



Building collaborative capability between law enforcement and civil society leaders to prevent urban violence

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Abstract

Objectives This research paper analyses how applying a Place-Based Leadership Development (P-BLD) programme adds value to an ongoing intersectoral Urban Violence Prevention Programme (IUVP) in Kenya building trust within collaboratives in the intersection between the historically adversarial law enforcement and civil society sectors.

Methods Data on participants' experience of the P-BLD programme were systematically collected through detailed pre- and post-session questionnaires which included a series of challenging but open questions. A framework analysis was undertaken to draw out the common themes.

Results By surfacing emotional, relational and structural tensions between law enforcement and civil society within the context of IUVP, the P-BLD programme has enabled leaders to become more open to and respecting others' perspectives as a first step towards a more collaborative mindset.

Conclusions The P-BLD programme is having a positive impact, explicitly addressing the tensions and enabling leaders to share their concerns and challenges in working towards violence prevention at the intersection between law enforcement and civil society. Moreover, this approach is replicable creating new knowledge and sustainable mechanisms for violence prevention within urban areas across the world.

Keywords Criminal justice · Intersectoral urban violence prevention · Collaboratives · Violence reduction · Place-based leadership development · Civil society · Mindset · Trust · Collective impact

Introduction

Growing urbanization, particularly in emerging economies, is placing unprecedented levels of demand on limited infrastructure, land and public services increasing tensions and leading to increased violence (World Bank 2011a). In Kenya, this has been exacerbated by high levels of distrust between the police and the public dating back to colonial

times and continuing after independence, where the former acted with impunity in suppressing the general population in the interests of those who controlled the state (Murunga and Nasong'o 2007; CHRI/Katiba Institute 2016). Moreover, whilst endemic violence levels (10 or more deaths per 100,000) have not been reached in Kenya, the homicide rate has increased sharply from 3.5 in 2007 to 6.5 in 2013 (UNODC 2016). During and after the 2007 election, Nakuru and Naivasha, the two case study municipalities in this study, were amongst the violent political 'hotspots' which accounted for a significant number of the 1200 Kenyans that were reported killed and thousands more injured (OHCHR 2008).

It is increasingly recognized by researchers and practitioners that reducing the levels of urban violence requires a comprehensive, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach (World Bank 2011a, b). Therefore, for its intersectoral urban violence prevention (IUVP) programme DIGNITY—the Danish Institute Against Torture and its Kenyan local partner organization (LPO), the MidRift

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Human Right Network (MHRN) draw on *intersectoral perspectives* such as ‘public health’, ‘human rights-based’ and ‘human security’ approaches combining traditional criminal justice control and repressive measures with evidence-based crime control and preventive public health strategies.

IUVP takes a territorial approach (at municipality level) aimed at optimizing how key stakeholders in law enforcement, civil society, private sector and local government join efforts, pooling resources (Worrall and Callahan 2017) and limiting the need for outside input to facilitating ‘safe space encounters’ and knowledge sharing. Working at municipal level provides a clear administratively defined territorial boundary with clear lines of responsibility for policy, plans and budgets, making it easier to identify resources for joint initiatives (Kjaerulf 2017). By empowering leaders in violence prevention to ask critical questions, look for existing institutions, stakeholders and community resources and structures to build on and work with or challenge, the IUVP aims to create municipality-driven ownership and sustainability for systemic change (Chan et al. 2016). This enables a joint critical assessment of what is in place already and what needs to be strengthened, challenged or created in terms of violence prevention policies, plans, resources, a safe meeting space, joint work, data gathering and evaluation mechanism.

IUVP engages the intersection between law enforcement and civil society by applying a ‘Human Security Approach’ at dialogue and development workshops and meetings where relevant duty bearers and right holders’ representatives are invited. The human security approach works to develop municipality intervention strategies that are firstly *participation driven* by strengthening of ‘bottom-up empowerment’ and including civil society and private sector in local governance to ensure it responds to local needs and secondly, *protection driven* by ‘top-down’ development of the state’s protection infrastructure—strengthening the norms, processes and institutions of the state. In this way, law enforcement and local government should continuously work to protect the citizens against dangers and insecurities and reduce the gap between partially dysfunctional state institutions and international human rights standards (Kjaerulf and Barahona 2010). The partners’ approach also mirrors the development of the conditions for urban violence prevention set out by the World Bank (2011a) in its influential study *Violence in the City* (see Table 1).

However, through their experience of practice-based implementation, the partners realized that the pathway towards rebuilding trust and better relationships, particularly between law enforcement and civil society, is fraught and challenging. Moreover, a recent study noted that

Table 1 Strategic policy orientations for urban violence prevention. Reproduced with permission from World Bank (2011a)

1. Creating the basic conditions for collective action
2. Rebuilding community trust
3. Focusing on building better relationships between state institutions, especially police, and the communities they serve
4. Addressing the trend towards extra-legal, private security solutions
5. Addressing the relationships amongst different forms of violence
6. Improving the built environment
7. Creating improvements in data collection and mechanisms

successful approaches to preventing violent conflict involve an inclusive intersectoral approach and decisive leadership developing shared narratives built on norms and values that promote peaceful conflict resolution (United Nations, World Bank 2018). In this regard, the inherently intersectoral and evidence-based place-based leadership development (P-BLD) framework, developed by Worrall (2014, 2015) whilst at the University of Sunderland (UoS), gives leaders the confidence, shared understanding, capability and enhanced capacity to work together to augment levels of trust, develop deeper relationships and build commitment to common purpose across their local area (Kjaerulf 2017). The framework, which emerged from an in-depth exploratory study of the lived experience of intersectoral leaders who participated in P-BLD initiatives in three English counties, enables leaders to surface, work through and eventually transcend the inherent tensions within self, between self and other, across organizations and wider place (Worrall 2014, 2015).

Initial application of the P-BLD framework focuses, firstly, on developing an enhanced self-awareness and knowledge of self as an individual leader, identifying strengths and areas for development (Day 2000; Day et al. 2014). The work on improvement of self is further augmented with interpersonal development looking at how a leader relates to and works with other people, across organizations, wider society and place (Worrall 2014, 2015). The extent to which the theoretical alignment between IUVP and P-BLD would be mutually reinforcing in practice was tested out through the design, delivery and evaluation of two pilot P-BLD workshops late 2016 for intersectoral leaders working on a pilot urban violence prevention initiative across the municipalities of Naivasha and Nakuru, Kenya. The subsequent study, based on analysis of the lived experience of the workshop participants, showed strong evidence of positive trust building between civil society and law enforcement leaders (Worrall and Kjaerulf 2017). This led to a collaboration between DIGNITY, MHRN and UoS on the co-creation, design and

delivery of a three-year P-BLD initiative as an integral pillar of the wider IUVP programme in Nakuru and Naivasha. The P-BLD programme is designed to support the building of coalitions across ethnic, psychological, sectoral, professional and community boundaries and provides the ‘software’ to transform mindsets and build long-term collaborative capabilities for the collective common good (Kania and Kramer 2011; Kania et al. 2014).

The first P-BLD programme development sessions of the three-year programme were held in Nakuru on 27–28 and Naivasha on 29–30 March 2017 involving 23 and 20 participants, respectively. The first one-day session was focused on Leader Personal and Professional Identity Development and Place and the second day session was on Leaders, Leadership and Values. The P-BLD programme for IUVP activities was a blend of individual, pair and group activities as well as plenary discussions. Activities took place in a formal classroom setting, but also externally in walk and talk sessions and in dialogue circles. Participants were encouraged to explore their own and others’ assumptions by asking questions to each other. The sessions were deliberately focused on providing tools and mechanisms to promote reflective practice (Schon 1983, 1987, 1991) and self-development (Bassot 2016; Korstange 2016). Reflective practice is as a way of reducing the gap between formal theory and professional practice reality and is increasingly seen as crucial for teaching and adult education practice (Boud et al 1985; Hatton and Smith 1995) and by extension for effective leadership and management development (Densten and Gray 2001; Hernez-Broome and Hughes 2004) and practice (Reynolds 1999). It is seen as particularly relevant when leaders are faced with volatile, uncertain and complex contexts such as violence prevention (Nandlam and Bindlish 2017).

This paper looks at the extent to which the P-BLD programme adds value to the ongoing IUVP programme in Kenya (Kjaerulf 2017) by considering the outcomes of the interactions between law enforcement and civil society. It starts by explicitly examining the tensions that have emerged from participants’ prior experience. It then considers whether the shared developmental journey will enable participants to start to explicitly address such challenges and work more effectively together towards reducing urban violence. Finally, it explores whether this interdisciplinary approach to collective capability building for urban violence prevention could be applicable to other urban areas.

Method

The sample for this study was based on pragmatism prescribed by the target population of the 23 and 20 participants who took part in the P-BLD for IUVP in Nakuru and Naivasha, respectively.

In Nakuru, 48% were from civil society (including the Community Policing Committee—CPC members) (compared to 30% in Naivasha) and 22% were from law enforcement (compared to 35% in Naivasha). There were also three times as many CPC members in Naivasha as Nakuru (see Table 2).

Pre- and post-session questionnaires were used as the main instrument of data collection to explore the participants lived experience of the P-BLD programme within two distinct case study localities (Yin 2003). This was consistent with the approach of embedding research into practice (Tran et al. 2017; WHO 2012). Given limited time, human and financial resources using questionnaires also represented a convenient and inexpensive way of gathering information from participants. It was also considered that questionnaires completed by hand on the day would result in a higher rate of participation than a post-event online survey. The careful design of the questionnaires, informed by the experience of the ones used for the initial pilot workshops, generates data which starts to build a picture of the impact of the P-BLD programme at an individual and collective level. The subsequent analysis also enabled the identification of common themes which could be further explored through in-depth semi-structured interviews with participants as part of the midterm review of the P-BLD programme.

The pre-session questionnaires were administered prior to the start of day one, and the post-session questionnaires, at the end of day one and day two. The pre-session questionnaire enabled the gathering of facts about people such as their age range, professional experience, line management and territorial span of responsibility and degree of involvement in collaboration (whether in IUVP or wider policy frameworks). Participants were also asked to reflect on which aspects of collaboration they found difficult; which organizations they found the most challenging to work with; and which aspects of leadership they found the most challenging and aspects they were most comfortable with. Finally, as a ‘safety net’ to identify issues that might compliment or build on those emerging from the preceding questions, participants were asked to reflect on their experience of completing the questionnaire (O’Cathain and Thomas 2004).

The post-session questionnaires had a dual purpose. Firstly, the collection of learner programme evaluation data on their lived experience in terms of content, facilitator’s approach, knowledge and presentation of the subject, achievement of learning outcomes, aspects of the content and experience learners found the most valuable to their role, how they would apply these back in their organization and across wider place and finally their least and most favourite activities. Secondly, the questionnaire sought to understand whether collaborative learning and interaction

Table 2 Research participants in Nakuru and Naivasha (Building collaborative capability between law enforcement and civil society leaders to prevent urban violence, Kenya, 2017)

Sector/municipality	Nakuru (participants)		Naivasha (participants)	
Civil society organizations (CSOs)	Local partner organization	3	Local partner organization	2
	Other CSOs	6	Faith-based organizations	2
	Faith-based organizations	1	Other	2
	Subtotal	10	Subtotal	6
Criminal justice sector	Law enforcement: Police	5	Law enforcement: Police	7
	Correction: prison service	3	Correction: prison service	3
	Subtotal	8	Subtotal	10
Community Policing Committee		1		3
Health		1		1
County government		2		0
Private sector		1		0
Total number of participants		23		20

had changed participant perceptions of other organizations. And whether this experience would improve their ability to and their confidence in collaborating with other organizations within the IUVP context.

An adapted framework analysis was deemed the appropriate data analysis method. Framework analysis is suitable for research that firstly has a specific question (in this case whether the P-BLD programme is adding value to the wider IUVP programme). Secondly, a pre-designed sample (i.e. the P-BLD programme participants). And thirdly, a priori issues—such as organizational and integration issues—which in this study are concerned with improving interactions (through trust building) and by implication collaboration between law enforcement and civil society (Srivastava and Thomson 2009). Fourthly, citing Ritchie and Spencer (1994), Srivastava and Thomson (2009: 1) argue that framework analysis overriding objective is to ‘describe and interpret what is happening in a particular setting’ rather than theory building. Indeed, the researchers would argue that the framework analysis would help generate a clearer understanding of what is going on, i.e. the outcomes of the interactions and collective learning within the context of the P-BLD programme.

The questionnaires were completed by hand on machine-readable forms. For each case study, the researchers were able to examine the data from individual forms and also explore all responses to particular questions by running the forms through Teleforms data capture software. This enabled researchers to experience increasing levels of familiarization with the data—making notes on key ideas and recurrent themes that emerged. The second phase involved each researcher identifying initial core themes through constantly comparative analysis of the data within sections from where commonalities emerged. In the third phase, the researchers identified and agreed emergent

themes and sub-themes within the data which formed the basis of a thematic framework (Braun and Clarke 2006). In the fourth stage, the data were linked to the themes and sub-themes drawn up when the thematic framework was created so that the research could be reported. The penultimate stage involved making sure that the agreed common themes were defined and named and that there were significant data to support them. The findings are set out below: Firstly, a brief overview of demographic and biographic data is provided. Secondly, the pre-existing tensions between law enforcement and civil society are described through the core theme of ‘distrust’ which has a number of relational, structural and intergenerational sub-themes. Thirdly, the impact of the shared lived experience of and shared learning from the P-BLD programme is explored through the commitment to self-development and a shift in mindset (Boyd 2014) and related sub-themes. And finally, implications for practice are considered.

Results

In both Nakuru and Naivasha, 48% of participants had not previously attended the pilot P-BLD workshops. Participants were younger in Nakuru with 50% aged 22–34 years compared to 69% aged 35–54 in Naivasha. Correspondingly, whilst 54% of participants had 5 years or more of professional experience in Nakuru, 78% had 10 years and upwards in Naivasha. In Nakuru, 66% had between 5 and 12 years’ experience of intersectoral collaboration, whereas in Naivasha 73% had 5 years or more. The higher proportion of participants from the criminal justice sector (CJS) in Naivasha (10/20) than in Nakuru (8/23) has not created significant differences in outcomes from our data analysis.

Tensions between law enforcement and civil society

The tensions between civil society and law enforcement emerged strongly from the analysis of the pre-session questionnaires with distrust running deep.

Not all sectors may welcome a police officer to interact with. Others fear the police. (Naiv010)

Civil society (...) view police as enemies (...) making police work very difficult, extra judicial killings, torture... (Nak014)

working with youth is the most challenging role. This is because they do not understand us well and many are afraid of us as Police Officers (Naiv012)

This is exacerbated by the perceived lack of structural and operational transparency with law enforcement acting within its own set of rules and failing to respect confidentiality when a crime is reported.

The national security structure that are embroiled in high level of secrecy and bureaucracy. (Nak02)

The bureaucracy within the police service is a hindrance to effective collaborations (Nak09)

Police because they don't want to be corrected and sometimes they don't treat any info given to them with confidentiality (Naiv018)

In turn, the police find civil society, epitomized by Human Rights Groups, more interested in promoting and protecting the interests of criminals, than working with 'genuine' officers who are not guilty of abuse of and illegitimate use of power.

Human Rights Groups – they mostly overlook the plight of law enforcement officers (Nak013)

They don't have confidence with the police as some police officers are also working with criminals; (Nak06)

...human rights – because they just treat prisoners as if they are angels yet they are imprisoned due to criminal activity (Nak018)

Complex intergenerational tensions also exist between the police and young people, and the police and 'traditional leaders'. The police perceive themselves as being stigmatized for upholding the law and see young people's criminal activity as being shielded and implicitly sanctioned by self-interested traditional leaders only willing to engage for financial gain.

Youth sectors may be challenging to work with because young people may have different views' than the ones you are telling them; Most youth tend to be involved in crime so (they) (...) may not be willing to

associate with me as a police officer and ... because the chiefs tend to cover crime (Naiv010)

Local leaders—they are also willing to give their time only on condition that there will be money (Naiv01)

A second source of intergenerational tensions is within law enforcement itself; the older generation of officers expect obedient implementation of orders even when younger officers may perceive a decision to be 'morally' wrong. Here there is an explicit tension between self-interest and what is right for the collective or common good.

Hierarchical structure that does not always allow consultations for a way forward. Working in that structure; (Nak010)

...you take orders and execute them not accordingly the way you know but according to someone else's idea; (Nak018)

Personal interest versus best interest of the community. (Nak08)

More worryingly given that situations increasingly involve complex issues where there may not be one evident course of action, the police psyche seems to thrive on certainty with clear orders from on high for a clear course of action.

Giving orders –as disciplined forces- always obeyed; (Nak09)

Receiving orders from the top management, They take the overall responsibility of decision making (Nak010)

Impact

Our analysis has shown that in both case studies, there is evidence to suggest that participation in the P-BLD programme has encouraged participants to adopt a less simplistic view of how they see the 'other' sector. One theme that emerged can be summarized as a change in perception of oneself and the need for self-development—with its sub-themes of being more open to different perspectives and seeing collaboration as fundamental to achieving greater (collective) impact on violence prevention. A second theme, a shift in mindset enabled through joint working within a safe space, which is underpinned by a commitment to 'spreading the word' of their learning.

Firstly, people have placed a strong emphasis on the need for and a belief in self-development to improve their ability to work collaboratively. Moreover, there is an acceptance that the complexity of the environment means one should constantly challenge oneself and others as part of the decision-making process.

Need to listen and evaluate before decision making (Nak019)

That I should have a growth in mind-set as opposed to fixed one because I can learn anything I want.... (Nak010)

... it's easier to approach challenging situations if we always reflect and change our mindset (Naiv02)

The need to see the narrower and the wider perspective (Nak014)

It is important not to stop asking questions. (Nav03)

Secondly, participants can see the importance of being open to different perspectives and the benefit of diverse approaches. This is accompanied by an expressed desire to be more open-minded—seeing other sectors as collaborators (rather than rivals) for achieving violence reduction. There is also some evidence of a reduction in generalized ‘fear’ of the police.

Though we approach the issues differently, the intent/objective is similar and hence the need for collaboration; (Nak017)

It has impressed upon me the need to build consensus and not being a stumbling block to the same; (Nak023)

It has taught me that without collaboration, unity of purpose and developing mechanisms of working together, the fight against violence cannot be won (Nak03)

...because it has changed my mind-set and perception towards different situation that I encounter in life and workplace. (Nak021)

It has challenged it in that now my fear of the police has declined since it has helped me interact with police officers who are focussed on good (Naiv01)

Thirdly, a number of participants’ statements support the idea that they have undergone a change in mindset, in other words, that joint working in the P-BLD ‘safe space’ had made it easier to work with former adversaries.

It will be much easier because I now know the group dynamics to take care of (Nak023)

...through the experience and skills acquired after training I believe that collaboration is an important aspect in violence prevention. (Naiv17)

Finally, participants also expressed a strong desire to enable the development of others by sharing their learning in the workplace or across the wider sector by reflecting on their learning, conducting seminars, empowering and educating colleagues.

Applying all the key points, having a dialogue and understanding my colleagues better (Nak05)

Empowering my fellow officers in the value of teaming up for common purpose (Naiv016)

Through sensitisation of members of staff during parades and teambuilding on reflective practice; (Naiv017)

I plan to invest in the different mind-sets of different employees within my span of control’ (Nak015)

Discussion

Law enforcement and civil society have traditionally seen the other as acting out of self-interest, undermining the common good by stopping the duty bearers from carrying out their lawful role and the rights holders being able to count on the protection of the law. Participation in the P-BLD programme has enabled participants to develop a shared understanding of the complexity of the intersection between law enforcement and civil society. By working through emotional, relational and structural tensions in interacting with the ‘other’, participants have started to understand the importance of being open-minded in relation to seeing the value of other perspectives. This has been characterized in the literature as the development of a ‘growth mindset’ (Dweck 2006, 2017) and the conditions for ensuring collective impact include achieving a mindset shift in terms of how people work together where the relational is as/or often more important than the rational (Kania et al. 2014). This would suggest that our approach could be used to support the development of leaders working towards violence reduction in other urban areas.

A reduction in the ‘fear’ of the police also suggests that people are connecting at a personal level, seeing the person before the role and the uniform echoing Worrall’s (2014, 2015) research, which termed this the ‘rehumanization of place’. The creation of the safe space within the P-BLD through which people have been able to work together also reflects the importance given within the literature to the shared lived experience as a means of building trust and shared understanding between people (Kempster and Parry 2004).

Limitations

Our analysis provides evidence that the P-BLD programme for IUVP has created a more open and collaborative mindset amongst participants from traditional adversarial sectors. However, exploring whether the expressed intent to collaborate is enacted and sustained and its impact on the wider IUVP programme will require further and deeper analysis.

Recommendations

In this regard, the emergent tensions and themes from this current study could be used to frame questions for a more in-depth midterm impact review through semi-structured interviews. As well as programme participants, a wide range of their collaborators would also be interviewed in order to assess the depth, reach and significance of the impact of the P-BLD programme. In relation to programme design and delivery, there will also need to be a continued focus on exploring tensions and building shared narratives that challenge the normalization of different forms of violence (United Nations, World Bank 2018).

Conclusions

Addressing complex social problems like reducing urban violence, where no single agency alone can provide the solution, requires local leaders to work more effectively together across disciplines and sectors. Attempts at collaboration are often marred by a history of distrust and personal, professional and organizational interests competing for limited power, influence and resources. Agreeing and achieving shared objectives and common purpose requires a shared trust-building journey and effective support enabling leaders to work through and break down such barriers for interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration. This research paper provides strong evidence that the P-BLD programme is having a positive impact, explicitly addressing the tensions and enabling leaders to share their concerns and challenges in working towards violence prevention at the intersection between law enforcement and civil society. Moreover, this approach is replicable creating new knowledge and sustainable mechanisms for violence prevention within urban areas across the world.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval This study is part of an ongoing research project, and it was carried out in accordance with University Ethics guidelines as approved by the University Research Ethics Group (UREG).

Informed consent Research participants were provided with an informed consent form explaining that research would be an integral part of and improve the P-BLD programme's effectiveness as well as the background and purpose of the research. Informed consent forms were signed by both the research team and participants and clearly set out participant's right to withdraw from the study.

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