



Western Cape consultation on the establishment of a provincial violence prevention forum

13 October 2020

Summary

Over the past two years Violence Prevention Forum (VPF) participants from the Western Cape have requested support to establish a provincial forum to enable stronger, more collaborative partnerships between government, NGOs and researchers; and to facilitate the provincial scale-up of evidence-based programmes and interventions to prevent violence.

After the May 2020 meeting of the national VPF the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) embarked on a two-month process to consult with all those in the Western Cape who have participated in the VPF meetings.

Organisations and individuals consulted expressed support for a process similar to the VPF in the province for the following reasons:

- It could provide a unique opportunity for on-going dialogue about violence prevention, across sectors. For NGOs, having a platform to dialogue with and build relationships with policy makers was seen as desirable. For policy makers, access to new research and lessons from practice, as well as having an opportunity to collectively make sense of how best to use evidence in preventing violence were identified as valuable.
- It could become a platform for mutual support, and for supportive relationships to be built, within sectors and between sectors.
- It could enable opportunities to create tailor-made, context specific solutions to violence.
- It could potentially enable service providers in remote areas, outside of the metro, who seldom have an opportunity to be included in information sharing and planning and policy discussions to be included.

Challenges and questions for consideration were also raised. These included:

- How would a provincial forum relate to the national forum?
- Would a provincial forum duplicate existing structures or place yet another meeting on the busy schedules of policy makers and NGOs?

- How is it possible to ensure that marginalised institutions and organisations could be represented?

The consultative meeting on 13 October 2020 discussed these and other issues and resolved that:

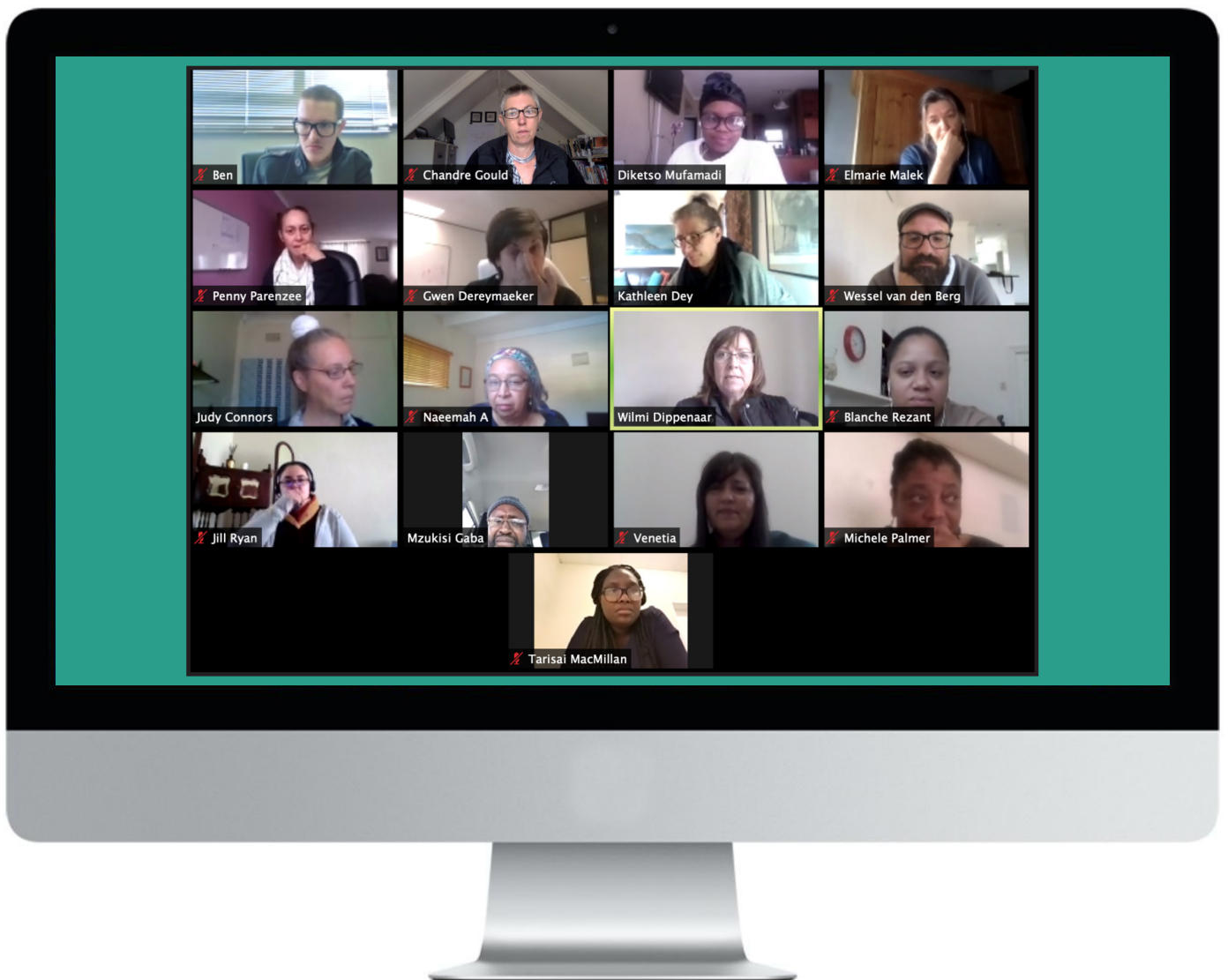
- It would not be in the best interests of participants to come to a hasty decision about the establishment of a new provincial structure.
- Further meetings of an expanded group are necessary to map existing structures and programmes in the province that address issues of safety and crime and violence prevention, in order to identify gaps and opportunities.
- A future meeting would consider the feasibility of undertaking a multisectoral project to prevent violence in a particular locality.
- Future meetings should include representation from NGOs and government who are not in the metro area.
- A group of volunteers would work with the ISS to plan the way forward. They are Kathleen Dey (Rape Crisis), Elmarie Malek (Department of Health and Stellenbosch University), and Michelle Palmer (Department of Social Development).

The process

Sixteen participants representing government departments, NGOs and academic institutions met over Zoom for three hours on 13 October.

It was agreed that participants would:

- Share and be honest
- Be open to conversation
- Accept dissenting voices
- Be present – do not be preoccupied by WhatsApps, emails or phones
- Manage differences between one another
- Be aware of power – which often gets in the way of honest conversations
- Be humble
- Respect the process



Central to the discussions that followed was the following question:

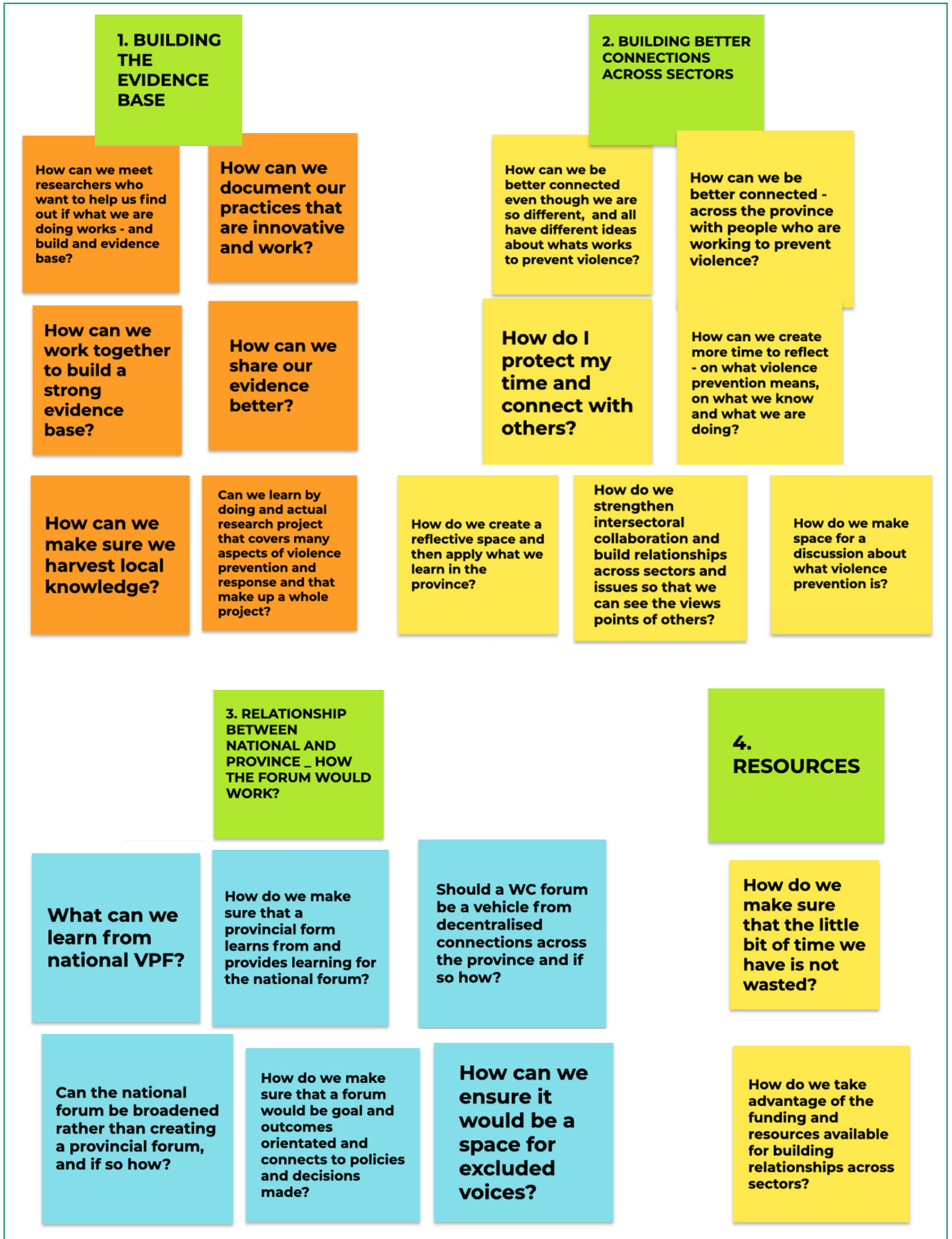
Would the establishment of a provincial violence prevention forum assist us in building relationships and understanding across sectors, in order to prevent violence by drawing on the evidence of what works and what doesn't?

The meeting identified four broad categories of questions that would need to be addressed in order to answer this question. These related to (see Figure 1):

- building the evidence base
- building better connections across sectors
- exploring the relationship between the national VPF and a provincial structure, and
- resources

Participants broke into small groups to identify the steps that would be required to arrive at answers to their questions.

Figure 1: Questions that arose during the consultation



Building the evidence base

The establishment of a provincial forum was viewed as an opportunity to improve co-ordination across and between sectors, decrease duplication, connect with one another and build an evidence base together.

It was noted, particularly by NGO participants, that a provincial forum could assist them to build relationships with research organisations so that they would be able to generate evidence for the effectiveness of their programmes, and ensure that community-based organisations deliver quality services.

The most important steps that would need to be taken to arrive at answers was a mapping exercise to document all existing violence prevention services (and service providers) within the Western Cape.

It was also proposed that a multisectoral group undertake a collaborative research project to encourage cross-sectoral and horizontal learning. Such a project would aim to connect all Western Cape violence prevention service providers and showcase interventions. Such a project would need to be aligned to policy goals, have tangible goals (and a research question). Documentation of this process would be critical. The following steps were brainstormed:

- Identify partners, stakeholders and practitioners in the Western Cape to invite to an engagement in a collaborative project. This will enable the identification of those who will be part of the process, and those who should be kept informed.
- Participants would map organisations and services delivered.
- Collaborators and innovators would be identified.
- At the end of the project a road show learning exchange would be undertaken throughout the province to share lessons and learn from what other organisations are doing in different areas of the province.

Building better connections across sectors

In order to identify future participants in multisectoral engagements around violence prevention:

- A mapping exercise was proposed to identify all work that is currently being done in the province to prevent violence. This map would enable the identification of gaps and intersections between sectors and stakeholders.
- It was noted that a safe space was necessary, where people could feel comfortable to share their knowledge.

Relationship between national and province – how would the forum work?

Participants were concerned about how a provincial forum would relate to the national forum, whether the existence of a provincial forum would restrict their participation in the national forum, how learning between the two platforms could be shared and whether the two structures would share the same values and objectives.

The following steps were identified in order to reach an understanding of the distinctions between national and provincial forums:

- Identify someone from the national VPF who could share what has worked, why it has worked and what its impact has been
- Have a facilitated discussion in the province to clarify the province's needs and how they can be addressed
- Generate a list of potential provincial participants and stakeholders (bringing in the excluded voices).

Conclusion

Agreement was reached that a meeting would take place to map existing structures and violence prevention interventions, as a step towards improved collaboration across sectors in preventing violence.

A team of volunteers was identified to undertake preparatory work:

- Kathleen Dey – to provide a preliminary list of organisations that do similar work to that of Rape Crisis within the province.
- Michele Palmer – to provide a list of organisations that work with the provincial Department of Social Development (DSD) in the field of violence prevention.
- Elmarie Malek – to identify policy makers in the Department of Health who should be engaged in future meetings.

Participant list

Name	Institutional affiliation
Blanche Rezant	The Parent Centre
Chandré Gould	Institute for Security Studies
Diketso Mufamadi	Institute for Security Studies
Elmarie Malek	Department of Health: Western Cape
Gwen Dereymaeker	Department of the Premier: Western Cape
Jill Ryan	University of the Western Cape & Medical Research Council
Kathleen Dey	Rape Crisis
Michele Palmer	DSD Western Cape: Crime Prevention and Support
Naeemah Abrahams	Medical Research Council
Penny Parenzee	Institute for Security Studies
Tarisai Mchunu	Mosaic
Venecia Barries	Parent Centre
Wessel van den Berg	Sonke Gender Justice
Wilmi Dippenaar	The Seven Passes Initiative
Mzukisi Gaba	Department of Social Development, Victim Empowerment
Judy Connors	Facilitator
Apologies	
Ammaarah Martinus	Department of the Premier: Western Cape
Mpume Danisa	Clowns Without Borders
Oswald Reddy	South African Police Service, Eden Cluster