Introduction

According to UN-Habitat, by 2050 nearly two-thirds of the global population is expected to live in urban settings, with the majority of this continued urbanization occurring in Africa, Asia and Latin America (UN-Habitat, 2013: 25). Evidence suggests that education plays a key role in the overall process of urbanization and the political, social, and economic transformations it brings about (UN-Habitat, 2013: xiv; UNESCO, 2014: 2). It is not surprising, then, that the promotion of equitable education and lifelong learning opportunities as well as safe and resilient cities are likely to be two of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG, 2014).

Urbanisation has historically been associated with both socio-economic development and social strain or unrest (Tilly, 1990). The characteristics that make urban settlements productive spaces – demographic size, population density, social diversity, and geography – are also widely perceived to foster social disorder and violence (Wirth, 1938). While the jury is out on the claim that the process of urbanization itself leads to higher levels of violence, it is clear that if it is poorly managed it can be socially disruptive (Fox and Beall, 2012; Rodgers, 2014).

In some countries – such as Brazil – rapid urbanization has occurred largely in a context of simultaneous socio-economic development, spatial fragmentation, exclusion, inequality and high levels of violence. Cities have not always been able to deal with such a rapid influx of population, leading to widespread concerns of social and political instability.

These insights raise a number of questions:
- How does urbanization affect education, and vice-versa?
- Can education (broadly conceived to include training) foster the creation of safer and more sustainable cities?
- What educational strategies are available to deal with urban violence?

Urbanization and Education

The process of urbanization implies a transformation of society and the distribution of public infrastructure and goods. Evidence suggests that education is a fundamental aspect of this process (UNESCO, 2014: 2). One of the most often cited examples is the role of education in the transformation of society in industrializing Britain (King, 1967). In today’s developing cities, education is seen as essential not only for fostering socio-economic inclusion and upward mobility (i.e. nurturing generative civic engagement) but also attracting investment, talent, and innovation – all factors that lead to the development of human capital which, in turn, fosters the creation of prosperous and productive cities (UNH, 2013: xvii).

“While rapid urbanization poses challenges to development and security, urban spaces also harbour solutions for dealing with violence.”

Urbanization – especially in low and middle income countries – has been found to have a number of important effects on education. Indeed, the process of urbanization is a strong determinant of the efficiency of countries in improving education outcomes, such as performance and completion (Jayasuriya and Wodon, 2003; Peng et al., N/D). Nevertheless, there are also negative effects of urbanization on education: the rapid influx of population leads to a shortage of schools and trained teachers and other educational staff, the expansion of cities leads to a strain on public institutions, as well as a fragmentation of urban space and ‘educational’ authority, the stratification and segregation of students along socio-economic lines; and finally the undermining of traditional notions of education, which often involve rural schooling (Qian and Anlei, 2014, Rodgers, 2014).
Urban Violence and Education

The nature of social exclusion and socio-economic inequality in cities is characterized by the proximity to but inability to attain the many benefits of urban life, especially education. Individuals living in urban areas are generally considered to have an educational advantage, but in reality urban fragmentation and inequality fundamentally undermine an individual’s access to education and training (UNICEF, 2012: 28).

The process of urbanization is rarely even, as a result of which the distribution and quality of education, and other public goods and services, varies across the city landscape. Thus, while good schools and training facilities are likely to be found all over the city, individuals coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds have limited access to them (UN Millennium Project 2005: 15).

Children and youth are especially likely to miss out on educational opportunities. While in most cities children living in poorer communities have access to primary education, the quality of it is questionable. When combined with poor living conditions and the pressures to support family livelihoods, the probability that children will drop-out of school also increases. Consequently, while living in poor urban areas is not correlated with lower primary school attendance, it has been found to be a significant factor in predicting lower secondary enrolment (Lewis, 2010).

The inability of local governments to provide goods and services to citizens living in poorer urban communities exacerbates the feelings of segregation and exclusion which, in turn, leads to the increased possibility of civic conflict. Beall et al (2013: 5) define civic conflict as the “violent expression of grievances (which may be social, political, or economic) vis-à-vis the state or other actors.” Specifically, the term refers to diverse forms of violence (such as organized crime, gang warfare, terrorism, religious and sectarian rebellions, or riots) which seem to have two things in common: a) they predominantly take place in urban settings, and b) they do not aim to take control of the state.

Civic conflict is the key source of insecurity in many parts of the world (GBAV, 2011: 70). Urban violence in Central America and Latin America – especially in Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Jamaica – is so intense that in terms of ‘body count’, death rates have surpassed those experienced in many intra-state conflicts (Rodgers, 2010). To put these figures in perspective, between 2004 and 2009, “the people of El Salvador were more at risk of dying violently (a death rate of 61.9 per 100,000) than any population around the world,” including Iraq (which during the same period had a death rate of 54.9 per 100,000) (GBAV, 2011: 52, 55).

Solutions in the city: available strategies for dealing with urban violence

While rapid urbanization poses challenges to development and security, urban spaces also harbour solutions for dealing with violence. Cities provide the opportunity and concentrate resources necessary for innovation related to violence prevention and reduction (OECD, 2011). While violence prevention in cities is nothing new, it is only recent years that these initiatives have caught the intention of international researchers and policy makers.

The last two decades saw the emergence of armed violence prevention and reduction programs (AVPR) or citizen security programs in urban settings (UNDP, 2013; IADB, 2012; Muggah and Szabo, 2014). Over the years, the nature and scope of these initiatives has undergone a dramatic change. For instance, in Central and Latin America, the approach has moved from ‘heavy-handed’ mano dura strategies (which emphasize the use force to deal with violence), towards ‘softer handed’ methods (which aim to create order through prevention and risk reduction) (Jütersonke et al, 2009).

These strategies also promote cross-sector engagement, working beyond the security field, and fostering a more integrated response to address the multiple drivers of violence. In this context, education (along
with health, and criminal justice) has often been a key programmatic component in AVPR and citizen security programs (OECD, 2011). Through various types of formal and informal education and training initiatives – mostly directed at youth, who are the main perpetrators (but also victims) of urban violence (GBAV, 2011) – education is promoted with the assumption that the provision of skills and support in change of behaviours can potentially reduce and mitigate violence.

Despite the cross-sector approach of AVRP and citizen security initiatives, available analysis on their structure, implementation and impact have tended to look at the various programs through a security lens (OECD 2011; World Bank 2011; Muggah and Aguire, 2013). They have thus rarely examined in detail the educational components of specific initiatives implemented in urban areas. Therefore, there is an important knowledge gap on the type of educational strategies available to deal with urban violence, the role of education in fostering safer and sustainable cities, as well as the conditions under which education might seemingly mitigate (but at times also foster) urban violence.

“There is an important knowledge gap on the type of educational strategies available to deal with urban violence.”

A significant portion of the globally implemented AVPR and citizen security programs can be found within a handful of countries in Central and Latin America and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa (OECD, 2011). These regions are some of the most urbanized in the world, and have experienced, in the past decades, high levels of organized and interpersonal violence. As such, countries like Brazil and South Africa – which have shown high levels of socio-economic development, but also inequality and lethal violence – have been called ‘laboratories of experimentation’ for interventions on urban violence prevention (dos Ramos and Muggah 2014). In this context, an examination of how these countries have used education to address urban violence can be a starting point for further understanding the relationship between violence and education in urban settings.

### Table 1. State capital homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants, 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maceió</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortaleza</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>João Pessoa</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>São Luís</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvador</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aracaju</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitória</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manaus</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natal</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goiânia</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recife</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belém</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porto Velho</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuiabá</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porto Alegre</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curitiba</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresina</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belo Horizonte</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brasília</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macapá</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Branco</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brazil (National)</strong></td>
<td><strong>29.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boa Vista</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmas</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campo Grande</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>São Paulo</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florianópolis</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Dealing with urban violence in Brazil

Brazil is one of the most violent countries in the world, despite witnessing a reduction in poverty and inequality over the past twenty years. According to the latest Global Study on Homicide (2013), about 1 in 10 victims in the world is a Brazilian (UNODC, 2013: 127). To contextualize this finding, between 2004 and 2009 there were 55,000 deaths per year in situations of armed conflicts around the world; during the same time period in Brazil, an estimated 48,800 people died violently each year (GBAV, 2011: 52).

Over the past decade, Brazil has experienced a general increase in national homicide rates. The rate is even higher at the sub-national level, particularly in cities. While the national homicide rate in 2012 was 29 per 100,000 inhabitants, only six state capitals fell below the average (Table 1). Violence in Brazil, like in many parts of Latin America, is primarily an urban phenomenon and is often related to drug trafficking, availability of small arms, repressive security forces, and high socio-economic inequality (GBAV, 2011).

In Brazil urban violence disproportionately affects youth. In 2012, the homicide rate among youth aged 15-19 was 53.8 per 100,000 inhabitants – this number jumps to a rate of 66.9 per 100,000 when looking at the 20-24 age bracket (Waiselfisz, 2014: 65). Again, the problem is particularly acute in cities. Out of 100 municipalities that have a higher homicide rate than the national average, 12 have homicide rates above 200 per 100,000 young people; while two municipalities in the state of Bahia (Mata de São João Simões and Simões Filho), experienced rates of 371.5 and 308.8 homicides per 100,000 young people in 2012 (Waiselfisz, 2014: 55).

The main perpetrators and victims of violence in the country are youth between 15-29 years old, often male, poor and black. Additional risk factors commonly highlighted by public authorities are lack of education and unemployment. In this regard, age-grade discrepancy and dropout rates have been pointed out as key
indicators of vulnerability. For instance, 49 per cent of inmates in Rio de Janeiro’s prisons have not completed primary education (Ministério da Justiça, 2012). Similarly, 50 per cent of youth under the age of 18 with a judicial record and currently in ‘social and educational service’ programmes were not enrolled in school (CNJ, 2012:15).

As in other parts of Latin America, public security debates and policies have moved beyond the traditional repression model of security towards a more integrated approach, with a strong preventive element, combining law enforcement with social development interventions (Dos Ramos and Muggah, 2014). That being said, in 2012 at least 1,890 individuals died during police interventions; this translates to an average of 5 people killed by police officers each day, with the majority of deaths occurring in urbanized areas (such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and Paraná) (Fórum Brasileiro, 2013: 8, 126; GBAV, 2011: 76-79).

Despite the absence of a national framework to prevent lethal violence, a growing number of innovative programmes have been developed, especially in the state and city levels by public authorities and civil society to change the trajectories of violence, with special attention to youth at risk. These interventions are often data driven and target specific sectors, from policing to health and education. Therefore, a wide variety of educational initiatives have been developed within violence prevention programs. An analysis of the types of educational programmes being implemented in Brazil, their methodologies, successes and failures can further our understanding of the role of education and training for dealing with urban violence.

Educational Strategies for Dealing with Urban Violence

There is a need to further assess the types of education programming that are being implemented in cities in order to deal with urban violence. In collaboration with the Igarapé Institute and American Institutes for Research (AIR), NORRAG’s most recent Programme of Work – Conflict, Violence, Education and Training (CV-ET) – has decided to tackle this question by undertaking a ‘mapping’ of educational strategies for dealing with urban violence. The development of an initial typology of ‘what is out there’ in these countries can be used to promote cross-country cooperation and learning, and potentially feed into the international policy dialogue on the role of education and training in the context of urban violence.

The Educational Strategies for Dealing with Urban Violence (ESDUV) project, and subsequent database, is an inventory of educational programming for dealing with urban violence. The database combines two comprehensive and comparable mapping exercises carried out in Brazil and South Africa, carried out by the Igarapé Institute and AIR, respectively. The ultimate goal of the ESDUV database is to be able to provide insights into the types of educational programmes in the two countries. The database will aim to compare programmes, and differentiate them according to levels of formality (formal or non-formal education), and sector of operation. It is important to mention that education is a transversal theme and educational programming can be found in other sectors which deal with urban violence directly or indirectly, namely: formal education, security, legal, health, civil society/development sectors.

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Preliminary fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro, conducted by the CV-ET team and focusing on the city of Rio de Janeiro, identified that education and training have been used as a key strategy for violence prevention, by a variety of actors (including state actors, NGOs, and private foundations) and covering a wide range of intervention areas (supplementing formal education, sports and communication/technology identified as some of the main ones).

“Despite the absence of a national framework to prevent lethal violence, a growing number of innovative programmes have been developed [in Brazil].”

Formal education is the most obvious starting point for trying to deal with urban violence through education. In Rio de Janeiro, local education and security authorities have actively engaged with the issue of violence in vulnerable areas of Rio de Janeiro. The State Secretariat of Education, in collaboration with the ICRC, has developed two projects, ‘Abrindo Espaços Humanitários’ (Creating Humanitarian Spaces), that promotes dialogue within secondary public schools about humanitarian principles and violence related topics, and ‘Comportamento Mais Seguro’ (Safe Behaviour), that promotes a series of workshops with school staff and students to develop and implement security plans for each school (often affected by violence in its surroundings).

The City Secretariat of Education created the ‘Escolas do Amanhã’ (Schools of Tomorrow) program, with the aim to reduce dropout rates and improve learning in schools located in the most vulnerable areas of the city. The program promotes full time education, providing extracurricular activities such as sports, arts and culture, as well as additional support to the regular program. The military police has also developed initiatives within the public school system, promoting a closer interaction between the security and the education communities. Through the PROERD project, for instance, police officers develop regular workshops and events on violence and drug abuse prevention at schools.

Furthermore, the use of sports and physical activity is seen as an entry point for dealing with urban violence. Sport for development is nothing new, but in recent years it has increasingly been combined with education and training programmes, with the aim of getting youth ‘back on track’, academically and in terms of employment. In Rio, the NGO Fight for Peace uses martial arts combined with education (including acceleration programs) for youth development and empowerment.

Located in the Maré neighbourhood, one of the most violence-affected favelas in the city, the NGO has also recently embarked on a project that focuses on gang leaders and combines physical activity (martial arts) with educational and vocational skills training. The police has also engaged in sports initiatives for youth in some favelas. In the Santa Marta favela, regular classes of martial arts occur inside the police unit – with a police officer as an instructor, developing life skills and supporting a closer relationship between police and community.

Information and communication technology is another means through which actors have aimed to deal with urban violence in Brazil. By providing youth with opportunities and skills to express themselves and influence decision making, NGOs and private foundations have sought to foster generative civic engagement. The NGO Viva Rio developed Viva Favela, a social and digital inclusion project that promotes citizenship and skills development through the training of community correspondents on writing, video, photography, editing and web design, and disseminates the contents produced on its website. The Oi Futuro Foundation, developed Oi Kabum, Art and Technology School that offers to youth from low-income communities, students or graduates from the public educational network, courses in graphic design, video, photography, and web design. These initiatives provide youth with access to communication and IT tools and skills which may influence their life trajectories.

Next Steps

Brazil has been dealing with urbanization and urban violence for the past two decades. There are thus many lessons to be learned from the Brazilian experience and the mapping of educational programmes conducted by NORRAG and the Igarapé Institute. That being said, there are things that are unique to Brazil and can’t be generalized. To get a more nuanced understanding of...
available educational strategies for dealing with urban violence, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in cooperation with the CV-ET Programme is conducting a parallel inventory of education and training strategies in South Africa. When combined, the two country databases will form the basis for the Educational Strategies for Dealing with Urban Violence (ESDUV) database.

The ESDUV database provides insights not only into the types of education and training initiatives that are available, but also what the priorities of public and private actors are (whether neighbourhood organizations, municipal and state governments, international organizations, and private businesses and foundations). Data obtained would be a starting point for the identification and in-depth exploration of ‘scenarios of educational programming in the city.’

Together, the information could be used as an entry point for dialogue with national and international stakeholders – such as UNESCO, UNDP, UN-Habitat, OECD, and World Bank. In the process the database would highlight the innovative approaches within the field of education (broadly conceived) for dealing with urban violence. What is perhaps most remarkable about the ESDUV database, is that it will allow for an exploration of the different understandings of education and training which, in turn, provide insights into the various methodologies, target populations, and sources of funding – all of which can be used to influence research and policy at the local, national, and international levels. In addition, the database can provide a means for breaking down the silos between supply driven educational policies (via schools mostly) and education demand driven policies (education against violence).

Finally, and related to NORRAG itself, the ESDUV database will inform the developments of the other programmes of work – Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Post-2015, and the Global Governance of Education and Training. The issues covered by the ESDUV database, and the CV-ET Programme of Work more generally, are transversal themes that are going to be of particular relevance to the field of education (broadly conceived) for dealing with urban violence. What is perhaps most remarkable about the ESDUV database, is that it will allow for an exploration of the different understandings of education and training which, in turn, provide insights into the various methodologies, target populations, and sources of funding – all of which can be used to influence research and policy at the local, national, and international levels. In addition, the database can provide a means for breaking down the silos between supply driven educational policies (via schools mostly) and education demand driven policies (education against violence).

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End notes

i The Igarapé Institute has developed an interactive dashboard of citizen security interventions featuring data from more than 1,300 interventions in Latin American countries. The main findings can be accessed at: http://citizensecurity.igarape.org.br/

ii According to the World Bank, percentage of people living with US$ 1.25 per day also dropped dramatically, from 10% in 2004 to 2.2% in 2009 (World Bank. N/D).

iii Variations have occurred through time, with important homicidal decrease between 2003-2007, often attributed the disarmament campaign and other discrete sub-national interventions (Waiselfiz, 2014: 26).

iv Brazil also registers above-average rates of violence against women. Evidence suggests that in 2011, women and girls constituted 88.5% of the 50,617 reported cases of sexual violence (Cerqueira and Coelho, 2014: 7-8).

v According to UNDP (2013a: 171), the primary school dropout rate in Brazil between 2002-2011 was of 24.3%.

vi See ICRC 2013: 431

vii More information on the structure of the initiative is available at: http://www.rioeduca.net/programasAcoes.php?id=19

viii The project was developed by Rio de Janeiro’s Military Police in 1992 and it has been replicated by other states around the country. For more information on the experience in Rio de Janeiro access: http://proerd-pmerj.com/new/

ix For detailed information on the main activities developed by the NGO, access: http://www.fightforpeace.net/

x News and online magazines developed by youth involved in the initiative are available at: //www.vivafavela.com.br/

xi More information on the school available at: http://www.oifuturo.org.br/educacao/oi-kabum/
About the programme of work:

The conceptualization of education and conflict has undergone a significant change over the past two decades. Although to a large extent still co-existing in separate academic and practitioner silos, the linkages between education and conflict have begun to emerge as a central concern for a variety of stakeholders working on sustainable development and peacebuilding in the global South. Critically examining this relationship is important, not just in the light of the post-2015 development agenda, but also in view of societal changes taking place globally. Many developing and emerging economies are not only characterized by an information and telecommunication technologies (ITCs) revolution, rising social inequalities, rampant urbanization, and youth bulges, but often also by extremely high rates of (often urban) violence. This level of violence is on a par with or higher than in countries affected by intra-state armed conflict or socio-political emergency.

About NORRAG:

NORRAG is an independent network whose Secretariat is located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) in Geneva, Switzerland. Since its launch in 1985, NORRAG has established itself as a multi-stakeholder network of researchers, policymakers, members of NGOs, foundations and the private sector seeking to inform, challenge and influence international education and training policies and cooperation. Through networking and other forms of cooperation and institutional partnerships, it aims in particular to stimulate and disseminate timely, innovative and critical analysis and to serve as a knowledge broker at the interface between research, policy and practice. As of June 2014 NORRAG has more than 4,000 registered members in more than 167 countries, 45% from the global South.

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