

CO-ORDINATED SERVICE DELIVERY

Local government's efforts to make Cato Manor safer

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Safety and security policy suggests that local government should play a central role in creating safer environments. This article describes how the Cato Manor Area Based Management (ABM), part of the eThekweni Municipality, has embraced this suggestion by striving to develop a sustainable co-ordinated approach to crime and safety in Durban's Cato Manor area.

The 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security and the White Paper on Local Government (1996) encourage local government to play an important role in creating a safer and more secure environment. The Safety and Security White Paper states that city and town government is the level at which planning can take the needs of local communities and their particular crime problems into account:

Many of the functions of local government relate, in any event, to issues of local governance. Thus, notwithstanding any specific interventions, local government has a key role to play in ensuring an environment less conducive to crime... Crime and crime prevention should be seen as central to the planning and functions of all municipal department line functions.¹

In October 2005 the Independent Projects Trust (IPT) was asked by the Cato Manor Area Based Management (ABM) of the eThekweni Municipality to conduct an extensive consultation with role-players in Cato Manor, in order to investigate and recommend a sustainable co-ordinated approach to

crime and safety in the Cato Manor area. One of the ABM's key objectives is the co-ordination of service delivery and it is hoped that a co-ordinated approach to safety and security will improve the situation in Cato Manor.

As part of the process IPT was required to investigate best practices with regard to community safety forums in the Western Cape and other practices elsewhere. In addition, the organisation was tasked with identifying and consulting internal and external stakeholders in an effort to understand key issues relating to safety and security in Cato Manor. IPT was also asked to facilitate the development of a safety plan.

Project process and methodology

IPT conducted a field visit to the Western Cape to meet with representatives from community safety forum initiatives, and conducted a document review of information available about community safety forums and other initiatives.

Workshops, face-to-face interviews and small focus group discussions were conducted as part of the consultation process. IPT also developed a

questionnaire that was filled in by 144 members of the Cato Manor community in an effort to gauge attitudes towards safety and security in the area. The consultation process provided information as to the crimes that people felt should be most urgently addressed and what could be done to deal with crime in Cato Manor.

After much consultation with the Cato Manor ABM, IPT developed guidelines for the establishment of the Cato Manor Co-ordinated Safety Initiative (CSI). The purpose of this forum is to address the need for a multi-agency response to crime prevention, and to prevent the duplication of efforts and wasteful expenditure.

The Cato Manor environment

Cato Manor covers a geographical area of about 1,800 hectares about 10 km from Durban's city centre. It is home to about 93,000 people who mostly settled in the area through mass invasions in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This area had been vacant since the forced removal of about 150,000 people in the 1950s and 1960s. The eThekweni Municipality website states:

Cato Manor residents include some of the poorest of the urban poor... The area remains characterised by a high unemployment rate and social fragmentation.²

Cato Manor, besides being one of the most fiercely contested urban localities in the history of South Africa, is an internationally acclaimed example of urban reconstruction that was conferred the status of International Best Practice by the United Nations' Commission on Human Settlements.³

Describing the environment in Cato Manor, Paulus Zulu wrote in 2004 that:

The majority of Cato Manor residents today comprise communities relocated from shanty townships, present residents of shanty towns, overflows from formal townships and communities displaced by political violence in rural areas. Cato Manor is not isolated from Durban, either geographically or

experientially. An examination of the state of poverty or wealth in Cato Manor is an examination of that state in the fringes of Durban, including such townships as Chesterville, Lamontville, Umlazi and KwaMashu.⁴

Using the 1996 census Zulu provides the following information about Cato Manor:

- There is a large number of youth in Cato Manor, 95% of them younger than 50 years. He attributes this to possibly being the result of migration from rural areas and of young individuals escaping from overcrowded family homes in the townships, a fact supported by the uniquely small sizes of households.
- Education levels in Cato Manor are low with 12% of residents illiterate, 12% barely functionally literate and 20% educated between grades five and seven. Only 2% of the population has a post-matric qualification.
- With regard to employment, 44% of the economically active population is employed, while 29% is unemployed.
- A total of 6% more women than men are employed.
- A total of 76% of residents live in informal houses (such as traditional houses, shacks or tents).⁵

Crime in Cato Manor

According to the SAPS, and corroborated by community reports, armed robbery, housebreaking, rape and assault were the four priority crimes in Cato Manor in the first quarter of 2006. Domestic violence is regarded as a major problem that accounts for most assault cases; however, many cases are withdrawn by the victims, while in other instances victims are too scared of their partners to report them to the police. Stakeholders say that domestic violence often occurs during the weekends after a drinking spree.

The survey conducted by IPT found that 32% of respondents felt Cato Manor was safe or very safe, while 45% said the area was either unsafe or very unsafe. A total of 40% of the participants stated that safety and security in Cato Manor had decreased or greatly decreased over the past five years.

The areas in Cato Manor that consist largely of informal settlements or low cost housing, such as Cato Crest, Fast Track and Dunbar, are most affected by crime. Street lighting in these areas is non-existent and the terrain makes the area difficult to patrol by vehicle and foot. Shacks located in informal settlements are situated in clusters that have no drive-in access, making them an ideal place for perpetrators to take cover and avoid detection and arrest.

Focus groups, meetings and discussions with individuals revealed that alcohol is a factor in criminal activity, with suspects and often also victims being under the influence of liquor. In the IPT survey respondents identified public drunkenness as one of the top three factors that impacted negatively on feelings of safety and security in Cato Manor.

Stakeholders say that most perpetrators are under the age of 18 and that tavern and shebeen owners should contribute to safety and security by not serving alcohol to children under the age of 18 years.

Assaults and murders are committed using knives and firearms, and the SAPS and the community argue that illegal firearms are a major problem in Cato Manor. Community members say that gangs often use illegal firearms, while delinquent youth steal legal weapons from their parents or other people. Stakeholders say that the armed robberies in which firearms were used were mostly perpetrated by youth who are unemployed, use drugs and are part of gangs.

The high rates of unemployment and poverty were raised as key factors that are likely to cause crime in Cato Manor. Drug addiction was ranked third, but quite significantly lower than both unemployment and poverty.

Participants attending the IPT workshop recommended that the Cato Manor ABM co-ordinate a process to take forward the issue of safety and security in Cato Manor. They also called for a multi-agency approach to crime prevention that would include local government role-players as

well as provincial and national government, representatives of schools and crèches, taxi associations, faith-based organisations, the business sector and NGOs.

According to the findings of the IPT survey, specific interventions that could be carried out by the eThekweni Municipality to make Cato Manor more secure include facilitating job creation for the unemployed and youth, running crime awareness programmes in schools, and improved street lighting.

The survey also asked what residents of Cato Manor could do to make the community safer. Interestingly, only a few respondents suggested carrying a gun or other weapon, while many believed that residents should report crime and join CPFs.

Policing in Cato Manor

There were 66 SAPS members stationed at Cato Manor police station in February 2006, supported by ten administrative personnel. The police claim that their crime combating and crime prevention efforts are hampered by a lack of vehicles and manpower. To illustrate their point they refer to a national intervention in 2005 that boosted the number of police members stationed at Cato Manor – but only lasted for three months. According to the police and the community this brief increased police presence resulted in a higher number of arrests, improved levels of visible policing and an improvement in community confidence.

In the IPT survey, 40% of the community members surveyed stated that the job done by the Cato Manor police was acceptable. However, it is worrying to note that 44% of respondents stated that the job done by the police in Cato Manor was bad, or very bad.

The relationship between the police and the community has for years been a troubled one. At the IPT workshops community members said that they received little or no assistance from the SAPS, and that police response to reported crimes was slow.

Community Safety Forums

The Western Cape-based NGO, U Managing Conflict (UMAC), which established CSFs in the Western and Eastern Cape, states on its website that community policing forums (CPFs) have linked the police and the community, but that other service providers have not been part of the forum:

A CSF, however, is a single forum within a municipality that brings together all the service providers from government (police, social services, health, education, justice and local government) around the table with NGOs and communities.⁶

The objectives of the CSF, according to UMAC, are:

- to share information on crime, safety and security issues in that particular municipality;
- to develop a common vision around social crime prevention and around fighting crime and violent community conflicts effectively;
- to identify gaps in service provision and obstacles in the criminal justice system and devise ways of addressing these at a local level;
- to co-ordinate an interdisciplinary approach to crime prevention and crisis management; and
- to facilitate increased co-operation and interaction of the criminal justice system.

At a provincial consultative conference on CSFs held in Durban in March 2006, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Community Safety and Liaison committed itself to establish CSFs throughout the province. The department has indicated that it will put together a plan for implementing this resolution.

Lessons learned from the CSF experience

In a presentation to the Cato Manor ABM, crime prevention consultant Dr Richard Griggs said that the strengths of CSFs include:

- addressing the strategic need for a multi-agency response to crime prevention; and
- offering an opportunity for partners to meet and locate ways to co-operate.⁷

However, his research on the CSFs identified six weaknesses:

- CSFs have no mandated powers because they are a non-statutory body, and implementation occurs per agreement of participating departments and bodies.
- CSFs rarely reach the stage of managing projects because they have no budget for this purpose.
- There is no champion to drive the CSF process.
- The CSF is not focused. As a result the process is delayed and politicised by regularly scheduled meetings between a large set of role-players to discuss every kind of crime problem.
- CSFs fail to disaggregate crime into various types and to establish appropriate strategies to address each.
- The 'changing faces syndrome' results in junior people sometimes being sent to meetings rather than senior people who have a mandate.

Guidelines for the Cato Manor Co-ordinated Safety Initiative (CSI)

IPT developed guidelines for the multi-agency forum to be established in Cato Manor. After much discussion with the Cato Manor ABM this body was named the Cato Manor Co-ordinated Safety Initiative (CSI). The guidelines were intended to address some of the issues raised by Griggs, as detailed above. They mention aspects such as the formal status of the CSI, the functioning of the initiative and the entities that could participate in the CSI.

The purpose of the CSI is to:

- address the need for a multi-agency response to crime prevention; and
- prevent the duplication of efforts and wasteful expenditure.

The functions of the CSI are to:

- co-ordinate crime prevention activities at local government level (this involves identifying and integrating existing roles and programmes);
- facilitate co-operation around service delivery, particularly at local level; and
- initiate and implement new projects (after at least one year of operation).

IPT emphasised the need for regular CSI meetings, a strong chairperson to facilitate these meetings, and for meetings to follow standard procedures. In

addition, task teams were to be set up on a needs basis to focus on specific projects.

Although the CSI is a non-statutory body with no mandated powers, it would be 'owned' by a senior official in the eThekweni Municipality and co-ordinated by the Cato Manor ABM.

The first members of the CSI would be senior officials from departments within the eThekweni Municipality, as this project is being driven at local government level. Other suggested participants include the Cato Manor SAPS, ward committee representatives, CPF representatives, NGOs, youth organisations, business leaders, provincial government departments involved in Cato Manor, and relevant national departments.

Lessons learned and way forward

The CSI has been well received by senior officials from the eThekweni Municipality, and the Cato Manor ABM is taking the process forward. IPT recommends that strong leadership and strict adherence to standard procedures for meetings are essential for ensuring a successful multi-agency partnership. The administrative arm of the CSI is vital because participants continually need to be provided with minutes, agendas, reminders of activities they are required to complete, and dates of future meetings.

IPT found the consultation process required as part of this study challenging, as participants often needed to be convinced that their involvement is worthwhile. This was the case not only with officials from all levels of government, but also community role-players. People often failed to see what role they play in creating a safe and secure environment. This presents a challenge for the Cato Manor ABM as the process is taken forward.

It cannot be stressed enough that the critical learning from the Western Cape is that the key participants in the first year are local government departments who have the mandate and budget to make a difference at local level. Focus should be on the success of current activities, rather than starting new projects as the CSI. It is evident that one of the biggest challenges in ensuring the

sustainability of structures such as community safety forums is that participants become disillusioned when plans that are too ambitious and high-flying fail. It is critical that individuals are invited to meetings because they have something to contribute, and that key people attend.

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Endnotes

- 1 Department of Safety and Security, White Paper on Safety and Security: *In Service of Safety*, 1998.
- 2 www.durban.gov.za
- 3 P Robinson, J McCarthy and C Forster, *Urban Reconstruction in the Developing World: Learning through an international best practice*, Heinemann, Sandown, 2004.
- 4 Robinson et al, op cit.
- 5 Robinson et al, op cit.
- 6 www.umac.org.za
- 7 Griggs wrote a chapter on CSFs in *Lessons from local crime prevention* published by the Open Society Foundation for South Africa, Newlands, 2003.