Building and Sustaining Partnerships to Fight Crime

Introduction

Since 1994, when South Africa’s eleven policing agencies amalgamated to form the South African Police Service (SAPS), policing has changed dramatically. From being a force that existed to enforce the law and uphold the government, the SAPS is now a service concerned with working with and for the community to reduce and prevent crime and create a safe and secure society for all South Africa’s citizens. In line with international trends, and to provide a sorely needed improvement in police-community relations, the SAPS adopted the philosophy of Community Policing.

In line with this philosophy, Community Policing Forums (CPF), which served to bring communities and the police closer together and increase levels of trust and co-operation, were introduced at each police station in the country. In addition, emphasis was placed on the need for the police to work together with other government departments and institutions to jointly understand and address crime and disorder problems. This commitment to partnership policing was a departure from previous approaches and required experimentation and learning.

Police station managers and members of community crime prevention initiatives and Community Policing Forums all over the country are therefore, striving to strengthen community policing. One of their key focus areas is the establishment and sustaining of effective partnerships to address crime. This short paper is targeted at these groups so that models of successful partnerships can be shared with them and lessons taken forward at station and community level.

Lessons

This Insight is produced by the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) and was made possible through funding support from the Ford Foundation and access to the Impumelelo Innovations Award project database.

This Insight is part of a series aimed at improving service delivery through innovation. See the back page of the publication for more information about the series. The publication is targeted at practitioners and policy makers, and shares lessons and experiences from award-winning service delivery projects.

The insight was prepared for the CPSI by Judy Klipin (Umhlaba Development Services). The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not represent the views of the CPSI.
Review of Current Challenges in Crime Prevention Partnerships

According to Criminologist, Daniel Gilling, the theme of partnerships has formed part of the development of crime prevention policy for decades (1997). Since the 1980s the partnership approach has been more aggressively motivated for, with governments calling for multi-agency and co-ordinated approaches to crime prevention. From the 1990s, the term ‘partnership policing’ has denoted the shift away from a shared responsibility for crime prevention amongst government departments, to a broader-based collaboration with a range of sectors.

Collaboration is an important element of partnership crime prevention as its nature can influence the success or failure of an intervention. No matter how carefully the mechanisms of crime prevention projects are replicated, if the context within which the collaboration takes place is different from the original context, the project cannot be guaranteed success.

There is a growing acceptance on the part of local communities that police alone cannot, and should not be responsible for the reduction and prevention of crime at the local level. Partnerships are required to bring together the variety of knowledge, skills and resources necessary for effective and successful crime prevention interventions.

In South Africa, local-level crime prevention has generally been left up to the Community Police Forums (CPFs), which are supposed to undergo training in the types of joint problem solving that are seen as necessary for effective crime prevention. The guidelines state that CPFs are ‘a means to facilitate partnership between the police and the community and a means to engage in joint problem identification and consultative problem solving’.

The National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), released in 1996, lays a clear foundation for the use of partnerships in crime prevention in South Africa. The NCPS recognises that not only do government departments at all levels need to work together to prevent crime, but also that law enforcement agencies and processes that take place within the criminal justice system are not the only mechanisms for addressing crime. A problem-solving approach to crime prevention that draws on skills and resources from a multitude of stakeholders and agencies is necessary for real and sustained crime reduction in South Africa.

In the years since 1996, many partnerships have developed, and their levels of success have varied. Some of the weaknesses that have been identified include:

- A lack of suitable indicators to measure the success of interventions;
- Sustainability challenges in the absence of ongoing funding and resources; and
- A lack of clear guidelines to assist with the establishment and replication of partnership interventions.

This paper aims to provide some insights and lessons from three award-winning partnership approaches to crime prevention: the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality Community Crime Prevention Programme; the Pietermaritzburg Safer Streets Programme; and the Crime Reduction in Schools Project.

Partnership Policing

The NCPS and the White Paper on Safety and Security clearly outline the benefits of partnership policing in the fight against crime. In addition to the enhancement of crime prevention programmes and approaches, there is the benefit of increasing resource availability.

The SAPS, in common with many police services around the world, is beleaguered by a lack of sufficient resources and personnel. The moratorium that was placed on recruitments into the SAPS for a number of years after the amalgamation took place has exacerbated this problem and there is a severe shortage of operational police officers to work in the field. Furthermore, as part of the new strategic plan of the SAPS, some of the resources and finances that were largely centred in the historically well-resourced areas were to be redistributed to provide the historically poorly resourced areas with better skills and equipment for fighting crime. This attempt to equalise levels of service delivery throughout the country has resulted in many police station areas having to function with fewer resources, and often higher levels of crime. One of the most effective ways to address this new situation is to enter into partnerships with other public departments, as well as private stakeholders in key neighbourhoods.

The following case studies provide some lessons in this regard.

Case Studies

Case 1. Pietermaritzburg Safer Streets

Background

The Pietermaritzburg Police Station experiences similar challenges to those of other police stations housed in central business districts (CBDs) in South Africa. The police station receives many complaints about cell phone theft, prostitution, street children, drugs, and alcohol.

Improving policing in the area

Director Parbathie Maharaj arrived at Pietermaritzburg Police Station in 1999, bringing a fresh approach to addressing the problems. She looked at the rising crime...
statistics and the existing strategy for the police station, and decided that she would move forward with what was available already, rather than wait for more resources and personnel. Her aim was twofold: to increase the visibility of the police in the station area and reduce crime in this way, and at the same time make members of the public feel safer through an increased police presence.

The first step was to ask all of the station staff who were working in administrative positions to become reservists who would work outside of the station in SAPS uniform. At the same time, she drew on the many college and university students in the area who were seeking work experience, and trained them to take over the administrative duties of the police station. The newly graduated reservists were sent out into the field together with permanent members of the SAPS. The next step was to increase the mobility of the reservists and this was achieved through the donation of eight bicycles, helmets and water bottles from the store manager of a local supermarket chain. In addition, the SAPS provided some motorcycles for the squad.

Reducing crime and fear of crime

The bicycle squad was conceived and implemented to reduce and prevent crime in the CBD. It succeeds in doing this by increasing police visibility, which reduces the incidence of crimes committed. The squad also plays an educative role, by handing out leaflets that provide tips on safety and how to avoid becoming a victim of crime. Many of the crimes in the area are relatively easily avoided through education and empowerment.

One of the more successful campaigns that the squad has waged has been reducing the incidence of cell phone theft in the area. By informing the public of the problem of cell phone theft - up to 70% of reported robberies in the station area related to cell phones being stolen in the course of street crimes - the squad managed to dramatically reduce the crime statistics at their station, while protecting the public and preventing them from becoming victims of crime. The squad also assists in reducing the fear of crime and making the public feel safer.

Resources

The resource requirements for this programme are relatively low and have probably contributed to its success. Utilising SAPS staff members and volunteers means there is no salary budget for the programme. Working together with the CPF and obtaining donations of bicycles and other resources has ensured that costs to the police station are minimal and are far outweighed by the benefits.

Partners

The SAPS has the support and co-operation of a number of key partners in this programme. These include the CPF, business in the form of Business Against Crime, individual businesses, NGOs such as Justice and Women, and other government departments such as Welfare, Health and Education. Together, these partners bring a range of skills, resources and capabilities to the crime prevention exercise. The Station Commissioner ensures their ongoing support and co-operation through holding monthly partnership meetings at the police station.

Success factors and sustainability

The Station Commissioner credits the members of the SAPS at her police station with being the key success factor for this intervention. The members of the station generally, and the squad particularly, have high levels of commitment to their work and there is a spirit of camaraderie and support at the station. Complaints of corruption and low morale have been dramatically reduced, and the crime statistics have too.

Another success factor identified by the Station Commissioner is the monthly partnership meetings. Government departments and NGOs come together at the station to engage in ‘function purification’ and problem solving. In this way, problems and incidents that would be better addressed by an organisation or department other than the SAPS are cleared from the police station and taken on by the relevant role player, freeing the SAPS up to concentrate on pure policing functions.

It is very clear that the most critical success factor for this programme is the strong and committed leadership provided by Director Maharaj.

Challenges

Despite the ongoing success of this initiative, there are some challenges. At an organisational level, there was initially a struggle to get buy-in for the concepts by SAPS members at the station and higher up in the organisation. In addition, the motivation and dedication levels of some station members were low and needed to be addressed.

From the perspective of the community, the SAPS experienced a degree of resistance, especially from some community members who resented the reallocation of resources.

The responsibility of the SAPS to provide policing functions more broadly impacts on the ongoing implementation of the programme. At election time or at the opening of Parliament, the Station Commissioner must re-deploy staff members to serve this function, which can disrupt the work and the success of the bicycle squad.

Innovation

The key innovation displayed in this initiative is the commitment to a problem-solving approach to crime prevention. The monthly partnership forums engage in problem solving by examining the crime and disorder
problems and identifying the root causes of these. In this way, the most effective and efficient response to the problem is generated and, because all of the relevant role players participate in the forum, there is no need to undertake consultation and buy-in processes outside of the meetings. This joint problem solving and planning increases the levels of accountability (and therefore delivery) of all departments involved in problem solving.

**Conclusion**

The relatively low level of resource requirement means that the Safer Streets Programme is sustainable and replicable. It is especially well suited to high-density areas such as CBDs and suburbs. The initiative in Pietermaritzburg has reduced levels of contact crimes in the area, and has improved relations between the police and the community, with fewer complaints being lodged against the police, and a higher degree of trust and acceptance of the police from the community. The programme has been aligned to fit in with the sector policing functions of the police station. It has gone from strength to strength and new projects have evolved from it.

**Case 2. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality Community Crime Prevention Programme**

**Background**

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (NMMM) in the Eastern Cape serves communities in the poorest province of the country. In an attempt to address both the high unemployment levels and crime, the Mayor of the Metro tasked the NMMM Safety and Security Department with using volunteers to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime in the city. The department launched the NMMM Community Based Crime Prevention Programme (CBCPP) in 2002. The CBCPP aimed to take advantage of the legislation allowing for the establishment of metropolitan police services, while at the same time providing skills development opportunities for unemployed community members who volunteered to act as local police officers. Of the 6000 people who responded to the call for applications in the newspapers, 400 were selected and given training in areas such as crowd control, fire-fighting, and self-defence. Thereafter, sporting their shirts and caps that identified them as CBCPP members, they were deployed in the crime hotspots of the city to act as a visible deterrent to crime.

**Improving policing in the area**

The CBCPP officers have been instrumental in reducing crime through increased police visibility, as well as recovering stolen vehicles and unlicensed firearms and, reportedly, preventing a planned cash robbery at a local hospital. The SAPS statistics show a marked decrease in crime in the areas where the CBCPP members are deployed. Because the CBCPP officers are deployed primarily in the crime hotspots of the city, they also contribute to reducing fear of crime by providing a clear and visible presence in these areas.

Despite initial reservations, the SAPS has since recognised the value that the CBCPP members add to policing in the NMMM, and works closely with them. The CBCPP officers were first utilised on the beaches over the festive season in 2002, and the resulting reduction in crime and reported cases led the SAPS to utilise some of the officers in the CBD as well as to address the understaffing of SAPS in that area. The CBCPP officers work with the SAPS in the SAPS-defined sector areas, thus swelling the police capabilities in sector policing. In addition, the CBCPP officers are deployed to crime hotspots or potential hotspot areas when needed, for example at the pension payout station at the end of every month, or at schools over registration periods.

Since the introduction of the programme, the NMMM has been voted the safest city for tourists in South Africa.

**Resources**

The programme has quite significant running costs, despite the use of volunteers. In addition to the costs of the equipment, CBCPP-branded clothing and reflective strips, some operating costs are incurred. Since the inception of the programme, a monthly stipend of R400 for the CBCPP officers has been included in the running costs. The municipality has provided a five-year budget for the programme, which increases incrementally each year to accommodate inflation and increased running costs.

Additionally, assistance is provided from the business community in the CBD, which has bought 12 bicycles and four motorcycles for the CBCPP. The SAPS provides the CBCPP officers with portable radios to assist with communication.

Because the SAPS, CBCPP and Traffic Department work so closely together, the resources available to them are shared, and therefore optimised.

**Partners**

The success of the programme is largely related to the partners it utilises. There is a very strong working relationship with both the SAPS and the Traffic Department. In addition to the co-operation between provincial and local government and various departments, a range of NGOs have continued and continue to support the initiative. A Community Safety Forum, which brings together all stakeholders and role players in the area every two weeks, provides a forum for analysis of crime trends and patterns, and formulates the policing agencies' responses to these. As a result, an excellent working relationship exists between the CBCPP, the SAPS, the Traffic Department, and the Departments of Social Development, Health, Education, etc.
Success factors and sustainability

The programme seems to be well received and supported by the community and the SAPS alike. The CBCPP officials credit the strong support from the community and the Mayor with its success. Although the programme may to a certain degree be institutionalised within the city, as with any volunteer-based organisation it is inevitable that there will be a high turnover of staff as people move on to more permanent and gainful employment. Ongoing recruitment of staff members is therefore critical if the success of the project is to be sustained. The fact that the project has been budgeted for five years by the city is a very encouraging sign for sustainability, although it is unclear what will happen in 2008 when the budget cycle ends. The CBCPP officials have decided to use the money they received from the Impumelelo Silver Award to empower other municipalities to develop their own CBCPP programmes. They are currently working with two other, very poorly resourced, municipalities in the province to do just this.

Challenges

The retention of volunteers is a challenge, as it is in any programme of this nature. The CBCPP has managed to provide a number of the volunteers with full-time employment within departments such as Traffic and Fire and Disaster Management, which does help to secure some continuity.

Another challenge that has been identified is one relating to political relations. The opposition party in the NMMM would reportedly prefer a fully fledged metro police department and, depending on the outcome of the future local government elections, the funding for the CBCPP may cease.

Innovation

The use of volunteers to increase police visibility, to develop skills, and provide a sense of self-worth and productiveness at the same time has contributed to the reduction of crime in the area. It is an inspired approach to crime prevention as it meets the needs of potential offenders and potential victims alike through social development, the increased visibility of police, and a reduction in opportunities for crimes to be committed.

Additionally, the fortnightly Community Safety Forum meetings to analyse crime trends and conduct joint problem-solving and planning processes assist greatly in sharing the resources that are optimally available, rather than duplicating processes or working in isolation or even against each other.

Conclusion

The CBCPP initiative is a good example of making the best use of what opportunities and resources are available. By combining the spirit of volunteerism with a skills development programme that increases policing visibility and person power, this initiative has succeeded in reducing the crime statistics and fear of crime, while providing skills and nominal employment to many people who would otherwise be unemployed, unskilled, and potentially unproductive members of society.

Case 3. Crime Reduction in Schools Project (CRISP)

Background

The University of KwaZulu-Natal Durban, the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, the ABSA Foundation, and six schools in the Durban area have partnered to form the Crime Reduction in Schools Project (CRISP). The project aims to make the educational environment safer and more rewarding by targeting learners and teachers alike. In addition to responding to crime and conflict through victim support and trauma counselling for parents and learners, CRISP also contributes to long-term crime prevention by equipping learners with skills and knowledge, and keeping them occupied in meaningful and positive pastimes.

Crime prevention

Making education attractive to children is one of the best strategies of long-term poverty reduction. Not only does it reduce crimes by ensuring that at-risk youth are diverted into productive activities, it develops skills and aptitudes that will allow for employment and productivity in adulthood.

Resources

The CRISP project is a relatively well-resourced one. It is funded by UNICEF and local, provincial and national government departments, particularly education departments. The CRISP office in Durban has two full-time staff members, and the project as a whole has a number of facilitators and co-ordinators that are employed on contracts and work at the sites that have been developed for the programme.

The participating municipalities support the project by attending meetings, and maps and planning information and assistance are sourced from the Inanda-Ntuzuma-KwaMashu (INK) project office. In addition, the Deputy Chief Education Specialist, the National Prosecuting Authority, the Human Rights Commission, and the Medico-Legal Manager for the eThekweni Municipality all provide assistance, support and resources to the CRISP project.

Partners

CRISP has developed a very successful partnership model. In addition to the funding partners, UNICEF, the Department of Education and the South African Council for Education, CRISP has developed Intersectoral Networking Forums at local level, which comprise relevant departments from the Municipalities as well as
the Departments of Justice, Health, Safety and Security and Education. Civil society is well represented too, as are learners from the participating schools. The Inanda-Ntuzuma-KwaMashu (INK) project is also involved. Each of these forums has a constitution and is chaired by an elected person. The forums meet every two months to discuss the project, to identify problems and develop solutions for that particular area.

**Success factors and sustainability**

The Director of CRISP, Ms Bashi Devnarian, credits the success of the project to many factors:

- Good planning with clear aims and objectives;
- Buy-in from all stakeholders and role players from the outset;
- Sector forums allowing for joint problem identification and solving, as well as informal networking and learning from each other;
- Increasing awareness and utilisation of the resources that are available in communities;
- Developing and applying local organic solutions and interventions that are sensitive to culture;
- Working within the policy framework that guides the work of CRISP (e.g. The Bill of Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Child Care Act, the Domestic Violence Act, etc.); and
- A developmental approach that guides the work of the project.

It is also clear that the ongoing support and buy-in from all of the partners contribute to the success and sustainability of the project.

Perhaps the most critical success factor, however, is the resourcing that allows for full-time employees and dedicated contract staff to concentrate on steering the project forward at area level. In addition to each site having an appointed and paid facilitator, monthly monitoring and evaluation visits are conducted site to provide assistance and support and to ensure that the momentum of the project is not lost.

**Challenges**

The challenges to the project reside mainly in the high turnover of participants in the forums. Every time an experienced person leaves and a new person is introduced to CRISP, a training and orientation process needs to take place in order for the project to proceed, which can be time consuming.

**Conclusion**

Two elements of this project stand out. The first of these is the fact that it is centred on a strong multi-agency crime prevention partnership, where local Intersectoral Networking Forums, which are formalised structures with constitutions, co-ordinators and facilitators, meet regularly. The second is the fact that there are staff who are paid to dedicate all of their time and attention to the project. The professional approach that is adopted in this project is evidenced in good planning, good consultation, and effective monitoring and evaluation.

**Lessons**

All of the projects discussed in this paper have succeeded in creating partnerships for crime prevention at local level. Although they are each unique and have different focus areas, it is possible to draw some general conclusions about what their key success factors and challenges are.

**Key success factors**

In all of the projects reviewed, there is a recognition of, and commitment to, a multi-agency approach to crime prevention. Not only are many government departments at local, provincial and, in one case, national, level brought on board, but civil society and businesses are also key to the success of the projects. The projects have all ensured the ongoing participation of the various agencies through institutionalising regular meetings and discussion forums, which allow for accountability and commitment.

A related success factor is the ability to identify and access resources that are available in communities, government departments, and business and civil society organisations and to use them optimally through avoiding duplication of interventions and programmes.

The projects all use their multi-agency forums to conduct processes of joint problem identification and solving. This allows all partners to understand their own roles, responsibilities and contributions in crime prevention, and provides a degree of accountability and transparency in the processes selected, and the decisions taken.

Another key feature of success is the presence of a strong project champion. This person may have initiated the project, or may have taken it over after initiation. In either case, this committed person (or these committed persons) provides direction and impetus for the growth and development of the project, and ensures that focus and commitment are maintained. The champions also ensure that proper planning takes place and that the goals and objectives of the project are clear and achievable.

Each of the cases presented is locally based, and has evolved and developed according to its environment and specific needs, and is therefore acceptable to and supported by the communities where it exists. The fact that the cases are all context specific in their aims and processes has contributed to their success.
There are a number of challenges the projects share. The key challenge to any project of this nature is that of resources and funding. Although the three case studies presented here require different levels of resources, the fact remains that for such interventions to succeed, some resources are required in an ongoing manner.

Because of the nature of the programmes and the involvement of the volunteers and community members who participate, there is a high turnover of members. This is time consuming and can be frustrating to the core project members.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the lack of suitable indicators to measure the impact of projects such as these may be an obstacle to further funding and the replication of the projects elsewhere.

Crime, as the NCPS states, ‘is not one thing’. It is a very complex issue that arises from a whole set of contextual and environmental factors. It is therefore very difficult to measure the impact of crime prevention programmes, particularly in the short term.

There do not appear to be any real indicators in place to measure the success and impact of community-based crime prevention projects.

However, there are a number of informal measurements that are used.

These include:

- Changes in perceptions and a reduced fear of crime;
- Improved relationships between the police and the community;
- A greater sense of community and community support; and
- A reduced incidence of crime.

All of the projects reviewed here show elements of all four of these measures of success.

**Abbreviations**

- CBCPP - Community Based Crime Prevention Programme
- CBD - Central Business District
- CPF - Community Police Forums
- CPSI - Centre for Public Service Innovation
- CRISP - Crime Prevention in Schools Programme
- CSF - Community Safety Forums
- INK - Inanda/Ntuzuma/KwaMashu Precinct
- SAPS - South African Police Service
- NCPS - National Crime Prevention Strategy
- NGO - Non-governmental Organisation
- NMMM - Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality

**Acknowledgements**

A number of people contributed to the writing of this Insight. Thanks are due to Bashi Devnarian, Parbathie Maharaj, L.M. Majikazana and Shirin Motala.

**People and Sources Consulted**

- Ms Bashi Devnarian - Director of CRISP.
- Director Parbathie Maharaj - Station Commissioner of SAPS Pietermaritzburg.
- Mr L.M. Majikazana - NMMM CBCPP Project Officer.
- CRISP Project documents.
- www.impumelelo.org.za
Effective responses to the many developmental challenges facing South Africa — combating poverty, dealing with disease, providing reliable services, and so on — require a significant level of experimentation and innovation. Old approaches are not always appropriate for addressing new challenges, a new institutional environment, or other changes.

In the last decade there has been no scarcity of experimentation and innovation. In many cases, individual projects have provided the evidence to spur on the re-thinking of service delivery arrangements and to improve policy and practice. In some cases, South African initiatives have contributed to shaping global thinking on particular issues - for example, the Working for Water project.

Innovation is vital if we are to meet our development challenges. There is growing acceptance, too, of the importance of other measures when development challenges are dealt with.

These include a stronger emphasis on:

- Acknowledging and rewarding innovation or simply good practice
- Introducing systems that encourage learning and knowledge sharing
- Ensuring that policies and strategies are informed by practical experiences on the ground, i.e. the concept of evidence-based policy-making.

The Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) was established with a specific mandate to unlock innovation in public service delivery. An important task in this regard is to identify innovations in service delivery that have proven to be successful and sustainable, and to assess how these innovations can be replicated elsewhere or mainstreamed. In this way, the innovation can be taken from one part of the country to another, or can be institutionalised in the area where it was started. Better still, it becomes the dominant way, nationally and internationally.

However, the experiences and findings of service delivery and innovation specialists have shown that replication and mainstreaming are far more difficult to achieve in practice. On this basis, the CPSI has created a work programme dedicated to enhancing our understanding of replication and mainstreaming and our ability to replicate and mainstream successful innovations.

With funding from the Ford Foundation, the CPSI has initiated this series of short Service Delivery Innovation Briefs. Each brief focuses on a different area of service delivery. The brief combines an exploration of key challenges within that sector and looks at the lessons that can be learned from award-winning cases where a different or innovative route was chosen. Where possible, the brief identifies crucial policy questions that may require attention and debate.

The case studies are drawn from the Impumelelo Innovations Award database. The database is managed by the Impumelelo Innovations Award Trust and contains more than 1000 examples of alternative approaches to service delivery in a range of service delivery areas, as well as projects focused on poverty alleviation. The database includes nominations as well as approximately 120 award winners from the first five years (1999—2004) of the awards programme.

The Impumelelo Innovations Award is primarily an awards programme. As such, the projects that are conferred with an award address only some of the many challenges faced within a specific area of service delivery. Despite this limitation, these projects do form an important basis for policy and practice. In addition, they assist in identifying improvements that can be replicated or mainstreamed, or help to spur on new innovations.