



**ETHEKWINI
MUNICIPALITY**



**A 'How to Manual' for
forming sustainable
community safety groupings**

**Community Action
for Safer
Neighbourhoods**





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for forming sustainable community
safety groupings

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Introduction

This manual is geared towards helping local communities establish (or reinforce) effective, safety-oriented community associations. The target audience for this manual is all community members who are interested in establishing voluntary associations that aim mainly to create safer and more cohesive neighbourhoods. The model laid out in this manual is meant to be flexible. All communities have their own unique dynamics, problems and history. Each community group should use this manual as a basis for developing its own systems for working and for networking with other safety providers. The authors hope this manual will provide a set of key principles to guide community safety groups and

some ideas regarding what mechanisms seem to work in making neighbourhoods safer. Creating such associations, we believe, will help us realize our imaginings of a safer Durban!

We hope that this manual is user-friendly and wish you the best of luck in establishing your own community safety group. The Imagine Durban Project and the Safer Cities Department of eThekweni Municipality will do their best to assist community initiatives that are guided by this manual, particularly those groups that commit themselves to the principles this manual suggests should underpin community safety groups.

This manual has five parts:

1. Part One describes why this manual was developed, and gives a quick overview of the thinking that informs this manual.
2. Part Two outlines the basic principles that we feel should underpin any community safety group.
3. Part Three examines the ways in which communities can come together to create more secure neighbourhoods.
4. Part Four looks at the role of the police, the private security industry and the city (local government) in creating safer environments.
5. Part Five looks at how to create effective and strong safety networks.
6. Part Six explores how this model could be adapted to suit different local environments.

Part One

Background to this manual

This manual is a joint initiative between the Safer Cities Department of eThekweni Municipality and the Imagine Durban project. The aim of Safer Cities is to ensure that every citizen within the eThekweni Municipal Area (EMA hereafter) is safe, and shares common understanding on community safety issues. Imagine Durban on the other hand is a council-led project which is concerned with long-term planning for a better city. Imagine Durban is being implemented in conjunction with Sustainable Cities, an NGO from Vancouver, Canada and the PLUS Network (a network of 35 cities sharing experiences in sustainability planning) who have received funding from the Canadian International Development Agency to support the project. Imagine Durban is primarily concerned with mobilizing communities, business people, government, NGOs, etc in the city to think creatively about what the EMA can and should look like in the future. One of the key themes of Imagine Durban that emerged out of its consultation process is the need to find innovative ways of creating a safer city. For most people in the EMA, safety remains the number one concern in their daily lives.

The Safer Cities Department and the Imagine Durban Project are looking at creative and sustainable ways for the people of eThekweni to make their city safe and secure. Because safety is such an important aspect of imagining a better

city, Imagine Durban allocated funds supplied by the Canadian International Development Agency to support a research-based project that looked into how communities, at the most grassroots level, were coming together to make spaces safer. To do this, the research team identified three different neighbourhoods in Durban to find out how people came together to secure their spaces. Newlands East was identified as a focus area because the first street committees in KwaZulu-Natal were launched here. Palm Ridge, an area in the Overport/Berea suburb, was identified because it has a very active and formalized neighbourhood association that focuses broad safety issues. Lastly, the Warwick Triangle area was identified because traders in that area have, for many years, been active in policing the area as a way to enhance trading and to secure customers in this busy metropolitan space.

This is not to say that these three areas are the only areas in which community members are taking the lead in creating safer environments. Indeed, throughout the EMA and South Africa more generally, there are numerous local communities that have come together to create associations with a key objective being making their neighbourhood safer. There are daily reports in the press about neighbourhood watches, street patrols, neighbourhood associations and other groupings that are actively involved in delivering

services that are traditionally viewed as the work of the police. With this in mind, we are drawing on these three areas for ideas. But we recognize that many local areas are full of innovations and community members who are committed to building feelings of cohesion and responding to issues of insecurity. This manual then is meant as a guide, as a source of ideas. It is not meant to be prescriptive, but to stimulate debate and to provide one framework for the people of the EMA to get involved in local safety initiatives in ways that are recognized and supported by local government and the police.

In drawing on these experiences we hope to achieve new imaginings about creating safe communities by bringing together the skills and knowledge of a wide range of organizations and individuals. We take as our starting point that although the police will always be the government body that is ultimately responsible (and accountable) for securing communities, there are a range of other organizations that are actively involved in making their communities safe. We are particularly interested in community groups that operate from the grassroots (from the bottom-up) and that are often more able than the police to identify safety problems and to design ways of solving them.

We know from talking with community groups and with the police that government institutions like the police have a limited capacity to provide safe, secure and healthy communities without effectively networking with community groupings

and other groupings such as private security agencies and NGOs. In recent years, the police have called upon communities to participate more actively in governing their own security, and in assisting the police in their work. In the Sunday Times of 17th May 2009, it was reported that government is making plans to get young unemployed people to become trained as community support officers. These officers will patrol the streets, wear a uniform, and receive a stipend for the work that they do. In developing this strategy, the government is saying some very important things: Firstly, the police cannot deal with safety issues without the active involvement of community members. Secondly, community members, especially the youth, have energy and willingness to contribute actively to improving the safety of their communities. Thirdly, government wants to form proper partnership with non-state actors, such as unemployed young people.

While this is an important and interesting initiative, the reality is that communities have been actively involved in creating safer spaces for many decades in South Africa. The questions facing us are: How do we harness the energies of community residents in a way that is seen as legitimate and is supported by government agencies? What are the best ways for communities to organize themselves in the quest for safer neighbourhoods? What can we learn from community safety groups that are already operating and that have seen positive outcomes from the work they have been doing?

What we hope to promote in this manual are new ways of thinking about how the knowledge, capacities and resources of local communities can be recognized and mobilized to create safer environments.

This manual is a starting point. It is a culmination of research and a discussion workshop held in Springfield on the 23rd of May 2009 with safety stakeholders. Imagine Durban, and the Safer Cities Programme of eThekweni Municipality, has produced this manual for debate and for testing. Based on the feedback received from interested groupings and stakeholders, the manual will be reworked in 2010 and considered for formal endorsement by eThekweni Municipality as a guide to the operation of community safety groups in eThekweni.

Part Two

Guiding principles for community safety groups

The foundation of the model laid out in this manual is a set of principles that we feel should be supported by community groups that focus on making neighbourhoods safer. These principles were pulled together from the research conducted, the discussions in the May 2009 workshop, and from the work of criminologists who are concerned with democratic and effective policing.

Why are guiding principles necessary?

We have already noted that community groups that aim to make neighbourhoods safer exist in many different areas. They have adopted a range of different names – neighbourhood associations; street committees; neighbourhood watches; street patrols; street committees and even community police forums. All these groups are geared toward the same goal: making local spaces safer and better places to live and to work.

Some police, councillors and political parties do appreciate these groups, but there remains a strong belief that neighbourhood groups can create problems. There are a number of reasons for this (often mistaken) view. Firstly, there are concerns that these groups have the potential to use rough justice and operate outside of the law. Secondly, there are concerns that these groups do not take

account of existing government agencies and non-government agencies striving for the same goals. There may be some validity to these concerns, but for the most part community groupings strive toward being legitimate groupings that are given recognition by government agencies. To make certain that community groups are able to attain this legitimacy and recognition, it is important that they adopt certain key principles.

The guiding principles are outlined below:

1. Safety is best promoted and achieved when all existing resources, capacities and knowledge are mobilized and coordinated in the form of a network.
2. Local community groups often have the best knowledge of the area in which the members are based and have good solutions to safety problems, but their contributions are often not properly recognized or coordinated.
3. The police, other government agencies (such as the municipality, social services, etc) do not possess all of the resources, capacities and knowledge required to make communities safer.
4. The resources of different individuals, groups and agencies are most effectively used when a safety network is established and takes full advantage of the unique abilities of all social actors.
5. Community safety groups should be non-partisan and non-political.
6. Community groups should avoid using violence and intimidation, even against those who are seen as criminal.
7. Community safety groups must recognize the right to safety of all community members – property owners and tenants, workers and the unemployed, South Africans and foreigners.
8. Community safety groups must always act in a way that demonstrates that the group values humane behaviour in general and the expression of care for one's neighbours.
9. At all times community safety groups must demonstrate a respect for the law. The police must be called in to make custodial arrests, to enforce the law and to curtail freedoms through the use of force.
10. The police, local government and other government agencies must recognize and support the vitality and creativity of community associations in creating safer neighbourhoods.
11. All actors/agencies in safety networks must operate in a manner which is respectful and accountable to the community and to one another. All actions and policies of safety network agencies should be in line with the South African Constitution.

These principles should be adopted by community groups and they should also guide the way in which other groups such as government agencies, NGOs, private security companies and business operate

as part of a security network. This would result in (legitimate) community groups being awarded the recognition and support they deserve.

Part Three

The structure and activities of community safety groups

The naming of community safety groups

Community groups that have come together to make their local neighbourhoods safer currently call themselves by a number of names. These include street committees, neighbourhood associations, street patrols, community policing forums and neighbourhood watches. Members of the community group must decide on the name for their particular group and this name should reflect what the group hopes to do in the area. In line with the principles stated above, the group name should not be evidently politically aligned or allude to the use of violent means.

The purpose of safety groups

Community safety groups come together for a number of reasons. Their key focuses may differ from area to area, but for the most part, research indicates that the main objectives of community safety groups are:

- To develop activities/projects/programmes that are geared toward making the local area safer.
- To build a sense of community cohesion at the local level. As the quote at the beginning of the manual states, safe communities are

communities where people ‘know each other’s business’.

- To develop a sense of pride in the neighbourhood.
- To ensure that local communities have an organized group that can represent needs, concerns, and strategies to relevant government bodies such as the police, local government, city service providers.
- To ensure that local communities have an organized group that can represent needs, concerns and strategies to private security providers. Of course, this will only be relevant in communities in which private security providers are present.
- To provide a network of people who are willing and able to assist community members who find themselves in difficult or troublesome situations.

The skills and knowledge that members of these community safety groups will gain from working towards these objectives will enable them to be more active decision making partners when dealing with government agencies, business groups and the private security sector. Through

participating in community safety groups, community members will develop the individual and collective strength to manage safety issues that affect their lives. The group will also provide an opportunity for community members who want to be active citizens to 'reach out' to others in their neighbourhood and to 'reach within' to sort out safety problems. Being part of such groups will make it more difficult for the police and local government to ignore or overlook problems and ideas for solving problems that the group might bring to their attention.

Giving structure to community safety groups

It is clear from press reports, published articles and the research done for this guide that community safety groups take on different forms. Some organize whole wards, others organize sections of suburbs (blocks) and yet others are more inclined toward getting together people who live or work along one street. All communities have their own dynamics and, as a result, how the community safety groups are structured should be decided upon at the community level. What does seem to work most effectively, though, is for community groupings to begin by organizing smaller groups (in streets) and then to allow the process to spread beyond a given street. Once one street is organized, and residents in that street are seen as being sociable, caring and alert, other adjoining areas will be keen to follow suit. Ultimately the more widespread the community groups are the better for the entire community/neighbourhood.

Members of community safety groups can comprise all people who live and work in the area concerned. These groups should preferably be as inclusive as possible. People who rent properties, work in the area (either formally or informally) and who live in garden cottages or back rooms should be part of these groups. The groups should not be exclusively for property owners in the area. People who choose to be involved in community safety groups do so voluntarily, and numbers of people attending and participating actively are likely to vary.

Community safety groups are likely to start off rather informally. Often an (negative) event in the neighbourhood is a catalyst for people getting together. However, these groups can be initiated through social events such as street parties or carnivals or work parties where people come together to 'fix' something in the area. These events always need an enthusiastic person or small group of people to kick off the process. This probably means going door-to-door to bring people together in the first place. Once one event takes place, our reports are that enthusiasm and momentum tend to develop on their own.

There are also campaigns or issues that a group can decide to take on. Some examples that we have been made aware of include:

- Having monthly street parties where people from around the neighbourhood contribute food and drink. The streets can be blocked off with permission and assistance from the

Metro Police. Games can be arranged for the kids who live in the streets concerned.

- Holding street carnivals during which people from the area sell their wares, do performances (dance, music, art displays, etc) and provide food. Kids can dress up in fancy dress. T-shirts, with slogans such as 'Proudly Umbilo'; 'Trading with pride in Warwick Triangle' or 'Coming together for a safer Newlands' can be made to build a sense of community.
- Competitions for the neatest or prettiest verge (pavement directly outside of one's house) in the neighbourhood. Such an initiative is underway in the Palm Ridge area.
- Street patrols at certain hours of the night as currently exist in Northpark, Newlands East, Manor Gardens and many other areas. Street patrols and neighbourhood watch groups often alert the police or private security companies when crimes or disorderly events are noticed. They may also, with consent from the local police, engage in citizen arrests. Such arrests must be done in accordance with the principles noted above and the police should be called to make a custodial arrest. For these initiatives to remain lawful, the onus is on the police to respond speedily to calls and requests made by community safety groups.
- Creating telephone or email communication chains so that people in the neighbourhood/

area are made aware of any event that occurs. Such events could include incidences of crime, but could also include a message that informs neighbours of a death or serious illness or of a happy occasion such as a marriage or a birth. Neighbourliness is built through people expressing condolences or congratulations, offering help, or giving words of support and encouragement during difficult times.

- Organising 'Trash and Treasure' events every few months where people bring things they no longer use to a common place to sell at a reasonable price. The proceeds can go toward something that makes the local area look nice or be safer. This may include cleaning up an unused park or planting flowers in places which look unattractive. Proceeds can also go toward fixing broken windows in local schools, creating feeding schemes or providing school bursaries to one or two children from families living in the neighbourhood and struggling to afford school fees. Proceeds can also go towards helping local police to increase their effectiveness and to make police stations more pleasant places to visit and to report incidences to.

All these activities help to build a sense of connection, pride in place, and informal surveillance that is meant to benefit all members of the neighbourhood.

These events will initially bring community members together informally, but for these groups to be sustainable and to have any meaningful outcomes, some kind of formalization needs to occur. Regular meetings should be held where people can come together to report on progress, change and concerns. Key people who are willing to organize these committees need to be identified. They can be nominated, self-selected or elected. These key people should form a core committee. Within this core committee each person can be allocated a portfolio such as facilitator/chair; secretary; events organizer; police liaison person; communication officer, etc.

Meetings of committee members should take place regularly and should feed into the general meetings. In these smaller committee meetings a number of issues could be discussed such as:

- Identifying issues of safety and well-being and prioritizing such issues in order to give direction to the larger community safety group.
- Identifying campaigns or events that can be organized.
- Ensuring that communication chains operate effectively.
- Forging links with police, local government, private security agencies, and business groups that are also concerned with broadly defined safety issues. All these agencies will

form part of a bigger safety network in the area. Members of a wider network should be encouraged to support the operation of the community safety groups.

General meetings to which all members of the community are invited should be held on a regular basis, such as once a month. These meetings should be short (one hour at most), take place at a time which is convenient for most people, and be held at a venue that is accessible. The work that volunteers put into the community safety groups should be recognized in some way by other community members.

Creating a network to support the group

This model operates on the premise that local community groups are able to actively identify and find solutions to local safety problems. However, the model's principles make the point that community members are not always able to solve problems on their own, particularly when government resources are required and when the use of force is needed to deal with criminal events. In addition, the best solutions to problems are often reached when a wide range of agencies and individuals are brought into the problem solving process.

For community safety groups to be able to solve problems in the best way possible, they need to be able to draw on the knowledge and resources of agencies and individuals that are not necessarily

part of the group. In order for this to be possible, it is important to have a network of supporters that can be called upon if required. These supporters can be members of service agencies, government authorities, the police, private security and local businesses. These supporters need to acknowledge the positive contribution that these voluntary groups are making and need to willingly lend their knowledge, time and resources to develop and implement action plans.

The exact interaction with support agencies and individuals will be determined by the needs of the community safety groups. For example, active police involvement may be required in developing and carrying out an action plan around drug usage or around closing shebeens that are causing problems in the area. Traffic police and local government authorities may be called upon to help solve road safety issues. Human resource development organizations may be called upon to assist with skills training in facilitation. Peer mediation agencies could be invited to meetings to provide information about resolving conflict between community members or between community members and outside groups or individuals. The roles of key 'nodes' (key agencies concerned with safety issues) within local safety networks will be discussed in Part Four below.

Monitoring the activities of community safety groups

Community safety groups need to be accountable 'externally' to the wider community. There are a number of ways in which this can be done. One way is for the documentation of the group to be examined by an outside group. One possible suggestion is that the local Community Policing Forum take on this responsibility, or that a department of the Ethekewini Municipality such as Safer Cities registers all community safety bodies and does twice-yearly reviews. This is important to ensure that the practices of local safety groupings comply with the principles laid out in this document. These review bodies could also play a key role identifying ways in which the model could be refined or improved and ways in which the community safety groups could operate more effectively.

Part Four

Identifying the roles of key agencies or groups

We have already mentioned the importance of community safety groups becoming part of a broader safety network. In our view, there are five groups, at the very least, that should be part of these networks. They include community safety groups, the public police (Metro Police and SAPS), private security companies, community police forums, the local government, and local businesses. For networks to work properly, each group needs to be clear about its role. We have discussed above what we see as the purpose and objectives of community safety groups. Below we briefly discuss what could be the role of each of the other groupings.

The police

The police service is a central node in safety networks. It is the government agency mandated with enforcing the law and with ensuring that there is social order in society. What we know about the police service is that its members cannot, on their own, prevent and combat crime. They cannot be in all places at all times. We also know that the police do not always have the best knowledge, skills or resources to deal with local safety issues. The police are specially trained in legal processes and how to curtail freedoms and to use force. We also know that the police cannot be all things to all people. The service does not have the resources

to do this and members want to be able to make use of their specialized knowledge and training. Lastly, the police find it far easier to work with organized groups or associations than to work with a dispersed and unorganized set of individuals. Bearing this in mind we would like to suggest that the roles of the police are as follows:

- The police should encourage community members to form community safety groups. This manual could be used as a set of guidelines for communities to establish safety groups. Once established, police should call on community safety groups to assist in identifying and solving local safety problems.
- Together with local government, the police should promote and support strategic and joined-up (networked) problem solving, particularly in preventing crime. If the police service operates as part of accountable and dynamic networks, members are less likely to revert to authoritarian or command-and-control centred ways of acting.
- Police members need to form good working relationships with community safety groups. In doing so they need to ensure that they meet with community safety groups on a regular basis and that they respond speedily

when such groups request their knowledge, skills and resources. The police need to ensure that community safety groups that abide by the principles noted above are given due recognition. Community safety groups should be viewed by police as force multipliers, rather than as potential problem makers.

- Given the important work that community safety groups do in identifying safety problems and in trying to resolve these to the best of their capacity, the police are 'freed up' to do what they are trained to do. This means that the police must always be available to deal with serious and violent criminal events and to speedily make custodial arrests when provided with good evidence or when community safety groups have made a citizen's arrest. In other words, police members need to make sure that they effectively carry out their core functions and do 'serious police work' in an effective and democratic manner. Communities want certainty that the police will deal effectively with serious crime.
- The police need to ensure the effective use of force that curtails freedoms and that all citizens and residents democratic rights are protected at all times.
- The police need to provide community safety groups with feedback on any incidences that are reported to them or that they have been made aware of in the areas in which the community safety groups operate.

- Where possible, the police can refer less serious safety issues such as reports of noise in the neighbourhood or minor conflict between neighbours to community safety groups for resolution.

- Police need to ensure that at least some members of community safety groups are familiar with criminal law, due process and police procedures. Some police commissioners at a local level have suggested that a few members of community safety groupings become police reservists so that this knowledge and skills base is developed in a coherent way by the police. The onus is on the police to collaborate with community safety groups and to provide technical skills and advice to them where this is required.

Community policing remains a core philosophy governing policing in South Africa. This model is proposing that community policing be centred on the creation of horizontal and vertical links between the police and other groupings involved in making communities safer. Community policing is about mobilizing as many resources and capacities as possible. For this notion of community policing to become a reality, the police have to be clear about their core role. They need to be confident in the knowledge that they have a unique right and requisite skills to use legal bureaucratic violence with discretion to resolve conflicts and create social order.

Community police forums

Our constitution and our various safety and security white papers call for the establishment of community policing forums (CPFs). The key objectives of these forums are to create formalized partnerships between the police and community groups and to ensure that police are accountable to communities in the services that they provide. While a number of guidelines have been provided since 1995 in regard to CPFs, in reality all CPFs operate differently and in some areas CPFs remain very weak. There seems to be some revival of CPF structures in the eThekweni area and indeed throughout the country. CPFs must continue to operate, but they have a different role to the community safety groups that we discuss in this manual. Given these observations, we recommend that:

- CPFs should be umbrella bodies that co-ordinate all safety/policing initiatives.
- CPFs should ensure that community safety groups have key representative in CPF forums.
- CPFs should serve as a channel through which other community groups and the police can get to know about the activities of such community safety groups.
- CPFs should find ways of assisting and supporting community safety groups in the work that they do, so long as they operate within the set of principles identified in this manual and have a proven record of achieving some of their objectives.

Private security

The private security industry provides a number of services to make communities (and individuals) safer and to reduce risk. The industry offers too many services to mention here. While problems have been raised about the private security industry, the public police and communities have come to view private security officers as force multipliers.

Private security companies differ from the public police in a number of very significant ways. Firstly, they are directly accountable to paying clients, not to the broad public. Secondly, they do not have the same powers as the public police. They are not able to investigate crimes for the purpose of state prosecutions. Furthermore, they do not have the right to use force at their discretion and to curtail the freedoms of citizens. In regard to the use of force, they have the same rights as ordinary citizens. However, private security companies do have significant resources to draw upon and a wide knowledge base about crime prevention and crime detection. In some areas they are more visible than the public police and they are known to respond to reported incidences far more rapidly than the public police. As a result of these reasons, and others, they are now broadly recognized as important contributors to safety networks. Without identifying the general role of the private security industry, we would like to make some suggestions about the role this industry can play as part of safety networks:

- The private security industry should be efficient and speedy in responding to calls from paying clients.
- Private security companies should consider ways to contribute to safety programmes in local communities and this includes responding to the needs of people who are affected by crime, but who are not paying clients. This should be part of their social responsibility programmes.
- Private security companies should make an effort to know the community safety groups in the areas that they service.
- As far as possible, private security agencies should develop formalized working relationships with community safety groups. In the Berea/Overport area, for example, employees from the most active and widely supported private security company (ADT) attend general meetings of the Palm Ridge Neighbourhood Association. They share information about the area, support local campaigns and initiatives, and have developed mechanisms for prioritizing calls that come from organized groupings like the Palm Ridge Neighbourhood Association.
- The private security industry could provide community safety groups with training relating to the identification of crime hot spots; carrying out a citizens arrest; identifying situations or circumstances that are likely to lead to crime

or disorder; and carrying out patrols without endangering themselves or others.

Local government

Local government bodies have a very important role to play in safety networks. Indeed, local authorities could become the 'hub' for co-ordinating all community safety groups. The specific roles of the city or local government bodies should be to:

- Identify security problems that exist, resources (state and non-state) that are available to fill these gaps, and what systems of accountability need to be put in place so that all sectors of diverse communities are equally guaranteed of security outcomes.
- Think of creative ways to encourage participation and volunteerism in community safety groups. This would involve incentive planning for those who get actively involved in creating safer living, working and leisure spaces.
- Local governments could develop models for building neighbourhood associations that help to create a secure environment (as a key function), in accordance with the model suggested in this manual. Further models could outline how patrols are done, how security related problems are identified and who they are reported to, and at what point the police must be called in and what to expect and demand of the police.

- Local government bodies should be the agency to which problems with community safety groups are relayed. They should also be the body that is informed about problematic relations between the police and community safety groups. Such situations could include issues relating to the police not responding to safety problems or to solutions that are identified by community safety groups.

In eThekweni Municipality the Safer Cities Department has been set up to focus on five strategic areas :

- Effective Policing And Community Safety
- Targeted Social Crime Prevention
- Better Design and Management of Public Spaces
- Research and Crime Analysis
- Community Involvement in Safety

In terms of its focus area number 5 above, the Safer Cities Department has a specific mandate to perform the functions that are described above.

Business Groups

The business sector has as much, if not more, to gain from knowing that the neighbourhoods in which they operate are as safe as possible. For trade and investment to be optimized, a safe

environment is required. Local businesses also contribute to the vibrancy and sustainability of local neighbourhoods. Like the private security industry, local businesses should be included in safety networks. In many areas this is already taking place and businesses actively support anti-crime initiatives and have contributed financially and in-kind to local police stations. The possible roles of the business sector in safety networks are:

- To contribute resources to campaigns and initiatives undertaken by community safety groups.
- To provide technical assistance and resources in regard to communication and information dissemination.
- To ensure that business representatives are part of community safety groups and community police forums.
- To actively promote the work of community safety groups by advertising their activities in shop windows, on their websites, etc.
- To provide community safety groups with items such as clothing, badges, hats, or torches (where possible) to assist the groups in the work that they do.
- To share their expertise and knowledge where this is asked of them by other members of safety networks.

Part Five

Creating effective and strong safety networks at the local level

Networks are, by definition, loosely structured arrangements between individuals or groups of people. Networks are formed because groups or individuals share a concern, a passion, a way of engaging. Groups of individuals come together as a sign of solidarity or to achieve particular outcomes. They are often fluid, but some networks do develop more formalized ways of structuring themselves, of communicating and of acting to bring about change. However, networks are not organizations. Those who form part of a network tend to provide one another with support and assistance.

In this manual we have spoken about the need for all those concerned with safety issues to come together as part of a safety network. Such networks allow for the combining of skills, resources and capacities in achieving a shared goal i.e. creating safe, cohesive and 'proud' neighbourhoods. Because networks are often not formalized, structured organizations, it is important to think of ways of creating strong networks and building lasting partnerships between network members.

Some tips for building strong safety networks and partnerships:

- Ensure that all groups that form part of the network have a shared broad mission and set of objectives.
- All agencies that are part of this support network should be aware of and support the principles and values of the model.
- All network agencies or groups need to be clear about their own role and how they fit into the network. In the section above we have suggested roles that key network actors should be playing.
- All network agencies/groupings need to acknowledge and respect each other's skills, knowledge and contributions.
- There should be clear systems of communication between network actors. This could occur through the use of technology such as email or cell phones, or through regular meetings or through media publications. A combination of two or more of these is probably best.

- Network relations are strengthened through creating memoranda of understanding between different actors. For example, a community safety group may have a memorandum of understanding with the public police in which both parties agree on the role of each group and expectations of one another.
- All network agencies or organizations could be asked to identify one or two 'agency champions'. This agency champion would be a contact person(s) that community safety group members contact directly and seek advice from if required.
- Agency champions can also be invited to community safety group meetings if it is believed that they will be of assistance in solving a particular problem or in devising a campaign. The agency champions would then act as a link between the various agencies in the safety network.
- Agency champions are also encouraged to access the group for any knowledge they may have about a particular issue or problem.
- It is important to ensure that agencies or groups are not dependent on the skills, knowledge, capacity and charisma of just one or two people.

Sustaining community safety groups

In this manual we have suggested that community safety groups can be, and often are, key actors in creating safe, cohesive and proud neighbourhoods. However, we all know that despite the positive outcomes that these groups often have, it is extremely difficult to sustain any groups that are based on volunteerism. If we accept that these groupings are important, we need to think about ways of sustaining volunteerism and keeping concerned community members active. We would like to suggest a few possible ways of doing this:

- Tasks must be shared within community safety groups. This can be done through creating formal portfolios or assigning specific tasks to particular individuals. For example, one person could be responsible for liaising with the police while another for liaising with businesses or private security companies. One or two people could be responsible for identifying potential security threats such as street lights that are not working, and relaying this information to the relevant government agency.
- Community safety groups should, on a regular basis, organize events that are fun and that bring people together in social events such as street parties or carnivals.
- Community safety groups need to take account of the needs and commitments of individuals that participate in the group.

Parents of young children, for example, might not be able to attend meetings that take place in the early evenings. Elderly people might not be able to participate in street patrols, but might be keen to organize communication chains, such as telephone or email links.

- When good work is done by a group or an individual, they should be given positive feedback from others in the community safety groups and by members of the broader community. Other agencies, such as the police, need to be encouraging and recognize the work that is done by volunteers.
- Network partners, such as the police, local authorities and private security companies need to be 'advocates' of community safety groups. They need to promote the work that volunteers are doing by publicly recognizing them in their publications, and even by providing regular awards or certificates to community volunteers.
- Local government should consider innovative incentive systems for local volunteers. This need not be in the form of monetary remuneration. Local government needs to create a body or forum that looks specifically at how to register and reward community volunteers. One way of doing this is for the eThekweni Municipality to establish an Office for Volunteers. Volunteers who are active in a range of community services should be

able to register formally as volunteers and should be provided with certification of their community contribution by this office.

Part Six

Adapting this model to suit local communities or neighbourhoods

This manual is not meant to be prescriptive. Communities have their own dynamics, their own unique histories and their own specific sets of resources. The information presented here is intended to serve as a set of guidelines to assist individuals to establish and sustain community safety groups. Each community safety group will determine its own name, ways of operating and network arrangements. We recommend, however, that all community safety group buy into the principles laid out in this manual.

It is our middle to long term hope that community groups that work in accordance with these principles and make use of these guidelines for operating will be given formal recognition by a local government body. This would probably require community safety groups to develop their own basic constitution and set of processes that can be reviewed and commented on. Where required, the relevant local government body could assist with developing such a constitution. A template or model constitution could be developed which individual local safety committees can adjust to suit their own needs and circumstances.



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