



THE DILEMMA OF CHRONIC VIOLENCE

**ITS EFFECTS ON HUMAN, SOCIAL AND DEMOCRATIC
DEVELOPMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC
POLICY, SOCIAL ACTION, AND RESEARCH**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Central America and other regions of the world today, people's lives are being disrupted by a new phenomenon of spiraling social violence during "peacetime" (i.e., in the absence of a formal state of war). Central America ranks among the most violent regions in the world. The most severe violence remains concentrated in the Northern Triangle, but similar levels of violence are quickly spreading throughout the region.

The World Bank's *World Development Report 2001* observed that this 21st-century wave of social violence may affect the lives of up to 25 percent of the world's population. The World Bank describes this new kind of violence as follows:

[It] does not fit with the 20th century mold. Interstate war and civil war ... have declined in the last 25 years; deaths from civil war ... are one-quarter of what they were in the 1980s [but] violence and conflict have not been banished: one in four people on the planet, more than 1.5 billion, live in fragile and conflict-affected states or in countries with very high levels of criminal violence [in situations that] do not fit neatly either into "war" or "peace" or into "criminal violence" or "political violence." (World Bank 2011, 2)

This type of violence, referred to as "chronic violence" throughout this report, has become a powerful, widespread force in Central America. Residents of marginal urban, extra-urban, and rural settlements — as well as transient, migrant, and stateless populations — are particularly vulnerable. Since chronic violence affects the lives of a significant number of people across the region, it is imperative to develop the tools to constructively and systematically recognize and cope with it.

Historically, chronic violence in Central America has been shaped by internal armed conflict that has disrupted social, political, and economic life. It is deeply rooted in systematic violence, marginalization, and a type of culturally acceptable human development that fails to recognize the importance of each individual.

Although drug traffickers and organized criminals are often singled out as those responsible for the chronic violence in the region, there are many contributors. Chronic violence systematically reproduces itself at *all* levels of society, making it difficult for powerful citizens, aid agencies, national and regional governments, and international institutions to control.

This report examines the impact of chronic violence on people's lives, social relations, practices of citizenship, and governance, asking the following questions: What enables individuals and groups to socially and politically respond to chronic violence in a constructive manner? What can change agents and affected populations do to support effective responses, advance social change, and conduct further research?

Before addressing these questions, it is important to first consider *why* the problem of chronic violence remains a relatively obscure global challenge, largely unidentified by many policy makers, government leaders, scholars, and citizens. In no small part, this is because the drivers of chronic violence are quickly evolving and under-researched, making it difficult for leaders to define the problem and its solutions; however, progress is being made. Cutting-edge research in biology, physics, human psychology, and the social sciences has begun to shed more light on the problem of chronic violence. In addition, international aid agencies and other change agents have grown increasingly aware of shortcomings in their security and violence prevention investments. In the cultural sphere, hip-hop artists, Broadway musical composers, and children's authors are now reflecting on the phenomenon in art. Spiritual leaders, opinion leaders, government officials, and public intellectuals have also begun to identify and address the challenge. Finally, parents are more aware of the violence in which their children are being raised and increasingly motivated to make a change.

Chronic Violence-Human Development Theory and Framework

The chronic violence-human development (CV-HD) theory and framework can be used to understand the dilemma of chronic violence and formulate effective policy and program responses. The CV-HD theory is based on Urie Bronfenbrenner's contention that human development is an integrated process in which personal, psychological, social, and political development, on the one hand, and the cultures, structures, institutions, beliefs, and practices they generate, on the other, are inseparable from and integral to each other. It transcends Maslow's mechanistic concept of a "hierarchy of human needs" by positing that the sense of safety and security that a developing person must have in order to thrive (or "prosper," in Bronfenbrenner's parlance) is intrinsically and inseparably both psychological and physiological. The conditions that enable individuals to thrive, according to the theory, are the same as those that condition both socialization and civic development (i.e., citizenship).

Living in an environment of chronic violence systematically undermines this integral process of human development and undermines how individuals, families, friends, and neighbors relate to one other, and informs the institutions, structures, beliefs, and cultures that they produce and reproduce. Chronic violence intensifies the dehumanization of long-challenged social relations between rich and poor, neighbors, nations, and other identity groups, and *fundamentally* threatens long-term global prospects for equitable development, democracy, and peace.

This report accepts the World Health Organization's definition of violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation" (World Health Organization 2002, 5). More specifically, the concept of chronic violence examined in this report builds on the working definition produced by Pearce (2007), which states that chronic violence occurs in contexts marked by the following: "Levels of violence are measured across three dimensions of intensity, space, and time; rates of violent death are at least twice the average for the country income (World Bank)

category; these levels are sustained for five years or more; acts of violence not necessarily resulting in death are recorded at high levels across several socialization spaces, such as the household, the neighbourhood, and the school, contributing to further reproduction of violence over time" (Pearce 2007, 7).

Propositions

The CV-HD theory is explained and detailed through the following eight propositions, which explain how chronic violence affects human, social, and political development.

Proposition 1: Human development is a multi-tiered system that encompasses personal development, social relations, the practice of citizenship, the nature of governance, and related beliefs, cultures, practices, structures, and institutions. What enables a person to thrive physically and psychologically is the same as that which enables him or her to prosper as social actors and citizens.

Proposition 2: Chronic violence is a self-reproducing systematic process that affects the totality of human development.

Proposition 3: Chronic violence is reproduced and enhanced by multiple interactive macro-level drivers and factors. These factors include perceptions of social inequality, weakened or failed democratization processes, justice and security reform efforts, globalization, mass media, urbanization, and climate change.

Proposition 4: Chronic violence undermines the quality of childhood development and parenting in fundamental ways. This consistently weakens the nature of social relations and all aspects of human development, and the legacies can be transmitted inter-generationally. It can undermine and weaken the maternal infant bond which provides the fundamental foundation that enables human beings to prosper. The stress caused by constant fear and uncertainty also weakens the ability to parent by shutting down the capacity for empathy toward the child. These dynamics set the stage for traumatic and other adverse childhood experiences, reduce a developing child's own capacity for empathy, and increase the lifelong potential for cruelty.

Proposition 5: Chronic violence undermines and weakens social relations and institutions. This leads to fundamental shifts in people's beliefs, moral categories, judgment, and priorities. In contexts of chronic violence, the lines between good and evil and right and wrong get blurred, and victims and perpetrators increasingly come to act like each other. When the lines between right and wrong are blurred, conditions are created for organized crime, drug trafficking, and illicit trade. Social silence, social amnesia, avoidance, and social forgetting are among the survivalist responses that help people simplify their perceptions and focus on survival. In these contexts, there is a growing tolerance for violence and an increase in brutality.

Proposition 6: Chronic violence obstructs and endangers the practice of citizenship and weakens the social support for democracy. Abandonment of public spaces, social

isolation and distrust in the state develops, and this opens up space for non-state forms of justice and brutality.

Proposition 7: In contexts of chronic violence, citizens tend to see themselves as “victims” who demand rights and protection but assume relatively little responsibility.

This reality points to a central challenge that must inform related policy and social change initiatives. Chronic violence compels policy makers and social activists to emphasize the facilitation of processes of social and political change that enable vulnerable groups to transcend the perverse effects of chronic violence in ways that enhance the practice of citizenship (or in cases of state absence, proto-citizenship).

Proposition 8: Chronic violence affects human development in every aspect and in each of the five tiers of the ecological system, transforming the fundamental process of development itself.

Recommendations for Action

Efforts to address this dilemma should seek to provoke changes that enable people to forge the necessary relationships, behaviors, beliefs, practices, and institutions to:

- Thrive as individuals, social actors and citizens or proto-citizens
- Progressively understand their conditions and needs
- Engage in increasingly constructive ways in society as citizens or proto-citizens in potentially long-term conditions of chronic violence
- Develop in ways that enhance the breadth, density, inclusiveness, and diversity of social and political relations at all levels of society

Change may begin at any point in the system, and change is necessarily conditioned by the continually evolving nature of the relations, institutions, and beliefs throughout the multi-tiered system. Change agents should take the complex reality of human development directly into account in the methods used to assess the problem. Change agents today have the opportunity to align their future investment with the systematic challenge of chronic violence. These recommendations detail the steps that change agents can take to:

- Assess and review the objectives and results to date in light of both lessons learned and this more integrated understanding of the challenge
- Launch a powerful, evidence-based approach to address this challenge that fully contemplates the complex dimensions of the challenge and integrates cutting edge approaches underway by USAID and other agencies

- Participate in building and sustaining a long-term collaborative capacity to observe, assess, and track this evolving challenge and the progressive effects of its own and others' efforts

These proposals offer a broader integral approach (through a promising larger process of intensified collaboration with other major stakeholders) that can ensure USAID's future investments are more effective. Moreover, they enable strategic integration with many other reform initiatives underway in the region sponsored by national and international agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and grassroots social organizations.

Specific Recommendations

1. Clearly define what is meant by "violence," "chronic violence," and "human development," and agree on a general strategic objective for action.
2. Establish an expert advisory group to accompany and strengthen the long-term effort.
3. Train USAID staff and other key colleagues to recognize and identify chronic violence and use the CV-HD framework to inform programmatic responses.
4. Contribute to creating and sustaining a pilot chronic violence observatory. This should provide the foundational experience to build a system of regional observatories that will permit stakeholders to compare and contrast how chronic violence manifests in diverse contexts and draw lessons applicable to the challenge elsewhere in the world.
5. Assess and prioritize the critical target populations and processes in correspondence to their relative need and role in the reproduction of chronic violence, based on evidence.
6. Take a multi-generational and relational approach that contemplates primary development, families, and primary networks.
7. Increase investment in art and cultural initiatives (visual art, movement, theater, music) that enable target groups to constructively process and transcend non-cognitive experiences of fear and trauma.
8. Recognize the importance of primary health providers and public health officials who play a critical role in identifying and addressing trauma and adverse childhood experiences.
9. Ensure that all programming effectively enhances human, social and political development. Programming should build capabilities such as resilience, community assets, both bonding and bridging capital, and collective efficacy.
10. Investigate role of mass media in reproduction of violence and engage key actors in building more constructive approaches to producing public information about this key challenge.

11. Create an integral approach to assessment, planning, monitoring, and evaluation that contemplates the systematic and long-term nature of the challenge.
12. Develop a matrix to organize and order the major problems of chronic violence and human development; specify approaches and collaborative needs; and define mechanisms of continual assessment, tracking, and evaluation.
13. Systematically assess and contemplate within interventions the discontinuous and inconsistent nature of international and national aid, and the uncertainty of such investments given the global economic crisis.

PREFACE: WHY IS CHRONIC VIOLENCE SO DIFFICULT TO RECOGNIZE IF IT'S ALL AROUND US?

Chronic violence is an increasingly common phenomenon. J. V. Pearce's quantitative measures describe the condition of people who live in long-term conditions of violence in countries or regions where there is long-term state fragility or relative state absence (termed "chronic violence" in this report), and who lack reasonable prospects in the short- to medium-term to fundamentally change these conditions. Using the World Bank's recent calculations, it is estimated that chronic violence affects at least one quarter of the world's population (World Bank 2011, 2). Chronic violence is particularly applicable to significant populations in Central America, parts of the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, and systematically marginalized and excluded populations in regions or pockets of virtually all medium- and upper-income countries of the world. Residents of marginal urban or extra-urban settlements are particularly vulnerable; however, chronic violence is also prevalent and often overlooked among marginalized rural populations.

Despite the alarming prevalence of chronic violence, the ascendant nature of the long-term social and political violence described in this report is a relatively obscure global challenge, unrecognized by most policy makers, practitioners, citizens, and scholars. The challenge of chronic violence is largely unrecognized, despite powerful evidence from a wide range of fields that transcend scholarly disciplines, political ideologies, and technical sectors of international development. Part of the challenge of defining the dilemma of chronic violence is that many of its drivers are quickly evolving and still relatively new and unmapped. Policy makers are only beginning to acknowledge, map, and learn how to cope with this dilemma of chronic violence. Given the significant number of people whose lives chronic violence touches, it is imperative to develop the tools to recognize and cope with chronic violence constructively and systematically.

Here are the major conceptual obstacles to understanding and solving this dilemma.

- Violence today is still understood in multiple and contradictory ways. Is it the cause of the problem or a consequence of it? This report argues that it is a systematic phenomenon that is irreducible to a "problem requiring a solution."
- Many major drivers of chronic violence are scarcely understood and unprecedented processes transforming the nature of daily lives and institutions. Globalization and information technology, the pace at which methods of communication are changing, and climate change are a few examples of rapidly evolving drivers of chronic violence.
- The experience of chronic violence causes many truths and values assumed to be universal — many of which are sustained by international or national laws — to simply fall apart, blurring the boundaries between right and wrong, moral and immoral, victim and perpetrator.

- While one quarter of people are particularly vulnerable to chronic violence, all are affected. Powerful actors and citizens can unknowingly reproduce it; however, most change agents, hindered by institutional silos, continue to believe and act as if they are “outside” it and as if their job is to “act” on it irrespective of personal conditions.
- Despite fundamental assumptions informing development and social change philosophies today, the most directly vulnerable or oppressed people living with naturalized forms of fear and trauma do not know how to respond in these contexts or resist oppression and inequity.

Despite the challenges, there has been progress toward paradigm shifts with respect to chronic violence. Decision-makers around the world, scholars, and citizens increasingly recognize this critical challenge despite the fact that many remain stymied by not knowing exactly how to best proceed. Groundbreaking research on the frontiers of social, human, and natural sciences are producing revolutionary insights through fields as disparate as neuroscience, biology, physics, human psychology, and the social sciences. This research is illuminating fresh dimensions of how brains, social behavior, and our worlds work, and is producing critical insights and potential new tools. Finally, chronic violence has long been a prime subject of cultural producers, including novelists and children’s book authors, hip-hop artists, composers of Broadway musicals, opinion leaders, and public intellectuals, focusing attention on the problem of chronic violence.

METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

Part I advances a theory called the CV-HD theory, which addresses the following question: What happens to people, their social relations, the practice of citizenship, and the prospects for democracy — all of which are integral to human development — when people live in chronic violence?

The CV-HD theory is based primarily on field research in Latin America and a broad range of global research, data, and theoretical materials. It is presented through eight "propositions" (i.e., essential step-by-step statements of what the theory proposes about the challenge chronic violence presents to human development). The detailed texts that accompany each proposition provide the evidentiary, conceptual, and field research that justify and inform the proposition and, more generally, the CV-HD theory.

Part II proposes how USAID, other change agents, and vulnerable groups can test the CV-HD theory in Central America. It proposes six hypotheses, or tentative explanations to be used as a basis for further investigation, and makes step-by-step recommendations to enable USAID and other change agents to test the hypotheses in the field and prove or disprove the CV-HD theory through the following:

- Assessing USAID's efforts and the nature of the challenge on the ground
- Monitoring and evaluating the effects of the interventions and recommended actions, as well as those that may be identified and launched based on further assessment of the challenge and specific institutional and strategic opportunities and proposals
- Judging the extent to which the growing foundation of knowledge already building about chronic violence in specific places, among specific groups and relations, and in specific institutions, beliefs, practices, and cultures validates, aligns with, confirms, or questions the CV-HD theory or specific propositions.

Finally, the paper makes complementary observations based on a survey of major violence, crime and security-related initiatives currently sponsored by international and national institutions including the public, NGO, and private sector in Central America.

These all support the recommendations, and inform and strengthen USAID's strategic capacity to engage constructively in concert with other major change actors and stakeholders to both pursue this long-term challenge and enable all stakeholders to mount an effective, evidence-based, theoretically and experientially sound, collaborative and sustainable long-term approach to this dilemma.

The paper builds on and refines the ideas about this issue presented in two previous publications by Tani Adams. Adams' first publication, "Chronic Violence and Its Reproduction: Perverse Trends in Social Relations, Citizenship and Democracy in Latin America," was published by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in

2012. It details this phenomenon through an extensive review of literature on Latin America that explored what happens to people in Latin America when they live in long-term conditions of violence and uses ethnographic, statistical, journalistic, and other longitudinal studies from the region and elsewhere, as well as from theoretical contributions from anthropology, sociology, economics, and political science. The concept was further synthesized in a policy brief written by Adams and published by the Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre in 2012, entitled “Chronic Violence: Toward a New Approach to 21st Century Violence,” which advances an earlier version of the positions about how chronic violence functions and makes a first effort to describe its implications for policy makers and other change actors. Both papers build on Pearce’s 2007 definition of chronic violence (elaborated on later in this report).

Like any theory, the value of this framework rests on the extent to which it can help change actors to more clearly recognize and understand this dilemma in specific places and more generally. The hypotheses and recommendations for policy changes and strategic research outlined in Part II will enable us to further clarify and refine this model and to better understand and grapple with what it means practically. The innovative experimentation and further research suggested in this last section can further enrich, correct, and fine-tune early characterizations of a phenomenon that has only begun to appear on the agendas of concerned policy makers and citizen activists.

PART I. THE CV-HD THEORY AND FRAMEWORK

Definitions

This report begins by defining basic terms. It then describes the ecological framework for human development and presents eight propositions detailing how chronic violence works and affects human, social, and political development (the CV-HD framework).

Defining Violence, Chronic Violence, Human Development, Change Agents, and Proto-Citizens

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation” (World Health Organization 2002, 5).

Chronic violence, as defined in this report, is based on the working definition produced in 2007 by Pearce, who accepts the World Health Organization's definition of violence and explains that chronic violence occurs in contexts in which “levels of violence are measured across three dimensions of intensity, space, and time; rates of violent death are at least twice the average for the country income (World Bank) category; these levels are sustained for five years or more; and acts of violence not necessarily resulting in death are recorded at high levels across several socialization spaces, such as the household, the neighborhood, and the school, contributing to further reproduction of violence over time” (Pearce 2007).

Human development is an integrated process of development in which individuals’ psychological, social, and political development are inseparable and integral to each other. This is because the conditions that enable individuals to thrive (or “prosper”) are the same as those that condition both socialization and civic development (i.e., citizenship).

Change agents are actors linked to government, multi-lateral institutions, private agencies, or social organizations who are engaged in efforts to promote individual, social, or political change among target groups to which the change agent may or may not belong. The change agent, along with his or her actions, beliefs, and the social and political frameworks in which he or she has been formed, constitute an intrinsic part of the processes that are the object of the change effort.

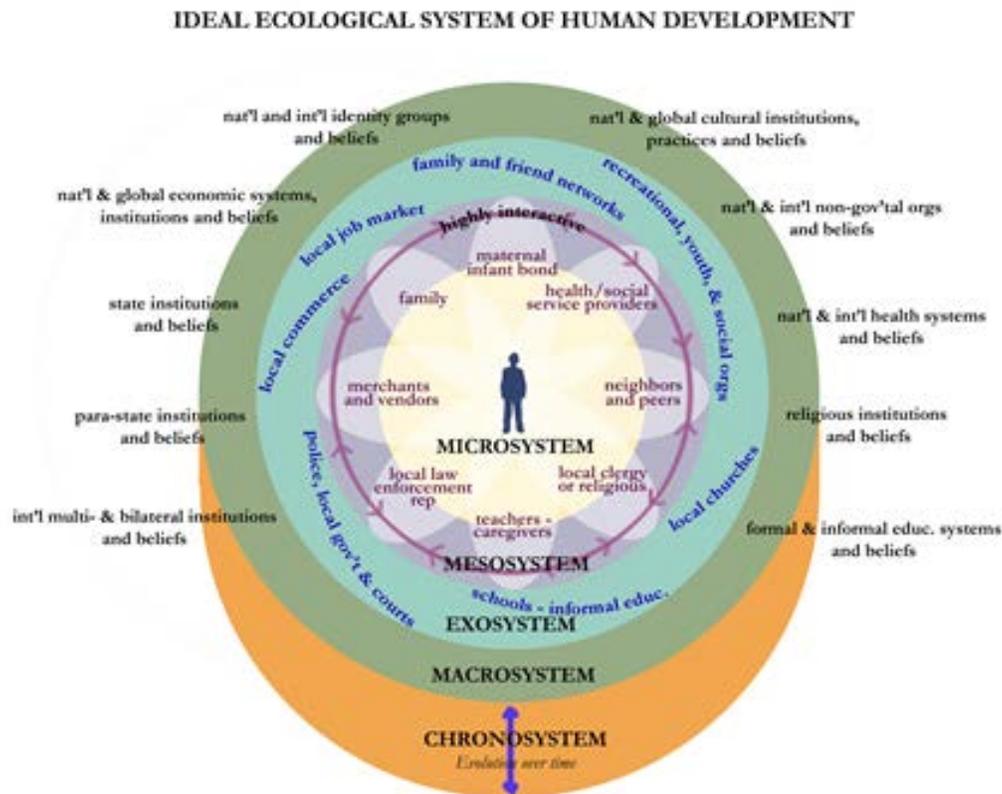
Proto-citizen refers to citizen-like actors who live in conditions in which the state does not provide security or ensure basic citizen rights, and where state legitimacy is collapsing or non-existent. Proto-citizenship focuses on the challenge of promoting social responsibility — a fundamental aspect of citizenship current approaches to citizenship and democracy, which prioritize promoting human and citizen rights, tend to neglect.

The CV-HD Framework Explained in Eight Propositions

Proposition 1: Human development is a multi-tiered system that encompasses personal development, social relations, the practice of citizenship, and the nature of governance and related beliefs, cultures, practices, structures and institutions. What enables a person to thrive physically and psychologically is the same as that which enables him or her to prosper as social actors and citizens.

The CV-HD theory presented here is based on the theory and framework of human development produced by social psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner, which argues that human development is an integrated or "ecological" system (see Exhibit 1 below).¹ Bronfenbrenner's model considers a person's physiological, psychological, social, and political development to all be part of one integrated whole. He proposes that human development occurs in a constantly interactive process with local, national, and global institutions, and depicts this evolutionary continuous process through a multi-tiered system with four progressive tiers.

Exhibit 1



¹ This model is summarized in Bronfenbrenner's 1994 article, available at <http://voicesfromtheedge.wikispaces.com/file/view/35bronfenbrenner94.pdf>.

Bronfenbrenner's model transcends the more mechanistic concept of a "hierarchy of human needs" advanced by Abraham Maslow. Maslow argued that individuals can pursue their need for safety and security only after basic physiological needs are met. Once basic safety is assured, belonging or love — usually found within families, friendships, associations, and the community — can become priorities (Maslow 1970). Bronfenbrenner's approach instead argues that the sense of safety and security that a developing person must have to thrive is intrinsically and inseparably both psychological and physiological.

The notion that human connection is a primary need on par with and inseparable from the "basic" physiological needs of food, shelter, warmth, and drink is fundamental to the concept of chronic violence. In such contexts, the physiological/psychological need for security can become endangered and remain so indefinitely. This paper will explore how these conditions systematically distort and reorient the nature of social development because of the ways that perceptions become distorted when survival-dominated needs become preeminent.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological system of human development is based on the theory that the properties of a person and their environment, the structure of environmental settings, and the processes between them are interdependent and should be analyzed as one system. A person can best be understood in terms of the conditions in a system composed of five interrelated and mutually constructive sub-systems, each "nested" inside the next:

- The *micro-system* contains the person, what he or she brings into the world, and the interpersonal relations experienced by this developing person. For a developing child, the primary maternal infant bond is a critical foundation that conditions lifelong development.
- The *meso-system* comprises the interrelations between the primary relationships of the developing person (e.g., the relations between parents, peers, teachers, family doctors, and local community authorities — licit or not). A strong level of consistent engagement between the developing person and each of his or her primary relationships, and strong and harmonious relations of these primary relations with each other, are indicators of the ability of the developing person to prosper.
- The *exo-system* is the larger web of settings that may not involve the developing person directly, but which directly affect and are affected by what happens in the prior settings. For a child, the exosystem includes a parent's work place, a school class of a sibling, parents' peers, and the activities of a local citizen commission. The extent to which this second tier of indirect relationships are in communication and basic coherence with each other is an indicator of the developing person's ability to prosper.
- The *macro-system* is larger pattern of consistencies in the form and substance and mutual permeation of the elements within each of the lower systems with each other — both horizontally within sub-systems, and vertically between systems, that exist or

could exist. One example is the relative mutual coherence and harmony of mechanisms of health care and the ideologies that accompany them, including the roles of the developing person and parent in taking care of the developing person's health, as well as up the system with primary doctors, health care institutions, and the ideas and beliefs about health and health care that inform and drive them.

- The *chrono-system* refers to the fact that all these four systems continuously evolve and change over time, with each and every change at any level continuously affecting and affected by evolving changes in other systems. In theory, then, if the system works well, change should occur gradually (i.e., organically) so that there is capacity in the larger system to adapt and rebalance without major crisis.

"Human development is the process through which the growing person acquires a more extended, differentiated, and valid conception of the ecological environment, and becomes motivated and able to engage in activities that reveal or sustain or restructure the environment in the levels of similar or increasing complexity in form and in content" (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 27). Development occurs when people can understand and engage in activities that clarify, protect, or change what happens at one level and at successively higher levels of the ecological system. Transformation or change is how this system enables people and societies to develop or change. However, change at any point on the system will inevitably be affected and depend on the constantly evolving and changing relationships and realities elsewhere in the same or in other tiers of the system.

In summary, "human development" assumes that individual, social, and civic aspects of development are integral to each other because the conditions identified in Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework that enable people to thrive as individuals and social beings are also those that condition social relations, civic development, governance, and other fundamental processes and structures. National and global cultures, societies, citizenship, and governance models are all understood to be both the outcome and conditioners for all other aspects of human development in the multi-tiered system. Specific kinds of citizenship and governments are fundamentally conditioned by relational factors and capacities rooted in primary childhood development.

Proposition 2: Chronic violence is a self-reproducing systematic process that affects the totality of human development.

Chronic violence tends to be associated with driving factors that have a synergistic, circular, and mutually reproductive nature and relationship. Violence and chronic violence can reproduce themselves or each other; however, neither violence nor chronic violence can be reduced to a mechanical or linear cause-and-effect relationship. The systematic "ecological" quality of chronic violence becomes evident when examined in the context of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system of human development.

Proposition 3. Chronic violence is reproduced and enhanced by multiple interactive macro-level drivers and factors.

Some key drivers of chronic violence are listed below:

Changing experiences and perceptions of social inequality. Social inequality has been a constant in Latin America, but it is perceived in new ways today. The dynamics in Latin America are changing and Latin American's are more education and aware of social inequality. Seventy-nine percent of Latin Americans live in cities (up from 41 percent in 1950), 92 percent are literate, and 33 percent of the population is under 15 years of age (see multiple sources in Adams, 2012). Fifty-five percent of Latin Americans perceive themselves to be part of the lower class, and only 37 percent see themselves as belonging to the middle class (Lagos and Dammert 2011). Forty-six percent of economically active Latin Americans work in the informal sector; even among employed workers, 38 percent were worried about losing their jobs in 2010 (*Latinobarómetro* 2010). There is relative deprivation or a perceived gap between aspirations and livelihood options. This is a big shift from the 1960s, when development-oriented, progressive, and revolutionary ideologies flourished in a predominantly rural continent where people contextualized their lives primarily within local and national realities.

It is critical to shift to follow indicators of perception, as these can be more significant than changes in material realities. Trends of recent decades show how social structures of agrarian societies have given way to new globalizing realities. In urban areas, people with radically different levels of privilege live in proximity, but are fiercely segregated. Mass media, the Internet, and increased migration make people increasing aware of the severe inequalities that prevail. Field researchers, for example, describe how many people today see themselves as "social zeroes" or "second-class citizens." They recount how the resulting shame and entrapment can transform into rage and a perverse search for respect, especially among young men. Fernando Vallejo's novel *Our Lady of the Assassins* illustrates this experience:

How can anyone murder for a pair of trainers? You, a foreigner, will ask. "Mon cher ami" it's not because of the shoes. It's about the principles of justice we all believe in. The person who is going to get mugged thinks it's unfair that they robbed him because he paid for them; the one who robs him thinks it's unfair that he doesn't have a pair himself. (Vallejo 1994, 68)

Such attitudes can fuel a militarized sense of machismo, manifested by the value assigned to a gun by security guards or paramilitary soldiers; the conspicuous displays of expensive properties and vehicles; the power gained by joining a gang or becoming a *sicario* (hit man); and the brutalization of women. A similarly aggressive "we'll do it ourselves" attitude occurs among frustrated citizens who decide to lynch suspected criminals in popular outbreaks of mob violence provoked by the failure of governments to protect them.

“Disjunctive” democracies, violent and illegal pluralisms, and the perverse nexus between democratization, security, violence, and the relative failure of justice reform efforts in the region. A growing consensus is developing that the new democracies of Latin America have chronic failings and that many contemporary democratic states face significant problems with regards to legitimacy. Seventy-six percent of individuals polled by the Latin American Public Opinion Project expressed little to no confidence in political parties, 64 percent for the judicial system and national congress, and 63 percent for the national police (UNDP and OAS 2010, 102). These macro-level findings correlate with the qualitative data from field studies reviewed for this report. State justice in these democracies is often perceived to be unjust, arbitrary, unacceptable, or simply nonexistent, directly fueling support for alternative forms of justice and parallel state-like polities.

The critiques cited above have all blossomed in the context of neoliberal approaches to democratization that have informed the political transformation of Latin America since the 1980s. The reliance on market-driven approaches, the reduced role of states, and the shift of risks from governments and corporations to individuals have all fundamentally undermined state capacity to control illicit activities and provide basic citizen security and rights. In this context, various scholars posit a direct relationship between the particular forms that democracies have taken in the region and the increasingly consistent patterns of violence. The work of these scholars challenges those in the democracy promotion community who assume that changes in political systems necessarily imply changes in political culture, and who have tended to downplay the significant problems of legitimacy faced by many democratizing states.

As Pásara has demonstrated in an article summarizing findings from his exhaustive analysis of the failure of the recent decades of judicial reform in Latin America, the 1.5 billion dollars spent by the World Bank and the Inter American Development Bank on justice reform in the region between 1992 and 2011 has reaped uncertain and questionable results (Pásara 2012). He states that the justice reform efforts spearheaded by major international donors were based on and driven by two major unexamined assumptions: (1) Western legal and justice procedures and cultural approaches were *ipso facto* superior to any other, including those that might exist locally; and (2) legitimate (Western) forms of rule of law are necessary to attract foreign investment necessary for democracy and economic development of democratizing countries.

The approaches that followed these problematic assumptions include:

- Technically defined and standardized models that were “transplanted” into scenarios that were insufficiently understood and mapped
- Approaches that assumed justice reform could take place without considering how these reforms related to the larger context of other state and informal institutions and culture, including historical conditions and the quality of local leadership and disposition of the critical participants

- Short term bureaucratic imperatives, including short funding cycles and changing ideologies that accompanied changing political leadership and changing economic conditions
- Uneven power relations between donors and recipient countries that intensified with policies of structural adjustment and the neoliberal ideologies that came to dominate in the 1980s

State security-oriented responses to organized crime and violence. A fallacy driving prevailing efforts in the field of violence and crime prevention is the notion that security itself enhances or strengthens democracy. As Pearce and McGee note:

State security oriented responses to violence can also undermine key democratic principles, vitiate political representation and erode the meanings and practices of democratic citizenship so that classic understandings of state formation — with their legitimate monopolization of violence — fall apart. (Pearce and McGee 2011, 7)

In Mexico between 2007 and 2010, as the government's anti-drug war intensified, cartels and local criminal organizations increased 10-fold the communities with 12 or more executions per year quadrupled. The connection between the anti-drug war and civil violence and reorganization, decentralization, and expansion of local and transnational cartels in Mexico has been well documented by Eduardo Guerrero. The complex ways that security-driven policies can undermine violence prevention and reduction efforts are now well documented, but have not been adequately acknowledged or addressed by international policy makers.

Diverse factors associated with globalization. The inadvertent effects of globalization are evident in the deficiencies in governance in an increasingly globalized world economy that permits illicit transnational operations to flourish beyond the reach of even the most powerful states. This has spurred asymmetrical processes of capital accumulation and increased divergence in income levels between and within nations and specific social groups.

Drug trafficking is an important driver of contemporary violence, although it has tended to be perceived erroneously by some security and violence specialist as the only cause of social violence in the region today. Colombian and Mexican traffickers move \$18-29 billion annually, dwarfing the budgets of the pass-through countries of Central America and the Caribbean by several orders of magnitude. The militarization of drug operations, which began in Colombia and then Mexico and is now spreading throughout the region, has had an explosive effect on spiraling civil violence. The critical question, however, is *why* populations in the region are so vulnerable to cooptation and engagement in this perverse form of livelihood.

Globalization has also contributed to international migration, which has provoked a transformation of micro-level family and community authority and childrearing

strategies. The well-documented ways in which this practice has weakened parent-child bonds and fractured and transformed the nature of social relations at the family and community levels feed into the complex dynamics of the reproduction of social violence in childhood, within families and by youth.

Finally, the growing primacy of market forces have created new levels of vulnerability for traditional agricultural products, destabilizing and undermining forms of livelihood among rural agricultural-based populations, and feeding internal and international migration. In urban areas, the increasingly fluid nature of labor relations has only increased. One result is increased perceptions of job insecurity. In 2010, Latinobarómetro reported that 38 percent of Latin American workers are worried about being unemployed in the coming year. In some countries, the numbers were much higher; for example, 62 percent in Guatemala and 56 percent in Ecuador (Latinobarómetro 2010, 11; Adams 2012, 12).

The mass media. Little or no focus is put on investigating the potential links between the horrendous forms of mass violence and popular fascination with extremely violent forms of entertainment (e.g., movies and video games). Media plays a central role in reproducing and amplifying violence and, as Martín Barbero notes, fear is “an elemental part of the new processes of communication.” In contexts of social fragmentation, he notes also how “television becomes a place of coming together, of vicarious encounters with the world, with people, and even with the city in which we live”. Latinobarómetro, in its 2012 survey of the region, highlighted how in many countries, people’s perceptions of violence are much higher than the realities. Perceptions of violence are often heavily influenced by the media and appear to be reflections of people’s experience of worsening trends or their distrust or lack of confidence in the capacity of the government to protect them (Latinobarómetro 2011).

Socially destructive patterns of economic development: natural resource and land conflicts. Economic development efforts can inadvertently introduce dynamics of violence and trauma into vulnerable populations. A recent study by Adams focused on natural resource development in Guatemala can provide an example of the kinds of conflicts that can be associated with economic development projects. Between 2005 and 2010, more than 700,000 people participated in 57 “popular consultations” regarding licenses for mineral exploitation in their communities. The majority of votes in these consultations were against the proposals for the mining operations. Most of these mineral deposits are located in the Western Highlands where the most vulnerable populations live, often in conditions of chronic poverty and malnutrition. In addition, as of 2012 there were 45 hydroelectric projects, both publicly and privately owned, that were either in construction or in the planning stages. This is almost double the number contemplated in the Guatemalan Government’s Plan for Priority Works for the System of Energy Transmission 2007-2010 within the framework of the System of Electrical Interconnection, linked to Plan Puebla-Panama. The external investment in natural resources has caused conflict with residents and opens the possibility for violence and land conflict.

A 2006 USAID study on land conflicts concluded that “Guatemala faces an enormous number of land disputes” and more recent reports have reconfirmed this assertion:

[In 2005,] there were 2,077 active land disputes registered with CONTIERRA, the state land dispute resolution agency, in September, 2003. This is a very high number of disputes for a country the size of Guatemala. On top of this, key land experts emphasized that [at least 80,000 individual and 300 communal land] disputes ...remain latent or unregistered to date.²... The number of officially registered disputes [will probably] increase in the coming years, especially as the types of situations associated with the as yet unregistered and/or latent disputes are addressed (e.g., as cadastral activities identify more land disputes, and as unprocessed INTA applications are eventually looked into, etc.). (Adams 2012)

Socially destructive policies of urbanization. Approximately 15 percent of the world’s population lives in slums, and this figure will likely increase to 25 percent by 2030. These people live in conditions that Sampson describes as “concentrated disadvantage” (United Nations Habitat 2006). Davis et al, in their recent report for USAID on urban resilience in contexts of chronic violence, provide an excellent account of how urbanization policy and practice over the past century enabled the emergence of peripheral marginal settlements or slums that today constitute a structural element of urban life (Davis 2012). They describe how urban planners and political leaders, by consistently ignoring the burgeoning populations spilling into cities through rural-urban migration, nurtured the construction of informal and illegal spatial, social, labor, and political relations, practices, and values. Situations have also been aggravated by colonial legacies of governance and political conflicts:

As planners sought to build the modern city, they concentrated attention on infrastructure and services, leaving questions of jobs and employment to the market.” (Foxen 2010, 76).

“When steady rural-urban migration combined with explosive demographic growth to create a city that spilled beyond its existent infrastructure, large swathes of the urban population began to live relatively informally, often in “no-man’s lands” outside the social, spatial and political bounds of the city... Whether seen as marginal or informal, residents of these areas were ignored because local government’s concerns with building a modern and more prosperous city meant that peripheral neighborhoods became invisible to city officials. ... These patterns not only set the basis for social and spatial separation rather than integration; they

² A footnote to the USAID 2006 report provides further detail, as follows: “Thousands of different types of land disputes are coming to light as a result of the work of the government’s cadastral pilot projects (this does not include cadastral work in Petén); 2) at least 80,000 unprocessed land title applications that accumulated over decades within the former National Institute for Agrarian Transformation (INTA) are said to be associated with almost as many latent land disputes; 3) boundary disputes exist involving at least 300 different townships (*municipios*) in the country and the majority of the nation’s twenty-one departments; and 4) many latent land disputes are associated with the majority of the state’s approximately 120 vacant land extensions (*terrenos baldíos*) that have not been registered to change their legal status to national farms (*fincas nacionales*).”

also reinforced the view that those who lived in the informal city or marginal neighborhoods were second-class citizens not morally worthy of inclusion or recognition, whose urban lifestyles and practices both stained and challenged the larger aims of modern urban progress.”(74)

Concerns about what type of employment opportunities would be offered within informal areas were almost completely absent, including efforts to develop and foster a thriving commercial sector in these same locations – mainly because commercial activities and growth were considered to be principal activities for downtown areas and other well-differentiated zones in the formal city. These mean that even when informal areas received infrastructural investments that paralleled or linked them to the formal city, the local economies of informal settlements remained highly under-developed or under-invested, at least in terms of state programs and policies, thus laying the foundation for continued poverty and dependence on non-state actors ... In [this context,] ... the built environment or physical infrastructure of these neighborhoods became the site of self-employment and economic production. ... Given the neglect of informal areas, it was the un- and under-employed poor residents of informal neighborhoods who actually were in the best position to use built environmental assets as a source of reproducing or generating their livelihoods. But because such activities and exchanges were always conducted outside the law, these same practices reinforced and strengthened the illegal market for urban services, thus laying the foundation for the emergence and illicit and illegal actors. To the extent that informal political leaders based their local legitimacy on their capacities to protect illegal or illicit markets, both residents and informal leaders needed each other, further tying them together in alternative reciprocities that distanced from the formal city and from the rule of law.” (76)

Environmental and habitat transformation linked to climate change. There is a broad scientific consensus that Central America is a major critical “hot spot” for global climate change. Giorgi’s 2006 report on the Climate Change Index states: “Central America was the most prominent tropical hot spot for climate change. The well documented disruption of life, and the immense economic and human costs provoked by the numerous and damaging hurricanes in the region over the past decade, as well as the perverse ways these have made affected populations increasingly vulnerable to illicit and illegal actors and practices, provide some indication of the scope of this factor in the Central American region.”

Proposition 4: Chronic violence undermines the quality of childhood development and parenting in fundamental ways. This consistently weakens the nature of social relations and on all aspects of human development, and the legacies can be transmitted inter-generationally.

Bronfenbrenner notes the central importance of the maternal-infant bond and primary relations for a person’s long-term development, which begins with the child’s early development in his or her “micro-system.” While the changes in recent decades in the

role and nature of families, parenting, and childhood experience in Central America and elsewhere have yet to be systematically measured and understood, it is clear that the roles of mothers, parents, and other adult relatives and families have been weakened as a result of diverse factors. These factors include intensified internal and international migration; changes in labor patterns that have tended to weaken earning power and therefore the authority and centrality of older generations; rapidly expanding access to globalized information and values, dominated more by young people than by their elders; the weakening of traditional community, religious, and other primary-level mechanisms of social order and containment; intensified cultural transformations; and other changes in gender and age-related roles and expectations. All of these factors are linked with the emergence of a decreased capacity for empathy and humanized views of oneself and the other, more “adverse childhood experiences,” and, in many cases, the destructively transformative experiences of trauma and/or chronic trauma.

Chronic violence can severely affect early childhood development through the weakening of the maternal-infant bonds, parenting capacity, trauma, chronic trauma, and social fear.

The *maternal-infant bond*, first theorized by John Bowlby in 1951, is still universally recognized is the single most important element in enabling human beings to “prosper.”³ Bowlby’s theory transformed both psychological theory and child care practices in schools and hospitals, and correctly predicted the trans-generational effects of this primary relationship even outside the realm of social development. The basic conclusion is that securely attached infants become more successful in all realms of life than their insecurely attached counterparts:

What the caregiver gives his or her child in those first few critical years is like an internal pot of gold ... Filling the child up with positive emotions is a gift more precious than anything material ... [that they carry] inside throughout their life. [It] gives the individual the strength to deal with challenges, the ability to bounce back from setbacks, and the ability to show affections and enjoy intimacy with others, in other relationships. It overlaps with what London psychiatrist Michael Rutter refers to as “resilience” ... [It predicts both how emotionally well-adjusted an individual turns out as an adult, but also predicts their moral development]. Moral development and empathy are not one and the same thing, since it is possible to develop a strong moral code even in the absence of empathy. (Baron-Cohen 2011, 48-49).

Bronfenbrenner notes Bowlby’s conclusion that the rupture of the maternal-infant bond undermines certain aspects of development more than others:

Least damaged are motor skills such as walking and manual dexterity, including, for example, the physical capacity to do damage or violence. Most affected are

³ The seminal work on this now basic assumption of psychology was produced by John Bowlby. His initial piece, “Maternal Care and Mental Health,” was written for the World Health Organization in 1951. This was followed in 1958 by “The Nature of the Child’s Tie to his Mother,” which appeared in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* (Issue 39, pp. 350-373), and many other publications.

children's ability to express themselves and their emotional adjustment — especially their capacity to establish and maintain genuine emotional attachments. [Rupture can provoke] affective disorders [that become] fully apparent in later childhood and adolescence and can lead to significant behavioral and relational problems throughout life. (Bowlby 1951 in Bronfenbrenner, 133, 156).

Siegel, Hughes, Baylin, and other psychologists and neuroscientists have documented the importance of *parenting capacity* and the fact that successful parenting and child development depends on neurological and biological pathways in parents' brains that enable parents to "naturally" parent in appropriate ways. These pathways can be obstructed by several factors, including high levels of fear and stress associated with long-term experiences of violence and insecurity. Hughes and Baylin note that unmanageable or chronic stress blocks the parents' ability to maintain and nurture the parent-infant bond.

Parents that grow up in unsafe or frightening environments are subject to rapid brain reactions that block their ability to remain open and attuned to their children, and to engage in constructive conflict resolution and problem solving. (Hughes and Baylin 2012, 94-95). In these conditions, parents tend to overreact to their children's actions, and both develop a mutual defensiveness.

These rapid assessments, in turn, produce simplistic cognitions, black-and-white thoughts about child and self. This one-dimensional way of carving up experience is adaptive for survival-based living. Parents under too much stress feel like they are fighting for survival and, sadly, they experience their children as the threat to their well-being. ... (97).

In such circumstances, the child is likely to respond by suppressing and disassociating from their pain, sending a signal to the parent that they don't care that they have been rejected. This in turn intensifies the parent's emotional disassociation as well. (98-99).

Thus, in conditions of chronic violence, many parents facing the long-term everyday challenges of violence and its accompanying uncertainties and imperatives tend to find their capacities to parent inhibited. These conditions cause people to become progressively less capable of seeing the world in proper perspective. Seeing the world in black-and-white terms enables people to "survive" in short-term crises, but as a long-term coping strategy leads people to trust and engage less with others, to seek out those few people who hold similar assumptions and beliefs, and to seek the most expedient solutions to problems. Since survival mandates immediate and expedient action, socially transcendent approaches that require and also strengthen empathy and more nuanced solutions that enable people to engage with and accept difference in others remain out of range. The result is more "enemies" and increased violence and conflict.

Adverse childhood experiences often start with the weakening of the maternal-infant bond, but includes many traumatic experiences. A decade-long study first reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente, the Adverse Childhood Experiences

Study, provided groundbreaking and longitudinal evidence that painful and traumatic experiences in childhood directly predict long-term emotional, social, and physical ailments throughout life. Almost half of the 13,000 people studied — upper- and middle-class Californians who were assumed beforehand to be generally low risk — had some kind of exposure to abuse or household dysfunction in childhood. The study found a strong and consistent correlation between the scale and types of adverse experiences or household dysfunction during childhood and risk factors associated with increased social, emotional, and cognitive impairment, adoption of health-risk behaviors, disease, disability and social problems, and early death (255). It concluded that "primary prevention of adverse childhood experiences has proven difficult (254, 255) and will ultimately require societal changes that improve the quality of family and household environments during childhood" (Felitti et al. 1998, 256).

Although trauma affects everyone, it is particularly devastating for children who are born virtually defenseless. Children are more vulnerable to becoming overwhelmed by violent events that might be less threatening to adults, and they can be traumatized by experiences that adults consider to be "routine."

Subsequently, the CDC/Kaiser team consulted with international colleagues to develop a "global framework" for adverse childhood experiences that contemplates indicators of trauma elsewhere in the world, including war and genocide and the chronic social violence discussed here. It offers a promising new methodological capacity to wed medical and psychological approaches to protect long-term trace the links between childhood trauma and long-term physical and mental health (Anda et al. 2010; Bowlby).

A weakened maternal-infant bond and adverse childhood experiences naturally lead to a weakened capacity for empathy and strengthened potential for extreme cruelty and dehumanization of others. The capacity for empathy, fundamental for constructive human interaction, can become compromised and nonexistent when people live under chronic stress. Neuroscientist Baron-Cohen has investigated the neurological and environmental conditions that enable or derail this capacity; he considers the absence of empathy to be a major driver of evil, human cruelty, and the inability to see others as human beings like oneself. Baron-Cohen and various other scientists refer to how cruelty and evil are often misunderstood, misdiagnosed, and mistreated by the medical, psychological, and criminological professions, religious leaders, and policy makers as the manifestation of "innate" human qualities rather than as the result of physical, psychological, and social conditions.⁴

Baron-Cohen defines empathy as the "ability to identify what someone else is thinking or feeling and to respond to their thoughts and feelings with an appropriate emotion which requires both recognition and response [and occurs when] we suspend our single-minded

⁴ See Baron-Cohen 2010 (pp. 1-10). For a more detailed analysis of manifestations of classic Judeo-Christian beliefs that evil is an innate human quality that can only be harnessed through various forms of repression and control Felicity De Zulueta's *From Pain to Violence: The Traumatic Roots of Destructiveness*.

focus of attention, and instead adopt a double-minded focus of attention" (Baron-Cohen, 10-11).

He considers people with certain psychological conditions — borderline personality disorder, narcissism, and psychopathology specifically — to have “zero-negative” capacity for empathy. This, he argues, occurs because critical neurological brain functions that enable an “empathy circuit” to function are impaired.

This damage, as noted in the last section, can often result from the weakening of the maternal-infant bond. Baron-Cohen’s neurological evidence lends further support to the notion that this bond can be critical in providing children with empathy and the lifelong emotional and social resilience he terms an “internal pot of gold.” Zero degrees of empathy can also result from environmental factors and the ways that traumatic experiences are assimilated and reenacted over a lifetime.

This mix of drivers helps explain why some people in difficult conditions can still develop basic social resilience such as the capacity for empathy, while others in the same conditions become irreparably impaired.⁵ Halpern and Weinstein and many others in the field of post-war reconciliation, transitional justice, and peace-making have theorized about the critical role of empathy and “rehumanization” in political and social process of reconciliation, peace-building, and peaceful coexistence with others.

Trauma and chronic forms of trauma affect a developing child. Trauma is a major contributor to violence as well as one of its most pernicious effects. This report is particularly concerned with chronic traumatic experiences, which are associated with chronic violence. Chronic traumatic experiences are much less understood or addressed in literature compared to what are understood as “single event” or “past” traumatic experiences. The humanly destructive effects of trauma and its definitive role in provoking violence were first recognized by social and clinical psychologists and are now confirmed by a growing body of evidence from neurobiologists and criminologists, among others.⁶

⁵ Certain individuals — for example, those with Asperger’s Syndrome (a kind of high-functioning autism that can sometimes include “genius”) — manifest what Baron-Cohen terms “zero-positive” empathy. This means that they can become constructive members of society even with no capacity for empathy because of their extraordinary potential if provided with conditions to channel their gifts constructively. A recent exception may be the young man who killed 27 elementary school children and adults in Newtown, Connecticut, described in the press as a “near genius who suffered from Aspergers” (*Washington Post*, December 18, p. 13).

⁶ For example: Felicity De Zulueta's *From Pain to Violence: The Traumatic Roots of Destructiveness*; Van de Kolk, McFarlane, and Weisaeth's *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body and Society*; Van der Kolk's "The Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma: Re-enactment, Revictimization, and Masochism" in *Psychiatric Clinics of North America* (Issue 12, pp. 389-411); Beveridge's "Origins of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder" in *Psychological Trauma: A Developmental Approach*; Gilligan's *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*. Groth's "Trauma in the Life Histories of Sex Offenders" in *Victimology* (Issue 4, pp. 6-10); and Lewis, Shanok, and Pincus' "Violent Juvenile Delinquents: Psychiatric, Neurological, Psychological and Abuse Factors" in *Journal of Child Psychiatry* (Issue 18, pp. 307-319).

To understand the role of chronic trauma, it is important to first clarify the meaning of “trauma.” Best described by psychologists, the human experience of trauma results from experiencing “a breach in the protective barrier against (over)stimulation leading to feelings of overwhelming helplessness” and “the urge to escape coupled with the perception of not being able to do so” (Freud, quoted in Levine 1997, 197). It irrevocably alters the previous equilibrium favoring life: “If death does not occur, a compromised equilibrium is established. It is like a bone fracturing after being bent and stressed and then repairing leaving a permanent vulnerability, or a wound which will leave a scar and sensitivity” (Valent 2003).

Trauma is defined as the experience of being overwhelmed by something that is experienced as a primary and fundamental threat to one’s being and survival. This feeling is often associated with the descriptions of the very primary reactions of fear, abandonment, and danger that are described in the ethnographic and other literature on the experience of living with violence.

Trauma resides in the nervous system, but the formidable challenge to its treatment is because this experience is not directly accessible to our rational selves. In his summary of the biological roots of responses to trauma and violence, Levine notes the three integral systems of knowledge contained by the human brain: the reptilian brain where instinct resides; the mammalian brain where emotion is rooted; and the neo-cortex where rational or cognitive thought resides. The fundamental experience of trauma is experienced at the two primary brain levels: first at the instinctive level, then at the emotional level. Since trauma is not directly accessible or comprehensible through conscious knowledge, it tends to be processed in irrational and self-destructive forms of expression or re-enactment that trauma victims themselves cannot directly control, understand, or explain in its full dimensions.

The long-term destructive effects of traumatic experience occur because trauma can come to dominate the mental life of a traumatized person through reenactment:

The phenomenon of re-enactment and its centrality in the lives of people who have been exposed to life-threatening experiences of trauma is well established in traumatic stress research. There is sufficient evidence showing how these traumatic memories, and difficulties in their assimilation, often return as behavioral reenactment, both at the interpersonal level as well as within societies . . . The connections between traumatic experience and these behavioral manifestations of the return of trauma are acted out as . . . re-victimization of self in battered women and sex workers, and victimization directed at others in criminals who suffered physical or sexual abuse as children . . . [There is] compelling evidence to significantly influence the way we think about the violence that we see emerging in societies that have been ravaged by the trauma of past wars and mass violence, societies that, in spite of having achieved some political resolution — either through negotiation or by other means — still continue to witness and suffer severe forms of violence. (Gobodo-Madikizela 2003, 1)

Van der Kolk et al, in an early groundbreaking book on post-traumatic stress disorder, concluded that “reenactment of victimization is a major cause of violence in society.” Freud and others similarly observed how traumatic re-enactment is a “major vortex of violence.” Other trauma specialists show how violence can be rooted in the traumatic experience of “primary attachment gone wrong,” a related issue addressed earlier. Chronic trauma that can result from long-term or chronic exposure to violence has been recognized, but most of the literature and clinical treatment strategies focus on trauma as if it were caused by one-time traumatic events, even when these can occur over relatively long periods of time, such as the Holocaust or long-term abuse or incest during a person’s childhood or life. The recent civil wars in Central America and the postwar social violence since these ended are characteristic of the new kinds of “non-war non-peace” that the World Bank identified in the *World Development Report 2011*. Such scenarios can often bring with them the long-term normalization of violence that establishes the social foundation for chronic trauma. Most “transitional justice” efforts being carried out in Guatemala today are framed as efforts to address trauma as a “post-war” challenge for victims of the war. However, some “on-the-ground” psychological assessments of victims and many of the ethnographic accounts reviewed for this report more clearly identify the long-term, continuous nature of this phenomenon and the ways that it provokes additional internal divisiveness and conflict within micro-populations. From a perspective that contemplates the dynamics of trauma, one asks if various post-war forms of violence — lynching, the escalation and normalization of everyday violence, increased domestic abuse, and the atrocious forms of violence of the ex-Kaibiles (Special Forces operatives engaged in some of the most extreme state acts of mass violence during the war) recruited by the Zetas for organized crime efforts — may be reenactments of traumatic experiences lived during Guatemala’s recent civil war.⁷

David Becker pioneered an early effort to characterize chronic forms of trauma, based on the particular kinds of trauma he observed in Chile, resulting from the social processes unleashed by the coup of 1973. He characterized it as “extreme traumatization”:

Extreme traumatization is an individual and collective process that refers to and depends on a given social context; a process that is marked by its intensity, extremely long duration and the interdependency between the social and the psychological dimensions. It exceeds the capacity of the individual and of social structures to respond adequately to this process. It [results in] the destruction of the individual, of his sense of belonging to society and of his social activities ... and is not limited in time and develops sequentially.⁸

His description and observations of many on-the-ground psychologists and others provide rich antecedents to orient further scientific research on the particularities of “chronic

⁷ One example is the dismemberment of the victims of a recent massacre in the Petén and the use of their limbs to paint messages on the walls of nearby buildings. See Tani Adams' *Reconstructing Community Amidst Chronic Violence in Postwar Guatemala: Views from the Ground*.

⁸ Becker developed the concept of “extreme traumatization” for the situation observed in Chile. See *Dealing with the Consequences of Organised Violence in Trauma Work* (www.Berghof.Handbook.net).

trauma,” including its neurological, psychological, and social ramifications and potential treatments.

Fear is both a biologically and socially driven experience. Fear is lived and understood through complex processes driven by how the human brain works and how we make sense of our environment in society. Primary biologically driven responses to fear provoke the flight or fight response and, in extreme conditions, paralysis and submission. The overwhelming fear and impotence associated with trauma provokes re-enactment of the state of fear produced in previous traumatic experience or experiences and can continue to drive the traumatized person into self-destructive and socially destructive acts throughout life. Traumatic experiences are stored in the brain outside the range of consciousness.

Although fear is initially an individual experience, often in ways that are not directly accessible to consciousness, our consciousness of feeling fearful drives us to identify some “cause” or “name” for it – either in ourselves, in something or someone outside ourselves, or both. This process of “naming” primarily nameless feelings of fear is called “social fear.” This idea, forwarded by cultural analysts, seeks to explain how fears held by social groups emerge through interactive processes with other people in our lives and the ideas we carry with us.

Reguillo proposes that fear should be analyzed as a social phenomenon. Fear, she argues, is both a primal response to risk and “an individually experienced, socially constructed, and culturally shared experience” accompanied by the need to “find a way to explain, according to the rationality of the situation, the fears experienced” (Reguillo in Rotker, 2002, 192). As will be seen in this report, the social construction of “the other” is an important individual and social mechanism for channeling fears, enabling people to transfer blame for risks, insecurity, violence, or other problems.

Proposition 5: Chronic violence undermines and weakens social relations and institutions. The leads to fundamental shifts in people’s beliefs, moral categories, judgment and priorities.

The cumulative evidence summarized in Proposition 4 describes the fundamental ways that chronic experiences of trauma and social fear undermine fundamental processes of human development. In his reflections on the nature of society in Auschwitz, Holocaust survivor Primo Levi detailed the systematic ways that life under such conditions dehumanizes everyone. He coined the term “grey zone” to indicate the ways that the lines between good and evil, right and wrong, become blurred and perpetrators and victims act increasingly like each other in conditions dominated by violence, fear, and social repression (Levi 1998, 36-69).

Yet this fundamental change in moral paradigms is not always evident to change agents or other major stakeholders, including those most affected by them. Levi explained that the most oppressed lose so much of their fundamental humanity that strategically conceived and organized rebellion is impossible (158-160)

Latin American scholars came to similar conclusions regarding life under authoritarianism. In their writings, they asked why colleagues in “free societies” (particularly Western democracies) paid so little heed to the social effects of fear. Corradi (writing long before 9/11) conjectured that “in the United States and other advanced industrial democracies, there is a marked reluctance to consider fear as something other than a personal emotion, and, hence, a phenomenon within the exclusive purview of psychology.” He came to a similar conclusion to Levi’s: “Free societies do suffer the occasional occurrence of collective frights or panics, but they do not know fear as the permanent and muffled undertone of life” (Corradi et. al. 1992, 1-2). These differences in worldview may help us further explain why the dynamics created by fear, repression and violence have received so little attention in the public policy world to date. The “grey zone” becomes manifest as well in people’s fundamental beliefs, their development and relationships, social and political relations and institutions.

Where the lines between right and wrong are blurred, a space is opened up for organized crime, drug trafficking, and “illicit trade.” Moisés Naím defines illicit trade as “trade that breaks the rules — the laws, regulations, licenses, taxes, embargoes, and all the procedures that nations employ to organize commerce, protect their citizens, raise revenues, and enforce moral codes. It includes purchases and sales that are strictly illegal everywhere and others that may be illegal in some countries and accepted in others” (Naím 2005, 2). He adds that “to think of a clean line between good guys and bad guys [or the ability to separate illicit trade from licit trade] is to fail to capture the reality of trafficking today. Illicit trade permeates our daily lives in subtle ways” (240-241).

In contexts of chronic crisis and the “grey zone,” young men face the absence of the possibility of a worthy life, and much more fluid realities and opportunities are opened to them through the blurred realities of illicit and licit trade. Henrik Vigh describes, in these situations, a kind of death that is not physical, but social. The stage of “being young” becomes a “social moratorium” for people unable — because of the structural limitations imposed by the drivers of chronic violence described in Proposition 3 — to transition “normally” to the stage of adulthood (Vigh 2006, 103-104). In such circumstances, migration or illicit activities like drug trafficking become not only important options, but prime opportunities and objectives. This is directly tied to the perverse search for respect, addressed elsewhere in this report.

Social silence, social amnesia, avoidance, and social forgetting are among the survivalist responses that help people to simplify their perceptions and focus on survival. It signals the weakening of capacity to critically understand realities and act accordingly, and permits the process that results in privileging tactics over strategies and presumptions over measured knowledge (discussed earlier in the section on the effects of long-term stress and fear on the brain). Although broadly documented as wartime coping strategies, these mechanisms today are critical adaptations to everyday peacetime violence. As a Salvadoran woman explained:

Learning how to live means only talking about good things, nothing dangerous. It is better not to talk about dangerous things because, in the first instance, you don't know who you are talking to, and another thing is that you can't do anything. If you speak just for the sake of it, when they look for revenge, how do you defend yourself? (Hume 2008, 71-72)

When illicit actors rule, silence can be imposed from above, provoking tacit complicity between the silencers and the silenced. The vacuum caused by silence is often fed by “crime talk” — popular discourse fed by sensationalist mass media that reinforces stereotypes and scapegoating of the marginalized, and spurs further violence.

Tolerance and acceptance of violence and the illegal and illicit grow and blur. Growing exposure to violence induces people to accept and practice it. In Medellín, a recent survey found that more than 70 percent of citizens approved of using violence on behalf of their families or for political and economic gain. The more people operate outside of the law, the more “normal” violence seems. Naím's concept of “illicit trade” points to how illicit activities, structures, behaviors, and beliefs increasingly implicate all members of society (Naím 2005, 240-241).

Domestic violence is the most prevalent — and most overlooked — form of violence. In Guatemala, El Salvador, and Colombia, between one-third and a majority of women suffer physical and verbal abuse, often intensified by alcohol or drugs. Violence toward children is probably higher, but is virtually impossible to measure because it is more socially acceptable.

The brutality of violence also appears to be growing, both by illicit groups driven by increasingly high stakes and militarized struggles over markets and territories, and by irate vigilantes. Atrocities associated with the most extreme crimes against humanity in places like Cambodia, Guatemala, or Rwanda today constitute everyday forms of violence in some places, especially Mexico, Guatemala, and Colombia.

Scapegoating and xenophobia increase as citizens seek to assign often obscure causes of violence to specific agents who can be held responsible, such as young people with tattoos or “outsiders.” This fuels violence at multiple levels via lynchings and other killings carried out by vulnerable communities in their own defense, through hard-line policies against gangs and delinquents, and from the reactions of those accused of violence.

New aesthetics and cultural values associated with extreme levels of consumption and displays of wealth. Aesthetics and cultural values associated with extreme levels of consumption feed the dynamics described in this policy brief. As one observer noted:

The aesthetic code of the drug trafficker in Colombia is part of its national identity ... ostentatious, exaggerated, disproportionate and laden with symbols which seek to confer status and legitimize violence. ... [however] the first thing it is important to note is that the narco aesthetic in Colombia does not any longer

belong only to the drug trafficker, but forms part of popular taste, which sees it through positive eyes and copies it, ensuring its continuity through time and across cities. The diffusion of the narco aesthetic is evidence of the Colombian institutional vacuum. No stronger system for social cohesion exists to provide an alternative to the model of the power and social justice which drug trafficking represents...

It is [also] worth noting that the narco aesthetic has been changing. The third generation of the drug cartels has changed their strategy of ostentation for camouflage, as the illegal drug trade has demanded diversification, ramification and 'sophistication'. Ornament has given over to smooth surfaces and aluminum blinds which copy the 'modern' houses of young successful executives of the big businesses, which are themselves copies of the residences which we can find in architecture magazines from Europe and the United States. Now we don't know who is copying whom... (Cobo, 2009)

Proposition 6: Chronic violence obstructs and endangers the practice of citizenship and weakens the social support for democracy.

Increased social isolation and the reduction of public spaces are constants in violent environments. While wealthy people retreat into gated communities, those living in dangerous areas retreat from public spaces into their homes. The first trend isolates rich from poor, while the second isolates neighbors from one another, undermining community relations and conditions for social action. In these vacuums, the mass media gain new power. This phenomenon leads to increased distrust in the state and opposition to due process and human rights.

Vulnerability to violence most undermines social support for democracy when people do not believe governments can protect them. In 2010, 76 percent of Latin Americans expressed little or no confidence in political parties; 64 percent expressed little or no confidence in the judicial system; and 63 percent expressed little or no confidence in the police. Disjunctive democratic regimes come to be seen as the enemy for very different reasons than occurred with their authoritarian predecessors. When the law fails to protect citizens, they increasingly question why they should uphold democratic principles like due process and human rights, which often appear to protect criminals more than their victims. Thus, hard-line security measures find growing support and legitimacy among all social classes – not just the most vulnerable – and younger generations show higher levels of approval for violence than their elders (Adams, 2012a: 22-23, multiple sources).

Non-state forms of justice increasingly fill the vacuum caused by state incapacity. These range from lynchings and other de facto impositions of justice by local groups to the employment of private security guards (both legal and illegal), who today significantly outnumber police region-wide. In one Guatemalan community, while everyone had clear ideas about justice, this was viewed either as a "divine" function or something that citizens meted out by their own hands. Virtually no one mentioned justice as a state function (Adams 2012, 24-25).

Where state governance fails, other governance mechanisms fill the vacuum. Drug traffickers assert state-like territorial control and can accumulate social legitimacy by providing goods and state-like services in communities that they come to control. In lesser and diverse ways, gangs offer “protection,” rules, and a sense of belonging for youth inadequately protected by families, communities, and the state itself. Pentecostal churches, some NGOs, and gated communities often provide this for wealthier citizens (Adams 2012, 20-31).

Proposition 7: In contexts of chronic violence, citizens tend to see themselves as “victims” who demand rights and protection but assume relatively little responsibility.

This reality points to a central challenge that must inform related policy and social change initiatives. Chronic violence compels policy makers and social activists to emphasize the facilitation of processes of social and political change that enable vulnerable groups to transcend the perverse effects of chronic violence in ways that enhance the practice of citizenship (or in cases of state absence: proto-citizenship). The complex nature of these reproductive factors means that chronic violence is likely to remain a significant phenomenon well into the future. It should be understood and addressed by policy makers and those concerned with social change as a “perverse normality.”

Proposition 8: Chronic violence affects human development in every aspect and in each of the five tiers of the ecological system, transforming the fundamental process of development itself.

Living in chronic violence provokes systematic changes in human development processes because it undermines fundamental and primary processes of physical and psychological development that permit people to prosper as human beings and citizens. Disruption and weakening of maternal-infant bonds, families, parenting capacity, both single-point and chronic trauma, adverse childhood experiences, weakened capacity for empathy and increased tendency to see people as objects or less-than-human;

A major driver in this process are the relatively unmapped ways that both isolated and chronic experiences of trauma may be causing significant numbers of people to become trapped in self- and socially-destructive dynamics of traumatic reenactment throughout their lives. Chronic violence does the following:

- *Weakens people’s ability to think constructively and with longer-term socially constructive objectives.* The general weakening of cognitive capacity and increasing primacy of short-term survivalist priorities limit and condition the ways in which people interact with and perceive each other, and the way they characterize and pursue broader social and political objectives.

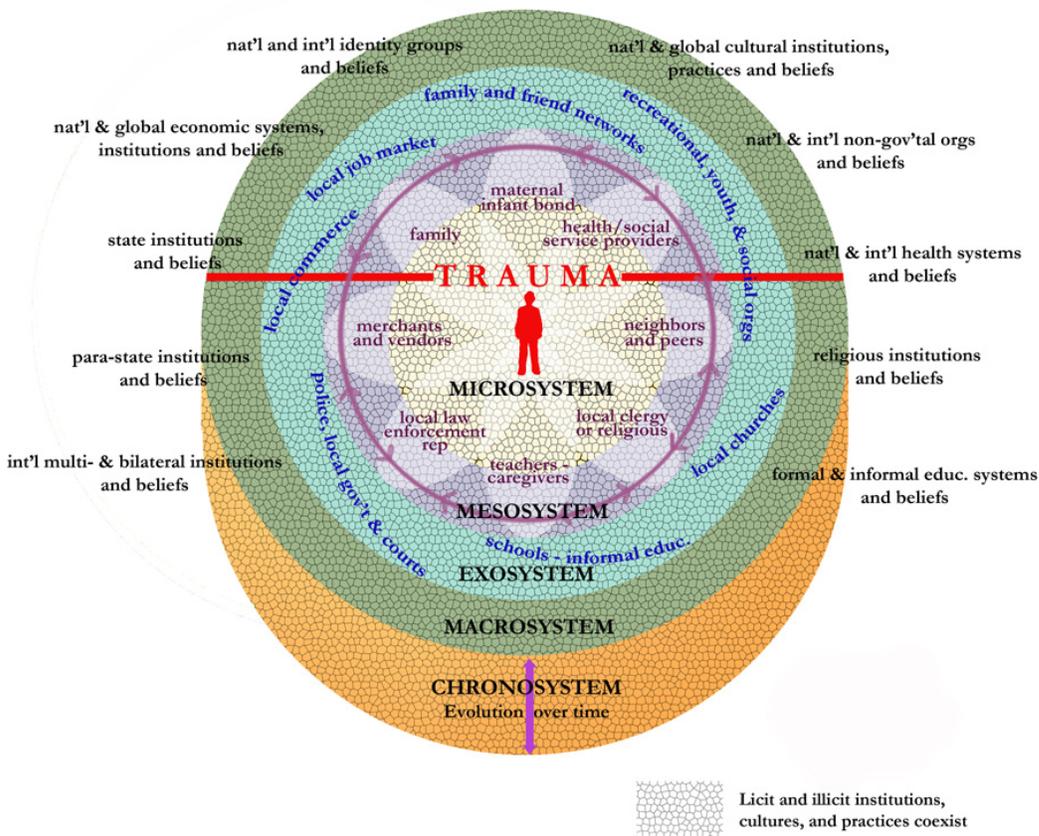
- *Transforms fundamental belief systems, relations, and values.* Chronic violence transforms these into survivalist priorities and leads to the increasing coexistence and confusion of licit and illicit beliefs, cultural practices and institutions.
- *Imbues most human relationships, institutions, and cultural frameworks with increasing isolation, conflict, and violence, and blurs understandings of the difference between licit and illicit, moral and immoral, and right and wrong.* The differences between licit and illicit and moral and immoral become increasingly indistinct and naturalized, informing the ways that people relate to each other and the evolution of institutions and cultural frameworks throughout the multi-tiered system.

These tendencies will tend to affect development as envisioned in Bronfenbrenner’s multi-tiered system, as follows (see Exhibit 2 on the following page).

- *Micro-system.* Primary maternal-infant bonds, the nature and function of families, and children’s primary relationships become restructured by increased incidence of trauma and chronic trauma, dysfunctional families, breakdown of parenting capacity, adverse childhood experiences that predict life-long psychological, social and physical illness and problems. These processes condition and limit individuals’ further development of social and civic relations, values, and capacities.

Exhibit 2

ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN CHRONIC VIOLENCE



- *Meso-system: transformed by everyday violence and disrupted primary power relations.* The capacities of those who sustain primary relationships with the developing person to interact constructively and appropriately with each other and with the child can be hampered, weakened, distorted, conflictive, or simply cease to exist. For example, parents' relations with their child's school teacher or health provider may become weakened or nonexistent. Local illicit actors may control more *de facto* power than the parent and be perceived by the child as more critical to his or her survival than the comparatively impotent parent. Distrust, social silence, isolation, and increased tolerance and use of illegality and violence further weaken the possibility of many developing people to thrive humanly and socially. Some become empowered by the control of illicit resources and through the development of destructive forms of efficacy or social capital.

Illicit and socially destructive values, behaviors, and institutions will tend to increase in power, in turn exerting more pressure on state health, educational, and other public services that in such contexts are often inadequate or co-opted from the start. The prevalence of illicit practices and beliefs is significant because, as noted, legal and social sanctions of the illicit and illegal are systematically weakened.

- *Exo-system: de facto and formal institutions include both licit and illicit institutions, practices, and actors.* The functional confusion between the illicit and the licit can influence and, in *de facto* ways, re-functionalize the role of institutions at this increasing level of complexity (regional and national levels). In regions like Central America, where most of the population works in the informal sector, most people work outside effective government or institutional control or regulation. Relations with licit institutions (i.e., the municipal government, the school system, the health care system, and the judicial system) will often be fragile or inadequate.

The capacity to identify and empathize with others, as opposed to blaming them for unviable living conditions and chronic insecurity, can be expected to weaken. People will tend to prioritize what they need and increasingly come to identify as victims of untenable circumstances. This can easily dominate any theoretical sense of responsibility toward others or over engagement in more far-sighted and effective citizen action.

In such contexts, multiple kinds of institutions may co-exist and compete with each other for relative legitimacy. Non-state entities that perform state-like functions are likely to take on new importance. These can include both licit organizations, such as international and nongovernmental organizations, and illicit organizations. As a result of efforts to stabilize and protect their operating environments and to ensure the support of local people, these organizations often provide social services not supplied by the state, including judicial intervention, health care, educational support, and other public services. Illicit institutions can carry extraordinary weight or exercise broad and unaccountable forms of power that further limit the capacity of states to play their role. While licit NGOs and international organizations often provide critical state-like services or even substitute the state's role formally in such scenarios, the

long-term effects of these substitutions on citizen perceptions of their own state's legitimacy remains little understood, as do the prospects for states to actually develop broader effectiveness and legitimacy through these kinds of strategies.

For citizens who engage in public life at this level, the fusion and confusion between moral and immoral, legal and illegal, formal and informal becomes increasingly structured, embedded, naturalized, and self-reproductive through their social behaviors and the kinds of institutions and culture that evolve in these circumstances.

- *Macro-system: Contradictory and mutually counter-productive (both licit and illicit) structures, institution, and cultural practices and beliefs co-exist and interact.* The macro-level drivers of chronic violence (detailed under Proposition 1) condition the possibilities for robust human development throughout the entire system, threatening and limiting the construction of robust social relations, the practice of citizenship, and democratic development. Illicit and licit behavior and function permeate these macro-level institutions, cultural frameworks and their relative legitimacy, and citizen's beliefs about, attitudes toward, and engagement with these institutions.
- *Chrono-system. Chronic violence is a fundamental reality into which certain populations are born and develop through their lives, and influence and engage with the institutions in their environment.* The self-reproductive nature of chronic violence reflects, conditions, informs, and reproduces specific kinds of perverse human development at every level of the system and can be reproduced in successive generations. The "chronic" quality of this kind of violence — the fact that the developing person is born into it and that it conditions their development and inter-generational changes — has fundamental consequences for the physical, psychological, and social development of the people who develop in this context, and fundamentally conditions their engagement with and attitudes toward democracy; economic development; and local, national, regional and global security.

PART II. ADDRESSING CHRONIC VIOLENCE: HYPOTHESES TO TEST THE THEORY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIRST STEPS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

How can one effectively address the daunting global challenge that chronic violence poses to human, social, and political development? This section shows how USAID and other change agents can mount an effective and evidence-based long-term approach to address the dilemma detailed by the CV-HD theory. Misconceived as a problem of violence, criminality, and insecurity, chronic violence continues to confound collective best efforts and intentions.

Hypotheses

The six hypotheses below detail how USAID and other change agent and major stakeholders can immediately begin to test the CV-HD theory empirically in light of both the existing evidence and the growing knowledge about how chronic violence operates in the region. Supporting explanations are included in brackets, and additional information can be found in the appendices.

Hypothesis 1

The objective of efforts to address chronic violence should be to provoke changes in the ecological system of human development that establish the conditions that enable people to:

- Thrive as individuals, social and civic beings;
- Progressively understand their conditions and needs;
- Engage in increasingly constructive roles either as citizens or “proto-citizens” in potentially long-term conditions of chronic violence
- Develop in ways that enhances the breadth, density, inclusiveness, and diversity of social and political relations in the society.

Hypothesis 2

Change may begin at any point in the system and is necessarily conditioned by the continually evolving nature of the relations, institutions, and beliefs throughout the multi-tiered system surrounding each person, as well as by each person's qualities. This requires change agents to take this complex reality directly into account in the methods used to assess the dilemma and to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate the problem and interventions over time in the context of this complex, interactive system.

Hypothesis 3

Change agents should prioritize the development of a collaborative, publicly available, and continually evolving database of information, knowledge, analyzed experience, and research. This tool will enable change agents to do the following:

- Develop planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and related analysis, and to draw lessons from past experience that can be applied and shared with other relevant actors.
- Generate indicators that enable them to properly plan and assess interventions. These indicators will enable change actors to move beyond the limited utility of using homicide and crime statistics to assess and plan interventions.
- Generate a collaborative, shared, and informative mechanism and the space that will permit relevant institutions and actors to engage with each other in the context of a growing evidence base and increasingly shared questions, goals, and concerns.
- Incorporate existing research and identify, commission, and apply the findings of further research as necessary on issues such as trauma and chronic trauma, fear and social fear, changing families and communities, adverse childhood experiences, the role of mass media, popular culture, religion, migration, internal displacement, and the changing cultural, social, and physiological qualities of femininity, masculinity, and sexuality.

Hypothesis 4

Change agents should properly assess the challenge and identify the most appropriate targets of intervention. Interventions should contemplate the respective and often rapidly changing roles of specific groups, their developmental needs, and the nature of their relations with other critical social interlocutors, processes, and institutions over time. Future interventions should:

- Prioritize strengthening the fundamental developmental conditions and the primary relationships and networks that enables children to thrive. This includes:
 - The maternal-infant bond
 - The capacity of parents and other primary care givers to parent their children appropriately
 - The evolving nature of childhood roles, experiences, and relationships with others
 - The relationships between individuals and groups at the micro- and meso-tiers
 - The capacity of individuals, groups, and relevant institutions to engage with chronic violence in increasingly constructive ways
- Target groups in affected societies in evidence-based correspondence to their relative need and role in reproduction of violence. Methods should place a high priority on the critical actors, groups, and institutions in society and their primary networks. In particular, this will have implications for current priorities assigned to youth at risk and in conflict with the law, the poor, indigenous people, and other ethnic and identity minorities, women, and urban dwellers. This will also affect expectations for

community policing and citizen security commissions, and the role of other higher-tier justice and security efforts.

- Fully contemplate in interventions new scientific insights about the roles of instinctual, emotional, cognitive and pre-cognitive, social, and political aspects of how people develop and function, and how these aspects relate to each other.
- Directly address and sponsor new research and innovative interventions on the critical challenges of trauma, chronic trauma, fear and social fear, and other important processes. These include the relationship of chronic violence with the following:
 - Mass media
 - Popular culture
 - Migration and internal displacement
 - Changing moral values and notions of victim/perpetrator
 - The nature of “corruption” which is an essential effect and reproducer of chronic violence through the blurring of moral values and priorities
 - Changing notions of masculinities and femininities
 - The role of the global economic crisis and climate change
 - States and inadequate justice systems in reproduction of chronic violence
 - Certain kinds of economic development, including mining, and energy production effort such as hydroelectric and thermal energy projects
 - The role of money laundering, drug trafficking and other illicit activities
- Focus on enabling people to be able to process pre-cognitive experiences of trauma and fear consciously and constructively through art and cultural experiences. A key method is “expressive approaches” that permit them to access pre- and non-cognitive experiences of fear and trauma and to bring them into cognitive awareness.

Hypothesis 5

Change agents should ensure public health officials and primary health care providers play a central and primary role in identifying, monitoring, and broadly communicating evolving knowledge about adverse childhood experiences, the nature of traumatic and fear-driven experiences, and their links to physical, behavioral, and mental ailments and cultural practices, institutions, and beliefs.

[Efforts to track and stem the effects of these experiences, which predict propensity for lifelong physical and mental health problems, can represent enormous savings in future public health costs and enable change agents to better understand the dimensions of this challenge. The Adverse Childhood Experiences framework is already being applied by primary service providers as basic diagnostic tools alongside other long accepted indicators of health, and global adverse childhood experiences indicators can be easily adapted and applied in Central America.]

Hypothesis 6

Interventions should investigate and systematically contemplate how chronic violence:

- Undermines the primary processes that inform social relations and citizenship practice
- Weakens people's cognitive capacity to engage constructively in ever-broadening social and political relations and objectives (counteracting short-term survivalist priorities that limit and condition how people interact with and perceive each other and how they characterize, understand, and pursue social and political objectives)
- Consistently pushes belief systems, relations, institutions, and values toward survivalist priorities (progressively blurring licit and illicit acts, practices, beliefs, and institutions and leading to confusion, internal contradiction, and violence)

Interventions and monitoring and evaluation processes should contemplate and pursue efforts that illuminate critical aspects of these processes. [These include:

- How visible and invisible boundaries and structures of authority and power among affected populations relate to the generation of increased, conflict, and violence.
- The complex and often unfamiliar ways that increasingly permit vulnerable groups, change agents, and other key actors to navigate the moral and existential realities of life in chronic violence — characterized by increasingly blurry perceptions of right/wrong and licit/illicit that emerge in the “grey zone.”
- The roles of democratization, political, and judicial reform, including the relative priority accorded in weaker states to the provision of basic social and civic services and state generation of violence. Both in democracies and other governmental forms, these deeply inform the conditions in which citizens perceive governance, government, and civic roles.
- The tendency of vulnerable populations to perceive themselves as passive victims deserving and subject to “rights” rather than citizens or proto-citizens responsible for forging the conditions of democratic governance. Especially critical is the assessment, reflection, and, as necessary, modification of the roles, assumptions, and priorities of international and national change actors and states.

Most critical, efforts should prioritize mechanisms that enable people to respond constructively toward themselves and in their social and political relations. This involves strengthening resilience (as defined by Davis), both bonding and bridging social capital, community or social assets, and constructive forms of personal and collective efficacy. The mechanisms that forge the least dependence on external sources of funding and changes should be prioritized. This “do least harm” policy is especially critical today given the ongoing global financial crisis; the related regression of international and national aid; mounting regional, internecine, and other forms of violence, conflict, and

state contestation; increasingly unpredictable and discontinuous international markets; polarized and changeable internal politics, financial conditions, geopolitical priorities, and global climatic conditions; and changing forms of national and international aid, philanthropy, and charity.]

Recommendations for Action in Central America

Change agents today have the opportunity to align their future investment with the systematic challenge of chronic violence. These recommendations detail the steps that change agents can take to:

- Assess and review the objectives and results to date in light of lessons learned and this more integrated understanding of the challenge
- Launch a powerful, evidence-based approach that contemplates the full dimensions of the task and the promising approaches already underway by USAID and other agencies
- Participate in building and sustaining a long-term collaborative capacity to observe, assess, and track this evolving challenge and the progressive effects of its own and others' efforts

These proposals offer a broader, integrated approach (through a larger process of intensified collaboration with other major stakeholders) that can better ensure USAID's future investments are more effective. The recommendations are relevant for virtually all of the other major change initiatives underway in the region sponsored by national and international agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and grassroots social organizations.

1. Clearly define what is meant by “violence,” “chronic violence,” and “human development,” as well as the general strategic objective for action.

USAID and other major stakeholders first require a systematic and unified definition of violence, chronic violence, human development, and change that corresponds to the scope of the challenge at hand. See those offered in Part I. Hypothesis I (see Part II) details a new, more integrated and strategic objective for future interventions to address the violence in the region that aligns with these definitions.

2. Establish an expert advisory group to accompany and strengthen the long-term effort.

USAID and other major stakeholders should form a group of the critical actors and thought leaders leading efforts to address this issue, in order to learn from their evolving insights, approaches, and ideas, and to be able to consult them in the assessment, experimentation, and evaluation of future efforts. A list of potential participants is provided in Annex D.

[Note: Recommendations 3 – 5 should be implemented in a single interactive process.]

3. Train USAID staff and other key colleagues to recognize and identify chronic violence and use the CV-HD framework to inform programmatic responses.

Chronic trauma is a transversal driver of violence throughout the life of people living in chronic violence. This needs to become a transversal foundation of future USAID programming with staff trained to develop appropriate tools for diagnosis and long-term management of this phenomenon. These efforts need to be based on new insights provided by the scientific community about the ways that violence, trauma, and constructive behavior depend on brain processes that interact intimately with changing social conditions.

USAID should convene a meeting to review the implications of the CV-HD framework for prevailing assumptions and theories that drive current programming and evaluation efforts, as well as critical elements not contemplated in current programming. The training program should contemplate the following points to equip USAID staff to develop and launch the new approach:

- Understand the CV-HD theory and associated proposals
- Analyze implications for the issues and challenges to be addressed and current theories, approaches, and strategies
- Analyze relevant programs, social dynamics, and processes that would be affected or would affect this work over time⁹

4. Contribute to creating and sustaining a national-level pilot chronic violence observatory in one country. This should provide the foundational experience to then build a regional system of national observatories that will permit stakeholders to compare and contrast how chronic violence manifests in diverse contexts and draw lessons applicable to the challenge elsewhere in the world.

A pilot effort to build a chronic violence observatory in a specific target country could enable change agents to contribute to building the foundations for a longer-term collaborative effort of documentation and intervention. The observatory would enhance the following strategic objectives:

- Build the capacity of individual participants to better contextualize the aspects of the problem that they focus on and how it fits into the larger dynamics of violence

⁹The relevant social dynamics and processes should be made available through the chronic violence observatory. Relevant “change efforts” and related initiatives to take into consideration include transitional justice and related psychosocial efforts to address trauma and conflict-related violence; economic development efforts; environmental reform initiatives, programs of primary health care providers, and other health related efforts; programs targeting maternal child health, nutrition and hygiene, child development, and training for parents; formal and informal educational programs; efforts concerned with migrant populations, ethnic minorities, and other marginalized groups; and gender and age-related questions.

- Promote long-term inter-institutional and inter-sectoral learning, collaboration, and the capacity for aligning strategic approaches
- Provide a mechanism to begin to integrate relevant micro-level and macro-level data

Operational tasks required:

- Convene potential participants and review prevailing concepts of violence and current sectoral or institutional approaches and products. Potential participants should explore the utility of constructing a platform to enhance conceptual compatibility and data gathering.
- Convene an expert advisory group to identify priorities for initial collaborative efforts for research, citizen action, and policy intervention.
- Map existing and potential sources of violence and potential participants in the observatory project. See Annex F for a preliminary catalogue of issues and institutions to consider.
- Assess relative interest, capacity, and potential contributions of relevant institutions.
- Identify and establish the first group of critical institutions and actors to plan and launch the pilot observatory. An initial observatory along these lines, progressively organized according to the CV-HD theory, has been organized already by the Myrna Mack Foundation in Guatemala and is available for review at www.observatoriodeviolencias.com. This initiative could be supported and converted into the pilot observatory recommended here and serve as the incubator institution for the regional consortium of observatories.
- Collectively construct and implement a plan of action in accordance with the strategic objectives that includes:
 - Identification of initial priorities for analysis
 - Development of an initial set of indicators that will enable participants to assess chronic violence in specific locations
 - Development of priorities for convening and training relevant groups of actors to engage them in the process and gain insights to inform understanding and action
 - Deciding and initiating a first collective effort to track and analyze a specific challenge (e.g., trauma or childhood adverse experiences)

5. Assess and prioritize the critical target populations and processes in evidence-based correspondence to their relative need and role in the reproduction of chronic violence. Those meriting special attention given the findings of this paper include:

- Children and families

- Youth, especially as they relate to their families and other primary networks
- The relative focus on poor, middle class and upper income people
- Indigenous groups and other excluded groups
- Women with a focus on how they relate to men and their children

Annex E provides justifications for reassessing current priority groups.

6. Take a multi-generational and relational approach that contemplates primary development, families, and networks.

Interventions should be based on an integral approach to early childhood development, parenting capacities, and primary relations over the short, medium, and long term. The goal should be to strengthen the fundamental developmental conditions and the primary relationships and networks, structures, institutions, and beliefs that enable people to develop and thrive. The critical foundations for such development are:

- Maternal-infant bond
- Capacity of parents and other primary care-givers to parent their children appropriately
- Evolving nature of childhood roles, experiences, and relationships with others
- Relations between individuals and groups in the micro- and meso-tiers
- Capacity of individuals, groups, and relevant institutions to engage in increasingly constructive ways with chronic violence

7. Increase investment in art and cultural initiatives (visual art, movement, theater, music) that enable target groups to constructively process and transcend non-cognitive experiences of fear and trauma.

8. Recognize the importance of primary health providers and public health officials who play a critical role in identifying and addressing trauma and adverse childhood experiences.

9. Ensure that all programming effectively enhances human, social and political development. Programming should be designed to build capabilities such as resilience, community assets, both bonding and bridging capital, and socially and politically constructive forms of personal and collective efficacy.

10. Investigate the role of mass media in the reproduction of violence and engage key actors in building more constructive approaches to producing public information about this key challenge.

In the context of democracy, the mass media have tended to be conceived in the classic liberal way as a necessary and fundamental arm of democracy that is critical to freedom in information and access to the “truth.” This role in fact is critical in contexts where the press plays a critical role in exposing information about the role of illicit actors — inside and outside of states — including drug and organized criminal actors. However, the mass

media in Central America can over-expose violence and desensitize people to violence. USAID programs can play a leading role in promoting a broader sense of responsibility within the mass media, as well as proper skepticism in the general public about the dangerous ways that media inadvertently contribute to escalating perceptions of fear and anti-democratic sentiment among citizens in contexts of chronic violence. The corruption in mass media has been an inadvertent effect of international efforts aimed to promote a free press and freedom of information, and is critical to address as part of this effort.

11. Create an integral approach to assessment, planning, monitoring, and evaluation which contemplates the systematic and long-term nature of the challenge.

A systematic model for assessment, planning, monitoring, and evaluation of programming will enable USAID and other stakeholders to contemplate the complex and interactively changing environment in which interventions take place and the unexpected ways that changes can provoke other unanticipated consequences. An approach worth considering is *outcome mapping*, a method pioneered by the International Development Research Centre of Canada that has been used by many institutions in Latin America and elsewhere. It is described as follows:

More and more, development organizations are under pressure to demonstrate that their programs result in significant and lasting changes in the well-being of their intended beneficiaries. However, such "impacts" are often the product of a confluence of events for which no single agency or group of agencies can realistically claim full credit. As a result, assessing development impacts is problematic, yet many organizations continue to struggle to measure results far beyond the reach of their programs.

Outcome mapping recognizes that development is essentially about people relating to each other and their environment. The originality of this approach lies in its shift away from assessing the products of a program to focus on changes in behavior, relationships, actions, and activities in the people, groups, and organizations it works with directly. In doing so, outcome mapping debunks many of the myths about measuring impact. It will help a program be specific about the actors it targets, the changes it expects to see, and the strategies it employs. As a result, the program will achieve better results. (International Development Research Centre of Canada 2001)

12. Develop a matrix to organize and order the major problems of chronic violence and human development, specify approaches and collaborative needs, and define mechanisms of continual assessment, tracking, and evaluation.

This matrix should include:

- Specific objectives to be pursued
- Relevant social processes carried out by other entities and institutions, and realities that will affect or be affected by these efforts

- The anticipated duration and scope of the initiative
- The funding and time requirements and anticipated allocation for each initiative
- The specific assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation requirements to track the success of the initiative

13. Systematically assess and contemplate in interventions the discontinuous and inconsistent nature of international and national aid and the uncertainty of such investments given the global economic crisis.

One of the most daunting aspects of chronic violence is the fact that it continues to exist in part because of what may be the systematic incapacity of states and external institutions to address and correct the long-term forces that continue to drive it. This problem is compounded by the well-known inconsistency and discontinuity that are intrinsic characteristics of international aid efforts and external interventions; such organizations need to assess this reality in realistic ways that takes into the long-term dimensions of this challenge and their ability to provoke the long-term changes that the challenge requires.

In many states and regions of the world, states have relatively little or no reach, and there is a lack of political will to follow through on mandates. In such cases, USAID and other change actors should prioritize support that will provide tools and capacities that the most affected communities and populations can appropriate for themselves to manage their situations in more constructive ways. Potential priorities include (1) research on topics that require more data to build effective programming; (2) training of local actors in key capabilities – social action, programmatic methodologies, research – necessary to address this long term problem, and (3) support for facilitation of processes to build national and local capacities for analysis and long term social action, for example, via the construction of the National Chronic Violence Observatory.

PART III. THE CHALLENGE OF CHRONIC VIOLENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA: OBSERVATIONS FROM A SURVEY OF MAJOR VIOLENCE, CRIMINALITY, AND CITIZEN SECURITY CHANGE EFFORTS

This section summarizes observations from a sample of approximately 80 current violence-related initiatives and programs being implemented in Central America by international and national organizations, NGOs, and private sector organizations. See Annex III for a list of Central American organizations and initiatives that address violence.

Scope and Limitations of the Sample Reviewed

The programs reviewed generally focus on the following:

- Programs for children
- Programs for youth
- Programs for women and families
- Community-based citizen security programs

This initial mapping of programming only gathered general information on individual programs available on one or both major databases that provide information on violence intervention programs in the region. For Guatemala, additional initiatives have been added based on the personal knowledge and experience of the writers of this report. When possible, further research was done on the websites of relevant institutions. This initial mapping has the following limitations:

- The range of programs identified constitutes only a portion of the relevant programs in the region. A more comprehensive list of existing programs can be gained through a more systematic review and targeted questions.
- Only limited information was readily available via the databases and individual websites. No detailed descriptions, substantive programmatic descriptions, operational assumptions and strategic goals, or evaluations of specific initiatives were available.
- Independent and thorough evaluations and assessments to learn how the programmatic goals, approaches, and outcomes link to the nature of the problem identified by the executing agency and external assessment of the problem could be critical inputs and are not available for public access through the means used for this report. Given that the majority of initiatives are publicly funded, this information should be publicly accessible.
- Since the formats in which the most readily available data are accessible (mass databases and institutional websites) are essentially used for communicational or public relations, it is safe to assume that the information reviewed here is essentially

the “public relations” version of these initiatives. In effect, this limits the value of the sample to being a survey of what the programs and executing agencies choose to tell the public about what they do, which must be informed by their needs to protect their legitimacy and existence.

- The survey only reviews programs that explicitly target the subjects detailed above. This means that a wide range of relevant programs, which may touch on the same problem but are not defined in the same way by funders and change agents, were not included in this review. This includes the efforts of primary health care providers working on the physical and sometimes other related dimensions; efforts that seek to support maternal-infant health, nutrition and hygiene issues, child development, and parental training programs; transitional justice and related psychosocial efforts addressing trauma and conflict-related violence; and organizations concerned with migrants, rural and urban development, and older people.

Despite these limitations, the information summarized below does enable us to make some initial observations. Posed as questions or issues meriting further exploration, these could also be used to inform a more comprehensive analytical review of the prevailing approaches to violence prevention, reduction, and intervention in the region.

General Observations

- 1. There is a dramatic imbalance in the diversity, relative investment, and sheer quantity of programs addressing the problem of violence among youth compared to programs focused on other groups acknowledged to be vulnerable or critical to resolving the problem (such as children, women and families, and communities).**

Even taking into account all the limitations of the sample reviewed, one is immediately struck by the priority given to programs focused on at-risk and violent youth in comparison to the other groups that have been commonly recognized as vulnerable to violence in society. The sample shows:

- 5 programs targeting children (and in a few cases youth)
- 40 programs targeting youth (and in a few cases children)
- 10 programs targeting women and families
- 4 programs supporting citizen security initiatives

Given the fundamental ways that a disposition and vulnerability to violence and traumatic reenactment of violent primary experiences can be established in primary stages of life and reenacted through the primary process of parenting and child development, this priority appears to merit immediate attention.

2. Certain vulnerable populations and problem areas are absent or virtually absent from programmatic efforts.

Certain critical problems and directly relevant populations appear to be either totally absent or relatively neglected in the programs and approaches conceived as “violence prevention and reduction” and “citizen security.” These neglected areas that become evident through the CV-HD framework as critical to violence production include those that contemplate:

- Challenges facing families living in contexts of violence, including stress caused by migration into urban areas or international migration and the loss of extended families
- The particular dangers facing parents and infant children, including dangers to the maternal-infant bond, to the capacity of parents to raise children, and to early childhood development
- Challenging conditions in which families raise children today
- The need for psychological, physical, and medical oversight of what is happening to populations exposed to long-term violence
- The need to prepare professionals and leaders to understand and be able to recognize and address the common problem of trauma or chronic trauma
- The need for consistent interchange between those working in the field of “war-time” violence and trauma with those seeking to address the traumatic effects of chronic violence
- The complex and destructive ways that middle- and upper middle-class people are affected by violence and engage in illicit and socially destructive activities in self-defense
- The need to document and address the complex ways that NGOs may also be affected by violence
- The implications of prevailing economic development policies and practices, such as real estate and land development schemes, urbanization policies, migration, environmental and natural resource destruction, and related nutritional and physical health problems
- The kinds of violence and trauma that children, especially of marginalized communities, may be experiencing in schools and other primary environments
- The limitations to effective policy and action caused by the lack of critical information, research, and interaction with other relevant initiatives and fields

3. There is no comprehensive baseline study of existing violence-related efforts in the region.

A comprehensive base-line study of existing violence-related efforts in the region would be a major and fundamental contribution to enable change agents to understand and design the best approach to this formidable challenge. If the limitations faced in conducting this initial mapping indicate something about the nature of publically available data on such initiatives, there appear to be significant limitations in the nature of the information readily available about existing violence-related initiatives underway in the region. A more comprehensive effort to understand what has happened in the region in this field would require the necessary resources and broad access so as to be able to compile a more comprehensive list of relevant local, national and international programs. The researchers would need to be able to access and review publicly available programmatic descriptions and evaluations and trace the nature of funding and diverse kinds of institutional support in order to gain a better picture of what these efforts thought they were doing, what they may be accomplishing (or have accomplished), and what conclusions or lessons are being developed or have been learned.

4. Efforts appear to be largely self-isolated or “siloed.”

There is a tendency evident in most of the programs to focus on one group or another in relative isolation from the other key actors. This not only weakens the capacity to work on the systematic challenges that unite projects, but also their capacity to engage actively with the larger knowledge base of best practices and how these issues relate to the others, and could positively or negatively affect the relative effectiveness of everyone. For example:

- Most programs focusing on children address them outside of the context of their families.
- In virtually none of the cursory descriptions of youth programs were we able to identify efforts to work with youth in the context of their families.
- Women tend to be addressed as the victims of men, but not in terms of the impact of this violence on their capacity to raise children.
- An important partial exception is that various programs focusing on children also focus on youth, and vice versa; however, few of these appear to work with children and youth in relationship to their families.

Recognizing the limitations assumed by these isolated approaches is a first step to building more systematic, evidence-based, and collaborative approaches.

5. The “rights” focus and emphasis on normative or moral requirements taken by many programs do not take into account the complex realities reflected by chronic violence.

Assumptions about the natural legitimacy and the positive effects of the “rights” focus and moral arguments that people should obey the law assume the natural legitimacy of

the basic tenets of democracy; for people in conditions of chronic violence, however, these assumptions may not be as “natural” or “legitimate” as more basic needs to survive and defend their basic identities. The need for survival and identity is accompanied by complex and interrelated sets of “alternative” cultural constructs, beliefs, and social structures, both licit and illicit. Hence, such approaches cannot necessarily be expected to have the effects that their promoters would like them to have. This reality calls again for change agents to carefully assess the complex ways in which violence affects the lives of target populations, change agents' own assumptions about how change occurs or should occur, and the nature of roles and responsibilities. As noted earlier, the rights approach (among people who are victims of violence and systems that they cannot “get into”) can backfire. For people who lack institutionally guaranteed rights, the first priority is how to constructively develop such guarantees.

Normative approaches assume that both sides of the conversation are open to accepting the norm as a fundamental ground for life and action. In contexts of chronic violence, using these approaches may be like trying to get people to change by speaking a language that means very different things to both sides of the conversation. People in these conditions may be driven by other *de facto* norms and values, which drive them to act and understand their actions in very different ways.

6. The prevailing “gender” approaches are too narrowly focused and need to be broadened.

Prevailing efforts that focus on women as victims and assume that men are victimizers must be broadened to address the complex problems caused by skewed gender identities. Approaches need to account for women, men, and children victimized by the stress lived by their parents. Ample analysis exists on how chronic violence is accompanied by the intensified expressions of masculinity experienced in conditions of relative deprivation and tacit social permission for violence, and the traps these models increasingly represent for men’s role in the world. The ways that long-term subjugation can also foment compensatory protagonist tendencies is amply documented among marginalized groups such as indigenous groups in Central America. These lessons also apply to women. In fact, the most nuanced analyses of *machismo* note how it can foment men’s excessive dependence on women, who ironically are thus accorded more power and authority (albeit often in relatively covert form). This report has explained that the basic maternal-infant bond and parenting capacity may be fundamentally affected by stress and trauma caused by destructive relationships between adults.

7. Primary health care providers have an obvious and central role as consistent “monitors” of the physical and psychological effects of violence.

An early and obvious priority, glaring in its absence, is the need for primary health care clinics and physicians to be provided with the training and resources necessary to play an integral and central role in monitoring and addressing the adverse effects of chronic violence in their patients.

8. Spiritual leaders cannot be assumed to be “naturally” constructive agents of non-violence.

Given the critical and doubled-edged role that religious beliefs have been documented to have in conditions of chronic violence, spiritual and formal religious leaders need to be trained about both the constructive and destructive tools and implications of their professions and specific power. The engagement of religious leaders from various religious groups by change agents in violence control efforts needs to be done with full cognizance of the complex implications that religious and other value-based approaches can have in vulnerable communities, especially the ways they can justify an intensified sense of “us versus them” and the ways that religious beliefs — just like political and social beliefs — can be applied to justify and promote the legitimacy of socially destructive and violent beliefs and actions.

9. The prevalence of efforts that promote self-expression by “cultural means” is promising and should be strategically targeted and prioritized.

Because the experiences of overwhelming fear and chronic violence are stored as pre-cognitive experience, interventions based on promoting mechanisms of non-cognitively dependent self-expression (e.g., art, music, or drama) represent a fundamental, primary and indispensable approach for virtually all vulnerable groups young and old. These mechanisms can function independently of the ways that people may intellectually “understand” and “interpret” their experiences. To be effective, however, some of the initiatives described in this paper would need to be adjusted and retargeted significantly.

- Cultural forms of self-expression cannot be used as simple mechanisms to divert attention or get people off the streets. These mechanisms are powerful tools that open fundamental pathways to enable vulnerable groups to access fundamental drivers of the way people experience life that may only be accessible through these means.
- The providers and facilitators of such processes have to be properly trained to recognize the mechanisms of trauma and the role of pre-cognitive modes of expression to more effectively harness and work with this powerful instrument, including mechanisms to constructively manage crises that could be provoked in target groups.
- Along with programs targeting early childhood development and parenting, such programmatic approaches should be given priority in efforts to deal with populations traumatized by chronic violence.

10. The critical role of constructive mentoring should be incorporated as a central objective.

Mentoring for young people needs to be contemplated first and foremost in the ways that it could be protected, recuperated, or properly stimulated within the context of existing family and primary structures. In addition, mentoring by outside institutions and actors should be approached such that it does not inadvertently weaken or replace family-level or primary-network level mentoring.

11. The significant limitations and dangers of citizen security initiatives need to be understood and directly addressed.

An urgent priority for careful and independent assessment is the nature of the obstacles and unintended negative consequences of citizen security efforts, which go by different names. This powerful tool can easily become derailed and misdirected in ways that in fact are quite easy to both predict and anticipate from the CV-HD framework and have been well mapped out by a recent study in two Guatemalan communities by the Mack Foundation.

12. Locally conducted diagnoses of violence and criminality should map and analyze how the community's problems may be intrinsically related to insufficiencies and cooptation of police capacity, justice, and law enforcement institutions all the way up the institutional ladder.

The unintended consequences of empowering historically excluded indigenous groups to control and implement the local dimension of their own security needs through “traditional” or “customary” law are similarly vulnerable in the lack of larger “containment” in the contexts of dysfunctional national-level justice and law enforcement. It is important to work with local groups to map the alternative measures in cases where higher level authorities cannot or will not provide them with necessary support for their own security protection efforts.

13. Citizen-oriented security initiatives and higher-level state security related efforts need to be designed and implemented hand in hand with how they interact and depend on other parts of the system.

A major danger caused by the *de facto* isolation of the various critical initiatives in the security realm is the lack of consideration for how changes to one aspect of the security system affect other aspects of the system.

The viability of citizen security initiatives seem to rest on the assumption that the functions of higher level justice and law enforcement entities are somehow intact, or that somehow the reforms that may be underway in other parts of the system are effective immediately. Neither of these assumptions usually tends to be true in the deeply rooted nature of chronic violence that this report addresses. All initiatives need to be designed and implemented with built-in mechanisms to contemplate their effects and dependence on other critical elements of the system. All efforts to address the “justice” element of the chronic violence equation depend on the conjunction of a wide range of factors that need to be identified and contemplated in planning interventions and monitoring results. Many of these factors can be anticipated through a careful application of the CV-HD framework to citizen security initiatives.

14. Urgent need to assess what is working in the most promising initiatives.

There are powerful common threads in current initiatives that, from the point of view offered by the CV-HD framework, would appear to be the most promising. These can provide a critical and experiential baseline for future efforts to build off. The model initiatives especially worthy of reviewing, the proponents and evaluators of which should be consulted, include:

- *Escuelas Seguras* from Guatemala and similar initiatives.
- The sophisticated expressive approaches that emerged from trauma-related therapeutic efforts and are practiced by the Ileana Gil Center in Virginia, other innovative efforts in Central America (*Caja Lúdica*), and elsewhere.
- Community-based security initiatives.
- The Mexican government's Federal Violence Prevention initiative.
- The Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development Initiative (detailed in Annex A).
- The Violence Interrupters approach, until recently known as CeaseFire; (detailed in Annex A).
- Lessons learned by the Development Research Center's (DRC) Citizenship Project (detailed in Annex B).
- Lessons learned through the recent multi-country comparative study of resilience led by Davis et al for USAID.
- The recent exhaustive evaluation of the ambitious *Unidades de Policia Pacificadora effort* carried out by the Brazilian government to address the chronic scenario of chronic violence in marginal urban areas of Rio de Janeiro (detailed in Annex A).
- The new initiative by the Urban Institute and collaborators to address the chronic problems of violence and social anomie among chronically excluded urban populations in the United States (detailed in Annex A).
- Lessons learned by the InterAmerican Foundation from its efforts to develop more effective programming based on the application of the CV-HD framework with grassroots target groups in Latin America. Early contributions from this effort will be a toolkit that facilitates a process for interested organizations to familiarize themselves with the dynamics of chronic violence and outlines a stair-step process to begin to be able to apply this framework to the specific interest arenas of the individual group or actor. This is currently under development at the InterAmerican Foundation and may be completed by February 2013.

- Lessons learned by the Mack Foundation and collaborators in their efforts to build a national integrated approach to systematic violence that has shaken Guatemalan society and the state to the core over the past decade. This is a long-term effort to mount a new kind of violence observatory that seeks to engage relevant institutions that keep records on the disparate factors associated with chronic violence into an integrated, long-term, collaborative effort of mapping, continual monitoring, and increasing the collective understanding and collaborative processes of rethinking approaches (detailed in Annex A).
- The findings and correction of the CV-HD theory that will emerge from a series of working group meetings of different sub-committees of the Latin America Working Group on Chronic Violence and Citizenship. These meetings will convene cutting-edge thinkers and change agents to further refine the concept and approaches mandated by the Chronic Violence and Human Development Framework.¹⁰

¹⁰ These meetings will occur early in 2013 and are sponsored by the Guatemala-based Mack Foundation and the National Endowment for Democracy. For more information, contact the Mack Foundation.

ANNEX A. BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF PROMISING MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND MULTISECTORAL INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE

All of the following models have certain common threads:

- Multi-disciplinary approach
- A foundation in realistic, evidence-based assessments of how the phenomenon is experienced and understood on the ground
- Appreciation of the multi-dimensional and deep roots of violence in the affected communities
- Understanding that the violence that needs to be addressed is caused by multiple factors and needs to be addressed through a systematic approach from the micro to macro levels
- The assumption that violence is often naturalized (assumed to be normal behavior) and gives power and legitimacy to certain actors, values, and ways of life
- Contain independent evaluations

Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development Model

The City of Los Angeles Mayor's office, over the past decade, has launched a comprehensive program to reduce violence and support youth and family development. The program seeks to apply state-of-the-art research and the realities of the pervasive problem of gangs in Los Angeles, and is described in a 2011 document as follows:

The Mission of the [Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD)] Office and Comprehensive Strategy is to reduce gang violence within the Los Angeles communities with the most need by:

- Reducing gang joining among youth at high risk for gang membership;
- Reducing gang involvement among young people who have already joined a gang;
- Providing effective proactive peace-making and responses to incidents of violence as they occur; and
- Improving communication and collaboration within and across government agencies, community-based organizations and community residents.¹¹

The first year of the comprehensive program was evaluated by the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center, which is charged with overseeing an ongoing, independent evaluation of the initiative.¹²

¹¹See <http://mayor.lacity.org/Issues/GangReduction/index.htm>.

The GRYD Comprehensive Strategy, published in December of 2011, reports that the GRYD program is a multi-systemic strategy directed at both the micro-level (i.e., individuals, peers, schools, and family) and macro-level (i.e., the community), and recognizes the importance of simultaneously directing activities to multiple systems that significantly contribute to a young person's ability to avoid gang membership and the associated violence, and to live a healthy and stable life. It comprises five interrelated approaches, including:

1. *Primary prevention.* Activities that support the community and help build its resistance to risk factors for gang membership and gang violence. Activities target the entire community and attempt to involve residents throughout the family lifecycle stages.
2. *Secondary prevention.* Secondary prevention is directed at youth aged 10 to 15 and families identified as high-risk for joining gangs. Young people in this category may be loosely involved in gang-related activities but not members of a gang.
3. *Intervention case management services for gang-involved young people.* The case management services focus on family case management with gang-involved youth between the ages of 14 and 25 and crisis response (e.g., mentoring, counseling, and community policing). The case management services also focus on proactive peacemaking in the community.
4. *Engagement with the community and law enforcement in a community policing capacity.*
5. *Suppression.* This approach contemplates targeted suppression activities and through regular communication with law enforcement agencies helps coordinate prevention, intervention, and suppression activities.

GRYD builds on multiple theories that analyze the phenomena of gangs and family systems, recognize the importance of supporting community residents along the family life cycle, and evaluate and treat youth in their family contexts. The program encourages multi-generational family “connectedness,” seeks to reinforce parental/caretaker authority, and uses positive and effective problem-solving skills at the individual, family, and community levels. It helps young people to self-differentiate from gang culture through alternative positive activities and positive connections with supportive, positive family members or adults. Thus, at the community level, it seeks to strengthen community-level support systems to alter norms that tolerate violence and instead support healthy children, youths, and families. At the individual, family, and peer levels, it seeks to change behavior by focusing on the family structure or living context that may not provide sufficient nurturing and firm direction for the youth, the youth’s internal decision-making processes, the peer-level interactions that reinforce antisocial norms,

¹² See, for example, *Evaluation of the Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development Program, Year 1* (<http://mayor.lacity.org/Issues/GangReduction/index.htm>). Other evaluations are publicly available on this website.

and the absence of pro-social, desirable alternatives that compete with the allure of the gang culture and peer pressure (Céspedes and Herz 2011).

Cure Violence (formerly Cease Fire)¹³

An approach that has gained much public attention in recent years is Cure Violence, formerly named Cease Fire, which was started by a public health specialist long associated with the World Health Organization, Gary Slutkin. Slutkin came from a professional career focused on combating major global infectious diseases, such as AIDS. Cure Violence is a unique, interdisciplinary, public health approach to violence prevention that maintains violence is a learned behavior, is rooted and reproduced in social and other reproductive factors, becomes normalized as appropriate and useful behavior, and can be prevented using disease control methods. Operating through a public health conceptual approach, it seeks to prevent violence through a three-pronged approach that includes:

1. *Detection and interruption of transmission.* Using a combination of statistical information and street knowledge, Cure Violence can determine where to concentrate efforts, focus resources, and intervene in violence. The data reveals which communities are impacted, provides a picture of those individuals at the highest risk for violence, and shows how to intervene.
2. *Behavior change to the highest risk.* This involves intervention in crises, mediating disputes between individuals, and interceding on group disputes to prevent violent events. Staff members are trained to know who to influence and how to talk to and de-escalate situations by meeting the participants where they are and working to change behavior and connect them to resources that would otherwise be out of reach.
3. *Changing community norms involves changing thinking about violence at the community level and the society at large.* It assumes that violence has come to be accepted as an appropriate — even an expected — way to solve conflict. It seeks to identify who may have the legitimacy to be active interrupters, without assuming that people in specific roles will — by virtue of their positions — necessarily have this legitimacy. It provides tools to shift the discourse from “prosecution” toward “prevention” and from “rates of capture of criminal elements and military language, like ‘war on drugs/gangs’” to viewing violence as a “disease” and seeks to help to end an “epidemic.”

Urban Institute Housing Opportunity and Services Together (HOST) Initiative

Despite decades of federal and private initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life among the most excluded and poorest populations in the United States, many remain mired today in the most destructive kind of poverty:

¹³ See <http://cureviolence.org/what-we-do/the-model/>.

The 2010 Census indicates that the larger forces—inequality and racial segregation—have, if anything, only intensified over the past decade, especially given the effects of the recession and foreclosure crisis. With the current level of political polarization in the United States and the focus on the federal deficit, there it seems unlikely that there will be any political will to address these broad, societal trends that contribute to the levels of distress in chronically disadvantaged communities. ...In the meantime, the families who endure these conditions are suffering and need targeted, effective assistance. In particular, they need new and innovative approaches to help alleviate the damage of living with chronic disadvantage and especially, to improve the educational and economic prospects for children so that they do not become the next generation of disadvantaged parents. The housing authorities that manage public housing developments need new strategies that will allow them to effectively manage their properties and prevent the kind of disorder and decay that creates such distress. Finally, the neighborhoods that surround these properties also need these solutions so that they, too, do not suffer the consequences of concentrated disadvantage.¹⁴

Building on more than two decades of research on some of the most systematically excluded populations in the United States — those living in distressed public housing communities — HOST is described as follows:

[HOST] is a comprehensive approach that could both help the families who live in these extremely disadvantaged communities and strengthen their communities [being tested through] through the two-generation Housing Opportunities and Services Together (HOST) Demonstration. Policy makers and practitioners have begun to recognize the promise of two-generation or whole family approaches as a means for addressing the worst consequences of concentrated poverty and helping families move toward self-sufficiency (Mosle and Patel 2012). HOST seeks to add to this body of knowledge, testing the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of targeting the most vulnerable families in a set of public housing and mixed-income communities with intensive, wrap-around services. The HOST Demonstration's goals are 1) improving employment, education, and physical and mental health outcomes for families and 2) reducing the level of violence and disorder for the community. HOST is currently being implemented in five sites; the comprehensive evaluation will generate lessons to inform similar efforts across the nation.” (Popkin and McDaniel 2012)

The Rio de Janeiro *Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora* (UPP)

The Brazilian military launched the UPP initiative in Rio de Janeiro in 2009 to “retake” *favelas* (“shanty towns”) long overrun by drug traffickers and organized crime, and to install and maintain a new kind of state-controlled social order. The commentary provided here comes from an independent evaluation of the initiative conducted by the *Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* and financed by the *Andean Corporación de Desarrollo*, finalized in May of 2012 (Cano 2012).

¹⁴ See <http://www.urban.org/publications/901403.html>.

The report notes that the basic objectives of the UPP were to "consolidate state control over communities under the strong influence of armed criminal elements and return to the local population the public peace and tranquility that are necessary for the exercise of full citizenship that guarantees both economic and social development." Additionally, the UPP sought to permit the entrance or expansion of public and private services traditionally limited by the parallel power of criminal groups; strengthen and formalize the economic activities, local services, and lives of local residents historically dominated by conditions of informality; and help connect these territories and their inhabitants to the rest of the city, moving beyond the traditional vision of a city divided in two that has long characterized the development of Rio de Janeiro.

ANNEX B. MECHANISMS AND INTERVENTIONS THAT POSITIVELY AND NEGATIVELY EMPOWER AFFECTED POPULATIONS

This annex provides summaries of some of the analytical efforts that detail mechanisms that can positively – as well as in some cases negatively – empower vulnerable populations.

The Limitations of Constructive Citizen Action in Chronic Violence Conditions

The role of citizen-led development and grassroots participation in democracy and development constitute fundamental operating assumptions for foreign aid, civil society, and philanthropy. However, there is little evidence about the actual effects or utility of citizen action, what it entails, and what is required for it to be successful. The “Citizenship DRC,” a decade-long project led by the Development Research Center, explored this question in 150 sites in 20 countries and published its final conclusions in 2009. This project found that the role of citizen action in promoting good governance becomes most effective through strategies that work across state and society, linking champions of change together from both sectors. In practice, state and society exist in relationship to each other and are interdependent and mutually constructive. The study concludes that the quality of the social and political effects of citizen engagement, whether constructive or destructive, depends on several things. It states:

[Effective citizen action can aid citizens to build] a sense of citizenship and contribute to more effective citizenship practices, which in turn help to create more responsive and accountable states and more inclusive and cohesive societies. When it fails, however, engagement can lead to disempowerment, more clientilistic practices, a less responsive state and an increasingly divided society. The difference between the two is often a product of six factors:

- *The institutional and political environment. In post-conflict and fragile societies, citizen action has largely been restricted to involvement in grassroots associations, whereas in states where democratic practices and norms are more institutionalized, citizens enter participatory spaces and social movements in addition to joining local associations . . .*
- *Prior citizen capabilities. To act, citizens need self-confidence and a belief that they can have an impact. They also need knowledge of their rights and legal entitlements, of state procedures and other civic issues. And they need skills – how to hold meetings, organize petitions, litigate, network, raise media attention . . . Where this is lacking, it is unrealistic to expect citizens to deliver accountability or development goals. Yet, these capabilities are also an outcome of citizen engagement . . . Where citizen capabilities are weak, strengthening them through practice can contribute important intermediate steps to broader success.*

- *The strength of internal champions. Change often happens when there is both citizen pressure, on the one hand, and political will from inside the state on the other . . . Working at the interface of state and society can mean efforts to empower champions inside to build the necessary will to support those seeking change from the outside.*
- *History and style of engagement. Modes of interaction differ for historical and cultural reasons . . . Understanding these differences in history is crucial for designing context-appropriate programs . . . [and] can highlight past mistakes and reveal where an established pattern of citizen engagement already exists.*
- *The nature of the issue and how it is framed. The nature of the issue itself, and how it is framed by proponents, can drive the form of engagement and nature of the response.*
- *The location of power and decision making. In an increasingly globalized world . . . it is crucial that citizen engagement follow the changing patterns of power — from the local, to the national and global — in order to bring about effective change . . . A coordinated, multifaceted, multi-level way of approaching citizen engagement is crucial for positive incomes.” (Citizenship DRC 2011, 41-44)*

The Citizenship DRC project also drew some conclusions about the dynamics of citizen action in conditions of chronic violence, detailed in the full body of the report.

Individual and Collective Mechanisms and Processes that Enhance Both Positive and Negative Forms of Citizen Capacity and Collective Action

Several critical human and social development processes have been identified that in one way or another condition and underlie powerful process of human development. Like citizen action itself, which can be put to more or less socially constructive ends, each of the following — personal and collective efficacy, bonding and bridging social capital, and resilience — can also have both socially and politically constructive and destructive ends.

1. Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura, self-efficacy is a critical condition that enables people to exercise control or “agency” over their lives (Bandura 1997). He notes that personal efficacy refers fundamentally to one’s beliefs in one’s capability to organize and execute a course of action required to produce a given goal. People’s belief in their self-efficacy influences their course of action, resilience in adversity, the experience of stress or depression, whether they self-hinder or self-help, and the accomplishment of their goals. People’s belief and behavior depends on the interaction of internal personal factors (i.e., cognitive, affective, and biological) and the external environment (i.e., the social structural conditions) in which they operate. Following a similar logic to Bronfenbrenner’s,

Bandura argues that we are both products and producers of our social systems — objects of our own reflection and agents of our own action.

The development of high levels of personal efficacy requires delayed gratification, entails responsibility and enhanced risk, and tends to be pursued by leaders. People with a lower sense of personal efficacy tend to depend more on proxy controls and also have reduced opportunity to thrive.

Expectations regarding one’s personal efficacy and outcomes produce different kinds of actions and outcomes. People with positive personal efficacy beliefs will produce constructive and appropriate action both when they believe that outcomes will be negative and when they believe they will be positive. Actions in these cases vary from protest, grievance, and social action to productive engagement, aspiration, and personal satisfaction. By contrast, however, for people with negative personal efficacy beliefs, both negative and positive outcome expectations generate negative consequences, such as resignation, apathy, self-devaluation, and despondency.

Human behavior, argues Bandura, is governed more by our *beliefs* about personal efficacy and controllability of social systems than by their objective properties (Bandura 483). As the following table details, negative personal efficacy beliefs tend to generate negative attitudes, behaviors, and actions.

How Expectations Influence Actions

	Negative Outcome Expectations	Positive Outcome Expectations
Positive Efficacy Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protest • Grievance • Social action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productive engagement • Aspiration • Personal satisfaction
Negative Efficacy Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resignation • Apathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-devaluation • Despondency

Bandura 1997

What occurs to perceptions of personal efficacy in contexts of chronic violence? For some, capacity to organize and execute a course of action toward a given goal will be undermined by the dynamics associated with chronic violence, both because cognitive, affective, and biological conditions for life become compromised and because the social structural conditions in which people operate become limited and perverse. That chronic violence would depress the belief in personal efficacy among some people is reflected by the many accounts of perceptions of social invisibility, second-class status, and marginality emerging from ethnographic accounts and popular cultural expressions of people in conditions of chronic violence (Bandura 1-19).

Just as social capital and collective efficacy can develop for perverse ends, however, so can personal efficacy. For example, chronic violence can also spur young people to overcome these self-devaluing notions through a perverse search for respect and power. This, combined with opportunities for illicit activity, profit, and power guaranteed by violence, can foster highly efficacious individuals with positive efficacy beliefs and positive outcome expectations, given certain social and personal conditions.

Implications for interventions. Personal efficacy is fundamental to the kind of human development that enables people to prosper and fosters citizen action (Citizenship DRC 2011). It requires that interventions acknowledge the following:

- The central importance of the destructive self-conceptions and attitudes generated by chronic violence beyond the material conditions that are usually tracked.
- The powerful nature of the alternative and “perverse” cultural models that emerge among some systematically marginalized groups and people.
- The unexamined coincidence between these cultural values and interests with those prevailing in the mass media and the global cultural mainstream, which blur the difference between “perverse” and “legitimate.” This includes, for example, the value assigned to violence and the military; the unlimited acquisition and display of wealth; instrumentalist and degrading notions of women, marginal groups, and the environment; and the subversion of law.

2. Collective Efficacy

In the same text, Bandura notes that the “fate of nations and communities depends on people’s sense of collective efficacy,” the perception of which is a group-level attribute beyond the sum of the personal efficacy beliefs of participants. Collective efficacy refers to a group’s “shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute courses of action necessary to produce given levels of attainment that require the group’s operative capabilities.” Equipping people to believe that they can produce valued effects through collective action is critical to enabling collective efficacy.

Bandura suggests that people will not take on problems they firmly believe are outside their power to address. Collective efficacy, as he and other have noted, can be channeled — with socially constructive or limited or perverse ends — through actions that seek primarily to gain control of local situations over regional/national situations, or that increase the influence of certain factions, interest groups, or sectarian priorities, feeding further fragmentation and inter-group conflict (Bandura 1997, 477-520).

These ends can become more likely in a world where, as he notes, peoples’ lives are increasingly shaped by influences beyond the scope of traditional states and institutions, many of which coincide with the factors that drive chronic violence:

- Transnational forces both create dependencies that are harder to affect, and diminish government efficacy and its ability to influence national economic life, which further undermines citizen confidence.
- New technologies used to control life environment also control thinking and action.
- Social machinery of government (i.e., bureaucracy) also hinders social action.

- Voices for parochial interests are greater than those for national interests.
- Increasing fragmentation – social, ethnic, religious, regional – weakens perceptions of collective interests.
- The larger the collectivity, the weaker the sense that people can change it.

Implications for intervention. In such contexts, the initial steps to make constructive citizen action possible in conditions of chronic violence that were identified by the Citizenship DRC project are required to establish a foundation for moving forward. These focus primarily on working with some limited group of citizens to identify and map the realities of local power dynamics and sources and spaces of resilience, and to base further efforts on a realistic appreciation of these realities.¹⁵

3. Bridging and Bonding Social Capital

Briggs, Putnam, and others note that social capital is a value-neutral concept that refers to the “resources stored in human relationships . . . that we use to accomplish things that matter to us and to solve everyday problems [which is built up] through repeated exchanges among people (or organizations) over time” (Briggs 1997, 1-3).

Bonding capital, used for social support and “to get by,” can become accentuated in contexts of chronic violence as circles of interaction and trust shrink and become increasingly homogeneous along class, race, religious, age, gender, and/or ideological lines. In-group identities are often characterized by powerful antagonisms — even scapegoating — toward certain “outsider” groups.

Bridging social capital, on the other hand, are those links outside our immediate identity circles that we use to “get ahead” — to solve problems that are impossible to address from within our immediate circles. The growing civic engagement and democratic practices necessary to equip affected populations to transcend perverse effects of chronic violence entails an interactive mix of trust-enhancing bonding and bridging social capital that that conforms to certain criteria:

- Discrete and increasingly broadly desired objectives shared by participants
- Interactive methods or social “technologies” that enable participants to transcend the tendency toward social division and in-group entitlement
- A widening circle of participants linked through diversified bonds and bridging relations with increasingly crosscutting and diverse interests, identities, and networks of reciprocities (Putnam 2000; Briggs 1997 and 2002)

¹⁵ These steps are necessary to establish a foundation for more ambitious measures to build community capacity for reducing and preventing violence.

4. Resilience

Much has been written on “resilience,” which like many human conditions and qualities analyzed in this section has both positive and negative manifestations in human/citizen development. Davis’ recent report advances a multi-faceted analysis of the factors contributing to both more constructive and more destructive forms of resilience. She coins the term “sustainable resilience” to characterize the conditions that enable resilience to be developed toward more constructive ends, and offers a detailed ground-up view of what is required to enable its emergence (Davis 2012).¹⁶

While the analysis focuses on resilience in urban areas and employs a more descriptive notion of chronic violence than that used here, it coincides in the major elements that define our notion of the term. The report notes that chronic violence:

- Refers to both bodily harm as well as coercive and structurally violent practices and measures
- Permeates all spheres of life in diverse social spaces -- from the micro to the macro
- Is driven by inter-connected factors that render ineffective efforts to address it through conventional policy tools or interventions targeting only one point on the continuum
- Contemplates its perverse effects on individuals, communities, and institutions
- Can be best addressed through a “pragmatic approach that . . . identifies and builds on the modest gains made by individuals and institutions in the face of chronic violence, and then uses these innovations as a starting point for building a more comprehensive set of policies that enable greater security at the level of city” (29)

The report parallels observations of the Citizenship DRC report in noting that this kind of challenge requires a historical appreciation of how violence emerged in the locality (73) and a “grounded and more qualitative approach that . . . redirects policy attention away from crime and violence *per se* — toward the ways that citizens, business firms, and the city have responded to them . . . focusing on individual and community-level innovations and [sources of] homegrown resilience” (30).

For Davis, however, the fundamental objective is to build increasingly sustainable, extensive, and systematic resilience out of more limited and basic existing forms of resilience described as “individual’s or communities’ capacities to resist against the perpetrators of violence through strategies that help them establish relatively autonomous

¹⁶ Although Davis’ use of the term “chronic violence” is not synonymous with the definition used here, the drivers of violence identified in the report coincide to a high degree with those in this report. Many elements in the analysis of the factors contributing to urban resilience (except perhaps those associated with infrastructural and spatial considerations) are also more broadly applicable.

control over the activities, spaces, and social or economic forces and conditions that comprise their daily lives" (36).

Sustainable, extensive, and systematic forms of resilience have the following characteristics:

- More proactive (in prevention of violence and cooptation) than reactive (defending, sometimes through violent or coercive means)
- More positive (where citizens push back against perverse effects) rather than negative (where they adapt, even non-violently, to coercive and perverse control)
- Increasingly collective (first through neighborhood or group solidarity, and eventually at more complex and higher levels of city and state) rather than individual (achieved through modifications to mobility and public engagement through individual decision)
- Both horizontal (fostering partial community autonomy) and vertical (also entailing connections between the state and the community); increasingly extensive in time and space, occurring in both peripheries and urban centers, residential and commercial areas, among poor and rich, and day and night

5. Community Assets Approach to Community Development and Capacity-Building

The “community assets” approach is a model that has gained significant momentum in recent years. The approach focuses on the assets existing in distressed communities or groups instead of on the shortcomings, which tends to be the implicit and sometimes explicit focus of many social change efforts with such groups. The differences between the more traditional “needs-based” (deficit) approach and an assets-based (dynamic) approach, as summarized in the UN Habitat publication of 2008, cited in the bibliography, are detailed below.

While the needs based approach to community development seeks to provide “deficient” and “needy” communities with assets they don’t have, the assets approach recognizes that such communities often have stronger informal social support networks than more affluent segments of the population – in part because of their social marginality. The critical first step is to identify the potential, capabilities and talents existing in a community. In the effort to deal with chronic violence, this mechanism could provide a stimulating counterbalancing mechanism to enable vulnerable groups to understand both the challenges they have as well as the existing or potential mechanisms that exist internally to address them.

The second step emphasizes empowerment and capacity building – where needs-based approaches often emphasize how to address community needs. This is another difference from needs-based approaches that result in long term dependency on outside sources.

The critical process here is building the long term partnerships to stimulate “self-help and self-organization, easing a community’s access to various local and government resources. Empowerment is conceived as having three components: organizing collectively, access to resources, and seeking external help. Often what is required is to expand beyond “bonding social capital” to “bridging” forms of social capital.

Partnerships represent an additional avenue for attracting external resources, support and expertise, and become mechanisms for expanding political networks and support in addition to building assets (UN Habitat, 2008: 5-11).

ANNEX C. LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES THAT ADDRESS VIOLENCE TODAY IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Region/Country	Organization/Funder	Program Name	Objective
Worldwide	Niños y Jóvenes en Violencia Armada Organizada		Seeks to identify existence of children involved in armed groups in countries that are not at war and produces and shares information. Developed a study of this issue that focused on Brazil, Jamaica, El Salvador, Honduras, Ecuador, Colombia, the United States, Northern Ireland, Nigeria, South Africa, and the Philippines.
15 countries, based in Colombia	<i>Instituto CISALVA</i> <i>Universidad del Valle</i> University of Pittsburgh	Regional System of Standardized Indicators of Co-existence and Citizen Security Promotion of <i>Comunidades Seguras</i> in Latin America and the Caribbean Intercambio académico e investigativo	Promotes efforts to document and systematize successful community security experiences. Operates <i>Centro Certificador de Comunidades Seguras</i> . Trains doctors and health professions in clinical research on trauma and lesions.
Central America	International City/County Management Association (ICMA) USAID CARSI <i>Centro de Estudios</i>	Alianzas Municipales para la Prevención de la Violencia en Centro América (AMUPREV)	Coordinates a portal of experiences relating to crime and violence prevention in Central and Latin America. Published "Guía para el Diseño Implementación y Regulación de una Instancia Municipal de Prevención de la Violencia."
Chile	<i>Centro de Estudios en Seguridad Ciudadana</i> <i>Universidad de Chile</i> Open Society Foundation	<i>Comunidad+Prevención</i> Network	Seeks to strengthen capacities of those who design citizen security efforts and manages best practices database.
Guatemala	<i>Ministerio de Educación</i> Millennium Challenge Cooperation		Produced documents on school violence. Prepared <i>Protocolo de Identificación, Atención y Referencia en Casos de Violencia Dentro del Sistema Educativo Nacional</i> . Also prepared <i>Guía para la Identificación y</i>

Region/Country	Organization/Funder	Program Name	Objective
			<i>Prevención del Acoso Escolar.</i>
Guatemala	<i>Centro de Investigación Económicas Nacionales</i>		
Guatemala	Coalición por una Vida Digna CIEN FLACSO CALDH USAID/ <i>Programa Desafío Joven and Jóvenes Contra la Violencia</i>		Provides recommendations to strengthen government policies on youth and youth violence. Focuses on generating work opportunities. Provides better access to education. Created of system of violence prevention. Strengthened family as the “formative base” for child and civic development.
Nicaragua	<i>Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas</i>		Invests in “democratic security” promotion.
El Salvador	<i>Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública UCA</i>		Conducts public opinion inquiries about several topics (also violence).
Guatemala	<i>Una Vida es una Vida</i>		Produces interactive violence maps (especially showing homicides in urban areas).
Guatemala	<i>Convenio Construcción de la Paz en Guatemala</i>	<i>Fortalecimiento de la Gobernabilidad Democrática e Instituciones de Justicia. Movimiento por la Paz (MPDL) and Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacionaa para el Desarrollo (AECID)</i>	Involves several NGOs: <i>Instituto de Enseñanza Para el Desarrollo Sostenible (IEPADES)</i> Supports local security commissions. Developed weapon control campaigns. <i>Colectivo de Investigaciones Sociales y Laborales (COISOLA)</i> . Supports female victims of violence. <i>El Instituto de Transformación de Conflictos para la Construcción de la Paz en Guatemala (INTRAPAZ)</i> . Trains in conflict resolution. <i>Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos (CALDH)/Caja Ludica/Las Poderosas</i> . Trains young people in artistic and theatric skills.
Guatemala	PROPAZ	Education	Specializes in mediation and conflicts resolution.
Guatemala	<i>Instituto Internacional de Aprendizaje para la Reconciliación Social (IIARS)</i>	Education. Interactive Museum “¿Por qué estamos como estamos?”	Works in education, learning methodologies, and inter-ethnic relations.

Region/Country	Organization/Funder	Program Name	Objective
Guatemala	<i>Instituto de Enseñanza Para el Desarrollo Sostenible IEPADES</i>	<i>Programa de Prevención de la Violencia Armada</i>	Works in gun control, armed violence prevention campaigns, and gun education in schools.
Guatemala	<i>Fundación Myrna Mack</i>	<i>Observatorios de las Violencias</i>	Coordinates with other institutions to provide data on violence in Guatemala.
Guatemala	<i>Oficina de Derechos Humanos de Arzobispado</i>	<i>Observatorio Sobre Situación de Violencia a la Niñez y Adolescencia</i>	Compiles data on violence about children and youth. Presents statistical violence reports.
Guatemala	<i>Oficina de Derechos Humanos de Arzobispado</i>	<i>Observatorio Juvenil Comunitario para una Cultura de Paz</i>	Implements youth violence observatories where young people gather information on youth violence. There are currently seven youth violence observatories.
Guatemala	<i>Instituto de Enseñanza Para el Desarrollo Sostenible IEPADES</i>	<i>Observatorio de Seguridad Ciudadana</i>	Contributes to the monitoring, evaluation, and understanding of female violence and citizen security.
Guatemala	<i>Municipalidad de Guatemala</i>	<i>Observatorio de Salud Urbana</i>	Monitors and evaluates urban health issues and looks at community-level health risks.
Guatemala	<i>Red Legal de Derechos Humanos y Virus de la inmunodeficiencia humana (VIH)/ Poblaciones en Mas Alto Riesgo</i>	<i>Observatorio de Derechos Humanos y VIH</i>	Provides information and data on HIV and human rights.

ANNEX D. POSSIBLE PARTICIPANTS FOR BRAIN TRUST

- Vincent Felitti or Robert Anda, directors of the Adverse Childhood Experiences study of the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente
- John Gaventa, co-director of the Development Research Centre's Citizenship Project on the challenges to constructive civic action caused by long-term violence
- Guillermo Céspedes, deputy mayor of Los Angeles and leader of Los Angeles' innovative gang prevention and reintegration initiative
- Gary Slutkin, leader of Cure Violence
- Sue Popkin, director of Urban Institute's long-term project on violence and young women in U.S. housing projects
- John Kretzmann and John McKnight, leaders of the Community Assets concept and initiatives at the ABCD Institute, Northwestern University
- David Becker, Ileana Gil, and Brandon Hamber, leaders of the innovative therapeutic and diagnostic approaches to trauma and interventions in chronic trauma
- Jodi Halpern and Harvey Weinstein, theorists about the challenges of humanization and empathy building (Weinstein is ex-director of the University of California – Berkeley Human Rights Program and founder of the International Journal for Transitional Justice)
- Colleen Duggan, director of Evaluation Unit and expert in outcome mapping, an innovative and integrated planning, monitoring, and evaluation method led by the International Development Research Centre of Canada
- Enrique Betancourt, ex-director of the Mexican government's Violence Prevention Program
- José Luis Cruz, opinion poll leader and researcher of violence and gangs in Central America
- Kevin Casas-Zamora, political affairs director of the Organization of American States and Latin American violence specialist
- Top theorists and analysts of the challenges of democratization and justice sector reform (Tom Carothers, Carnegie Institute; Desmond Arias, John Jay Center for Criminal Justice – New York University; Luis Pásara, University of Sevilla; Rachel Sieder, *Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social* in Mexico.
- Vanda Felbab-Brown, expert on narco-traffic and government responses, Brookings Institution

ANNEX E. JUSTIFICATIONS FOR REASSESSMENT OF PREVAILING PRIORITY TARGET GROUPS

This annex provides a brief review of some of the elements to be considered in reassessing the relative priority given to diverse groups.

Reassess the priority given to youth at risk and in conflict with the law. Although there is no question that youth, and young men especially, are particularly vulnerable and powerful participants in the reproduction of violence, current intervention methods ignore the fact that they are still developing people that depend on and need their families and primary networks. Young men often move into illicit activities to supplement or replace family and the sense of security that families provide. Securing appropriate early childhood development, helping parents to parent and mentor properly, and monitoring the devastating effects of traumatic childhood experiences are critical priorities that could convert youth-oriented interventions into long-term interventions to ensure they become effective and productive citizens.

Reassess the current priority on poor people as a continued and relatively exclusive priority class for intervention. Chronic violence affects everyone in complex and differentiated ways. Each social class participates in its own way to undermine and weaken social relations and the prospects for democratic governance. By using a multi-tiered and relational focus, USAID will both acknowledge the specific challenges and resiliencies of each class, and the internal variations within each that result from the ways that the entire society is transformed by illicit behavior and actions. The private sector is critical to engage in these issues because they are especially powerful reproducers of violence themselves and often represent the population that needs to contribute taxes to establish the principled, depersonalized, and democratic governance systems that enable states to treat all citizens equitably. Middle-class people increasingly depend on illicit activities and protections to secure their lives in an unstable economic situation.

A major challenge for USAID and other major stakeholders is to help social classes reduce the conflict and alienation among them by promoting actions that strengthen relations and comprehension. A balanced approach that contemplates the complex ways in which all members of society both affect and are affected by chronic violence will enable USAID to strengthen these fundamental relations and equitable forms of civic co-responsibility and engagement.

Rethink and redirect the nature of support for indigenous people and other ethnic and identity minorities. The powerful national and international support in recent decades for indigenous people and other racial and sexual minorities has inadvertently excluded populations and at times caused conflict between groups. The non-Indian half of Guatemalans, for example, has increasingly been left with the expectation that they are to blame for the racist legacy of the country and that they should in principle cede power and privilege, without the necessary civic vision to imagine the virtue of a country in which everyone is considered equal.

The dynamics of chronic violence, and the ways in which indigenous populations tend to demonstrate their vulnerability through collective action (e.g., lynching) and justify these acts with increasingly powerful assertions of identity and essential difference, also exacerbates the risk of Manichean and dehumanized interpretations of the “nature of the Indian” — for example, that that Indians are somehow naturally violent and primitive or simply passive victims of violations by outside actors.

Evaluate the relative focus on women primarily as victims of men. The focus on women as victims of men has to be broadened to contemplate women’s key role in reproducing violence among their children when the child-maternal bond is disrupted or weakened. Training about the more complex nature of women’s involvement in the reproduction of violence is critical. Both gender-specific and inter-gender relational support is required for girls and boys, children and youth, and women and men. This includes contemplating the complex ways that masculine and feminine identities and roles of different age groups are evolving and complicating traditional notions of roles, power relations, child rearing, local governance, and authority structures.

Assess the dualistic categories assigned to urban dwellers and rural people. Data confirms that urban dwellers, especially of marginalized settlements and slums, are far more vulnerable to violence than their rural counterparts; however, this does not account for the fluid ways in which urbanity and rural life are mixed and confused. Nor does it account for the high levels of perceived or actual violence in increasingly unstable rural communities, which have lost traditional mechanisms for social control, economic sustenance, and communal local governance.

ANNEX F: POTENTIAL SOURCES OF DATA FOR VIOLENCE OBSERVATORY

The following sources and types of information should be included in a chronic violence observatory to develop an integrated notion of how violence is generated and reproduced.

1. *Adverse childhood experiences.* The Ministry of Health, public- and private-supported primary health providers, and experts from the Adverse Childhood Experiences Project of the Centers for Disease Control should be contacted to explore the potential for beginning to track indicators of adverse childhood experiences that can lead to violence.
2. *Trauma: “chronic trauma” versus “war-related trauma.”* The Ministry of Health, primary health care providers, and human rights and other organizations working on war-related trauma should convene to explore how to more effectively approach and track and approach this problem.
3. *Gender violence and changing femininities and masculinities.* Public and private organizations concerned with gender and domestic violence should be enlisted to participate in the observatory to track this phenomenon and provide a new capacity to explore its link with adverse childhood experiences.
4. *Demographic and economic change.* The National Census Bureau and other relevant international and national agencies and researchers should be enlisted to provide critical demographic and economic analyses of changing family structure and the effects of other demographic factors, including internal and external migration, on family structure and function.
5. *Youth violence.* Existing efforts should be sensitized to the broader array of factors that affect youth development.
6. *Substance abuse.* Government ministries, international entities, and NGOs should be enlisted to explore the possibility of more systematically tracking trends in social tolerance for and the use of drugs, alcohol, and associated forms of violence and licit/illicit behavior.
7. *Impact of urban and rural spatial organization and distribution of social services.* Academic institutions and professional organizations linked to the distribution of social services, urban planning, land use, and architecture should be enlisted to explore how these relate to violence and licit/illicit behavior and structures.
8. *Violence by state institutions and armed and organized citizen violence.* The Public Ministry, *Comision Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala*, the Ministry of Health, and relevant international, state, and private organizations should be enlisted to explore how to better track these issues, taking into account previous

research and efforts to improve record-keeping, particularly in the area of civic violence.

9. *Security-related surges of violence.* Pertinent national and international agencies and organizations should be enlisted to provide critical information to assess the possible correlations between anti-narcotics and security policies and civic violence.
10. *Labor-related violence.* The Ministry of Labor, labor unions, and employer associations should be enlisted to track the incidence of violence within these spheres of activity, including the effects of the transformation of the agrarian sector.
11. *Conflicts, violence, and illicit/licit behaviors and structures related to natural resources and economic development initiatives.* Relevant state, international, and national organizations should be convened to explore how to document and assess this dimension of the problem, especially in the areas of mining, hydroelectric projects, land disputes, and other economic development projects.
12. *Natural disasters and environmental destruction.* Explore correlations with violence and licit/illicit activities and behavior, and public-private responses to these events.
13. *Public opinion polls.* Research groups tracking public perceptions of democracy, institutions, state legitimacy, violence, the practice of citizenship, and licit/illicit behavior and structures should be utilized.
14. *Effects of the media on violence.* Professional media organizations, relevant academic entities, and NGOs should be enlisted to begin to document and track the effects of the media on violence.
15. *Ethnic identities.* The role of ethnic identifies and dynamics as a double-edged dynamic in conflict and other social dynamics should be explored.
16. *Popular culture.* The critical and double-edged role of popular culture as a preventive and stimulants to chronic violence should also be explored.
17. *Migration, displacement, and other major demographic changes.* The relevance of these factors should be explored.
18. *Recent armed conflicts and historical forms of social and political repression.* It is important for the effects of recent armed conflicts and historical forms of social and political repression, as well as their relationships to chronic violence over time, to be explored.

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