions designed to reduce violence – these projects have usually been limited in geographical scope and operated in isolation from one another.

Lack of data also hinders a more comprehensive understanding of the risk factors that may draw young men to crime. The number of gangs cited by Jamaican authorities has varied considerably over the years. In November 2015, a JCF representative noted there were 266 gangs and in 2017 another report in the *Sunday Gleaner* noted 258 gangs. The most recent estimate from the government estimates 381 gangs. But as noted earlier, the

authorities have not published any significant data on the profiles of criminals, recidivism or relationships between different categories of crime. Better data, together with more public access to data, would increase the quality and transparency of the public-security policy process.

In contrast to the modest projects adopted in Jamaica, other countries provide alternative and more ambitious goals on how to implement structural change in the way that the state relates with youth in violent areas. The case cited below of Ecuador's legalization of street gangs highlights the potentially positive results of establishing a regular and more institutionalized approach to youth groups. In Ecuador, this engagement has helped to transform some gangs from violence outlets to partners in social-development projects involving education and training. These, alongside improvements in security, have helped to strengthen trust in the state – in itself a worthwhile reason to look seriously at a more meaningful engagement with youth groups (gangs or otherwise).

Ecuador's experience of legalizing street gangs is also useful for understanding the kinds of integrated, comprehensive support that gang members need to exit a criminal lifestyle. Members in gangs in Jamaica do not have any facilities that are state supported or resourced for gang exit – the closest equivalent is the demobilization efforts in the approach adopted by the PMI. The Jamaican experience has shown that there are a number of considerations and safeguards required for interventions geared towards exiting gangs. The first is the extent to which an individual seeking exit can fully disassociate himself from the gang and sever points of contact. Then one needs to understand how widespread the desire to exit is among the gang members, as well as the attitude taken by the rest of the gang when a member expresses the intent to leave. A third consideration is the attitude of the community to accepting reformed gang members back, and their ability to reintegrate into society and find legitimate employment.

Legalizing the gangs of Ecuador⁵⁸



The Sacred Tribe Atahualpa of Ecuador gang, also known as the Latin Kings. © Adam Goldsmith via Alamy Stock Photo

The Ecuadorian approach to reducing violent crime has centred on innovative policies to address social exclusion holistically and with a development-centric approach, where improvements in education, health and welfare were given equal weight to community policing and crime-prevention activities. The most notable of these was the decision in 2007 to legalize a number of street gangs. The government claims that these policies have contributed to the homicide rate falling from 15.35 per 100 000 in 2011 to 5 per 100 000 in 2017. Encouragingly, it also weakened the main drivers of risk for youth groups in socially disadvantaged urban areas.

The security improvement was the result of a cultural transformation, through which gangs went from being essentially groups focused on armed violence for members' protection, vendettas or status to being civil society organizations. In the words of one gang leader, the groups have become 'political and social actors who can give answers to youth'.⁵⁹ This seems to eliminate some of the most crucial drivers of risk to youth (as outlined in the introduction to this section), reducing threats and violent behaviour experienced by young men in their daily lives in marginalized urban areas. Members of previously rival gangs began to exchange ideas with each other by having lunch and meeting regularly to discuss how to organize and fund cultural projects.⁶⁰

Another youth dynamic affected by the legalization process was the influence that older gang members have over the younger ones. The legalization process prevented these older members from being arrested under *mano dura* ('iron fist') suppression policies, which in turn allowed them to influence the younger members towards constructive and peaceful enterprises rather than directing them towards violent rivalries and behaviours.⁶¹

This approach to gangs has achieved impressive results, but it has some limitations that Jamaican policymakers should be mindful of. Most importantly, the gangs involved in the process were highly local and small, in contrast to more sophisticated organized criminal groups operating at national or even international levels. This means that not all criminal groups will be potential candidates for a legalization process. In fact, the Inter-American Development Bank has emphasized that 'one of the most important aspects of the Ecuadorian approach' has been the continuation of the fight against 'cartels but inclusion towards gangs'.⁶² Cartels, or the much larger criminal syndicates, are still negatively impacted by gang legalization because the policy has reduced their ability to recruit local gang members. Differentiating between local gangs and the larger criminal enterprises dealing in transnational drug trafficking is a key component behind the achievements of Ecuador's programme.

FROM VIOLENCE TO CIVIL SOCIETY

The first group to be legalized was the Sacred Tribe Atahualpa of Ecuador (STAE), also known as the Latin Kings. The move was widely considered to be a watershed moment in national-security policy. STAE had been attributed with upwards of 27% of all homicides and had driven an exponential rise in youth arrest rates between 1999 and 2005.

Rather than outlawing or criminalizing the visible symbols of gang membership – an approach taken elsewhere in the Americas – the legalization of the STAE transformed the group from a street gang to a cultural group and youth organization – a transformation that was largely possible because of the group's identity being legitimately rooted in a shared identity and cultural values, not just criminal activity.

Legalization made it possible for members to embrace their identity and subculture, and emerge from being a marginalized and clandestine group into a recognized organization that could gather and engage in social practices and legitimately participate in public and political life. It was a marked shift from before, as previously when the group would convene, they could count on the police coming quickly to physically abuse or arrest them. Now, they could wear their colours and symbols with pride, without being harassed by the police.

This was accompanied by a shift away from *mano dura*-style policies suppression policies towards social investments, which were made as an incentive for the gangs to recuse themselves permanently from criminal behaviour. If they met the conditions of the agreement, members of the group became eligible to receive state funds for employment, and the group itself could access social-development funds for community infrastructure and activities. They were also encouraged to form pro-social associations, such as sports and music groups, and to host events. It essentially allowed the social capital of a gang to be channelled towards positive behavioural change for the members, and it resulted in manifold pro-social transformations.

The transition was facilitated, chaperoned and underwritten by a range of civil-society groups, of which the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLASCO) was a particular success. FLASCO helped the STAE to navigate the formalities of civic life and served as champions and guarantors for the process, helping

to convince government officials of the importance of the project and its feasibility.

Through the process of legalization, the STAE established a collaborative relationship with several state institutions and ministries, enabling a progressive process of trust-building and collaboration, and ultimately increasing the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the gang. In particular, the de-escalation in the adversarial relationship between the gangs and state-security actors was critical for creating a new paradigm in which gang members felt that the state was demonstrating its respect for their identity.

Over time, the culture of the group itself began to shift as a generation of members of STAE grew up and matured into the legalization process, creating role models for the next generation and thereby creating a decisive break in the chronic negative cycles of violence. State-sponsored investments in education, apprenticeships and entrepreneurship gave opportunities to individual gang members to carve for themselves legitimate livelihoods and learn how to navigate the state as a service provider, allowing them to find alternatives to crime.

An accomplishment that was also noted in the process was a change in gender relations. This created space for self-organized women's social groups within the gangs, allowing them to also build an identity and status within the group that had previously been impossible. Improved gender relations reduced some of the domestic violence issues, smoothing the early childhood experience, reducing the risk of children witnessing or experiencing trauma, and therefore brought down some of the inter-generational risks making youth vulnerable to at-risk behaviours.

In addition, the STAE process served as an example of successful transformation and cooperation that served as a model for less clearly defined groups, who became eligible for transition later in the process, as they were able to clearly see the dividends of the approach. As a result, intergang and reprisal violence also began to drop, and previously antagonistic gangs began to cooperate in initiatives, with the support of government facilitation.

Ten years later, Ecuador can boast a sustained drop in crime, violence and homicide rates, and a clear and firm pathway to development in areas that were previously the most vulnerable.

Selected conditions for success in Jamaica

The Jamaican experience suggests that the conditions for success required to address the propensity for violence among at-risk and unattached youth are as follows:

1. Interventions with at-risk youth should be customized to the offending history of individual beneficiaries, and ensure that they are sensitive to the distinct cognitive and moral definitions justifying the crime type – i.e. there is a difference between homicides, violent crimes, gender-based violence and non-violent criminal behaviour.
2. Strategies should be graduated and targeted appropriately according to risk profile. Greater sensitivity to programme beneficiary contact with the criminal justice system and offending is important. It requires more resources and greater time, as seen in the CSJP experience; at the same time, it cannot be ignored. Resources would be better focused on those who elect to use violence to solve conflict and offend either on their own or through gang facilitation. There is a danger of resource wastage by targeting those who only show a disposition.
3. Because a small group of youth go on to become persistent offenders, desistance programming can be expected to attract the greatest interest and most resources in support of cognitive and behavioural change for this group and their realization of pro-social adult transitions. It is important for programmes to prevent crime and violence to assign resources to assist with desistance. This approach would also work in tandem with gang exit strategies.
4. Emerging from the case management approach, it was recommended that psychotherapy and family counselling be included in the treatment of at-risk populations. This is an important recommendation because at-risk youth often have to return to environments that do not necessarily reinforce pro-social pathways. Support systems for programme beneficiaries have to be put in place through the life of the programme. Families can benefit from therapeutic interventions that seek to improve spousal, parent–child and sibling relations.
5. Long-term gang exit strategies targeted at individuals, gangs and the broader community are needed if the intervention is to be sustainable.



SCHOOL ENROLMENT AND ENRICHMENT

Schools – including pre-schools, primary and secondary schools and colleges – are a defining experience for children and youth, and can be both a positive and negative force in a child's formative years. The early years of education are increasingly understood as a time when early-warning signs of vulnerability to gang recruitment, crime or violence can be identified and preventive measures taken.

Evidence suggests that unemployed and out-of-school youth are at greater risk of becoming perpetrators and victims of violence and crime, though, counterintuitively, evidence cannot conclusively prove that education policy can prevent or reduce violence and crime.⁶³ (However, there is a proven benefit for children staying in school longer, both in terms of hours in the day, as well as years in education.) Studies on the quality of education and its impact on crime present intuitive results – that the more positive and enriching a child's experience with education, the more positively bonded they feel to their schools, and the more likely they are to see positive dividends from their time in school.⁶⁴

Education policy as a social intervention to reduce crime and violence, therefore, often divides into two areas: firstly, working to ensure that children and youth have access to and stay in school for as long as possible; and, secondly, to ensure that their experience in school is nurturing of the child, that it inculcates positive social behaviours and takes preventive measures to avoid negative social behaviours.

▲ Schoolchildren in Kingston. A nurturing experience at school allows children to thrive, and reduces youth crime and violence. © Getty Images

Evidence from programmes in various countries demonstrates that investing in early-childhood development programmes – including healthcare, nutritional support, mental stimulation, parental training and education activities – can have the strongest impacts on risky behaviours, ranging from violence to criminal activity and substance abuse.⁶⁵

Evidence from developed countries, including the US and the UK, suggest that programmes aimed at developing children's life skills and behavioural competencies (e.g. programmes on dispute resolution) can also prevent violence and risky behaviour. In a 2011 report by the UK Department for Education – widely considered to be the defining study on the subject – four interventions were seen to be the most effective in reducing problematic behaviour:

- the reorganization of grades and classes to allow high-risk or disruptive youth a chance for specialized instruction;
- the alteration of classroom and instruction management to increase and incentivize participation in learning;
- the alteration of school discipline and management to make it more inclusive for students and families, and to promote a more positive school climate; and
- instructional programmes that teach social-competency skills using cognitive behavioural methods.⁶⁶

Cognitive behaviour therapy has broadly been seen as one of the most successful anti-violence initiatives in all contexts.⁶⁷

In Jamaica, there are a myriad of services (e.g. scholarships, and the government and World Bank's Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education) to support those under the age of 17 facing socio-economic challenges. However, challenges of scaling and funding hamper resilience support, while evaluation and data gaps make it difficult to gauge the likelihood of sustainability and the long-term impact of some of these efforts.

The Reach Up and Learn programme starts in early childhood, before the age of three, and provides in-home support to parents to increase their ability to provide responsive care, positive attitudes towards learning and to engage in activities that help children learn. There is evidence from three small cohorts in Jamaica that wide-ranging benefits were visible throughout childhood and even into adulthood, including gains in education, mental health and income and reductions in violent behaviour.⁶⁸

The Child Resiliency Programme (CRP) is an after-school intervention geared at improving the literacy skills of children whose reading is below grade level and who are associated with delinquency and high-risk behaviours, and have suffered sexual, emotional and physical abuse and neglect. The intervention involves parents, churches, schools and communities in trying 'to build a broad enough network for the protection of young children'.⁶⁹

The CRP has not been subjected to a rigorous evaluation, but assessment of enrolment profiles and performance across components show low levels of involvement in physical conflicts, clear identification of goals and higher self-esteem on the part of beneficiaries. One of the challenges, however, is selecting which candidates to

include, given the widespread need for the intervention, and the generally low level of education quality and capacity in the poorer parts of the country.

A lot of focus in programming in Jamaica has been placed on reducing risk factors very early in the development cycle of children. This effort should cut across the home, community and school environments so as to factor parental and peer influences on pro- and anti-social behaviour, and so that programmes align with the initiatives under reordering of gender norms (see the earlier section).

And, increasingly, the emphasis on making schools safe and secure for children's development has been evolving away from an initial focus on physical security features, such as fencing and perimeter walls, towards creating an educational environment that fosters peaceful societies. The Change from Within project, a collaboration between PMI, the JCF and the Ministry of Education is one example.

The Ministry of Education produced security and safety policy guidelines in 2015 that articulate a set of minimum standards for the implementation of a zero-tolerance strategy towards violence. The ministry has also produced guidelines on specific topics, for example the management of substance misuse in the school system, bullying, human trafficking and cybercrime. A criticism is that guidelines have relied excessively on law enforcement and criminal justice approaches, using language that is overly punitive, and that they should be reviewed for gender sensitivity and more clarity regarding proposals to reduce the use of physical force, such as using a 'limited pat-down' on students. Another criticism levied at the strategy is that it describes approaches that are apparently weighted more towards protecting educators and school administration than the students.

Plans for a new safer school policy are in the process of being approved by parliament, which is intended to provide a comprehensive approach that encompasses the different mandates and topics that are currently dealt with in separate guidance documents. The policy is also expected to reference updating legislation governing the protection of children. It is hoped that the new guidance would continue focus on integrating government led approaches with civil society initiatives that compliment the formal education system, including support for grassroots community-based initiatives within an integrated approach.

The strategy should also ensure a holistic approach that reinforces other social intervention priorities, as it is clear that the more promising initiatives seek to enrich educational establishments as collaborative and inclusive social centres, offering a benefit to the community as a whole, rather than exclusively targeting individual at-risk youth within the school environment. New community spaces and reconfigured spaces within communities are much needed resources in inner-city communities in Jamaica. Often there are places that serve multi-functional roles, such as for meeting venues of different community-based organizations. These facilities are sometimes under-financed or lack sustainable financial plans for their maintenance, and consequently fail to deliver returns for residents.

Finally, funding will be key for state-led and civil society-led programmes. Providing capacity-building, coordination and flexible funding mechanisms to support these initiatives would offer benefits for sustainability and scalability.

In Jamaica, there are a myriad of services to support children. However, challenges of scaling and funding hamper resilience support.

Mentorship and education enrichment in Elsie's River, South Africa⁷⁰

Elsie's River and Ravensmead are residential and commercial areas in Cape Town, South Africa, that are plagued by severe unemployment, chronic poverty and social pathologies, particularly gangsterism. The local community live amid a permanent sense of personal insecurity and lack of safety across all age groups, which permeates all spheres of civil society. Residents are exposed to acts of violence and criminality on a near daily basis: the murder rate in these urban areas is estimated to be 90 per 100 000, which is extraordinarily high.⁷¹

South Africa is confronted by a crisis in terms of the quality of its state education. This has been repeatedly confirmed in international benchmark studies, in which South African learners in government schools underperform significantly in reading and mathematical proficiency. In 2011, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study showed that South African learners had the lowest performance among all 21 middle-income countries that participated in the study. Results of diagnostic tests carried out by maths tutoring service Brighter Futures involving more than 8 000 high-school learners in 2017 and 2019 showed that concepts such as multiplication from as early as grade 3 are not properly mastered. Similarly, standardized tests done in the last decade show that around 85% of grade 4 learners in South Africa cannot read with comprehension.⁷²

MathMoms is a grassroots civil-society initiative that developed in Elsie's River in response to the twin threats of weak social investments and high levels of violence. MathMoms aims to offer average-performing grade 2 and 3 foundation-phase learners a firm footing in basic mathematics to facilitate the successful negotiation of the subsequent years of this subject. This is achieved through weekly contact of learners of these grades with women from the area. The women are trained in basic mathematic competency by

professional mathematic consultants and supported by MathMentors. Besides teaching principles of mathematics, the MathMoms also act as 'mothers' to these children, sometimes acting *in loco parentis*.

The provision of emotional support is in line with the MathMoms philosophy of building positive and wholesome relationships as well as resilience. A dedicated room in the school is used where children, usually around four in total, form small learning webs, with one 'MathMom' as instructor and facilitator.

Each contact session is 45 minutes, of which the first few moments are used as a mindfulness exercise.

This approach ensures a relaxed environment that establishes an association of enjoyment with mathematics, rather than one of anxiety. The participating learners are selected by the school (mathematics) teacher.

In addition to the learners who are selected by teachers in the formal school system, the women selected to teach the programme are also direct beneficiaries. These are often low-income women with different levels of formal education, and professional qualifications and experience. The lowest formal qualification of a mother was grade 8, and many have no formal professional experience. They are often as traumatized and socially marginalized as the children living in these communities whom they teach. It is envisaged that through their experience in the training and interaction within the school ecology, they will develop enhanced levels of confidence and improved self-esteem, in addition to the technical skills, while becoming socially more integrated and generally empowered.

MathMoms describe their approach as follows: 'We begin [the transformation of communities] by shifting our attention from the problems of community to the possibility of community,' creating 'a structure of belonging'. Strong communities have social



Participants of the MathMoms programme, South Africa. © MathMoms

capital – a shared sense of belonging, a valuing of interdependence, and hospitality and affection. The focus of the MathMoms programme is on unlocking the massive potential and talents in these communities that are currently suppressed due to social exclusion and lack of opportunity.

A 2019 evaluation of the intervention showed that the MathMoms programme has had a proven ability to increase the quality of students' academic performance, and has also resulted in benefits for the emotional well-being of the participants of the programme – not only for the school learner, but also for the women, the mentors and the mathematics teachers overseeing the programme.

MathMoms is ultimately a small programme, targeted at one of the most troubled, violent and poorest places in South Africa. It will offer only an incremental benefit – a wider set of reforms and interventions needs to take place nationally, regionally and locally to address violence and improve the quality of the South African education system. But the programme's strengths derive from the fact that it is an organic, grassroots initiative that was born from and remains embedded in the community and civil society.

Although they struggle to attract funding, these types of programmes can offer the greatest sustainability, have the strongest legitimacy and buy-in from target populations and should be fostered within an integrated and holistic approach.



Ensuring children remain and thrive in school should be a priority in Jamaica. © Anthony Asael/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images

Selected conditions for success in Jamaica

1. A policy for safe schools is a much-needed framework in Jamaica and should be approved and adopted urgently. The policy has to be guided by updated laws but it should also have the support of civil society and young people.
2. There are numerous grassroots efforts aimed at boosting school enrichment and in Jamaica they face financial challenges. Duplication efforts in some communities has to be addressed for coordinated support and monitoring.
3. Awareness raising about the trajectory of gang recruitment and membership for youth and at-risk adolescents should take place in schools. This education enhancement should follow a module, benefit from best practice and be subject to evaluations. It can be delivered in partnership with the JCF Community Safety and Security branch.
4. Expectations of social interventions and educational enhancement programmes should be realistic. Although these programmes are important and should be sustained, they are battling against a strong current of an embedded gang culture, which is difficult to overcome and results may prove disappointing.



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Ensuring that youth have access to gainful, legitimate employment is critical to, and interconnected with, breaking inter-generation cycles of poverty and reducing the risk that they become drawn into criminal behaviour. Studies have found that participation in youth employment programmes can have a significant impact on reducing the likelihood of youth being arraigned. A 2019 study on the Boston Summer Youth Employment Programme found a decrease in criminal activity six months after the programme ended, suggesting that there may well be long-lasting effects associated with such programmes that change youth behaviour.⁷³

Unemployment is a vulnerability factor in urban areas for crime. Gangs tend to concentrate in low-income areas affected by limited employment opportunities.⁷⁴ Many researchers looking into gangs in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s, for example, have linked this phenomenon to gang members seeking employment and status through drug dealing.⁷⁵

Employment programmes have shown remarkable dividends, which would seem to justify the relatively low financial investment. However, they always need to be embedded in a wider effort to tackle the psychosocial factors that create barriers to employment.⁷⁶ Payment for work or for precursor training has been identified as a critical factor making the difference between successful youth-employment schemes and those that fail. The stipend ensures that participants do not need to seek other employment and it also increases their sense of self-worth.

▲ Levels of youth unemployment in the country are high, increasing their vulnerability to turning to crime. © Andrzej Brown via Unsplash

Jamaica has implemented a number of policy initiatives and public-private partnership schemes to promote youth employment.

Levels of youth unemployment in Jamaica are still very high. Jamaica's unemployment rate may have been trending downwards, and youth unemployment in both rural and urban areas has decreased to around 20%. But this is nonetheless more than double the national rate, and far above global figures. Moreover, the duration of unemployment for youth tends to be long in Jamaica. The International Labour Organization in a 2018 study of Caribbean youth unemployment found that 38% had been unemployed for two years, 23% for between one and two years, and 18% for between six months and a year.⁷⁸

The country has implemented a myriad of policy initiatives and public-private partnership (PPP) schemes to promote youth employment. These have included a US\$40 million World Bank-funded project to small government programmes that helped hundreds of graduates to find jobs. In December 2016, the Partnership for a Prosperous Jamaica agreement was signed by the government, opposition, civil society, the private sector and the trade union movement. The agreement is spearheaded by the National Partnership Council, and one of the five priority areas is economic growth and job creation.⁷⁹ The Development Bank of Jamaica is a designate body for the oversight of PPPs undertaken by the government ministries, and PPPs have support from the highest level of authority in Jamaica.⁸⁰

Below are a few noteworthy interventions involving partnerships. A unique characteristic of Jamaican interventions is the heavy emphasis on public-private partnerships to bring employment readiness and job placement to youth. These initiatives have relied on partnerships between the implementing agency and community actors, such as community development committees and community-based organizations. These employment efforts are organized under two categories: general schemes that are available to all young people in Jamaica, and schemes that are targeted specifically at youth who are marginalized.

The most notable of the programmes designed for at-risk youth is the Citizen Security Initiative, started in 2006 and funded by a J\$200 million grant by the former Department for International Development of the UK government.⁸¹ The project was specifically intended to provide a peace dividend in communities secured after state security operations. A study at the time found that the employment opportunities offered through the initiative appealed more to women, and that more could be done to provide opportunities appealing to males. Another significant finding from that report was the inability of participants to retain jobs because they were not adequately prepared for the work environment, and a key takeaway from the Citizen Security Initiative experience was the need to ensure that employment programmes were better aligned with the needs of the labour market.

The earlier experiences showed that youth employment efforts had been extremely fragmented among different projects and government departments. After 2010, employment efforts became more targeted, often honing in on the 50 communities identified by the CSJP and the CRP, run by the Planning Institute of Jamaica. CSJP-funded activities built partnerships with more than 100 organizations for job placement and at least 41 organizations for an employee internship programme. Unlike other initiatives, the CSJP partnering organizations were public and private, although a large proportion were public, drawing criticism that these may provide

less employability opportunities and skills development. That said, a criticism of the programmes that had relied heavily on PPPs was that the private component sometimes failed to deliver as expected.

Participants in the CSJP were also slow to move on from the initial training and skills development phase into the programme stage because they apparently had not progressed enough or acquired the requisite skills to reach this stage.⁸² Reporting on the project also found that although the more focused geographical approach has promoted better coordination, challenges remain, including the fact there are too many projects that have similar goals in one community. At the time of writing, the results of the CSJP III are not yet available, so there is no clear indication of how effective the placement and life-skills programmes have been.

Some employment and entrepreneurship programmes have been initiated by groups such as the PMI in the context of interrupting gang membership and providing alternative pathways for young people. (The PMI, for example, had a project that supported former gang members in establishing small poultry farms.) But these programmes were not sustained because of financing challenges on the part of the PMI, creating a very damaging dynamic where nascent enterprises collapsed, and youth returned to gangs.

Jamaica's experiences with job-creation programmes are a stark contrast to the successful case, explored below, of Papua New Guinea's Urban Youth Employment Project, which focuses on a 'full service', from vocational training to subsidized job placements with regular payments. The summer job programmes in the US, also examined below, reinforce the importance of early interventions for job programmes – namely, how such programmes should reach youth before they drop out of school, a critical juncture after which it becomes harder for social workers to make contact with them.

The experiences also highlight the need to focus on the demand side of the employment equation, in order to ensure that youth-employment programmes are effective. If youth complete the training programme but do not have skills needed by the local employment market, then expectations will have been raised that cannot be met, creating further disenfranchisement. Employer engagement and labour-market surveys should therefore underpin the design of youth-employment programmes, and an ongoing investment in good data should provide the evidence basis to justify and expand successful programmes. In both of the programmes cited below, their evaluations noted that the ability to document improvements for the participants and the second-order benefits on crime, security and the community have been major factors in ensuring that the programmes had political support, were able to secure financing to continue and had the momentum to expand.

Youth-employment project in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea⁸³

Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea, has one of the highest rates of homicide in the world, with a murder rate in excess of 54/100 000. Violent crime is synonymous with the *raskol* gangs, who carry out theft, extortion and robbery across the city, targeted both at foreigners and local people and businesses. An average week in Port Moresby consists of three murders, four rapes and 30 car jackings.⁸⁴

More than half the population of Papua New Guinea are under 24, and youth unemployment is extremely high – in 2011, only 8% of youth between 15 and 24 years old were in employment, and a huge portion had never experienced formal employment. To address this issue, the Urban Youth Employment Project was set up with a mandate to improve employment opportunities, earning potential and living standards for urban youth between the ages of 16 and 25 in Port Moresby. The programme ran for seven years, from late 2012 to mid-2019.

The programme provided a ‘full service’ intervention that targeted long-term unemployed youth through vocational training, job matching and fully subsidized work placements. Participants were given small, regular income payments throughout their enrolment in the programme to reduce dropout rates.

The programme targeted both men and women – an important advancement in a country where women traditionally do not work outside of the home, and where domestic and sexual violence are rife. Only 28% of women were represented in formal employment, compared to 68% of men, and more than 60% of women report having been subject to physical or sexual violence.

The programme provided participants firstly with skills training – a combination of life skills and professional skills – and then with short-term subsidized employment in one of two streams. The first stream was a public-works programme called the Youth

Jobs Corp, where participants engaged in low-skill activities to improve their community, such as cleaning, landscaping, painting public spaces, and paving and maintaining roads. Those who completed this phase graduated into the second stream of the programme, which entailed on-the-job training. Participants first received 20 days of pre-employment training before entering a five-month internship programme with pre-selected businesses or public companies that had partnered with the programme. For both streams, the wages for the youth participants was paid by the programme.

Of the 24 000 youth who graduated through the programme, 70% reported never having been employed before; 33% had never attended high school; 35% had been involved in a crime; and 74% had never had a bank account. By the end of the programme, 41% were in full-time employment and 33% were actively seeking employment, expressing confidence in their skills and employability. Around 50% reported increased interest in pursuing additional education and training following the programme, and 5% were already enrolled. From the employers’ perspective, 97% were reporting that programme participants were fully qualified for a full-time job.

In addition, there were also demonstrable secondary benefits in reducing crime and violence: 85% of community members in project locations reported that crime and violence had fallen because of the project. The percentage of participants reporting participation in criminal or violent acts, or knowledge of people affected by crime or violence, fell by nearly 10% during the project lifespan, and reports of incidents where the participants had used threat or force with someone was cut by half. Participants reported a far higher rate of happiness and greater self-esteem than the control group, as well as a changed and improved attitude towards gender relations.

Summer-employment programmes in the US



Participants of the One Summer Chicago programme in the US. © One Summer Chicago

One programme designed to promote summer youth employment in marginalized areas in New York City served 34 000 youth per year between 2005 and 2008 (at the time the largest summer jobs programme in the US) and resulted in a 10% drop in incarceration and an 18% drop in mortality rates among youth. A similar programme in Chicago in 2012 and 2013 saw even more positive results. The One Summer Chicago Plus programme, which was only a six-week initiative, led to a 43% drop in violent-crime arrests over 16 months. The impact was sustained, as a later evaluation showed similar results two years later. Another programme that provided jobs for youth in the juvenile justice system found that the programme reduced violent crime arrests by 33% and significantly improved future employment outcomes for participants.⁸⁵

Summer youth-employment schemes place eligible youth, typically from low-income families in

disadvantaged neighbourhoods, in part-time, minimum-wage jobs with a local government agency, community organization or business for the summer school holiday. Some programmes also offer additional skills-building training, mentorship or life-skills workshops in parallel. The New York programme cost per participant was less than US\$1 500. The youth in the programme were paid on average around US\$1 100 for their work.

The summer programmes are judged as being particularly successful because they run in the holidays, when the targeted youth are not in school or otherwise employed. They also reach youth before they may drop out of school, after which they become far harder to access through social interventions. The programmes were also evaluated as having longer-term benefits in socializing and helping to mature youth in ways that endure beyond their participation in the programme.⁸⁶

Selected conditions for success in Jamaica

The conditions listed below are not exhaustive but are important in terms of the expectations of a partnership that seeks to boost youth employment and opportunities for at-risk youth.

- 1.** There has to be an understanding of sacrifices, gains and rewards associated with any partnership. Given Jamaica's history with partnerships, this is critical and must be known and shared in the partnership. Roles and responsibilities have to be defined between government, the private sector, civil society and trade unions. The conditions for the partnership – such as how long a programme is likely to run for and the resource burden or spread – have to be known.
- 2.** Addressing youth employment and opportunities can be multidimensional and is a multi-stakeholder problem. It requires clear guidelines for the intensive coordination of labour and supply-side market interventions, and realistic expectations have to be set with business partners and youth participants before programmes begin.
- 3.** The expansion of credit facilities and access to grants catering for people who wish to start their own business is an important alternative pathway for young people to take ownership of their employment. But it requires strengthening.
- 4.** Youth employment and job opportunities for youth have to include a component addressing cognition and self-regulation, so that they are able to develop goal orientation capacities, which is key to resilience. This is vital for them to overcome difficulties that may arise while they are being prepared for the reward system in pro-social pathways.
- 5.** Employment programmes targeting youth, especially those in street and criminal gangs, have to be properly resourced, consistent and sustained.



COMMUNITY POLICING

Governments in Jamaica have long experimented with policing approaches that include a strong community focus. The principle of community-based policing (CBP) gained momentum in the 1990s alongside modernization efforts within the JCF. CBP is an organizational strategy that advocates for partnership between the police and citizens.⁸⁷ Policing in partnership with the community in Jamaica has three main dimensions: problem solving, community partnership and transformation of policing institutions (or organizational transformation).⁸⁸

Between 1993 and 2009, various efforts to strengthen CBP were put forward by the JCF and external funding agencies. One key document was the 2005–2008 JCF Strategic Review. Practices that subsequently developed included providing police officers with basic training in CBP and training for the reinforcement and transition of CBP from a pilot initiative to countrywide implementation in 2009.⁸⁹

A central challenge facing Jamaica's community policing efforts has been the scaling up of small or geographically restricted projects to a wider partnering with local communities. The JCF manual on CBP emphasizes that CBP is not 'a specialist function' that is 'reserved for some members of the organization':

The model adopted by the Constabulary is one that requires the commitment of all members. Personnel in geographic and non-geographic formations are essential to the operationalization of CBP. Each encounter among internal stakeholders and with citizens and stakeholders should be aimed at strengthening partnership, problem solving and supporting the changes required by the CBP style of policing regardless of where the member is based.⁹⁰

▲
Men discuss a programmed event with police in St. Thomas, Jamaica. Positive engagement between police and citizens enhances public-safety policies.

© Phil Clarke Hill/In Pictures via Getty Images

Reforming the police is not exclusively a technical process: it is also a profoundly political one.

A few communities in urban and rural areas in the parishes of Kingston, St. Andrew and St. James were the recipients of the first CBP experiments, which began in the 1990s. These included Gold Street in Southside and Dunkirk in Brown's Town in 1996; Grants Pen (2002–2005); and Flankers (St. James) in 2007.

The principle of community policing and the projects to implement it in practice have received significant support by external development agencies, especially USAID and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (which later became the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office). Aid was provided for the resourcing and implementation of the CBP organizational strategy. The JCF has benefited from the placement of police experts in its ranks as consultants. This support, in turn, strengthened political will and leadership around the issue, leading to the creation of a Community Safety and Security policy, establishment of a Community Safety and Security Branch and an Assistant Commissioner of Police responsible for CBP in 2006.⁹¹ In order to facilitate the spread of community policing approaches through the ranks of the police, CBP training is now included in the training of all police officers in all 19 police divisions.⁹²

These experiments during the 1990s and 2000s produced temporary improvements in security, but they were geographically limited and lost steam over time.⁹³ The 2009 Assessment of Community Security and Transformation Programmes in Jamaica recognized that linkages between community policing and other transformation programmes were slow. While policy documents emphasize the importance of CBP as a philosophy, officers still have a 'narrower understanding of the objectives of community policing' and rather than being perceived as an institutional pillar of the police, CBP was seen as a programme with its own officers.⁹⁴ Public perception supported this, as citizens did not see uniformity across the force in the practice of CBP. The Jamaican model of policing with the community has still had no evaluation to identify how it has contributed to crime increases or decreases (i.e. external impact) or improved behaviour of staff exposed to CBP (internal impact). This lack of publicly available data or evaluation makes it difficult to understand the value in the pursuit of transforming the JCF or lowering rates of violent crime.

The JCF has used various kinds of patrol tactics and partnerships with civil society groups in order to increase engagement with communities, including partnering with local neighbourhood-watch groups, and creating local police youth clubs, organizing community forums and undertaking social interventions. They have also experimented with local patrols on foot or by bicycle in an attempt to make the police service more accessible and bring it closer to the community. Despite the intensity of such projects, documented behavioural change among police officers was slow. The approach was neither able to reduce the presence of street gangs and entrepreneurial criminal activities in key communities, nor provide better safety and security to residents. Citizens in some crime-affected areas still do not expect the police to show up – depending on the type of incident being reported or its location. (For example, a fifth of Jamaicans believe that the police would take three hours to arrive, or would never arrive at all, in the event of their house being burgled.⁹⁵) New legislation transforming the JCF from a 'force' to a 'service', focusing more on collaboration with civil society, has been stalled.

In recent times, there have been some small successes in promoting legislation aimed at suppressing organized crime, in the form of the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Act 2014, and the Major Organized Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency Act 2018. One policy that has been prominent in the national debate is the announcement of states of emergency and the creation of zones of special operations (legislated for by the Special Security and Community Development Measures) in 2017. These provide for joint military and police interventions in violent areas, which are antithetical to the ethos of community policing.⁹⁶

ZOSO, as the special operations initiative is commonly known, was the first piece of legislation to focus on the integration of social and security interventions for specific areas. The initiative stipulates the convening of a social intervention committee comprising the joint security command, other government agencies and community representatives. The joint police–military component entrenches the practice of such security partnerships normally seen in states of emergency in cases where crime levels are beyond the normal JCF’s capacity to control. Strategies like ZOSO are yet to undergo rigorous evaluations.⁹⁷

To date, reports have been mixed about the interventions, which have taken place in the communities of Denham Town,⁹⁸ Mount Salem,⁹⁹ Greenwich Town and August Town. In the case of Denham Town, for instance, data for the period 2016–2019 shows no sizeable reduction in homicides and shootings. In the VPA study of 2017–2018 mentioned earlier, police officers in St. James, where a state of emergency was in force, could not confirm if criminals had fled to Kingston because of the police interventions in communities in the parish, but were able to confirm that perpetrator displacement occurred as criminals moved to other communities in the parish where they had kinship ties.¹⁰⁰ This has to be interpreted cautiously, however, because of pressures such as internal gang feuds and splintering, which were happening at the time. The reason for the criminals’ movement may therefore not necessarily be attributable to a joint police–military presence in a given area.

Looking ahead, the new legislation for the JCF should reinforce a fair, service-oriented approach to dealing with people in contexts where they experience threats to their security. It should also signal for Jamaicans the legislated move by the JCF away from a paramilitary institution to a service-focused organization.

The new legislation is critical to bringing about institutional change in the police and disrupting the culture of resorting to use of force and other coercive approaches on the part of police officers. The legislation would also support the likely expansion of Jamaica Eye, a surveillance strategy that has seen over 500 CCTV cameras installed in urban centres across the island.¹⁰¹ To have greater geographical coverage, Jamaica Eye requires not only partnership but, more importantly, also a perception of transparency and accountability regarding how data collected by the cameras is managed. While the JCF has made significant strides in increasing its focus on citizen needs, vast sections of the institution still operate with a repressive focus. The new Act would enable new, consistent reference points by JCF and citizens, replacing reference points where ‘protection of the peace’ and a paramilitary culture are the operational norm.



An active and engaged citizenry can contribute towards an accountable police service. Above, a Peace Management Initiative meeting in St. James. © David Danelo

Jamaica's experience has also demonstrated that reforming the police is not exclusively a technical process: it is also a profoundly political one. The bipartisan nature of the Consensus document has the potential to create a new momentum and an opportunity for unprecedented efficacy in these efforts. To achieve these returns will necessitate addressing corruption and promoting accountability, as shortcomings in these areas undermine the integrity of the police force and its ability to achieve sustainable peace in the communities – not to mention broader investigations into serious and organized crime.

The Consensus document has laid out some strong steps that need to be taken to create a legislative architecture required to address police corruption. This needs to be followed up with mechanisms to improve internal accountability and ensure political independence for the police.

Global experience highlights that enforcement patterns – and the messaging sent by enforcement – have long been shown to be critical to deterring certain violent practices, while providing incentives for alternative behaviour.¹⁰² Citizens play a key role in ensuring their own security, and the success of many public-safety policies is predicated on positive engagement between police and the wider population.¹⁰³

In Jamaica, the relationship between the police and the public needs to change and, for that reason, mechanisms that bring the police and the community closer together to work in partnership must be achieved if the overall effort is to be successful. In addition, it is crucial to develop and institutionalize mechanisms of civilian oversight – and thus ensure the police is a service that is accountable to citizens.

Community policing by quadrants in Colombia

In 2010, the Colombian government issued a nationwide policy to change the way the police force operated in several large and medium-sized cities (initially, eight cities were targeted; more were included later). The National Plan for Community Policing by Quadrants (PNVCC, from the Spanish) has become one of the most prominent examples of community policing. It uses an approach to urban security that focuses on constant interaction between police officers and local communities, in which local inhabitants have a significant role in setting law-enforcement priorities.¹⁰⁴ Among many community-policing initiatives implemented in Latin America during the past two decades, Colombia's PNVCC programme stands out for its geographical spread and continuity.

The policing-by-quadrants programme represented a major shift in policing tactics and strategy for Colombia, a country where law enforcement had for decades been considered an integral part of the armed conflict against left-wing guerrilla groups, such as FARC and ELN. This policing initiative not only encourages regular, face-to-face interaction with local inhabitants but makes it almost inevitable, since police officers are assigned to the same 'quadrant' (a small neighbourhood or part of a neighbourhood) over long periods of time – usually years – in a patrol role.¹⁰⁵ The purpose of this closer and more regular proximity to communities is not just to improve relations but to allow officers to understand the types and drivers of crime in that particular area. With that information, together with a digital system of geo-referenced data on crime updated on a weekly basis, officers were tasked with designing tailor-made interventions to address crime problems.¹⁰⁶ These interventions were able to enlist cooperation with other state agencies to improve public services beyond policing.¹⁰⁷

The quadrants programme also successfully conceived ways to translate the theory into the day-to-day practice of police officers on the beat. One such mechanism was the form known as 'minimum required actions table', which required officers in a quadrant to set goals and register subsequent actions taken and results.¹⁰⁸ Accompanying these proactive and planning roles, the quadrants programme also involved another important shift, this time in policing management:

it allowed for decentralization of planning and decisions. Decentralization was reflected in the physical implementation of police substations, known as Immediate Attention Centres, allowing for a larger spread of police centres.

This shift towards a proactive and decentralized format represented a break from the traditional policing approach in Colombia (as in most of Latin America) based on reaction to crimes or repression of criminal groups or suspects. Colombia's community-policing initiative aimed, instead, to be preventative, as opposed to reactive (and often violent) in approach.¹⁰⁹

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ITS CHALLENGES

Colombia's path towards a more community-oriented policing model was facilitated by the devolution of significant powers over public security to local governments through the 1991 Constitution.¹¹⁰ Many large and medium-sized cities in Colombia now have a Security Secretariat – an important entity when it comes to planning strategies and coordinating different state institutions in the fight against crime. National police reform passed in 1993 provided the critical impetus for a shift from a military-style police force to a more citizen-oriented service. The legislation established the National Council for Citizen Security and Policing, with a national police commissioner serving as a civilian coordinator for a force accustomed to a context of internal armed conflict.¹¹¹

The 1993 police reform was driven not only by a shifting understanding of the role of police in Latin America around that time (and continuing over the following decades), but also by an appalling episode: in February 1993, an underage girl was raped and killed inside a Bogotá police station, sparking widespread indignation.¹¹² Alongside the much-needed reform came a programme called Community Participation, implementing a series of engagements between officers and local communities.¹¹³ This policy evolved into the Community Policing programme of 2003, which provided for police officers to regularly patrol specific quadrants within each city. These programmes were the main policy roots of the national policing by quadrants strategy implemented in 2010 (PNVCC) and its successor, the Community Policing by Quadrants Model, beginning in 2013.¹¹⁴

A key aspect sustaining community policing in Colombia over the past decade has been its capacity to serve as a bridge between low-income communities (which are often marginalized in terms of public-service provision and economic prosperity) and other state institutions. At least on paper, police officers help to channel complaints and requests, often regarding public-service provision in poorly serviced communities, to authorities in local or national governments.¹¹⁵ The practical application of this principle, however, has been vague and left to interpretation by officers on a case-by-case basis. The original strategy paper lays out the 'steps to conduct adequate inter-agency coordination', which include 'recognizing costs and benefits of the coordination' as well as 'identifying possible obstacles'.¹¹⁶ The process, therefore, anticipates difficulties in this interaction, but is less clear about how to overcome them.

The policing-by-quadrants model achieved tangible success in many aspects of public security. An independent evaluation of the programme in 2012 (two years after it began) showed implementation was fairly consistent: 70% of police stations in the eight initial cities followed the PNVCC, and 79% of the officers in those stations had direct interactions with local dwellers through joint planning or door-to-door visits. The evaluation also estimated that the PNVCC was responsible for 18% of the fall in homicides in the eight cities during the initial year.

Over time, however, some flaws in the policing-by-quadrants model would become clear. From the start, joint action alongside other state agencies to tackle socio-economic factors facilitating crime was the most challenging aspect: although the vast majority (67%) of officers recognized the importance of inter-agency cooperation, only 49% implemented any joint projects with other government actors.¹¹⁷

This challenge would only become more obvious over time. Regular police presence in areas that otherwise lacked public services has harmed relations with such communities, who came to feel more like a target than a partner of the police.¹¹⁸ Residents in low-income areas of Cali, for instance, have come to distrust the police in its capacity to address social problems, particularly in relation to youth. Residents of some neighbourhoods have voiced concerns that the police know the places of drug retail and the identities of those responsible but refrain from acting, possibly due to bribes.¹¹⁹ Despite these flaws, the policing-by-quadrants model is still considered a positive shift from the old, more militarized model of policing.

Recent events in Colombia have shown, however, that community policing does not exclude other policing tactics that contradict and harm the aim of strengthening relations with socially marginalized populations. The death of a man in police custody in Bogotá in September 2020, together with a video showing him being repeatedly tasered by police, sparked widespread protests, some of which turned violent. Within two days, dozens of police stations had been set on fire or broken into, and eight people were killed during protests.¹²⁰ This appalling episode of police violence is a reminder that community policing needs to be a holistic effort, with non-committed factions of the force potentially undermining the entire strategy.

While several Colombian cities remain committed to the quadrant model, other police operations and ad hoc arrests continue to take place. The culture of heavy-handed policing can be hard to overcome in some sections of the force – and indeed cultural changes among officers has been a major challenge for police-reform programmes in several other countries.

Selected conditions for success in Jamaica

The issue of community policing is long and contentious, and the preconditions for success are manifold. The following few points focus on the specific issue of engagement with civil society and social interventions, congruent with the rest of this paper.

1. Constant evaluation of community policing is required as a core element of maintaining the trust and consensus of the community. Data from risk and conflict analysis, perception surveys, victimization surveys and incident reports can feed into this evaluation.¹²¹
2. Police agencies should devote more attention to identifying and directly addressing the top security problems in their immediate geographical area in order to increase the effectiveness of the police service. Failure to respond to crimes of concern to the community can erode citizen trust and confidence. A greater focus on problem solving can help overcome these hurdles. This should include addressing perceptions of unfairness and lack of transparency within the JCF.
3. Surveillance strategies, such as Jamaica Eye, may be effective in capturing criminal activities, but also require systems that can deliver a swift response. Trust building in this new direction of policing with citizens and their communities has to be participatory in nature, allowing the police and community to decide jointly on the process.¹²²
4. Stronger and clearer structures for citizen participation in public security would help locals engage with the police, though it would need to ensure a formal system by which civilian-police relations are channeled and managed.



MEASURING PROGRESS

▲ In order to achieve public security, cooperation between government bodies is essential.

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The main challenge when it comes to measuring progress in the core objectives of Jamaica's National Consensus on Crime is likely to be the complexity of the policy concepts involved. Each priority area cited in the Consensus involves action involving several spheres of government and civil society. For instance, community regeneration, as is illustrated above, has involved policies related to urban planning, infrastructure building and public-service provision, in close coordination with the security bodies (police and sometimes armed forces). Another major challenge will be to measure the coordination between the different priority areas laid out in the Consensus and between the different spheres of stakeholders (i.e. national and local government, civil society and the private sector).

These challenges are by no means unique to Jamaica – there is widespread consensus that public security is essentially a multidimensional effort that prescribes cooperation and a 'whole of government approach'.¹²³ For instance, whereas measuring progress is relatively simple when it comes to burglary – due to straightforward police statistics for this crime category and the uncomplicated measures to counter it – the picture is much more complex when it comes to violence prevention.¹²⁴ An important reason why this is so is that prevention of armed violence involves partnerships between institutions with widely different views and practices – the police, schools, local governments, etc.¹²⁵ This multidimensional element is clearly present in the Consensus, but will nonetheless require coordination and complementarity between several spheres of policy action combined with information and data from academic knowledge.

Global lessons that have been learnt to overcome the joint challenges of complexity and coordination involve embedding the measurement of progress into the planning of security policies as well as maximizing the efficiency of data analysis. The former means that measuring progress will involve identifying indicators and actors to collect data on multiple policy areas. The latter requirement, the efficiency of data analysis, means that a combination of indicators drawing from different spheres of policy action will need to be combined. These challenges will probably not require significant further investment, but they do need careful planning and coordination.

Planning of indicators from an early stage of the multiple projects involved in the Consensus would help avoid gaps in the measurement of policy areas. For instance, governments usually have reliable data on homicides but measuring attention to at-risk youth will probably involve indicators that may be harder to collect or not consistently collected across the country, such as youth unemployment, gang membership, illegal drug consumption, etc. The UN Development Programme has recommended 'proxy measures' to 'act as a substitute when it is not possible to measure the desired outcome directly'.¹²⁶ This could involve interviewing a selection of community members about a certain issue if community-wide data or surveys are not available or viable.¹²⁷ Interviews with community leaders or other prominent local figures can also provide qualitative data when quantitative indicators are not available.¹²⁸

During the virtual meetings organized as part of this project, participants emphasized the need for indicators in addition to homicides, which tends to be a more common and public number. It was suggested that more time should be spent on measuring 'softer' issues, like the percentage of children that can express their emotions, such as grief (which was cited as a key proxy for minors' predisposition towards crime), as well as how many adults are able to care for a vulnerable minor. There was a sentiment among some participants that researchers spend too much time measuring aggressive variables related to violent crime, such as gun possession and homicides.

If planning the data collection and indicators is critical for later measurement, the analysis of material coming out of the process is no less important. This is especially true for a cross-governmental effort like the National Consensus on Crime. This effort is intrinsically related to planning. For instance, the UNODC recommends the systematic collection of data throughout projects' duration:

Indicators are best produced not by ad hoc efforts to measure outputs currently of interest, but through the routine registration of basic data on work processes by those carrying them out, and the transfer of key information to centralized databases where the data can be reviewed and analyzed for its broader implications.¹²⁹

There are different layers of complexity when it comes to analyzing data related to public security. The first layer relates to the geographies of crime, especially the contrast between national or regional indicators, such as homicides and other crime statistics, and the micro level, which means the local contexts within specific neighbourhoods, slums or other sub-municipal or rural areas. For instance, city-wide data might mask the concentration of highly organized crime forming in one particular urban area.¹³⁰ Another layer is the collaboration, in the spirit of the



Building the community into intervention programmes increases resilience. © Stuart Hannagan/Getty Images

Consensus, between state and non-state actors such as civil society organizations and businesses. While the variety of actors reinforces the need for coordination and exchange of data, it also increases the capabilities at the disposal of the Consensus. Organizations, including academia, can provide expertise on certain methodologies and disciplines beyond what government agencies could achieve by themselves.¹³¹

In such ambitious undertakings, disaggregated data can help to make evaluation of the different elements of each priority group achievable, to be then combined and analyzed in context. A group of experts advising on the indicators of progress for the ambitious Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals – to promote peaceful and inclusive societies – has proposed a separation between essential and supporting indicators for each policy goal.¹³² Although no indicator individually is sufficient to measure progress in a combined effort such as community regeneration, for example, a combination of smaller (and more achievable) datasets and indicators will help to provide a clearer picture. For instance, the status of infrastructure investment projects, budget spent on low-income urban areas and net increase in access to public services, such as water, sanitation and electricity, may form part of such an assessment. The group of experts advising on Goal 16 have also suggested a separation between output indicators, or the results produced by an institution, and outcome indicators.¹³³ The latter relates to the experience of communities or society as a whole with the institution. This speaks directly to Jamaica's effort in improving the JCF and the need to include not only violence indicators, but also community relations and community policing.



OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

Chronic violence creates a set of negative reinforcing cycles, including compromised human development, environmental degradation, weakened public health and a proclivity to organized crime and illicit trade, all of which exacerbate the systemic conditions that promote further violence. It threatens the capacity of individuals to respond in positive ways to the constant shocks or stressors to which they are exposed, increasing the risks of poor judgement, stress-related illnesses, domestic violence, the weakening of family structures and social fracture. Chronic violence ultimately erodes civic participation, as violence creates barriers – both virtual and actual – between those able to purchase security and those excluded from it; it risks the rise of protectionism from non-state actors such as criminal groups; and prompts vigilantism as a mode of direct justice as people lose faith in the rule of law.¹³⁴

While regional, national and even local specificities shape the nature of responses to the problems of chronic violence, the contemporary evidence basis drawn from examples, experiences and research across the globe suggests a surprisingly common set of conclusions. These span from how the problem is diagnosed and understood to how interventions in response are designed and implemented, and how their success is measured. This section attempts to synthesize those commonalities into a set of 10 overarching principles for response and considers what they mean for the Jamaican context.

▲
Countering chronic violence in Jamaica is essential for resilience to organized crime in the country. © Rock Staar via Unsplash

Ten principles for social intervention

1. Political will

The first and foremost requirement to change a social paradigm in which violence and crime are allowed to perpetuate is political will. This is well demonstrated in Jamaica's National Consensus on Crime document, which has bipartisan support. But political will is not just a simple expression of support: it requires a long-standing commitment and change in mindset to establish the provision of security and development opportunity as an equal right and entitlement.

Examples of best practice show time and again that social interventions that address the motivations and opportunities for crime and violence, and address victims and perpetrators, are essential to a sustainable solution. Criminal-justice and security responses cannot be successful alone; even urban-renewal programmes risk being captured, eroded or destroyed if the social interventions are not pursued simultaneously.

The National Crime Consensus is an excellent, bipartisan foundation on which to build change. If there is to be sustainable change, then Jamaica's road map must have the unwavering support of the current administration and the next one. Those implementing the Consensus should use a data-driven strategy to adapt and innovate, but not fundamentally change course, even when there are setbacks.

It is easy, in a political environment, to use hard language and force in an attempt to demonstrate commitment and action. By contrast, investing in social interventions can be hard to sell, given that interventions usually deliver slow results. But it is essential for politicians to drive the process. Social interventions require being prepared to invest in outreach and coordination while bringing a diverse set of stakeholders to the table at multiple levels. These are functions that leadership alone can fulfil.

The Consensus sets out a threshold, timelines, performance indicators and mechanisms of oversight

for joint police-military deployments. Oversight, in particular, is important to show that the government can operate while remaining accountable to targets. Independent oversight committees, with private sector and civil society membership, can be empowered through formal memoranda of understanding with the government to monitor progress towards set targets, as an example from the Economic Programme Oversight Committee has successfully demonstrated.

2. Integrated approach

The six areas outlined by the Consensus are not to be understood or delivered in isolation from complementary action in justice and security. Neither should they be considered six independent activities.

Instead, global experience suggests that a paradigm shift is required in how the problem is solved. Rather than perceiving violence as a set of discrete problems – e.g. gangs, criminality, political violence, domestic violence – these need to be understood as a systemic phenomenon, with multiple (macro and micro) causes and effects, and which can actively reproduce itself.

To respond to a problem of this nature necessitates breaking down sectoral silos and seeking integrated and interdisciplinary solutions. Coordination and coherence through central planning and the promotion of inclusive information sharing between different sectors is required to ensure that the space does not become fragmented and disjointed. Impact can be increased if all interventions are considered holistically and their synergies can be maximized.

Notwithstanding that sequencing has a critical role to play in influencing behaviour change, a web of different and interdependent development-centric interventions are required to make positive progress towards peace and to achieve a sustainable reduction in levels of violence and crime. These interventions must occur in parallel to

security interventions, if results are to be seen and interventions are to remain sustainable.

In Jamaica the authorities do nominally advance an integrated approach to crime and violence, which is expressed through rhetoric and policy support for prevention, interruption and suppression, including for example in Goal 2 of Vision 2030: that Jamaican Society is Secure, Cohesive and Just. Even the ZOSO is an example of an integrated model, but the local violence-prevention element is often relegated to the periphery. Trust building, a vital input in peace making and peace building, is necessary in a model that seeks to manage clearing, holding and building.

3. Differentiated strategy

Effective solutions require addressing people, opportunities and high-risk places, ensuring that targeted efforts are commensurate with and appropriate for the nature and extent of offending and victimization. Alone, excessively heavy-handed interventions with groups at lower risk of delinquent behaviour can seem punitive and unjust, without tackling co-offending instigators and organized crime offenders, may exacerbate strain on resources and dilute response expectations.

At an operational level, oversight agencies have to be vigilant in ensuring law enforcement personnel behave with respect for people and property in their dealings with civilians. The police policing themselves will not be enough in environments of high violence and low trust.

Ideally, the police should be leading community-security efforts, with the capacity, equipment and integrity to be able to perform their community-policing role without having to rely on military support or military tactics. In addition, the police should have the skills and resources to conduct higher-level and thorough investigations aimed at identifying and interdicting both illicit commodities and the agents who control them, whether in Jamaica or overseas.

In order to prevent the diminution of violence- and crime-control gains, the approach to security

has to change from broad sweeps in vulnerable communities to focused deterrence targeted at the worst offenders. Where focused deterrence is predicated on a strong, nuanced evidence basis and combined with effective police surveillance strategies, crime displacement is expected to be minimal and the crime-control diffusion of benefits greater. Systematic reviews of focused-deterrence applications in different settings support its contribution to a reduction in crime. Interventions to reduce person-based offences by street gangs will not be reduced if those with a long history of violent offending continue to enjoy impunity.¹³⁵

Best practice suggests combinations of cognitive and behavioural efforts across primary, secondary and tertiary levels of intervention to impact the likelihood and status of offending. This has been under-resourced and some of these multidimensional interventions require programmatic funding, such as what would obtain under the CSJP. The ZOSO and SOE measures faced criticism for extended, unconstitutional detention of individuals in the areas under the measures. This has been corroborated in several media reports and comments made by the country's Officer of the Public Defender.¹³⁶ Detentions under the SOE have also been ruled unlawful.¹³⁷ Some detainees, when released, had difficulty finding employment. In other instances, young men who were detained and released felt it was an ongoing cycle of processing, with no referral or sharing of information with stakeholders who could help them make adult transitions. On the other hand, a chasm exists between opportunities provided and expectations of adolescents in mid-career crime trajectories. These expectations regarding income result in opportunities not being taken up and continued joblessness.

It is important to note that before the implementation of the police-military security measures in the last three years of ZOSO and SOEs, officers to be deployed in the areas underwent human rights training, but overall there are still calls for the government to address what seems to be lingering policing excesses, infringing on the rights of citizens.¹³⁸ While survey data suggests citizens' willingness to see a

much tougher approach to crime, more problem-solving collaboration between the police and citizens is needed. Crime Stop is a private sector-led initiative that assists with confidential reporting by citizens on crime incidents, but reporting infrastructure, such as hotlines or calls for service, which could assist with analyzing offending patterns, lacks resources.

4. Community-driven development

Projects that have been implemented successfully have recognized the importance of building community engagement in the priority setting and allocation of resources, and have recognized the need for strengthening community capacity to utilize, manage and maintain assets acquired under projects. In order to ensure buy-in, social or urban-renewal programmes must be community driven and ensure diversity of participation by critical stakeholders in the problem definition, solution design and strategy development.

Building the community into the intervention also increases resilience. A resilient community understands how violent crime has gained power over the community and can demonstrate its resilience in a number of ways and turn back the negative cycle of violence. A resilient society can create and sustain an alternative vision of their society, and build and foster the relationships that oppose the social erosion and fracture created by violence.¹³⁹

Equally, however, civil society and the community need to work in partnership with local authorities and to reinforce them, rather than trying to be independent and disjointed. The importance of understanding the context of local communities includes the local authorities, and integrated engagement with local authorities and building the capacity for state and non-state partnership are critical to sustainability.¹⁴⁰

In Jamaica, gaining input from residents into needs identification and assessments of their community is a long-standing component in the approach to community transformation. Community safety

plans are products of collaboration between the Social Development Commission and community development committees, which are composed of representatives of community-based organizations. The plans direct what is important for funding against resources available in the community. This collaboration method builds on a tradition in Jamaica that appreciates participatory, consultative strategic planning at the community level.

Many of the community plans that are produced in Jamaica identify correlates of violence and crime, but actions are confined to capacities and willingness to adopt a problem-solving collaboration between the police and community members. Because crime types may vary across communities in Jamaica (even when correlates for others are present), the crime-prevention focus of community plans in the immediate and short term are not uniform. All community plans, regardless of crime type, should have resilience indicators for pro-social behaviour reinforcement, which would assist with reducing individual and community-level inabilities to overcome strain and improve collective efficacy. This requires a shift away from interpreting priorities solely as problems (such as unemployment) that need to be addressed.

5. Gender participation

The role of women as change agents – and a renewed emphasis, worldwide, on their position within the value chain – has emerged in seeking to respond to development challenges, including those posed by organized crime. The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women, noting that 'systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the implementation of the agenda is crucial'.¹⁴¹

One of the leading drivers of violence in Jamaica is gender-based violence, and negative familial relations and domestic abuse are a strong causal vector in onset of aggression and offending. Chronic violence is transmitted through generations.

In efforts to achieve social change, women are emerging as figureheads in building community resilience, enabling social cohesion and driving transformation.¹⁴² Community activists repeatedly emphasize the importance of recognizing the multifaceted role women play in both transmitting chronic violence and their potential to resist it. Increasingly, there is recognition of the role women play as a source of resilience to these shocks.¹⁴³

If interventions are going to be effective in breaking this negative cycle and rebuild stronger societal bonds, then women's participation needs to be mainstreamed into every aspect of policy setting, planning, the design of legislation, the allocation of funding and the evaluation of programme success. Ensuring equal gender representation is necessary to prevent inherent gender biases being built into programme design. This requires a top-to-bottom approach, from the representation of women in political office down to the involvement of women's groups in participatory planning and prioritization at the community level.

In Jamaica, women have held leadership positions, including roles in government and the civil service, such as Attorney General, Director of Public Prosecutions, Political Ombudsman and Public Defender, working to influence dynamics that influence criminal activity, though they are often not final decision makers in criminal justice outcomes. Women are also present as change agents and advocates for pro-social pathways at the community level, but rarely have the authority to influence the overall crime and violence intervention picture. There are a few notable NGOs where women are at the helm of violence prevention approaches, and these have been successful in policy change and learning. Eve for Life, Rise Life Management Services, Youth Upliftment Through Employment and Violence Prevention Alliance are noteworthy examples.

However, there has been no recent study on the Jamaican crime and violence setting that empirically establishes a causal link between women's representation (or lack thereof), and levels of crime and violence. This would require a robust panel of data that is not currently available.

6. Data-driven mapping

The interventions that have demonstrated the greatest successes globally are data-driven. These use constant, iterative input of different types of self-reported, administrative and perceptions data to guide their implementation. Data sources need to be multifaceted and extend beyond just homicide and crime data, so that a human-development and well-being approach drives the objectives of programming. This requires a robust set of quantitative and qualitative indicators for identifying, understanding and tracking violence, trauma and related behavioural and attitudinal patterns.¹⁴⁴ More nuanced data, in particular on perceptions, allows interventions to be timed for maximum impact, and for penalties and rewards to be delivered when required.¹⁴⁵ These data sources should include arrest history, violence-related injuries, calls for service, violence interruption, potential shootings data and offender scripting.

The data models demonstrated by the VPA Jamaica Chapter integrate spatial violence-related injury, parish-level socio-economic data and official reported crime statistics to inform an understanding of hotspots of crime and violence. For example, a collaborative project in Kingston between the VPA and the MONA Geospatial Institute maps data from hospitals on violence trauma by location on a weekly basis. This project points towards a number of interesting conclusions, in particular when mapped against physical infrastructure. For example, the data found that there are two major violence hotspots in West Kingston that align with stops on main bus routes. Data such as this therefore allows for targeted prevention activities at points of particular vulnerability. Hospital data also suggests that the police data based on the reporting of crime is vastly undercounting the extent of harm – potentially at a scale of 5:1 – which means the police are capturing only 20% of violent incidents in Jamaica. Nascent evidence from the project indicates a relationship between gang violence and other forms of civil violence – for example, areas under police action might show a lower rate of homicide, but a higher rate of familial or intimate

partner violence. The mapping also demonstrated how homicidal violence, rather than being ended by police incursions into specific communities, is merely displaced.¹⁴⁶

Integrating different forms of data can provide a visual representation of the locations of criminal incidents and helps with the prioritization of policing and targeting for behavioural change. This data needs to be cumulated and analyzed faster, and shared more broadly across policymaking departments in order to ensure that the hotspots and vulnerability profiles can be understood in a timely manner, and policies can be reoriented accordingly.

Jamaica also needs to commit to more robust and regular gang-mapping exercises, which are a norm in most countries and cities where gang violence is problematic. Evidence-led policy has become increasingly the norm in Jamaica, led firstly by a shared and growing understanding of its importance among civil society and government, but also thanks to the guidance and funding from international development agencies. However, much stronger investment and dedication are needed to create the empirical data that can help establish baselines for understanding future patterns.

Much of the data used for decision-making is driven by reported crime and criminal-justice statistics but, as noted, this is limited in frequency, and is dependent on those victims having contact with law enforcement. Opportunities exist for the use of geospatial information systems to promote a better understanding of crime hotspots, if an integration can be achieved between the JCF and the UWI analytical institutes. The Kingston Violence Prevention Board uses an imported and modified Cardiff model, but lacks a working memorandum of understanding to ensure that this data relationship becomes systematic.

Jamaica also has a crime observatory located in the Ministry of National Security. Its functioning relies on cooperation for the sharing of data between the police, the Ministry and other agencies.

7. Programmatic flexibility and capacity for adaptation

Because chronic violence has multiple drivers, and often demonstrates no immediate or necessarily evident link between cause and effect, it requires a set of programmatic interventions and methodologies that can reflect its systemic nature, as well as being able to adapt; privilege prototyping and innovation; learn by trial and error; and adjust and retest strategies and approaches. Some projects and initiatives may not hit the mark, and there should be room to allow them to close off, and for alternative approaches to be proposed in place, under the umbrella of an ongoing, overarching commitment to achieving progress through social intervention.

All reviews of successful initiatives emphasize the need for a 'no such thing as failure' approach to build an environment that encourages innovation and experimentation. Achieving this needs to be built throughout the programme design and in the underpinning of financial and administrative arrangements. All participants – from the leadership to implementing partners and donors – will need to be inculcated in this approach.

The CSJP programme would be a suitable platform for this principle, though the programme entered its sunset phase in 2019. It faced criticism for crime and violence outcomes in a mid-term evaluation, but it also brought to the fore important questions, experiences and lessons associated with implementation of programmes for violence prevention in Jamaica. These have been documented. The CSJP III built on lessons learnt from CSJP I and II, which ran from 2001 to 2007 and from 2009 to 2014, respectively. Among the lessons CSJP III has sought to build on are partnerships with non-governmental organizations and the private sector to achieve behavioural change outcomes associated with employment. Another lesson is the need for holistic treatment of target populations, such as at-risk youth.

8. Funding sufficiency and flexibility

The funding available for violence-prevention measures is typically a very small fraction of that allocated to traditional public-security measures, such as policing, justice and prisons. Greater funding needs to be dedicated to social interventions in absolute and relative terms. Evidence has shown that, when correctly designed in partnership with communities, social interventions can quantifiably reduce the costs and increase efficiency of other investments in enforcement, security and urban renewal.

Good practice in donorship and development emphasizes the importance of sustained, predictable and independent funding that is ring-fenced and cannot be reprioritized or redirected according to political priorities. In this area, the additional requirement is to build flexibility into funding, and for funding organizations to leave space to reorganize their funding criteria, categories and funding envelopes to support complex community work on complex community issues.¹⁴⁷

There have been an ongoing calls from civil society for programmatic or sustained funding for violence and crime-prevention initiatives in Jamaica. Interventions that start and stop pose risks for the types of programmes that are targeted at behavioural change of at-risk youth – in fact they may even strengthen deviant behavior. One of the challenges that social interventions have faced is their relatively high cost per capita, without an obvious impact on violence levels. Global experiments in recognizing the secondary costs of violence – for example on public-health systems – can provide a new justification for sustained funding.

9. Long-term commitment

To achieve genuine and systemic social change is a long-term endeavour. As shown by some of the case studies in this report, results can take a decade or more to manifest. This theme repeats itself through the other points, from political will through

programme design, to financing and administration, but it is worth repeating again.

Achieving an end to crime and violence, and creating the conditions for security and development in the worst-affected communities will take decades. Planning horizons of that length should be built into theories of change, indicators of success and the expectations of all stakeholders involved.

The calls for sustained funding for social interventions are part of the understanding that systemic change is a long-term endeavour. The year of zero homicides in August Town Proper in 2016 was argued as an outcome of sustained complex activities beginning a decade earlier. In that decade, there had been local ownership through peace-building efforts by residents, suppression, gang truces, capacity building in community development committees and infrastructural improvements to student housing and recreational facilities, and the reconstitution of gangs since 2014, to name a few. Simultaneously, a reduction in homicides became evident, culminating in a year of zero homicides.

10. Sustainability strategy

Civil-society engagement has been highlighted as crucial in ensuring that efforts and interventions are sustainable. Establishing structures that will allow multisectoral planning, programming and financing will be key. There are a number of good examples already in Jamaica, where civil society and the state work hand in hand; where the community can support policing efforts; and where private-sector competencies and resources are integrated into an effective collaborative approach. One of the expert group discussions conducted in the course of this paper also highlighted the requirement for crime prevention to be coordinated centrally.

The possibilities for expanding and upscaling social intervention initiatives, as well as formalizing them and empowering them, are manifold, but such initiatives need political commitment from the state

A civil-society-led oversight mechanism and participatory decision-making can rebuild the trust that will be fundamental to a more constructive future.

and its institutions; they need resources (both human and financial); and they need to have a clear link to policymaking and resource allocation, rather than just being consultative. International donors can catalyze and reinforce these efforts through their development financing.

In addition, these kinds of initiatives can play an oversight, monitoring and evaluation role. Given that public trust in institutions can be low – particularly in the communities most affected by crime and violence, and where the perception of corruption and elite impunity is high – a civil-society-led oversight mechanism and participatory decision-making can serve to progressively allay those concerns and rebuild the trust that will be fundamental to a more constructive future.

Financing for development in Jamaica has been channelled in support of the country's development plan, Vision 2030. A Citizen Security Plan was approved in 2019 and within it were built oversight mechanisms, with membership from civil society and the private sector included, to monitor the progress and achievement of outcome indicators against spending. But, as with the discussions around the CSJP programme, questions have been raised about the extent of government uptake and commitment if there is no external funding to support it. The approach to citizen security has been absorbed into the Ministry of National Security, demonstrating political will, but the approach is expected to be significantly scaled down due to lack of funding available to the government.



CONCLUSION: THE CHALLENGE OF AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Combining security and social development is a complex endeavour due to the necessary involvement of, and desirable coordination between, various ministries, government agencies and non-state actors, including the private sector and civil society organizations. In addition, these initiatives, usually classed as 'social interventions' (i.e. they aim at improvements in basic services, infrastructure and social capital in low-income urban areas), need to be integrated with law-enforcement agencies that are accustomed to being the sole face of the state in neighbourhoods affected by crime.

This challenge of achieving an integrated approach has been present in several of the international case studies cited in this report. The discussion of integration in Jamaica is also about the need for social interventions that both seek to improve well-being and have empirical support for decreasing the likelihood for aggression, violence and criminal-justice contact.

The challenge is also related to two other principles of social intervention that have been holding back progress in Jamaica: political will and community participation in public policies. Whereas there is significant emphasis by political leaders on the need to have a multidimensional approach to public security, some initiatives have received much more political and financial support than others. The use of joint police–military intervention, for instance, has been a prominent and frequently employed policy tool.

▲ Social development and security in Jamaica depend on successful coordination between government agencies and non-state actors. © DeAgostini via Getty Images

In contrast, proposed legislation aiming to transition the JCF towards a more community-friendly service is stalling, and social interventions are being defunded. In terms of community engagement, some of the youth employment programmes referred to above display a lack of attention to the coordination of skills and aligning them to job markets in each local context.

Another important pillar for social intervention is gender participation and the inclusion of gender-sensitive perspectives. These have been extremely deficient in Jamaica. Programmes that can be classed as taking a gendered perspective in the country usually involve initiatives to educate young men on parenting skills. Although this is an important undertaking, measures to empower women as agents of change in violent communities have been under-explored and under-served in Jamaica.

Another key lesson that stands out from the cases examined is the critical role played by the timing and planning of social interventions. There is a delicate balance to be struck in implementing social interventions and security policies in parallel. This is complicated by the fact that social interventions can in some cases take many years to produce meaningful results, whereas their implementation requires security on the ground. Therefore, it is clear that law enforcement that is consistent with the community needs highlighted here – and in numerous other studies – is required in order to pave the way for social intervention. Other critical factors, such as funding streams and engagement with local civil society, need to be consistent and operate in parallel, given the importance of each sphere in the public security effort.

One critical issue that has to be given careful thought is the question of good suppression versus bad suppression. The comprehensive approach to addressing gangs requires suppression, but at the same time police excesses that infringe people's constitutional rights should be minimized. One element that has been particularly prominent in the virtual meetings held near the conclusion of this project is the need to build trust between police and communities, and the almost overwhelming challenge of doing so against a backdrop of armed violence.

It is possible that in many places there is a tension between macro-objectives – i.e. reducing homicides at the city level – and micro-level priorities, namely improving people's lives in vulnerable areas. One way to make these two halves of the public security effort more harmonious would be to improve multi-sector coordination and timing – in other words, deploy both policing and social-development components at the same time and in the same spaces. When the police are the only state agents that communities see and have experience of dealing with, they will gain legitimacy among the community only if their presence is accompanied by state interventions. Participants in the virtual discussions have emphasized that the presence of institutions other than the police in vulnerable communities actually improves trust in the police, especially when locals observe improvements in basic service provision.



Bay of Kingston, Jamaica. © Ghislaine Bras via Getty Images

There have been various law enforcement and social interventions to influence crime-prone areas in communities and, especially in the case of the CSJP, to impact youth and adults for pro-social behaviour outcomes. But these kinds of interventions require more resources, need to be scaled up and there has to be popular awareness of them, together with a data-driven approach to understanding and replicating what works in such settings.

There are also other lingering concerns. For example, the targeting of specific areas and communities can sometimes lead to increased use of force, including lethal force on occasion. Participants in the virtual meetings have emphasized the need for a granular understanding of local social conditions in order for authorities to identify individuals in particular vulnerability groups. This would enable them to identify those who need to be recipients of service provision and those who need to be targeted by law enforcement. This relates to police forces' capacity to investigate and build human intelligence. Sometimes police departments in Caribbean contexts have not been able to identify the specific relations between different crime categories or the drivers leading to crime. The absence of such granular information may increase the propensity for use of force as a short-term violence-reduction measure.

In conclusion, achieving the social interventions mandate of the Crime Congress declaration is by no means a small endeavour, or one that is likely to deliver rapid results. It remains, however, a worthwhile and important set of objectives. While the evidence basis on the success of social interventions may be limited, the counter-factual of delivering solely enforcement and justice responses, especially those that employ emergency militarized measures, have been shown conclusively to exacerbate rather than quell crime and violence. A balanced approach is therefore needed, in line with the overarching principles outlined above.

Data-driven law enforcement and social interventions in Jamaica require more resources and more popular awareness.

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ABOUT THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE

The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime is a global network with 500 Network Experts around the world. The Global Initiative provides a platform to promote greater debate and innovative approaches as the building blocks to an inclusive global strategy against organized crime.

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