

An Evaluation of Challenges Confronting the South African Local Municipal Role in Crime Prevention

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ABSTRACT Approved in the 1990s, “the policy documents such as the 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) and the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security (WPSS)” are explicit with respect to the local government’s role in ensuring crime prevention, safety and security of people living within its jurisdictions. The foregoing schemes provide the local governments with novel roles of coordinating and implementing crime prevention programmes within their areas of jurisdiction. The former stipulates the necessity of the local government to facilitate continuous reporting, enhancing and reviewing of its crime prevention programmes, while the latter prescribes the role of municipalities as a unit expected to cooperate and partner “with the local South African Police Service (SAPS), national and provincial departments, private sector, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)” in developing and implementing strategies aimed at reducing crime. This article evaluates the municipality’s role in crime prevention by assessing existing challenges on this strategy. A total of 30 community safety unit officers were purposefully selected for interviews across five (5) districts in the Limpopo Province using unstructured “in-depth interviews”. Findings revealed that most of the safety officials are not familiar with the tenets (which collectively mandate the municipal role in crime prevention) of the proposed legislations by the NCPS and WPSS. Moreover, a lack of political buy-in across local municipalities is a militating factor against effective crime prevention. In the same vein, the majority of municipalities fail to adhere to the policies mandating implementation of municipal crime prevention strategies regarding the request and mandate of the Provincial Department of Community Safety. The study embraces “Dr. Bengt-Ake Lundvall’s four knowledge taxonomy principles (Know-what, Know-how, Know-why, Know-who)” as an assessment tool to evaluate the local municipal compliance with the tenets of safety policies in crime prevention. It further recommends recurrent reviews of crime prevention policies and intense training of municipality safety managers on crime prevention strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars such as Stevens and Cloete (1996), Moolman (2000), Lab (2010), Garner (2012), Bezuidenhout (2020) and Mekaoussi and Nebbar (2022), term “*crime* as any unlawful act in contravention of the criminal law, which is prohibited and punishable by law”. By the same token, the central focus of various South African policies has been premised on countering high levels of criminality. This is due to a dramatic crime increase from the mid-80s, rising in the 90s and stabilising at high levels since this epoch. Thus, the main government policy components targeted at undercutting the root causes of crime and costs of lawlessness. Studies by Masuku and Maepa (2004), Garner (2012) and Mothibi and Roelofse (2017), described state crime as a phenomenon which could be prevented either by tightening the specified environment where it

occurs, or effectively identifying social and family conditions found to have an impact on the level of criminality. Moreover, the concept, ‘crime prevention’ bears complexities that frequently hold a variety of meanings and connotations. Its definition tackles, amongst others, an understanding of crime and its causes. This requires an analytical process, which determines root causes and types of crime, including skills, mechanisms and resource coordination by relevant stakeholders to successfully develop and implement effective interventions.

Based on reflections on the study’s findings, for crime prevention mechanisms to be effective and successful in society, they should be developed in specific places where such crimes occur. While in this instance, a targeted multidisciplinary approach that explores multiple activities towards a single crime problem is complementarily required. Sutton and Cherney (2002), Anderson and Homel (2005), United Nations (UN) Habitat (2007) and Garner (2008) uncovered that crime prevention programmes specifically mandate that a significant

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role must be played by local stakeholders, since research inquires have identified that local government is strategically positioned to fulfil such a role. Criminological research reflects the shift and capabilities of local government as an important and influential agent in crime prevention (Homel 2005; Cherney 2006). Similarly, “from the standpoint of Hastings and Melchers (1990), Crawford (1997), Shaw (2001), Shaw (2013), Cherney and Sutton (2007), Bruce and Gould (2009) and Grant (2015) as well as the submissions made by the “Council of Europe 2002” and the “United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime” (UNODC 2004), the shift and capabilities of the local government in crime prevention” are well documented in the findings of various criminological research inquiries.

Furthermore, according to “Shaw (2001), there are other well-researched motives for embracing broad shifts in ensuring localised response to crime. Broad shift and movement were evident with identification of factors and greater recognition of the local nature of crime, partnerships, understanding of local problems, and the connection with the citizenry. In the same vein, South Africa realised and embraced local government capabilities in tackling issues of crime prevention (Swift 2004). This is evident in the introduction of the “Local Government Negotiating Forum (LGNF), which in turn, led to the introduction of the Local Government Transition Act (LGTA) No. 209 of 1993. Subsequently, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) was introduced in November 1996 to expand the aim of democratic local government” (South Africa 1996b). Then the Constitution of South Africa was introduced in the year 1996, 1997 and 1998 respectively, and this clearly stipulates the local government’s aim in crime prevention. Hence the Constitution envisages significant functional roles allocated to organised local governments in the democratic South Africa with a unique focus on developmental service delivery (Mtileni et al. 2016). Thus, municipalities were mostly introduced according to the terms of the Local Government Municipal Structure Act No. 117 of 1998 (South Africa 1998c), as amended by notice 307 in the Extraordinary Provincial Gazette No. 615 of 1 October, 2000” (See also Cherney, 2006, Garner (2008, 2012), Buthelezi (2017). Recognition of “local municipality” as an important institution to lead in the development of mechanisms and strategies required in crime prevention is analogous to international developments. It further reflects logical and practical

roles played by the local government as crime prevention strategies coordinators at local levels.

Subsequently, the introduction of the “National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS 1996a) and the White Paper on Safety and Security (WPSS 1998)” clearly specifies the role of local government, particularly municipality, in crime prevention. In view of this development, an extent to which municipality can be involved in crime prevention has been extensively researched by a diverse range of scholars such as Crawford (1997, 2009), Shaw (2001), Geddes (2005), Garner (2012), Mothibi (2016), Buthelezi (2017), and Mothibi and Roelofse (2017). Their findings clearly demonstrate how municipalities should lead in crime prevention strategies. However, South African research focuses on the role of local government, ignores other cities and focuses mainly on metros such as Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town. To fill in this wide gap in literature, the current study extends its focus beyond the foregoing metropolitan regions, addressing the questions that centre on “the role of local municipalities in crime prevention from the Limpopo Province, which is generally regarded by the South African populace as a marginalised region of the country”. Limpopo, as a gateway to other African countries such as Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Zambia, is quintessential to evaluate the municipal role in crime prevention so as to clearly unfold the multi-faceted challenges bedeviling the safety officials in the course of combating crime, particularly cross-border crimes that characterise this continent of sub-Saharan Africa. It is hoped that engaging in this kind of research will remain valuable in assisting the local municipality in ensuring that the goals of the crime prevention policies are achieved. This study largely seeks to chronicle the challenges already embedded within the proposed policies, with a view to highlighting the existing challenges confronting municipal role in crime prevention.

South African Context of Local Crime Prevention Policies: The Selected Policies Mandates

“The National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996a) and the White Paper on Safety and Security (1998a)” are precise on crime prevention mechanisms at local levels. The schemes extensively highlight specific

roles to be played by local governments within the area of jurisdiction. The policy further determines that in collaboration with relevant local stakeholders, crime prevention priorities within an area of jurisdiction should be identified by the local government. In the same vein, “promotion and coordination of crime prevention initiatives, as well as, communication, overseeing and engagement of relevant agencies is effective in crime prevention within some respective localities” (Mokoena 2016: 668). It is necessary that the local government acquires necessary skills to tackle safety issues and ensure capacity to drive relevant projects in crime prevention. Furthermore, obtaining the assistance of committed major role players in crime prevention is also a key. Meeting the management to assess requirements of a chosen strategy assists local government in reaching safety project goals. The NCPS (1996) further highlights that it is necessary for local governments to facilitate continuous reporting, enhancing and reviewing of its programmes. Congruently, this policy goes on to state that the municipality should have a capable committee to coordinate crime prevention. The committee should comprise “leaders from structures of the local authority, police station offices, local community policing forums, local government departments responsible for welfare, department of education, housing, health, justice, and appropriate Non-Government Organisations. For municipalities to ascertain the above, “Dr. Bengt-Ake Lundvall’s” four knowledge taxonomy principles suggest that they should have the ‘Know-What’ principle. This is where municipalities should know what role it should play in crime prevention. During the coordination of the crime prevention programme”, Dr. Bengt-Ake finds that it is crucial to have the ‘Know-How’ principle, which requires knowledge on how to coordinate the crime prevention programme. Reasons why municipalities should tackle issues of crime prevention will be well understood with respect to “Dr Bengt-Ake’s third knowledge taxonomy principle” of ‘Know-Why’, while the identification of key role players to collaborate with in crime prevention is outlined in the fourth knowledge taxonomy principle of ‘Know-Who’. It is, thus, established that continuous reporting during stakeholder engagement and coordination of programmes will only succeed if the fourth principle is clearly outlined.

Whereas “the White Paper on Safety and Security” (1998b) mandates that crime prevention initiatives be at city level by allowing cities to take responsibilities for the enforcement of by-laws. The White Paper further identifies that implementation vis-a-vis coordination of crime prevention projects should be the responsibility of a city. It covers multiple crime prevention related activities requiring municipal intervention. The activities include, “among others, social crime prevention, by-law enforcement, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)”. The passing of the South African Police Services or SAPS Act (No. 68 of 1995) allows local government to establish municipal police services in their areas. The “White Paper” further indicates that the municipalities’ clearest crime prevention tools are contained in the by-law policies. Hence by-laws monitor and control the city’s social patterns and behaviour of its people (Bruce 1997). Common municipal law enforcement activities include among others working on the identification of crime hot spots and developing joint projects on policing of hot spots in collaboration with the “SAPS and the “National Prosecuting Authority” (NPA), and enforcing by-laws, zoning regulations and enforcing traffic laws. According to “Dr Bengt-Ake Lundvall’s four knowledge taxonomy principles”, common law enforcement activities should assist officials with the ‘Know-What’ principle. This is where the community safety unit officials are equipped with knowledge on what is crime and subsequently, the second principle, which is the ‘Know-How’, which highlights how crime is to be prevented. Reasons why crime and hot spots are to be identified in the city are specified in the third principle, which is the ‘Know-Why’. Officials and offices responsible for collaboration in crime prevention are highlighted in the final principle, which is the ‘Know-Who’ principle. At this level, officials will be able to identify with whom to tackle safety issues and how to execute their actions.

Consequently, the partnership formation between municipalities, civil organisations and government departments to assist in designing and monitoring out crime prevention programmes is facilitated by the “White Paper on Safety and Security (1998b) through the Local Government. Moreover, the Local Government Transition Act (No. 209 of 1993) mandates municipalities to develop negotiated Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), which highlight crime and safety related projects”. Critical municipal task

is a clear understanding of the crime problem within its area of jurisdiction. The problem is that these aspects of safety are in place in the research area but their implementation has never been evaluated in Limpopo Province. No research was ever carried out in the province to reflect on challenges in the implementation of the tenets of the NCPS (1996) and the WPSS (1998). Against this backdrop, this study was designed to highlight and present these challenges as the major obstacles facing local municipalities in their civic role of crime prevention and control.

METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative in nature and given the proposed policies for local government, particularly in terms of municipalities' involvement in crime prevention, formative evaluation was utilised as research design for the study (Trochim 2006). Formative evaluation becomes the most common approach to crime prevention evaluation, and it reviews programme implementation encompassing the design, and the extent to which a programme is being delivered (Maxfield and Babbie 2005). According to Fetterman (2000), the process and impact approach was also used in this study, seeking to answer these two questions: Have the crime prevention programmes been implemented as planned (process)? How can it be determined whether the identified programmes are achieving their intended objectives or not (impact)?

Study Population and Sample Size

The study population consisted of 30 municipal safety officials (community safety unit officials) and managers in community safety units, "who have been mandated by the proposed policies to be actively involved in crime prevention". The officials were selected across 5 districts in the Limpopo Province as follows: Polokwane Municipality (10), Greater Tzaneen Municipality (6), Vhembe District Municipality (5), Modimolle Municipality (5) and Sekhukhune Municipality (4). The officials were purposefully selected because their daily mandate involved crime prevention at their respective municipalities. It is of paramount importance to know that the variance in the sample size across the five district municipalities was influenced by the size

of the municipality, as well as the availability of officials at the selected local municipalities.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected by unstructured in-depth interviews. The "unstructured in-depth interviews" were conducted to provide insight into unexplored dimensions of the identified problem. The 30 purposefully sampled individuals were representative of a range of municipal safety officials and managers with knowledge of public safety and crime prevention. The recruitment strategy and the compilation of the sample facilitated a comparative research approach as each representative sample group offered their opinions on the subject under investigation from a particular vantage point. This selection technique was highly appropriate as it was able to subside the redundancy effects associated with qualitative data collection of a larger scope. The process of data collection reached saturation point when sufficient credible and dependable data had been collected and when no further new insights could be provided by the participants. The process ensured that "the data that were generated from the interviews represented a comprehensive picture that addressed the research questions and supported the findings that describe the objectives of the study. After data collection, the collected data were then dissected and classified into different themes under which various statements and assertions that emanated from each theme were systematically placed" (Olofinbiyi 2018). It is also crucial to note that the data analysis followed a set of five stages to ensure adequate and comprehensive analyses of collected data (Olofinbiyi 2018). These stages were made more analytical and elaborate in the work of Olofinbiyi and Steyn (2019). These analytical stages are briefly discussed in this section of the study.

- a. **Familiarisation:** This stage entailed "reading and re-reading of the transcripts, research and voice notes and their translation to ensure data reduction and familiarisation with the keywords that formed the key themes and ideas of the subject.
- b. **Identification of Themes:** This process involved an "open coding procedure", which was utilised for the identification of all emerging themes that were deemed relevant to address the study's research questions.

- c. **Coding and Indexing:** This stage involved marking and coding of the appropriate themes with numbers or short phrases in order to facilitate an explicit identification of all emerging themes that were found relevant to the in-depth understanding of the collected data.
- d. **Chatting:** The stage entailed the re-arrangement of data under main headings and subheadings according to the themes that had been identified. All the statements belonging to a specific theme were arranged into a single file to discern the similarities and differences existing in the opinions of the different officials recruited for the interviews.
- e. **Mapping and Interpretation:** This stage was concerned with the interpretation and condensing of a diverse cluster of responses, central themes, and shared perceptions, as well as dissenting of participants' viewpoints". Finally, germane thematic quotes expressing textually the emerging themes were noted and highlighted at this final stage of data analysis.

Overall, the investigators adopted the following elements to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

- I. **Credibility:** Ensuring "credibility, the research objectives were formulated in such a way that the representation of data matched with the participants' views. As a result, it was concluded that the responses validated the accuracy of the findings.
- II. **Transferability:** The process adopted was extensively and thoroughly described for others to follow and replicate, especially municipalities that are located in other provinces in South Africa.
- III. **Dependability:** This helped determine whether the research process used in the study was logical, reliable, well documented, and audited. In this study, the research findings were understood and juxtaposed with literature relevant to the study.
- IV. **Confirmability:** In this study, this concept refers to the final construct and captures the traditional concept of objectivity. The researchers presented the findings that emerged from the information gathered from the extant literature". In this regard, the findings informed the information gathered from both the participants' narratives and the existing literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The unstructured in-depth interviews with community safety officials revealed that the "Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) is precise on the role the local government can play in crime prevention". It was recorded that the prevention and safety officials interviewed were not aware of how the local municipality oversees crime prevention strategies as offered by the departments and agencies, and their reason was that they do not know the correct procedures. Section 152(1) "provides that the object of the local government includes the provision of safety and security in a healthy environment".

Strategy Review and Municipal Coordinating Committee

The participants highlighted that the municipality cannot incessantly review and enhance strategies, programmes and activities. However, few participants argued that the municipality does review but the process is not consistent. This assertion is evident in the response below:

"Strategies are reviewed occasionally when there is a hype around a particular crime. Only when the political office bearers are willing to pay attention to an issue, it is then that programs and activities are reviewed. Again, there is no question when the programs are not enhanced nor reviewed."

Further narratives contend that "crime prevention activities should be enhanced by the SAPS and that the municipality exists to help in crime prevention wherever necessary. This outrightly indicates a destitute of knowledge regarding the proposed policies". The coordinating committee had been set up but not by the municipality, whilst other officials asserted that there were no coordinating committees consisting of senior representatives. This finding also showed a lack of knowledge regarding their duties in crime prevention. It is evident that Dr Bengt-Ake Lundvall's fourth knowledge, which is the 'Know-How' taxonomy, is neglected. Garner (2008) and SALGA (2016) "found that to prevent crime successfully, the municipality should establish, manage and review the operation of the crime prevention advisory committee and develop clear plans for crime prevention, and ensure that the plans are integrated into other administrative functions".

Furthermore, not all the participants understood the Municipality Council's responsibility in providing safety and security. This finding tallies with those by Garner (2012), that "though local crime prevention demands multi-agency responses, the inter-agency entities and structures management has various implications. Moreover, it is noted that various inter-agency groups, together with the volume of inter-agency structures can be time-consuming and highly demanding".

Municipal Crime Prevention Strategy

From the standpoint of Munzhedzi (2016), "the local community crime prevention strategy has not been developed by the municipality. This was partly due to the challenges the municipality faced in the implementation of the local crime prevention strategy. The participants outlined funding, capacity, political support, inter alia, as the challenges faced by the municipality". Narratives from the study's participants expressed the following views:

"There is no municipal crime prevention strategy. It is the responsibility of the Department of Community safety to give the municipality a crime prevention strategy. The municipality does not have enough funds to spend on the process of developing a crime prevention strategy."

The conceptual analysis of the participants' viewpoints corroborates the findings presented by Shaw (1998), Garner (2012) and Buthelezi (2017), "when they maintained that the way the local level crime prevention is budgeted and financed is highly critical in the shaping of the role played by local governments in the coordination and implementation of crime prevention strategies. When sourcing funding for crime prevention initiatives, especially when seeking financial injection from external donors, crime prevention is often considered an 'add-on' ". This hinders accountability for delivery, and it further weakens the local government's responsibility and strength towards the prevention of crime. Furthermore, since crime prevention crosses over multiple departments, poor financial support becomes a sad reality. Poor financial support was deemed to have led to local government officials' poor adherence to the tenets of the NCPS (1996) and the WPSS (1998). Thus, Dr Bengt-Ake Lundvall's 'Know-What' and 'Know-How' knowledge principles are lacking. Consequently, for municipalities to fail to budget for safety, which

is a crucial mandate, reflects a severe lack of the Know-How knowledge, and hence no knowledge on how to tackle crime prevention issues. It is evident that crime prevention will require funding and political support. The 'Know-How' knowledge taxonomy would have imparted the municipality with required knowledge, which involves financial support from concerned authorities.

Unfunded Mandate and Capacity of the Local Government

This study reveals "that the local government sees crime prevention as an unfunded mandate and that safety crime prevention is the mandate and function of the national government and not municipalities". This finding ignores safety as an integral 'quality of life' and local government should highly contribute, and in as much as a variety of local government functions is involved more broadly in issues of governance, it is a must that the functions must also involve crime prevention. Considering this, a participant highlighted that:

"Crime prevention is the responsibility of the SAPS and the Department of Community Safety".

Local governments' capacity is found to be closely related to challenges associated with funding. It is noted that the developed crime prevention projects consider requirements in crime prevention development without increased resource allocation. The above finding upholds the arguments of Shaw (1998) as well as Masuku and Maepa (2004), when they contended that the local municipalities are consistent with the fact that crime prevention issues are unfunded, and hence ignorance of the prescripts of the specified crime prevention policies. This inadequacy in crime prevention projects is purely seen as a heavy burden for municipalities.

Political Support for Crime Prevention

The issue of political support for crime prevention is found to be potentially problematic. According to Garner (2012), for crime prevention to be prioritised, buy-in by the political leadership is highly required. Findings further highlight that political support is lacking, and all initiatives in crime prevention are often undercut. Due to the public pressure under which the politicians find themselves, they often become tempted to manipulate community expectations regarding

what the local government can achieve in crime prevention within the shortest term. Participants' viewpoints were captured as follows:

"During election campaigns, political leadership promises the community impossibilities, and when they get into power they neglect the safety-related promises".

"What we have is, thus, neglect of safety-related projects and a poor budget agenda for community safety".

Delving critically into the above narratives, it can be established that crime prevention programmes at local levels are commonly composed of too many objectives, which were poorly funded, and sometimes those projects consequently became overloaded and abandoned, and ultimately achieved little actual result on crime prevention. This scenario impacted negatively on local governments' coordination of crime prevention projects, which in turn, frustrated municipalities to neglect issues of security, safety and crime prevention.

Lack of Crime Prevention Policy Review

The "1996 NCPS was never reviewed nor defined by the municipality, and this was well captured when all indicated that the tenets were never implemented and this outcome finds evidence to resonate with Rauch's (2002) findings", which indicated "why various crime prevention policies were not implemented in South Africa. Reluctance by political leaders who were purely hesitant to implement policies largely influences lack of policy review". Furthermore, politicians are found to lack the same vision as those who made the crime prevention policies.

"Policies are designed by academics who don't understand municipal issues and again, safety officials are not educated to tackle safety policies. Mostly are political appointees who are in office for five years. When they exit, so are their programmes and plans. Hence the policies cannot be reviewed".

The NCPS policy, for example, demands the introduction of crime prevention strategies, which ensure multi-departmental involvement and fails to consider how challenging this can be for any new political leadership (Mothibi and Roelofse 2017). The challenge includes inability to enforce accountability within the departments responsible for crime prevention projects. Inability to enforce accountability is inherited in political spaces and

this has led to non-compliance. Thus, Dr Bengt-Ake Lundvall's second knowledge principle, which is termed the 'Know-How' principle, is lacking. This principle would have assisted municipalities to know how to respond to policies mandating municipal involvement in crime prevention. For municipalities to fail to review crime prevention policies, suggests lack of the 'Know-How' and 'Know-Who' knowledge principles. One of the inadequacies experienced during the course of the interviews was that participants could not actually articulate their opinions and identify who, in particular, failed to ensure the policies were reviewed.

Budgetary Constraints

Issues relating to budgetary constraints as one of the challenges that "characterize the implementation of crime prevention policies at local levels were highlighted by the participants". To redress the historical inequities that give rise to criminality, the local government should prioritise and ensure enough budget is set aside for the process, which can be massive at times. The findings on poor budgetary constraints align with those presented by Rauch (2002) and Modaberi and Momeni (2016), who maintained that budgetary constraints further cause a rift between those designated departments which are responsible for crime prevention. Hence, high rates of extreme competition and poor level of cooperation across the concerned departments. Crime prevention mechanisms became largely dependent on all criminal justice agencies' transformation processes. According to some of the participants interviewed:

"Ill-informed competing needs and lack of financial prioritisation are the results. Therefore, crime prevention success is largely dependent on the ability of the local government to transform and have confidence in the transformation process".

Lack of Municipal Policing

Not a single municipality sampled established municipal policing regardless of the "SAPS Act of 1995's Amended Act (No. 83 of 1998) mandating local governments to introduce municipal police services within areas of jurisdiction, and many other municipalities in South Africa fail to do so". Participants' views were captured as follows:

“Municipal policing can only be established in metro cities rather than rural municipalities. There are too many challenges between the SAPS and metro police at other municipalities and we are not ready to face similar jurisdictional issues amongst too many other issues”.

The participants yarned “that it would be impossible for the municipality to establish its policing due to the challenges previously faced by other South African municipalities”. The above findings concur with those by Rauch et al. (2001) and Newham (2005, 2006), “who identified cooperation between the SAPS and other criminal justice agencies as crucial in the reduction of crime”. If priorities are set jointly, resources shared, territorial conflict between all agencies are avoided, stakeholder collaboration in crime prevention will be a success. The different geographical jurisdictions in which the police operate is also identified by the participants as a major challenge between police agencies. Furthermore, inability by the relevant stakeholders, especially the local SAPS, to build an effective working relationship is highlighted as a common challenge facing all cities and municipalities that have municipal policing. The organisational sharing of crime prevention legal mandate is found to be a problem, and hence municipalities do not have municipal policing and shared understanding as regards the mandate of crime prevention.

The main challenges of establishing municipal policing are identified as follows by this study, that is, coordination with the SAPS and other enforcement agencies requires Municipal Police Service (MPS) to reduce and control crime by harmonizing priorities, sharing “resources and avoiding turf conflicts with the SAPS. One of the obstacles to coordination between the police agencies is the different geographic jurisdictions in which they operate. Building an effective working relationship with the SAPS is one of the most critical challenges facing MPS leaders, and this is complicated by the organisations’ lack of sharing of crime prevention legal mandate and shared understanding of the crime prevention mandate”. Terming the relationship between relevant stakeholders as “burden sharing” continues to strain agency relations. Moreover, of great concern is the desire for the SAPS budget to be linked with certain functions of municipal policing. Hence all municipalities in the province

will continue to fail in the development of municipal policing.

Poor Stakeholder Cooperation

The municipalities do cooperate with “Community Police Forums (CPFs) and Community Safety Forums” (CSFs). However, they fail to lead and wait for other stakeholders to initiate programmes and projects relating to safety. For municipalities to wait for other stakeholders to lead clearly reflects lack of Dr Bengt-Ake Lundvall’s first knowledge taxonomy principle, which is the ‘Know-What’ principle. Municipalities clearly do not know what to do in terms of leading on issues of crime prevention as per policies. The municipality attends to the recommendations (such as maintaining streetlights, cutting off grasses, as well as information sharing across communities etc.) by the CPF in crime prevention. At this juncture, it is crucial to note that, for the municipality to wait for CPF to initiate safety programmes is against the existing policies for crime prevention. Contrariwise, Community Policing Forum (CPF) Act (No. 68 of 1995) requires the municipality to lead in crime prevention and spearhead initiatives. As per the CPF Act 68 of 1995, the local municipalities should participate in all initiatives in the neighbourhood, predominantly those aimed at ensuring safety and taking ownership of the CPF and SAPS in law enforcement. The Act further requires that crime prevention plans are discussed during the community police sub forum meetings, where effective participation in information sharing and problem solving is actively discussed.

Surveillance Systems

Surveillance system was improved at some of the crime hot spots and was achieved through the installation of Closed-Circuit Televisions (CCTVs) for visibility design and coverage throughout the municipalities. However, municipalities domiciled in the rural areas of the province, such as Vhembe District Municipality and Sekhukhune Municipality lag in the utilisation of CCTVs. Respondents were captured saying:

“Municipality does not have enough money to maintain CCTV cameras across the municipality. During protests, the cameras were vandalised, and

the municipality got tired of fixing them more than five times a year”.

A critical and conceptual analysis of the above narratives suggests that poor planning and budgetary constraints have been identified as a stumbling block to effective crime prevention by local municipalities. The installation of CCTV as regards the precepts of the “1998 White Paper on Safety and Security is indicated as an effective city hot spot management method. The importance of visibility design is in conjunction with the findings by the National Crime Prevention Council or NCPC (2004) and Lab (2010)”, contending that designing visibility in the built environment is important and it further aids the exposure of isolated or hidden spaces in various communities.

By-Law Enforcement

It is, thus, established that not all municipalities procured the necessary skills to engage in crime prevention. Those that managed, acquired skills through workshops, trainings and presentations. However, the acquired skills are not put to practice due to lack of monitoring and evaluation. This assertion is confirmed in the narrative below:

“We are tired of attending training and workshops facilitated by people that have never worked at a municipality. We are further tired of being trained and not being given certificates”.

The agenda priorities for crime prevention within municipal jurisdiction are set. By-law enforcement was mentioned across municipalities as one of the priorities needed in crime prevention. The finding correlates with the tenets of prescribed policies, “whereby by-law enforcement is outlined as the responsibility of the municipality. By-laws are identified as a product of social conventions that determine people’s interactions with the city through explicit regulatory mechanisms” (see Mabitsela 2022). The participants mentioned “that there are by-law officials whose priorities are to inspect buildings that have been categorised as problematic in terms of being in a bad state, abandoned, overcrowded, or failed to comply with building regulations, as well as having illegal dumping sites and illicit hawking”.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated municipalities’ role in crime prevention by closely looking at the existing

challenges of resting on policies, mandating municipalities to lead in crime prevention strategies within their areas of jurisdiction. Arising from interviews with the community safety unit officials, there is, therefore, no doubt that municipalities within the 5 districts in the Limpopo Province continue to ignore the “tenets of the policies mandating their active involvement in crime prevention. Like other South African municipalities, the municipalities failed to overcome gaps within the policies. Consequently, this has led to crime prevention being spearheaded by the South African Police Service (SAPS). Increased resources were identified as sine qua non for improving the effectiveness of the municipal role”. Poor funding and politicking governing municipalities in South Africa led to issues of safety being undermined by municipalities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For municipalities to participate “actively in crime prevention, they should attend to the different challenges identified by other municipalities, which include political support, budgetary constraints, lack of capacity, monitoring, and evaluation, among others. In order to implement the policies successfully, the municipality should continuously review and redefine its strategies, monitor and evaluate and learn from other municipalities that are actively involved in crime prevention. Lastly, all municipalities should develop municipal safety plans or municipal crime prevention strategies in line with the tenets of the policies on crime prevention. “Dr. Bengt-Ake Lundvall’s four knowledge taxonomy principles (Know-What; Know-How; Know-Why; Know-Who)” must be embraced as an assessment tool to evaluate the local municipal compliance with the tenets of safety policies in crime prevention”. Recurrent reviews of crime prevention policies and intense training of municipality safety managers on crime prevention will indisputably assist with policy compliance, and these efforts will represent a brilliant step forward in ensuring efficacious safety measures across local municipalities.

AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTION

KA Rakubu conceptualised the study, wrote the manuscript, and carried out the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data.

SA Olofinbiyi did the rewriting, language editing, critical review, and formatting of the manuscript in line with the editorial requirements of the journal.

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