Introduction

Groblershoop is a small town, population 16,000, located approximately 200 km from Upington in the Northern Cape. The town could be one of any number of small towns in the province, characterised by high levels of unemployment, little formal economy, a dry, arid landscape and underserved in terms of basic infrastructure and services. Unemployment rates in the area are estimated to be as high as 76% (compared to national estimates which place unemployment between 25% and 33%). The town includes a number of communities: Boegoeberg, Gariep, Grootdrink Kleinbegin, Opwag, Topline and Wegdraai.

The residents of Groblershoop live in both formal and informal housing structures. Many of the informal housing structures are made of bamboo wreaths and mud. One in four households uses a pit latrine or portable chemical toilet while one in six households has no toilet. Most homes lack ablution facilities inside the dwelling and residents use a bucket to wash outside. Approximately one-third of residents collect their water from a communal tap.

The formal housing structures are predominately made of brick and corrugated iron roofs, which radiate heat in summer (in an area in which temperatures in excess of 40°C are not uncommon in summer) and make homes colder in winter. In summer, many families sleep outside due to the heat. Most of the social characteristics that are commonly considered as correlates of crime coalesce in Groblershoop: the high levels of unemployment, with little scope for either formal or informal real employment growth in the town; high levels of substance abuse, particularly alcohol; high levels of teen and single mothers and pregnancy rates; poor social services and infrastructure; few recreational facilities; and poor educational outcomes contribute to high levels of interpersonal and property crime.

From youth risk to youth resilience

The risk factors for crime and violence particularly relating to youth have been studied and documented extensively in a wealth of academic and professional literature. These factors have informed the design and implementation of broad social crime prevention and safety policies, various youth policies and project interventions.

Broadly, the most useful understanding of risk factors is conveyed in the ecological approach, which places an individual at the centre of a series of systems that are interconnected. The individual comprises the innermost layer, surrounded by the influence of family, school and peers, and then at the next level extended family, community neighbours and friends, as well as more external factors such as the mass media, social and legal services, etc. Each layer exerts some influence on, and is in turn defined by, the individual at the centre, and determines or helps shape the developmental trajectory of the individual.
Various risk factors exist within each layer and the system as a whole, which when present contribute to the likelihood that a young person will engage in crime and antisocial behaviour as he/she matures.

Most researchers agree there is no single risk factor that leads to child delinquency but rather an often complex combination of conditions and factors which culminate in possible offending. Studies indicate that the greater number of risk factors a child is exposed to, the greater the possibility he or she will display deviant behaviour or commit a crime. The rationale behind many programmes is thus to minimise or mitigate as many of these risk factors as possible, thereby reducing the likelihood that a young person will engage in crime as well as improving the person’s general quality of life.

There has, however, been an increasing move internationally to focus more on identifying the resilience factors within young people that protect them from, or cause them to desist from, engaging in crime. Several reasons can be provided for this.

First, many of the risk factors that exist in the literature and which have informed projects impact on a large proportion of society. But despite the presence of these factors the fact remains that however common crime is, the vast majority of individuals do NOT engage in crime and violence. This suggests that there would be more use in determining what factors protect people from turning to crime, and then targeting these in programmes and policies.

Second, the vast majority of programme design and implementation involves little assessment and prioritisation of which risk factors are more pertinent within a particular context or timeframe. Interventions aimed at addressing single aspects of the environment, or single or a few risk factors, are rolled out with limited impact as other influential factors remain unaddressed. At the same time, debates exist on what constitutes a resilience or protective factor – whether such a factor is simply the converse or absence of a risk factor, or whether resilience exists as discrete variables.

The Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) has built on the emerging international literature to identify and prioritise resilience factors that are specific to the South African environment. Through this research the CJCP designed a demonstration youth project that builds resilience to crime and violence among young people within a high-risk environment. While using the broad layer of protective factors from international literature as a departure point, the project was designed to focus on specific factors identified through CJCP research as pivotal and most influential.

Specifically, the following aspects were identified as priority resilience factors that have a direct impact on a young person’s proclivity to engage in crime and violence: schooling and education; a peaceful home environment; non-exposure to criminal role models (conversely exposure to positive role models); abstinence from alcohol and other substances; neighbourhood access to weapons; safety from youth victimisation; attitudes intolerant of violence and antisocial behaviour; and positive gender socialisation.

While impacting on the likelihood to engage in crime by itself, each factor is also strongly related to the other factors. For example, youth victimisation impacts on positive educational outcomes through the potential of crimes against youth to undermine the victim’s attachment to school, performance at school, or even impact on his/her school attendance. Similarly, positive educational outcomes – an attachment to school and commitment to achieving – might mitigate the development of a violent, masculine identity within a young person.

It is the complexities and synergies between the various variables that necessitate a comprehensive approach to targeting each and every resilience factor within a particular environment if any meaningful and sustainable impact is to be made in keeping young people from engaging in crime.

The encouragement of resilience factors
that deter young people from crime not only builds individual resilience but also contributes to building a safer community and, ultimately, country. This strategy is more cost effective and yields more sustainable results than behaviour modification in the aftermath of crime.

In order to prevent crime and repeat offenses, it is important to offer young people long-term programming that focuses on mitigating risk factors and building personal and community strengths. In rural areas particularly where services are sparse, reactive and individual programmes that run in isolation of sustained and proactive or preventative interventions have little chance of creating positive change in young people. It was from this departure point that the CJCP Groblershoop Youth Resilience demonstration project was designed and implemented.

Design and implementation of the Youth Resilience project

Origins of the project

The location of the CJCP demonstration project in Groblershoop in the Northern Cape was strongly influenced by previous CJCP activities and those of its core donor, the Open Society Foundation of South Africa (OSF-SA). These activities had focused primarily on community-based diversion activities in the Noupoort community, and entailed partnerships with the Northern Cape Department of Social Development (DSD): Population and Development, and the Noupoort Youth and Community Development project.

Diversion is defined by the Child Justice Bill as ‘the referral of cases of children alleged to have committed offences away from the formal court procedure with or without conditions’. The broad objective of the Groblershoop demonstration project was to upscale key activities while introducing additional specific and contextually indicated interventions to enhance youth resilience to crime, in the form of a developmental crime prevention project.

The Youth Resilience project is based on the hypothesis that the provision of adequate social services and the development of productive opportunities for those most at risk in a particular geographical area will address risk factors associated with youth crime, thereby reducing the number of young offenders. There is no boilerplate set of experiences that lead a youth to fail school, engage in drug use, exhibit delinquency or other common youth-related problems. Rather, it is the accumulation of risk, the sheer number of adversities and traumas confronted by a child and his/her family, which disrupts normal developmental trajectories.

Ecological theory posits that development is deeply affected by interactions between the biological and psychological characteristics of the individual child and conditions in his/her environment. The Youth Resilience project was framed in an ecological perspective, recognising that children are shaped by their family unit, school, network of peers and community. This approach led to integrated services that targeted individuals, families and communities with a special focus on schools. Partnership with local government and existing service providers was crucial to the success of the programme as well as to its ownership by the community.

Project set-up and process

The set-up process incorporated a number of steps considered pivotal to the success of the project. These included consultation with and support from local community stakeholders, the development of a vision and mission statement, the identification of strong and effective leadership, the mobilisation and application of resources, as well as building the capacity for programme implementation.

At the outset of the project, the Northern Cape DSD: Population and Development facilitated a number of stakeholder and consultative meetings, drawing on school principals, non-governmental organisations, local municipal councils and community members. These meetings also served to provide initial insight into some of the socio-economic challenges facing the community, namely: poverty; alcohol abuse; domestic violence; lack of recreational activities; aggression and violence; housebreaking and

- Encourage rendering the victim some symbolic benefit or the delivery of some object as compensation for the harm.
- Promote reconciliation between the child and the person(s) or community affected by the harm caused.
- Prevent stigmatising the child and prevent adverse consequences flowing from being subjected to the criminal justice system.
- Prevent the child from having a criminal record.
A local project steering committee was elected, comprising the local ward councillor, a community development worker, a representative from the South African Police Service (SAPS) and a school teacher. After the steering committee was established, six volunteers were recruited to assist with programme implementation. As part of their training, volunteers visited the Noupoort project to familiarise themselves with the model in practice. A baseline study was conducted by CJCP researchers, which collected data on key socio-economic variables, victimisation data, perceptions of crime and safety items, and service satisfaction variables. This data, together with stakeholder and service-provider interviews and analysis and information from the consultative meetings, provided an accurate profile of the community and its specific needs.

An initial set of project objectives, activities and indicators was formulated from this baseline study. Central to its formulation are the vision and mission statements that provide overall guidance for the project. Similar assistance was provided by the CJCP to the project in choosing a name and developing its constitution. The Groblershoop project adopted the name !Kheis Youth and Community Development Project (KYCDP). The approval of the service plan, drafting of the constitution and opening of bank accounts were prerequisites for the release of seed funding. This process led to funding agreements being signed in June 2006, and all parties agreed that the project’s budgets would extend to March 2007. At the time of signing the agreements, the project had already begun to implement local crime prevention programmes.

Strong leadership is imperative for the success of a programme. Leadership is required at every level of a project – the ability to articulate and advance the vision and mission of the project enables the implementation of programmes and services. The emergence of new leadership within a project surfaced via the steering committee and programme coordinator. Solid and consistent leadership had a significant effect on other aspects of the project, such as the number of project volunteers, the acquisition and management of resources and the enhancement of networking activities.

There are several examples of leadership that were crucial to the success of the Groblershoop project. The DSD: Population and Development’s probation services manager took a strong leadership role in the project in its infancy. Scheduled meetings were attended by stakeholders. Diligent provisioning of resources ensured tasks were completed and stakeholders stayed informed of their roles in the project. The effective leadership also inspired action from the local probation officers who provided mentoring and support to the volunteers.

With the steering committee structure firmly in place, focus turned to establishing a similar structure to support volunteers who were at times restless and frustrated due to the long delay in programme implementation. As a result, programme coordinators were appointed from within the existing project team to provide direction and leadership to volunteers. The CJCP placed strong emphasis on capacity building and support of the diversion projects in the Northern Cape and conducted various trainings to support the implementation processes. Training was also facilitated by the DSD: Population and Development.

Geographic location, in this case rural, can greatly affect how a project is run, which activities are best suited for a community, and the level of support needed to confront issues and challenges – such as how to make services accessible when wide distances exist between groups of potential beneficiaries. The provision of support, training and mentoring are crucial for the success of small organisations. Leaders, staff and volunteers of the Groblershoop project were often brought together during training sessions. This provided an opportunity for sharing, connecting and teaching in an environment that served to counteract the sense of isolation sometimes felt by members of small organisations.
The collection of baseline data at the outset of the project, which was then used to define the individual priorities and activities and against which impact could be assessed, proved essential to the project. Through ongoing monitoring of data, changing needs could be identified as well as the impact of individual activities against various combinations of activities. For example, while project activities initially targeted primarily young people themselves, it soon became apparent through monitoring the project and its impact that in order to see the full impact of the interventions targeting the youth, support was required for parents as well as for the young people.

The focus on project and institutional capacity-building, which was central to the project, provided added impetus to the activities and the skills sets of those involved in the project, and also contributed to the project’s sustainability. The capacity-building approach together with the partnerships formed provide the platform for the project to continue after the CJCP’s withdrawal.

Based on an assessment of impact and of the enhanced skills and vision of the board and project staff, as well as on financial contributions from the province, the next step would be to formulate an exit strategy. This would involve the board and project staff assuming full responsibility for the project and the gradual withdrawal of CJCP input. The CJCP would assume a role limited to longer-term mentoring and monitoring.

**Design of the project**

The paper has already located the Youth Resilience demonstration project within the public health and ecological paradigms of safety and social crime prevention. The purpose of the CJCP Youth Resilience project was to build resilience among young individuals across the key social institutions of the family, community and school, while also including support for the individual. The focus in this approach is on prevention and early intervention rather than being a more reactive response to crime and anti-social behaviour.

At the **individual level**, the project offers activities that serve to strengthen and expand existing diversion services to young offenders. The initiatives aim to enhance the key youth and child resilience factors of self-esteem, confidence, empathy and self-control and teach how to be a responsible citizen. The programme also prioritises the promotion of healthy sexual identities and responsible health behaviour. The projects are designed to provide access to information and communication technologies, thereby enhancing future employment opportunities. After-school and holiday programmes are implemented to provide youth with constructive and enjoyable activities focused on sports, crafts and culture. Leadership training is available in the form of workshops, specifically designed courses and wilderness camps. A mentoring programme for at-risk youth has also been established.

At the **family level**, the project focuses on improving family communication and parenting skills through parent–child events and conflict-resolution training. The greatest achievements of child-focused interventions targeting violent and criminal behaviour are those focused on children in their earliest years of development.10

The family-level interventions have a particular focus on educating and supporting young fathers and teenage mothers. Family interventions espouse core principles of early childhood development, particularly those which focus on the role of parenting in setting positive examples for children. The groundwork for pro-social behaviour and positive interpersonal relationships with peers and adults is learned through interaction with parents and relies on positive parenting skills. Family-level interventions support vulnerable families through the improvement of life skills and parenting skills which enhance the quality of life for children in the family.

**Community level** interventions seek to build social cohesion by strengthening community organisations and structures. Rights-based awareness training workshops are conducted for community organisations. Young people, often excluded from safety and crime prevention interventions,
are trained in community crime prevention and are taught to identify potential dangers, unsafe areas and safe community spaces. Through this process, young participants are encouraged to reclaim their community spaces and to take ownership in making their communities safe.

**School level** programming is an important element of this programme as schools form an integral part of community life and youth experience. A number of initiatives focus on reinforcing the positive role that schools play in communities, especially for youth. Key nodes of care are implemented through international agencies such as UNICEF.

A comprehensive meta-analysis of successful interventions focused on youth resilience highlighted the importance of including school-specific programmes in a holistic approach to crime reduction. The CJCP’s school-based interventions address violence and crime and explore how to build a culture of lifelong learning through the existing Hlayiseka programme.

The CJCP, in partnership with the National Department of Education and with support from OSF-SA, had already developed the **Hlayiseka Early Warning System** – a school safety monitoring toolkit aimed at effective school management. The toolkit has been piloted, evaluated and refined, and has been rolled-out at ministerial priority schools nationwide as well as at additional schools in a number of provinces including Gauteng, the Western Cape and Eastern Cape. The Hlayiseka project ensures that schools implement the necessary tools to address crime and victimisation.

The CJCP has also advocated for the support of learners through after-school activities and holiday programmes. This ensures that opportunities for continued personal development and support are available for at-risk youth in the schools. As such, the CJCP supports the integration of after-school activities into school programming and encourages schools to be responsive to community needs.

The Hlayiseka Toolkit provides a useful entry point to individual communities for further developmental crime prevention work, engaging as it does school leaders, learners, educators and parents. While the Youth Resilience demonstration project was in this case already firmly located within Groblershoop, the Hlayiseka Early Warning Toolkit is considered an essential component of the resilience and school-based work of the project.

Each of these activities are complemented by ongoing support to enhance the capacity of local projects to implement innovative diversion projects for young first-time offenders, targeting youth who have been in contact with the law for minor offences. Targeted interventions at this stage in a young offender’s experience minimise the risk of later, more serious, offending and facilitates reintegration into society. The project model is depicted in Figure 1.

**The resilience project in action**

The specific project activities discussed above can take various forms depending on the context in which they are implemented. Within the Groblershoop context, the activities were tailored to meet the specific needs – identified through the baseline and stakeholder analysis – of the young people and the community members of the town. All the activities were not offered at the outset of the project, but were instead rolled-out over four years in a phased approach, and as additional needs and requirements were identified.

From the outset, records and data on participation in the various activities was kept for monitoring purposes; however, as the package of services and activities broadened, so the need became apparent to develop a coherent assessment, case-recording and tracking system.

The project officers, who are qualified social workers, make an assessment on initial contact with each individual. The assessment covers individual, family, school and other contextual items. From this assessment, the most suitable individual or combination of activities and support is identified. This ensures that the support to individuals – and the impact of the various project activities – is maximised. At the same time, though, the process does not
All the activities were not offered at the outset of the project, but were instead rolled-out over four years in a phased approach, and as additional needs and requirements were identified.

exclude any individual who might want to engage in any one of the project activities.

After-school programmes

Providing young people with organised activities outside of school not only stimulates positive growth, builds self-esteem and enhances skills development but also deters involvement in crime. These programmes include performing arts, a chess club, community gardening and a homework and reading group.

Life skills

The purpose of life-skills training is to contribute to the holistic development of a young person through the prevention of negative behaviour patterns and the encouragement of positive social skills. The life skills programme focuses particularly on conflict resolution, communication, goal setting, personal development and decision making. The programme sessions provide young participants with the tools to make wise decisions when faced with challenges, and encourages them to express their ideas, views and feelings in a constructive way.

Counselling

The individual student programme is a combination of individual counselling and life skills for referred youth and children in remote and distanced areas. A defining feature of rural areas in the Northern Cape is the vast distances between towns. This project effectively serves a wide geographical area, including the Groblershoop and !Kheis municipal area.

Challenges such as lack of transport, low referral rates and high costs resulted in the piloting of the External Student Programme in which young offenders who cannot be
included in a group due to the lack of a referral or distance meet with a facilitator who provides a combination of individual counselling and life-skills sessions. This often includes open dialogue and specific assignments completed by the young person.

**Youth participation programme**

Providing comprehensive support for young people requires a critical re-examination and reformulation of society’s attitudes toward youth. One way to foster resilience in young people is through participation in decision making that involves meaning, control and connectedness. Youth participation requires young people’s involvement in all decisions that affect them.

Meaningful participation can enhance a young person’s sense of connectedness, belonging and valued participation. The project’s youth participation strategy aims to involve young people actively in social and developmental processes that are voluntary, active and based on sound methodologies.

The Youth Action Team consists of young representatives from various community organisations and youth groups who provide a platform to engage with issues affecting young people. Their mission is to inspire action through dialogue, debate and service. The Action Team is supported and trained in leadership, team building and project management. It is responsible for organising youth indabas to assess progress and address issues affecting youth.

**Braveheart Youth Leadership and Resilience Programme**

The Braveheart Youth Leadership and Resilience Programme is a six-month personal development programme aimed at building practical leadership and resilience skills. Participants are challenged during the programme to push their mental and physical limits and to develop leadership, communication and problem-solving skills that prepare them for active, contributing roles in their communities.

The programme is based on the premise that despite the challenges they face, young people possess qualities and characteristics that support positive decision making in the face of adversity. A group of 20 participants between the ages of 14 and 18 years is selected to attend this training course. Through personal reflection, the young people are challenged to become more aware of the risks and protective factors contributing to their resilience as leaders.

The programme comprises: weekly sessions focusing on interpersonal skills and team building; two wilderness-based camps; project management; community service projects; and a graduation and gifting ceremony at the conclusion of the project.

**Wilderness and adventure therapy**

Recent developments in the field of diversion programming have demonstrated the healing aspects of wilderness experiences for young offenders. Wilderness and adventure therapy programmes provide opportunities for personal reflection, leadership and education in a supportive environment. These programmes are often used in combination with life-skills initiatives.

**Rich Rewards after-school programme**

Risk factors that increase the likelihood of youth offending and victimisation include unsupervised time spent with peers, a shortage of social capital, poor parental supervision and a lack of community cohesiveness. Accordingly, the CJCP recognised the need for accessible after-school activities and holiday programmes for children and young residents. Constructive activities during these times provide supportive environments in which participants learn and hone skills and enhance teamwork capabilities.

After-school activities are a tested strategy for engaging children and teenagers when they are not under the supervision of school or caregivers, providing a safe and stimulating experience where life learning occurs. A number of after-school activities have been established, including a youth and children’s club, chess club, academic support group, dance group and various

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**SOME STAKEHOLDER OBSERVATIONS ON THE ACTIVITIES AND THEIR IMPACT**

**SAPS**
The youth seem to have enhanced moral direction and violent crime committed by youth has decreased in Groblershoop.

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT WORKER**
Youth now have opportunities for more constructive activities and fewer young adults and children appear in court for committing crimes.

**CHILD WELFARE SPECIALIST**
The programmes are enjoyable for young people and at the same time offer an educational component to raise the consciousness of young people regarding social issues and crime.

**SOCIAL WORKER**
The initiatives have had a positive impact on the community as children now have access to services that did not exist before.
sports activities. A resource centre is being established that will be fully operational this year.

**Adolescent Family Support Programme**

Negative family characteristics such as poor parenting skills, unmanageable family size, home discord, child maltreatment and antisocial caregivers are risk factors directly linked to juvenile delinquency. Other family risk factors include: poverty; unemployment; lack of parental education; illiteracy; poor health and hygiene; lack of nutrition; the absence of a stimulating environment including toys and books; psycho-social stressors; and the lack of cognitive stimulation such as singing, playing and reading with the child.

The Adolescent Family Support Programme is implemented to address the needs of adolescent mothers and fathers. Drawing again from the ecological approach, this programme provides social and educational support that contributes to creating a better environment for both parents and children. The programme is also designed to prevent repeat, unplanned pregnancies and school dropout.

Elements of the programme include the provision of social and educational support, parenting education focused on early contact, parent family involvement and support groups that provide assistance in accessing basic community services.

**Community crime prevention and safety programmes**

Activities in community crime prevention programmes focus on building social cohesion through the engagement of local stakeholders in community-building initiatives.

Rights-based awareness training workshops are conducted for community organisations, and community safety and crime prevention workshops are held, aimed at implementing the social development approach in a crime prevention strategy. Young participants are trained in community crime prevention and in how to identify safe community spaces.

**Home-based supervision**

Home-based supervision is used as a diversion option and is employed in some cases as an alternative to detention while awaiting trial or as a sentencing option. It is defined in terms of section 1(c) of the Probation Services Amendment Act, Act No. 35 of 2002 as ‘... supervision under certain conditions where an arrested, accused, convicted or sentenced child in the care of his or her parents or guardian or in the custody of any other person, is monitored by an assistant probation officer’.

Home-based supervision ensures that the child remains at his/her place of residence, and attends schools and other predetermined activities while kept away from negative influences. Home visits are performed by a local probation officer and facilitators. It also ensures that the child returns to court to stand trial, as the chances of failure to report to the criminal justice system are substantially reduced when a young offender is under home-based supervision.

**Pre-trial community service**

The Pre-trial Community Service programme is an option for first-time offenders. In situations in which this is appropriate, the young offender is given an opportunity to repair the harm done by performing community service for a specified period of time before the court date.
Restorative justice programme: family group conferences
A family group conference is a restorative justice process by which families and communities are involved in making decisions about children accused of committing crimes. Family group conferences bring together the offender(s), victim(s), families, police officials, school teachers and other relevant individuals to construct a plan that may restore the harm or damage caused by the crime.

Anger management programme
Conflict-resolution training for young people equips them with the skills they need to deal with anger in a healthy manner. This programme focuses on enhancing participants' communication skills and encourages non-violent behaviour.

Substance abuse programme
The relationship between substance abuse and crime, violence and generally antisocial behaviour is well documented. This programme focuses on awareness about substance abuse and its physical and familial effects as well as community consequences. Sessions help participants to identify the signs of abuse and addiction in themselves, their peers and family members and how to get help.

Reflections and conclusions
The process of establishing services for young people in Groblershoop was characterised by distinct differences in terms of efficiency of implementation and the types of challenges experienced. The programme aspects that proved most important are discussed next. Insight was gathered on a number of topics including leadership, accessibility and costs, capacity and skills to implement resilience programmes, programme quality and content, organisational management and challenges of funding and resources.

Leadership
A strong leader mitigates environmental challenges and nurtures emerging leaders.

Projects of this nature require innovative and dynamic leaders who keep the vision of the desired impact in focus. A project leader must provide guidance at various phases of the project including inception, monitoring and evaluation. One positive outcome of community projects is the emergence of new leaders as individuals’ capacity and innovation are harnessed during the course of the project. This is often accompanied by a new dynamic in projects and communities and may lead to better synergy – or, alternatively, conflict if not managed appropriately.

Partnership
Partnerships must be built on mutually agreed on goals, clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Local partnerships are critical to the successful attainment of project goals.

The very inception of this project was characterised by collaboration. As mentioned, the Groblershoop Youth Resilience Project was a collaborative partnership between the CJCP and the Northern Cape DSD: Population and Development. One distinguishing feature of the project was the partnership between existing community-based service providers, governmental agencies and the founding partners. For example, some programmes had active involvement from Probation Services and, of particular importance, the presence of a local probation officer.

The formation of mutually beneficial partnerships is an important feature of community-based crime prevention projects. This is essential in identifying and addressing the wide range of risk factors affecting at-risk youth. Developing partnerships at local level is critical for both success and sustainability. While provincial partnerships define broad agreements regarding the project, local partnerships contribute to the implementation of grassroots work as well as community ownership and participation.

Partnerships are also important in ensuring that limited resources are used to their
greatest capacity and that services complement rather than duplicate each other.

Organisational infrastructure

The organisational structure of a project must comply with minimum norms and standards pertaining to youth resilience programmes.

Capacity building to ensure good governance is an essential part of project implementation.

When it comes to the development of crime prevention initiatives in South Africa, providing a sound and transparent organisational infrastructure is critical to the success of youth resilience programmes. Non-profit boards are ultimately responsible for the organisations they oversee and are the primary vehicles through which citizens are able to participate in the non-profit sector. As projects continue to grow in depth and reach, it is increasingly vital for board members to understand the ever-changing context of their work.

The CJCP capacity-building programme ensured that the management committee members were trained in understanding their roles and responsibilities within the projects. Although issues of governance remain a challenge within the programme, the emergence of new leadership and expertise in the youth resilience initiatives proved critical for the optimal functioning of the projects.

The CJCP demonstrated that the roll-out process and implementation phase of new youth resilience programmes can be sustained if complemented by long-term support and capacity-building initiatives. The capacity-building programme focused on a wide range of issues related to the functioning of the project, the skills needed to implement activities, financial management, human resources and the training of facilitators.

Consultation and participation

Projects must have a youth and community participation strategy.

The design and implementation of community-based youth resilience programmes must include an extensive process of consultation with community leaders, youth leaders, community members, other stakeholders and the young people who will participate in the programmes.

The purpose of the consultation process is to engage genuinely with community members and to provide them with a platform from which to express their concerns and visions for the project. This should not consist of project planners informing community members of finalised plans, but should rather involve the creation of dialogue and open communication among participants which helps shape the project. Local project committees should be representative of a range of stakeholders who have the skills and the will to lead a project. Projects can employ various strategies to consult with communities regarding the establishment of new projects or the refurbishment of existing programmes. These may include community meetings, presentations at existing forums including schools and religious institutions, and informal discussions with community members.

Accessibility and cost

Youth resilience services must be accessible and designed to respond to the

Serious consideration must be given to the voices and opinions of young people. This is central to their empowerment and also vital for determining project type and design.

Successful projects that target the youth view young participants as potentially positive forces in their communities rather than as a problem needing to be ‘fixed’.
specific conditions and situations of youth within rural communities.

There are distinct differences in communities which shape the types and levels of interventions offered. Learning about projects that have been implemented in other areas is helpful for project designers, but should only be used for methodology and examples and not as an exact blueprint. Each community has specific needs, challenges and strengths that must be taken into account when planning how to fund a project and to make it accessible to residents. For example, while the Noupoort project’s services were directed at young people residing in the immediate community, the Groblershoop project aimed services at young residents in the greater !Kheis municipal area. This increases the cost of rendering the services. The Groblershoop project therefore developed the External Student programme to make provision for single referrals in the outlying areas.

Capacity and skills

Projects in rural areas should specifically address the lack of opportunities for skills development and should make a considerable investment in terms of resources and time in developing participants, facilitators and stakeholders.

Project facilitators (who were likely also deprived of opportunities for skills development in their communities) joined the CJCP projects lacking a number of skills that ensure efficient and effective programme implementation. Acknowledging the critical role of community-based leaders for programme success, the CJCP committed to investing not only in the initiatives but also in the staff running the projects.

Feedback from facilitators highlighted a lack of information about youth resilience; what it looks like in practice and developments relating to restorative justice specific to South Africa. Training workshops were held on the topics of youth resilience and restorative justice. Understanding developmental assessments was key to laying the foundation for facilitators’ education on the topic. Training in facilitation skills was important to expose facilitators to the different styles and methods used and to encourage them to adopt a confident, warm, flexible and enthusiastic approach to working with programme participants.

The presence of local probation officers was significant in the early phases of the project, offering key support and guidance to the project. An initial challenge regarding the implementation of programmes centred on the lack of communication between the project facilitators, the courts and the probation officers. Facilitators said they were unclear about the referral process. Meetings were thus organised to explore and clarify the referral process, resulting in a better working relationship between the probation officers, the courts and the project facilitators and participants.

Programme quality and content

Successful programmes are designed to meet the specific needs of young people in rural communities.

Recipients of youth resilience services are entitled to quality programmes that promote respect and human dignity, and which evolve to meet new challenges and issues.

The CJCP, through its capacity-building programme, introduced and facilitated various youth resilience programmes. Project content included facilitation skills, wilderness and adventure programmes and youth mentoring programmes. Through monitoring and training, the CJCP ensured that the projects met the requirements for the various youth resilience options.

Programming committed to meeting the specific needs of a community will likely evolve over time as new challenges present themselves in an area. For example, increased exposure and utilisation of new information technologies, particularly the use of the cell phones by young people, have influenced programmes in Groblershoop. The community has experienced an increase in the number of sexual and pornography-related cases referred to diversion programmes. The CJCP recognises
that the absence of the SAYSTOP programme will present a significant challenge and will encourage ongoing programmes to address issues of that nature.

**Funding and resources**

Community-based youth resilience programmes require a substantial investment of resources, and the government should prioritise funding for programmes of this nature.

The Groblershoop project was initially funded by the CJCP through a grant from the OSF-SA. The Northern Cape DSD: Population and Development provided additional financial assistance to the project through an assisted process of compliance, registration and submission of business plans. However, due to the long delays in allocation and payment, projects struggled to achieve stated objectives in a timely manner and lost some facilitators due to non-payment.

Realising the negative effects of delayed payments and the challenges of being reliant on a single source of funding, the CJCP contracted a facilitator to conduct a training workshop on professional fundraising. The workshop assisted project members to draft funding proposals and to broaden their knowledge about the non-profit funding environment.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

Regular collection of reliable information enables the determination of social change, the effectiveness of spending and resource allocation, and the impact and success of a project over a period of time.

At the start of the project, the CJCP embarked on a baseline study to collect information regarding a number of variables. The baseline study was used to develop some initial safety indicators for the project.

Each activity planned had an impact indicator to ensure that the objectives of the project were met. The existence of a decent set of baseline data shows programme impact, and needs to be constantly assessed.

**Conclusion**

The combination of applied research and the experience of project implementation detailed above allows for the formulation of a number of recommendations which should enhance young people’s resilience to crime and violence, as well as improve the safety of children and young people more generally.

South Africa as a society has some unique challenges, especially when it comes to crime prevention and safety. These challenges need innovative, creative and well-developed interventions that target not only the individual causal factors of crime but also the social causes. Youth resilience initiatives give organisations the opportunity to create programmes and interventions that target the core reasons why crimes are committed and deal with youth (at-risk or not) in a meaningful manner so that change is sustainable. It also presents an opportunity for organisations to work with youth together with families and communities, instead of the more common mainstream justice approaches that work with youth in conflict with the law in isolation from other initiatives.

The Child Justice Act requires a widespread restorative justice approach to dealing with youth justice, with the hope of ensuring that recidivism rates are reduced and victims and communities are provided with the opportunity to heal from the direct and indirect trauma that crime causes. While conducting youth resilience programmes can be more challenging in rural areas where community services and resources are scarce, opportunities for innovation in programme development, empowerment and social cohesion do exist as long as organisations work with communities to invest in unique solutions tailored to a specific community’s needs.

It is critical that a multipronged and comprehensive approach be adopted and implemented as a way forward in justice, crime prevention and safety in South Africa. It is important to have a well-balanced approach to problems when dealing with social justice challenges. In short, differing social issues cannot be dealt with in isolation from each other. In the broader
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Creating innovative and sustainable programmes that target social justice issues – including social crime prevention – is not only cost effective compared to institutionalised reactive and punitive approaches but also enables communities to take control of their challenges in a unique way, thereby empowering communities to manage their own sustained change and growth.

Efforts to mitigate and respond to crime must be balanced by longer-term systemic changes aimed at addressing the causes and drivers of crime.13 Rural areas, which often lack services and infrastructure that support long-term and integrated initiatives, present specific challenges for any type of development.

Reflecting back on the Groblershoop project model explored in this paper, future social or developmental crime prevention programmes, both rural and urban, should recognise the importance of partnerships with communities and institutions as well as the need to identify and address community-specific risk and resilience factors at various stages of youth development. The practices examined in this paper are intended to serve as examples that will increase the sustainability of future programmes and, most importantly, shape innovative initiatives that provide the support, opportunities and guidance youth need to become productive, happy adults and build safer communities in South Africa. ■
This paper presents an overview of the rationale, process, implementation and impact of the CJCP Groblershoop Youth Resilience demonstration project. A more comprehensive discussion can be found in Khan F & Arnolds L, *Beating the Odds: Building Youth Resilience to Crime and Violence in South Africa*. CJCP Monograph Series No. 8, Cape Town (forthcoming).


Efforts to mitigate and respond to crime must be balanced by longer-term systemic changes aimed at addressing the causes and drivers of crime.
The Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) is dedicated to developing, informing and promoting innovative evidence-based crime prevention focused on the groups identified as being vulnerable to victimisation or offending. The CJCP does this by:

- conducting rigorous research into issues of relevance to policy makers, public service officials, development partners and crime prevention practitioners;
- facilitating the implementation of crime prevention projects;
- providing sector-specific and accredited training in crime prevention for policy makers, public sector officials and non-governmental organisation practitioners; and
- disseminating the results of its research and lessons learned to relevant audiences.

Crime prevention is often understood as encompassing effective policing, harsh punishment and an efficient criminal justice system.

While some of these may be prerequisites for a safe society, a more fundamental approach to crime prevention is one that treats communities as a system in which all parts – the individuals, families, communities and society more generally – depend on and influence the others.

A public health approach to crime prevention emphasises addressing and dealing with the underlying drivers behind crime, thus focusing on prevention rather than deterrence.

This paper details the process and resilience model adopted by the CJCP in a rural community in the Northern Cape.

The project – designed as a demonstration project building on evidence-based best practice within a rural South African setting – brings together a range of interventions targeting different environmental ‘spheres’ of life. It explores the challenges faced, how these were met, and the rationale behind the design of the project, as well as illustrating some of the successes that can be achieved.