

Urban Governance, Social Inclusion

Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU) in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, South Africa

Khayelitsha is a dormitory township of about 600.000-800.000 inhabitants about 28 km from the City centre of Cape Town characterised by high crime rates, poverty, high unemployment, and high HIV rates. Surveys amongst residents reveal that robbery, murder, rape, and housebreaking are the top four types of crime in the area. Women are often victims in the public domain and in domestic violence. Youth is most likely the victim of the priority crimes as well as the most likely perpetrators.

The City of Cape Town in cooperation with the KfW implements the VPUU programme with the support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The aim is to improve safety by improving the socio economic situation of about 200.000-300.000 residents in defined so called Safe Node Areas via an area based approach. The strategy is a three pronged one including social crime prevention (social capital), situational crime prevention (built environment), and institutional crime prevention (operation and maintenance of facilities, mainstreaming of crime prevention in public administration). The programme follows a research based methodology based on baseline studies, participatory planning and implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation, and sustainability through community ownership and management of the public realm. Strategic partnerships are started with national departments, civil society organisations, and the private sector to contribute to the success of the programme.

Youth are an identified target group that is given perspectives to overcome the cycle of violence.

One of the elements are small community centres on neighbourhood level called 'Active Boxes'. These are managed and run by resident groups with support by VPUU. The aim is to positively occupy perceived dangerous spaces. The Active Boxes are placed approximately every 500 metres along major pedestrian routes. Volunteer civic patrols man these buildings, a ground floor activity may vary from youth centre, sport centre, informal trader's bays, a crèche, depending on the local context. A care taker flat ensures 24 hour occupancy. Each Active Box aims to make a specific area safer, while in it's replication a network is established which spreads across a whole Safe Node Area of about 50.000 – 80.000 residents.

The City of Cape Town currently assesses the possibility to expand the approach and methodology to other areas of Cape Town.

Results and impact of VPUU:

- Improvement of the perceived and real safety of residents in selected areas in Khayelitsha
- Provision of victim support and crime prevention services
- Improvement of the residents access to social, recreational, and commercial facilities
- Expansion of the capacities and competences of civil organisations and promotion of civil society initiatives to prevent violence
- Empowerment of people in relation to employment and income
- Conflict resolution
- Sustainability via Community Delivery of Services in the Safe Node Areas.

Duration: September 2005 – December 2010

www.vpuu.org