



SAFER PLACES:
RESILIENT INSTITUTIONS AND
NEIGHBOURHOODS TOGETHER

SPRINT

LEARNING BRIEF 7

Partnerships in ABVPIs

2021



SAFER PLACES:
RESILIENT INSTITUTIONS AND
NEIGHBOURHOODS TOGETHER

SPRINT

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This initiative will contribute to strengthening and empowering a learning network amongst already well-established civil society organisations, working closely with municipalities and other partners, to apply approaches and tools for violence prevention through urban upgrading, in line with the objectives of the Integrated Urban Development Framework and other relevant policy frameworks, particularly in the human settlement and safer communities sector.

ABOUT SPRINT

The Safer Places: Resilient Institutions and Neighbourhoods Together (SPRINT) Project is a joint initiative of the South African-German Development Cooperation with the support of the GIZ – Inclusive Violence Prevention Programme (GIZ VCP), implemented by Isandla Institute and Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU NPC). The initiative was conceptualised in response to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which has amplified risk factors for violence and crime in vulnerable communities. The project aims to support and strengthen institutions and organisations working to build resilience in communities across the country by utilising and upscaling targeted, area-based violence prevention interventions (ABVPI). The project vision is the institutionalisation of effective ABVPIs in the development and management of vulnerable urban communities.

To achieve this, the SPRINT Project has two distinct, but inter-related, pathways:

A Learning Network, which consists of a civil society organisations (CSOs) from a cross-section of sectors, and creates opportunities for peer exchanges resulting in learning and advocacy documentation.

A Laboratory, which involves capacity-building processes with participating municipalities and local CSOs, and focuses on co-designing and implementing practical, area-based solutions to violence-related challenges.


The project's Steering Committee, which is led by the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG), together with the Department of Human Settlements (DHS), National Treasury and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), oversee and endorse this initiative.



ABOUT THE LEARNING NETWORK

In 2020/21, the thematic journey of the Learning Network is conceptualised in two parts. The first is contextual which relates to the South African Violence Prevention Interventions context and the impact of COVID-19 and the second part focuses on institutions and systems needed to implement VPI. Critical knowledge from participating organisations is drawn into the Learning Network's outputs and the multistakeholder events. The multistakeholder events bring together CSOs, municipalities and national government departments and agencies to discuss violence and crime prevention theory and practice. The deliberate and unique cross-section of CSO participants within the Learning Network and their varied experiences, knowledge and expertise is central to the success of the SPRINT Project. Participating organisations include Afesis-corplan, Masifunde, Agape Youth Movement, Ndifuna Ukwazi, Cape Development and Dialogue Centre Trust (CDDC), Open Streets Cape Town, Caritas, People's Environmental Planning (PEP), Planact, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), Project Empower, Development Action Group (DAG), Sinosizo Siyaphambili, Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU NPC) and Isandla Institute.

The long-term aim of the Learning Network is to achieve enhanced innovation and evaluation capacity to strengthen and expand violence and crime prevention solutions.


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Key to the implementation of area-based violence prevention interventions (ABVPIs) is the role of municipalities. Prioritising ABVPI in municipal planning processes, enables local government to bring together the necessary community, CSO, private sector and government stakeholders to create change.

INTRODUCTION

This is the seventh brief in a series of learning briefs produced by Isandla Institute under the Safer Places: Resilient Institutions and Neighbourhoods Together (SPRINT) Project. The briefs are developed from the Learning Network sessions. The title of the seventh session, and the focus of this brief, is 'Partnerships in ABVPIs' hosted by Isandla Institute on 19 May 2021.

The brief begins with examples of the key policy documents for both the country holistically, as well as violence prevention strategies and plans around partnership building. The importance of partnerships during the COVID-19 pandemic is emphasised. The brief then moves on to discuss the lessons from the Learning Network on the success factors to effective partnerships, as well as some challenges that were experienced, including examples of strategic partnerships that contributed towards the success of ABVPIs. Finally, the brief ends with key messages to take forward.



Cross-sectoral, multi-level partnerships and inter-governmental relations are key in addressing integrated, multi-dimensional issues, including violence and crime prevention.

POLICY AROUND PARTNERSHIPS

There is a mandate for government to work in partnership with communities and other key stakeholders towards various development goals in the country.

The National Development Plan (NDP) (2012) emphasises that “Active citizenry and social activism is necessary for democracy and development to flourish. The state cannot merely act on behalf of the people – it has to act with the people, working together with other institutions to provide opportunities for the advancement of all communities”. The NDP also acknowledges that while “South Africa has an active and vocal citizenry ... an unintended outcome of government actions has been to reduce the incentive for citizens to be direct participants in their own development” (2012). To address this, the NDP espouses that the state must actively support and incentivise citizen engagement and citizens should: seek opportunities for advancement, learning, experience and opportunity; work together with others in the community to advance development, resolve problems and raise the concerns of the voiceless and marginalised; and hold government, business and all leaders in society accountable for their actions (2012). At a local level, the Municipal Systems Act (2000) states that one of the purposes of the act includes “to provide for community participation” as a core principle and outlines that “a municipality must establish appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures to enable the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality”.

The 2016 Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) identifies a number of issues confronting cities in South Africa, including urban safety. Throughout the framework, the issue of partnership is highlighted. The IUDF identifies weak partnerships between local government and non-government institutions as a key challenge stating that “Partnerships with civil society and communities are critical for developing sustainable models, and so municipalities should work together with civil society and local inhabitants to identify and implement innovative and relevant solutions” (2016:64). The IUDF also identifies “the organisational capacity to engage with external role-players and to champion local interests” as well as partnership-building as a key capacity that requires strengthening for municipal institutions” (2016:86). Partnerships, between many different stakeholders and in different forms, are critical for taking forward much of the action identified across the IUDF. Specifically, cross-sectoral, multi-level partnerships and intergovernmental relations are important because of the integrated and multi-dimensional nature of these identified issues, including violence and crime prevention.

In relation to violence and crime in particular, the White Paper on Safety and Security (WPSS) (2016) and the Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy (ICVPS) (2021) emphasise the importance of government working with other stakeholders, including civil society organisations, in order to reduce and prevent violence and crime: “The White Paper reaffirms that building safer communities is a collective responsibility of both the state and its citizens, and is located within the broader developmental agenda of government, as set out in the NDP 2030 and Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF 2014-2019). In this regard, the White Paper affirms the



The Integrated Urban Development Framework identifies nine policy levers:

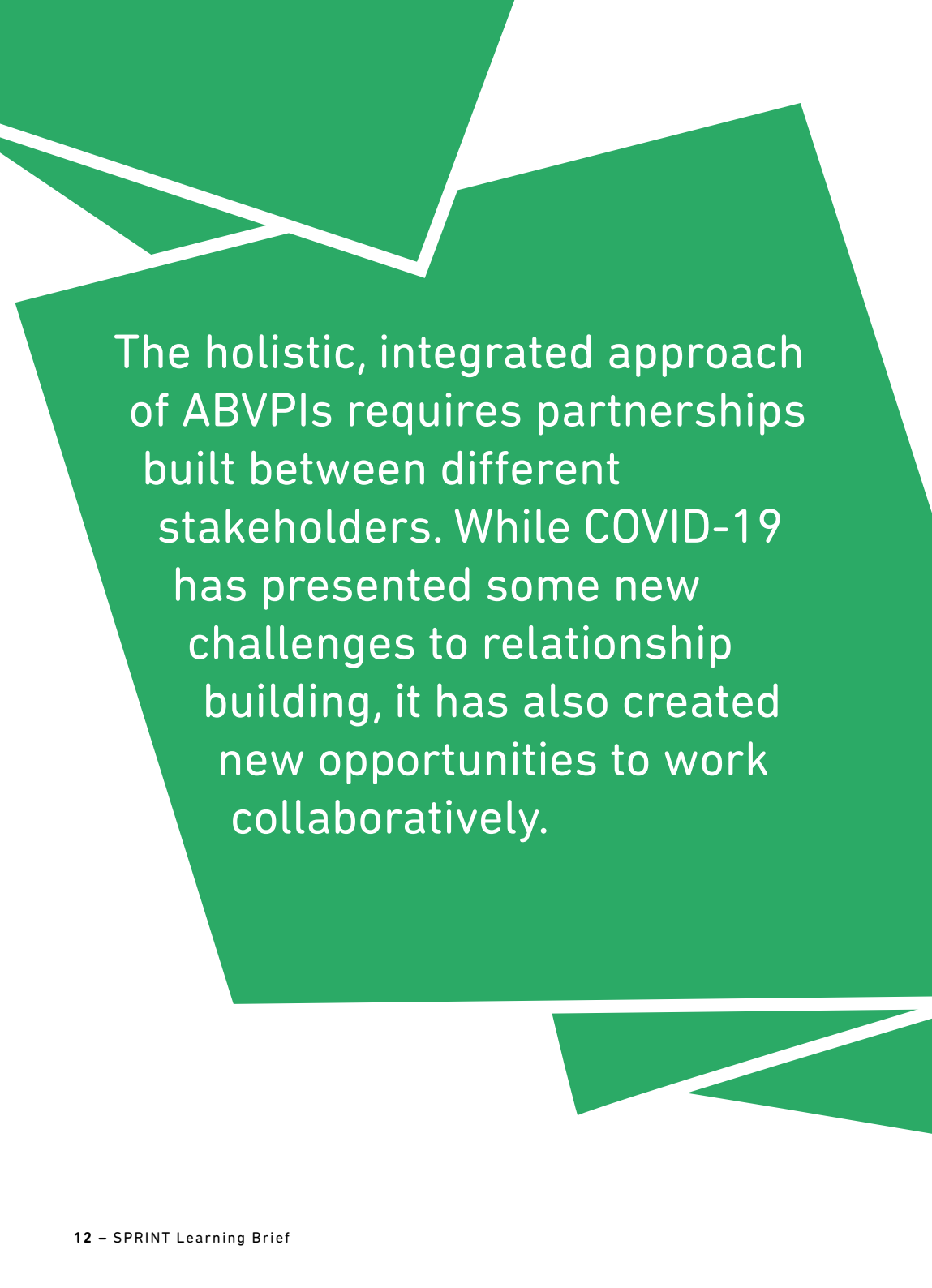
- 1:** Integrated urban planning and management
- 2:** Integrated transport and mobility
- 3:** Integrated sustainable human settlements
- 4:** Integrated urban infrastructure
- 5:** Efficient land governance and management
- 6:** Inclusive economic development
- 7:** Empowered active communities
- 8:** Effective urban governance
- 9:** Sustainable finances

In addition, rural-urban interdependency, urban resilience and urban safety are identified as cross-cutting issues.

need for an active citizenry, civil society, and private sector to contribute to the on-going efforts of government in safety, crime and violence prevention” (WPSS.2016). The ICVPS (2021) builds on this, emphasising that “in order to systematically address crime and violence, a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is required”. The ICVPS (2021) also states that “programmes and interventions must be integrated, coordinated and evidence based, with active civil society and community participation”. This is mirrored in the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF 2019-2024), which calls for strengthened community partnerships as one of the key interventions to ensure the outcome that there is an increased sense of safety in communities (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. 2020).

The concept of co-production challenges previous notions of asymmetrical relationships between government and non-government institutions and communities, which were typically defined by dependence, disempowerment and exploitation. Instead, “co-production refers to an equal partnership between the public and the state when delivering services. It goes beyond the idea of citizen engagement and views the public as resources, not mere recipients of services.

(Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. 2016:93)

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The holistic, integrated approach of ABVPIs requires partnerships built between different stakeholders. While COVID-19 has presented some new challenges to relationship building, it has also created new opportunities to work collaboratively.

BUILDING ABVPI PARTNERSHIPS AND COVID-19

Partnerships between government and non-government organisations are essential for ABVPIs. Violence and crime are the result of the interplay of a variety of factors. There are many different stakeholders who influence these factors and as such, each of these stakeholders has a role to play in increasing community safety. These stakeholders also each offer different perspectives, skills and resources; therefore, collaboration through partnership can mean that strengths are developed and weaknesses minimised.

With regards to partnerships in ABVPI processes, there are two key questions: Who is there? And who is not there (yet)? In a preliminary ABVPI assessment, stakeholder mapping is used to identify decision-makers and champions who can be drawn into the partnership. Part of this process should also include questioning which stakeholders are not included, but may be useful – or essential – additions. The identified stakeholders will help develop the joint vision for the community, which guides future area-based violence prevention interventions, and will be part of possible local safety audits, community safety forums, or the development of integrated safety plans. They would also be involved in the implementation of interventions and their activation, maintenance, management and assessment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many shifts in South Africa since the first national lockdown was announced for 26 March 2020, and factors that contribute to violence and crime in the country have been exacerbated by the subsequent lockdowns. Unemployment rates have risen to nearly a third of the country's population at 32,6% in the first quarter of 2021 (StatsSA. 2021). Another contributing factor to violence is inequality, and South Africa, with the highest level of inequality in the world (World Bank. N.d.), is now facing increasing strain, thus increasing the risk factors for violence in the country.

"The crisis called for new and intensified responses, and partnerships and connections to enable those responses" (Civicus. 2020). Thus, the importance of the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in implementing ABVPIs in this context cannot be understated: "As the virus swept the globe, civil society organisations played a key role in responding, helping those most in need, filling the gaps left by governments and businesses and keeping them accountable" (Pousadela and Firmin. 2020). The effort it takes to build and sustain partnerships is considered very resource intensive, both with respect to time and budget. In rapidly changing contexts such as the COVID-19 pandemic, relationship-building without set outputs and outcomes is often deprioritised to focus on more pressing aspects of the work.

The impact of COVID-19 on partnerships to take ABVPI forward can be seen in the composition of stakeholders and their ways of engaging. On the one hand, the increased need during COVID-19 has meant that new or emerging opportunities for working collaboratively – including with stakeholders one may not have worked with before – have presented themselves. One such example is the Western Cape Food Forum, which initially came about as a civil society response to the need for food relief in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown in April 2020. Over time, it developed into a multi-stakeholder forum, which includes the public and private sectors.¹

Undoubtedly, the limitations around face-to-face engagements have further complicated the establishment and maintenance of partnerships. The lockdown regulations have at times meant that there could be no face-to-face

Notes:

1: The Western Cape Food Forum is facilitated by the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP). www.wcedp.co.za/western-cape-food-forum-evolves/



The COVID-19 pandemic has limited face-to-face engagements. For many, creating and maintaining partnerships is now done through virtual platforms including Whatsapp, Zoom and MS Teams.

engagements and, at other times, have imposed restrictions on how many people may occupy a space and their proximity to one another. While it has been possible to utilise virtual engagement through technology, such as message groups (e.g. WhatsApp or Slack) or online meeting platforms (Zoom, MS Teams, Skype, etc.), this can create challenges for some stakeholders. Virtual engagements require access to technology (such as smartphones or computers) and connectivity can be limited or very costly. Moreover, virtual meetings cannot replace the value of face-to-face engagements, which have the added benefit of more access to non-verbal cues, allowing better and more inclusive participation, and informal relationship building during breaks.

In sum, developing strong partnerships is vital for having a greater impact in communities in terms of safety and violence prevention. Given the nature and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, such partnerships are even more important, despite the challenges to establish and nurture them.

The background of the slide features several overlapping, angular orange shapes that resemble stylized paper or geometric blocks. These shapes are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement, with some shapes appearing to be layered behind others. The colors are various shades of orange, from a light, almost white tone to a deep, vibrant orange.

Partnerships are essential for effective ABVPI. The White Paper on Safety and Security and the National Development Plan both emphasise the importance of building partnerships between government and non-government organisations.

LESSONS FROM THE NETWORK

Through engagement on their experiences of partnerships in area-based violence prevention interventions and aligned violence prevention work, the Learning Network members outlined their key success factors in effective partnerships, as well as some challenges in initiating and maintaining the partnerships. Two examples of ABVPIs with an emphasis on partnerships are also highlighted.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS TO EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

One of the first key success factors for effective, beneficial partnerships is broad-based stakeholder identification and participation. Diverse and wide-ranging partnerships, comprising a variety of community groups, local leaders, CSOs and local and provincial government, are required. Having such a diverse group can assist with ensuring that the conceptualisation of an intervention is appropriate, relevant and serves the community at large; it also increases a sense of collective ownership for the intervention. Inter-disciplinary collaboration and good intergovernmental relations can further strengthen the partnerships through knowledge sharing, greater coordination and integration of plans.

To ensure that there is the necessary buy-in from government, there needs to be dedicated senior personnel within the various spheres of government, with delegated authority, to oversee programmes and champion interventions. Learning Network members noted that it was important to secure the buy-in of people who can ‘make things happen’, such as those in middle management or high-level leadership positions. This buy-in needs to be consistent throughout the relevant spheres of government, with clear political leadership driving the process.

In addition, implementing a successful ABVPI must be informed by a common vision and joint understanding of what the ultimate goal/goals for this intervention are. In light of this, Learning Network members emphasised the importance of developing good relationships with the various stakeholders. Partnerships should be built on cooperative relationships and there should be co-leadership, rather than authoritarian-style management. The importance of taking the time to develop trust and a good understanding about different groups' motivations, goals and ways of working was emphasised as vitally important. It was noted that often there is the urge to begin implementation as soon as possible, linked to funding timelines and other pressures, however, this could lead to misunderstandings or misaligned goals. Throughout the process, having good communication and openness in these partnerships can have a significant impact on the success of the project. Participants identified the various methods that they used to communicate, including WhatsApp, email, face-to-face meetings and phone calls, emphasising the continuous nature of relationship building and the importance of maintenance for sustaining these relationships. Building mechanisms for conflict resolution are also a vital part of maintaining relationships, and outlining clear methods to navigate, mediate and mitigate conflict is important when conflict or disagreement inevitably arises.

Linked to the above point is the importance of managing all stakeholders' expectations. Having a detailed plan with roles and responsibilities laid out should assist in clarifying what can be done, and what can't be done, to ensure common ground on desired outcomes. This clear goal setting requires an open exchange of information that is linked most importantly to information on budgets and performance, as well as the timeline for any intervention.



Useful Guides

The GUIDES TO DESIGNING INTEGRATED VIOLENCE PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS were developed as part of the Knowledge Management across the Field of Violence Prevention within the Southern African-German Development Cooperation. They cover the following topics:

- Building Relationships
- Sharing Knowledge
- Fostering Active Citizenry
- Co-Designing Integration
- Integrating Budgets

The guidebooks are available on the SaferSpaces website here:
www.saferspaces.org.za/learn-how/entry/a-guide-to-designing-integrated-violence-prevention-interventions

It was further noted that having memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with clear terms of reference and specific goals to guide a detailed programme of action are invaluable towards achieving the targets of an intervention. Having MOUs also leads to a greater sense of accountability for the different role-players, which is not only beneficial, but also essential for partnerships to flourish.

Good monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of an intervention ensures a comprehensive overview of the progress of an intervention and enables a faster response when things are not developing as planned. Conducting performance reviews and satisfaction surveys that are performed openly and transparently also create greater learning opportunities and assist in greater buy-in from the various stakeholders.

CHALLENGES AROUND PARTNERSHIPS

While there are significant benefits of partnerships in the implementation of ABVPIs, there are also various challenges that arise. Working with government, particularly local government, is an important relationship to cultivate in ensuring that ABVPIs are implemented effectively, however, there are a variety of issues that have the potential to impact on the success of these partnerships. One of these is a lack of ownership of a project or intervention within local government or if the project or intervention is championed by a department that is not strategically placed to do so. Learning Network participants found that sometimes there is a disconnect between what is in higher-level policy and what municipal officials feel is their responsibility, which results in a lack of accountability or availability of officials to prioritise this work. Linked to this is the assigning of junior personnel to lead on projects, without any kind of authority, which leads to delays and frustrations. The opportunity that arises from this challenge is that these projects can illuminate or create opportunities for emerging leadership. They can also become the platform through which relationships are created and in some instances, this can be beneficial for future endeavours.

Other issues that can impact on implementation include contested leadership, either at a political level or a community level, or contested leadership authority at project level, with

different government departments struggling against each other to lead a project. Such scenarios make it extremely difficult for CSOs and communities to build partnerships with government as a lot of effort can be spent managing relations within and between different government departments and relationships with the community and CSOs are sometimes neglected. A high turnover of staff within local government also means that efforts toward partnership building have to be restarted with each new placement of staff. This further frustrates relationship-building efforts.

Additionally, government sometimes gets caught up in bureaucratic processes, thereby losing sight of critical qualitative inputs (like a shared commitment or goal) and opportunities. Participants noted that often government officials want to go straight into the implementation of a project and skip over partnership building due to time pressures and planned delivery timelines. The process of building partnerships can be complex; CSOs and communities have their own agendas that might not align with government. It is important that all stakeholders, including CSOs, community and in some cases private business, manage their expectations. Often partnership-building and getting community buy-in is not budgeted for, in terms of both time and money. The time taken for partnership building can put the project behind schedule, adding additional stress on all implementors. While good partnerships are likely to result in improved implementation, it may not be possible to recover lost time.

Another factor that was brought up by Learning Network members is the imbalanced power relationship between government and communities. It was noted that budgeting

It is important to manage expectations in partnerships. The process of building partnerships is complex; CSOs and communities have their own agendas that might not align with government.

Broad, vague targets and ill-defined outcomes might enable quicker buy-in from diverse interest groups but often result in a disjointed vision and unrealistic expectations from within the partnership.

and planning of interventions is often done behind closed doors, which is neither inclusive nor transparent. In addition, participants' experience is that when there is a lack of inclusion in the planning of an ABVPI, there is minimal involvement of other stakeholders. CSOs can play a critical role in facilitating inclusion which can include sharing knowledge, data and research or building confidence and skills. When the process isn't collaborative, municipalities often have the view that a project or intervention is 'their' project/programme and ownership sits with them. In examples where this is the case, the experience is that government comes to do a service for communities, and the community is expected to be happy with whatever happens; in this case, ABVPIs are not able to have the desired impact in communities, because they lack community buy-in and support. To address the imbalanced power that leads to these issues, it is important that all parties are included from the onset of the project and, if necessary, that their collaboration is facilitated.

Having diverse stakeholders can assist to strengthen ABVPIs, but it can also hinder its implementation. A wide range of stakeholders can result in competing interests with higher levels of contestation around goal setting, project rollout and outcomes, with different groups prioritising areas that suit their specific needs. Learning Network members noted that such a space often leads to projects that have broad, yet vague targets, and ill-defined outcomes which can be agreed upon by the different interest groups, but often result in a disjointed vision and unrealistic expectations from within the partnership. Vague targets also have an impact on budgets. Budgets need to align with specific, clearly defined activities and set timelines; without this, budgets can be spent

on non-strategic elements of ABVPIs, and often end up being insufficient. To avoid this, it is essential that there is strategic championship and systems of accountability to keep the intervention moving forward.

It was also noted that implementing ABVPIs in and with communities will always involve some form of resistance, contestation or conflict. In any given context, there are also different interests at play. One extreme example of this is gangs, who are likely against efforts to reduce crime in the area. Other examples include key members of the community who do not want to give up their power or influence or want to maintain the status quo. There are also those who have different priorities, strategies or interpretations of causes and solutions. While these groups can offer the greatest resistance or conflict in a project, if they come to support the project, they can be a great source of support. They also often offer unique insights into the context which can be helpful in planning and implementing an intervention. These insights can come from them directly, or from others around them.

Another key challenge in partnership development is the lack of trust that can exist between the stakeholders in the rolling out ABVPIs. It was noted that from Learning Network members' experiences of working with communities that there is often a lot of scepticism by communities of both local government and CSOs; in addition, from local government's view, there is a scepticism of the intentions of CSOs operating in this space. As a result of this lack of trust, CSOs often have to take a lot of time to do repair work on relationships and are also frequently placed in the role of mediator between government and communities to facilitate processes, which is a challenging position to be in.

Finally, Learning Network participants highlighted that a lack of clarity and transparency around processes, timelines, progress and results can also lead to a lack of trust. Partnerships that do not have adequate trust often lead to a breakdown of relationships and conflict. Learning Network participants noted that often conflict in the implementation of interventions results in a scenario whereby the stakeholders lose sight of the ultimate goals, and the people that the interventions are meant to serve, thereby stunting the impact of the ABVPI.



BUILDING LEGACIES

The Safety and Peace through Urban Upgrading (SPUU) is a collaboration between the Mandela Bay Development Agency (MBDA), the community of Helenvale in Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth), and the German Development Bank (KfW) to address the socio-economic causes of crime and violence in the community. Key to this project are strong partnerships, and the MBDA facilitated the process of getting a programme advisory committee elected from within the community. The key areas of the intervention include: improved safety of public spaces and community facilities; safer schools, in partnership with the community; domestic violence prevention; improved housing; and improved employment opportunities for the youth (SaferSpaces. N.d.). While initially the governance and leadership within MBDA presented a challenge (SaferSpaces. N.d.), persistent, active efforts to improve relationships were successful and the project has managed to transform key areas of the community in Gqeberha (South African Cities Network. N.d.).



CONSENSUS BUILDING

The Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU) programme is a collaboration between the Drakenstein Local Municipality, the German Development Bank (KfW), and the communities in Chicago, Groenheuwel, New Orleans, Dalvale and Fairyland. The intervention undertaken here was developed from the 'Community Action Plan (CAP)', which was developed through extensive processes of negotiation and consensus-building with communities and the municipality (Western Cape Government. N.d.). The key areas of intervention include: developing an early childhood development strategy for the area; establishing programmes for youth; developing a local economic development strategy for Paarl East; providing skills training and support; organising community festivals in order to establish social cohesion across racial boundaries; providing platforms for local leadership to engage with communities; developing safe walkways and improving public lighting in crime hotspots; improving public facilities and public open space; and conducting ongoing community surveys to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the programme (Western Cape Government. N.d.).



BUILDING TRUST IN RELATIONSHIPS

In the guidebook *Guide to designing integrated violence prevention interventions: building relationships* (2020:20) the following actions to help build trust in relationships are proposed:

- Start with a visioning exercise and team-building activities to gain a common understanding
- Actively communicate and listen to one another across all sectors. Promote a culture of openness to better manage disagreements and tension.
- Think transversally and inter-disciplinarily to integrate interventions and develop mutually beneficial processes. Involve everyone in decision-making from beginning to end.
- Clarify your expectations of one another and show dedication to your roles.
- Tap into your emotional intelligence (EQ); pay attention to the body language and feelings of others so that issues can be dealt with as they arise. All team members, regardless of department, level or sector, need to know what is happening on the ground.

KEY MESSAGES

Partnerships between the various spheres of government, CSOs and communities are vital for the design, resourcing, implementation and monitoring of ABVPI. Some key points to note around partnership building are included below.

1: The first is the recognition that there is a legislative mandate for government to work in partnerships with CSOs and communities. Efforts need to be made by local government to include communities in all elements of the intervention, from inception, to planning and implementing, as well as reflecting on the results and impact of interventions. CSOs play a key role in facilitating engagement between communities and government and ensuring the communities' voices are heard throughout these processes. Part of this role also includes advocating to government on the benefits of integrated, ABVPIs and showing government and communities that such an approach to violence and crime prevention can be successful.

2: Partnerships can take a number of different forms and these can and should be adapted according to need. This includes partnerships in which organisations have their own activities and processes or partnerships in which organisations collaborate across all processes. The critical component to building and maintaining partnerships is a shared or common vision.

3: A critical success factor for developmental partnerships is committed and decisive leadership from all stakeholders. In order to achieve broad-based support from the relevant stakeholders, a lot of time and energy needs to go into both the initiation and maintenance of these relationships. At the inception of an ABVPI, time is required for building and strengthening relationships and getting buy-in from stakeholders, as there is a lot of value to be gained from working together. A key element of relationship building includes setting aside adequate time and budget to do so. As noted, relationship building is often overlooked in favour of swift implementation. The resources required for relationship building need to be planned into interventions from the outset to ensure the resources have been allocated for this to be done successfully.

4: In addition, a proactive approach in developing good, collaborative relationships that are built on trust is vitally beneficial as the intervention is implemented. Trust is a key commodity in any partnership, and this needs to be proactively built from the beginning stages, and maintained throughout the intervention. These relationships are likely to limit the likelihood of conflict at a later stage, or mitigate the impact that the conflict may have on the intervention.

5: Setting clear timelines, budgets and processes that contribute towards explicit goals is an important way to ensure that all stakeholders are aligned. Formalising relationships between CSOs, government and communities with MOUs is a beneficial way to outline clear roles and responsibilities and have all relevant groups working toward clear objectives, with common expectations.

6: Finally, regular, consistent communication is required among all stakeholders throughout the various stages of an ABVPI. Efforts should be made to utilise different methods of communication to ensure that there is a good flow of information to all the role-players and that transparent procedures are in place.



CONCLUSION

Developing robust and proactive partnerships among various stakeholders, particularly local government, communities and CSOs, is vital to ensuring greater impact of ABVPIs. Working collaboratively is increasingly recognised as vital to the development of a community, a municipality and the country in general. The NDP, the WPSS and the ICVPS all explicitly highlight the importance of government working collaboratively with communities and CSOs in the implementation of its plans and strategies. In these periods of uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is even more necessary to prioritise constructive partnerships to ensure the rollout of ABVPIs.

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