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Public-Private-Community Action towards Safety: A Focus on Housing in Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Building Social Capital in Barrio San Jorge, Barrio San Jorge, Argentina.....	4
Residents in Safer Environments, RISE, Fairfield, Sydney, Australia.....	6
San Romanoway Revitalization, Toronto, Canada	8
Le Chantier: Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion, Saint Michel, Quebec, Canada.....	10
Job Expres, Taastrupgardsvej Estate, Copenhagen, Denmark	12
Aigues Douce- Urban Revitalization Project, Port de Bouc, France.....	13
Jamaica Urban Poverty Project (JUPP), Jones Town, Jamaica	15
Løvstakken Project, Løvstakksiden, Norway.....	17
A Collaborative Approach to Building Safety in Schiemond Rotterdam, The Netherlands.....	18
Kendray Initiative, Barnsley, UK.....	20
Project H.O.M.E, Philadelphia, USA	22

Introduction

In many countries, crime, and fear of crime are among concerns expressed by residents about their living environment, in addition to lack of affordable housing alternatives, and neighbourhood image.

Costs of crime associated with vandalism, burglary, and graffiti can be enormous for social housing organizations and private landlords, including high repair costs, high vacancy rates and tenant turnover. They can also contribute to increased feelings of insecurity among residents.

Housing agents (public and private) can play an important role in collaborative action to prevent crime in social housing and housing complexes in deprived neighbourhoods.

This collection illustrates in very concrete ways how strategies and practices have been put into place through public-private-community collaborations to reduce and prevent crime in housing in disadvantaged communities. In some cases, initiatives include broader aims and focus on building neighbourhood cohesion, improving living conditions, reducing poverty, and enhancing the quality of life of residents.

In particular, following from ICPC's previous work on private sector involvement in prevention (Sharpening the Lens: Private Sector in Involvement in Prevention, and Proceedings of ICPC'S fifth Annual Colloquium on Crime Prevention), this collection highlights the roles of the private sector (landlords, insurance companies, architects and housing companies) in a range of initiatives to enhance safety in 'housing communities'. These include good design and planning of housing, housing management, prevention, and intervention programmes helping to strengthen the protective factors of at-risk youth.

These short accounts of what has been put in place by governments, private sector representatives, and by communities and civil society organisations, are designed to encourage and inspire governments, the private sector, and communities elsewhere.

They range from initiatives which were established fairly recently, and do not yet have major outcomes or evaluations to report, but which illustrate a good strategic approach, to fully implemented and evaluated long-term initiatives, based on evidence about what has been found to be effective elsewhere.

Some of the key lessons about effective prevention in the area of housing in deprived neighbourhoods are:

- Active consultation and participation of residents, especially young people, in partnership with housing authorities, local authorities, local businesses
- The combination of preventive approaches (situational, community, developmental)
- A long term commitment and an integrated plan of action towards improving the living conditions of inhabitants
- Various expertise and support of the private sector

**Building Social Capital in Barrio San Jorge,
Barrio San Jorge
Buenos Aires, Argentina**

Context

In 1961, Barrio San Jorge became a resettlement site for families living in areas with frequent flooding. In the 1980s, the barrio was divided physically and socially between the old and new barrio. The majority of the site is owned by the province of Buenos Aires and the municipality of San Fernando, the remainder is privately owned. According to a census taken in 1990, there were about 450 households and 2400 inhabitants in the barrio, including a high proportion of infants and children and young people (58% under the age of 20). In addition, a small percentage of the adult population had completed primary school (46%), and the quality of education of children aged 6-13 was quite low. Rivalry between street gangs, burglary and other criminal activities are among some of the challenges facing residents on the settlement and in neighboring areas.

Description

A continuous process of development in the barrio began in the late 80s over a ten year period. It involved the participation of residents, government agencies (provincial and municipal), NGOs and private enterprises in various projects and initiatives to improve the living conditions in the barrio.

After several years of meetings between residents and the local Catholic church parish, in 1987, a decision was reached to create a mother and child centre in the barrio. The aim of the centre was to improve child health, nutrition and development and free up time for mothers to work, since the new centre would act as a daycare. An architect who belonged to the parish was asked by a charity organization (Caritas) affiliated to the church to plan and coordinate the construction of the centre. Initial financial support was provided by the Charity, with additional funds from the Canadian embassy and private Argentine donors.

In 1989, the Netherlands Save the Children charity donated (Euros) \$12,000 to \$36,000 a year over three years. The funding encouraged the development process through the support of community initiatives.

Three part time professionals were hired: an architect and two social workers. This team assisted in the expansion of the mother and child centre's activities and infrastructure and promoted the participation of children's families in these activities.

A derelict building located close to the mother centre was repaired by men involved in the on-going initiatives in the community. This building housed a training workshop for women, and later became a common meeting place for residents.

Subsequently, a multi-disciplinary forum slowly emerged including members from the Latin American Faculty of Social Science (FLACSO), the health centre, the school, the kindergarten, the child centre and religious groups, architects, doctors and social workers.

This inter-institutional network promoted learning and facilitated coordination of initiatives, the sharing of expertise, and the pooling of resources. This led to the launch of the **Integral Improvement Programme** (1990-1992), whereby an agreement for cooperation was signed by the provincial and municipal government and IIED-America Latina to improve living conditions in the barrio. This programme consisted of supporting community initiatives on several different fronts, including housing improvements, access roads, land regularisation, provision for water and sanitation and for child health and development.

A neighbourhood commission was set up following the barrio's first election, which later developed into the cooperative Nuestra Tierra (our land). The cooperative launched many initiatives including campaigns for garbage collection, water pump repairs, and the provision of light bulbs for public lighting. The municipality donated a seven hectare site to lower density in the barrio. IIED-America Latina had an active presence in the settlement, and worked with the community to promote active participation of its members.

From 1991 onwards, IIED- America Latina sought funding to sustain ongoing initiatives in Barrio San Jorge. Other infrastructure components were introduced in the later development stage including: the broadening of the water supply and sewerage system in the barrio, and the maintenance of these systems by a privatized water company.

Outputs

Since 1990, the mother and child centre has been self financed. The continuous support from the foundations and other private donors has allowed the centre to increase its capacity and the quality of assistance. The centre expanded its activities giving additional training to some 70 students with learning difficulties, referred by the schools.

The inter-institutional network launched a programme for children and youth aged 8-16 years of age. Activities identified by children and youth which formed part of the programme included sewing courses, training in football, and creative expression workshops for youth at risk.

The work undertaken in Barrio San Jorge has continued in other settlements in the area, such as Barrio La Paz, Barrio San Martín, and Barrio Jorge Hardoy.

Sources

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Residents in Safer Environments Project Sydney, Australia

Background

A medium-density public housing estate in the Fairfield local government area in Sydney Australia was built in 1981. It has 250 dwellings and 1200 people, including large numbers of children, adolescents and unemployed young single adults. By the late 1980's, there were over 60 language groups in the estate and 57% of the population were from non-English speaking backgrounds. Many were refugees from South-east Asia, the Middle East, Europe and South America. Street crime and violence had been ongoing concerns for the residents. There was increased fear, and a low-level of participation among residents in community activities.

Description

Two major strategies were introduced in the early 90's to respond to the challenges on the estate.

Community development: Fairfield City Council sponsored the Safer Neighbourhood Project to research and promote crime prevention in the area. This research added further weight to the arguments made by local residents and a local community development agency (Fairfield Community Resource Centre, FCRC) for a full-time community development worker to be hired on the estate. Funding was obtained from the State Department of Planning for the worker, whose main goal was to establish contact with residents, build trust and encourage their active participation in a broad programme of community development.

Physical Upgrading: The Department of Housing worked to upgrade the estate and increase community surveillance, and to increase the quality of homes and space for tenants. This involved closing alleyways, widening private space around homes, and redesigning homes to face outwards towards public streets rather than inwards towards the estate. Following these interventions, a third phase of the project was developed- Residents in Safer Communities Project (RISE).

An Insurance company in Australia (National Roads and Motorist Association (NRMA)), expressed interest in supporting prevention in the Fairfield local government area, given their knowledge about the number of home and car insurance claims filed, combined with police data which signaled a high crime area. While NRMA had already sponsored several phases of neighbourhood watch in New South Wales, it wanted to test a new approach to community crime prevention, and encourage other members of the community to contribute to reducing crime rates.

NRMA, the community development worker and his employer (FCRC) jointly established the project. This was assisted through the use of an interim planning group, in which NRMA's Area Manager, and Community Liaison Manager, participated. They agreed that RISE would form part of the broader social development programme that the community worker and residents were already implementing, and that community development would be the way to address the conditions associated with crime on the estate. NRMA agreed to provide three years of funding towards activities identified by residents through **community development processes**.

From the start, the worker engaged residents, taking into consideration their views about the directions of RISE. This was largely done through the worker's existing network and by conducting a wider random survey of residents on the estate. Results indicated that theft, vandalism, and fear of violence were major issues for the residents surveyed.

Residents were then invited to participate in a planning day to discuss survey results and this was followed by the launch of RISE- a community event with entertainment allowing priorities and planned projects to be promoted to the broader community.

Two groups of projects within RISE were implemented. The first set of initiatives aimed to address the needs of youth and children on the estate, and bring them into life on the estate. Measures to increase employment, provide positive recreational outlets, build self-esteem and encourage participation were implemented.

The second set of activities aimed to increase resources and networks in the wider community. These networks were built through playgroups, women's groups, craft groups, English classes and celebrations of diversity in the area.

Outputs/Outcomes

Several sources of evidence (see Lane & Henry 2001) reveal the outputs and outcomes of RISE. An external evaluation conducted two years after the project start date suggests that:

- Over two thirds of survey respondents on the estate had participated in an activity or function on the estate in the last year.
- For a significant number of residents, the quality of life on the estate was improved, with residents socializing more and having a greater acceptance of each other.
- A widespread perception that street violence and crime had been reduced during the time of the project.

Reduced tenant turnover, increased participation in public life, and increased neighbourliness suggest that fear of crime had been reduced on the estate between 1991-1994.

In 1996, NRMA launched its own CrimeSafe Grants Programme providing over (AUD)\$1 million in support of Australian community crime prevention projects over an eight year period. Since then, this programme has evolved into a broader grants programme (**Communityhelp Grants**) that provides support to Australian communities in the areas of injury prevention, emergency services, and environment in addition to crime prevention. Since Project RISE, other Public Housing Estate projects in Sydney have benefited from NRMA's support (See Mayo 2004).

Sources

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Report Available at: www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au

**San Romanoway Revitalization Association (SRA)
Jane/Finch Community, Toronto, Canada**

Background

San Romanoway (SR) otherwise known as the “Palisades” consists of three high rise buildings located on the North-East quadrant of the intersection of Jane-Finch, in Toronto, Canada. There are 892 units, housing 4400 residents of whom between 2800-3000 are children and youth. In the wider Jane-Finch Community including the San Romanoway neighborhood, there are 82 different nationalities speaking 102 different languages. Low income and a high percentage of single parent households were some of the known risk factors in the community. The results of a community crime survey revealed that violent crime was a serious concern in the San Romanoway neighborhood. From 1987 until 2000, there was a high amount of violence permeating the entire community. This violence impacted negatively on various ethno-racial groups living in the three buildings. Building owners were losing thousands of dollars monthly on vandalism to properties, high vacancy rates, illegal entries to buildings, and other crimes including drugs. There was also continuous negative media portrayal of the SR community, leading to increased fear among residents.

Description

A community development manager was hired to assist property management in responding to the challenges. From the start, the community development manager held forums and small group sessions with parents and youth to develop a list of priorities. In 1999, buildings ownership and management met with law enforcers, residents, local businesses, community organizations and community leaders to discuss the escalation of crime and vandalism to properties in the San Romanoway complex located within the Jane/Finch Community.

Initially, Canada’s National Crime Prevention Centre provided a total of \$300,000.00 (CAD) for three years to help SRA build and strengthen community capacity. A “not-for-profit” organization was set up (San Romanoway Revitalization Association) to promote community development and safety, find proactive solutions to solve the problems of youth violence in the neighbourhood, and provide Cultural/Social enrichment programs for children, youth and families. The SRA involves a broad range of partners including local businesses, corporations, governments, and volunteers to help build effective and sustainable partnerships.

SRA’s collaborative approach to community safety combines environmental design principles like improved outdoor lighting and landscaping, with strategies that address crime prevention through social development such as The San Romanoway Boys/Girls Club –Breakfast/After School Program, Children’s Summer Camp and Music Program, Youth Programs: Teens In Action and Straight Talk about Relationships, Domestic Violence Program, Teen Violence Prevention Training, Parenting Program and Seniors Program

The private sector has played a key role in assisting the SRA to develop a strong support network and highlight the positive things happening in the community through neighbourhood revitalization. They have helped construct a neighbourhood playground (with the support of the business organization, Home Depot), expanded SRA's office space, contributed to renovations, and provided job opportunities for high school drop outs or those previously involved with the criminal justice system.

For example, one of their partners from the labour sector committed (CAD) \$75, 000 to hire and train youth in the construction industry. Rogers Cable donated computers and Internet access for a computer centre, Tennis Canada refinished the run down tennis court and the Ontario Tennis Association provides free tennis instruction during the summer months.

Outcomes and Outputs

Some of the main findings from the community crime survey conducted following the implementation of SRA activities revealed that between the years 2002-2004:

- Violent crime victimization was reduced by 22%
- Property crime decreased by 23.7%
- Break and enters declined by 21.1%
- Increased sense of safety in the community
- Overall satisfaction rates with community programming were very high. None of the programmes scored lower than 85% approval
- Reported daily resident interaction rose from 9.4% to 15.4% of respondents, monthly interaction rose from 9.8% to 15.4% of respondents

Statistically significant decreases were found for: vandalism, public use of alcohol and drugs, teens loitering, youth gangs, graffiti, garbage on the streets, noise, drug dealing, armed robbery, burglary, violent assault, family violence, and theft.

However, it is important to note that while crime victimization rates have gone down considerably, they are still well above the average, and although fear of crime has decreased, a high number of San Romanoway community residents still report feeling unsafe while walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark. There is still considerable work to be done with the building of the new community resource centre, and educational activities for children, youth and families.

Source(s)

Strategic Partnerships for Effective Crime Prevention: A Focus on Inner Cities- Urban Communities. Paper presented at ICPC's Fifth Annual Colloquium on Crime Prevention, Santiago, Chile. October 27-28, 2005.

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Le Chantier: Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion, Saint Michel, Montreal, Quebec

Background

Saint Michel is a culturally diverse neighbourhood within Montreal. In 2003, visible minorities comprised some 42 percent of the population, of whom 43% were North African, 19 percent were Latin American, and 17 percent were from Southeast Asia.

Saint-Michel residents (population 60,000) face a number of housing and social challenges. Their neighbourhood has a high population density, almost double of that of Montreal, and an extremely low level of owner-occupied lodgings (33%). Some of the risk factors in the community include: Lone-parent families (29 percent of the population), a high school drop out rate among residents (33%), a high unemployment rate was 12.6%, with the average annual income (CAD) \$18, 841 (2001).

Description

Le Chantier de revitalization urbaine et sociale (Taskforce for Urban and Social Revitalization) was launched in March 2003. It is an offshoot of an earlier community revitalization initiative known as *Vivre Saint Michel en Santé* (VSMS). Le Chantier aims to address issues of poverty reduction and social inclusion by mobilizing people and resources, and strengthen its links with partners within and outside the Saint Michel neighbourhood. Assistance and support is provided by Centraide (United Way) of Greater Montreal, Vibrant Communities (a pan-Canadian initiative of 15 urban centres exploring local solutions to poverty) and several municipalities.

Both VSMS and Le Chantier play important roles in the revitalization of Saint Michel. While VSMS focuses on quality of life issues (eg. access to services) and targets its initiatives on mental health, youth, family and seniors, Le Chantier is committed to a long-term integrated strategy, aimed at broadening the participation of local citizens and new sectors, especially newcomer and business communities.

Le Chantier has established three priorities to tackle poverty and exclusion:

- 1) Helping individuals develop their capacities, obtain work, and earn income to meet their own and family's needs
- 2) Developing accessible affordable housing
- 3) Obtaining access to diversified quality services, particularly in the areas of culture, sports, recreation and commerce

VSMS Strategic Planning Committee, composed of local business, community organizations and institutions oversee the operations of Le Chantier. A community profile, consultations sessions, the development of an action plan to combat poverty and exclusion and a 10 year vision proposal marked the first stages of the project.

In 2004, the General Assembly of VSMS approved the plan, and **five broad strategies** were developed to achieve project goals.

These are outlined below.

1) Increase and reinforce partnership: A high-profile event was held in September 2005. Leaders and supporters not directly involved in the project work were brought in to tour the district. Twenty external partners, 100 local partners and 250 citizens participated in the event. Le Chantier decided to form partnership clubs around each major priority and strategic file. Club members are stakeholders who are interested in supporting the implementation of a specific initiative or plan. Partnership clubs have been established for the housing and citizen participation priorities. Future plans include developing a strategy for engaging at least 15 businesses in the project, increasing resident awareness of Le Chantier, producing a 10- to 15-minute film about the work of community mobilization, and establishing three additional partnership clubs. These will focus on efforts to revitalize a business thoroughfare, support sport and recreation initiatives, and provide direction for work on security.

2) Reinforce citizen participation: The citizen participation part of the Action Plan has received the most project funding of all its elements and totals (CAD) \$140,000 (of the \$260,000 donated so far to launch projects). A further \$400,000 has been donated by the Bronfman Foundation, the Government of Québec, the City of Montreal and l'Arondissement Villeray/Saint-Michel/ Parc Extension. These funds will support **youth engagement activities** to clean up the environment. Mechanisms developed to increase resident participation by Le Chantier and partners include: Neighbourhood of the 21st Century which works to mobilize residents in a 300-dwelling radius in a targeted area, café-style meetings in parts of Saint-Michel where diverse cultural groups were able to meet and get to know each other. Some 20 citizens now meet regularly in each of the three areas. A third participation project operated two youth dialogues to involve area youth in planning group initiatives.

3) Intensify action in all priority areas of the plan of action: Organizers have initiated 14 of 34 projects identified in the initiative's action plan. Six of the 14 projects are aimed at raising individual and family incomes, four focus on affordable housing, and four are designed to increase resident involvement in the areas of culture, recreation and commercial services. Examples include: The Training for Local Employment Project, which will recruit and train residents to meet the needs of local and area businesses and industries. This is a partnership with the Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM) and the Centre de formation en Alimentation de Québec. Also, a pilot programme within the school system directed at promoting arts and culture with children and youth, involving a partnership between the Commission Scolaire de Montréal, the Cirque du Soleil, and Le Chantier.

4) Review and refresh the VSMS governance structure and relationships created among government, institutions, and community organizations: A new VSMS administrative structure is currently taken shape in 2006, including the appointment of a formal Steering Committee for Le Chantier. The new Steering Committee will meet at least five times and each of VSMS's action committees will also have developed its own strategic plans

5) Sharing experience and evaluation: Chantier members will continue to refine the evaluation framework for its individual projects, the continued evolution of the initiative's theory of change, participation in Vibrant Communities' face-to-face meetings and presentations about their work to other neighbourhood revitalization initiatives. The City of Montreal will concurrently assess the work done by municipal departments in Saint-Michel and five other low income areas identified jointly by the city and province. The resulting municipal report will help inform Le Chantier's ongoing evaluation work.

Source

Makkoul, A., Brodhead, D. & Leveiten-Reid, E. (March 2006) Le Chantier in Saint-Michel- Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion. Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour through Community Development Taastrupgardsvej Estate, Copenhagen, Denmark

Background

The Taastrupgardsvej Estate in Copenhagen was built in the 1970's. It consists of 912 flats, with 2500 residents, with some 40 countries represented. The estate has a high migrant population (70%), a high youth population (47%) and the average income is less than two thirds of the national average. Some of the challenges facing estate residents include: limited knowledge of Danish, high unemployment, with some youth experiencing drug and alcohol problems.

Description

As part of Denmark's National Programme on Estates, a tenant counselor was hired to work with tenants of the Taastrupgardsvej Estate and local organizations to promote social cohesion and reduce crime and anti-social behavior.

The counselor is jointly funded by the housing association they work with (25%), the local authority (25%) and the National Building Fund (50%).

The counselor works with the probation service, the police, local schools and social services to assist youth at risk on the estate. Residents identify problems and solutions the counselor then develops pilot initiatives and seeks support from the main funder.

Some of the social and community crime prevention measures that have been developed on the Estate include:

- 23 clubs, run through community rooms on the estate, including one focused on youth with special needs.
- A Go-Kart club for youth, under the age of 18, involving two male adults who serve as mentors since many youth on the estate have little relationship with their own fathers.
- A program for young families aimed at strengthening parental abilities.
- The creation of JOB Expres, an employment and training organization which involves a partnership between the housing association, the Kommune, local businesses and tenants, with support from the Danish Ministry of Integration.

Based in offices on the estate, Job express develops relationships between local businesses and minority groups, integrating residents in the wider community.

Outcomes and Outputs

- It is reported that in the last five years, crime and anti-social behavior on the estate has been reduced by 20%
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that crime and fear of crime are no longer main concerns for residents
- Job Express found employment for over 200 of estate residents, and part-time work for 50 resident youth under the age of 18.

Source

Summary adapted from Taastrupgardsvej Estate Case Study. In Randall, B. (October 2005) Safe as Houses. EU Social Housing Organisations: Preventing and Dealing with Anti-Social Behavior. A report produced for CECODHAS. Available at: www.cecodhas.org/

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Urban Revitalization Project
Aigues Douce Housing Complex,
Port de Bouc, France

Background

The Aigues Douce Housing Complex was built in Port de Bouc (16 686 inhabitants in 1999), west of Marseilles, by the Regional Public Housing Authority between 1971 and 1972. It includes a large proportion of social housing (more than 50% of the main homes). Social housing is divided into several neighbourhoods and is the responsibility of different social landlords. The main ones include the Regional Public Housing Authority (1900 flats) and LOGIREM (1000 flats).

In 1993, a social profile of residents revealed that 85% of the households were of French origin, 15% originated from the Mediterranean, and 8% Magreb. Around 50% of the population was between the ages 15-24 years, from low income families, and there was a high unemployment rate. The neighbourhood had a poor image, and residents felt stigmatized. The social landlord was confronted by a large number of vacancies, high repair costs, and a high number of unpaid rents, and needed to re-establish links with tenants, making them feel part of the housing estate and community.

Description

The urban revitalization project in Aigues Douce involved the partnership between two main actors: the town authority (French State and Region) and the social landlord in the mid 1990's. The project aimed to break away from traditional individual interventions, and adopt a more integrated and cross cutting approach to renewal. It also aimed to provide a space to listen to resident concerns and provide both individual and/or collective support.

The project included both a technical phase (architectural, recreation, and construction of new buildings) and a social phase (employment activities, creation of consultation venues).

The technical phase included measures to:

- Break-down the isolation of the neighbourhood from its environment- the city and the sea. This involved remodeling existing roads, the development of the main road linking the neighbourhood to the town centre, and pedestrian path to the seaside.
- Lower population density: Given high vacancies in some towers, 219 flats out of 716 were demolished (30%)
- Redesign of the buildings. Hallways and the landings were widened, lifts were repaired and re-decorated, some flats were reorganized, all flats were renovated, heating and hot water supply systems were modified.

Different components of the social phase included:

- A social audit, analyzing the situation of each household and re-establishing contact with residents. The audit used the skills and expertise of the Tenants Association (CNL), and ARELFA (external service provider for the social master builder –MOS-)
- Improved communications fostering inclusion: Public meetings, General Assemblies, Special Events, and Neighbourhood Parties were organized to consult and collaborate with residents and public authorities. In 1992, a newspaper highlighting recent renewal developments was created for tenants and the public authorities to share information.
- Implementation of a coordination system: 'the rehabilitation workshop', which aimed to provide continuous information to tenants, external partners including highly involved social workers. The complex houses a permanent agency for the ARELFA which links the social aspects and the technical aspect of the renewal project. It is led by the social direction for the economic integration of the Regional Public Housing Authority (OPAC South). It includes the project manager, district manager and communications officer of OPAC, the MOS, and the project manager for the city policy. Also according to themes, social workers (CAF- Familial allocations Fund, DIS- Direction for the sanitary and social Intervention), associations and schools are involved.
- Provision of jobs for tenants in the housing complex: A local company committed itself to implementing a recruitment policy.

- Creation of ceramic mural frescos on the building entries by students from primary and secondary schools. This initiative is part of a long term project aimed to involve many actors (such as schools, families, the city, OPAC) in renewal. These murals aim to invite people from outside the council housing to the neighborhood and help to improve the image of Aigues Douces.
- Projects, implemented by the schools, the CAF, and the social centre have been developed to mobilize the residents in the housing complex (eg organization of streets and flats theatre, settlement of a CAF agency welcoming parents and children in the neighbourhood, creation of books made by residents help from the social centre and the multi-media library).

Outputs

- Lowering population density and re-modelling the housing complex helped to improve neighbourhood image and lower the vacancy rate
- Increase in residents' feeling of belonging to their neighbourhood
- Improved communication between Public Housing Authority employees and tenants on renewal initiatives

Source

Pinson et al (2001). French NEHOM Case Studies. NEHOM. Evaluating housing and neighbourhood initiatives to improve the quality of life of deprived urban neighbourhoods and assess their transferability across Europe. Report available at: <http://www.nhh.no>

Evaluation d'opérations de restructuration urbaine. Site de Port de Bouc, les Aigues Douces"; GIE. Ville et Quartiers, novembre 1998.

Jamaica Urban Poverty Project Jones Town, Kingston, Jamaica

Context

Since the 1980s, several inner neighbourhoods surrounding Kingston, Jamaica have been suffering from urban decay, street violence, and political unrest. These conditions resulted from several decades of deterioration of social and economic conditions, gang warfare and the destruction of public spaces leading businesses to abandon the downtown zone. In particular, Jones Town a community of around 12,000 residents, faced problems such as high unemployment rates, dilapidated housing stock, and environmental deterioration. In the 1990's violence and instability had caused the area's only bus service to be suspended, and taxi drivers refused to serve the community.

Description

The Kingston Restoration Corporation (KRC), founded in 1983 by a group of business leaders working with the government's Urban Development Corporation, forged a partnership between public and private sectors in a series of integrated initiatives to stimulate the economy, create jobs, reduce poverty and revitalize the community in downtown Kingston.

Given the challenges facing Jones Town, and its strong sense of community spirit, KRC selected Jones Town to pilot this multi-sectoral approach to neighbourhood revitalization.

An Integrated Jones Town Redevelopment Plan was developed by KRC, involving a diverse group of stakeholders including the national inner-city Committee, the University of Technology Jamaica, the University of West Indies, the Jones Town Area Council (JTAC) and local residents and the Government of the Netherlands provided initial funding.

Following this initiative, in 1997, the Jamaican Urban Poverty Project (JUPP) was launched, with support of the Jamaican government and funding from the British Government. From the beginning, JUPP had the following four goals:

- Reduce poverty in the community by improving and increasing the residents' capacity to earn an income through education and skills training, aimed at employment and income generation from micro-enterprises and small business development
- Strengthen residents' ability to work together to build their community through the acquisition of different skills, and inter-community action to resolve problems and issues
- Improve environmental conditions through better management, education enhancement of built areas, housing restoration and development and maintenance of infrastructure including roads and drainage
- Develop strong community based organizations and institutions to increasingly implement and manage the Jones Town Redevelopment Project.

A **participatory planning process** was used throughout JUPP (1997-2003) involving a high level of community participation. Five priorities were identified: community safety, capacity building, environment and sanitation, education and micro-enterprise.

Activities within each priority area were then identified in 3 categories: NOW (projects which could be undertaken in less than 2 months with no or little outside support) SOON (projects that would require several months and some external support) and LATER (projects that were long term and would require significant and sustained external resources).

Some of the participatory strategies and initiatives that were used to increase community safety, which were identified by Jones Town residents included:

- Installation of street signs and street lights
- Removal of garbage from abandoned areas through community mobilization
- Creation of community/police consultative committees to provide training in health, safety, civic rights
- Development of conflict and dispute resolution workshops in cooperation with local agencies and NGOs
- Creation of a mother's centre to educate the public about domestic violence and to provide a day shelter for teenage mothers and victims of domestic abuse.
- The negotiation of the return of the bus and taxi service.

Outcomes and Outputs

It is reported that by the end of 1998, the number of shootings had dropped by 28 per cent, the price of housing has increased, and people and businesses have returned to the area.

Some of the outputs include:

- New participatory methodologies, based on the Participatory Implementation approach, developed, tested and established
- Enhanced capacity of KRC and JTAC to respond to and support community-based urban poverty projects.
- Increased capacity of Jones Town and associated communities to participate in urban poverty initiatives

Sources

Jamaica: The Jamaica Urban Poverty Project in Kingston:

www.ucl.ac.uk/

Rising from the Ashes. The International Development Magazine (DFID)

www.developments.org.uk/data/10/ashes.htm

Contact

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Løvstakken Project

Bergen, Norway

Background

In the early 1990's council housing (estimated population 1000) in Løvstakksiden, Bergen was in poor physical state, since there was no major upgrading to area council housing in over 40 years. Outdoor areas and playgrounds were dilapidated and littered and a high number of council residents were suffering from alcohol and drug abuse, and/or poor mental health. In 1995, high media attention to the negative aspects of the neighbourhood led to the growth and acceleration of projects already established to deal with some of these challenges.

Aims

- To improve housing standards in and around council housing
- To upgrade outdoor and playgrounds
- To provide services to improve safety and quality of life

Description

The project was led and developed by the Bergen Housing and Renewal Company (BBB) in 1994, employing a full time secretary and contact person for residents, and a part time project manager. Some of the main activities of the project included:

- Employment of private security to patrol the estate on evenings and report any problems to the housing company
- Installation of specialized doors between flats and staircases to prevent burglary
- The reconstruction of a building into a community house by the social housing company.
- The recruitment of additional partners to develop and run Community House activities designed for youth and immigrants (see description below).

The community house is used by different volunteer organizations in area for public meetings and social gatherings. Official meetings are also hosted in the community houses between residents, and between residents and various township and housing representatives. The second floor of the community house provides rooms for the Løvstakken Youth Council. The Youth Council was created in 1996, supported by social workers over a three year period, and originally funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Families. Over the years, it has organized social events and meeting places for young people in the area.

A Neighbourhood committee was started at the initiative of residents and involves a group of volunteers who work to stimulate cooperation between different volunteer organizations and actors working in the neighbourhood. It works as an adult resource to the Youth Council.

In addition, the Bergen Police established a Neighbourhood Police Office located in one of the council housing buildings, staffed with one superintendent and two police officers, which largely functions as a service agent to the residents as opposed to a control agent.

Outcomes and Outputs

- It is reported that the local crime rate in the neighbourhood dropped by 25% between 1998-2000.
- A Council housing survey conducted in 1999 revealed that Residents living in the renovated flats were happier with facilities and outdoor areas than previously.
- Smaller real estate companies bought additional buildings and continue to rent out the flats.

Sources

Jensen et al (2003) Norwegian National Report. NEHOM Neighbourhood Housing Models. Project under the EU 5th Framework Programme. Improving the quality of urban life. Report available at: www.nhh.no/geo/NEHOM

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www.eura.org/plus-eura/public%20pdf%20files/scientific_report.pdf

A Collaborative Approach to Building Safety in Schiemond Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Background

Schiemond is among the most deprived neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, located within close proximity to Rotterdam's red-light district. Crime, violence, anti-social behavior and the presence of drug dealers are some of the problems facing Schiemond residents. In 2001, the City of Rotterdam developed a safety index which is used for the 33 main social housing estates located in five areas of the city. Schiemond was given a low rating - 'serious problems'. The city index is based on crime figures including street violence, domestic violence, burglaries, car thefts, theft from cars, drug abuse and vandalism.

Each estate is scored between 1 and 10, and five grades are used: unsafe and dangerous, serious problems, safety under threat, in need of attention and safe. The Woonbron Housing Estate, which largely forms part of Schiemond was targeted for action. It includes 1,420 flats, housing 4000 residents, with over 100 different nations represented.

Description

In 2001, the Woonbron Housing Association¹ hired a manager to consult and work with residents to improve safety on the estate. Following resident consultation, a number of activities were implemented.

Some of these included:

- Introduction of an efficient and estate based maintenance service
- Removal of graffiti
- Construction of fences, and installation of gates
- Environmental 'clean up'
- Creation of an estate patrol by residents working in shifts until 2:00am
- Creation of a tenant council which mediates anti-social behaviour disputes
- Launch of Home on the Street projects involving two estate-based staff members, and community police, who work with teenagers and organize activities such as art projects, basketball, football tournaments. Many activities are sponsored by the housing association.
- Employment of two community workers by the local school who work with parents and children.

Future plans for the estate include the creation of a one-stop office in the community centre, bringing together police, housing staff and social services which work with Woonbron residents.

¹ Housing associations in the Netherlands have been referred to as hybrid organizations performing both a public role through the provision of housing to disadvantaged communities, and semi-private in its requirement to sell off stock on the open market. See: Regeneration of Dutch Urban Districts: the Role of Housing Associations: http://www.feweb.vu.nl/ersa2005/final_papers/28.pdf

Outputs and Outcomes

Since 2001:

- A rise in housing stock
- A higher rating on the Rotterdam safety index for Schiemond from 4.1 (serious problems) to 6 (in need of attention).
- Increased participation of residents in both consultation and implementation of community safety initiatives

Source

This summary is based on a previous case study description on Schiemond. Randall, B (October 2005) Safe as Houses. EU Social Housing Organisations: Preventing and Dealing with Anti-Social Behavior. A report produced for CECODHAS. Available at: www.cecodhas.org/

Kendray Initiative Kendray, Barnsley, UK

Background

Kendray is a neighbourhood within close proximity to the centre of Barnsley, comprised mainly of social housing constructed in the 1950's. It faces several problems including, low-demand housing, decaying physical conditions, poverty, unemployment, poor health and educational under attainment.

Description

In 1999, The Kendray Initiative Board emerged out of longstanding attempts by residents, the local authority and other service providers to jointly address the estate's problems. The board is comprised of community group representatives, key service providers, councilors and local businesses. They oversee the work of the programme and the work of the local neighbourhood management team.

Six priority areas were identified by Kendray residents have helped to guide the work of the board. These include

- Underpinning the place of young people
- Improving housing and estate management
- Lifelong Learning
- Training and Jobs
- Promoting Kendray
- Building its strength-this includes building up the skills of local people to manage the future development of Kendray

Initially, the Kendray partnership worked with Barnsley Council, residents and then with Berneslai Homes, the Housing ALMO (Arms length Management Organisation) which was responsible for initiating and implementing a blueprint for selective demolitions and rebuilding of the estate. This initiative was designed to help lower vacancy, and meet the needs of specific groups on the estate including youth and the elderly.

Since 2002, the neighbourhood management team has helped to improve communication between local residents and mainstream service providers, and this has helped to increase confidence among housing managers, developers and community members.

The Kendray Initiative has developed many projects, some examples include:

- Working to bring a housing association and a private housing company onto the estate to build new homes to buy and bungalows on some of the demolition areas
- Creating environmental work and training for 10 local people, who work on a number of local projects to improve the way Kendray neighbourhood looks.
- Organising sports and holiday activities for over 1000 Kendray kids
- Organising two Kendray Cleanup and Spring clean days; including the highly popular 'Bring Out your Rubbish days'
- Organising courses on the estate which local people are asking for
- Supporting a Community House to produce the Kendray Newsletter
- Setting up the Kendray Kids Club & the Young at Heart group
- The creation of a new outdoor café for leisure and arts events
- The establishment of a Housing Impact Team by Berneslai Homes to provide a rapid response service on the estate

Projects currently underway include: the Introduction of a Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) in Kendray to work with local young people aged 13-16. The YIP aims to give young people somewhere safe to go where they can learn new skills, take part in activities with others and get help with their education and careers guidance, a study support project for 9-12 year olds, to help them to learn better at school, and research on ways public transport in Kendray can be improved.

In 2005, the Kendray Initiative received the award for Outstanding Neighbourhood Management Partnership from the New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Management Awards. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit regularly refer to the initiative's work around partnership development as an example of national best practice.

Outputs/Outcomes

- Increased resident satisfaction with Kendray as an area to live (from 54 per cent to 74 per cent from 2002-2005)
- Increased educational achievements of Kendray youth
- Evidence suggests a reduction in crime rates in the neighbourhood

Sources

Neighbourhood Management- working together to create Cleaner Safer Greener Communities. Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, UK.

Kendray Community Website: <http://www.kendray.net>

New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Management Awards 2005:
www.neighbourhood.gov.uk

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Project H.O.M.E, Philadelphia, USA

Background

In the late 80's, Philadelphia had a large street population, and only a handful of programs were able to provide anything beyond emergency shelter. Many of those on the streets were chronically homeless: they suffered from severe mental illness and/or substance abuse and were "falling through the cracks" of the few services that were available. Some of them had lived on the streets for several years. In particular, the North/Central Philadelphia community known as the St Elizabeth's/Diamond street (33-square block) neighborhood has suffered years of economic divestment cause by an eroding manufacturing base, migration of families and employment opportunities to other parts of Philadelphia. Since 1995, Project H.O.M.E. has focused its efforts to revitalize this neighborhood.

Description

Project HOME, a non-profit organization founded in 1989, has been working in partnership with neighbourhood residents, corporations, foundations, government, faith communities and others to empower persons to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty and to address the structural causes of poverty through neighbourhood revitalization. Neighbours and residents participate actively in project development, and also serve on Project HOME's Board of Directors.

Project HOME provides a continuum of care from street outreach, to supportive housing and comprehensive services (eg. health care, employment, education). Root causes of homelessness are tackled through the development of affordable rental housing, construction of affordable homes for homeownership, greening of vacant lots, adult youth education and enrichment programmes, and community based health care services.

Recent programmes implemented by Project HOME include:

Ridge-Avenue on the Rebound (RAR): A 5 year Action Plan, developed by the Community Economic Development Programme that targets the Ridge-Avenue commercial area. RAR addresses the need to enhance the physical environment, improve public safety and security, re-use vacant property, strengthen existing businesses and establish an effective association of business owners and community stakeholders who will maintain efforts to improve the commercial corridor and establish stronger links to surrounding communities.

Community Parks and Gardens: In 2001, the community adopted 'From Spaces to Places' a community-based strategy for addressing approximately 260 vacant parcels of land within the St. Elizabeth's/Diamond Street neighborhoods. To date, 22 vacant lots have been transformed into meaningful places for community residents to gather and play.

Learning Centre: A 38,000 square foot community based technology centre was developed in one of the lowest income neighbourhoods in Philadelphia. It aims to integrate computer technology with art, education and enterprise. Four after school programmes are offered to children and teen-agers, and General Education Diploma classes, computer, art and basic literacy classes, and tutoring services are offered to adults.

Back Home Cafe & Catering: An employment initiative offered by Project HOME, employing more than 120 individuals who were once homeless. Cafe employees earn valuable job skills and earn much needed income. The cafe also helps to bridge the gap between people who were once homeless and the broader community. Many people from outside the neighbourhood dine at the café, and the catering business is popular as well.

Kate's Place: Project H.O.M.E.'s newest housing initiative includes 144 units of housing in the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood for low- to moderate-income adults.

Outputs

Since its establishment, Project HOME has helped more than 5000 adults and children break the cycle of homelessness and poverty in Philadelphia by providing them with a continuum of care.

One of Project HOME's most significant achievements was winning the right to develop permanent housing at 1515 Fairmount Avenue for 48 men and women who were homeless and mentally disabled. This was an important victory because it established national legal precedents under the Federal Fair Housing Act.

Ninety-five percent of the men and women who live in Project HOME's permanent, supportive housing stay off the streets

Sources

Success in the City of Brotherly Love. The city that knows how - Philly Philadelphia. Effort stems tide of homelessness -- can San Francisco. learn from it? San Francisco Chronicle, Sunday, June 13, 2004. www.projecthome.net/AboutUs/newspaper/SFChronicle61304.pdf

Project HOME : www.projecthome.org

Fine, M., Walters, J. (November 2004) Reframing the Problem of Homelessness. Project H.O.M.E. NYU/Wagner. Research Center for Leadership in Action Leadership for a Changing World. www.leadershipforchange.org/insights/research/files/24.pdf

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