

# Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading



## EXPERIENCES FROM FINANCIAL COOPERATION



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development



## **Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading**

KfW Entwicklungsbank is a competent and strategic advisor on current development issues. Reducing poverty, securing peace, protecting natural resources and helping to shape globalisation are the main priorities of KfW Entwicklungsbank. On behalf of the German Federal Government it finances reforms, infrastructure and financial systems for socially and ecologically compatible economic growth. As part of KfW Bankengruppe it is a worldwide financing partner, and it also employs funds of its own for development projects. KfW Entwicklungsbank knows about the potentials and problems in developing countries thanks to its close cooperation with local partners and target groups.

It actively seeks to cooperate with German and international partners in order to further enhance the developmental effectiveness and efficiency of its activities.

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## **Preliminary remarks**

This Working Paper was initiated in February 2010 by the Sector Division for Social Infrastructure and Modernisation of the State, Latin America and the Caribbean, at KfW Entwicklungsbank. Violence prevention in through urban upgrading is highly relevant for reducing the divide between the formal and the informal city. Increasing interest among national and international partners underlines the topic's importance. German Financial Cooperation has provided crucial impetus for an innovative programme approach addressing violence in urban areas. This Working Paper summarises the experience of German Financial Cooperation with violence prevention programmes in urban areas with a view to disseminating the programme approach to countries worldwide.

## **1. Introduction: Bridging the Urban Divide**

With half of humanity already living in towns and cities today, it is projected that within the next 50 years, two-thirds of mankind will be living in urban areas – over 4 billion people. Cities and metropolitan agglomerations have always been dynamic centres and motors of economic, cultural and political development. Therefore, urban development is a key factor for worldwide poverty reduction and for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Today, urban growth is not necessarily caused by rural-to-urban migration. It is the result of progressive expansion of metropolitan areas into formerly rural spheres. During recent decades many cities have experienced a process of very rapid, chaotic and unequal growth. In consequence, the last 20 years have witnessed a massive transfer of poverty from rural to urban areas. This phenomenon tends to be neglected by statistics, as cities in average are better off than rural areas. In many of today's metropolitan regions, income, opportunity and resources systematically and disproportionately accrue to certain, more elite segments of the population only. Spatial disparities in urban standards of living, uneven distribution of urban services, social, economic and spatial segregation and urban income inequality are summarised in the notion of “the urban divide”.

When a large population group in cities is afflicted by malnutrition, impoverishment, social exclusion and discrimination, ill health and poor housing conditions as well as restricted access to land and basic infrastructure, increasing levels of criminal violence, lack of safety and general fear in the use of public space are often observed. In some cases, crime is reaching epidemic rates in rapidly urbanising environments. For example, in Africa, major cities such as Lagos, Johannesburg and Nairobi tend to have a much higher rate of armed violence in relation to the national averages in Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya. Homicide rates in Central America are among the highest in the world.

The evaluation of experiences with urban development and slum upgrading programmes reveals three areas of challenge:

- The aggregation of social and economic problems in cities indicates that individual, sector strategies can only be effective as a part of larger urban crime and violence prevention programmes.
- Increasing violence in slum and squatter settlements involves the economic, political and social exclusion of a large part of the poor urban population.
- The phenomenon of violence in urban areas is linked to the failure of the state to provide appropriate political responses to the lack of basic social and economic needs, and to the failure to establish the state's monopoly on the use of force. Local authorities need support in the creation of responsive and accountable administrative structures, in the development of comprehensive policies and in the efficient provision of local services and infrastructure.

In reaction to these emerging issues and social concerns, authorities of cities, metropolitan regions and the international community are expanding the scope of their interventions. New projects in urban environmental management, inner-city rehabilitation, or urban violence mitigation are coming on line. The ultimate goal is to achieve socially inclusive and sustainable urban development.

## **2. The Basic Concept of Financial Cooperation**

Programmes of Financial Cooperation (FC) for slum upgrading through KfW Entwicklungsbank have been implemented since the 1990s. Experience made with high crime rates and social violence in marginalised settlements has led to the development of a multisectoral approach for violence prevention in urban areas.

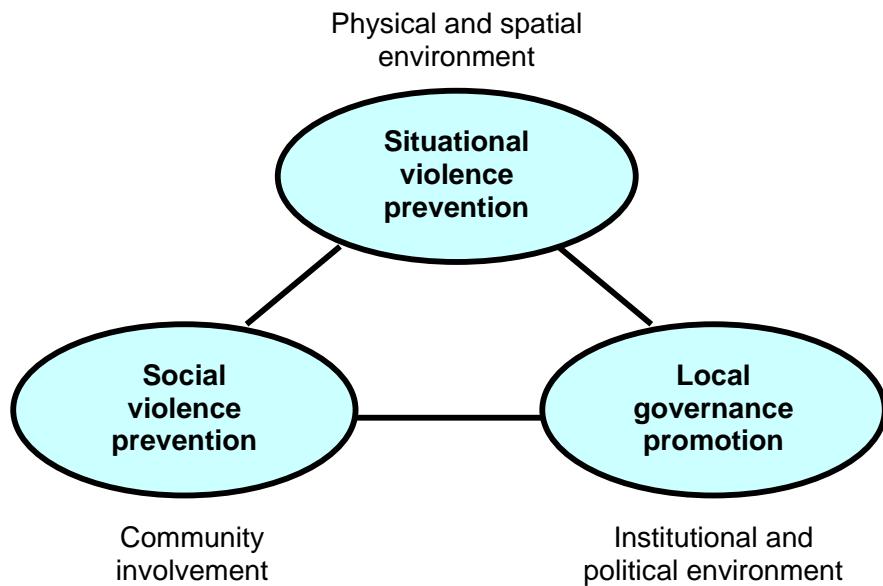
FC programmes recognise that residents of a city have a fundamental right to environmental health, basic services, security, employment, and political participation. They strengthen activities that prevent, counter, and control factors associated with crime and violence in urban areas. Different types of crime and violence need different sets of measures and imply the involvement of specific institutions. Certain types of social violence like domestic violence, violence at schools or neighbourhood struggles can be tackled by local authorities through a package of urban upgrading and violence prevention programmes. High-level crime committed by organised crime including drug trafficking, murder for hire and armed robbery are to be handled by specialised national and often international police forces. The phenomenon of youth gangs (so-called "maras") in Central America shows how closely youth subculture, gangs and criminal organisations interrelate, but not necessarily convert. Causes for youth violence are multifaceted and require differentiated responses.

However, poverty-oriented and participatory urban development projects can make an important contribution to overcoming the culture of violence resulting from a lack of perspective particularly for poor adolescents of large cities. Programmes are designed with the aim to stabilise the social environment and overcome marginalisation in the peripheries of large cities. They address low levels of quality of life in fast-growing urban neighbourhoods and reduce the public's perception of insecurity.

The programme approach discussed here uses urban design, conventional urban planning tools and public infrastructure provision as a means for fighting crime. Investments in local public infrastructure are combined with activities to improve the socio-economic situation and environment for the target group, the poor urban population.

These programmes are implemented in cooperation with local partners in Latin America and Africa. Municipalities are the prime partners of Financial Cooperation and act as project executing agencies, managing and coordinating the implementation of the programmes. But urban planning in the context of violence prevention in urban areas is more than a state-driven planning exercise and urban development demands more than infrastructure provision. It includes the advocacy for and mobilisation of community-based groups that seek to actively participate in their rights to the city. It also includes the promotion of constructive cooperation between the state, civil society and the private sector. The approach hence requires multi-sector and inter-institutional coordination and cooperation.

In a nutshell, the approach focuses on violence prevention on three levels:



Programmes thereby use the financing and participatory assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and administration cycle of public infrastructures as a leverage to reach out to root causes of urban violence and to gain access to marginalised groups.

Financing is provided by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) via KfW Entwicklungsbank for the design, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of the programmes.

### **Situational violence prevention**

Situational violence prevention aims to change the physical and spatial environmental conditions that generate violence, crime and fear of crime through improved urban planning, design and infrastructure.

General insecurity and/or feelings of insecurity are a result of high violence and crime rates and incidences of armed violence, but also of physical factors such as danger of mudslides. In practice, components of situational crime prevention focus on the **recovery of public spaces**. To this end, existing crime hotspots are eradicated and programmes aim to constructing integrated human settlements including general access to basic infrastructure such as water supply or transportation systems. Measures also include improved access to parks and green areas or improved solid waste management and street lightening, among others.

Elements of situational violence and crime prevention are:

- Coherent and integrated **town planning**, from larger areas down to site-specific considerations. Planning tools include tailor-made adaptations of national urban and architectural design standards based on the identification of crime and insecurity hotspots. They form part of the community consultation process.

- **Provision of social and economic public infrastructure** to (re-)establish the functionality of the city. Programmes support local authorities in the setting up, operation and maintenance of public infrastructure and social services. They encourage the participation of the local population and local businesses so as to provide services that meet people's needs and create favourable conditions for local economic development.
- **Site-specific interventions** introduce places that enhance individual safety and allow the population to identify itself with the areas. Interventions range from safe pedestrian walkways, urban parks, rehabilitated housing units, sports and recreational sites, to the development of schools into community learning centres, daycare facilities, healthcare centres, and commercial centres. Complementary interventions tackle geological or environmental security conditions, such as stabilisation of slopes or riverbeds.

### **Social violence prevention**

Social violence prevention addresses factors arising from social interactions in the neighbourhood and felt needs of community development. Experience with slum-upgrading programmes has shown that the success and sustainability of programmes is contingent upon **community involvement** in decision-making, implementation and operation and maintenance. Activities contribute to social cohesion by empowering vulnerable groups: they enable residents to assume responsibility for their environment, offer ways for ordinary people to make a contribution and identify with their residential environment, and thus enforce social control in high risk areas.

Activities are generally based on volunteerism and aim at improved self-organisation of the neighbourhood to defend residents' needs. They are designed to respond flexibly to local needs, based on the participatory analysis of how crime hotspots arise, and what the most imminent needs for the community are. Programmes therefore can comprise a broad range of activities in the areas of work with victims and offenders, health, education, (self-) employment, legal support, community development, leisure/sport, culture and others. A central aspect of social activities is the necessity of preventive work with children and youth in social risk. Initiatives apply innovative methods of dispute resolution for the generally large (and in many cases post-war) youth population of slum settings. Social violence prevention activities cover preventive measures, active work with victims and offenders as well as measures with a long-term perspective to enforce social cohesion.

Examples may include:

- Cooperation with and support of non-governmental organisations, e.g. on providing psychological and legal services to female victims of domestic violence.
- Support to initiatives of community education in a neighbourhood. This includes activities that encourage the dialogue between the family and family health care units.
- Creation of demand-oriented funds for small upgrading projects, administered and managed by the community. Activities financed by the funds contribute to a cooperative spirit and sense of togetherness and promote gender equality. They improve the capability of the citizens to plan and to implement activities and manage funds.

Situational and social crime prevention are interrelated: facilitating infrastructure and housing improvements can encourage broader community participation in joint activities and upgrading efforts. And most importantly, upgrading can be affordable when carried out jointly. Programmes show that even low-income residents are willing to pay for infrastructure services in adequate conditions.

### **Local governance promotion**

In general, governance is a cross-cutting issue and precondition for the implementation of FC programmes. Local governance promotion first and foremost aims at **mainstreaming principles of good governance** in public administration. The weakness of state institutions to actively address the multi-faceted problems in slum areas creates a vacuum, which leaves the door open to violence. By implementing FC programmes, local governments go through a learning process, which empowers them to fulfil their stipulated roles and functions.

In addition to the provision of basic services and support to community initiatives, one of the key elements of programmes for urban violence prevention is to improve the legal and institutional framework governing urban areas. To this end, programmes seek to increase the institutional capacity of public authorities and to encourage active participation of civil society organisations in decision-making processes. The aim is to convert previously marginalised slum-residents into citizens with rights and obligations.

Elements include:

- Strengthening the capacities of local governments for conflict- and crime-sensitive planning, operation and maintenance of public and community facilities, thereby increasing transparency and accountability.<sup>1</sup>
- Strengthening the cooperation between state, civil society and private businesses, and reinforcing inter-institutional cooperation.
- Enabling active involvement of the target group in political decision-making by introducing and consolidating legitimate, elected structures in the neighbourhoods. Civic education activities complement these aspects. Participatory processes are strengthened by involving communal leaders in municipal and national structures.
- Legalisation of property and land tenure by slum dwellers and the development of a clear legal framework for land rights. Often, slum dwellers face severe obstacles to owning or obtaining title deeds.

The aforementioned elements contribute to restoring confidence in the government and to integrating poor settlements and their residents into the **political and institutional environment** of the city.

### **3. Experiences With the Approach**

Three FC programmes in El Salvador, Colombia and South Africa follow the approach described above. One key element of each programme is highlighted as a show case.

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<sup>1</sup> The mainstreaming of crime- and violence-sensitive administrative decision-making and processes is also known as *institutional violence prevention*.

KfW Entwicklungsbank has been cofinancing slum rehabilitation programmes in **El Salvador** since 1996. They are implemented by FUNDASAL (Fundación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo y Vivienda Mínima), an NGO which has received many international awards for their participatory, integrative and **self-help oriented approach**.

Life in slum settlements is difficult. High crime and murder rates and the fear and insecurity that comes with criminal youth gangs are the most obvious signs of social problems. A high percentage of single-mother households are found in these densely populated neighbourhoods, and illiteracy is widespread. FUNDASAL focuses on improving the self-help and cooperation potential of the local population. So far, five projects have been formulated, attending 38 "barrios" (neighbourhoods) of the municipalities of Soyapango, Ilogango and Mejicanos in the greater metropolitan area of San Salvador, reaching out for a total of 2.900 families.



Before and after the intervention: illegal waste dump in Las Palmas, San Salvador and a sports ground on the same location after programme implementation. © FUNDASAL

For example, assistance with the legalisation of land tenure is complemented by small credit schemes for residents. This means that residents can use their land titles as a security for the acquisition of property, for the financing of refurbishments, or small business activities. People who otherwise would never have had access to loans can thus take up economic activities to support their families. Other activities of mutual self-help, assisted by FUNDASAL, are common works for the refurbishment of a community centre, for example. The works are carried out by the residents and result in a more attractive environment. The experience of joint achievements for the area also empowers residents to make a difference.

Sustainable development in slum settlements can only be achieved if these areas are integrated into the public administration of the city. Public facilities are run by residents through neighbourhood organisations in close cooperation with local authorities. The programme also supports local bodies elected by the slum residents. These elected representatives actively participate in the political life of the city.

The programme in **Colombia** jointly implemented by Bogotá's Secretaría Distrital de Hábitat (SdH) /Subdirección de Barrios, and KfW, adds a strong emphasis on **preventive work with youth** to municipal infrastructure investments. The objective of the programme "Conflict Management and Violence Prevention in Suburban Areas of Bogotá – Convivencia" is to support a culture of conflict management and violence prevention in the neighbourhoods. The actual phase of the programme is scheduled to end in 2012.

Violence is widespread in marginalised suburban areas of Bogotá and has many self-reinforcing causes. Unemployment is crushing. Young people in particular hardly have any chance of finding a job, given their lack of schooling. The lack of prospects is one of the causes of the mounting violence. Violence in families is very widespread, with women and children most often being the victims. Since there is practically nowhere for victims to seek refuge, and since the perpetrators are often friends, acquaintances or family members, few cases are ever reported to the police. Rampant corruption and the absence of land titles further add to the overall sense of discrimination leading to frustration and social exclusion.



Badlands transformed into a park - used for recreation and social events © SUM Consult

Sports grounds are an example for public facilities directly addressing youth. As one resident and father puts it: "As long as my kids play football, they don't get up to any nonsense, and I know where they are". But there is more to football than just sports and pastime. "Football for peace" is an example for successful interactive measures to prevent violent conflicts by working with youth in an environment where crime and violence are deeply rooted in social life. Here, youth do not play ordinary football: there is no referee, the groups develop (and apply) their own rules, and scores are not given for defeating the opponent, but for fairplay. Such sports activities enable adolescents to learn fairplay, work in teams, apply and comply with rules and, most importantly, to respect opponents. With this activity, the programme uses the potential of a popular sport for transmitting values and life skills to marginalised youth. Football, a popular pastime and sports game, thus contributes to social cohesion.

The overall programme has been enhancing the living environment in Bogotá's suburban areas. Hence, the preconditions for a peaceful co-existence are improved, particularly for low income families.

Another programme in **South Africa**, "*Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU) in Khayelitsha, Cape Town*" has a strong focus on **integrated urban design and planning** and their impact on the safety and living conditions of township settlements.

Khayelitsha is a dormitory township of about 600,000-800,000 inhabitants located at about 28 km from the city centre of Cape Town. It was characterised by increasing crime rates, poverty, high unemployment, and high HIV rates. Surveys amongst residents reveal that robbery, murder, rape, and housebreaking are the top four types of crime in the area. In some areas of Kayelitsha, it is literally perilous to walk along dark pathways and unlit streets at night, particularly for women.

The City of Cape Town implements the VPUU programme in cooperation with KfW. Financing is provided with the support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and

Development (BMZ). The aim is to improve safety by improving the socio-economic situation of about 200,000 – 300,000 residents in defined, so-called Safe Node Areas via an area-based approach. This means that dark, neglected and dangerous hotspots are filled with active life through crime-sensitive urban design.



Urban Design Concept Plans are elaborated that integrate the Safe Node Areas into the urban context © AHT-VPUU

The Safe Nodes are vitally important. The many unemployed individuals in Khayelitsha have practically no way to become self-employed as tradesmen or -women. The risk of being assaulted and robbed is too great. In the safe nodes, though, safe commercial premises are being made available.

One of the innovative urban design elements of the programme is small community centres called 'Active Boxes'. They are managed and run by resident groups. The aim is to positively occupy previously perceived dangerous spaces. The Active Boxes are placed approximately every 500 metres along major pedestrian routes. Volunteer civic patrols guard these buildings. A ground floor activity may vary from youth centre, sport centre, informal trader's bays, a crèche, depending on the local context. A care-taker flat ensures 24-hour occupancy. Each Active Box aims to make a specific area safer, while in its replication a network is established that spreads across a whole Safe Node Area of about 50,000 – 80,000 residents.



Active Box in Kayelitsha © KfW

The murder rate in the area has declined by one third since the start of the programme and is now clearly below the national average. The City of Cape Town is currently assessing the possibility to expand the approach and methodology to other areas of Cape Town. The approach has also been replicated in other South African urban agglomerations.

#### 4. Impacts and Lessons Learnt

Evaluations of FC programmes as highlighted above show positive **impacts** on different levels.

Programmes have improved the **general living and housing conditions** in their respective areas. Numerous aspects contribute to this improvement: the most obvious impact is the upgrading of supported areas, resulting in a more beautiful environment that increases the sense of well-being among residents. Investments financed by the programmes lead to improved public service provision. Residents thus have better access to social, recreational, and commercial facilities. From an environmental point of view, personal damage and economic loss is prevented through infrastructure investments in erosion control and flood protection in many settlements.

The approach helps to **overcome marginalisation**: measures of mutual self-help have assisted inhabitants to better identify with their neighbourhood, and to increase their self-esteem. Surveys show that the self-help capabilities of the population and their willingness and ability to cooperate within the neighbourhood have improved during and after programme implementation. Despite their poverty, people invest in common projects – and have a say in the decisions. Furthermore, residents' creditworthiness and propensity to invest in their immediate environment and in economic activities is significantly enhanced by the clarification of land tenure. For inhabitants, having an official address means formally being resident of a city. Ultimately, all these aspects contribute to the development of a sense of belonging of the population.

At institutional level, **capacities** of civil organisations and civil society initiatives to participate in political decision-making processes and their capacity to negotiate with representatives of the government and the urban services have been improved. Local governments have learnt to better adapt their services to local needs, to apply administrative processes with a view to violence and crime prevention, and to open up for community participation in the decision-

making for urban development. Ultimately, improved governance within local (and national) authorities thus expands their sphere of influence into formerly illegal and marginalised areas.

Programmes have lead to an overall **decrease of violence** in the respective neighbourhoods, as indicators for the perceived and real safety of residents in areas concerned show. This has been underlined by declining murder and crime rates, with formerly hot-spot programme areas falling significantly below national averages. Programme activities that focus on preventive work with youth have also resulted in a decline in the importance of young offenders.

Evaluations of ongoing and past programmes reveal a number of success factors contributing to positive results and sustainable impacts.

- **Political will of stakeholders**
- **Local management by beneficiaries**
- **Flexibility in programme design**
- **Needs-orientation**
- **Conflict-sensitive analysis and monitoring**

The political will of authorities to push and support initiatives is a precondition for programme implementation. Strong support by higher authorities with comprehensive competencies such as mayors and their personal engagement has proven to be a key factor for success. It will, in the long run, contribute to making slum rehabilitation and integration a permanent part of political urban development strategies.

Experiences over the years have shown that a local management approach that actively includes the beneficiaries works best for the design, planning, realisation and operation and maintenance of facilities. The participatory character of the programmes contributes to a sense of identity, trust, cooperation and ability to drive change among residents, and between residents and local authorities. However, the definition of clear roles and responsibilities for all participants, including governments, NGOs, the private sector and communities, is necessary.

At the beginning of implementation, the management of interdisciplinary and participatory programmes may appear time-consuming. However, the needs-orientation of the approach requires an open and flexible programme design, which bears fruit when all stakeholders are actively involved in implementation and management. Community development funds, for example, prove to be a useful tool for exercising in managing cooperative self-help activities. They enable residents to take responsibility for realising small-scale projects.

Programmes of violence prevention through urban upgrading are always carried out in a difficult environment. Interventions should therefore be based on comprehensive local Peace and Conflict Analysis (PCA) and baseline studies to allow the identification of high-risk areas, main conflict lines, as well as peace-building needs. This enables to focus interventions and facilitates decision-making during implementation. Implementation should be accompanied by regular peace and conflict-related monitoring (“Do No Harm”). Furthermore, violence statistics always contain dark figures. Sensitization efforts tend to increase the figures, as more citizens report cases. Therefore, monitoring systems should include perception indicators on security.

## **5. Conclusion**

Lessons learnt from the implementation of slum upgrading initiatives and programmes for violence prevention in urban areas over the last 20 years have revealed that carefully designed programmes can make a significant contribution to improving living conditions, enhancing social cohesion and preventing social violence in suburban settlements. However, they can not appease all forms of crime and violence. Issues of gang-related and organised crime have to be addressed openly by stakeholders involved at national and international level. Aspects of crime prevention and enforcing sanctions are interrelated. However, the justice and national security system is beyond municipal influence, where FC programmes are implemented. It will therefore be necessary to find mechanisms to incorporate experiences from the local level into national policy development, such as justice and security sector reforms. Such efforts merit strong support and innovation on the part of partner countries and donors in finding ways to scale up these experiences. Furthermore, channels will need to be established through which experiences with locally managed programmes can be disseminated to other municipalities, and to national and regional level.

## **6. Links**

### **KfW Entwicklungsbank**

[http://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/DE\\_Home/Sektoren/Stadtentwicklung/index.jsp](http://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/DE_Home/Sektoren/Stadtentwicklung/index.jsp)

### **Inter-American Development Bank:**

[http://www.iadb.org/sds/SOC/site\\_471\\_e.htm](http://www.iadb.org/sds/SOC/site_471_e.htm)

### **World Bank:**

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTURBANDEVELOPMENT/0,,menuPK:337184~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:337178,00.html>

### **United Nations Children's Fund:**

[http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index\\_violence\\_peace.html](http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_violence_peace.html)

### **United Nations Development Programme:**

[http://www.undp.org/cpr/we\\_do/armed\\_violence.shtml](http://www.undp.org/cpr/we_do/armed_violence.shtml)

### **United Nations Human Settlements Programme:**

<http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=375>

### **World Health Organization:**

<http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/en/>

## **South Africa**

### **VPUU Project**

<http://www.vpuu.org>

### **KfW Entwicklungsbank**

[http://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/EN\\_Home/Countries%2c\\_Programmes\\_and\\_Projects/Sub-Saharan\\_Africa/South\\_Africa/Violence\\_Prevention\\_Project.jsp](http://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/EN_Home/Countries%2c_Programmes_and_Projects/Sub-Saharan_Africa/South_Africa/Violence_Prevention_Project.jsp)

### **Deutscher Präventionstag**

<http://www.praeventionstag.de/html/GetDokumentation.cms?XID=381>

### **UNICEF**

[http://www.unicef.org/southafrica/resources\\_708.html](http://www.unicef.org/southafrica/resources_708.html)

## **Latin America and the Caribbean**

### **FUNDASAL**

<http://www.fundasal.org.sv/>

### **United Nations Development Programme:**

[http://www.undp.org/cpr/how\\_we\\_do/youth/ElSalvador.shtml](http://www.undp.org/cpr/how_we_do/youth/ElSalvador.shtml)

### **World Bank:**

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/LACEXT/EXTLACREGTOPURBD/EV/0,,contentMDK:21084425~menuPK:2364651~pagePK:34004173~piPK:34003707~theSitePK:841043,00.html>