

IPT's Crime Prevention Networking Forum

Guideline

Setting up a Community Based Crime Prevention Initiative



IPT has established a Crime Prevention Networking Forum that aims to provide support for community based initiatives in the Durban Metro. The aim is to facilitate the development of relationships between individual projects through a networking forum.

Information relating to crime prevention processes is being developed and distributed as part of the project. This information is available at about 20 libraries throughout the eThekweni Municipality.

IPT also hosts regular workshops to enable role-players in community based crime prevention to network, exchange information about strategies and to access current information.

IPT is also compiling a database of community based crime prevention projects.

Should you wish to participate in the Networking Forum please contact Val on (031) 305 8422 or by email - val@ipt.co.za.

IPT has also published a book entitled *Owning Safety: A Profile of Community Initiatives* which documents the activities of community based crime prevention initiatives in KwaZulu-Natal and is available from Adams Bookstore (031) 305 3791.



27th Floor
Old Mutual Centre
303 West Street
Durban 4001
South Africa
Phone: (031) 305 8422
Fax: (031) 305 8420
Email: val@ipt.co.za

The following information is provided in an effort to equip you to begin to develop a crime prevention initiative in your community. We suggest that you consult the manual for community based crime prevention entitled *Making South Africa Safe* during the development of your project. The National Crime Prevention Centre of the Department of Safety and Security published this manual in 2000 and it is available from Superintendent Logan Govender of the National Social Crime Prevention division of the South African Police Service. He can be contacted telephonically on (012) 421 8287 or by email at cphqloc@saps.org.za.

This brochure is compiled by



COMMUNICATION

Communication is vital on several different levels and can take a number of different forms. It may include meetings of the community, church groups or other organisations. It may also require access to technology such as radio, email, telephones or short messaging services via cellular phone.

1. Communication within your community

It is important that people you want to include in your crime prevention initiative develop a sense of community. You may live or work in the area where the project is to operate, or you may become involved in an initiative as a result of a particular role that you play or because of your interest in crime prevention.

For example, a project may involve people who live in Cato Manor, or who work and utilise the Durban beachfront for leisure, or it may be concerned with street traders and shop owners.

It is vital that people within the community that your project is serving feel confident about approaching the representative or representatives of the initiative about crime prevention issues. People should feel confident that matters raised will get addressed and aspects such as confidentiality will be respected.

It is useful to get a wide variety of role-players such as community leaders, political representatives, business people, tenants and ratepayers involved in community based crime prevention initiatives. However, you should be aware that people with vested interests might try to exert some influence on your project, so it is important that such issues be debated and questioned.

2. Communication with other organisations in your area

It is important that you identify organisations within the geographical area or field in which your crime prevention initiative is to work.

It may be possible for your initiative to be developed through these existing structures to avoid duplication. Such organisations and structures may also be able to assist when your project is unable to fulfil a certain role or identifies functions that are already being performed elsewhere. Such relationships may assist by ensuring that roles are carried out more effectively, in terms of time, efficiency and financial resources.

3. Communication with other crime prevention initiatives

It is important that you develop a networking relationship with other crime prevention initiatives. These should be developed on national, provincial and local levels so that your project operates within the framework of national crime prevention policy and remains relevant at local level.

In addition, it is important that you attempt to develop some understanding of national crime prevention policy to assist you to understand the role that your project can play in addressing crime. Please bear in mind, that it is not always easy to keep track of national developments, so you'll have to network with others.

Networking with other crime prevention initiatives and with broader structures, also gives projects the opportunity to receive recognition for work accomplished and to share information about changes happening elsewhere. While projects may feel that they could open themselves to criticism, it is more likely that by being open to suggestions a successful crime prevention initiative will find support from broader structures. It is important not to assume that other structures and organisations, particularly those operating on a national or provincial level, are aware of your project.

IDENTIFYING A CHAMPION

While it is important to identify a "champion" for your project, it is also important that the project does not depend on one person. A project that does depend on an individual is likely to collapse if that person becomes unavailable for any reason.

A "champion" must also have support from other people involved in the project. This is not to say that there will never be conflict, but the "champion" must in general be supported by a broad group of people.

In addition to being respected by community members, "champions" and other crime prevention initiatives representatives must be trusted by the community and have a reputation for honesty and delivery.

A "champion" must also have the time, resources and initiative to spearhead a crime prevention project, and could be employed by the initiative.

A project may also be championed by an organisation. There is perhaps less risk of a project being left champion-less if it is driven by an organisation, but the group may still be disbanded for a particular reason.

FUNDING AND OTHER RESOURCES

It is possible for community based crime prevention initiatives to function without financial resources, and lack of funding should not deter you from developing an initiative.

However, should funding be limited it is important for you to attempt to identify ways of accessing resources. For example, if you need to set up an office, but do not have money for the monthly rental costs, consider approaching a business in your area that could assist by providing you with the use of a small room.

BE FLEXIBLE

You may have very clear ideas at present of how you see your project in the future. However, it is possible that the project may change direction, or may need to evolve. So, it's important that you recognise this possibility in order to enable it to happen. A crime prevention project is seldom static and it is likely that your initiative will need to develop when additional needs are identified.