

Lessons from and for Effective OVPs (Offices of Violence Preventions)

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1 Research demand and design

- Direct request from PiOC members
- Methodology: mapping, research & analysis, adaptation missions, and publication
 - Subsample selection and criteria trade-off evaluation
 - Collaboration with the Vera Institute of Justice
- Research limitations, including confidentiality

2 Key observations

- OVPs can achieve effectiveness through a broad menu of options, as long as responsive to local realities
- **Civilian leadership** is crucial
- Ensure sufficient autonomy
- Balance **specificity and comprehensiveness**
- Increase political and societal buy-in to ensure sustainability
- There are good practices that may be replicable
- Coordinating a **whole-of-city** approach

3 Tradeoff analysis (I-III)

Criteria	Why is it important?	Tradeoffs
Clearly defined mandate	Mandates specify the OVP's mission and keeps it accountable to stakeholders and citizens.	A broad mandate allows the OVP to be flexible but can also engender frustration if (ambitious) mission is not fulfilled or leads to unfocused efforts. On the other hand, a narrow mandate may unnecessarily constrain the range of interventions.
Consultations and community partnerships	Inclusive, sustained participation increases trust in and ownership of the OVP, and facilitates coordination	It can be difficult to reach decisions or sustain participation with too many partners, but community partnerships extend legitimacy, ownership and sustainability.
Diagnoses or baseline assessments	Establishes the scale and scope of the problems and guides the actions taken to address them	Diagnoses are fundamental for correct prescriptions and to measure progress, but these can be costly, with sometimes potentially unnecessary duplications. When updating diagnoses, it is important to leave sufficient time for changes to materialize.

3

Tradeoff analysis (IV-VI)

Criteria	Why is it important?	Tradeoffs
Population	A well-defined, well-thought-out population increases the likelihood of effective and efficient interventions	If the population is defined too narrowly, it can leave out potential beneficiaries; if it is too broad, it may diffuse its impact.
Violence prevention approach	Indicates how the challenges are being addressed	Pursuing combined approaches can be key to an integral response, but may be more expensive and entail greater coordination.
Budget sustainability	<p>Defines the range of actions that the OVP can take, its long-term sustainability prospects, and shows the extent to which it is a political priority</p> <p>Do not tell me your priorities, show me your budget</p>	<p>Relying on only one source of financing can jeopardize survival after political changes, so aim for legal safeguards.</p> <p>Depending on various sources of funding can dilute decisiveness and give non-local actors too much weight in decision-making but can offer multiple roads to sustainability.</p>

3 Tradeoff analysis (VII-IX)

Criteria	Why is it important?	Tradeoffs
Staffing composition	Determines whether the personnel are sufficient and adequately prepared to implement the initiatives	Generalists have a lot to contribute and may add resilience to the office, but specialists have particular expertise that is hard to replicate. Outsourcing implementation to community partners increases flexibility and local ownership but reduces control.
Political buy-in	Political leadership can promote the OVP internally and internationally, boost its legitimacy, and navigate potential conflict	Political support is fundamental to clear barriers and implement the strategy (urgency). However, if the prevention work becomes too dependent on political actors it can lead to under institutionalization and potential disbandment under a new administration (instability).
Results and impact evaluations	Informs stakeholders of the extent to which the OVP has been effective in its initiatives, thus increasing its legitimacy	Monitoring outputs is important for transparency, but the aim should be to evaluate the impact of prevention programs and the office itself. Communication of results is often just as important.

4 Adaptation and research missions

Cali, Colombia

Rosario, Argentina

Bristol, England

Oakland, USA

Edmonton, Canada

5 Conclusion

OVPs can take many routes to effectiveness, including different institutional structure and prevention strategies. Some common denominators of sustained effectiveness are:

1. Ensuring resources meet ambition by adequately funding the OVP.
2. Constructing and maintaining inclusive relations with community-based partners.
3. Balancing between political buy-in from authorities but also sufficient autonomy from political interference.
4. Adopting a “whole-of-city” approach, coordinating between state agencies, private entities, academia, and community partners.

“Folks just want a quick fix and there's no magic bullet, there's no pill that a city can take to cure itself of this. It really is a long-term investment and ***you got to stay with it***, even when it doesn't feel like there's progress being made.”

6 Guiding questions for discussion

- What do you think makes an OVP effective?
- How can effectiveness be sustained?
- What can earn an OVP legitimacy with the community?
- How do OVPs reconcile their work with broader trends?
- How can OVPs assert their autonomy in the face of political pressures?

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Table of subsample selection:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pYPMYtJgITMUq11UBLCN8xAcqLCGUKNM/edit>

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