

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

Khayelitsha is a dormitory township with around 600,000 to 800,000 inhabitants about 28 km from the city centre of Cape Town. It is characterised by high crime rates, poverty, widespread unemployment and high HIV rates. Surveys among residents reveal that robbery, murder, rape and housebreaking are the four most prevalent types of crime in the area. Women are often victims of crime in the public domain and of domestic violence. Young people are both the most likely victims of these crimes and the most likely perpetrators.

In cooperation with KfW, the City of Cape Town is implementing the VPUU programme with the support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The aim is to increase safety by improving the socio-economic situation of some 200,000 to 300,000 residents in defined “safe node areas” using an area-based approach. The strategy has three components, 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 uses research-based methods 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 initiated with national departments, civil society organisations and the private sector to contribute to the success of the programme.

Young people have been identified as a target group that needs hope for the future in order to overcome the cycle of violence.



One of the elements involves small community centres at neighbourhood level called “active boxes”. These are managed and run by resident groups with support from the VPUU. The aim is to positively occupy spaces perceived as dangerous. The active boxes are placed approximately every 500 metres along major pedestrian routes. Volunteer patrols man these buildings, with ground-floor activities including youth centres, sport centres, informal trading bays and crèches, depending on the local context. A caretaker flat ensures that they are occupied around the clock. Each active box aims to make a specific area safer; through replication, a network is established that spreads across a whole safe node area of about 50,000 to 80,000 residents.

The City of Cape Town is currently assessing the possibility of expanding the approach and methodology to include other areas of Cape Town.

### Results and impact of the 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 residents’ access to social, recreational and commercial facilities;
- Increase in the capacity and competences of civil organisations, and promotion of civil society initiatives to prevent violence;
- Empowerment of people through employment and income;
- Conflict resolution;
- Sustainability via community delivery of services in the safe node areas.

Duration: September 2005 to December 2010

[www.vpuu.org](http://www.vpuu.org)

