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**Designing and implementing community
safety programming**

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Foreword

The United Nations (UN) Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism strives to improve the UN's ability to work as one in delivering effective policy, programming and advice to Member States on curbing the illicit trade, destabilising accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Established by the Secretary-General in 1998 with the task of coordinating the small arms work of the United Nations, CASA today unites more than 20 UN bodies active in policy development and/or programming related to small arms and light weapons.¹

Building on previous UN initiatives to develop international standards in the areas of mine action (International Mine Action Standards)² and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants (Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards),³ the United Nations has developed a series of International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) with the aim of providing clear and comprehensive guidance to practitioners and policymakers on fundamental aspects of small arms and light weapons control. The present document constitutes one of more than 20 ISACS modules that provide practical guidance on instituting effective controls over the full life cycle of small arms and light weapons (all ISACS modules can be found at www.smallarmsstandards.org).

ISACS are framed by existing global agreements related to small arms and light weapons control, in particular the

- *UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects* (UN PoA);
- *International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons* (International Tracing Instrument);
- *Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (UN Firearms Protocol); and
- *Arms Trade Treaty*.

Within this global framework, ISACS build upon standards, best practice guidelines, model regulations, etc. that have been elaborated at the regional and sub-regional levels. ISACS seek to cover the fundamental areas of small arms and light weapons control on which the United Nations may be called upon to provide advice, guidance and support.

ISACS were developed, and continue to be improved and supplemented, by a broad coalition of small arms control specialists drawn from the United Nations, governments, international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector (a full list of contributors to ISACS is available at www.smallarmsstandards.org).

ISACS modules were drafted in accordance with the rules set out in ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, *Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards*, under the oversight of the CASA Working Group on ISACS, co-chaired by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

¹ For a full listing of CASA partners, see www.poa-iss.org/CASA/CASA.aspx.

² www.mineactionstandards.org

³ www.unddr.org

Introduction

Human development and human security are inextricably linked. Human security is a precondition for sustainable peace, development and respect for human rights. Armed violence perpetuates a culture of violence that can have long-term consequences for communities and individuals. Armed violence divides societies, results in human rights violations, undermines community resilience and can result in the breakdown of social structures and protective mechanisms that serve as safety nets, especially for vulnerable members of society.

Community insecurity can hinder and reverse development by disrupting markets, deterring local entrepreneurs from investing and creating employment, and sparking an exodus of human and financial capital. It leaves behind a legacy of damaged infrastructure, weakened political institutions and social services, social division and often deep psychological trauma.

A growing understanding of the links between conflict, peace and external assistance has sharpened the focus on the role that development cooperation can play in both ameliorating and exacerbating the root causes of violent conflict, and on how to make development cooperation “conflict-sensitive.” It is within this broader context of conflict-sensitive approaches to development that most community safety programming can be situated.

Community safety programming is being increasingly used as part of small arms and light weapons control initiatives at local, sub-national, national, regional and international levels. Community safety programming links to small arms and light weapons control by helping communities to feel more secure and, therefore, less likely to use weapons in a harmful manner. Community safety programming can thus be a useful precursor to, or a component of, small arms and light weapons control initiatives.

However, the goal of community safety programming is not necessarily to reduce the number of small arms and light weapons in (legal or illegal) circulation, especially if this would lead to a deterioration of the overall security situation or to increased vulnerability for particular groups or segments of society. Rather, community safety programming aims to encourage safer behaviours that reduce harm linked to the presence of small arms and light weapons in a community. Community safety programming can be used to build the capacity of communities to solve private and community-level disputes in non-violent ways, thus contributing to a reduction in armed violence without necessarily reducing the number of weapons in circulation.

Furthermore, community safety programming can promote and empower community-level efforts to regulate ownership and use of small arms and so contribute to safer behaviour in relation to these weapons. Broader, often national-level small arms control initiatives can build on the successes of such local-level initiatives in order to institutionalise local regimes that promote safe behaviour.

Community-safety programming can also address the harmful impacts of misuse and diversion of small arms and light weapons by State security providers (i.e. armed forces and law enforcement) through promoting better stockpile management (including destruction of surplus stocks) and addressing issues related to the possession and use of small arms and light weapons by private security providers.

Community safety programming, including the use of Community Safety Plans, can encompass small arms and light weapons self-regulation and reduction objectives, as well as broader public safety and health, community empowerment and community insecurity objectives.

Designing and implementing community safety programming

1 Scope

This document provides practical guidance on designing and implementing community safety programmes that support, complement or form an integral part of small arms and light weapons control initiatives.

It is applicable at the community and local levels in contexts of insecurity or poor public safety, including post-conflict settings. It is not applicable in situations in which a community perceives an armed conflict to be in progress.

In addition to being applicable to small arms control programming, this document may also be applied in the context of public safety and public health programming.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISACS 03.30, *National regulation of civilian access to small arms and light weapons*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISACS 01.20, *Glossary of terms, definitions and abbreviations*, including the following, apply.

In all ISACS modules, the words 'shall', 'should', 'may' and 'can' are used to express provisions in accordance with their usage in International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards.

- a) **“shall” indicates a requirement:** It is used to indicate requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform to the document and from which no deviation is permitted.
- b) **“should” indicates a recommendation:** It is used to indicate that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required, or that (in the negative form, 'should not') a certain possibility or course of action is deprecated but not prohibited.
- c) **“may” indicates permission:** It is used to indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.

- d) **“can” indicates possibility and capability:** It is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical or causal.

4 What is community safety programming?

4.1 General

Community safety programming

- a) is a series of coordinated activities aimed at improving the wellbeing, safety (actual and perceived) and empowerment of a community;
- b) puts the capacities, needs and priorities of the affected community at the centre of its assessment, analysis, design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- c) can contribute to creating a secure environment for the return of ex-combatants and returnees (i.e. internally displaced persons, refugees and diaspora), as well as for trade and investment; and
- d) aims both to improve the immediate security situation and to strengthen the target community's capacity to resist pressures, prevent behaviours and resolve problems that could lead to a (re-) emergence of violent conflict.

Developing Community Safety Plans is one activity of community safety programming, which often focuses on reducing crime and the misuse of and demand for small arms within a community, but does not necessarily focus on reducing the number of small arms and light weapons in a community.

4.2 Settings in which community safety programming may be needed

Community safety programming may be usefully applied in settings in which

- a) State–citizen relations are poor;
- b) State-centric models and views of security are predominant;
- c) institutional resources and capacity are lacking;
- d) fostering genuine accountability and political incentives for security and justice reform is challenging;
- e) active citizenship and public engagement on issues related to security and justice are lacking;
- f) tensions within and between communities, particularly involving marginalised groups, exist;
- g) effective models for providing security, including rule of law and access to justice at the local level, are lacking;
- h) decent opportunities for income generation and better livelihoods are lacking;
- i) gender inequality and its potential to feed into gender-based violence and gender-related conflict dynamics exist;
- j) there is a need to reintegrate former combatants into communities;
- k) there is a need to decentralise, or extend the reach of, security and justice provision whilst maintaining values and accountability; or

- l) there is a need to anticipate tensions and security challenges and work on them in a preventive and constructive manner.

In settings where the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants have taken place and DDR-related community violence reduction activities have been carried out, community safety programming should build upon and be complementary to community-based reintegration and community violence reduction initiatives that have previously taken place.

5 Guiding principles

5.1 The community at the centre

5.1.1 Community resources

Communities affected by armed violence almost always have existing capacities and coping mechanisms (whether positive or negative) to 'deal' with the violence. Community safety programming should

- a) endeavor to identify these coping mechanisms;
- b) distil the positive from the negative;
- c) build on the positive coping mechanisms and existing capacities; and
- d) work with the community to explore acceptable alternative positive coping mechanisms to replace or transform existing negative mechanisms.

5.1.2 Community participation

Community members shall be the principal actors in community safety programming. Outside actors should only support and facilitate community safety programming in order to promote active and meaningful participation of community members at all stages and in all decision-making.

NOTE A community is not a homogenous group but comprises individuals and categories of people with different social markers, which may facilitate or hamper their participation, visibility and voice in the community and in community processes.

Efforts to engage with communities should reach out to all members, including the most vulnerable and those who may traditionally be silenced (e.g. children and youth, women, ethnic and religious minorities, persons with disabilities, etc.) in order to ensure that they have a voice, and as much as possible promote the same inclusion amongst communities themselves.

5.2 Conflict, gender and age sensitivity

5.2.1 General

Community safety programming shall do no harm, i.e. it shall not (intentionally or unintentionally) expose a community to additional risks or dangers or increase the vulnerability of the community, or groups or individuals within it, to external or internal threats.

Community safety programming need not necessarily be designed to reduce the number of small arms and light weapons in (legal or illegal) circulation, and shall not seek to do so if this would risk increasing the vulnerability of a community, or groups or individuals within it, to external or internal threats.

5.2.2 Conflict sensitivity

5.2.2.1 General

All stages of the community safety programme cycle — from design and planning, through implementation and monitoring, to evaluation and learning — shall be conflict sensitive. Being conflict sensitive means

- a) understanding the context in which a community safety programme operates;
- b) understanding the interaction between community safety programme interventions and their context; and
- c) acting upon the understanding of this interaction in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts.

Identifying and supporting community conflict mediation mechanisms can help to enhance conflict sensitivity.

5.2.2.2 Conflict analysis

Conflict analysis shall be used to understand the context in which a community safety programme operates and to help the programme to be conflict sensitive.

Conflict analysis is the systematic study of the context, causes, actors, and dynamics behind a conflict, as well as the linkages between them. Information from a conflict analysis provides a contextual overview for a potential community safety programme.

A conflict analysis is a prerequisite for doing no harm and ensuring that community safety programmes remain conflict- gender- and age-sensitive. It can help to ascertain whether community safety is the right kind of programming for a given context – it may not be relevant everywhere.

A conflict analysis should include individual analyses of

- a) the overall situation — overview of the conflict context including historical, political, economic, social, security, cultural, demographic and environmental factors, including the human rights situation, gender and age norms and other social inequalities that may have security implications;
- b) the drivers of conflict — identification of the issues that drive, or have the potential to drive, conflict; these are often categorised as root causes, intermediate causes, and triggers, primarily to ensure that the analysis goes deeper than the most immediately visible, obvious factors;
- c) relevant stakeholders and actors — analysis of the interests, goals, positions, capacities and relationships of those engaged in or being affected by conflict;

NOTE This is particularly important for identifying which actors have the most significant influence on peace and security, which relationships may need to be transformed, and what capacities to foster peace and security exist in the society.

- d) conflict dynamics — analysis of the interaction between a) to c) above; i.e. the situation, conflict drivers and the stakeholders / actors, including the identification of drivers of change and potential opportunities and structures for peacebuilding. This may include the mapping of scenarios, in order to help anticipate how dynamics may evolve and what contingency plans should be put in place; and
- e) security structures — analysis of the structures that currently provide security at the community level, how (effectively) they provide it; who are the main decision makers; do people have equal access to security and why (not); what are peoples' major security concerns; are these being met by current security provision; is community safety programming an appropriate approach?

The conflict analysis that informs a community safety programme shall be updated as needed in order to ensure that the programme remains conflict sensitive throughout its full duration.

5.2.3 Gender sensitivity

Practising gender sensitivity is an integral part of doing no harm by ensuring that the security needs of people of all genders are met.

Approaches to community safety programming should be based on a solid understanding of gender norms in a local context. However, gender norms should not be taken as fixed, but rather as something that can – and often should – be challenged.

At all stages of the community safety programming cycle, steps shall be taken to avoid entrenching or exacerbating existing gender inequalities. Community safety programming should actively promote gender equality in its overarching approach.

NOTE Community safety programming that does not challenge discriminatory gender norms may tacitly reinforce them.

Being gender sensitive means

- a) facilitating the equal participation of people of all genders from a range of backgrounds at all stages of the process, and addressing specific gendered barriers to participation;
- b) ensuring that women's, men's and gender minorities' security concerns are identified and given equal consideration;
- c) aiming to create a safe environment in which people of all genders feel able to raise sensitive issues, including those relating to cultural taboos around gender;
- d) analysing and addressing how attitudes and behaviours relating to gender may undermine or improve people's security; and
- e) encouraging respectful and productive relationships between local authorities, security providers and community members of all genders.

5.2.4 Age sensitivity

Different age-groups can be affected differently by conflict and violence and can have different perspectives on the root causes of the problems faced by them and their communities, as well as on potential solutions to those problems.

All age-groups should have a voice in the elaboration of community safety programmes, from children, adolescents and youth, to adults and seniors.

Community safety programming should endeavor in particular to recognize, appreciate and harness the energy of youth and help to direct it towards positive purposes that can contribute to community safety, resilience, and the capacity for non-violent dispute resolution.

Special focus should be placed on engaging and empowering marginalized youth, whose designation can differ from context to context but which may include young women and girls, unemployed youth, street children, etc.

Young men — especially those with few or no prospects in the areas of education, employment or constructive social expression — are particularly vulnerable to being caught up in conflict, crime and violence. This can lead to the development and spread of negative social norms that promote violence as a means of resolving disputes and that normalise violent expressions of masculinity.

Community safety programming should seek to transform any negative attitudes towards young men that may exist in communities, including by enabling and empowering young men to voice their

perspectives and to play an active and constructive role in the design, implementation and evaluation of community safety programmes.

By being age-sensitive, community safety programming can make an important contribution to promoting inter-generational dialogue, which can promote understanding and respect and lead to more inclusive and successful problem-solving.

5.3 Human rights-based approach

Community safety programming shall be grounded in international human rights law and shall be compliant with international human rights standards and contribute to their fulfilment in practical ways.

Human rights principles derived from international human rights law obligations — including equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, and accountability — should guide community safety programming.

The decision on whether or not to refer explicitly to human rights instruments depends on the impact this would have on stakeholders in the context in question. Where explicit reference to human rights might prove divisive or counter-productive, human rights objectives may be pursued using alternative language and concepts that foster consensus in the context in question.

5.4 Accountability

Designers and facilitators of community safety programming shall continually demonstrate accountability for their actions. This is critical for encouraging trust and openness since it reassures communities that may be suspicious of outside interventions and helps to redress any past misdemeanours.

Designers and facilitators should also promote local forms of accountability and good governance in the community's interaction with authorities.

5.5 Affordability and realism

Designers and facilitators of community safety programming should encourage communities to identify affordable and realistic solutions to their problems rather than solutions that depend on substantial outside support or that are otherwise unattainable.

5.6 Collaboration

Designers and facilitators of community safety programming should encourage all relevant actors in the beneficiary community (see Clause 10.3.5) to work together to address safety needs and to deliver solutions to safety problems.

5.7 Empowerment and inclusivity

The community safety programming process should engage all social groups within the community and should ensure that the less powerful and the marginalised are able to voice their concerns. The process should seek to identify and build on existing capacities and positive coping mechanisms, empower the target communities and institutions to address their safety needs and solve their safety problems through active engagement in all stages of the community safety programming cycle.

5.8 Equal access to justice

Designers and facilitators of community safety programming should support only community-based solutions that promote equal access to justice for all community members.

5.9 Holistic approach

Community safety programming should be based on an integrated approach to security, protection and development, recognising that the factors that make communities unsafe are often a combination of security, protection, and development issues. Community safety programming should therefore link to other programmatic interventions related to safety, security and protection, e.g. small arms and light weapons control; security sector reform; community-based policing; child and women protection and early recovery and development programming.

5.10 Honesty and integrity

Designers and facilitators of community safety programming should always do what they say they will do, be rigorous in fulfilling their financial and other commitments and at all times promote integrity as a public good.

5.11 Impartiality

Designers and facilitators of community safety programming should target communities, and the social groups within them, according to need and without any positive or negative bias toward any particular group, be it political, ethnic, religious, gender, age-group or otherwise.

5.12 Partnerships

Designers and facilitators of community safety programming should facilitate the development of partnerships between the beneficiary community, on the one hand, and other local stakeholders (such as local authorities, traditional justice providers, security providers, businesses, service providers, civil society groups, donor agencies, etc.), on the other.

5.13 Sustainability

Designers and facilitators of community safety programming should aim to produce outcomes that are sustainable; through empowerment, strengthening and development of local capacity and the creation of durable links between the community and government authorities.

5.14 Transparency

The aims and methods of community safety programming, its progress, the roles of different actors and other relevant information shall be communicated clearly to the target community and to participants in the process. Opportunities for the target community to provide feedback on and evaluate community safety programming should be built into the process.

6 Success Factors

6.1 General

Community safety programming should comply with the conditions set out in this clause in order to maximise the chances of success and avoid doing harm to the target community or to neighbouring communities.

6.2 Managing expectations

Designers and facilitators of community safety programming should be honest and transparent throughout their engagement with the beneficiary community about what the project can and cannot achieve.

6.3 Sufficient time

Facilitators of community safety programming should plan to engage with a community for long enough to help to meet the objectives the community sets out in its Community Safety Plan (see Clause 10).

The planned length of an engagement with a community should be flexible in order to be able to deal with unforeseen events and to mitigate potential risks associated with the project. Sufficient time should be factored in to build and maintain a relationship between the facilitators and the beneficiary community; and to properly evaluate the project.

6.4 Appropriate political context

Designers of community safety programming should ensure that the community safety intervention will not be blocked or appropriated by political actors inside or outside the beneficiary community.

6.5 Desire for and possibility of change

Designers of community safety programming may select beneficiary communities in which there already exists a desire for change, in order to increase chances of success. They should select beneficiary communities in which an improvement in safety is possible, and seek to identify and build on existing capacities and positive coping mechanisms that are already in place to mitigate or address the impacts of armed violence, while working with communities to transform any negative coping mechanisms and social norms that may have emerged.

EXAMPLE Communities may need to have already attained a minimum level of security or development in order for a community safety intervention to attract the necessary support of and resources from the community.

6.6 Openness to outsiders

Designers of community safety programming should select beneficiary communities that display a level of openness to outsiders (including the designers and facilitators themselves) that is sufficient for the project to proceed.

6.7 Shared issues

Designers of community safety programming may select beneficiary communities that already have some shared problems or issues that a Community Safety Plan could address, in order to increase chances of success.

7 Goals and objectives

7.1 Goals

7.1.1 General

Community safety programming is broad and multifaceted and encompasses much more than just small arms and light weapons control. Indeed, small arms and light weapons control may not be a priority issue (or an issue at all) in a community safety programme if the community in question does not perceive it to be among the most important safety and security challenges facing it.

Even when a community does perceive small arms control to be an important issue, community safety programming that aims exclusively to reduce, control or regulate the presence of weapons is unlikely to be successful, since the reasons behind widespread weapons possession need to be addressed first. Community safety programming should instead focus on encouraging a wide spectrum of safer behaviour within a community, including, where appropriate, in relation to small arms and light weapons.

The remainder of this clause provides guidance on formulating goals and objectives for safer community programming when small arms control is perceived by the community as being an important safety issue.

7.1.2 Goals related to small arms and light weapons

Community safety programming in the context of small arms and light weapons control can have different long-term goals, including to

- a) reduce and/or refocus the demand for small arms within a community;
- b) regulate or change intra-community behaviour regarding small arms; and
- c) create conditions conducive to collecting small arms and light weapons and thus reducing their numbers in the community.

7.1.3 Gender and age considerations

Long-term goals related to small arms and light weapons should be disaggregated in order to take into account the different security and safety needs and concerns of men, women, boys and girls, including adolescents as an age-group requiring separate and specific focus.

7.1.4 Legitimate use of small arms

Members of a community may wish to possess small arms for legitimate and lawful purposes such as hunting, species management, pest control, etc. In such circumstances, basic training on

- a) small arms and ammunition safety;
- b) secure small arms and ammunition storage; and
- c) age appropriate use and keeping children safe from small arms and ammunition

should be integrated into the community safety programme, in accordance with ISACS 03.30, *National regulation of civilian access to small arms and light weapons*.

7.2 Objectives

7.2.1 General

Shorter-term objectives that contribute to achieving the longer-term goal of a community safety programme should be derived. These may contribute indirectly or directly to reducing the availability and/or misuse of small arms and light weapons in a community. In either case, such objectives are essential to laying the groundwork for subsequent small arms control work, such as weapons collection programmes.

7.2.2 Indirect objectives

Shorter-term community safety programming objectives that relate indirectly to small arms and light weapons control include

- a) improving feelings of safety among both male and female members of a community, including those of different age-groups;
- b) demonstrating to the community its ability to solve its own safety and security problems;
- c) improving cohesion among community members, including those of different gender and age-groups;

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- d) empowering women, children (as appropriate) and adolescents to engage with security providers in the community and to address safety and security concerns and needs with them;
- e) strengthening the protective environment for children;
- f) improving mutual feelings of trust and respect between a community and its security providers; and
- g) establishing links between a community and its local and national government representatives.

Direct small arms and light weapons control interventions, such as weapons collection programmes, should not take place until after these shorter-term objectives have been achieved.

7.2.3 Direct objectives

Shorter-term community safety programming objectives that relate directly to small arms and light weapons control include

- a) building community awareness of problems associated with the availability and misuse of small arms and developing community solidarity in addressing them;
- b) promoting licensing and, if required by law, registration of small arms in the community, in accordance with ISACS 03.20, *National regulation of civilian access to small arms and light weapons*.
- c) reducing the number of accidents and other preventable incidents in the community that involve small arms, light weapons or their ammunition;
- d) minimizing children's (including adolescents') exposure to small arms and light weapons;
- e) reducing the diversion of small arms and light weapons into the illicit market (e.g. through theft from private individuals, government stockpiles and businesses);
- f) reducing the number of small arms and light weapons available for use in crime, including terrorism, and by illegal armed groups;
- g) supporting the recovery of stolen small arms and light weapons;
- h) reducing the visibility of small arms in the community;
- i) strengthening community norms against the illegal and irresponsible use of small arms; and
- j) using small arms and light weapons control interventions to launch capacity-building and sustainable development initiatives.

8 Types of community safety programming

8.1 General

The characteristics of armed violence and the use and misuse of small arms and light weapons can differ between urban and rural settings, while also retaining common elements. Such differences and similarities between urban and rural contexts shall be taken into account when assessing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating community safety programmes.

8.2 Community safety in urban areas

Urban centres are home to more than half of the world's population and this is expected to reach 60% by 2030 (the deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals) and 70% by 2050. Some cities struggle with high levels of violence that undermine the foundations of the economic and social development of the population. Areas of a city can deteriorate into "no-go zones" that undermine governance and the rule of law and trap the poorest in a dangerous cycle of poverty and violence.

Community safety programming in urban areas targets communities in high-density populations that usually have some degree of access to municipal services and some degree of interaction with local authorities. While often logistically easier to implement due to the compact nature of communities, it may be more difficult for urban programming to foster community spirit, especially if there has been a high level of recent immigration into the community (e.g. from other parts of the city or from surrounding rural areas).

Community Safety Plans for urban communities

- a) may include "in kind" donations (i.e. non-monetary forms of assistance) from municipal authorities and should engage local institutions in order to improve the community's interaction with them; but
- b) should not undermine services provided by local authorities. Rather, they should aim to support the provision of such services to the target urban community over the longer term.

Due to the proximity of communities in urban settings, there is a risk that safety programming in one urban community could have a negative impact on neighbouring urban communities. For this reason, as part of its conflict analysis (see Clause 5.2.2.2), community safety programming in urban areas should assess the risk of negative spill-over into neighbouring communities and develop strategies to mitigate this risk.

8.3 Community safety in rural areas

Community safety programming in rural areas targets remote, often dispersed populations, sometimes with little or no interaction with local authorities. This can pose challenges related to sustainability, logistics and building relations of trust with a community, even more so than in an urban context.

To address these challenges, Community Safety Plans developed with the participation of rural communities should incorporate a phase in which building trust between the community and local authorities is an explicit objective, and should endeavour to establish links with projects (government or non-government) that can lend sustainability to the Community Safety Plan.

Even more so than in urban settings, facilitators of community safety programming in rural areas should, from the very outset, carefully manage the expectations of rural communities and should make clear to the beneficiary community the risks associated with the programme, including in relation to logistics and sustainability.

Facilitators of community safety programming in rural areas should, where appropriate, involve law enforcement officers (often the only representatives of the government present in remote areas) and other security providers (including traditional authority structures and small arms users and user groups) in the process of developing Community Safety Plans.

8.4 Community safety in border areas

Community safety programming in border areas can take place in the vicinity of recognised international borders, borders of internationally unrecognised autonomous regions, or significant domestic administrative boundaries. Such programming should take account of and be sensitive to

- a) past and potential conflict dynamics between communities on either side of the border; and

- b) existing cross-border flows of people, goods and services – both licit and illicit, including human trafficking and smuggling in small arms and light weapons and other commodities.

In order to ensure that community safety programming in a border area is conflict-sensitive, a local conflict assessment should be carried out in consultation with the beneficiary community and with communities on the opposite side of the border.

Community safety programming in border areas should involve regular communication with all affected communities where legally and practically possible. Cross-border projects may be appropriate in this context.

Security and safety problems faced by border communities can be unrelated to local service provision and may instead relate to broader dynamics of politics and trade that play out in the border region. It can be the case, however, that unequal provision of social and security services on either side of the border (or perceptions of such) can create tensions, or exacerbate existing tensions, between communities on opposite sides of the border.

Community safety programming will usually not be capable of resolving such macro-level problems or the insecurity caused by them. Facilitators of community safety programming in border areas should be aware that the micro-level solutions identified by a Community Safety Plan may not be relevant to addressing macro-level security issues that may exist in border areas.

For this reason, community safety programming in border areas should begin with an assessment of the likelihood that a border community will identify security and safety problems that are conducive to being addressed in the context of a Community Safety Plan. If a community is unlikely to do so, it will probably not benefit greatly from a community safety approach.

8.5 Pilot community safety initiatives

Pilot community safety initiatives test the community safety methodology in a specific context in order to determine

- a) its overall suitability to the context; and
- b) what, if any, modifications to the methodology might be required in order to enable its wider application.

Pilot community safety initiatives shall contain a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework that includes baseline data on community perceptions of safety, security and trust in security providers.

Pilot community safety programming shall carefully manage the expectations of beneficiary communities and related actors. To this end, the budget and timescale of the pilot programme, as well as the level of commitment of its implementing agency, should be fully transparent to the community in question.

Pilot community safety programming should link to related processes such as

- c) armed violence reduction programmes;
- d) mine action programmes;
- e) crime reduction programmes;
- f) local, sub-national and national development programmes; and
- g) security and justice sector reform programmes;

whether carried out by government ministries, international organisations, donor agencies, security providers, local authorities or civil society.

Pilot community safety programming should also draw as much as possible on existing capacities and positive coping mechanisms, as well as previous projects that provide lessons that are relevant to future community safety programming.

9 Target communities/beneficiaries

9.1 General

Community safety programming is necessarily community-focused. In the context of small arms and light weapons control, community safety programming is most appropriate in settings where weapons are perceived to be held collectively by the community, but it can also be applicable in situations where the ownership of weapons is perceived to be primarily an individual responsibility.

9.2 Identifying appropriate communities

Clear values, objectives and criteria shall be used when selecting communities in which to conduct community safety programming. The selection process shall not be unduly influenced by any particular actor's interest and its fairness shall be underpinned by transparency.

Factors that can offer community safety programming a higher chance of success include working in communities where

- a) community members themselves want change;
- b) it is unlikely that community safety plans can be manipulated by any particular actor's interest;
- c) there are no obstacles powerful enough to stop the project, and those with the potential to act as barriers can be involved in the programme in appropriate ways;
- d) neighbouring communities are strong enough to cope with the effects of any potential crime displacement;
- e) there are common issues that could unite citizens;
- f) there is scope for change – and sensitively calling for change will not place partners and the public in significant danger;
- g) a significant number of community members are not hostile to outsiders;
- h) expectations can be managed to allow space for slow progress or even failure during initial community safety efforts;
- i) there are strong local partners to work through/with;
- j) there are seeds for building confidence and trust both within the community and between the community and the authorities;
- k) a sufficient proportion of local power-holders approve of the community safety approach and actively engage;
- l) progress can be achieved with available resources or with minimal seed-funding;
- m) the community has demonstrated commitment and motivation during other security and development projects;
- n) the community has problems that are within the project team's expertise;

- o) there are opportunities for coordination with other programmes;
- p) the project team has already had some contact and profile within the community; or
- q) there are opportunities for 'quick wins'.

9.3 Gender considerations

Community safety programming should involve women and men in proportion to their relative numbers within a community and should prioritise according to the relative insecurity or vulnerability experienced by men and women.

Community safety programming may involve women and men separately for some or all of the project, especially if safety, security or social considerations are such that this approach would enable women and/or men to speak more freely or feel more empowered.

NOTE See ISACS 06.10, *Women, gender and small arms and light weapons*, for further guidance.

9.4 Involving youth and children

Schools can be an effective entry point or forum for community safety programming, whether broadly focused or focused specifically on the school. School-based community safety programming should involve teachers, students, parents and school principals / administrators and may also involve representatives of the wider community such as NGOs, youth groups, businesses, police and local authorities.

However, youth clubs and other projects that involve out-of-school children can be even more effective entry points for community safety programming as they offer an opportunity to reach children, including adolescents, who may be far more exposed to small arms and light weapons than are school-going children.

Justice for children programmes, including juvenile justice, can also be important entry-points to ensure that community safety programmes take into consideration and address the specific needs of vulnerable children, including adolescents. Such programmes should include efforts to promote diversion and community-based alternatives to detention for children / adolescents, as well as community support and, where appropriate, involvement in the effective rehabilitation and reintegration of children, including adolescents, who find themselves in conflict with the law.

Livelihood programmes can also act as entry-points to involving youth in community safety programming and can help to mitigate youth involvement in armed violence. Community-based child protection programmes build social capital and, as a consequence, can contribute to reducing violence at the community level. The impact of interventions is greater when they target the early stages of human development.

NOTE See ISACS 06.20, *Children, adolescents, youth and small arms and light weapons*, for further guidance.

10 Designing Community Safety Plans

10.1 General

A Community Safety Plan is an action plan, developed with the involvement of a community (in the context of community safety programming), which identifies community-level risks, needs and problems — as well as existing capacities and positive coping mechanisms — and proposes community-chosen activities for strengthening capacities, mitigating risks, addressing needs and solving problems.

10.2 Scoping assessment

The process of developing a Community Safety Plan shall begin with a scoping assessment that selects potential target communities. Communities should be selected according to criteria, pre-agreed by the implementing organisation. Such criteria may include

- a) size of the population;
- b) geography;
- c) history of security problems;
- d) prevalence of violence (e.g. number of violent deaths/injuries compared with the size of the community), etc.

The scoping assessment should take account of the success factors set out in Clause 6, as well as other criteria deemed relevant by the project team (e.g. cost, logistics, presence of local supporters, etc.).

The scoping assessment may identify a number of potential target communities, particularly if it is being conducted as part of a pilot community safety initiative (see Clause 8.5). Identifying a number of potential target communities can help to provide sufficient information to design a wider community safety programme.

The scoping assessment should identify other processes and actors that are relevant to community safety programming with a view to linking with them where possible and desirable.

After a community has been selected as a beneficiary, the project team shall undertake a conflict analysis in accordance (see Clause 5.2.2.2).

10.3 Actors

10.3.1 General

Generally speaking, the broader the range of actors involved, the more likely it is that a Community Safety Plan will be representative, successful and genuinely owned by the community.

Community Safety Plans should be developed and implemented by members of the beneficiary community themselves, with facilitation by community safety programmers.

10.3.2 Project team

The project team should include representatives of the beneficiary community and of the organisation(s) guiding the development of the Community Safety Plan. Actors external to the community in question (e.g. regional or national government officials) may be given observer status.

In order to bolster the sustainability of a Community Safety Plan, facilitators of community safety programming should engage one or more local, nongovernmental, community-based organisation to co-run the project that will develop the Community Safety Plan.

Facilitators of community safety programming should ensure, at the outset, that all members of the project team are familiar with the methodology to be employed. Where this is not the case, facilitators should provide appropriate training.

10.3.3 Designers of community safety programming

Designers of community safety programming (also known as 'programmers') plan and put together entire community safety programmes. They may or may not be involved in the implementation of the programmes they design.

10.3.4 Facilitators of community safety programming

Facilitators work for the organisation that aims to implement community safety programming. They are usually external to the beneficiary community but are directly and closely involved in the implementation of the project. Facilitators may or may not have been involved in the design of the community safety programme that they are helping to implement.

10.3.5 Community actors

Facilitators of community safety programming should be as inclusive as possible in both the selection of actors to involve in the elaboration of a community safety plan and in subsequent work to implement and evaluate the plan.

Different actors will be appropriate for different types of engagement and tasks. Some actors may be selected by the facilitators or by the beneficiary community because they play a particular role in the community or have a special expertise from which the project could benefit. Other actors may be self-selecting due to the fact that they are the most vocal or activist members of a community.

Facilitators shall engage a broad range of actors in the process of developing a Community Safety Plan. Such actors should include representatives of all social groups within the community, including marginalised groups, and may include

- a) community leaders, including local government officials and traditional leaders / elders;
- b) civil society activists, including from non-governmental organisations and academia;
- c) local security service providers, including police, border guards, the military, neighbourhood watch groups, etc.;
- d) women's groups;
- e) youth groups, including students and out-of-school children (including adolescents), street children's organisations, etc.;
- f) survivors of violence (including armed violence, sexual and gender-based violence and intimate partner violence);
- g) schools and school associations;
- h) health service providers;
- i) local businesses and business associations;
- j) religious organisations;
- k) lawful small arms users groups; and
- l) donors that provide support locally.

10.3.6 Divided communities

If a Community Safety Plan is being developed for a divided community (e.g. a community divided by ethnicity, religion, class, caste, etc.), facilitators may choose to work with these groups separately or jointly, depending on the sensitivity of the division.

10.3.7 Age and gender

The age distribution and gender balance of the actors involved in elaborating a Community Safety Plan should be a broad reflection of the community for which the plan is being developed, subject to the provisions of Clause 10.3.8.

10.3.8 At-risk groups

Segments of the community that are most acutely exposed to danger and insecurity shall be involved in the elaboration of a Community Safety Plan and may be over-represented in the process to develop the plan, in relation to their numbers in the community.

10.3.9 Marginalised groups

When otherwise marginalised groups (e.g. survivors of violence, out-of-school children, people with disabilities, street children, unemployed people, etc.) are included in the process of elaborating a Community Safety Plan, facilitators should work with these groups separately, both in advance of and during the elaboration and implementation of a Community Safety Plan, in order to ensure that their voices are heard and heeded.

10.4 Timescales

Community-level engagement takes a long time to be successful. In designing Community Safety Plans, facilitators of community safety programming shall incorporate sufficient time and flexibility in order to ensure that they take full account of the needs and expectations of the members of the beneficiary community.

A Community Safety Plan will normally take in the range of 18 to 24 months to plan, design, implement, monitor and evaluate. However, the level of engagement by facilitators of community safety programming may vary over the course of the project, with more intensive involvement usually required during the first 9 to 12 months, and less intense follow-up and ad-hoc support required for the remaining period.

11 Implementing Community Safety Plans

11.1 General

Following selection of the beneficiary community or communities, the process for developing a Community Safety Plan should proceed along the following steps.

11.2 Building support

Facilitators of community safety programming shall ensure that the initiative to develop a Community Safety Plan enjoys a sufficient level of support among members of the beneficiary community to allow the project to proceed.

11.3 Identifying and prioritising problems

The project team (see Clause 10.3.2) should involve community members in identifying and prioritising the main safety and security problems and needs of the community. The project team may choose to use focus groups of community members to help identify and prioritise these issues at this stage.

Empirical data (e.g. collected by the local police, health service providers, NGOs, media organisations or an injury / violence surveillance system) can provide an evidence base to help community members understand the nature and magnitude of the problems they face.

Focus groups can investigate safety and security problems in detail. Grouping people by different characteristics can provide more information about the problems they face. People may be grouped by sex, age, profession, religion or other socio-economic characteristic depending on the local context and on the nature of the safety and security problems being investigated.

Focus groups shall include and may over-represent marginalized groups such as survivors of violence, out-of-school children, people with disabilities, street children, unemployed people, etc.

11.4 Action planning

The project team should involve community members in drawing up the Community Safety Plan, so as to address and solve the prioritised needs and problems. This process may be facilitated by the community safety programmers.

11.5 Taking action

The project team should take action, or authorise others to take action under its supervision, according to the action plan. The project team should monitor process in implementing the action plan.

11.6 Evaluating

The project team should involve the beneficiary community in a participatory evaluation of the project once it has been completed (see Clause 13).

12 Funding Community Safety Plans

12.1 Funding commitment

Funding for community safety programming shall be committed in advance and shall be sufficient to support engagement with a community for at least 18 months. Funding should be flexible enough to respond to and support community-driven initiatives that are not foreseen in the original funding proposal.

12.2 Capacity-building

Facilitators of community safety programming should build the capacity of the beneficiary community to mobilise funds to support implementation of its Community Safety Plan, both from outside sources and from sources within the community itself.

12.3 Sources of funding

Community Safety Plans may foresee a wide range of activities in different areas. It will not always be possible for a donor that has been involved in the development of a Community Safety Plan to assist the community in all areas in which they would like to take action. In such cases, additional funding should be sought from donors that have not been involved in the design of the Community Safety Plan.

13 Monitoring and evaluating Community Safety Plans

13.1 Internal monitoring and evaluation

A Community Safety Plan shall contain a monitoring mechanism designed to track overall implementation of the plan according to milestones agreed by members of the beneficiary community.

Monitoring implementation of the plan should be undertaken by members of the beneficiary community themselves, either alone or with the support community safety programme facilitators.

Information gathered through monitoring should be used to identify and resolve problems related to implementation (in order to keep the Community Safety Plan on track), to contribute to the transparency of implementation (including financial transparency), and to measure the extent of implementation of the Community Safety Plan, in relation to the agreed milestones.

Following implementation of a Community Safety Plan, an evaluation shall be carried out to determine the extent to which the plan succeeded in achieving its stated goals. Evaluations may also be carried out during implementation of the Community Safety Plan in order to evaluate the extent to which the achievement of agreed milestones has resulted in desired outcomes.

13.2 Community-led, participatory evaluation

A community safety programme should involve beneficiary communities in the evaluation of the programme. This contributes to a sense of ownership by beneficiary communities and provides qualitatively better information to project implementers on the successes and challenges of the project.

If a community-led, participatory evaluation is employed, the project team shall adhere to the guiding principles of community safety programming set out in Clause 5.

13.3 Community data management

Sustainable community data management should be an integral part of the monitoring and evaluation of community safety programming. Sustainable mechanisms for data management should be established and maintained across multiple stakeholder groups and institutions in the community being monitored / evaluated. The monitoring and evaluation of community safety programming should contribute to sector-wide efforts to develop or strengthen mechanisms for efficient community data management.

13.4 The importance of feedback

Whether or not a participatory evaluation is undertaken, the project team shall seek feedback from the beneficiary community after the project activities have been completed, and shall be transparent about what will happen to the information provided by the beneficiary community.

NOTE For further guidance on this topic in the context of small arms and light weapons control, see ISACS 04.40, *Monitoring, evaluation and reporting*.

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