



HIV/AIDS | Orphans & Vulnerable Children | Early Childhood Development | Youth and Adult Education & Development | Community Safety & Development

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Community Safety Initiative: Chesterville

STREET COMMITTEE PROJECT

I. PROJECT TITLE: Chesterville Street Committee Project

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1. BACKGROUND

Vukukhanye is a Public Benefit Organisation concerned with the support and upliftment of vulnerable and underprivileged individuals, families and communities. Our strategic focus is the holistic development of the community of Chesterville, in Cato Manor, KwaZulu-Natal. Vukukhanye is presently engaging with various stakeholders (community, government business and civil society) in the implementation of a Community Safety Initiative, targeting the community of Chesterville. The principles underpinning the Community Safety Initiative are based on a document commissioned by the South African Government and compiled by the National Crime Prevention Centre (SAPS), the CSIR Crime Prevention Centre and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) entitled "A Manual for Community Based Crime Prevention – Making South Africa Safe" (2000). The Ethekeweni Metro Council's crime prevention strategy ("Durban Safer City Strategy: 2000") is also aligned with this manual. **This Street Committee Project forms part of the above-mentioned Community Safety Initiative.**

2. MOTIVATION

There can be little doubt that one of the key factors in South Africa at present is the issue of crime; most especially, violent crime. It has been mooted that the resuscitation of Street Committees will be a practical step in the fight against this scourge of crime.

A recent report (*South Africa – The Good News*, 19 May 2008) by the MEC of the Western Cape, Leonard Ramatlakane, has revealed a 32% reduction in contact crimes in the Western Cape (contact crimes referring to attempted murder, rape, assault and aggravated robbery). According to Ramatlakane, "In the last five years, we have seen increasing numbers of our communities expressing a willingness to participate in crime prevention ventures." The report goes on to explain "that public involvement had contributed significantly to the reduction in contact and drug-related crime". The MEC expressed his belief that "the co-ordinated efforts of Community Policing Forums, Community Based Organisations and Neighbourhood Watch programmes had resulted in impressive and effective crime-fighting partnerships. Since 2002 the Western Cape Department of Community Safety has mobilised 188 Community Policing Forums, 12 Community Safety Forums, 2000 victim support volunteers in 168 police stations around the province and trained 8000 'Bambanani Against Crime' volunteers."

Given Vukukhanyes long relationship with Chesterville, the historic success of Street Committees in this community, and the available experience and desire among Chesterville civic leaders; the strategy of formally implementing Street Committees is being pursued.

These Street Committees will be integrated and cooperate with existing legislative frameworks and legal structures such as SAPS, community policing forums, ward committees and local councillors. The day-to-day operation of the Committees will be guided by a 'Policies and Procedures Manual', which will be a practical help to community members, but will also facilitate the role-out of Street Committees in other communities, once a successful model is established in Chesterville.

3. TARGET POPULATION - CHESTERVILLE

This project will target the historically disadvantaged community ('township') of Chesterville. Chesterville (part Ward 24 & Ward 29) is located in the Cato Manor region of the eThekweni Metropolitan Area, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.



The population of Chesterville is approximately 42,000 (Stats SA, 2001). Despite the progress made since South Africa's democratic elections in 1994, characteristics of this community still include widespread poverty, unemployment, a high prevalence of HIV infection, and unacceptable levels of crime (including theft, assault hijacking, rape and murder). Also prevalent is domestic violence, child abuse and neglect.

4. OBJECTIVES & FUNCTIONS

4.1 Objectives

The primary objective of Street Committees is to involve the community of a particular area in creating a happy, peaceful and productive environment by encouraging community members to take a greater interest in, and responsibility for, their community.

The success of Street Committees hinges on community involvement and effective communication with local government departments, including, police, social welfare, infrastructure services etc.

The following foundations are critical to achieve the stated objectives:

- Involvement of the community.
- Formalisation of communication structures for information to and from the community.
- Creation of a platform for teamwork and cooperation within the community.
- Structured protocol to lodge concerns, obtain information and create accountability when dealing with challenges that require solutions.

4.2 Functions

The main function behind the formation of the Street Committees is to combat crime through:

- The provision of information
- Collective identification of suspects
- Cooperation with police services
- Early identification and prevention of crimes

Street Committees should be encouraged to go beyond this by engaging in other socio-economic activities in their communities, which include:

- Prevention and resolution of domestic violence
- Social welfare issues e.g. orphans, disabled, elderly, etc.
- Liaison with local business people
- Youth and Women empowerment
- Education

The increased interest of the community in all these matters that are of collective interest has a significant impact. It must be noted that the community should be encouraged to not only identify problems and hold the relevant government departments accountable but to also seek creative solutions in partnership with government and business. This requires commitment and volunteerism, but these are the ingredients needed to build and strengthen our great nation.

5. PROJECT PLAN OVERVIEW

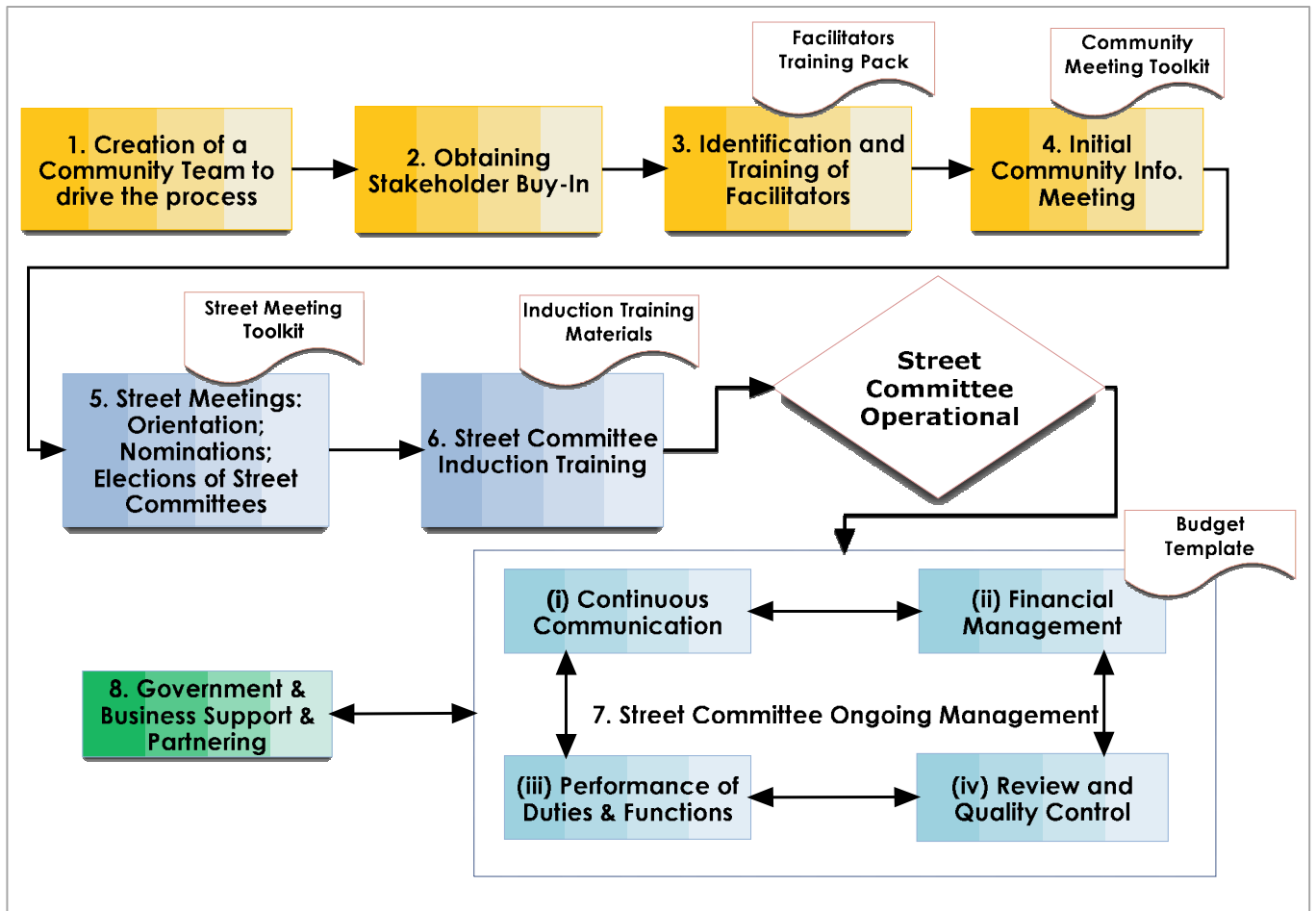


Fig. 1: Street Committee Overview Flow Diagram

A communication and training specialist was co-opted to formulate training materials and guidelines which are guiding the implementation process. These include a 'Facilitators Training Pack', 'Community Meeting Toolkit', 'Street Meeting Toolkit' and 'Induction Training Materials'. A Street Committee Brochure has also been designed, to be used as a communication & education tool.



Are we going to stand up and fight for our community?

6.2.3 Pavilion Partnership

During the December/January holidays, two Chesterville residents were appointed as "Community Liaison Officers" to work alongside security personnel at the Pavilion shopping Centre. This was part of the growing partnership between the Pavilion, Chesterville and Vukukhanye - to help improve safety and security at the Pavilion, as well as protect Chesterville residents (many of whom are Pavilion Staff) particularly when walking between the Pavilion and Chesterville.

The following comment from Lynette Ntuli (Pavilion Manager) sums up the success of the intervention: *"The partnership was very successful, especially in such a busy period. I feel the most significant aspect of the liaison was that it was apparent to all that we had created links in the community and these were beneficial both ways. The officers were part of the JOC team and they played their part where called upon to assist in the matters they were drawn into. Another significant mention is that we had no (major) incidents on the Chesterville path reported to us. The collaboration between Security, JOC members and the Safer Cities volunteers meant there was constant monitoring in that area. This is the type of net result I certainly hoped to see and would like to continue to see."*

Procedures have also been put in place to deal with child offenders found misbehaving or shoplifting at the Pavilion. Such children, who live in Chesterville, are referred to community leaders who follow up on the case with the children's parents/caregivers. This approach has been implemented since December and has proved very successful.

6.2.4 Method and Progress (as at August 2009)

A further 'training and stakeholder meeting' was held on Saturday the 23rd of May, which was facilitated by the Chesterville Residents Association.

The Chesterville Residents Association and trained facilitators have been actively engaging with the community and have succeeded in establishing over 26 street committees to date, which represents nearly 300 street committee residents. Committees are being formed 1 street (or small area) at a time - this involves calling street residents to a meeting, communicating the purpose and responsibilities of street committees and then the election of a street committee chairperson and members for that street. Roll-out will continue to cover the remaining areas of Chesterville. Six two-way radios have been donated by Jwayelani, which will significantly improve the committees communication ability.

An **Induction Training** weekend was held at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for the 300 street committee members on the 8th and 9th of August. Besides being trained on the roles and responsibilities of street committees, delegates were addressed by specialists on topics such as child abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, rape & forensics and case management. Speakers included representatives from Childline, SANCO, the International Office for Migration, Department of Community Safety & Liaison, Department of Justice, and Safer Cities.



