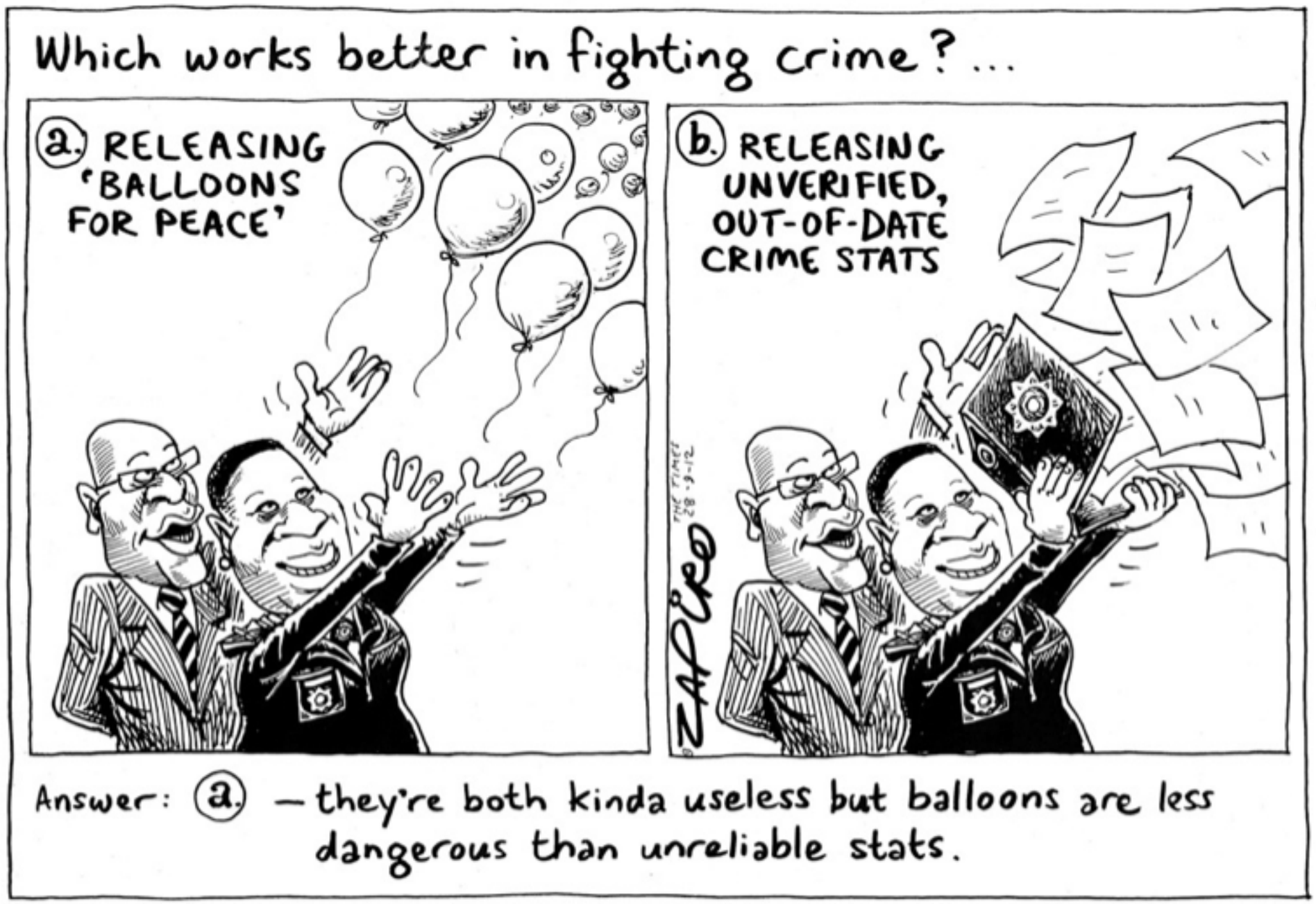
ISS conference 14-15 August 2014



topic | social innovation applied to violence prevention

The Safety Lab

presentation

1. what is ‘the Lab’
2. snapshot of projects
3. principles & approach

The Safety Lab is an innovation test center
focused on safety & security in the Western Cape.
We conceptualize and incubate paradigm-shifting solutions
that create opportunities for safety.

The Safety Lab

overview

1. funded by Western Cape Govt Department of Community Safety
2. arose out of provincial strategy to develop ‘whole of society solutions’
3. established 2012; currently team of 6 plus network of advisors

– The Lab approach –

1. Inquiry

"What's going on here?"
Lab engagement starts with inquiry, often questioning orthodox assumptions. These aim to derive enough insight to inform action, as the foundation of responsible experimentation.

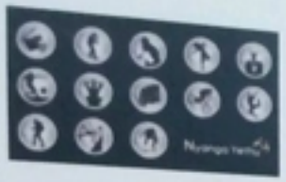
2. Design

Projects are designed around 'fulcrum points': specific links in a chain where intervention can have disproportionate impact. Project design focuses on the development of effective, street-ready & sustainable models.

3. Activation

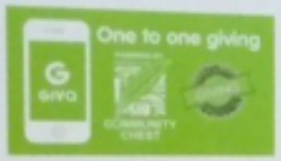
We are a 'test center' driving rapid on-ground activation. We operate as 'open source' in broad collaboration with private sector, government, academia, communities, development agencies and law enforcement.

Active projects | July 2014



Nyanga Yethu | *youth program*

In the most murderous precinct in the country our diagnostic identified a lack of credible weekend programs for kids and youth. We set up and run a program of 'prosocial' activities ranging from open mic and yoga to free movie screenings. Attendance ±650 weekly. The platform is branded for youth market appeal, not as 'safety programming'.

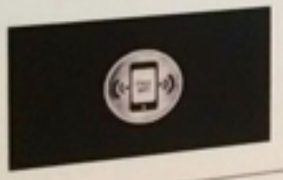


GIVA | *digital funding platform*

Social media has been applied to help fund organizations and projects, rather than needs of individuals – until now. We conceptualized, developed and are launching an innovative digital platform enabling one-to-one giving via accredited NPOs. This is being operationalized with Community Chest. GIVA is a World Design Capital 2014 project.

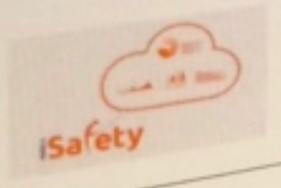
CCTV activation | *public safety empowerment*

We asked, how could CCTV footage be creatively edited and recycled for public benefit? We first launched a comic book (50 000 copies distributed by Metro officers and volunteers). We then successfully piloted mobile projections of CCTV clips at public hotspots. We're now developing an online archive as the basis for social media activations.



Guerilla wifi | *digital placemaking*

The Lab sees huge opportunity in augmenting physical 'placemaking' with local access to free wifi. We've successfully experimented with this in Nyanga and will shortly launch a dedicated Free Internet Zone. We're driving development of a dedicated media channel for rights-based education, safety messaging and local economic development.



iSafety | *applied mobile technology*

The lack of accurate, detailed and timely safety statistics is a systemic challenge to improving community safety. We're testing innovative ways to use mobile technology to fill some of the gaps. As part of this program we're working with Ceasefire | Hanover Park, and are developing and testing solutions for other organizations and contexts.

Pipeline & inquiries | July 2014

Prevention in Action | *domestic violence inquiry*

The Lab is working with Metro Police to develop and apply innovations in domestic violence prevention. This is based on the exploration of a social mobilization program previously piloted in KZN and WC with USAID technical and financial aid. The goal is to identify elements of a model that can be piloted locally with support from Metro structures.

Gangs inquiry | *ethnographic research*

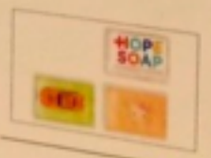
One of the most prevalent forms of violence in the Western Cape stems from townships gang activities. However, not enough is widely known about their varied forms, where they exist, operating structures or relevant interventions. The Lab is engaged in a series of inquiries to better understand gangs in order to inform program design.

Safe shebeens | *harms reduction*

Alcohol plays a prominent role in interpersonal violence, and illegal shebeens are ubiquitous. Yet enforcement is costly and risks escalating negative consequences. We're investigating harm-reducing ideas informed by local context. The current phase focuses on Sweet Home Farm in partnership with Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation.

Confidential | *restricted sharing*

The Lab is involved in a range of confidential projects and initiatives in an advisory capacity, as an operationally independent entity with privileged access. Partners include government and various agencies, with topics covering law enforcement, systems development and data analytics.



Hope Soap | *community health & entrepreneurship*

The Lab supported the piloting of Hope Soap, a behavioral activation encouraging kids to use a glycerine soap bar with a toy embedded. The project has funding for an RCT assessment, and a supply chain linking a leading retailer, local economic empowerment & distribution through government clinics. Not typical Lab context, but with valuable insights.

1. Nyanga Yethu

The brief

"Find creative ways to implement the WC Liquor Act to reduce murder in Nyanga"

- 'SA's murder capital' (±10% of province)
- politicised context
- multi agency focus

Our insight

No credible youth programming at times of violence (weekend & evenings)

- SAPS stats, census data, court inquest, forensic pathology
- video documentary

Approach

Activate existing facility with suite of sports / arts / culture offerings

- 'activity agnostic'
- brand for youth appeal not 'safety' or recognition
- focus on costs

Nyanga Yethu

Nyanga Yethu

Youth Diversionary Programme

Powered by: The Safety Lab

Fast Facts

70,000+

Total individual diversionary hours
July 2013 to June 2014

R6,50	650	190+
cost per individual per diversionary hour	average weekend attendance	movies shown

Example Weekend: 6 - 8 June 2014

	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Movies (2 hrs)	150	130	150
Open Mic (3 hrs)	200	-	-
Soccer (2 hrs)	24	16	15
Basketball (2 hrs)	23	20	19
Drama (2 hrs)	16	15	19
Dance (2 hrs)	22	20	10
Boxing (2 hrs)	12	18	-
Skating (2 hrs)	29	10	-

The Safety Lab has continued to bolster the existing activity streams by up-skilling the program's activators (drawn from the local community). To this end the Lab partnered with The Fresh Group, a private business focused on professional development, in focused skills training sessions with the team.

The Lab, through its partners, assisted Program Development Coordinator Zukile Ntentema to attend an international Fight for Peace training week in Rio de Janeiro. In addition, to assist him in his work addressing the issue of gangs amongst school going youth in Nyanga, the Lab secured a donated laptop for him.

Sibabalwe Nongquna aka Sibah Anne, having completed a 6 month intensive programme at the Raymond Ackerman Foundation is now being supported by the Lab in his endeavours to initiate a youth business forum for the young entrepreneurs of Nyanga

Activating the best in the activation team

2. iSafety

The brief

How can we improve access to safety stats or construct better data sets?

- SAPS embargo and low reporting rates…
- while rest of world moves to data transparency & improved analytics

Our insight

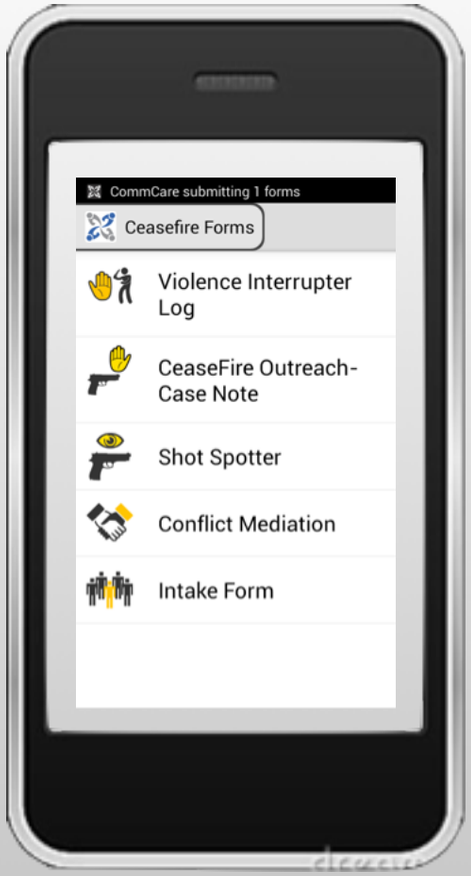
Closed user groups have capacity to generate accurate useful safety data

- ‘Crowd sourcing’ apps largely hype: duplicative, costly & no incentives
- Closed user groups in violent areas have useful data but less tech access

Approach

Build simple phone apps to replace paper reporting in specific user groups

- Reduce admin time; increase accuracy & completeness
- Move to simple analytics
- Smartphones affordable & widespread



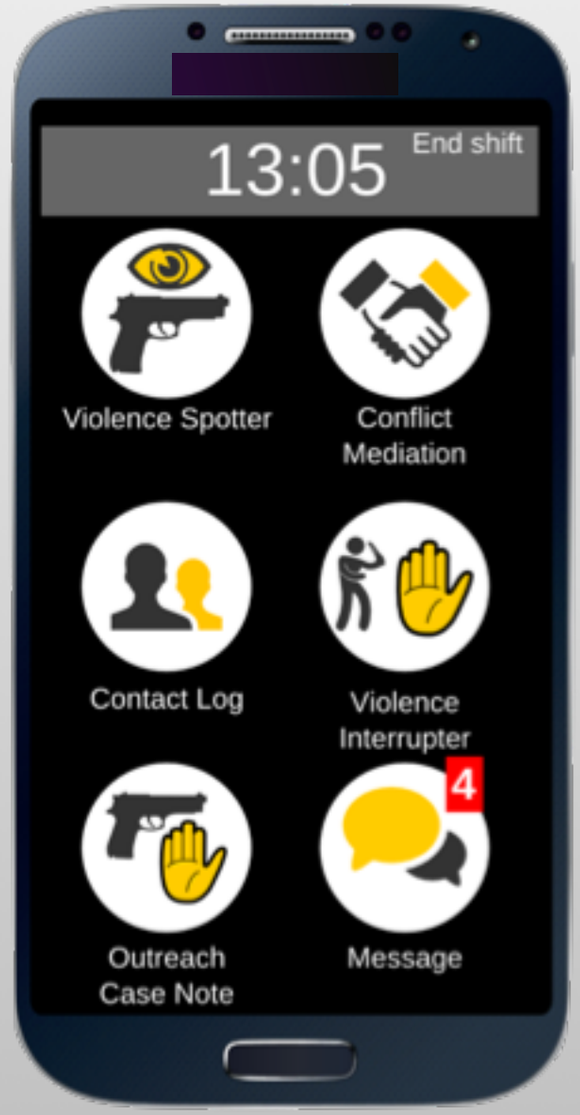
v1

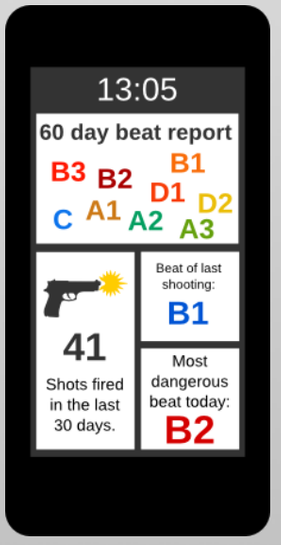
1 800 events logged over past year

example:
Ceasefire Hanover Park

v2

adds GPS tracking for staff security & data verification





iSafety

3. CCTV activation

The brief

"What happens to CCTV footage not used in apprehension or conviction?"

- limited access
- emotive topic with global sensitivities
- concerned about irresponsible sharing

Our insight

Vast majority of footage destroyed unused. Rich material if used effectively

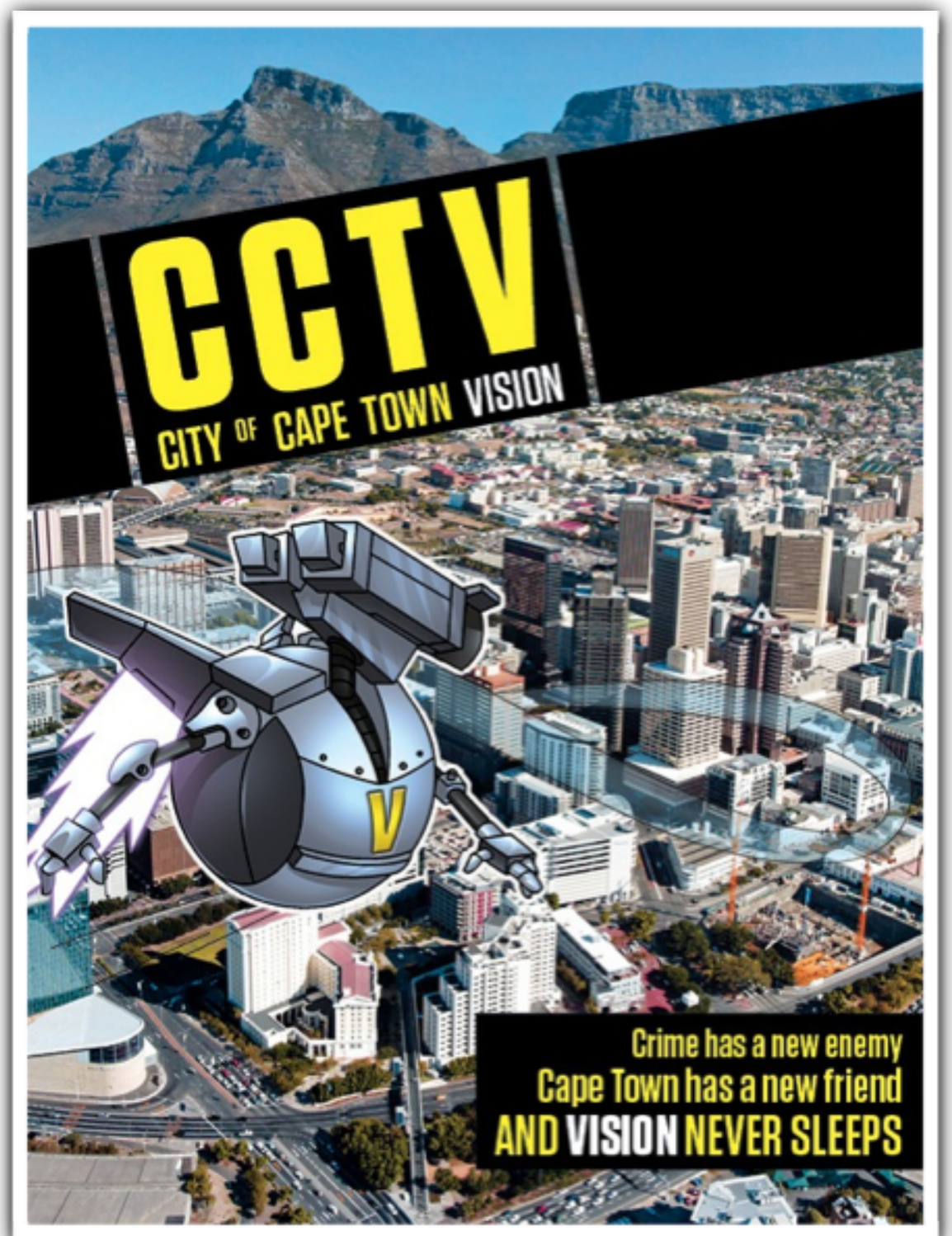
- live images are more compelling than any pamphlet or email
- many crime types can be reduced by awareness

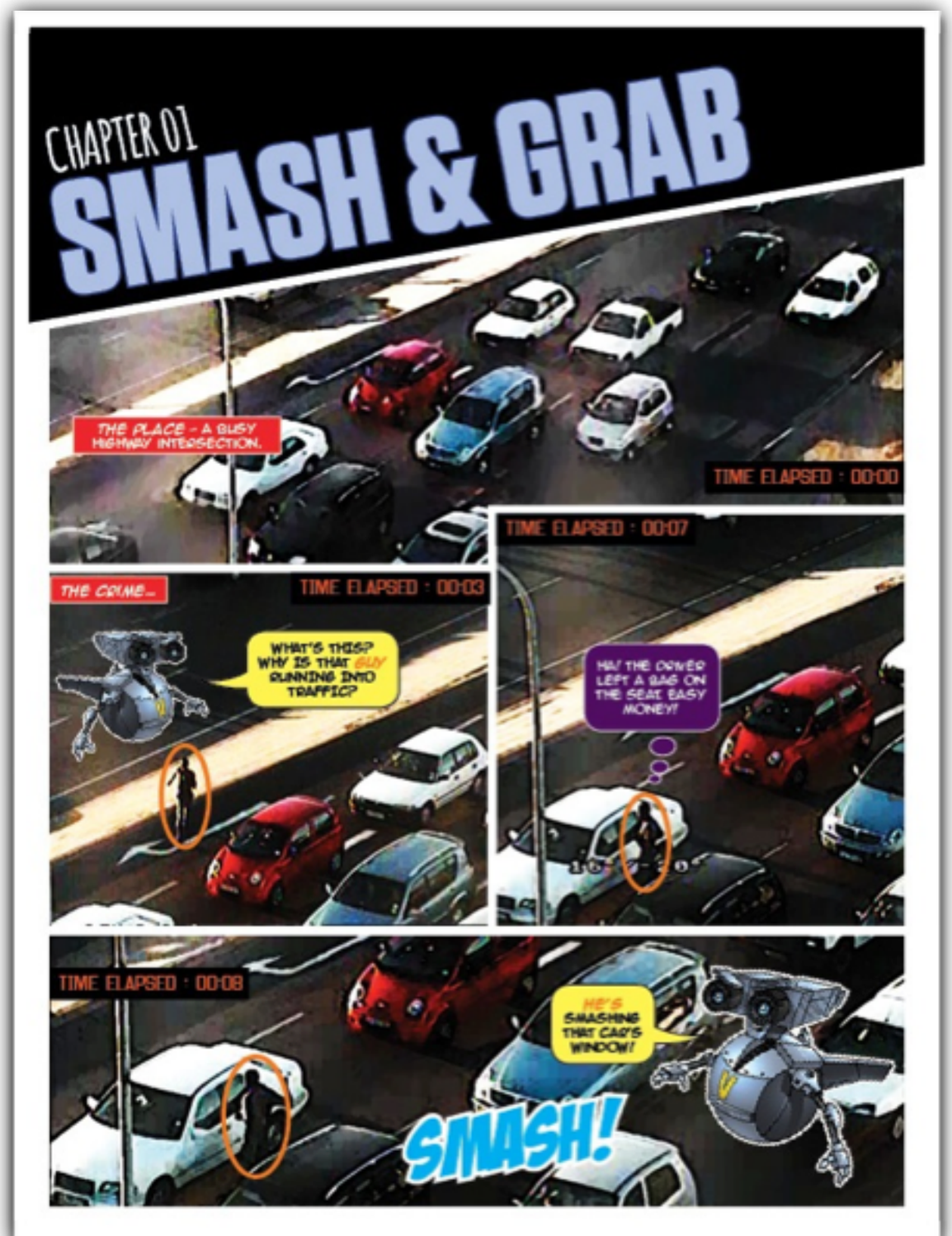
Approach

Repurpose & activate CCTV for crime types where insight enables safety

- pilot: comic book format
- night-time digital activation on Long St
- coming soon: online 'living archive'

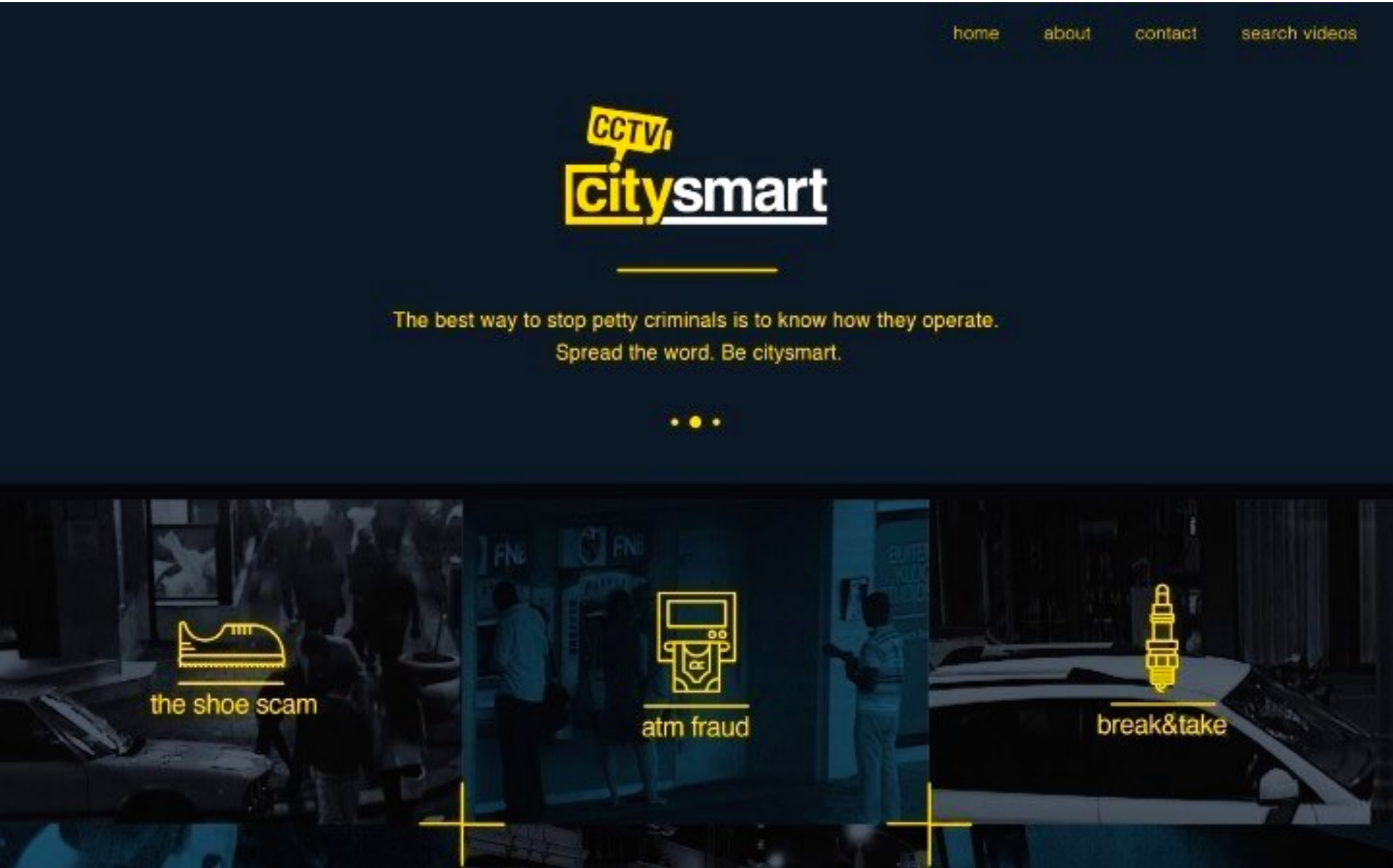
round 1: 16 page comic book | 50 000 distributed | partner Metro Police





round 2: mobile street activation | >8 000 viewers | 3 night-time locations

round 3: social activation via online repository | launch with 8x MO's



A taxi driver picks up Herbert von Karajan after a concert and asks, "where to?"

Karajan replies, "it doesn't matter…
I'm needed everywhere"

the Lab's key principles

1. strategy based on capability not theory
2. enough data to inform decisions
3. 'responsible experimentation'
4. 'just do it'

serious challenges

1. what's the value / role of innovation?
2. 'tag & release' - to whom?
3. safety vs security responses
4. funding model - "isn't this government's job?"

thank you