Introduction – The changing nature of urban safety

“A city-level (safe city) campaign promotes a city where all urban inhabitants – regardless of socio-economic status, gender, race, ethnicity or religion – are able to fully participate in the social, economic and political opportunities that cities have to offer. Engaging the urban poor, youth, and women in particular at all levels of planning and decision-making is key to creating a safer city” (UN-Habitat, 2015a, p. 10).

Ensuring citizen safety is an important role of government. City governments, due to their proximity to local populations, are well positioned to champion urban safety and to ensure that it responds to local priorities, even when national governments have developed overall prevention policies (ICPC, 2013). It is for this reason that several organisations including ICPC, the European Forum for Urban Safety (EFUS), the National League of Cities (USA), the National Crime Prevention Centre (Canada), UN-Habitat’s Safer Cities Programme and the Ministère de sécurité publique du Québec, among others, have advocated for the role of cities in implementing local safety strategies since the 1990s (ICPC, 2013). The support of national and subnational government to enable cities to carry out this role is essential.

Urbanization: challenges and opportunities

We are living in a primarily urban world with an estimated 3.5 billion people living in cities today (UN, 2015b). This trend is projected to continue in the next decades, with 95% of urban expansion happening in cities to occur in the developing world (UN, 2015b). By 2050, the urban population will be bigger than the world population today (Revised zero draft of the new urban agenda, 2016, p. 1). See Figure 2.1.

In the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the first stand-alone goal on urban signifies that the international community acknowledges the critical role of cities in sustainable development. Ironically, there is no internationally agreed upon definition of ‘urban’. Some argue that its definition is related to its productive capacity, centred around non-agricultural activities (Rashed & Jürgens, 2010), while others, including the United Nations Statistics Division, simply refer to cities with populations of over 100,000 as urban. Either way, there seems to be a relative consensus that the interconnectedness between cities and rural areas is increasing, and the lines distinguishing the two diminishing (Rashed & Jürgens, 2010).

Urbanization and migration to urban areas is occurring faster than municipal infrastructure, spaces and services are able to expand, resulting in inadequate delivery of urban infrastructure and services, affecting the urban poor and women particularly. Some governments, Vietnam for example, are now trying to address this by bringing urban infrastructure to rural areas.
villages in an attempt to curb migration to the city (Rashed & Jürgens, 2010).

The majority of cities today are marred by inequalities and lack social cohesion. The divides and dualities that are manifest in the form of urban inequalities are important root causes of crime. For example, as cities expand, so does the establishment of gated communities and informal settlements. In both cases, the availability of urban services including safety services and the police are often lacking, on the one hand replaced by private services, and absent or inadequate on the other. It is in informal settlements, areas characterised by poverty, lack of access to quality basic services, unplanned settlements, and high rates of insecurity and crime, that we find some of the greatest challenges to urban safety. It is also these areas that 828 million people call home; a number that continues to grow (UN, 2015b). Inequality is often correlated with levels of urban crime and violence, in both the Global North and South (GIT Security, 2013).

In spite of these challenges, cities are hugely important in their potential for sustainable development. They are sites of opportunities, for education, employment, social cohesion, gender equality, freedom of expression of sexual orientation, etc. and in that sense urbanization has the potential to be transformative. New policy approaches are needed to turn urbanization into opportunity (AUC, 2015). Technology is increasingly important for city management, and offers potential for integrated urban management and citizen participation in urban development, management and monitoring.

**Defining urban safety**

There are many different ways of understanding crime prevention and urban safety, and these definitions change from one language to the other, and from one region or country to another. ICPC’s working definition, reflected in the concepts of crime prevention and community safety, “emphasizes the role of residents – or communities – in developing and implementing these policies. Likewise, the development of personal capacities, whether by education, professional skills development, leadership, etc., promotes good social integration and the building of peaceful living environments” (ICPC, 2010b, p. 4).

It has been argued that today’s definition of urban safety is complementary to crime prevention, as it considers how to enhance a person’s individual rights and well-being, in terms of their physical (Kelly, 2015), social and psychological integrity, in addition to addressing the prevention of crime and violence (Habitat III, 2015c). Urban safety thus “starts from the observation that inadequate urban development and local governance and social and territorial exclusion patterns encourage crime and violence. In this perspective, urban safety adopts a citywide and participatory process to address the risk factors, and above all, protection factors of insecurity in cities, creating the conditions of more sustainable, inclusive, cohesive and just cities” (Habitat III, 2015c, p. 2).

Urban safety is an important political, social and economic issue. Much knowledge has been gained in this area over the past twenty years, since the adoption of the first UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Urban Crime in 1995. The follow-up 2002 UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime assert “there is clear evidence that well-planned crime prevention strategies not only prevent crime and victimization, but also promote community safety and contribute to the sustainable development of countries” (UNODC, 2002, p. 2), now reflected in the SDGs in Agenda 2030.

This accumulated knowledge and experience has resulted in a shared understanding of the basic elements of effective urban safety strategies (WICI, 2016, p. 17). Firstly, connecting different levels of government from the national to the community is key (see Chapter 3). While national governments develop safety strategies for the country, municipal governments localise crime prevention efforts through their own plans. Multilevel coordination is fundamental to successfully developing and implementing crime prevention and urban safety strategies, and “addressing the interlinkages between transnational organised crime, and local crime, violence and insecurity” (Habitat III, 2015c, p. 3). National and subnational governments must support cities in ensuring urban safety, including sufficient power and resource allocation for effective implementation and monitoring. Community engagement and participation of a diversity of the urban population inclusive of age, gender, indigenous status and other factors in safety diagnosis, planning, implementation and monitoring is important, since different identities face safety disparities (see Figure 2.2). In this sense, a complementary bottom-up approach is important in successfully localizing safety strategies. Finally, a multidimensional and multi-stakeholder approach to understanding and addressing crime and violence is essential across all levels. This will allow for a more robust, effective and comprehensive safety strategy (UN-Habitat, 2007a; WICI, 2016).

Urban safety is increasingly being integrated as a cross-cutting issue in sustainable urban development and governance (UNODC, 2014). The connections between safety and the physical design and infrastructure are widely recognised, as are the links with governance (UN-Habitat, 2007b). It is argued that “sustainable urban development will only be achieved when well-planned city-wide, gender-sensitive,
community-based, integrated and comprehensive urban crime prevention and safety strategies have been put in place” (WICI, 2016, p. 4). This is reflected in urban safety strategies that use rights-based approaches to include elements of social development and inclusion.

Overview of the chapter

This chapter begins by exploring how international norms and standards on prevention and urban safety have evolved and are currently being updated to better reflect the composition of cities. It explores the state of urban safety today, highlighting some relevant trends and exploring ongoing (gangs, violence against women and girls) and emerging challenges (migration, fragile cities). It considers the increased interconnectedness between cities, and the new urban governance that places greater emphasis on citizen participation. The chapter also looks at how technology is being use by both city governments and citizens to make cities safer and smarter, including in particular geo-mapping. Finally, it looks at some policies, programmes and projects developed to respond to the challenges facing cities.

Norms and standards on urban safety

We are at a pivotal point in modern history where many international norms and standards are being revisited to reflect major changes in demographics, and rapid urbanization. Urban safety is considered a major issue of concern in cities around the world, regardless of the degree to which they are affected by crime and violence. Many of these norms and standards call for strengthening inclusion, particularly of youth, refugees and other excluded groups; for governance that is transparent, accountable and inclusive; for multi-level and multi-sectoral partnerships to confront challenges; for planning that accounts for diverse city users and that involves diverse people’s voices in planning; for gender equity and ending violence against women and girls; and for urban opportunities to be made available to all. While many of these messages are consistent with the previous crime prevention normative frameworks, they are being updated to incorporate new understanding and knowledge, and reflect current challenges such as migration.

From the MDGs to the SDGs

“SDG 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.

“Target 7: ‘By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities’ (UN, 2015a)”.

When the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were adopted in 2000, development efforts were still largely focused on rural areas and developing countries. Fifteen years later, with the adoption of Agenda 2030, and the majority of the world’s population living in urban areas, cities are recognized as key to sustainable development. This is reflected in the inclusion of a stand-alone SDG 11 on making cities inclusive, safe and resilient. The explicit inclusion of safety is noteworthy in that it is recognized as an essential condition for sustainable urban development, and positions urban safety as a development issue.
CHAPTER 2 URBAN SAFETY

From UN guidelines on crime prevention (1995, 2002) to UN guidelines on safer cities (Shaw, 2010)

Two sets of guidelines relating to crime prevention already exist: the Guidelines for Cooperation and Technical Assistance in the Field of Urban Crime, ECOSOC Resolution 1995/9; and the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, ECOSOC Resolution 2002/13. These guidelines articulate the need for crime prevention strategies to be developed and implemented alongside criminal justice responses. Among other tools, a Handbook on the 2002 Guidelines is designed to help their implementation by national and local governments (Shaw, 2010). See Box 2.1 for other pertinent UN guidelines and resolutions.

UN Guidelines on Safer Cities are now being developed. The purpose of the new guidelines is to provide policy makers at national and local levels with a clear normative framework that builds on the earlier guidelines and on accumulated knowledge about the development of safe cities, and provides a practical basis for practitioners. This reflects the recognition of the rapid changes affecting cities, and the benefits of incorporating recent knowledge and tools into crime prevention approaches, and new technologies. They are being strategically aligned with other normative initiatives, including Agenda 2030 and the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

From the Habitat II Agenda to the New Urban Agenda

In 2016, countries around the world will be adopting a New Urban Agenda (NUA) at the Habitat III meetings in Quito, Ecuador. The NUA will guide countries in their urban development plans and goals for the next twenty years. The 2016 NUA strives to be transformative and sees urbanization as an opportunity for sustainable development, for building social cohesion and for social development (UN-Habitat, 2015b). Urban safety is a necessary condition for cities to flourish as reflected in the Draft, with crime prevention specifically mentioned as a key strategy.

From the EU Urban Charter to the EU Urban Charter II

In 1992, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe adopted the Urban Charter. The move was regarded as ground-breaking, as it

Box 2.1 Other UN resolutions touching on urban safety

- 2002 – General Assembly Resolution 56/261 calls for close cooperation between sections including justice, health, education, and housing to support effective crime prevention.

Box 2.2 Making the links: the SDGs, Habitat III and the NUA, and SC 2.0

The Habitat III meeting in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016 is the first major international conference following the adoption of Agenda 2030 and the 17 SDGs. The Habitat III meeting will adopt the NUA, a new global normative framework. The NUA will serve to guide urban policy and development for the next twenty years, just as did the earlier meetings in Vancouver in 1976 and Istanbul in 1996. Since the SDGs are a binding agreement of Member States, it will be important that the NUA, a non-binding normative framework, be linked with the SDG, and the urban SDG 11 more specifically. At the same time, UN-Habitat and UNODC are championing the development of new UN Guidelines on Safer Cities, and UN-Habitat is evaluating what it has learnt from the past twenty years of its Safer Cities Programme and what the next phase of the programme will look like. To guide this next phase, it is developing a Safer Cities 2.0 (SC 2.0) framework document. Strategically, the new Guidelines and SC 2.0 should be seen as pathways to implementation of SDG 11 and 11.7 as well as the NUA.

These important global normative conversations and agreements have inspired much reflection and stocktaking. ICPC’s decision to choose Urban Safety as the theme of the 2016 International Report is one example.
recognized and legitimised urbanization across the continent. In 2008, the European Union Urban Charter II – Manifesto for a new urbanity was developed to reflect the social, economic and cultural changes that had taken place in cities since the first Charter was drafted. The following principles and concepts guide the Charter II: ethical governance, sustainable development, and increased solidarity in public policies, all seen as essential for confronting rapid urbanization (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe & Council of Europe, 2009).

Africa Vision 2063

The African continent has experienced unprecedented growth, growing from about 229 million people in 1950 to 1.2 billion in 2014 (AUC, 2015). Africa Vision 2063 is an ambitious 50-year vision and action plan for the continent and aims, inter alia, to respond to the challenges brought on by rapid urbanization. It strives to be transformational in its impact, and identified cities as the place where national and continental transformation will take place. While not always the stated objective, several of its seven aspirations address the root causes of urban crime and violence, and can serve to strengthen urban safety throughout the region: poverty reduction; reducing inequalities; good governance and strengthening institutions; respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law; strengthening mechanisms to build, maintain and restore peace; appropriate financing for safety and security; gender equality and parity in political, economic, and social spheres; ending violence against women and girls (VAWG); and people-driven development. Africa Vision 2063 aspires to build social cohesion with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics, and recognizes diversity as a source of wealth (AUC, 2015). Additional actions related to enhancing urban safety include: calls for a gun-free Africa in the short term, and no conflicts arising from social exclusion in the long term; a capable and accountable police force; mechanisms of cooperation for addressing and preventing transnational crime; adequate financing for sustainable urban development to contend with the anticipated urban growth; and it is considered imperative to create safe urban neighbourhoods (AUC, 2015).

The state of safety in cities: trends and challenges

Increased attention to the role of cities in development has put a spotlight on urban safety challenges as barriers to sustainability, and incited researchers to revisit urban crime prevention strategies and their effectiveness. Invariably, issues such as the privatization of safety and the proliferation of gated communities, the presence and prominence of gangs, VAWG, urban safety in the context of conflict and disaster, and the influx of refugees to urban centres are all being examined closely. The Safe and Inclusive Cities Initiative, launched by IDRC (Canada) is one example (see Box 2.3 below).

The prevalence of urban crime and violence in today’s cities

The Economists’ Safe Cities Index 2015 assigns 50 cities in the world with a ranking according to a number of factors, including personal safety. According to their assessment, Tokyo ranks first as the safest city, while Jakarta occupies the last spot (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2015a). As aforementioned, urban crime and violence is a central preoccupation of city residents and governments. It threatens social cohesion and economic stability and has negative health impacts on residents. The harm and fear it instils threatens quality of life, human rights, social stability, and sustainable development, and disproportionately affects the urban poor (UN-Habitat, 2015a). One in five people in cities has been a victim of violence and crime (UN-Habitat, 2015a). This rises to 70% of people in parts of Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa (UN-Habitat, 2007b), while globally, one in three women is a victim of violence (ICPC, 2014; UN Women, 2016).

Homicide rates are noticeably higher in cities than rural areas, especially settlements with populations exceeding 50,000 (UNODC, 2014). Similarly, a majority of armed violence and homicide by firearms occur in cities. In 2013, 46 of the 50 most violent cities were

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**Box 2.3 The Safe and Inclusive Cities Initiative: efforts to understand urban safety (IDRC, 2015)**

The **Safe and Inclusive Cities Initiative**, a five-year global programme (2012-2017) to invest in research to better understand urban safety and violence. Five factors driving urban violence have been identified so far:

1. Poor access to basic services can foster competition and fuel conflict between groups.
2. Population displacement can increase vulnerability by severing community support networks.
3. In some high-crime areas, criminal gangs play the dual role of perpetrator and ‘protector’.
4. Poverty and unemployment undermine households and may fuel domestic and community violence.
5. Segregated urban planning can leave a legacy of community tension and insecurity.
in the Americas, yet none were experiencing armed conflict (Muggah, n.d.). Contrary to popular assumption, there is no consistent correlation between the size of a city, or its population density, and levels of crime and violence (ICPC, 2010a; Muggah, 2014; Shaw & Carli, 2011), although UN-Habitat notes that when a city is in a condition of rapid growth, there is a link (UN-Habitat, 2007b). Apart from levels of inequality it has been argued “it is not the size of urban agglomerations that create criminal surroundings but rather poor planning, design and management of urbanization” (Habitat III, 2015c, p. 2).

Beyond the city: Metropolitan areas, informal city expansion, and privatized spaces and services

Some current trends in urban development – notably gentrification, metropolitan expansion and the growth of informal settlements – require us to rethink urban safety strategies. UN-Habitat’s Safer Cities model, for example, emphasizes enhancing urban safety through planning, management and governance with the municipal authority (and mayor if possible) taking a strong leadership position. Yet when we consider metropolitan areas beyond city centres, informal settlements and gated communities, it is often not the municipal authority that takes the lead in the planning, management or governance of these areas.

One response to fear of crime and violence is the increased privatization of space and safety through gated communities and private security. Further, with gentrification, the urban poor are often displaced to peri-urban areas where they experience greater exclusion. The privatization of city spaces creates real and perceived barriers and segregated spaces – often based on class, which has been described as ‘infrastructural violence’ (Moser & McIlwaine, 2014, p. 336; Rodgers & O’Neill, 2012). In Harare, Zimbabwe, for example, colonial planning based on racial segregation now reinforces economic segregation, which has the consequence of limiting the freedom of mobility of the urban poor (IDRC, 2015, p. 3).

Some informal settlements in many cities in Latin America, the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa and others are considered too dangerous for local police officers to manage urban crime and violence, leaving the informal management to gangs (Muggah, 2013). For example, in San Salvador gangs require urban residents and business owners to accept their protection against other gangs. This produces “a coercive form of social cohesion, whereby survival hinges on tolerating the sources of insecurity” (IDRC, 2015). In these cases control, power and authority are negotiated at a neighbourhood scale (Muggah, 2014). Interventions aimed at enhancing urban safety in these areas must be prioritized but also reconceptualised, as we know that urban crime and violence are the results of the combination of inequalities, lack of institutional and social control, and social exclusion, all characteristic of these ‘no-go’ zones (Habitat III, 2015c).

The cities with high inequality, segments of the urban population often end up living in situations of exclusion and marginalisation, disempowering conditions and environments conducive to crime (UN-Habitat, 2015a). There is a need for city governments and planners alike to consider how these different areas interact with the city, and to take account of the daily movement of people residing in them. Thus, it is essential to invest in understanding these new governance gaps and mobility patterns to inform planning strategies that promote inclusion. See Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion in relation to Latin American cities.

Identities, exclusion, and crime in cities

“Youth are the agents of change and women the advocates of safety in the city. They must be fully engaged as resources – not problems – in the design and delivery of any sustainable violence and crime prevention strategies” (UN-Habitat, 2015a, p. 10).

Patterns of urbanization have resulted in fragmented cities with sharp divisions and contrasts from one neighbourhood to the next. In order to better understand the nuanced perspectives of the diversity of residents, it is important to consider how an individual’s identity markers intersect to shape their urban experience.

Each person’s identity is shaped by many intersecting factors including age, gender, sexual orientation, income, race, and ability. The way these factors interconnect with one another has a predictable impact on their degree of inclusion, access to opportunities, sense of safety, experience of harassment, or involvement in illegal activities and gangs (CAWI, 2015; WICI, n.d.). By understanding the needs and experiences of different people, we are better able to design crime prevention initiatives that promote the inclusion of all. This requires a strong shift away from current urbanism and urbanization patterns, which tend to produce places of exclusivity (UN-Habitat, n.d.-a).

Sense of safety guides mobility choices and has a direct link with one’s ability to benefit from urban opportunities. More than half of women surveyed in the European Union reported avoiding places and situations ‘sometimes’ as a direct result of fear of violence. This has human rights implications as it can limit participation in social, political and economic life (UN Women, 2015a). It affects access to and use
An important element of preventing urban crime and violence involves building social cohesion amongst diverse urban dwellers (see Chapter 6 and ICPC’s 4th International Report, 2014). France has instituted a public policy in this regard, which also remains the basis for the powers given to the inter-ministerial structure responsible for crime prevention (ICPC, 2010b). Thus specific forms of systemic and infrastructural exclusion in cities require local governments to systematically include those different populations in the development of urban safety strategies. Strengthening the identity of people with their city and creating a sense of belonging starting at the local level (neighbourhoods), are effective ways to build local democracy and engage people in the production and maintenance of urban safety (WICI, 2016).

a) Preventing violence against women and girls in cities

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action explicitly highlighted ending VAWG as “one of the 12 critical areas to achieve gender equality” (UN Women, 2015b, p. 1). VAWG is an endemic problem in cities around the world. It manifests itself in many forms, from physical or sexual, to psychological or economic violence, in private and public spaces (UNDESA, 2010). Consistent with other crime prevention initiatives, efforts to prevent VAWG are shown to be most successful when they are coordinated, multi-sectoral and involve “multiple strategies implemented in a mutually reinforcing way with individuals, as well as communities and organisations, and at the broader social level” (UN Women, 2015a, p. 8). Efforts are increasingly being made to transform the underlying factors that encourage or allow gender discrimination to flourish, including discriminatory laws and policies and social norms, attitudes and behaviours; all of which are dynamic features that promote unequal power relations based on gender.

Greater international attention to ending VAWG in public urban spaces is a significant new trend. It departs from a past focus mainly on intimate partner violence and victim response services. The 2013 UN Commission for the Status of Women (CSW57), for example, “identified various forms of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) in public spaces as a distinct area of concern, and called on governments to prevent it” (UN Women, 2015b, para. 2). The recognition of the importance of preventing, reducing and ending gender based violence in public spaces is also encapsulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for “the elimination of all forms of VAWG in public and private spheres”, as Target 5.2 (UNDESA, 2015a).

Several international safer cities for women and girls’ programmes have been initiated in the past decade. One of the first findings from these programmes was the important and previously overlooked link between experiences of street harassment and sense of safety. For example, UN Women’s Safe Cities Global Initiative, now working in over 20 cities worldwide, shows that “sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces are an everyday occurrence for women and girls around the world – in urban and rural areas, in developed and developing countries” (UN Women, 2013, para. 1). Recently, some striking figures from various studies were released: 68% of women experienced sexual harassment or violence in the past year in Quito, Ecuador, and 43% in London, England; 55% of women experienced sexual violence in marketplaces in the past year in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; and in Delhi, India – 92% of women had experienced sexual violence in public spaces (Blumenthal, 2014).

Today’s safer cities for women and girls’ initiatives recognise that efforts must go beyond infrastructural change, to consider “how laws, regulations and policies governing city life can help to promote greater safety for women, and the importance of public education and awareness of the issues” (Shaw, 2016, p. 10). A combination of longer-term situational and social prevention initiatives is needed to effectively reduce VAWG in urban public spaces. These will help to change negative gender stereotypes, roles and the cultural norms that enable gender discrimination and gender-based violence to flourish in cities. Finally, men and boys must be engaged as allies and important actors in this transformation.

b) Boys, young men, and gangs

A recent global review of youth gangs underlines the importance of identity politics and belonging as underlying foundations for involvement, and a means of escaping exclusion (Winton, 2014). The study argues that identity is the main output of transnational gangs, and a shift is needed away from studying and programming for individuals, to gaining “an understanding of the intersection of structural violence (the exclusion from legitimate means of making a living) and symbolic violence (stigma)” (Moser & McIlwaine, 2014, p. 334).

Evidence from cities around the globe shows that young men aged 15 to 25, or younger, are most likely to be or become involved in crime. Research in three
cities in Côte d’Ivoire revealed that the average age of gang members is ten years old (IDRC, 2016). Additionally, young men are the most likely to kill and be killed, accounting for approximately 70% of homicide victims (Habitat III, 2015c). The presence of gangs in urban areas and the involvement of young men in them has been explored and documented for decades. Gangs in Brazil and Central America in particular have been the subject of many studies and interventions, and initiatives aimed at engaging youth, particularly from childhood, show some positive results (Muggah, 2014). Some good practices are highlighted in the final section of this chapter. Understanding more nuanced identities of young men will help to inform future prevention programmes and show how youth can both perpetuate and prevent cycles of urban violence and crime (UN-Habitat, 2015a; IDRC, 2015). The Diagram on the Three Pillars for a Safe City below illustrates the role of social programmes, in conjunction with urban design, management and planning, and law enforcement, in achieving urban safety.

c) New residents: migrants and refugees in cities

In our globalised and connected world, there is much fluidity between borders, and more than one billion people are migrants, with more women and girls migrating than ever before (ICPC, 2014). In our urban world, most of this movement ends up in cities, accounting for 60% of the total 14.4 million refugees and 80% of the 38 million internally displaced people (IDPs), where they are most likely to find successful social and economic integration (Habitat III, 2015a, p. 2). The urban growth patterns in some countries such as Colombia, Angola and Sudan, have themselves been shaped by the movement of people escaping conflict (COHRE, 2008).

While there has always been migration and displacement resulting from conflict and disaster, the high levels of urban violence in some cities also result in forced and voluntary transnational migration, as in Colombia for example (Moser & McIlwaine, 2014). Additionally, many women and girls migrate to cities
to escape gender-based violence, including domestic violence, genital mutilation and early marriage (Blumenthal, 2014; Plan International, 2010, 2013). In all cases, new urban residents must contend with challenges in cities, including structural and infrastructural violence, lack of access to housing, discrimination, and lack of access to services (see also Chapter 6).

Racism, prejudice and xenophobia in cities can make migrants and refugees feel excluded. A lack of understanding or appreciation of their social, economic and cultural contributions means that they “are frequently seen as burdens rather than assets” (Habitat III, 2015a, p. 2). This can create further frustrations and alienation, which can give rise to urban crime and violence in the public sphere, and domestic violence in the private sphere. The reality is that the economic and social benefits that come with migration outnumber the drawbacks (ICPC, 2014). Further, research shows that immigration can have an unexpected benefit of reducing crime and itself contribute to crime prevention, through the revitalization of neighbourhoods and cities, strengthening social cohesion in the community, and strengthening the local economy, which reinforces social controls (ICPC, 2014). Prevention efforts aimed at building inclusion and integration should be built into urban development and planning. This will help cities to plan in advance for receiving migrants, IDPs, refugees and others, and will build resilience to urban crime through social and spatial development planning.

Urban safety, conflict, and disaster

Living in an urban world means that the majority of global emergencies will be in urban areas. In fact, the World Disasters Report (IFRC, 2010) predicted that there would be three to five significant urban disasters between 2010 and 2020. This appears to have been underestimated, considering the events in Haiti, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia, and Syria (de Boer, 2015). Further, cities have become the place where civil unrest, interstate conflict and terrorism are increasingly being played out, and terms such as ‘urban wars’ and ‘slum wars’ are evidence of this (ICPC, 2012; Moser & McIlwaine, 2014). This has changed the face of conflict and humanitarian aid agencies are now starting to begin to plan for how to respond to humanitarian crises in urban areas. In fact, urban violence in some cities is so extreme and endemic that humanitarian response is justified, again pointing to a significant shift in the precedent for international intervention.

Cities affected by conflict are also more at risk for disasters, and those living in informal settlements are most vulnerable in all instances (de Boer, 2015; Muggah, 2013). Efforts to build community resilience and strengthen capacities of the state, especially municipal governments, to prevent and respond to conflict or disaster are needed. Social crime prevention initiatives are important for resilience building. Specific efforts must include a gender dimension, since VAWG increases in times of conflict and disaster (COHRE, 2008).

Crime prevention and urban safety strategies should be core components of post-conflict and post-disaster rebuilding, although this is rarely the case. Rebuilding efforts offer unique opportunities for engaging women and men in shaping their neighbourhoods, articulating their needs and fixing challenges from the past. For women in particular, this can be an opportunity for empowerment and increased participation in local development and decision-making (UN-Habitat, 2014).

Fragile cities

As noted in Chapter 1, the term ‘fragile city’ has emerged, echoing references to ‘failed’ or ‘fragile’ states. It is the inability of city governance structures to keep up with rapid urbanization that creates an environment where cities are considered to be fragile. Fragility causes citizens to lose trust in the government due to its inability or unwillingness to provide adequate services, including security (Muggah, 2014). As de Boer points out “in some cities, systems of law and order, ranging from the police, judiciary, penal systems, and other forms of legal enforcement, are dysfunctional and considered illegitimate by the citizens they are intended to serve” (2015, p. 2). Unfortunately, this lack of capacity and credibility makes cities even more vulnerable to disasters, extreme poverty and violence (de Boer, 2015).

Critics of the fragile cities approach question the potential self-fulfilling prophecy of such a stigmatized designation, while Muggah (2014, p. 2) suggests “fragility can be understood as a kind of continuum, (...) a dynamic state that affects different areas differentially. Stable and functioning areas of cities can, and frequently do, co-exist alongside fragile and violence-affected spaces.” Research shows that the degree of urban vulnerability to disaster, extreme poverty and violence is “the aggregation of risk”. In the context of urban crises, many risks manifest in a very short period of time and can stall or completely overpower the ability of the state to respond and manage the crisis. This leaves those urban areas particularly exposed and prone to violence.

In spite of these challenges, there are city level efforts aimed at rebounding from fragility through resilience building. In particular, these efforts are aimed at building social cohesion, strengthening institutions...
and confidence in the city and state, or working with gangs through truces or pacification programmes (see Chapter 1). While evidence supporting their varying degrees of success is limited, it does indicate that the most successful approaches are those that engage communities in a coordinated and multi-level government initiative to enhancing urban safety, with a focus on prevention, not repression (Muggah, 2014).

City to city networking and the new urban governance

“Well-planned citywide community-based integrated and comprehensive urban crime prevention and safety strategies, not only prevent crime and victimization, but also contribute to sustainable urban development” (Habitat III, 2015c, p. 4).

Urban crime prevention strategies require a coordinated governance approach to be successful, across different levels of government, across different sectors, and bringing together a diversity of stakeholders, including women, youth and others. The establishment of networks between cities to help them address urban safety issues has been one important way in which cities have learnt by example and exchange. There is also an increasing number of multi-city initiatives connecting cities working on similar issues.

New urban governance: citizen participation and the ‘co-production’ of urban safety

“Successful experiences show that good governance and safe cities are reciprocal: where inhabitants are free from fear, and where safety is improved for citizens and neighbourhoods, interaction among people, groups and with the public institutions becomes possible” (Habitat III, 2015c, p. 6).

While supported by international norms and standards, as well as national laws, policies and action plans, it is at the city level that the normative becomes operational, and urban safety, or its lack thereof becomes tangible. As Rodgers and O’Neill (2012, p. 402) explain, in cities, “infrastructure is observable, its stakeholders identifiable, and its functions variable”. Municipal governments impose laws, govern urban development, and manage local crime prevention strategies, making them arguably the most important actors in preventing urban crime and violence (Modaberi & Momeni, 2016). Their capacities to do so must be strengthened and supported by national and subnational governments, with open communication, collaboration and cooperation between the different levels. Many tools, guides and other resources have been developed to support local governments in developing effective urban crime prevention strategies (EFUS, 2007; ICPC, 2014; Shaw, 2010). Increasingly, cities are moving towards a new model of urban governance, explored in more depth in Chapter 3, which calls for citizen participation in urban development (See Figure 2.4 for different forms of public participation). Moreover, engaging the community can create

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**Figure 2.4 Spectrum of public participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increasing level of public impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consult</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involve</td>
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<td>Collaborate</td>
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<td>Empower</td>
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<th>Goal</th>
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<tr>
<td>To provide a balanced and objective information in a timely manner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives and decisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>To work with the public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making.</td>
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<tr>
<td>To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Promise</th>
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<tr>
<td>“We will keep you informed”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We will implement what you decide.”</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Lam (2015)
a ‘culture of prevention’, and a shared responsibility to prevent and respond to urban crime and violence, referred to as the ‘co-production of safety’.

France’s urban strategy – the Politique de la ville includes urban upgrading, prioritizing investment in the more deprived urban areas of cities. Priority is given to urban renewal projects that encompass elements of both the social and built environments, and are multi stakeholder processes for developing and implementing city contracts (Ministère de la ville de la jeunesse et des sports, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). Arguably the greatest innovation in these contracts compared with their predecessors, is the 2014 law that mandates the participation of citizens in the co-production of all aspects of the urban policy. This is achieved through the establishment of a citizen’s council in priority neighbourhoods, to act as a space for civic engagement, capacity building and ensuring that a diversity of citizens participates in setting the priorities for their communities.

A useful paradigm for exploring participation in developing and implementing urban safety strategies is the Right to the City. This approach sees the city as the place where human rights should be attained and supported, and calls for governance based on the principles of transparency, inclusion, accountability and citizen participation in urban planning and governance (Global platform for the right to the city, 2014; Habitat III, 2015d). Since urban safety is a priority for urban residents, it can be an entry-point for engaging with the city. Citizen participation has been institutionalised in some cities as the example of Sao Paulo illustrates in Box 2.4 below.

With increasing participation, we are seeing a corresponding language shift, referring to local actors as “agents of change”, not “beneficiaries” (UN Women, 2015a). This same logic must be applied to the diversity of all urban dwellers, especially those most excluded from local governance processes. However, while community participation in urban safety strategies is key, it is equally important that they be supported by experts who can share their knowledge and experience (Muggah, 2014).

Finally, recognizing the important role of identity in gang involvement, several initiatives have harnessed their neighbourhood leadership position to transform them into positive community leaders. In Barcelona, Spain, for example, ‘gangs’ became cultural community ‘associations’ to enable their participation in the community. As associations, the former gangs organize cultural events for the community, including music and sports events (ICPC & EFUS, 2014, p. 11).

City to city networking

As cities continue to grow, not only in terms of their populations, but also in terms of their political, economic and social significance, there is an increasing need for them to connect with one another to share lessons, challenges, knowledge and experience. The United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) organization does just that, and advocates for the participation of local governments in global governance, an arena still dominated by national governments. Linked with UCLG is Metropolis, which draws its membership from cities with populations of over one million. There are many more networks of cities with specific thematic focuses: the World Cities Network aims to build resilient cities; the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities; ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability; and the newly launched Strong Cities Network to Strengthen Community Resilience against Violent Extremism are some examples.

Box 2.4 Municipal Secretariat for Human Rights and Citizenship, São Paulo, Brazil
(Prefeitura de Sao Paulo direitos humanos e cidadania, n.d.)

The Municipal Secretariat for Human Rights and Citizenship (SMDHC) was created in 2013 and is responsible for human rights and social participation. The SMDHC recognizes the importance of public spaces in building social cohesion and creating a sense of belonging to a city. The Secretariat brings together various departments representing 13 thematic areas: youth, the elderly, LGBTQ, children and adolescents, education on human rights, migrants, the homeless, the right to memory and truth, the right to the city, social participation, the promotion of decent work, public policies on drugs, and the Municipal Human Rights Ombudsman.

The SMDHC has two main action areas:
1. Working to deconstruct a culture of violence while strengthening a culture of human rights by ensuring that these objectives are reflected in all municipal public policies.
2. Recognizing civic participation as an administrative method, and encouraging such participation through both traditional methods (conferences, public hearings) and new methods (social dialogues, social media).
The Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand (SCFNZ) aims to increase safety in cities by building on the evidence-base from local violence and injury prevention strategies and safety education. It was inspired by the WHO Safe Communities approach originally established in 1990. It uses the following criteria for designating cities in the country as ‘safe communities’: leadership and collaboration, programme reach, priority setting, data analysis and strategic alignment, evaluation, and communication and networking. The SCFNZ continues to make use of its link with WHO by drawing on global research and resources in injury prevention, safety management systems and crime prevention through environmental design, for safe community development.²

A growing trend has been the creation of multi-city initiatives around thematic issues. For example, the Rockefeller Foundation launched the initiative 100 Resilient Cities (100RC, n.d.) to support cities in building their resilience to the causes of urban vulnerability, including fragility, and crime. The World Urban Campaign (UN-Habitat, n.d.-d) has also launched a 100-cities initiative towards sustainable urbanization.

When it comes to confronting urban safety challenges specifically, the distinction between the Global North and South is less pronounced, with much innovation and promising practices emerging from cities in the South to inform other cities around the world. A number of networks have been put in place to facilitate these linkages, with a specific focus on crime prevention and urban safety.

ICPC continues to be a leader in this arena. Its membership is global and brings together organisations, cities, research institutes, and other networks working on issues of crime prevention and community safety. Other networks working on urban safety globally include the Global Network on Safer Cities (GNSC), led by UN-Habitat, bringing together urban safety and crime prevention experts, organisations and cities (ICPC, 2014). The GNSC has supported the development of Technical Working Groups on a number of issues related to safer cities, including peacebuilding, gender, and smart cities. Women in Cities International (WICI) works to make cities safer and more inclusive with and for all women and girls. Several long-standing regional networks work on urban safety issues in their respective regions. The European Forum for Urban Safety (EFUS) brings together 250 local authorities from 16 countries to strengthen crime prevention policies in cities throughout the region and to promote the role of local authorities in national and European policies. Red Mujer y Habitat de America Latina (RMH) works to make cities free of VAWG, CityNET works to enhance urban safety programmes and strategies for Asia Pacific, and, most recently, the African Forum for Urban Safety launched in 2016.

Technology and smart cities

With the unprecedented technological innovations of the past years, it should be no surprise that there are efforts to explore how urban development and governance can use them to make cities socially, economically and environmentally more sustainable. The increasing availability and affordability of mobile technologies in particular, and the accompanying infrastructure to support their use, has meant that more and more people in all regions of the world have access to telecommunications and the internet.

Smarter, safer cities

The increased use of information communication technologies (ICTs) (Figure 2.5) have inspired cities to strive to be ‘smart cities’, where ICTs play a central role in shaping the urban agenda. Smart cities endeavour to improve quality of life and respond to the demands of an increasing population by making urban infrastructure work ‘smarter’, to allow for better service provision without requiring time-consuming and costly infrastructure development (Habitat III, 2015b; Moon, Heo, & Lee, 2014; The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2015b).

In terms of urban safety, a smart city approach involves a networked connection of safety and security systems (CCTVs, police, traffic, etc.), across four stages: prevention, protection, response and recovery.

![Figure 2.5 Global ICT developments (Subscription per 100 inhabitants, 2005-2015)](Source: UN-Habitat (2016, p. 42)
A complementary approach is networked urbanism, considered to be more people-centred, which promotes accountable governance by enabling citizen participation through ICTs, often focused on urban planning and design to redevelop neglected neighbourhoods and slums with the active participation of community men and women (Gil, 2014).

The private sector plays an important role in making cities smarter and safer through the provision of technology solutions to safety and security challenges in cities. These technology companies are changing the way cities are run, and this is rapidly evolving (Woods & Goldstein, 2014). The Thales Group, for example, specializes in security technology and is working with cities to find integrated solutions, streamlining information across government departments, essentially digitizing multi-stakeholder cooperation. The group boasts “the citizen-centric approach to security has been proven to deliver a measurable reduction in crime, by as much as 35% since deployment” (Thales Group, n.d.). Similarly, SAP has a dedicated programme to assist cities, the Urban Matters programme. It strives to assist cities to respond to the challenges of rapid urbanization, with a focus on good governance, community engagement, better service delivery and resilience building to enhance urban safety (SAP News Center, 2012).

ICTs can be a governance tool, encouraging accountability by creating opportunities for community monitoring of public spaces and services (see Figure 2.6 below). Safetipin, for example, the digitized safety audits application initially developed in Delhi, India, can be used to monitor sense of safety in public spaces, and rate the quality of the built environment across nine safety principles (Safetipin, n.d.). Similarly, ICTs can encourage participatory governance and can facilitate the participation of typically excluded groups in city life. For example, accessibility features are available for many ICTs and can allow people with limited mobility and communication capacities to participate actively. ICTs can provide detailed and disaggregated data to cities to better inform their urban safety plans (Habitat III, 2015c; Moon et al., 2014) and can be used to make public safety information open and accessible.

Unfortunately, gender and income gaps in access to ICTs are another example of social division and exclusion. Therefore, any initiative by a city to be smarter should be grounded in a human rights-based approach to be inclusive (Habitat III, 2015c). In some instances, it is important that the possibility of engagement through ICTs be complementary to other methods in order to accommodate broad and inclusive participation.

There is also a darker side to the increase in access to ICTs, which has been used to incite urban violence. Furthermore, ICTs are being used by youth gangs to expand their operations and make them more sophisticated as tools for recruitment, hiring illegal services or for intimidation purposes (Muggah, 2014). On the other hand, ICTs and social media can be used to challenge social norms for the better. For example, young women in Pakistan are working to debunk myths that women should not use public spaces through the Girls at Dhabas initiatives, where they share images on social media of young women at street cafés, areas typically occupied solely by men (Khan, 2016). Today’s crime prevention efforts must understand cyberspace as an extension of city space, closely linked to real potential for urban crime and violence.

**Geography, mapping and crime prevention**

The geography and spatial dimensions of crime have long been studied and are now important tools used by police, criminologists, crime prevention specialists and others (Argun & Dağlar, 2016; Chainey & Ratcliffe, 2005, p. 1). The USA-based initiative Mapping and Analysis for Public Safety (MAPS) served to develop and advance tools and knowledge about crime mapping, and legitimized and spread their use to several countries in Latin America, Australia, the United Kingdom and South Africa which adapted and replicated the work (Chainey & Ratcliffe, 2005). Analyses based on these datasets on the geography of crime, understood in a social, economic and political context of neighbourhood demographics and geographical boundaries, inform and dictate many police and prevention decisions, including allocation of resources, infrastructure development, social programming and prevention strategies (Argun & Dağlar, 2016; ICPC, 2013).

It is important to consider the findings from these geographic tools in a broader social context in order to understand the nuances of a given space, which is
Today’s technological advances mean that crime mapping and Geographical Information System (GIS) are widely integrated as core components of security tools and applications, serving to “make the data visible” (Argun & Dağlar, 2016). The Carabineros in Chile, for example, make wide use of the information they gather through GIS, which they make available through their online platform. This allows them to visually understand which crimes are being committed where. Digitizing the information has allowed for it to be analysed against a variety of other data to make the links between cause and crime and to better inform prevention strategies (Argun & Dağlar, 2016).

In Guatemala, women are using GIS and map-based technology to illustrate local safety audits and to show how neighbourhoods can be transformed. By adding different layers to satellite images of the city, the women are able to show how adding lighting or animating public spaces could make the area feel safer (Fundación Guatemala, 2016).

As discussed in Chapter 1, there are some important drawbacks and challenges to using GIS and hot spots policing. For example, there is concern that by making information about crimes available online, victims could be identified and threatened (Argun & Dağlar, 2016). Another challenge posed by GIS is the potential for stigmatizing neighbourhoods by labelling them ‘hot spots’, ‘no-go zones’, or simply ‘dangerous’. This messaging increases exclusion among those residing in the area. It can also increase crime and violence if people avoid going where it is considered to be too risky, perpetuating the cycle of isolation, neglect and abandonment.

Recent examples of urban safety policies, projects and programmes

As this chapter has underlined, it is now accepted that successful urban crime and violence prevention initiatives must be part of integrated and inclusive safety strategies that embrace multi-dimensional, multi-level, multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder collaboration. The production of safety is a shared responsibility, and it is only by meaningfully including the diverse men, women, boys and girls who live in those cities that safe cities will be created, and sustainable urban development achieved (Shaw, 2010).

This section looks at some examples of urban safety projects and programmes, illustrating the range of approaches that are being used around the world. Examples are drawn from a number of sources, in particular 100 Promising Practices on Safer Cities compiled by ICPC and EFUS for UN-Habitat in 2014 (ICPC & EFUS, 2014). Other examples can be found in reports on workshops organized by ICPC during the 11th and 12th UN Congresses in Bangkok, Thailand, and Salvador, Brazil (ICPC, 2005; Shaw & Carli, 2011; Travers & Shaw, 2007) and from ICPC colloquiums (ICPC, 2008). The examples illustrate the active involvement of local city services such as the police, or community-based organizations, and in some case the private sector. Others focus on particular issues such as VAWG or youth involvement as victims and perpetrators of violence and crime. Good practices relating to safety on public transport are included in Chapter 4 of this report. However, as has been the pattern for many years, city-based projects are not always evaluated, or evaluated to a standard that would allow them to be seen as replicable and transferable.

Improved city data collection

The use of local safety audits to assist the development of local crime prevention strategies has been well documented (EFUS, 2007; Shaw, 2010; WICI, 2008). However, in cities in many parts of the world, there continues to be a lack of data about urban safety, particularly data that is disaggregated according to age, gender, ethnicity, etc. There are some exceptions to this, however, with a number of cities investing in rigorous data collection on crime and perceptions of safety (Valera & Guàrdia, 2014). The Rotterdam Safety Index, a survey administered to residents in all areas of the city to measure crime based on both objective and subjective factors is one such example (ICPC & EFUS, 2014). Studies exploring safety on transportation, as discussed in Chapter 4 are also an exception.

Local authorities in Saint-Gilles, Belgium developed a local safety audit based on an integrated, multi-sectoral and collaborative process to ensure that urban safety efforts are balanced in terms of prevention and crime control, and include ongoing evaluation to assess the effectiveness of both. To begin, a local analysis is made of crime data (crime statistics, GIS and mapping) and data related to feelings of safety (surveys, perceptions of safety) collected, to create a baseline. Both of these steps are regularly repeated to assess the efficacy of different prevention initiatives (ICPC & EFUS, 2014).

There are a number of local crime or violence observatories (eg. Ciudad Juarez, Mexico; Brussels Belgium), and regional ones (e.g. the Central American
Urban development, social urbanism and upgrading

As discussed above, urban planning and design can be a transformative tool to change social relations, build social cohesion and transform real and perceived safety in public spaces (Cozens, 2011). One innovative practice is Placemaking, which involves communities coming together to identify and transform a space into one that a diverse range of men, women, boys and girls want to use. It is increasingly used as a tool for transforming neighbourhoods. There are several examples of placemaking projects with Latino gangs in American cities, including Los Angeles, Chicago and Portland (Project for Public Spaces, 2015).

The City of Brest, France, used urban planning to transform crime hot spot areas into public spaces used by a diversity of people. Evaluations found that they succeeded in increasing diversity, and decreasing urban crime and violence rates, without causing displacement (ICPC & EFUS, 2014, p. 75). Examples of planning for safer transportation in cities are discussed in Chapter 4. While changes to the built environment are only one component of comprehensive prevention strategies, they have the power to be transformative, as Rodgers notes, “infrastructure can be a key means through which social improvement and progress is distributed throughout society” (Rodgers & O’Neill, 2012, p. 402).

As underlined earlier, women and girls use and experience public spaces differently from men or boys, yet gender is seldom considered in urban planning practices. Women and girls in cities in both the global north and south have used women’s safety audits to bridge gender gaps in planning (UN-Habitat, 2014; WICI, 2012). The audits have resulted in both small and low-cost changes, from street naming in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to high visibility infrastructural changes in cities, as in the redesign of metro exits in Montreal, Canada. Efforts have been made to adapt the tool for use by a diversity of women and girls (Plan International, 2013; WICI, 2010, 2012).

In Cape Town, South Africa, the Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU) initiative is an integrated approach that focuses on urban upgrading, capacity building, access to cultural facilities, victim support and other crime prevention measures. Much of their work involves making changes to the built environment to deter and prevent crime, drawing largely on the broken windows theory. For example, investment in making buildings more aesthetically pleasing and in ensuring greater maintenance of public spaces signalled that the area was cared for and worth investing in. More clearly defined boundaries between residential properties encouraged greater personal responsibility for caring for property, while higher barriers between properties worked to prevent criminal mobility. A complementary Social Development Fund was set up to support community-initiated projects, with funding having been provided to over 80 different projects. These collective efforts have resulted in an important reduction in homicide rates (Barolsky, 2016; ICPC & EFUS, 2014).

Investing in changing the built environment can have major impacts in decreasing urban crime and violence, and in stimulating social and economic growth. One of the most well-known examples is the city of Medellin, Colombia, where the term ’social urbanism’ has been used to show how urban upgrading was specifically intended to affect social and economic change (Hernandez Garcia, 2013; Perez Salazar, 2011). Investments in connecting the informal settlements built on steep hills with the city, through a cable car system, combined with public infrastructure improvements and better services including education, signalled to the population there that they were worth investing in. This has helped to build inclusion and social cohesion. The transformation quickly led to a sharp decline in urban crime and violence. It has attracted the interest of visitors to Medellin, which has now become a tourist destination (Hernandez Garcia, 2013; Perez Salazar, 2011). In another example, city officials negotiated with informal vendors in Warwick Junction in Durban, South Africa, to organize and create a safe and regulated market space. The area was transformed from a disorganized and high crime area, to a flourishing market and tourist destination, with a marked reduction in traffic injuries, crime and violence (Dobson, Skinner, & Nicholson, 2009; ICPC & EFUS, 2014; Travers & Shaw, 2007).

Several factors have led to the successes of these and similar urban upgrading initiatives: the participation of the users of the space in redefining it; the support of the local authorities in investing in improving
Putting youth at the core of urban safety

The majority of urban violent crime is perpetrated by the youth – young men in particular – against each other. Therefore, a large number of city-level initiatives are aimed at enhancing urban safety through engagement. There are many sources of good examples (ICPC, 2005; Shaw & Travers, 2007; Shaw & Carli, 2011).

Many crime prevention initiatives aim to provide alternatives to crime, by making positive activities available during their leisure time, by providing skills training to empower them to harness urban opportunities and employment in particular, or by empowering them to engage in transforming their neighbourhoods for the better. Other programmes offer economic incentives and job training to youth. For example, the TAPAJ programme (Montreal, Canada and Bordeaux, France) provides youth in vulnerable situations with paid work opportunities. The youth are closely followed by front-line workers, as they gradually increase the number of hours they work, allowing them to gain experience and take on more responsibility until they are independent (ICPC & EFUS, 2014, p. 128). Another example of a programme that provides economic opportunity is the REMIX project (Toronto, Canada). REMIX offers a 6-month programme where the youth are mentored and have access to facilities to improve their skills, be they in music, photography, video editing or business development. The youth can receive high school credit and internship opportunities to practice their skills in the real world (ICPC & EFUS, 2014, p. 47-48).

The Youth Expression Programme (Brazil) demonstrated its commitment to invest in youth to prevent urban violence. The programme strove to address the two most important manifestations of violence in Brazil – male on male homicide and VAWG. The evidence-based project was designed to respond to the root causes of violence – social and economic exclusion with a pilot programme in three communities. The programme responded by offering financial and entrepreneurial education, encouraging self-expression through the development of socio-cultural projects, and offering social dialogues on topics such as sexuality, violence, and health. Some of the initiatives included the organization of the Urban Arts festival, and the establishment of cultural and sports activities for youth. Finally, the programme underscored the importance of partnership and dialogue between the government, private sector and civil society in order to prevent and reduce urban violence. Part of the evaluation included a cost benefit analysis which found that every R$ 1 invested yielded R$ 1.87 in social profit.

The Safe Cities for Girls programme, (jointly led by Plan International, WICI and UN-Habitat) engages girls in making their cities safer and more inclusive through Girls’ Clubs. The clubs allow girls to learn new skills, about urban development and governance, how to have influence, and build their leadership skills to speak out on the issues that affect them and offer recommendations for change (Plan International, n.d.). School-based safety clubs, girls’ clubs or broader curriculum are used to reach large numbers of young men and women.

Similarly, the Schools of Peace programme in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, built a culture of peace through workshops and civic education, with students reporting a reduction in school violence by 69.5%, violence in the neighbourhood by 43% and violence at home by 36.3% (ICPC & EFUS, 2014).

Chicago’s Cure Violence programme is a well-known programme with impressive results, noting a 67% reduction in shooting deaths in one year (ICPC & EFUS, 2014). The programme identifies high-risk individuals and mediates conflict before it turns violent (Cure Violence, n.d.; WHO, n.d.). Another example is the Programme de suivi intensif (intensive follow-up programme) (Montreal, Canada) that works with gang-involved youth and those at risk of involvement. The programme works by providing intensive support, training and education to individuals who engage in activities for 20-40 hours per week (Centre jeunesse de Montréal, n.d.).

A common component of these programmes is that they appear to be most effective when the strategies are personalised to the individual, efforts are made to connect and better integrate them within the community, and long term support is offered to follow the individual’s development (cf. Laliberté, Rosario, Leonard, Smith-Moncrieffe, & Warner, 2015).

Prevention through institutional change

In some communities and cities, there is a lack of trust in the criminal justice system and in the police to uphold justice fairly. Issues including racial profiling, police violence, re-victimisation of sexual violence survivors, and corruption have received much attention, as demonstrates the discussion in Chapter 1. Several initiatives have developed to transform institutions to build accountability and
trust and, more importantly, to change the culture of those institutions. They challenge oppressive practices and discriminatory policies so that they can promote a culture of prevention while respectfully upholding and administering justice in cities. Police in Montreal, Canada, for example, have received training on how to handle cases of sexual exploitation and human trafficking where underage girls are often the victims, ensuring that they receive adequate support afterwards (ICPC & EFUS, 2014, p. 68). In Newport, USA and Emilia Romagna, Italy, efforts have centred on breaking down cultural and ethnic barriers to build positive relations between particular communities and the police. There have been and continue to be many initiatives aimed at improving police response to gender based violence in cities around the world. There are women only police stations or specially trained officers who handle such cases. The Women and Habitat Network of Latin America is currently carrying out a programme aimed at building relationships between the police and local women’s organisations to better respond to cases of GBV. Police are offered training on how to be gender responsive and sensitive to victims of violence (Red Mujer y Hábitat de América Latina, n.d.).

There are a number of initiatives that use aspects of restorative justice or alternative justice. For example, social mediation has been used since the 1990s both in the community and in schools in Brussels, Belgium. The purpose of the mediators is to provide immediate support and conflict mediation to diffuse escalating situations, immediately followed by an analysis of the situation to identify appropriate prevention strategies. Regular meetings are held between multi-level partners (community mediators, local and national safety officials) to share information to better plan integrated prevention strategies (ICPC & EFUS, 2014). In Stuttgart, Germany and New York City, USA, community courts are used to provide rapid responses to youth offending and to consolidate the justice and support services into one integrated approach to prevent reoffending (ICPC & EFUS, 2014). Similarly, New Zealand’s youth courts, which favour a flexible alternative approach to justice, centred on accountability and making amends, have been heralded as a success, noting new lows in youth crime rates.

Integrated governance programming for urban safety

Many of the most comprehensive urban safety programmes include a strong governance focus. While many cities lead their own urban safety strategies, it is important that they be supported at the subnational and national levels. In South Africa, the Nelson Mandela Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention for Safe Public Spaces (VCP) programme is being carried out to support the government’s objective that all people in South Africa feel safe. The project is a public private partnership focused on connecting government and non-government actors at the national, subnational and local levels to work together to make cities safer. The project concentrates on working on challenging areas where there is much exposure to violence, especially targeting youth, women and girls. There are four main areas of intervention: (1) up-and wide-scaling of violence prevention practices (establishing and strengthening exchange mechanisms and platforms); (2) professionalization of violence prevention practitioners in different communities (increasing capacities); (3) active citizen participation in creating safer communities, focusing on youth; and (4) mainstreaming of a safety lens in local government (ICPC & EFUS, 2014, p. 193).

In Brazil, initiatives in the state of Pernambuco underscore the importance of integrated urban safety strategies that are coherent at different levels, in this case the subnational and local levels. This Pacto Pela Vida (Pact for Life), the State Plan for Public Safety was localised through the development and implementation of 138 projects (ICPC & EFUS, 2014, p. 205). It has parallels with the National Programme for Public Safety PRONASCI (Observatório de Segurança Pública, n.d.), originally introduced in 2007, which has provided support to states and municipalities. Finally, in Colombia, the city of Bogota has seen many innovative initiatives since the mid-1990s led by its mayors. The Bogota Humana programme, for example, was introduced in 1998, following the success of the former Mayor’s Cultura Ciudadana strategy (Mockus, 1995). It was designed to create an equitable and inclusive city where all residents are able to participate and benefit from urban opportunities. To realise this vision, eight complementary programmes were carried out focusing on developing different areas: inclusiveness, economy, mobility, environment, transparency and anticorruption, crime prevention and reduction, democracy, participatory planning and budgeting (ICPC & EFUS, 2014). It embodies the actions called for by the UN-Habitat Safer Cities programme for effectively enhancing urban safety.

Conclusion and looking forward

With ongoing global urbanization, and widespread concern about crime and violence in cities, successfully enhancing urban safety must be a global priority. Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, and the forthcoming New Urban Agenda and UN Guidelines on Safer Cities, recognize urban safety as an essential condition for sustainable development. Even though these are new agreements and normative standards, urban crime prevention is not. We have acquired much knowledge and experience since the adoption of the 1995 and
CHAPTER 2 URBAN SAFETY

Box 2.5 From the Birth of UN-Habitat to safer cities +20 and safer cities 2.0

Since UN-Habitat’s Safer Cities Programme was launched in 1996 it has supported initiatives in 77 cities in 24 countries worldwide. The Safer Cities Programme has evolved over time as knowledge on the drivers of urban insecurity has been gained and approaches to addressing it have been refined. Today the Programme embraces a holistic, integrated, multi-level government and multi-sectoral approach to improving the livability of cities and quality of life for all urban residents, predicated on the confidence that good urban governance, planning and management can improve the safety of neighbourhoods (UN-Habitat, n.d.-c).

The Safer Cities approach is described as a:

“Prevention policy frame advocating for safety as a ‘public good’ and with public space as the arena for the co-production of safety for all and the site for the construction of citizen’s values and manifestation of citizens’ rights for all and particularly for the most vulnerable. At the heart of the safer cities approach is ‘attitudinal change’ and the “co-production of security for all” which requires the leadership and vision of the mayor and the concerted effort of a wide range of local government departments working together with national government and non-state actors to identify the causes of crime and insecurity, develop a coordinated response at the community level and supported by a national level policy framework” (UN-Habitat, 2015b).

There is an increased global recognition, including within the context of the Agenda 2030 that inclusive, safe and resilient cities and societies are a cornerstone for, and primary outcome of, sustainable development. The majority of the world’s poorest people live in cities affected by high crime and violence and largely in the context of tenure insecurity, weak social support networks and areas prone to manmade and natural disasters – over 1.5 billion people (Muggah, 2012).

At the local level, the Programme provides direct support to cities and local actors formulating and implementing citywide crime prevention and urban safety strategies. Tools and approaches are developed and tested in different contexts and the programme has been reinforcing its approach through constant exchange at regional and international levels. The strategy includes strengthening institutional capacity, mobilizing key partners, implementation, and institutionalizing the prevention approach within the municipal structure.

In the past 20 years, the increasing mobilisation of local resources in support of urban crime prevention and improved local partnerships on this issue led to a total of 32 cities and 55 municipalities having adopted the Safer Cities approach by the end of 2015, and a continued growing unmet demand.

The Safer Cities 2.0 programme seeks to build linkages with the new urban agenda in the areas of urban planning, urban legislation, urban economy, basic services, slum upgrading and urban risk reduction. It foresees the strengthening of UN-Habitat’s mandate in this area, the consolidation of a Global Network on Safer Cities (GNSC), the development of a shared conceptual framework on safer cities, and the production of specific flagship products, including tools/guidelines for local level interventions.

2002 guidelines, and have a greater understanding of the essential elements of a citywide crime and violence prevention strategy. For example, UN-Habitat’s World Urban Campaign toolkit on making cities safer calls for the integration of local crime prevention strategies in urban planning and slum and neighbourhood upgrading plans (UN-Habitat, 2015a). It recognizes the potential of urban public spaces as “sites for enhancing urban safety by nurturing the values of social cohesion and co-existence” (UN-Habitat, n.d.-b, p. 10). There remains, nevertheless, an ongoing gap in investment and prioritization of the evaluation of strategies. Relatedly, there is a need to refine the global system for measuring urban crime and violence, to better understand and enhance urban safety (IDRC, 2015).

Technology, smart cities strategies and ICTs (beyond the mass installation of CCTV which does not prevent crime) can be useful tools for cities in integrating their data to inform safety planning.

Localised city-level urban prevention strategies are key, and are most successful when supported by subnational and national prevention frameworks. Cities need the mandate, capacity and financing to properly carry out prevention work, which requires multilevel partnerships and collaboration with a diverse range of actors. Similarly, there is renewed attention to city strategies championed by mayors who work in partnership with civil society. This allows for further localising strategies, ensuring they
are locally-owned and respond in appropriate ways to community priorities. Participatory methods and approaches that instil community involvement in governance are particularly important. There is greater understanding of the importance of an intersectional approach, developing comprehensive and inclusive strategies that acknowledge gender, race, age and cultural differences.

These lessons and past promising practices need to inform future safety planning to confront the new and emerging challenges facing our cities – both a cause and consequence of rapid urbanization. Migration, environmental disasters, climate change, and conflict are just a few. Our cities must build their resilient capacities to better integrate new city residents, ensuring access to equitable, affordable, and quality city spaces and services. This is accomplished not only through infrastructure upgrading, but also through social resilience, achieved through inclusive governance and social cohesion, particularly given the diverse backgrounds and cultures represented in today’s cities. City development strategies should incorporate the principles of social urbanism, and be cross-cutting and inclusive across all urban sectors, including urban planning, housing, education, gender equality, poverty reduction, employment, marginalisation and exclusion (Habitat III, 2015c).

There are still important gaps in terms of effective implementation of urban safety strategies. Social crime prevention in particular requires a much longer investment in order to demonstrate impact. With short political terms and public demand for quick results, crime prevention initiatives often continue to be short term and stand-alone. Further, in fragile cities, local authorities and weak institutions make it very challenging to effectively implement urban safety initiatives. Elsewhere, there are still challenges in terms of lack of decentralization of power, and insufficient resources to enable cities to implement plans adequately.

Current urban safety strategies often focus on the neighbourhood and call for participation and meaningful inclusion of women, boys and girls, and people who are differently abled, elderly, etc. From creating citizen committees to participatory urban planning or placemaking, the scale of interventions is more focused, while remaining in line with municipal or national policies and priorities. Coordination between the neighbourhood and the wider city can promote fluid movement of people, increase diversity and interactions, and access to urban opportunities. This is a strategy to building spatially just cities, and territorial cohesion (Habitat III, 2015c). Reducing urban crime and violence is a shared responsibility, involving participation across institutions (police, courts, governments), communities (women’s and youth groups, local organisations, NGOs), and individuals (the diverse men, women, boys and girls).

“Public safety must be considered a right of all citizens” (UN-Habitat, 2015a, p. 9).
Traditional development models are increasingly being recognized as inappropriate in rapidly changing urban contexts. Such models, though widely used in the past and successful in other contexts, fail to account for the complexity of violence in urban areas. The nature of the relationship between urbanization and violence highlights the diversity that exists in violence, its causes, correlates, and solutions in cities such as Port au Prince. The underlying causes of violence are difficult to isolate, complicated by urban growth, which often outpaces municipal capacities, social relations, economic factors, and political marginalization (Kivland, 2012; Lemay-Hébert, 2014; Muggah & Calpas, 2009).

Urban violence in Haiti is understandably complex. On the one hand, cities typically have more access to institutional support, which can facilitate coping with violence and addressing systemic problems that encourage the proliferation of armed gangs and criminal groups. Urban areas have a greater concentration of resources, access to information, and infrastructure to support violence reduction efforts. Yet on the other hand, social relations in urban areas can be more strained and the pressures of poverty combined with urban living are often associated with higher levels of both crime and interpersonal violence (Chelsey L. Kivland, 2012; Lemay-Hébert, 2014; Muggah & Calpas, 2009).

Viva Rio has addressed urban conflict in Port-au-Prince by drawing on principles and techniques developed during more than 20 years of working in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas and strategically applying them to the Haitian context. Viva Rio offers a community development approach to tackling issues plaguing poor urban areas. This approach has been adapted through an interactive learning process involving community members, armed urban groups, MINUSTAH (the United Nations Mission in Haiti), and many Haitian partner organizations.

Viva Rio Haiti’s flagship project, Tambou Lapè, embodies the organization’s philosophy of social integration as key in efforts to reduce violence. Using a unique participatory framework, Viva Rio works from within and in collaboration with the community, which allows the organization to actively confront its “outsider status” and grants it the opportunity to be more spatially and socially connected to reality on the ground than most other external development actors in the country.

The Tambou Lapè project emerged several years after Haiti’s violent 2004 coup d’état, the aftermath of which included armed combat between gangs, police, UN peacekeepers, and United States marines. Bel Air, one of the capital city’s most neglected and socially marginalized neighbourhoods, was a hot spot for violence with violence against residents by state and non-state actors as well as violence by neighbourhood bases against each other, the state, and foreign peacekeepers. The Tambou Lapè project was not just a response to this armed conflict; it also grew out of Viva Rio’s efforts to improve the daily lives of urban residents in Bel Air. With projects addressing violence, urban renewal safety, development and human rights, Viva Rio’s integrated approach intentionally addressed both conflict drivers and connecters (F. Neiburg & Nicaise, 2010).

The Tambou Lapè project is aimed at reducing community violence by managing and transforming conflict in the intervention area. The most visible element of the project has been peace accords, a negotiated covenant with local power structures through a process of peace negotiations between local community leaders. The tangible outcomes of the peace accords included both a written agreement but also the ability of Viva Rio to facilitate the implementation of other community projects, thus solidifying the process of stabilization and development as well as the presence of Viva Rio in the neighbourhood.

As a first step, Viva Rio commissioned research to establish the shared connectors across groups within Bel Air as well as the community’s unmet needs and possible correlates of armed conflict. Connectors across groups within the community included common dependencies, school institutions, attitudes, values and shared experiences. The limited access to potable water in Bel Air was identified from the beginning as both a basic need and a “cause” of local conflict. Initial research also indicated the
importance of access to solid waste management, the creation of alternative energy sources, access to education, sports programming, and school health. These areas of need became the primary focus of Viva Rio’s first interventions in Bel Air.

In May 2007, the first peace agreement was signed between the rival bases of Delmas 2, Bel Air, Solino, La Saline and Fortouron. The peace agreements had the particularity of being structured by people of the zone. An evaluation conducted in 2012 noted that the agreements read as though they were “written by people from the zone” (A.R. Kolbe, Muggah, & Campbell, n.d.). Meetings are organized once a month between the National Haitian Police, Viva Rio, and the UN Brazilian battalion – until 2010, these meetings also included the Commission Nationale de Désarmement Démantèlement et Réinsertion (CNDDR) – to discuss the safety of the community and to establish a contextual consensus on homicides and their circumstances. These encounters are more than just a monthly check-in to see if the peace accords are holding; they also encourage a fertile debate among the local leadership and the forces of law and order, during which the basic needs of each locality are discussed, food distribution by MINUSTAH is organized, and gaps in police presence and other subjects relevant to the community are identified.

The peace agreement incentivized compliance. For each month without homicides or armed confrontations between the bases or with the Haitian authorities, Viva Rio rewarded the peace accord signatories, including the Haitian National Police, with school scholarships that gifted to children and youth in their locality. A drawing was used to select candidates for the scholarships and if a violent death occurs as a result of conflict, the lottery draw was suspended for the month in question. Similarly, grants for vocational training to the young members of the rival bases in each locality were offered after two consecutive months of peace. Training courses included French, English, music (percussion, guitar and electric piano), handicrafts, poetry and the production of cultural events. Other incentives for compliance with the peace accords included bimonthly neighbourhood cultural events hosted by Viva Rio and a lottery drawing to leaders of the bases in recognition of the advances made for the safety in Bel Air. The awards vary and sometimes include motorcycles, which are a symbol of prestige.

Viva Rio’s success in Haiti has been grounded in its integration with the local culture and the centering of activities and interventions on women, children and youth, community leaders and groups whose role is critical in the stability and prosperity of the local community. These populations are not only the victims of much of the violence but are also the potential change agents, with the power to transform their communities and keep the peace.

Some of the most important connectors used by Viva Rio are symbols and celebratory occasions. Therefore, Viva Rio began its intervention in Bel Air with a voodoo ceremony. Viva Rio doesn’t just draw on the local culture; it also contributes to a greater pride in the local culture through support for Creole music and sports activities. With an increase in self-esteem, the general attitude towards violence can be changed. Although homicide statistics are a fundamental indicator of the control of violence, they do not capture other aspects of safety.

Viva Rio’s success is also grounded in a theory of change that emphasizes stabilization through social integration. This premise infers that political, social and economic dynamics in environments such as Bel Air – indeed in any society – are highly persuasive in defining how these communities flourish or deteriorate. Societies rife with identity-laden or predatory violence can be fractious and lead to social disarticulation, even disintegration (Kolbe Athena, 2013). However, an underlying assumption of Viva Rio is that communities are socially resilient and can be supported in their integration efforts. Carefully targeted “catalysts” (spanning the security development continuum) can hasten this process of integration. Viva Rio emphasizes the dividends of advancing both security-style activities and socioeconomic development in a mutually reinforcing fashion. As a social catalyst and mediator, Viva Rio emphasizes the role of mediation, dialogue and communication to neutralize prejudice and social marginalization, which are often the source of conflict (Muggah, 2010; Federico Neiburg, Nicaise, & Braum, 2011). Furthermore, it challenges essentialist views of deviant groups such as “gangs” or “criminals”, and underlying risk factors that shape the onset and persistence of violence (Athena R. Kolbe, 2015; Muggah & Moestue, 2009). It is evident that the situation in Bel Air has changed since Tambou Lápè was created; although everyday violence still exists to some extent, armed territorial conflict has diminished (Chelsey Louise Kivland, 2009; A. Kolbe & Muggah, 2012; A.R. Kolbe et al., n.d.; Muggah & Moestue, 2009).
What is the role of conflict resolution and peace-building practice in shaping responses to crime and violence in cities? In government and diplomatic circles, ‘peacebuilding’ is frequently understood as something the UN does after inter-state or civil wars. It is also understood to involve an interventionist modus operandi imposed on countries. More recently, however, the UN has reviewed its approach to peacebuilding and coined the term ‘sustaining peace’ that repositions peacebuilding as an activity across all stages of conflict and as a priority for the entire UN system (UN Security Council, 2016). This repositioning may be an opportunity to re-emphasize the “the community-based origins” of peacebuilding practice and its “multi-stakeholder, context-sensitive, inclusive and bottom-up nature” (Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, 2015). It could also assuage the fears of some governments (and mayors) that ‘peacebuilding in the city’ is about foreign intervention at the city level. A focus on ‘sustaining peace’ could therefore frame approaches in the city that build on “the use of dialogue, trust-building and consensus-seeking to resolve or manage conflict through non-violent means” (Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, 2015) and the processes of “engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict” (Lederach, 2003; Miall, 2004, p. 4).

Why should mayors consider the potential value of conflict resolution and peacebuilding practice? First, the dynamics of conflict and violence are changing in many parts of the world, with cities becoming a future flashpoint (Butchart & Mikton, 2014; Organisation of American States, 2015; Secretariat, 2015). Traditionally, violent conflict has been associated to inter-state or civil wars; but there is a growing convergence among experts that most violent conflicts no longer fit these ‘traditional’ categories (Krause, 2014). While wars in Syria, Iraq or Yemen make the headlines, the great majority of violent deaths occurs in non-traditional conflict settings with Central America, Southern Africa, the Caribbean, and South America being the worst-affected regions (Butchart & Mikton, 2014; Organisation of American States, 2015; Secretariat, 2015). Such violence is the result of chronic political instability, persistent social volatility and other risk factors. In the future, these dynamics are expected to find their violent expressions in cities, and they call for new solutions and responses.

The second reason is that the political power of crime groups has become more apparent, and an expanded toolbox is necessary to fight crime as a political issue. The political power of organized crime is well documented in research on North Africa, the Sahel, and Central and South America (Briscoe, Perdomo, & Burcher, 2014; Kofi Annan Foundation, 2012; Shaw & Mangan, 2014; Täger & Aguilar Umaña, 2013). In the contexts of dysfunctional institutions and weak state-society relations, crime groups infiltrate and influence local and national political systems to serve their needs and, in the process, affect institution building, urban safety and development efforts supported by national governments, municipal authorities or international donors (Wennmann, 2014). Reframing the challenge of organized crime as a ‘political’ rather than a ‘criminal’ issue can enable city leaders to go beyond the default policy choice of legal and security instruments, and strengthen the case for conflict resolution and peacebuilding approaches.

So far, many city policies have emphasized repressive approaches where state authorities crush crime through ‘law-and-order’ or a ‘war on drugs’. These approaches have, however, been largely proven ineffective in terms of violence and crime reduction (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). In Latin America, heavy-handed policies and securitized responses to crime and violence had tremendous human cost and led to even greater levels of violence (Jütersonke, Muggah, & Rodgers, 2009). While securitized approaches remain popular among politicians (Gagne, 2015; J. Gutiérrez, 2016), approaches that are integrated across a range of sectors and work at different levels have shown strong results (Canadian Consortium on Human Security, 2007; Comunidad Segura, 2011; Eavis, 2011; F. Gutiérrez, Pinto, Arenas, Guzmán, & Gutiérrez, 2013; Jaitman & Guerrero Compeán, 2015; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011a; United Nations Development Programme, 2010).
What are the responses to conflict and violence that work? And how do they work? What counts as ‘success’ (and for whom) is highly contested in the conflicted political environments in which conflict resolution and peacebuilding occur. But when considering ‘success’ as a measurable reduction of violence, as the number of saved lives, and as stronger relationships to prevent, transform or resolve conflict, several components of what ‘success’ entails and how it is reached do emerge:

- Successful conflict resolution and peacebuilding practice has evolved from aligning several strategic building blocks, including trustworthy data, collaborative analysis, progressively expanded coalitions for change, targeted interventions that address the most acute risk factors of conflict and violence, and sustained institutional support by an honest broker (Ganson & Wennmann, 2016, pp. 168–182).

- Key principles for successful practice are relentless prioritization of the prevention and reduction of violence and conflict; engagement of the conflict parties on their partisan interests; ensuring vertical linkages within the conflict system; work within the de-facto political economy; and limiting the role of outside actors to strategic accompaniment (Ganson & Wennmann, 2016, pp. 183–191).

- Positive results also emerge from addressing conflict and violence deliberately and on their own terms; from stepping outside the formal, top-down approaches; from reaching out to atypical actors; and from building systems and institutions on the foundations of those functioning parts of society that are found in even the most fragile contexts (Andrews, 2015; Wennmann & Ganson, 2016).

- Successful conflict resolution and peacebuilding builds on an acute awareness of labels. Labels such as ‘organized crime’, ‘criminal’, ‘warlord’, ‘gang’ or ‘terrorist’ can obscure the multiple facets of an individual or group, especially when the distinction between public and private, and crime and legality, is blurred. Labelling can be a deliberate political strategy to stigmatize specific individuals or groups, or to undermine peace processes or violence reduction programmes (Wennmann, 2014, p. 270).

This practical knowledge is largely considered ‘mainstream’ in the fields of conflict resolution and peacebuilding; and some of it is already applied at the city level. Due to the El Salvador gang truce between 2012 and 2014, “at least 5,539 Salvadorians are alive today who would have died had the gang violence not been curtailed through dialogue and negotiation” (Wennmann, 2014). Many mayors in Latin America have been at the forefront of integrated programmes that have measurably reduced violence (Muggah & Aguirre, 2013). A review of armed violence reduction initiatives shows that informal mediation is the most common instrument with respect to interventions targeting perpetrators of violence (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011b).

From the peacebuilding side, there is also a small, but growing literature about building peace in urban contexts (Björkdahl, 2013; Grob, Papadovassilakis, & Ribeiro Fadon Vicente, 2016a, 2016b; Jütersonke & Krause, 2013; Milliken, 2014; Wennmann, 2015).

Despite this record, many urban safety professionals still perceive conflict resolution and peacebuilding practice as untested at the city level. In order to bring urban safety professionals closer to such practice and adapt conflict resolution and peacebuilding to the city level, ‘city labs’ can be an important space to build confidence and create policy space. City labs are understood as spaces for locally-led innovation to prevent and reduce violence and crime. They represent a space for the application of best practice from the fields of urban safety, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, to adapt practice from elsewhere to a specific local context, and to protect the sometimes sensitive dialogue and negotiation processes from the influence of spoilers. Overall, city labs can contribute to building stronger relationships between people and authorities in urban settings, and thereby also play a strategic role in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

For seasoned professionals in the fields of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, the current tendency to view dialogue and negotiation with perpetrators of criminal violence as something morally reproachable, illegal or impossible is reminiscent of the state of their field over 20 years ago, when the same attitudes were present in relation to the then outlawed ‘liberation movements’, ‘insurgents’ or ‘rebel groups’. There is an ever better understanding that negotiating with today’s outlawed ‘gangs’, ‘crime groups’, ‘terrorists’, or ‘violent extremist’ is not much different from negotiating with what is more neutrally called ‘non-state armed groups’ (Atran, 2010; Powell, 2015; Van den Eertwegh, 2016). What is more, research finds that terror campaigns end because terror groups join a political process or as a result of better policing (Cronin, 2011; Jones & Libicki, 2008). Over the last decade, the conflict resolution and peacebuilding profession has evolved into a discrete, global web of facilitators and experts. These networks do the important exploratory work with armed actors – be they part of state security forces, rebel groups, or other perpetrators of violence – to assess if parties are ready for talks before more formal ‘peace talks’ or if humanitarian access is possible. They can also provide expertise to accompany parties during a process. Over the years such ‘mediation support’ has become commonplace and is supported by many international organizations and governments (United Nations, 2012).
With the coming tide of conflict in cities and the increasing recognition that urban crime and violence are a 'political' issue, there is good reason to believe that in 20 years from now (and hopefully earlier) there will be a well-established support network for mayors and other city leaders as a dedicated resource for discrete engagements with perpetrators of violence. Such networks can provide access to the expertise and know-how necessary to drive ‘peace processes’ in the city, and help to better protect the facilitators and the political space for the processes necessary to sustaining peace in the city.
1 See Women in Cities International’s website for more information: www.womenincities.org

2 See Safe Communities Foundation for more information at www.safecommunities.org.nz/become-safe-community/become-safe-community

3 Programmes Coordinator, Viva Rio Haiti.

4 Experts were commissioned by Viva Rio to undertake a seismic study to identify potential water sources in the area and to assess water quality. This included the drilling of four wells (two in higher and two in lower Bel Air) and a study of water markets; see Neiburg & Nicaise (2009).

5 An important concept to understand with regard to this work is that of the base, which has a territorial definition but also includes other elements. Bases represent complex groups that combine the following four characteristics: local leadership, political affiliation, cultural expression and criminal activity. Members are usually associated with one dimension more than another, although the base contains all the types. Together, these characteristics form the profile and the internal dynamic of the base and its impact on the territory with which it is associated. After the period of strong conflict between 2004 and 2006, the Tambou Lapè project identified 14 localities that were involved in five rival area bases: Bel Air, Delmas 2, Solino, La Saline and Fortouren. It is not uncommon for these bases to be perceived as purely criminal, an understanding that neglects the more complex dynamics at play. Integration of the local base leadership into networks is essential, and the incentives Viva Rio offers can provide the only realistic driving force to maintain the commitment to a peace agreement, especially in a poor environment like that of Bel Air.

6 The CNDDR dissolved in 2010.

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CHAPTER 2
Urban Safety


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