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Over the last eleven years the Independent Projects Trust (IPT) has often worked on projects which have necessitated our working with multiple stakeholders – from communities, political parties and other organisations as well as the institutions of government and civil society. Many of these projects have been around peace-building within communities and have often required the development of joint strategies to reduce crime and violence. Through this we have learnt a key lesson - a multi agency approach to issues of crime and violence achieves better results and is more sustainable than interventions working in isolation.

It was this lesson, reinforced by a recent successful project and attendance at a workshop hosted by the World Council of Churches “Peace to the City” Network, that gave rise to this issue of *insight*. In the following pages we share two case studies which demonstrate how this approach can have enormous impact, even in two different environments. The first case study is from Boston, USA and describes the Boston Ten Point Coalition and the work done in reducing crime in that city. The other is a case study from Durban, KZN which focuses on an urban renewal project which has improved the quality of life for many residents in the area.

What is apparent from these examples is that any multi agency approach requires much more than just lip service. It is far too easy to fall into the trap of holding meetings while never acting on any of the issues. Any successful project requires the involvement of individuals who are prepared to take some level of personal risk; to share workload and responsibility and to reach across divides to drive the process forward in unison. We believe those individuals can be found in many other places and we hope that this issue provides some support to their efforts.

A Multi-Agency Approach to Crime and Violence Reduction : Two Case Studies

The Boston Ten Point Coalition

The impetus for the formation of the Boston Ten Point Coalition was an event which became known as the Morning Star incident. During a funeral at the Morning Star Baptist Church in Boston in 1992 a young man, fleeing his pursuers, sought refuge in the Church only to be stabbed, in the sanctuary, in full view of the congregation.

Shocked by this incident, a group of ministers, most of them African American, decided to mobilise themselves in order to begin to address the problems of youth from racial minority groups who were at high risk of not being able to achieve a productive adult life, for as religious leader Eugene Rivers observed “if the Churches were not willing to go out onto the street, the street would come in to them.”

The initial target group for the Coalition were youth between the ages of 15 and 22, - especially those at risk for violence and drug abuse. These youth were often both victims and perpetrators within a cycle of violence and were generally already in the criminal justice system. These high risk youth were identified by meeting some or all of the following criteria.¹

- Active membership of a youth gang currently involved in criminal activities, especially violence and/or drug use and distribution.
- Individual criminal activity, particularly if it has led to court involvement on two or more occasions.
- A history of violent behaviour involving assault and/or use of weapons.
- Individual involvement in drug distribution.

Such youth would also often have a history of one or more of the following:

- Dropping out of school.
- Physical, psychological, or sexual abuse.
- Drug use and/or addiction.
- Risky sexual behaviour.

These ecumenical ministers were in fact responding to a situation which has become common in many American cities. In the United States the figure for youth arrests increased by 1 million between 1991 and 1994, and of these a third were youth under the age of 15. While minors were responsible for about 14% of violent crime and 15% of felonies against property, reported to the police, adolescents accounted for 26% of the increase in violent crimes from 1985 - 1994, including a 50% increase in thefts, 48% in rapes and 35% in homicides. These figures demonstrate a frightening trend of increased participation by young people

¹ Ministry to the Marginal : Outreach to the “at risk” Summary of the Ten Point Coalition Approach - Revs. Jeffrey Brown and Ray Hammond

in criminal activity.

In response to this increasingly common problem one of the first initiatives of the Ten Point Coalition was to initiate a dialogue with local gang leaders and these discussions gave them insight into their own failures. Gang leaders clearly articulated the key to their success: they knew the streets intimately, were out there after dark, knew the circumstances of the families, who was experiencing financial difficulty, who couldn't pay the rent or provide anything to eat for dinner. These gang leaders had become authority figures in the lives of the community by providing a support network for the marginalised and socially excluded.

The Coalition then began the hard work of winning back the streets. This involved key role players spending their nights on the streets with youth, talking, counselling, asking questions and slowly establishing themselves as alternative authority figures.

While these faith based organisations were working to win back the streets, the Boston Police Department also realised that it had an overwhelming problem with youth violence. Crack cocaine was the currency of the highly organised gangs and young black males between the ages of 15 and 22 were again identified as both the victims and the perpetrators in an increasingly violent cycle. The Police Department mapped where crime incidents occurred and this clearly showed logical targets for crime prevention and alleviation projects. For example 29% of Boston's firearm incidents occurred within 5% of the land area of Boston.

The Police Department also began to compile detailed profiles of key gang members and targeted the top 1%. This was accompanied by inter-departmental initiatives within the Police Department to identify the source of guns, especially when they were coming in from other states (often with lax gun control laws). Interstate initiatives were then developed to block these sources of supply and compile profiles of the actual firearms, serial numbers, and incidents in which they had been used.

In one early co-operative exercise members of the Police began to visit schools, talk to youth, and work with the faith based organisations. They also participated in joint visits with the Ten Point Coalition. As both Rev Jeffrey Brown from the Coalition and Paul Joyce from the Boston Police Department explained, this was not easy because of a history of mistrust and social division but key individuals put themselves on the line to build alliances.

The Ten Point Coalition and other faith based organisations began to provide the Police with a mantle of legitimacy within the community who found inspiration in the development of a single narrative which was problem solving in nature. Through this multi agency approach advantage was slowly gained on gang leaders as the many agencies began to work differently and smarter.

One of the many internal innovations within the Police was for them to work more closely with the Probation Department. Until this point the Probation Department and the Police had worked separately, often with the same youth offenders, but in discrete parts of the system. As they began to

work together and consult more extensively with other roleplayers they were able effectively pool information and focus on youth who were lacking in opportunity as well as pragmatically identifying those “who would only benefit from a prison ministry”

In some areas the Police took a hard line. Certain communities like the Bay Village Neighbourhood were degraded and badly affected by brothels operating in the area, a problem compounded by the active drug trade which had accompanied these activities. The Police approach was to first canvass residents and obtain their views on the brothels and their affect on the neighbourhood. With the residents on board they set up check-points and cameras at strategic points in the neighbourhood and assigned police, some in vehicles and some on bicycles, to the area.

Physical changes were also made within Bay Village by the Mayor’s Office, who provided appropriate street lighting, placed planters on the pavements to stop the “johns” jumping the sidewalk thus avoiding the check points and camera. With community co operation, the Police also closed the 24 hour store used by “johns” for provisions. Once they had been photographed entering or leaving the area the “johns” were sent letters of warning and eventually their cars were impounded if found again in the neighbourhood. These activities included multi agency support from legal services who provided appropriate legislation and support.

Simultaneously, the Mayor’s Office began an urban renewal/clean up programme which along with other strategies, involved the removal of graffiti from buildings, cleaning of

vacant lots, removal of rusted car chassis from backyards, cleaning and planting of verges. This generated an upward spiral of confidence in the community who began to realise that the City cared about them and their streets and was prepared to make an effort to improve their conditions.

Critical to the success of this multi agency approach were the Street Workers. This initiative was launched in 1990 in response to the high levels of violence among teens in the city. Street Workers bring youth, families, service providers, business, government and communities into collaboration and has attracted national attention in the USA where it has been hailed as one of the top violence prevention programmes.

Youth, and specifically high risk youth, were the primary focus of Street Workers who tried to help re-open the forgotten lines of communication between youth, established agencies and the community. They also worked closely with the Community Disorder and Youth Violence Strike Force units of the Boston Police Department to encourage the development of neighbourhood policing. Each Street Worker has direct contact with the Community Service Officer and the Youth Service Officer in the area in which they work.

Street Workers were able to use their relationship with the police to advocate for youth in order to prevent their future involvement within the criminal justice system. In order to do this they try to deconstruct the “them versus us” fracture between the youth and the police and have become part of the curriculum for the training of community policing officers. This helps officers understand youth issues,

gives them better skills to reach out to high risk youth and has helped build further bridges between Street Workers and the police. While Probation Officers usually work office hours, the Street Workers monitor youth at all hours and also provide an essential post-release counselling service to youth who have been incarcerated and so contribute to decreased repeat offender statistics.

Also contributing to this multi agency approach is were the Department of Youth Services (DYS), the juvenile justice agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Their mission is to protect the public and prevent crime by promoting positive change in the lives of youth committed to their custody, and by partnering with communities, families, government and provider agencies toward this end. They accomplish this mission through interventions that build knowledge, develop skills and change the behaviour of the youth in their care.

As a result of this ongoing dialogue, co operation and commitment between the Department of Youth Services, Probation Officers, Street Workers, the Police and the faith organisations the murder rate has dropped from 150 a year in the early 90's to 37 in 2000. Today as a result of this work, these formally disadvantaged areas of Boston are revitalised and it is once again safe to walk in the streets..2

Warwick Junction Urban Renewal Project

The Warwick Junction is one of the oldest and most vibrant areas of Durban and is strategically placed at the entrance to the city, with an estimated 300 000 commuters passing through it each day. Its' unique character is the result of a merging of cultures and history and reflects Durban's rich heritage. The area has three distinct precincts –

- A Trade and Transport area - a primary metropolitan transport hub with associated markets and street trading.
- Grey Street precinct - the historical Indian business district with shopping, street trading and residents.
- Warwick Triangle - an infill housing project, catering for households of lower to lower-middle income groups.

During the apartheid era the area was politically marginalised in terms of physical, social and economic development and within its precincts are the historic Grey Street Mosque, the Emmanuel Cathedral, the famous early morning market, informal trading stations, and the "Umuthi" market, where traditional healers consult and market their cures.

By 1996 the area had fallen prey to serious urban decay – the advent of the taxi industry had created numerous transport problems in the area; informal traders had invaded any empty space including the sidewalks and many were living on site under unsanitary conditions. This was accompanied by a breakdown in law and order. At this point local residents and other stakeholders began to actively lobby local government to begin to address

these problems. The initial response was from individual government departments that attended to complaints addressed to them.

However by 1997 the Durban City Council realised that these isolated responses were having limited impact and a coordinating team was formed to address the problem and especially important, the Council made funds available for this project. The project which became known as the Warwick Junction Urban Renewal Project had as its focus the improvement of the quality of life for traders, businesses, transport operators, commuters and residents.

Central to the projects success was the decision to base it within the Warwick Junction area, rather than at City Hall, or in the offices of consultants. The City provided venues for meetings between the multi disciplinary teams, members of the various community interest groups and representatives from the various council departments.

The aims of the project were defined as follows:

- To improve safety and security in the area.
- To enhance transport facilities.
- To increase trading and employment opportunities.
- To upgrade cleanliness and the quality of the physical environment.
- To expand services.
- To integrate the area with other parts of the city by providing walkways and effective transport and - finally –

- To create investment opportunities which bring resources to the junction.

Early in the project much time was spent building relationships and initiating dialogue with local stakeholders and roleplayers. Residents and traders were extensively consulted to ensure that their needs were identified and taken into account. Over time the results of this integrated approach have been remarkable. There has been a marked improvement in the trading, commuter safety and living conditions for a large portion of Durban's population. Currently the Project Leader estimates that the area has a gross annual turnover in excess of R1,0 billion (the annual turnover of one of the largest shopping centres in Durban is R1,2 billion)³

As a result of discussions a Herb Traders Market was created for traders who previously traded from sidewalks in the area. In 1998 this market had an annual turnover of R20 million in the retail of products and R150 million through visits to *inyangas* (traditional healers). While providing a venue for between 300 and 450 traders, the market has also created an employment chain of an estimated 14 000 jobs in Durban. This from an initial Council outlay of R3,5 million to develop the market.

Other job creation opportunities were provided when the Project set up a purpose designed facility for the cooking of mealies (corn cobs). The capital outlay was approximately R50 000 and in December 2000 the weekly gross turnover was estimated at R1,0

³ Letter from Richard Dobson, Project Co-Ordinator 2001

million with 28 tonnes of mealies prepared daily and sold throughout the inner city.

An area of complete urban decay has, over a period of just five years, been transformed into a vibrant business centre and colourful, exciting tourist attraction through a project which enabled and supported multi agency and multi disciplinary co-operation.

Conclusion

Clearly, multi agency work requires more than lip service. We must acknowledge that there are difficulties associated with co operation. Working together often involves more effort in the early stages as diverse groups have to build dialogue and common understanding. This takes time and is often fraught with conflict. For many agencies and individuals the fact that credit accrues to the collective/team rather than individuals or departments is problematic especially since funding often depends on what one is seen to have accomplished.

It is also vital that local and central government departments actively include and involve the “little people” who have a current or future stake in the area. The planning of interventions must happen in consultation with the residents and users of the area if they are to have any chance of success – in both Boston and Durban much time was spent getting to know the community. It is also important to anticipate the arrival of new residents and entrepreneurs who are attracted to areas undergoing improvement.

For a multi agency approach to work there is a need for people who are prepared to take some level of personal risk, to share workload and responsibility, and to reach across

divides to drive the process forward in unison.

Further Contacts

For more information from people working on Safer Cities visit:

www.tenpointintl.org

The Boston Ten Point Coalition

www.bostonstrategy.com/default.html

The Boston Strategy

www.durban.gov.za/emergency/safercities

Durban Safer City Project

www.unhabitat.org

United Nations Habitat

www.unep.org

UN Environment Programme

www.wcc-coe.org

World Council of Churches

www.durbanpeace.org.za

WCC Peace to the City Campaign



Background to the World Council of Churches “Peace to the City Campaign”

Throughout the last millennium the churches of the world adopted widely differing positions on war and violence, with theology often used in order to justify and legitimise conflicts. In response to this situation the World Council of Churches (WCC) was founded 1948 with a mission to seek strategies to avoid war, to minister to victims of violence and to rebuild towns and cities devastated by various conflicts.

Since that time our cities have become increasingly violent. The global proliferation of small arms has fuelled crime at a local level and promoted a culture of violence where the gun becomes the peacemaker. The illicit trade in guns also contributes to

symbiotic activities such as money laundering, terrorism, kidnapping, drug trafficking and other criminal and black market activities. As crime and violence increasingly manifests itself at schools, on streets, in workplaces and even within churches, there has been a corresponding increase in community awareness of the critical contribution they can make to crime prevention initiatives within their neighbourhoods.

In 1997 the World Council of Churches launched its Peace to the City Campaign in Johannesburg. The campaign links seven cities throughout the world, each involved in creative peace building activities. Mayors from various South African cities attended and the function had a strong African flavour with the highlight a special Africanised Peace and Reconciliation Service.

The Campaign has provided a global forum for sharing best practice among those involved in the task of peace building. The Campaign is designed to build networks through which peace building strategies and examples can be shared amongst those communities who are playing a hands on role in local efforts and initiatives.

In November 2000 the Peace to the City Network, through funding from the WCC, held the first of what is intended to become a regular training workshop for member cities. The four day workshop was held from 14th to 17th November 2000 in Boston, Massachusetts, and had, as its focal point, the presentation of a successful peacemaking model, the Boston Ten Point Coalition. Delegates were hosted by the Boston-based Rev Jeffrey Brown of the Coalition and were drawn from eight countries, Colombia, Germany, South Africa, Sierra Leone,

Northern Ireland, Jamaica, Brazil and Bosnia Herzegovina. WCC representatives also attended from in Geneva and New York.

The workshop provided delegates with an opportunity to share experiences, broaden their knowledge, share information and skills and build relationships. It is hoped that this will contribute to the various initiatives as each city works towards greater safety and security. As participants in this process we are pleased to be part of a broader network of concerned agencies working to find new ways to improve safety and security in our cities and towns.

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Visit our website : www.ipt.co.za
This issue was prepared with financial assistance from Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust