



# EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING FOR SOUTH AFRICA

An introduction for police officers, researchers and communities



SECTION FOUR EMBEDDING EVIDENCE-BASED THINKING IN POLICE PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT





#### **ABOUT THE ISS**

The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) partners to build knowledge and skills that secure Africa's future. The ISS is an African non-profit with offices in South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia and Senegal. Using its networks and influence, the ISS provides timely and credible policy research, practical training and technical assistance to governments and civil society.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This guide is funded by the Hanns Seidel Foundation and the Bavarian State Chancellery. The ISS is also grateful for support from the members of the ISS Partnership Forum: the Hanns Seidel Foundation, the European Union, the Open Society Foundations and the governments of Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the USA.



















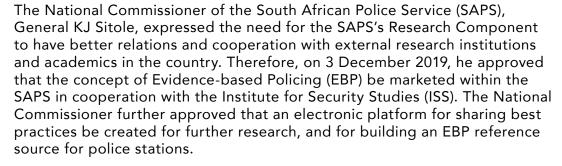
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#### **SUMMARY: SECTION FOUR**

This is the fourth section of the ISS's Evidence-Based Policing Resource Guide for South Africa. It can be read as a stand-alone document but readers are encouraged to read sections one, two and three as well. These can be accessed via the ISS website and ISS Crime Hub.

#### **FOREWORD**



New technologies, new methods and new ideas have brought significant change to the profession of policing, but at its core, evidence-based policing requires the same dedication to communities, the same sense of duty and sacrifice, and the same integrity as always.

As policing continues to evolve, it is important to look back at its history and the nine principles of policing by Sir Robert Peel, to understand where we came from and what we can do to solve our most pressing challenges. To understand those challenges, the principles of Sir Robert Peel can be a fantastic tool allowing options for creating more publishing outlets for evidence- and research-based policing, and looking forward to the future trends that will shape policing in South Africa.

The Evidence-Based Policing Resource Guide (EBPRG) is aligned with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which implies significant technological advancement for the country, but also involves substantial risk. The threat to the South African economy and population posed by the malicious and criminal targeting of cyberspace, is significant and must be countered through the appropriate development and implementation of legislative, policy, strategic and operational responses for policing, which is to be informed by ideas that are generated by all who have a vested interest in the improvement of safety and security in our country, as well as evidence and research-based policing that enhances the body of policing knowledge.

The EBPRG is about keeping society safe. So it is no surprise that as society has changed, so too policing has changed and needs to be scientific and evidence-based. New technologies, new methods and new ideas have brought significant change to the profession of policing, but at its core, evidence-based policing requires the same dedication to communities, the same sense of duty and sacrifice, and the same integrity as always.

Lastly, as the Head of Research in the SAPS, it is my hope that the EBPRG might make a meaningful contribution in assisting the SAPS to realise its vision by providing a simple overview of key concepts and methodologies, and encouraging the SAPS and its contributors to pursue evidence- and research-based policing for the improvement of policing and community safety in South Africa.



Major General (Dr) Phillip R Vuma

The Head: Research - South African Police Service

SECTION FOUR

## EMBEDDING EVIDENCE-BASED THINKING IN POLICE PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT



The previous section presented an example of the 'evidence toolbox' - a set of evidence-based guidelines for responding to specific categories of crime, based on the work of Lum and Koper.<sup>1</sup>

This section provides guidance on how to formulate plans to address chronic crime and safety problems in a station area or community.

The guidance draws heavily on problem-oriented approaches to crime and safety.

Evidence shows that this approach is far more effective than 'business as usual' policing, especially when applied to hotspots.<sup>2</sup>





When formulating or evaluating plans using this methodology, police officials and their partners should consider the evidence discussed in the previous sections, reviewed by the <u>College of Policing</u> (Section Two), and translated into practical guidance by Cynthia Lum and Christopher Koper (Section Three). Using this toolbox, police and communities can access the tools most likely to be effective in addressing particular problems, and adapt them to local circumstances.



The methodology discussed in this section is evidence-based in two ways. First, it has been systematically reviewed and shown to be effective. But it is also evidence-based in that it encourages police officials and partners to carefully monitor and evaluate the impact of their work – to generate evidence. Where plans are not having their desired effect, they should be changed. Lessons learned from this process can be shared with partners so that others can more easily replicate what works, and avoid what doesn't.



The version presented here is called 'PANDA' and is based on the work of Jerry Ratcliffe – a former police officer and leader in evidence-based policing, intelligence-led policing, and problem-oriented policing. <sup>4</sup> The PANDA model is a version of the well-established SARA model of problem-oriented policing <sup>5</sup> on which the SAPS Sector Policing guidelines are based. <sup>6</sup>



#### WHY THIS MODEL IS SO IMPORTANT

Studies show that the traditional model of random patrol, rapid response and reactive investigation does not significantly reduce general crime. <sup>7</sup> Instead, interventions are most effective when they target specific places, people and behaviours, and when they are based on a careful, systematic analysis of the problem being addressed. <sup>8</sup>

A map of a crime hotspot tells us where crime clusters, but not why it clusters there. We need more information and intelligence to understand its causes, and to create an effective intervention plan to address it. Unless a local crime challenge is clearly understood and a solution specially crafted for it – ideally drawing on the best available evidence - long-term solutions are unlikely.

While most of the work for PANDA should be carried out or led by police, they will very often need to partner with others to successfully bring about the changes envisaged in their plans.

Communities can use the guidance below to encourage local police to be systematic in the ways they approach crime and safety problems in their area, and to hold them accountable to the plans they have put in place.

Researchers can also use this model to encourage systematic policing, and to support police in their analysis, monitoring and evaluation, as well as in helping police document and share the lessons learned from carefully implemented intervention plans.



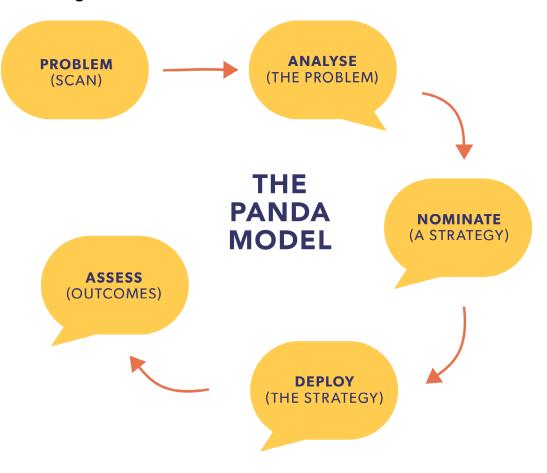
#### THE PANDA METHODOLOGY

PANDA is an acronym representing the core steps required for an effective crime or violence prevention intervention. As depicted in Figure 1, these are:

- → **Problem** scan to identify the priority problem
- → **Analyse** the problem
- Nominate a strategy to address the problem
- **Deploy** the strategy
  - Assess the outcomes

For the PANDA process to work, activities or outputs (e.g. police patrols, reporting defective street lights, expanding after school programmes) and outcomes (the objective of the activities, e.g. fewer street robberies near a taxi rank) should be stated as clearly as possible, in order to gauge the plan's effectiveness. To promote evidence-based policing and learning in South Africa, lessons should be documented, shared and re-tested/repeated so that the local evidence-base grows.

Figure 1: The PANDA model



Source: Ratcliffe, 2019



#### PANDA Step 1: Problem Scan (P)

The first thing that police and partners should do is carry out a problem scan. This involves gathering information about the problems, challenges and threats in their area. In other circumstances, this would allow police to identify what they most urgently need to address (police can't do everything but can do what matters most). Ideally, these should be chronic problems, not those related to a sudden spike in crime.

Most crime occurs in particular places, at particular times, or involves particular people (victims or offenders). Once these have been identified, police should conduct a careful analysis to understand why these are linked to the problem at hand. The reasons can be spatial, social or purely police-related (or a combination of these).

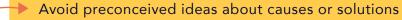
A lot of crime and violence occurs in focused geographic areas. Evidence shows that focusing police resources in these areas reduces crime without displacing it to other areas.



#### PANDA Step 2: Analyse the problem (A)

It is natural for residents of high crime areas, seasoned police officers, and many others to feel that they understand the nature and causes of crime in an area. Often, they do. However, our beliefs are seldom carefully tested. Rather, we decide what we believe and then seek evidence that supports our ideas. 9

It is important that when police and their partners analyse a problem, they: 10

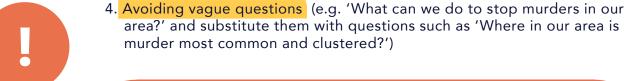


Don't confuse 'discussion' with rigorous problem analysis

Don't settle for the first promising idea without also considering others (especially those already established in the evidence-toolbox)

Instead of falling into these traps, carry out a systematic, thorough analysis. This can be achieved by following Jerry Ratcliffe's guidance, as presented in his book Reducing Crime: a companion for police leaders, summarised and adapted for South Africa below (www.reducingcrime.com), and by:

- 1. Intentionally challenging assumptions (e.g. How do we know alcohol is to blame for violence in our area?)
- 2. Always asking 'why' questions (e.g. Why does violence increase on Fridays?)
- 3. Avoiding imbedding assumptions in questions (e.g. Not 'Where should we increase patrols to reduce murder?' Rather, 'Is there a relationship between patrols and murder?')



A useful tool to avoid these pitfalls and ensure thorough analysis is Ratcliffe's VOLTAGE framework presented in Table 3. By applying this method, police and partners are more likely to comprehensively analyse each chronic problem:



Table 1: Ratcliffe's VOLTAGE guide 11

COMPONENT	EXAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK
VICTIMS	Does crime concentrate among a certain type of victim or target? Are there multiple victims or is a particular target the subject of repeat victimisation? Does the type of target generate particular public concern (e.g. women and children)?
OFFENDERS	Is the crime problem created by numerous offenders who are not known to each other, or by a group? Is it caused by a few repeat offenders? Are there new offenders in the area (e.g. parolees or a new gang)?
LOCATIONS	Are specific places targeted, or is crime distributed widely? What is special about the place? Is it a particular location (such as a tavern or bar), a particular street (with a troublesome family or a drug house), or an area (e.g. an informal settlement or taxi rank)?
TIMES	Is the crime problem within normal variation or explainable by annual seasonal patterns (crime will always fluctuate)? If not, are there specific times when crime is concentrated? Are new patterns evident?
ATTRACTORS	Are particular locations or places attracting offenders because of the easy criminal opportunities (attractors) or are particular places creating crime opportunities (generators)? Where are the worst places?
GROUPS	Are gangs a factor? Are school children of a particular age or sex involved either as offenders or victims? Are there disputes between taxi associations or members of different political groups?
ENHANCERS	Are drug or alcohol use factors to consider? Are groups particularly vulnerable due to poverty, values or beliefs? Are behavioural (mental) health issues part of the problem?.

Source: Ratcliffe, 2019

Using VOLTAGE as a guide, police and partners should aim to understand why things are the way they are. Analysis should not produce a description of the problem, but rather, seek to understand its causes. Answers to well formulated questions should be sought through:

- Crime analysis
- Crime intelligence
- Community information

In some instances, community partners can be invited to participate in some or all of the PANDA process.

Answers identified through a VOLTAGE analysis form the data on which decisions and plans can be made. However, the information and data used should as much as possible be:

- Accurate
- Precise
- Consistent
- Complete

If it isn't, it should be treated with caution while better or corroborating data is found.

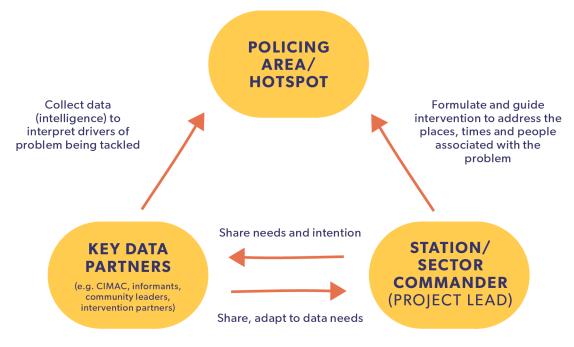
Not all of the information and data required to effectively tackle a crime problem is in the hands of police. Where relevant, police should keep their key data partners updated about their planning and needs.

This will allow the partners to more effectively provide the kind of information necessary to address the problem, and to feel invested in efforts to address it. Key partners may include:

- Forensic pathology services (e.g. Can pathology data shed light on how people are dying?)
- Emergency Medical Services (e.g. Where are ambulances being called to treat violence-related injuries that may not be reported to police?)
- Other police and security services (e.g. Who else has databases and technology in place that can shed light on activities in the area?)
- Community leaders/Community Policing Forum leaders (e.g. What does the community know that police do not? What can be learned from managers at schools, clinics, train stations, shopping centres, etc.?)
- SAPS Crime Registrar (e.g. Has there been a docket analysis related to your problem?)
- SAPS CIMAC (Crime Information Management and Analysis Centre) officers are crucial to understanding trends in reported crime.
- SAPS crime intelligence/detectives (e.g. What information is needed from informants in the area?)
- Other government agencies and NGOs working in the area (e.g. Social workers, prosecutors).

Data and intelligence provided by partners can support the VOLTAGE analysis and broader intervention plan. This is depicted in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Intelligence and data sharing for crime & problem-solving plans



Source: Adapted from Ratcliffe, 2019

While community and CPF leaders can serve as intelligence and data partners, it can be very useful to conduct community surveys among the groups or in the area involved. These could focus on experiences of crime (victim surveys), feelings of safety, beliefs about the causes of problems, and perceptions of police, social workers, teachers, councillors and other partners. Survey samples can be relatively small but should be repeated over time to measure change.

#### Supporting VOLTAGE analysis with the Crime Triangle

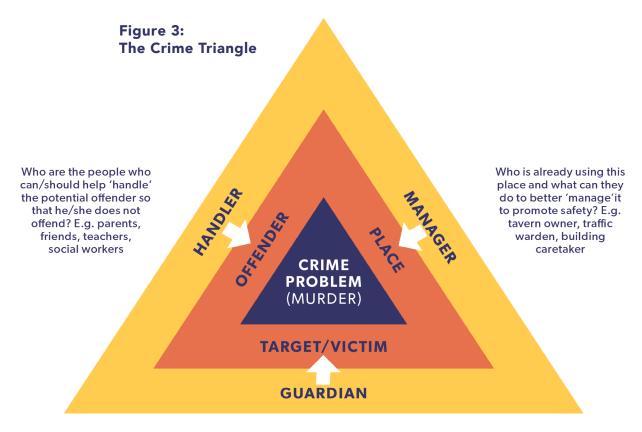


Remember, police and partners carry out their analysis in an effort to understand the nature and causes of the problem being addressed. Another helpful tool to aid this process is to think of the problem in terms of the Crime Triangle, depicted in Figure 3 below. <sup>12</sup> Police and partners should keep the Crime Triangle in mind when carrying out their VOLTAGE analysis.

The Crime Triangle encourages parties to think about recurring problems as a product of three variables coming together at the same place and time:

- **1.** A likely or motivated offender (e.g. a career street robber who uses violence)
- **2.** A suitable or vulnerable target/victim (e.g. a commuter walking home at night)
- **3.** The absence of a suitable guardian (e.g. no other commuters or pedestrians around)

Police and partners can use the idea of the Crime Triangle to to identify partners who can help address the problem, for example: 1) place managers (e.g. tavern owners); 2) victim/target guardians (e.g. police, security guards), and; 3) offender handlers (e.g. parents, teachers).



Who guards potential targets and victims? E.g. neighbours, police, community volunteers, friends (of victims)

Other helpful tips for police and partners to keep in mind during analysis:

Victims and offenders are part of social groups and networks that influence behaviour. Understanding these networks and their influence empowers police and partners to tailor interventions to engage with the right people in the right way.

Most offenders do not travel to commit crime. Instead, crime occurs in the spaces that they already frequent, or are close to where they live. As a result, evidence suggests that most crime is not automatically displaced to another area following an effective intervention. <sup>13</sup>

## PANDA Step 3: Nominating an intervention strategy (N)

NOMIN PAR

Analysis helps us understand the problem. Once this has been achieved, police and partners can begin designing an intervention to address it. The plan should be summarised through a clear statement that links the understanding of the problem to how it will be addressed, the tools to be used, and the outcomes expected. The intervention plan must be clear, logical, and understood by all parties. <sup>14</sup> It should be as specific as possible.



When planning, it is very easy to become distracted by outputs (e.g. numbers of cars stopped, people searched, or taverns visited). These are useful but tell us nothing about the impact of the activity (see Section One). Rather, police and partners should always remain outcome-focused. First ask, 'What do we want to achieve?' and only then, 'How can we achieve it?'.

An intervention (crime) plan can be thought of as a clear story that links what is being done to the expected result. The story must be logical, realistic, and acceptable to all involved. Police and partners should understand their respective roles and how their work will contribute to achieving the intended goal.

To answer the 'how', police and partners should use their analysis to identify (or theorise) the mechanism (causes) behind the crime or safety problem. In other words, 'What explains the high incidents of street robbery in this area?' Don't settle for the first good idea, or the one that comes from the most senior officer. Think creatively and broadly.

Once an answer/theory is proposed (e.g. The combination of many unemployed young men, the availability of weapons, and a large taxi rank drives street robbery during commuting hours), police and partners can consider which aspects of the Crime Triangle (for place-based interventions) can be changed to disrupt the harm-causing mechanism (e.g. offer support to unemployed men, task informers with locating illegal firearms and identifying potential offenders in the area, improve awareness and surveillance at the taxi rank). Again, this can be guided using Ratcliffe's VOLTAGE framework.

#### Tips for formulating an intervention plan: 15

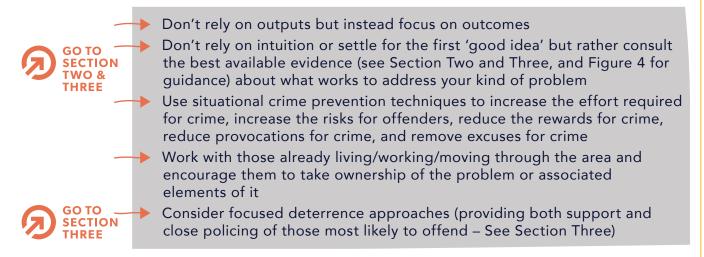
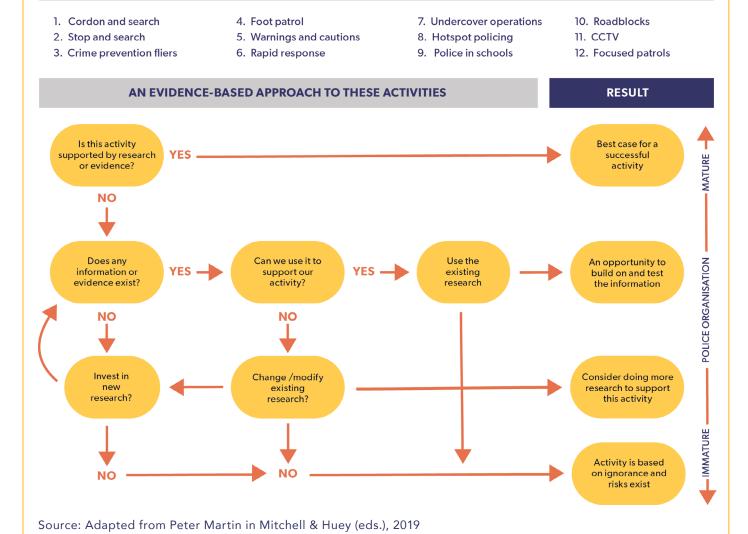


Figure 4 provides a useful guide for thinking through, selecting and testing strategies relevant to your intervention plan.

Figure 4: How to select an intervention strategy for your plan and generate evidence <sup>16</sup>

WHAT WE DO NOW (some example activities)



Key to the intervention plan is the strategy to be used to achieve the desired outcome. Once again, Ratcliffe offers a very useful tool to guide the selection and formulation of an intervention - the VIPER checklist. As shown in Table 2, VIPER encourages police and partners to think about their interventions in terms of Victims, Intelligence (gaps), Prevention, Enforcement and Reassurance.

Table 2: The VIPER checklist <sup>17</sup>

VIPER Category	Example questions to guide planning
V ictim Support	Police and partners should think about how the intervention plan supports victims, or those who are vulnerable to becoming victims. How does the intervention address their <b>safety</b> , how does it <b>support</b> them, how does it communicate useful <b>information</b> , how does it promote <b>access</b> to services, how does it encourage <b>continuity</b> in approach between service providers and departments, how does it give victims a <b>voice</b> , and how does it deliver <b>justice</b> to victims? All victim strategies should be tailored to the needs of the area/problem and its dynamics.
ntelligence Gaps	These are things that the police and partners do not have answers to, but can figure out if they can access the right information. They should work with others to fill these gaps while carrying out other intervention work (e.g. By tasking officers with asking key questions of the public while on patrol), or they can try to answer them before proceeding to other tasks. Intelligence gaps can be identified using the VOLTAGE analysis (Table 1).
Prevention	Prevention refers to the non-law enforcement/policing aspects of the intervention. Police and partners should think about what they can change in the area to address their priority problem.
<b>E</b> nforcement	Focused law enforcement offers shorter-term order maintenance and the disruption of criminality (in contrast to prevention which addresses the long-term elements of the problem). The most effective, evidence-based enforcement strategies are place-based (hotspot), problem-oriented (PANDA), person-focused (focused-deterrence), and community-based (building trust, leveraging community).
R eassurance	It is important that people living, working and passing through the intervention area feel safe and trust that police, ward councillors, municipal authorities and others are working to improve their safety. Police and partners should aim to build trust and promote feelings of safety by reassuring people of the work being carried out. This can be achieved through public demonstrations of work (e.g. visible policing in crime hotspots) and through effective communication of plans, successes, and outcomes.

Source: Ratcliffe, 2019



## PANDA Step 4: Deploying the strategy (implementation plan) (D)

Once an intervention strategy has been developed it is time to 'deploy' it. At this stage, police and partners will work to implement the plan. It is crucial that all partners understand their role in the plan, understand and accept its logic, and are accountable for carrying out their responsibilities. Ratcliffe's GOALS checklist can be used to achieve this. GOALS stands for Ground leader, Objectives, Analyst, Limits, and Support.

Table 3:
The GOALS checklist to support effective implementation of plans

GOALS Category	What do they mean?
<b>G</b> round Leader	Who has overall responsibility for the implementation of the plan? This could be a sector commander or a team comprised of police, community leaders, private security and others – but they must be able to drive the process and be accountable for moving it forward. Different individuals can be responsible for different VIPER tasks (Table 2) but tasks should be clear and individuals held accountable for delivery. Ideally, one person would lead.
<b>O</b> bjectives	Identify clear objectives linked to the VIPER analysis. Objectives should be SMART - <b>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic,</b> and <b>Time-bound</b> . Objectives are the goals to be met in order to achieve the desired outcome.
Analyst	Identify the person who will collect, track, collate and analyse data related to the intervention. Analytics are key to understanding the impact of the intervention as it unfolds (which is why objectives must be SMART), to adapting it where necessary, and to learning lessons and building evidence from the experience.
Limits	It is important that the plan is bound by limits in place, time, activities and scope. Police and partners should work according to the logic of the plan and avoid being distracted or carrying out tasks that don't fit its spatial boundaries or logic. All involved should be aware of these limits, and of how and when the plan will be assessed and revised.
Support	Ensure that both police and partners are aware of their role in the plan and of the kind of support that they are expected to provide to each other. Ideally, write down what, when, where and why support is needed.

Source: Ratcliffe, 2019

Final thoughts on the deployment of the intervention plan:

The person or people driving the plan should regularly visit the intervention area (where applicable) and participate in relevant engagements to demonstrate investment, provide feedback, and to check that partners understand and are working according to the plan.

- Avoid mission creep. Stick to the plan, or revise it based on careful analysis and predefined intervals. Don't simply expand the size of the intervention area, or the scope of the intervention due to political or community pressure. This will undermine the whole process.
- Stick to a clear, regular review schedule to gauge whether the plan is working as intended, or whether it needs to be revised.



### PANDA Step 5: Assessing intervention plan outcomes (A)

The final step in the PANDA model is to assess the outcomes of the work.

This is crucial. Without it, any claims that the plan has or hasn't been effective are empty. The assessment stage is also crucial for learning what works and what doesn't - i.e. the development of an evidence base, and what needs to change in future.

Ratcliffe offers the OILRIG checklist, presented in Table 4, as a very useful guide to the assessment process.

Table 4:
The OILRIG checklist for assessing the impact of intervention plans <sup>18</sup>

GOALS Category	What do they mean?
outcomes achieved	Were the stated outcomes achieved? (Don't base this solely on reported crime but rather on the SMART objectives identified during planning).
mplemented as planned	Was the intervention plan implemented as intended? Did all partners work according to their taskings, the logic of the plan, and within its limits? How is the plan currently being implemented? Where implementation did not occur as planned, why was this?
essons learned	What lessons can be learned so far?
R esults acceptable	Are the outcomes acceptable, even if the intended outcomes were not fully achieved? The answer should be based on an outcome evaluation, crime and disorder observations, the quality of data and intelligence, the accuracy of the VOLTAGE analysis, assessment of crime displacement or a diffusion of benefits, perceptions of stakeholders and partners, sustainability and practicality of the intervention.
ntelligence gained	Was new intelligence gained which can inform future activities? If not, why not? What went wrong? What can be shared with others?
G oals to be revised	Should the intervention plan's GOALS be revised? Did the Ground leader/ team steer the plan appropriately? Were Objectives SMART? Was Analysis sufficient? Were the Limits appropriate? Did the Support work as intended?

#### Where next in the PANDA process?

Following assessment, police and partners must consider what to do next. In an ideal but rare situation, the plan will have worked as planned, and achieved its intended goals. However, it is likely that something may not have worked as planned. If an outcome and process evaluation is properly conducted (e.g. using the OILRIG checklist), it should be apparent where things may have gone wrong. Police and partners should next consider where changes are necessary: at the 'analyse', 'nominate a strategy', or 'deploy' stages, or perhaps at all of them. This is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

**ANALYSE PROBLEM** (THE PROBLEM) (SCAN) Success! Document the Didn't achieve the process (evidence) so desired outcomes? Why? Identify problems, revise that it can be shared plan and implement. with others. Then begin Where relevant, document a new problem scan to address another and share (evidence). challenge in the area or **NOMINATE** move to a new area. (A STRATEGY) **ASSESS** (OUTCOMES) **DEPLOY** (THE STRATEGY)

Figure 5: Where to after the assessment?

Source: Ratcliffe, 2019

Not only is the PANDA (problem-oriented) approach to policing supported by good evidence (i.e. it is more effective than many other approaches), but it can be used to generate evidence about what works and what doesn't in South Africa. A collection of guides based on lessons learned using related methods can be found at the Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing (popcenter.asu.edu). You can also learn more about the PANDA model at the Reducing Crime website (www.reducingcrime.com).

If South African police, researchers and communities can carefully plan, implement and monitor their work, and if we can share the lessons learned, we can more rapidly create a knowledge base from which to effectively and efficiently reduce crime, promote safety, and improve trust between police and communities.

#### FINAL THOUGHTS

Does hiring more police reduce crime? The evidence is unclear. What about rapidly responding to calls for assistance? Historically, no, but new evidence is challenging this. Random, visible patrol? Ineffective. Being aggressive with 'criminals'? Evidence suggests that this can make things worse. While none of these practices has been conclusively shown to work, these are some of the things that South Africans assume will make the country safer.



#### This is why it is important to test our assumptions.

Our beliefs about what works to reduce crime are not always accurate, even when they are based on our own experience and we're absolutely convinced of them. This is why decisions about how South Africa is policed should be informed by the best available evidence of what works to improve public safety. Using this guide as a foundation, we can improve policing, reduce crime and promote trust in police. Increased success means better morale and improved motivation and a safer South Africa for all. Working together, we can do this.



#### **RESOURCES**

Learn more about our efforts to promote evidence-based policing at: www.issafrica.org/crimehub

The following websites also offer valuable information and resources:

- The Society for Evidence-Based Policing (UK): https://www.sebp.police.uk/
- The American Society of Evidence-Based Policing: https://www.americansebp.org/
- Australia & New Zealand Society of Evidence-Based Policing: https://www.anzsebp.com/
- Crime Reduction Toolkit (College of Policing): https://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx
- Centre for Evidence-Based Crime Policy (George Mason University): https://cebcp.org/
- Evidence-Based Policing Matrix (CEBCP): https://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/the-matrix/
- Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing (Arizona State University): https://popcenter.asu.edu/
- Cambridge Centre for Evidence-Based Policing (Cambridge University): https://www.cambridge-ebp.co.uk/
- Africa Centre for Evidence (University of Johannesburg): https://africacentreforevidence.org/
- Crime Solutions (National Institute of Justice): https://crimesolutions.ojp.gov/
- Campbell Collaboration: https://campbellcollaboration.org/better-evidence.html

#### **FOOTNOTES**

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