

Sustainable Approaches

to Crime Prevention through

Social Development

Dialogue Tool Supplements

HANDOUT 1-1: BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO CRIME PREVENTION

What is the goal of Sustainable Crime Prevention?

The goal of achieving a sustainable approach to crime prevention reflects the growing understanding that the health, safety and overall quality of life of Canadians is inherently related to existing social, economic, environmental and political forces and conditions. We need to address the broader, structural factors and underlying causes that contribute to crime and victimization. Planning and implementing a “sustainable” approach to crime prevention is an essential part of doing this!

What does a Sustainable Approach mean?

Understanding the basics of a sustainable approach takes us back to the field of sustainable development. The term “sustainable development” first came to the fore in 1987, when the World Commission on Environment and Development published *Our Common Future*¹. It has come to mean the integration of environmental, economic and social factors into decision making at all levels. The recognition of the interdependence among the economy, the environment and the human condition forms the basis of the sustainable development approach. These have come to be known as “the three E’s” of sustainable development:

- Environment
- Economy, and
- Equity.

The term “sustainability” is now used to frame a wide variety of societal problems and issues, including issues related to the environment, health, crime, and community safety.

Why is a Sustainable Approach to Crime Prevention important?

Ultimately, a sustainable approach to crime prevention contributes to achieving the broader vision of safe and healthy communities. Lessons learned from research and community experiences in fostering sustainable approaches can be applied to crime prevention at many levels: at the level of community, organization and project.

¹ Brundtland, Gor Harlem. *Our Common Future*. World Commission on Environment and Development, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

How can Policy-makers and Community Leaders help to build a Sustainable Approach to Crime Prevention at the community level?

Policy Actions to Consider:

- Work together! Use proactive and integrated approaches in addressing crime prevention.
- Facilitate integration through effective communication and coordination processes.
- Build practical bridges and partnership.
- Invest in community capacity development.
- Create opportunities to build on community strengths.
- Support research, reflection and evaluation that helps communities make evidence-based decisions.

Funding Actions to Consider:

Flexibility and innovation are good, but *not enough to sustain community-level activity.*

- Use multi-year, multi-sourced strategies to ensure some stability and capacity for the long-term planning and action.
- Harmonize and streamline funding processes so that resources can be used efficiently and effectively.

Ask yourself:

- What community issues regarding safety, health and well being are you concerned about?
- How willing are you – and your group and organization – to commit your time and resources to working on these issues?
- Are there others in your community that share your concern over these issues?
- Are some people already working on these issues that you can work with or can you or someone you know get the ball rolling?
- Are there other decision-makers and community leaders that you can contact and invite to work with you on these issues?

RESOURCE LIST

References

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Kretzmann, John P. and John L. McKnight (1993) *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. [

The Finance Project (2003). *Sustainability Planning Workbook: Planning for the Future*. Washington, D.C. www.financeproject.org

Helpful Websites

[If we have the CAPS web site up, we should add it to the list!]

Search the following websites on a regular basis for further information and updates on sustainability issues, research, strategies, and tools.

Canadian Policy Research Network: <http://www.cprn.org>

Canadian Council on Social Development: www.cpsd.org

Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The Centre for Sustainable Community Development. www.fcm.ca

Government of Canada. Public Security and Emergency Preparedness Canada.
www.psepc-sppcc.gc.ca

Government of Canada. National Crime Prevention Strategy.
www.prevention.gc.ca

Government of Canada. Social Development Canada. www.sdc.gc.ca

Government of Canada. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.
www.hrsdc.gc.ca

Government of Canada. Health Canada. www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Government of Canada. Department of Justice Canada. www.justice.gc.ca

Government of Canada. Sustainable Development Information System (SDInfo).
www.sdinfo.gc.ca

Government of Canada. Policy Research Initiative. www.policyresearch.gc.ca

Government of Canada. National Crime Prevention Strategy.
www.prevention.gc.ca

Government of Canada. Voluntary Sector Initiative. www.vsi-isbc.ca

International Institute for Sustainable Development. www.iisd.org

The Asset-based Community Development Institute. Institute for Policy
Research, Northwestern University. www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd.html.

The Finance Project. www.financeproject.org

The Sustainability Report. www.sustreport.org