

TOGETHER LIGHTYEARS AHEAD

THE MILLENNIUM MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY CRIME RISK MANAGEMENT
SOLUTION TO RURAL CRIME

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
THE STATE OF SOUTH AFRICAN LAW ENFORCEMENT.....	4
THE PUBLIC'S RESPONSE TO RISING LEVELS OF CRIME	5
HOW CRIME WORKS	6
THE RURAL MILIEU - VULNERABILITY	7
COMMUNITY CRIME RISK MANAGEMENT	8
TOGETHER LIGHTYEARS AHEAD	9
THE MILLENNIUM APPROACH.....	11
IMPLEMENTATION PHASES	12
PROJECT DURATION - ROME WAS NOT BUILT IN A DAY.....	15
CONCLUSION	15

INTRODUCTION

Throughout early history, people worked together as communities; everyone contributing his part for the benefit of the whole. People looked out for each other, were involved in the day-to-day happenings, made decisions together. People could survive by banding together to achieve safety. There is safety in numbers, as clearly visible from the natural world.

As time passed, and with the advent of Modernism, responsibility somehow shifted from the community themselves to structured institutions that took on a controlled approach to governance. These institutions, such as the police, had taken over the responsibilities previously shared by all members of the community. And we had grown accustomed to it.

Since 1994 South Africa underwent a political and social revolution, and the way people interact with one another changed. People became separated, self-involved and self-reliant. Neighbours are often strangers; the sense of community and social cohesion has for the most part been lost.

Parallel to the social changes our society has gone through, South Africa has also seen a dramatic rise in crime. Crime has been characterised as one of the most difficult challenges in post-apartheid South Africa, not only due to the rising levels of crime, but also to the perpetuation of social divisions in response to the fear of crime.

Crime can thus be categorised as an integrated part of South African society. The general consensus amongst South Africans are that Government and Law Enforcement agencies have been unable to get a grasp of the situation, which seems to be spiralling out of control.

Large parts of the country, especially rural areas, do not receive adequate law enforcement coverage, giving greater opportunity for criminal attempts to succeed.

Rural crime used to be a special priority for the Mandela-administration, prior to President Thabo Mbeki's disbanding of the commando safety system, and the government's inability to replace it with a workable and sustainable system afterwards has been detrimental.

There are no signs that the crime situation will improve any time soon; in fact, judging by the most recent crime statistics, it is getting worse. However, if one can grasp the basic principles of the workings of crime, there is a way to establish a mitigation strategy.

THE STATE OF SOUTH AFRICAN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Mainly due to gross under-reporting of crime, the data gathered in the SAPS's Crime Statistics are unreliable and unable to represent the true levels of crime experienced in South Africa.

There are many factors that contribute to crime being under-reported. Some evidence suggest that poorly resourced areas may be particularly associated with much lower reporting rates.

In South Africa, there are 1 126 police precincts, to whom approximately 51 million people have been allocated, averaging 45 000 people per police precinct.

The educational level of our police force are as follows¹:

- No Schooling: 7%
- Incomplete Primary Schooling: 25%
- Incomplete Secondary Schooling: 27%
- Higher Education: 7%

It is difficult to believe these statistics, and the possibility remains that there may be a correlation between educational level and the train-ability of officers, impacting the quality of service one can expect of the police.

It is foolishly assumed that the SAPS are an all-powerful instrument that could eradicate crime. Apart from poor levels of educated police officers, the South African Police Service has several other weaknesses – limited resources, corruption, general lack of appropriate skills and a shortage of managerial and investigative expertise. These apparent weaknesses are worse in rural areas, where due to environmental isolation of most rural areas the lack of infrastructure, skewed allocation of resources and capacity constraints, the lack of effective policing is experienced the most.

Post-1994 South Africa has experienced a steady decline in the quality (and quantity) of service delivery and maintenance of infrastructure and order, in conjunction with a noticeable increase in criminal behaviour and lawlessness. It appears that with the failure of the criminal justice system, there no longer seem to be tangible consequences for crime and delinquent

¹ Borat, H., Lilenstein, A., Monnakgotla, J., Thornton, A., Van Der Zee, K. 2017 *The socio-economic determinants of crime in south africa: an empirical assessment*.

behaviour, as most cases never even see the inside of a courtroom or are dismissed, resulting in a brazenness amongst those with criminal intent.

THE PUBLIC'S RESPONSE TO RISING LEVELS OF CRIME

The natural reaction to the rising levels of crime and the police's inability to deal with it, was a scurrying towards private security to pick up the slack. With feelings of insecurity rapidly rising, an increasing number of South Africans are making use of private security companies to protect themselves and their assets. There are more than four private security guards for every uniformed member of the SAPS currently engaged in visible policing work.

When Pali Lehohla released the Victims of Crime Survey statistics in February this year, it was reported that the last time it had been checked the police budget was R30-billion and the public was spending about R45-billion to protect itself. Per the survey, about 50% of households take physical protection measures at home to protect themselves from crime. About 11.4% of households employ private security services and 5.5% of people now carry a weapon to protect themselves - compared to 5.1% in 2011².

The survey also showed a decline in society's faith in the police and courts between 2011 and 2015/16.

The level of satisfaction with the ability of the police to deliver on their mandate declined from about 64.2% in 2011 to 58.8% in 2015/16.

Conventional private security can only contribute to the management of crime to an extent, because the standard business model and operational practices of security are reactive in nature, much like the police. Meaning that private security mainly respond to an event after-the-fact. This may sometimes result in the apprehension of criminals or the recovery of stolen goods, but it cannot take away the unnecessary emotional, or even physical trauma resultant from the violence that oftentimes accompanies a crime. The ideal would be to prevent the criminal event from occurring in the first place.

² STATS SA. 2017 *Victims of Crime Survey 2015/16*

HOW CRIME WORKS

Before one can explore possible solutions to crime in rural South Africa, there is one fundamental principle to grasp: crime is a symptom of the socio-economic state of a country. As with health, addressing only a symptom does not necessarily make the underlying illness go away. If the illness is not addressed, the symptom will continue to reappear and become chronic. The same analogy applies to crime, and South Africa has been terminally ill for quite some time.

The socio-economic state of the country is a complex issue to address, and not within the public's power to change. It is also an issue currently not being attended to properly; hindered by sluggish governmental policies, large-scale corruption and political red tape.

Research has indicated that crime is a symptom of a complicated variety of social dilemmas, such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, no access to resources and no hope for the future.

In the traditional economic model of crime, criminal behaviour depends on, amongst other things, the pay-off from committing a crime successfully, conditioned by the likelihood of obtaining legitimate sources of income.

South Africa currently has an unemployment rate of 27,7% - the highest it's been in 13 years. When including the number of discouraged workers, the rate raises to 36%. The youth (15 – 35 years) face a daunting unemployment rate of 55%. Furthermore, incomes are incredibly low for most South Africans. Stats SA's poverty trends report shows that one in two South Africans live under the poverty line, amounting to about 30 million people.

High levels of unemployment mean that the probability of gaining a legal income would be low, whilst high levels of legal income simultaneously increases the pay-off from criminal activity as well as increasing the opportunity cost of criminal activity. Unemployment, lack of income, and inequality all induce psychological costs of their own which may impact on an individual's propensity to commit crime. Crime is seen as an economic activity for some living in poverty with no other means of gaining access to resources, and with nothing to lose.

Once it is accepted and understood that crime is a symptom of greater wrongs in the country, the anatomy of the criminal event can be dissected.

Every potential crime event has three distinct parts that it consists of, that come together in a specific time and place for the crime to occur, namely:

1. Environmental Characteristics – Lack of adequate law enforcement and guardianship, lack of risk management infrastructure, easy access to high value assets etc.
2. Victim Characteristics – Easy targets, lack of risk management behaviour
3. Perpetrator Characteristics – Motivated by socio-economic issues (poverty, unemployment), always on the lookout for opportunities to benefit from crime.

THE RURAL MILIEU - VULNERABILITY

If the abovementioned characteristics of crime are applied to the rural milieu, it becomes apparent why farm dwellers are a unique and especially vulnerable group with regards to crime.

Per the National Rural Safety Strategy, the characteristics of rural areas can be arranged into the groupings of the elements of crime as follows³:

ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS	VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS	PERPETRATOR CHARACTERISTICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale underdevelopment • Lack of basic infrastructure and the proper maintenance thereof • Poor communication network system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispersed spatial living arrangements • Lack of access to sufficient services, including policing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High percentages of poverty and unemployment • Low levels of education

It is clear that due to the above characteristics that rural areas and rural dwellers would be soft targets for criminal acts to be successfully perpetrated.

³ SAPS. *National Rural Safety Strategy*

Due to this vulnerability, a specific approach would be required to counteract these weaknesses towards a state of resistance to crime. The concept would require the doctrine of Safety in Numbers, or the *Communitas* Approach. Safety in Numbers is the hypothesis that, by being part of a large physical group or mass, an individual is less likely to be the victim of a mishap, attack, or other bad event. Some related theories also argue (and can show statistically) that mass behaviour (by becoming more predictable and "known" to other people) can reduce risks.

COMMUNITY CRIME RISK MANAGEMENT

The concept of community crime risk management revolves around a critical mind-shift that is required amongst a group of people. It is noticeable when scanning through media headings regarding rural crime, that there is a very strong expectancy of government to address issues of rural crime and to intervene. The reality is that rural crime, for whatever the political, racial or other reasons may be, is not currently very high on government's agenda. This has been the sad reality since 2003, when Thabo Mbeki disbanded the commando system and failed (albeit refused) to replace it with another working system. All that has been received from government from that point forward is white papers and lip service, and a deafening silence on the serious issue of farm attacks, torture and murder.

One can understand the expectancy that government is responsible to address safety and security in rural areas - safety is a constitutional right and every citizen contributes taxes to make sure that everyone has equal access to services. Organisations such as Afriforum must continue to put pressure on government to fulfil its constitutional mandate, but in the interim, while the battles are fought in courtrooms and newspapers, on ground level, change must occur between individuals themselves.

In 1998, severe cross-border stock theft was occurring daily along the border with Lesotho. It had reached the proportion where even the army was deployed to get a handle on it. Many farmers in the Rhodes and surrounding area had given up hope on sustaining economically viable farming practices of thousands of hectares of land.

Mr Pieter Pienaar, ex-special forces soldier, was called in as a last hope. Making use of military tactics and skills obtained in his many years in the special forces, he could, with the assistance

of a single assistant operator, create the illusion of large force patrolling the border. Risk analysis of the area indicated where thieves were entering and leaving with livestock and these hotspots targeted. During his years spent at Rhodes, Pienaar had observed that some of the contributing factors lied with the farmers themselves, who were easy targets. The farmers had lax farming practices - fences on the border were left in disrepair, livestock were not counted regularly etc. - all factors making the theft occur that much easier. Pienaar realised that the community members themselves must address certain issues themselves, to create an environment where crime could not easily exist. Given the vast expanse of some farms, this would not be easy, but with the establishment and implementation of systems, it could be achieved over time.

An area's reputation of resilience to crime could be built up over time, when farmers would cooperate with him and the risk management advice that he would give them.

TOGETHER LIGHTYEARS AHEAD

To understand Millennium's operational doctrine and why it is so important to have all members committed to and involved in the project, there must be a rudimentary understanding of Millennium's theory of the workings of crime.



Crime is stimulated through three elements:

1. Presence of a Motivated Offender
2. Presence of a Suitable and Vulnerable Target

3. Absence of a capable Guardian

Motivated Offender

Due to the current socio-economic state that South Africa is in - high unemployment rate, low economic growth, shortage of skilled workers to name a few, there is a steady stream of people motivated to survive through crime. There is nothing that can be realistically done to curtail or eliminate this element. Once the individual has the desire or motivation to commit a crime, he is looking for a target and an opportunity.

A suitable target is anyone or anything that appears to be easy to take or easy to overpower.

Suitable Target

Opportunity plays a large role in being an easy target - Limiting opportunities is well within our control by being proactive and more alert to our behaviour and what is happening in the environment we are in. This is one of the most important aspects of Millennium's crime risk management strategy. Millennium assists members to identify their vulnerabilities and to proactively "harden targets" to become unsuitable targets.

As it stands, local law enforcement suffers from a lack of resources, training and discipline, are

Absence of a Guardian

often understaffed and are frequently involved in corruption. What it amounts to is that there is a lack of proper supervision and efficient reaction and assistance. In Millennium's operational approach, Millennium takes on the role of a capable guardian. By stationing the Millennium operational team in the area, there is a constant surveillance of movement in the area, making it harder for attempts at crime to go unnoticed.

Crime that might seem like petty crime in an area now, has a way of evolving into more serious crime as time passes, as the area shows no resistance to it. Social scientists James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling coined this the "Broken Window Theory". It is therefore vital to incorporate a strategy that shows zero tolerance to all instances of crime, especially petty crime.

THE MILLENNIUM APPROACH

Millennium's approach is to bring together all relevant role-players, to manage an area's risks that arise from crime and crime-related activities in a collaborative manner.

It is important to establish a culture of safety within the designated area and preserve both strategic commercial activities and maintain quality of life.

The operational concept for any given rural project area involves addressing determined high risks and the decay of risk management infrastructure and safety systems, per specific priorities, coupled with re-establishing law and order in the region.

The basic principles that Millennium promote in community risk management, is as follows:

- Target Hardening
- Target Removal
- Reduce the payoff of crime
- Access Control
- Surveillance
- Environmental Design
- Rule Setting
- Increasing the chances of criminals being caught

The Operational concept contains of the following key elements:

- Dividing the project region into zones
- A central safety and support "hub", located centrally to the zones
- Multi task Ranger teams individually stationed in each zones
- A chief Ranger to oversee the management of the Ranger teams and running of the support hub with the direction and support from the Millennium Head Office.
- Establishing a communication network – bulk sms system, monthly reports, database of incidents etc.
- Supplying additional support through Support Projects: Labourers Assist, Limited Resources (local law enforcement support) and Tourism Assist.
- Proactive and strategic coverage of the region.

- Intelligence and counter-intelligence measures.
- Proper investigation of incidents and follow-up.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

Project Progression Phases

During the course of its lifetime, a Millennium Management Project goes through three progression phases. These phases are not bound to a specific timeframe, and the duration of each phase is completely dependent on the involvement and participation of the members. To progress to the next phase, each phase must first be successfully completed. Sometimes members get indolent and slack on development and maintenance of their risk management infrastructure and protocols. This makes them suitable targets for crime yet again, meaning the project constantly has to revert back to the previous phase to stabilize the project again. This sort of action is counterproductive to the long-term goals of the project.

Phase 1: Stabilize

During this initial phase, Millennium places a lot of focus on the predominant identified crime risks. The community involvement and cooperation with hardening of targets is extremely important during this phase.

During stabilization Millennium will give advice to members on how to make their properties undesirable targets for crime. This means that certain changes will have to be made by the members, their families and employees. Members have to do an audit of their current safety and security measurements on their properties, and acknowledge any shortcomings. Several layers of risk management infrastructure can be applied to a premise to contribute to its undesirability as a criminal target, but behaviours must also change. Risk management behaviours must be learnt as well, for example locking doors and vehicles after use, not leaving keys lying around, not having a predictable schedule etc.

During this phase Millennium will be focusing on making criminal elements aware of their presence. This includes investigating suspicious vehicles and people within the project area. Routine, but random patrols are conducted, during which suspicious activities are monitored and suspicious persons are investigated. Suspicious persons are informed about the Project and asked to leave the area. Millennium will oftentimes call in the SAPS to investigate the situation and perform legal vehicle searches etc.

Phase 2: Normalize

The basic risk management infrastructure developed during Phase 1, should be in place and functional on each member's property.

The locals within the area will be aware of the Millennium Rangers, through the high visibility vehicle patrols and investigation into suspicious persons and vehicles.

The project area has already developed an image of resistance against crime, by means of the above-mentioned developments.

During the normalization phase Millennium focuses on the construction of a safe culture in its project members. The safety and security procedures that were developed in Phase 1, should by now be normalised as a habit.

Since the area is not under as much criminal strain as before the advent of the project, project members can focus on rebuilding infrastructure lost to criminal or undesirable activities and start to expand the risk management infrastructure or layers of security on their properties.

Millennium can now also establish its support projects, namely labourer assist, tourism support and force-multiplying assistance to local law enforcement. These support project will already have started during Phase 1, but was not a high priority during that phase.

Phase 3: Maintenance

This phase is the long term situation where the project end up. During this phase, Millennium has successfully managed to oust criminal elements to outside the project area. The project

area itself has sufficient risk management infrastructure and its residents have developed appropriate risk management skills that they practice daily.

The Ranger Team continues a constant guardianship over the area to maintain the image of resistance to crime that has been developed.

The project can now focus on expansion, to magnify the safe zone within which the project members can interchange.

The one limitation of the Maintenance Phase is that members often become negligent and unconcerned towards their obligation towards and participation in the project. Every so often new farm managers or children taking over the property do not take their responsibility towards the project seriously, are not aware of the original goals of the project and neglect their risk management infrastructure. The risk then arises that such members often seek a quick fix security solution to try to counter the shortcomings after a lack of involvement and lack of risk management infrastructure maintenance, and not with the measures of the risk management project as was the initial intention. It is important to remember that it takes effort to upkeep a safe environment, since there will always be motivated offenders waiting for opportunities to commit crime. Simply because an area feels safe, does not mean that you can lessen your risk management protocols and infrastructure. These should constantly be maintained and developed further if possible. Criminals always find new innovative ways to commit crime, and it is important to keep risk management infrastructure up to date. Millennium will also advise members on new appropriate safety and security technology that could be implemented in the project area.

PROJECT DURATION - ROME WAS NOT BUILT IN A DAY

To return an area to one of safety, is not an overnight task. Simultaneous mobilisation of a large group of people towards a direction of self-managed safety and security is not easy.

The largest problem faced with a community-based approach to safety and crime risk management is changing age old mindsets from reliance on external (governmental) guardians to a realisation that safety is primarily a personal responsibility.

It is also easy to slip back into complacency once an area is starting to show signs of stabilising, and to become lazy with personal involvement and continuing to implement the required changes to make the project work.

Once individuals inside a stabilised area start to slack on their involvement, they become soft targets for crime yet again, jeopardising the entire project by potentially attracting the influence of crime back into the midst of an area.

Continuous reminding and educating is required to keep farmers involved and actively participating in the project. Most farmers involved in Millennium projects are aware that permanent change is required of them to make projects work.

The level of decay of risk management infrastructure will also impact on the duration required to stabilize an area. It is very important that risk management infrastructure be rebuilt to an acceptable level to assist a project in its stabilisation priorities.

CONCLUSION

In urban areas, people are banding together in gated communities for safety and pay levies to have the area they live in managed and maintained. It is not as easy in rural areas, but still possible. But it requires a mind shift from those living in rural areas. Continuing to blame the State and police for the dismal crime situation (although it is true that the State is somewhat to blame for the socio-economic condition of the country) is futile and delivers no real results. Even worse is waiting for the State to come up with a workable solution to the problem. That does not mean that pressure should be taken off the State to deliver on its responsibilities towards the citizens of South Africa. South Africans pay taxes and organizations and individuals alike must continue to address issues of corruption and service delivery. But what must be

understood is that in the interim, on ground level, individuals are the masters of their own destiny.

As in most of nature, there is safety in numbers; people are no different. Communities must reconnect and with a cohesive joint effort change the environment they live and work in. Risk management infrastructure must be rebuilt and continuously maintained and upgraded; individuals must be vigilant and able to identify risks – be it suspicious vehicles or people, or identifying vulnerabilities and pro-actively address these risks to prevent escalation to criminal events.

Having guardians to assist with the above-mentioned, makes it easier to sustainably maintain an area's resistance to crime, but caution must be taken not to fall into old habits of expecting others to take full responsibility for it. The reality is that crime is not going anywhere, it will be a life-long commitment to keep an area resilient against it.

The question therefor is: What would personal safety cost? Is it a price that one would want to wait to find out the cost of when the worse happens? What would you give to live in a space that is not tarnished by relentless criminal interference?

Why is a community crime risk management project necessary? It is a tangible attempt of a community to take back their space and out-manage crime from their midst; to take control of the crime situation that they have had to live with. It is possible to do so with the guidance and guardianship of Millennium Management, as the company's track record of nearly 20 years goes to show.

Community resilience should be viewed against the backdrop of the contemporary society in which we live today, since no one can be separated from the society or the threats and dangers within the society in which he/she subsists.

No society is without challenges; especially the complex contemporary society and therefore the community should become increasingly independent from societal structures to cope. Thus, the individual can be assisted to make a meaningful and safe existence within the society in which he/she lives.