

Crime and safety partnerships give communities confidence

Through a joint project with Leeds in the UK, a Durban township in South Africa has given its residents greater confidence, reduced crime and the fear of crime, and helped to create a thriving and prosperous community. Partnership working, involvement of the community and developing positive activities for young people have been at the heart of the approach, report John England and S'bu Xulu, following a review of the impact of the project.



In the province of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, eThekweni Municipality (formerly Durban Municipal Council (DMC)) has administrative responsibility for a diverse geographical area combining the original city, with its successful port and industries; suburban areas where economically more successful people live; township developments and a large rural hinterland.

Cato Manor is a township of Durban, a traditional area of settlement for African people. Cato Manor was selected for the project as it was a community identified as a Presidential Project for re-development, with an existing community development infrastructure and dynamic programmes of investment in new housing, roads, environment and employment.

<View of new building projects in Cato Manor



‘Crime casts fear in the hearts of South Africans from all walks of life and prevents them from taking their rightful place in the development and growth of our country. It inhibits our citizens from communicating with one another freely, from engaging in economic activity and prevents entrepreneurs and investors from taking advantage of the opportunities which our country offers.’

S’bu Xulu, Security Adviser

Violent crime was a facet of day-to-day life for people living in Cato Manor. During the 1990s the levels of crime resulted in a number of basic social services, including education, health and welfare services withdrawing from the area because of violence and intimidation towards staff. Similarly, contractors working on infrastructure and house building projects were threatened and robbed and in one instance a worker was killed, leading to frequent disruptions in the building programmes. Clearly this was not a situation which would encourage either private investors or local people to have the confidence to establish small businesses in the area. Consultation with local people identified their desire to address these issues; however, confidence in the South African Police Service was low following the apartheid years.

The cities of Leeds and Durban already had a Memorandum of Understanding and had previous experience of working together on mutually beneficial projects. One of the priorities identified for joint work was safety and security, where Leeds had valuable experience having developed its own successful partnership approach to tackling community safety issues and developing a community safety strategy.

In September 1999 Leeds City Council and Durban Metropolitan Council, with financial support from the CLGF Good Practice Scheme, embarked on a project for Building Effective Community Safety Partnerships to assist with the development of a community safety strategy for Cato Manor, which could act as a model for elsewhere.

Leeds’ successful partnership approach to tackling community safety issues was the starting point for the Leeds – Durban project and helped shape the project’s objectives of:

- Developing a multi-sector partnership focused on community safety,

- Consulting with and engaging local people in decision making in the area of community safety,
- Identifying positive alternatives to crime with a focus on young people,
- Creating safer communities through transforming the physical environment.

A four-stage work plan was drawn up for the project.

Stage 1 – Durban delegation visit to Leeds for a study visit and introduction to policy and practice within Leeds. The delegation met a wide range of partners, including representatives from business and education.

Stage 2 – Leeds delegation visit to Durban to enable participants to make a broad assessment of the situation in Cato Manor, with a particular emphasis on the training and development needs of key staff.

Stage 3 – A programme of training and work shadowing for four representatives from Durban with organisations in Leeds focusing on positive alternatives to crime for young people, a training course for community workers in crime prevention, and work shadow opportunities with the West Yorkshire Police, Leeds Community Safety Unit and an inner-city community safety project.

Stage 4 – Applying the learning within Cato Manor, including training for local community workers, the development of training materials, the launch of a local community safety partnership and finalisation of a community safety strategy for Cato Manor.

Partnership working

During the project a start was made at developing a wider cross-section partnership around crime and public safety but this was not achievable within a short time frame, as they lacked experience of this approach.

The example of partnership working in Leeds, based on the Community Safety Partnership model was difficult to replicate in the Cato Manor setting. Institutional barriers and resource constraints proved difficult in the first phase. However, a more flexible approach to partnerships emerged, built around local circumstances and specific objectives.


Wider lessons were learned through the project about the importance of such partnerships. The recently set up Area Based Management has produced a community safety plan for Cato Manor that has a continuing commitment to public-private sector partnerships, with the focus for partnership working on specific issues, for example CCTV in Cato Manor and the application of technologies, such as GIS mapping, to improve the sharing of crime related information.

The message that partnerships are ultimately the key to delivering a safer city has also had a wider impact at regional level. In 2000 Safer City Durban – itself a partnership between the City of Durban, the National Department for Safety and Security and the South African Police Service - published its first strategy to coordinate the crime prevention activities of all agencies in the Durban area.

Involving the community

A key aim of the project was to involve local people in identifying local crime related issues, to challenge misconceptions and change attitudes. Leeds’ experience showed how local people can be involved in local crime and safety audits as well as communicating information on what has worked well in other areas.

A crime audit undertaken at the end of the project report pointed to the increasing effectiveness of the police and greater confidence by local residents in reporting crime incidents and criminal intelligence. The review



John England (right) with Captain Naidoo of the South African Police Services consult with a local shopkeeper on the crime situation in Cato Manor >



found that the principle of engaging communities and local residents in developing crime prevention initiatives is now a well-established practice at both the city and provincial level. Thus the work in Cato Manor and other areas has influenced policy and implementation at a wider level.

In late 2003 the Cato Manor Area Based Management was established and in 2005 published its first business plan. Nandi Trinidad, the Social Development Manager and Mhlengi Gumede, the Area Manager, gave priority to reviving the Community Policing Forum with the assistance of Safer Cities and the police. Since then it has focused on two key projects:

- A crime mapping exercise using GIS software, launched in February 2006, developed by the Metro police, which shares information with the South African Police Service.
- The beginnings of a network of CCTV cameras in Cato Manor which, in consultation with the public, are targeted on businesses, open spaces and the public.

Safety and security is clearly one area where the provincial government, which has responsibility for the police and justice systems, is working in partnership with local authorities, who are responsible for delivering crime prevention programmes at the local level. At the strategic policy level there is now a recognition that crime prevention is only effective if strong partnerships are developed and the police are working with and for the community.

The Community Police Forum is seen as an important component in the good governance of local policing, with emphasis on adopting constitutions, facilitating engagement of local people and accountability for decision-making. In the provincial Strategic and Performance Plan 2005 – 2010 there is a commitment towards the establishment of Local Government Multi-Agency Crime Coordination Structures (known in some provinces as Community Safety Forums), which will act as

an umbrella within the local network. Policy at provincial level is being developed with knowledge of projects such as those at Cato Manor, and the department is using the knowledge gained from such targeted crime prevention programmes across the KwaZulu Natal province.

Sport helps youngsters kick crime

The project team in Cato Manor identified a need to develop programmes that could build young people's confidence and self-esteem through engaging in positive recreational activities. Team games and sports competitions were seen as one way of achieving this. The team learned about the Leeds SPACE project that worked with young people to challenge their anti-social or criminal behaviour whilst offering positive alternatives through individualised activity plans.

A programme of activities for young people was drawn up including local sports competitions, and football tournaments. Included in this programme were activities to help build understanding between young people and the police, through visits to the local police station, and planned activities involving local police officers. To help young people understand the consequence of criminal behaviour, opportunities were also found to visits courts and hear first-hand from 'reformed' adults who could describe their experience of the justice system and life in prison.

In a country where sport, particularly football, plays a major part in the lives of people, the organisation of soccer tournaments featured prominently. Captain Naidoo from Cato Manor Police Station described two aspects of the Community Safety Strategy that the police continue to have a direct involvement in: the Community Policing Forum and the positive alternatives to crime programme - mostly local football tournaments organised by the police, including a team of local police officers.

Meanwhile sport and recreational activity is now seen as a mainstream service activity for the local authority, with new posts created to develop sport activity across Durban. Indeed, one of the participants in the project exchange visits and work experience opportunity in Leeds has now been appointed to a post in sport development. In February 2006 she spent a further month in Leeds engaged in a similar UK Sport funded programme of professional development in her new role. Sport and recreation have now become a mainstream service for the eThekweni Municipality.

Transforming the physical environment

Awareness that good urban design and environmental improvement would improve community safety was already established in both the UK and South Africa.

The aim was to transform the environment, to make Cato Manor a safe place to live, where people could move about without fear, and have confidence in the security of their own home. Road networks, street lighting, the physical appearance of buildings and the clearing of bush were all priorities for action as was to create safe public places, particularly schools, libraries, community centres and health centres. Similarly attention was given to creating similar environments, hostile to crime, in areas where economic activity was taking place.

The strategy also recommended that local residents should acquire knowledge and skills so that they could take the necessary steps to make their own homes safe, as well as identify local risks and discuss solutions with the authorities.

New housing schemes are taking into account some of the ideas and experience gained during the project. Mzi Magubane from Durban Metro Housing Department, who was part of the initial delegation that visited Leeds,

GOOD PRACTICE SCHEME: LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE



< S'bu Xulu (far left) and John England (far right) meet with members of Cato Manor Area Based Management and the South African Police Services to review the effectiveness of the good practice scheme project

“The Leeds experience provided a structure for our work. We took the Leeds model then used local experiences to shape it.....International partnerships are critical to developing ideas – there is no need to reinvent the wheel”

Willies Mchunu, Speaker - Kwazulu Natal Legislature

explained that in 2006 the Durban metro area is planning 16,000 new homes. Each of these housing schemes would start with the involvement of local people, who will both advise and decide on the community facilities. Advice is also sought from local police to ensure that community safety issues are being addressed in the design of new schemes. Roads must be able to accommodate police and other emergency service vehicles, the location of street lighting and roads without natural hiding places for criminals were all considerations in the design of new schemes.

The network of CCTV cameras in Cato Manor, which has been developed in consultation with the public, and is targeted on businesses, open spaces and the public at large is an important tool in community safety. Other approaches include floodlighting areas where public safety has been an issue, and bush clearing and street maintenance, to reduce opportunities for street robbery and improve general accessibility.

Without doubt, there are tangible results. In the 2001 strategy, physical environment improvements were identified as a priority for crime prevention. The evidence of substantial investment places environmental improvement at the centre of improving community well being, with benefits beyond those of community safety.

Lasting returns

Measuring the impact of any project over short to medium term is always difficult, as so many external variables are bound to play a part. The review of the Good Practice Scheme found a web of connections, with the spread and development of ideas built around shared knowledge and experience gained through the project. Above all, there is strong evidence of a lasting commitment to engagement with local people and the building of multi-sector partnerships, which goes beyond a narrow focus on community safety.

At the City level the eThekweni Municipality Integrated Development Plan Review 2005/06 confirms that the “Municipality is also committed to promoting extensive community education on crime prevention and supporting partnerships to increase community involvement in crime reduction”. Lungisa Manzi, Head of Emergency Services at the Municipality provided examples of how consultation and involvement of communities was being used in, for example the installation of CCTV. A further example was an initiative to find employment for unemployed young people in the hotel and catering industry, which has developed in conjunction with a local NGO.

The estimated total cost of the project was £39,885, with a contribution through the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme of £26,235. The balance of the budget was made up of in-kind contributions from the partners, including 195 person days contribution from agencies in Leeds and Durban.

Whilst the strategy for tackling crime and security in Cato Manor was far more extensive than the specific objectives covered by the project, there can be no doubt that together they contribute to Cato Manor gaining the confidence to tackle issues of safety and security in partnership. A project of this nature, well planned and executed, can provide excellent value for money. For an investment of £40,000, and the goodwill and commitment of many people, real and substantial outcomes have been achieved. Perhaps the most significant outcome is the communities gaining the confidence to tackle issues of safety and security in partnership with public bodies; taking the development of their area into their own hands, and addressing long-standing problems of poverty and security thus creating a foundation for the future prosperity of their community.