A Portrait of Sustainable Crime Prevention in Selected Canadian Communities

Volume 1: Main Report

Report prepared for the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group of Community Safety and Crime Prevention

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HIGHLIGHTS

Introduction

This section of the report provides the highlights of this 2003 study, entitled *A Portrait of Sustainable Crime Prevention in Selected Canadian Communities*, conducted by Tullio Caputo, Katharine Kelly, Wanda Jamieson and Liz Hart on behalf of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Community Safety and Crime Prevention.[1]

Background

Community-based crime prevention has been embraced and realized to different degrees in different communities across Canada. Some communities have been engaged in crime prevention through social development activities for long periods of time; many others are just beginning. Why is it that some communities have been able to carry on while other activities have failed? How have those communities that carried on sustained their efforts? What can we learn from their success and how can it help others?

Purpose of this Study

The main purpose of this study was to explore lessons learned from six communities that have sustained crime prevention through social development activities over time, and to identify the factors that community members believe have contributed to the sustainability of these activities.

Communities Studied

Six diverse communities from across Canada were studied, including:
- two urban neighbourhoods;
- two "communities of interest" located within urban areas;
- a series of rural communities in close proximity, which share a similar cultural heritage, and
- one northerly First Nations community.[2]

Sustainability and Crime Prevention: Common-sense Notions and Alternative Approaches

As a concept, the common-sense notion of "sustainability" relates to how community activities *persist over time*. However, a recent review of the sustainability literature and its relevance for crime prevention through social development suggests that sustainability has a more holistic, contextual meaning: it is about how community activities *take place within*

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[1] This study was undertaken through the Centre for Applied Population Studies, Carleton University, with funding provided by the Crime Prevention Partnership Program of the National Crime Prevention Strategy. The full report is available online at www.prevention.gc.ca

[2] The communities are not identified by name in the Report.

a web of social relations.[3] In the context of crime prevention, the concept of sustainability is integrally linked to concerns about community development and encompasses:

- the **capacity** of the communities to identify and respond to their own needs — including how that capacity is linked to the overall health and well-being of community members

- the **interconnection** among crime problems and other social factors — including, for example, local social and economic conditions and social connections among groups and individuals, or how collective action such as volunteerism becomes part of community life, and

- the **process** through which *private* concerns get translated into *public community-wide issues.*

The Common Elements of Sustainability in All Six Communities

This study examined what sustainability means "on the ground" in communities engaged in crime prevention activities. It was exploratory in nature and based on a purposive sample of communities that had a recognized level of success in sustaining community-based crime prevention initiatives. Although the sample size is small and should not be taken as representative of all Canadian communities, it does serve to highlight important patterns and themes related to the sustainability of community-level initiatives.

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[3] Tullio Caputo and Katherine Kelly, Discu*ssion Paper on the Sustainability of Social Development Activities in Canada: Some Implications For Crime Prevention* (Ottawa: prepared under contract to the National Crime Prevention Centre, Department of Justice Canada, 2001).

The elements that contributed to sustainability in all six communities are depicted in the following diagram:
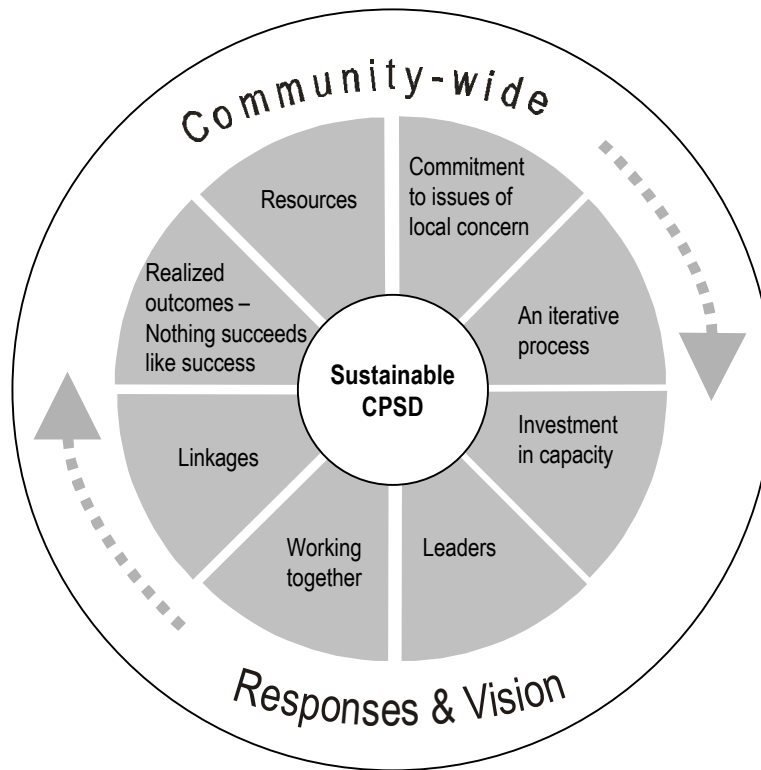
A Commitment to Issues of Local Concern: In every community, the first step involved identifying the issue(s) of specific concern to the local community. Community members came together — in kitchens, schools, community centres and other locations — to share their concerns and ideas. Depending on the community, the initial focus was on one or more of the following personal or community safety and security concerns: violence and abuse, substance abuse, drinking and driving, bullying and/or public disorder. Often, the rallying point was a concern about children, youth and families.

An Iterative Process: Each community engaged in an iterative process to identify, articulate and take action on their issues. They identified their concerns, considered potential solutions and decided on specific actions. They also explored all of the potential resources — human, financial and other — that could help them achieve their goals (including, but not limited to, sources of project funding). Each community

Community members' level of commitment to taking action on these issue(s) — and the issues of concern themselves — evolved over time.

engaged in some form of ongoing community consultation, communication, information sharing and feedback. In some cases, the process was informal (learn as you go), while in other cases it was more structured (e.g., community forums). Some communities used specific tools such as asset building, workshops, surveys, focus groups and action planning. All processes involved coordination. As activities unfolded, the focus typically

changed from concern with one specific issue to interest in a wider set of community concerns. If, for example, the first step was a community event for young people, the focus would eventually shift to the broader needs for youth programming in the community.

Investment in Capacity: From the outset, communities had differing levels of community capacity to address the issues of concern. Every community, however, took steps to further develop their capacity: they did this by acquiring additional knowledge about the issue(s), by obtaining human resources to play key roles (e.g., a coordinator), and/or by applying for funding to implement specific project(s).

Leaders: In each community, leaders were crucial. Leaders were individuals — or in some situations, groups of individuals — who had a thorough knowledge of the community and its concerns, and were personally connected to the community. In every case, the effectiveness of these leaders was based on their commitment, their trust in others, and their ability to build alliances/partnerships.

> *The following claim was made in every community: "If it hadn't been for [name of local leader(s)], this initiative would never have 'gotten off the ground'."*

Working Together: In all of the communities, the process of working together required an ongoing — and often challenging — effort to bring people together to raise their awareness of issues, reinforce their sense of community ownership of the problem and take action.

Linkages: Connections between individuals and groups *within* a community — as well as with others *outside* the community — were very important. Within

> *Over time, as individuals continued to work together, relationships gradually emerged. As organizational barriers — or "turf" concerns — became less significant, mutual respect and trust developed.*

communities, these horizontal linkages increased trust, generated creative ideas and solutions, encouraged the pooling of knowledge, skills and expertise, and offered a support system. Vertical linkages, particularly to government officials and agencies, also provided important resources and support. Leadership and the level of community commitment to the issue were key components in maintaining these connections. Liaison and coordination mechanisms (committees and coordinators) were also crucial.

Realized Outcomes — Nothing Succeeds Like Success: Each community achieved an early success or tangible achievement, such as a successful community gathering, camp or event. These successes helped to further stimulate community interest and involvement in efforts to address the issue(s).

Resources: Communities utilized many different types of resources to address the issues of concern. People were the core strength of these efforts. In particular, having a coordinator was invaluable. However, obtaining funding for a coordinator was one of the most challenging issues communities faced. Material resources, including funding from internal and external sources, were important. Having a physical space gave groups visibility, a sense of place and belonging, and provided community members with a point of contact and easy access to what was being offered.

Access to knowledge and ideas about innovative and effective approaches, tools and programs that could be applied to their local situation was also very important.

Lessons Learned

These findings lead to a number of lessons about how crime prevention through social development activity can be sustained:

1. Local Meaning: Sustainable community activity begins with local groups and organizations identifying needs, problems and solutions that are meaningful for them.

2. Local Connection: Sustainable activity connects individuals and groups who share a concern about a specific problem. It is through these connections that individual/private concerns become community-wide/public issues.

3. Local Ownership: Sustainable approaches are shared: the problem(s) — and their solutions — are owned by the community, rather than a single individual or group. Effective leadership and coordination is necessary to find shared solutions.

4. Community Vision: Sustainable activity may begin with the identification of a single issue but broader needs and issues will emerge over time. Sustaining crime prevention activity means developing and retaining a focus on the bigger picture — a vision of where the community is going — while simultaneously working step by step on projects and specific issues.

5. Non-hierarchical (bottom-up), Integrated and Diversity-sensitive approach: Community activity is more likely to be sustainable when it is premised on a non-hierarchical (bottom-up), integrated and diversity-sensitive approach. This contributes to the flexibility to respond to demands in the local context that emerge over time.

6. Community Capacity-building: Sustainable initiatives build on existing community capacity to a) identify problems and b) mobilize communities to respond. This includes making investments in knowledge, coordination and project implementation.

7. Coordination and Communication: Sustainable action requires coordination and communication. Coordinators are crucial because developing connections and maintaining communication between community partners, and establishing links with governments (municipal, provincial/territorial and federal) is critical.

8. Linkages within Communities — and Beyond: Sustainable activities build relationships within the community that are based on trust, mutual respect, and a shared interest in and commitment to the well being of the community. Connections with others outside the community can provide resources such as funding support, knowledge, and a link to wider values and norms (e.g., social justice and human rights). Such relationships benefit participants both in their capacity as individuals who care about communities and as professionals working in communities.

9. Opportunities for Early Success: Early successes enhance commitment and capacity building. Communities that begin with limited capacity can use early successes to build momentum.

10. Project Funding: Project funding offers opportunities for early successes, which in turn build commitment and momentum. Project funding can also help build community capacity in specific areas. Project funding alone, however, will not sustain activity; it must be viewed as one component in a larger community vision or initiative.

11. Resources: Sustainable responses require financial resources for infrastructure and to support coordination and communication, including a coordinator position. "In-kind" resources, especially volunteer labour as well as other donations, both sustain activity and build community ownership.

Study Implications: Finding the Balance

The need for multi-dimensional responses to local problems provides a set of complex challenges for policy makers at all levels. In particular, there is a fine balance between:

a) strengthening the capacity of communities to address their specific needs, and
b) implementing governmental policies and initiatives that are broad enough to encompass the diversity of Canadian communities, yet specific enough to have a meaningful local impact on crime.

Finding the Balance
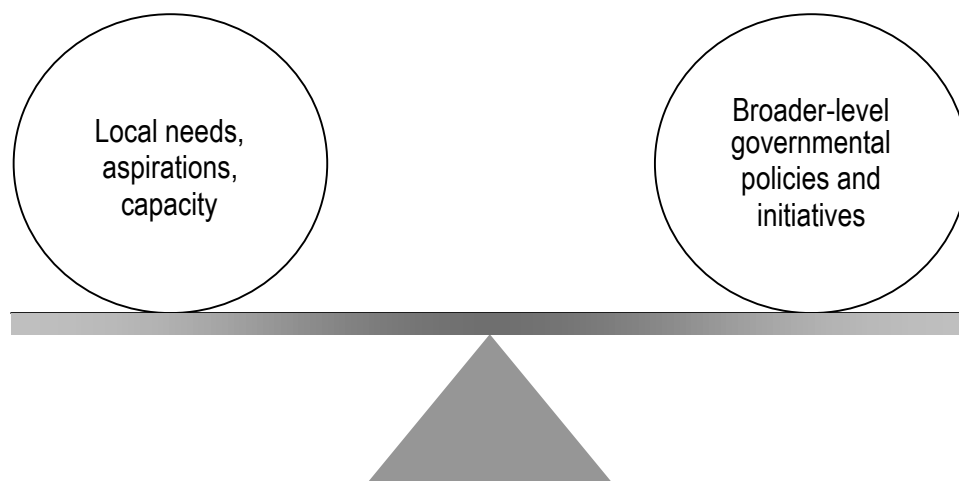
Actions that may prove helpful to finding the right balance to sustainable crime prevention activity include:

- Ensure ongoing dialogue with communities to identify problems, priorities, approaches and solutions
- Apply a proactive and integrated approach to policy development, rather than a "stove-piped" approach
- Use communication and coordination mechanisms that facilitate integrated approaches
- Build practical bridges and partnerships that foster and sustain activity
- Share information and develop knowledge about effective approaches, tools and programs
- Invest in community capacity, in particular in areas such as leadership and human resource development
- Recognize the *value added* of the voluntary sector <u>and</u> the *value* of shaping opportunities to build on that strength.

In terms of investment, this study found that project funding contributed to flexibility and local innovation but on its own is not sufficient to sustain activity. Infrastructure funding, multi-year funding strategies, and diversification of funding sources are some examples of how stability and capacity for long-term planning could be maintained at the community level. Greater harmonization in funding processes across various initiatives would also contribute to sustainability by streamlining the ways and level of effort that communities must exercise to access funding. These are significant challenges that require coordination and cooperation among funding partners and between stakeholders involved in community-level initiatives. Indeed, they reflect many of the same challenges that communities have to address in order to ensure the sustainability of their efforts at the local level.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Finding ways to effectively sustain community-based crime prevention has been an ongoing concern of crime prevention policy makers and practitioners. We undertook this study to learn how communities that have been undertaking crime prevention activities over a period of time sustain their efforts. Our purpose was to gain insights into features or practices that they use that might assist policy makers and practitioners in their efforts to support sustainable crime prevention development in other communities.

The study began in 2001, when the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Community Safety and Crime Prevention commissioned research on sustainability, entitled *Discussion Paper on the Sustainability of Social Development Activities in Canada: Some Implications for Crime Prevention*.[4] The Discussion Paper explored how lessons learned from research on sustainability in the areas of the environment, economy and social justice could inform crime prevention policy and practice. It found that the sustainability literature provides a holistic and multidimensional framework for conceptualizing issues of concern such as health, education and crime. It also offers a corresponding set of criteria to inform practice. Crime prevention through social development (CPSD) is consistent with the holistic philosophy underlying sustainable development, because it acknowledges the links among criminal activity, poverty, unemployment, security, and the overall health and well being of community members. CPSD is also consistent with the sustainable development notion that communities with greater assets have more capacity to mobilize and consequently greater potential to create and sustain healthier and safer places to live.

Community-based crime prevention has been embraced and realized to different degrees in different communities across Canada. Some communities have been engaged in crime prevention through social development for long periods of time; many others are just beginning. The Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Community Safety and Crime Prevention expressed interest in learning more about sustainability as viewed and experienced "on the ground." Why is it that some communities have been able to carry on? How have they sustained their efforts? What can we learn from their "success" and how can these learnings help others?

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study was to explore lessons learned from six communities that have sustained crime prevention activity over time, and to identify the factors that community members believe have contributed to its sustainability. We set out to explore the local patterns and context of sustainable crime prevention, identify the common elements of

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[4] Tullio Caputo and Katherine Kelly, *Discussion Paper on the Sustainability of Social Development Activities in Canada: Some Implications For Crime Prevention* (Ottawa: prepared under contract to the National Crime Prevention Centre, Department of Justice Canada, 2001).

sustainability across sites, and to consider the implications for further policy development and action.

How this Report is Organized

This volume of the report includes:

- An overview of the methodology
- A synthesis of the key findings
- A summary and discussion of the cross-cutting, practical implications for fostering sustainable crime prevention activities in communities across Canada (including insight into how funders could identify the key factors in communities that should be present, or fostered, to promote sustainable crime prevention)

Volume 2 of this report (Community Profiles) contains the case studies.

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The study is based on a purposive sample of six Canadian communities that, through a step-wise selection process, were identified as having sustainable crime prevention activity. We selected communities through the following process:

Development of selection criteria: We considered the results of the Discussion Paper literature review and consulted with federal/provincial/territorial (FPT) crime prevention officials to determine the selection criteria for the study. We agreed to select communities that were believed to have focused primarily on social development-oriented crime prevention activities that had:

> persisted over time and were not primarily project focused — that is, communities where there was a sense of community ownership and involvement in crime prevention.

Application of selection criteria: We consulted with FPT crime prevention officials to obtain their suggestions (based on the selection criteria). Twenty communities were initially identified. From that list, we "short-listed" eight communities that represented a range of diverse contexts (including rural, remote and urban settings) and that would potentially provide a range of insights. We originally selected five communities. Over the course of the project, one community was substituted for another on the list of five, and an additional site was added to round out the picture.

Data collection: Data collection involved a combination of efforts, namely:

- Reviewing community profile information from Statistics Canada
- Reviewing available funded community project activity information

- Interviewing and corresponding with key informants — national, regional and provincial crime prevention officials and community representatives (the "drivers" of the activities)
- Conducting on-site visits including key interviews and focus groups with institutional and community players and, where possible, discussions with the participants/beneficiaries of the crime prevention activities.

The on-site visits focused on exploring the following issues:

- *What* is it that communities are trying to sustain?
- *How* has each identified community achieved sustainable activity that contributes to crime prevention?
- *What* is the nature of the sustainable activity communities are undertaking?
- *What* is the role of projects within sustainable efforts?
- *What* sectors and organizations (groups) are involved in sustainable efforts?
- *What* is the nature of partnerships within sustainable communities?
- *How* are community action goals and priorities identified?
- *What* are the physical, material and human resources needed to develop sustainable community-based crime prevention?

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITIES

We studied six diverse communities from across Canada. Early on in the study, we agreed not to identify these communities by name in our Report. We have used a straightforward descriptor — Communities A to F. The communities reflect different types of populations, contexts and geographies. Of the six communities studied, two were urban neighbourhoods; two were "communities of interest" located within urban areas; one was a series of rural communities that share a similar cultural heritage and are in close proximity to each other, and one was a northerly First Nations community.

Community A: A high-density neighbourhood in a large urban centre.
Community B: A rural area encompassing 15 small communities.
Community C: A northerly First Nations community.
Community D: A "community of interest" within a medium-sized port city.
Community E: A "community of interest" within a medium-sized town.
Community F: A social housing community within a northerly medium-sized town.

Volume 2 (Community Profiles) contains the case studies.

AN OVERVIEW OF SUSTAINABILITY: IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED FOR CRIME PREVENTION

Sustainability and Crime Prevention: Common-sense Notions and Alternative Approaches

Over the past decade, policy makers, practitioners and researchers have become increasingly concerned with the question of sustainability. Their understanding of sustainability has moved beyond a common-sense notion of persistence over time, to a sophisticated conceptual approach that contextualizes community-based activities within a web of social relations. This approach recognizes that initiatives can only be sustained if they are valued in the community in which they are based and if they recognize how interventions in one area (e.g., the economy) reverberate throughout all parts of a community. The former, more limited, definition of sustainability has been associated with a project-focused approach to community initiatives. Here sustainability is equated with securing ongoing funding for projects and other community-based activities. However, the research in this area suggests that initiatives that are overly reliant on project funding are usually not sustainable. They are typically time-limited efforts based on the duration of a given project. They do not persist once funding is exhausted. Furthermore, project funding may contribute a singular element of capacity (e.g., individual knowledge or skill) but in and of itself does not usually result in increased community capacity or community resources.

The alternative approach is based on an understanding of sustainability that emerged from the literature on sustainable development.[5] This understanding is linked to a set of broader philosophical and practical concerns. It begins with the premise that for an initiative to be sustainable, it must be sufficiently meaningful to those involved (the community) to encourage their ongoing commitment. Such an approach transcends a limited focus on persistence over time and raises concerns about equity, social justice, and the impact of human activities on both the social and physical worlds. It provides an understanding of the linkages between social policy and social practice, as these are played out in diverse contexts (social, economic and environmental). It encourages a holistic and multidimensional analysis and provides a conceptual framework for assessing social issues (e.g., health, education, crime) and engaging in social action.

The sustainable development literature also provides insights into how a broader conceptualization of sustainability operates. For example, such a conceptualization is necessarily non-hierarchical (bottom-up), integrated and diversity-sensitive. Non-hierarchical processes are integral to ensuring that proposed activities and concerns are meaningful to the local community. The intimate local knowledge of community members contributes to integration. This knowledge is essential for establishing both internal and external linkages required for activities to be undertaken. Finally, community diversity

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[5] When the term sustainability is used in this paper, it refers to a concept derived from the sustainable development model. Please see: Tullio Caputo and Katherine Kelly, *Discussion Paper on the Sustainability of Social Development Activities in Canada: Some Implications For Crime Prevention* (Ottawa: prepared under contract to the National Crime Prevention Centre, Department of Justice Canada, 2001).

issues are not reliably identifiable by outsiders. Members of the local community are aware of issues of diversity and other concerns that can impact on the success of any community-based activities.

Multiple Definitions of Community

Definitions of community used in such a conceptualization are flexible and reflect the specifics of the local context. Thus, communities may be geographic communities or special interest communities. The Communities in this study include citizens as well as local government and non-government organizations. Further, a sustainable development approach directs attention to understanding what local communities want to sustain and why. This focus on the local community recognizes the role of local decision-making, building community capacity and mobilizing community resources as crucial processes in sustaining community-based activity. The need to develop and maintain connections among the participants is also recognized since these connections represent the basis for shared meaning and collective action.[6]

Questions and Concerns from a Community-based Crime Prevention Perspective

Applying this broader conceptualization of sustainability to community-based crime prevention raises a number of questions and concerns. A project-focused approach is common in many community-based crime prevention initiatives. This approach reflects only one aspect of sustainability; namely, the success of those involved in securing the financial, physical and human resources that will allow their activities to persist. It tends to spawn concerns about writing proposals and securing funding. However, this narrow focus is at odds with the wider goals associated with sustainable development.

Fully operationalizing a sustainable approach requires a number of issues to be addressed. Questions about how communities operate need to be considered. For example, how are community issues (including crime prevention issues) identified and brought to the attention of community members? How are decisions about mobilizing community resources made? Who is involved in such decisions at the community level? These types of questions go to the heart of community-based activity. They focus attention on the capacity of communities to identify and respond to their own needs and concerns.

These and related questions regarding the sustainability of community-based crime prevention are addressed in this broader conceptualization of sustainability. They encourage an examination of how criminal activities are related to issues such as poverty, unemployment, and the overall health and well being of people living in a community. They provide insights into how social problems such as crime might be addressed more successfully through a consideration of their interconnection with other social factors. Importantly, this approach is consistent with a "crime prevention through social development" philosophy.

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[6] T. Hodge, "Toward A Conceptual Framework For Assessing Progress Toward Sustainability," *Social Indicators Research* 40 (1997): 5-98.

Moreover, a broader conceptualization of sustainability stresses the need to understand community activities within their social contexts. It addresses the fundamental social processes that reflect how particular social practices are transformed into the social norms or "folkways" of a community. For example, in some communities volunteerism and a spirit of cooperation among neighbours is a normal and expected way of behaving. In other communities, this is not the case. A broader conceptualization of sustainability directs attention to the way that collective action such as volunteerism becomes routinized and taken for granted in a community. It takes note of both the obvious as well as the more subtle mechanisms operating at the community level that influence the way communities address collective concerns.

The experience of communities across the country with crime prevention issues is similar in many ways. For example, issues often come to the forefront in communities when a basic need is not being met or is not being met adequately under existing arrangements, or a crisis has occurred. This situation leads some individuals or groups to come together to discuss the situation and to attempt to meet the existing need. It is clear from the literature that this process is common. It is also clear that most communities have some capacity to meet their needs. This is reflected in both the formal institutional structures that exist (such as municipal governments, non-governmental and voluntary sector organizations, etc.) and in the less formal ways that people meet local needs (community groups). What is not readily apparent, however, is how these processes become transformed into sustainable community-based activity. Thus, many communities have groups that may identify an issue or concern. These groups may even develop a response to meet the perceived need. However, few of these efforts prove to be sustainable. Fewer still become incorporated into the normal practices of the wider community. This suggests that while needs identification and local capacity are common, sustainable community activity is not. Many groups and individuals find it challenging to translate their private concerns into public, community-wide issues.

In many ways, the transformation of private issues into public concerns epitomizes the central processes that underlie the sustainability of community-based activities. The community processes that facilitate local needs identification and community mobilization are key factors in the sustainability equation. Once these processes are set in motion around a particular issue, they must become enmeshed in the social fabric of the group if it is to be sustainable. If this happens, a change may occur in the routine behaviour of those involved. In short, these processes reflect the way specific issues become transformed into community concerns that are sufficiently important and meaningful that they warrant a change in community behaviour patterns. In a real sense, the culmination of these processes reflects a realization of the potential that a particular community has to define and meet its own needs. Understanding these processes provides important insights into what makes community-based activity sustainable.

A similar set of questions can be raised with regard to the idea of social development. For example, how does social development differ from community development? How are social development activities related to the prevention of crime? Can a distinction be effectively drawn between more general social development activities and those related

specifically to crime prevention? There are significant differences between everyday uses of these key terms and their inclusion in a broader theoretical framework.

Key Concepts and Terms

Key concepts that underlie this process are highlighted in the literature. These include community, community-based, community capacity, community capacity building and social development. A number of questions related to these concepts inform this current analysis. For example, the meaning attached to the term "community" has important ramifications. Does it mean a geographical area or a "community of interest"? What are the implications of using different definitions of community? Similarly, the notion of "community capacity building" needs to be made clear. How, for example, does the idea of "capacity building" relate to different notions of community? What does it mean to identify something as "community-based"? Is an activity "community-based" if it is provided by the paid staff of a governmental or non-governmental agency? Do actual members of a community have to be involved in an activity before it can accurately be described as "community-based"?

Definitions of some of these key terms and concepts are presented below. These concepts are used in the literature in discussions of sustainability and the processes that contribute to making activity sustainable.

The concept of sustainability itself has evolved from its roots in sustainable development. It has become equated with a philosophical approach to social change that seeks to achieve a variety of positive ends. As Passerini notes,

> Sustainability is used to frame a wide variety of social problems from traffic, to crime, to toxic waste. Industry and businesses have developed documents and organisations, which frame their actions as sustainable. Many grassroots organisations are framing environmental and social justice issues as problems of sustainability.[7]
>
> … in essence sustainable development focuses on the economic, social and environmental factors which contribute to a good and secure **quality of life**. These include:
>
> - *social factors* — health, housing, education, crime prevention, democracy and leisure
> - *economic factors* — employment, pay and conditions, investment, trade, innovation and business practices
> - *environmental factors* — air, water and soil quality, protection of wildlife habitats, and the efficient use and reuse of natural resources and energy [emphasis added].[8]

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[7] Eve Passerini, "Sociology and Sustainability," *The American Sociologist* (Fall 1998): 60-69: 61.
[8] www.sustainability.org.uk/info/policyguidance/susnut.html: p.2

In the broadest sense, sustainability refers to the ability to maintain a particular set of practices and activities given a particular set of human and material conditions. In the context of sustainable development, sustainability is a totalizing concept that does not focus on a particular activity or practice but on an approach that is holistic, integrative and non-hierarchical. In practice, it is often used to integrate issues of problem identification, developing solutions and mobilizing the community resources required to implement the planned response.

What constitutes a community? Lacy argues that for the purposes of community-based development:

> … a group is a community to the extent that it encompasses a broad
> range of activities and interests, and to the extent that participation
> implicates whole persons rather than segmental interests or activities.[9]

This definition of community views people (residents, members of particular communities of interest) as key to community development. However, community actors are more than just individual citizens acting together to achieve a desired end. Community actors can also include non-governmental organizations (NGOs) based in the area, local businesses, local, regional and national governments — the structural dimension of both community and community-based activity.[10] Structure involves horizontal linkages within a community that provide such things as organized spaces for interaction and networks for information exchange. Horizontal linkages emphasize partnerships within communities including citizens, NGOs and the business community. This is the infrastructure for community-based, sustainable activities. In addition, structure also involves vertical linkages. These are linkages between the local level on the one hand and the national level on the other. These vertical linkages also provide a forum in which various levels of government can meet to negotiate roles and responsibilities. The vertical linkages represent mechanisms for ensuring that actions at the local level meet national standards with respect to issues such as human rights[11] and in shaping what can be done and by whom.[12] Both components (horizontal and vertical linkages) are integral to a sustainable response to community-based issues.

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[9] William B. Lacy, "Empowering Communities through Public Work, Science and Local Food Systems: Revisiting Democracy and Globalization," *Rural Sociology* 65, 1 (2000): 3-26.

[10] Adam Crawford, *Crime Prevention and Community Safety: Politics, Policies and Practices* (Edinburgh: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1998).
Adam Crawford and Matthew Jones, Inter-agency Co-operation and Community-Based Crime Prevention," *British Journal of Criminology*: 35,1 (1995): 17 -33.

[11] Jnanabrata Bhattacharyya, "Solidarity and Agency: Rethinking Community Development," *Human organisation* 54, 1 (1995): 60-69.

[12] Mark Joseph and Renae Ogletree, "Community Organizing and Comprehensive Community Initiatives," *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*: (March 1998): 71-79.
Clarence N. Stone, "Poverty and the Continuing Campaign for Urban Social Reform," *Urban Affairs Review* 34,6 (1999): 843-856.

Community capacity is defined as:

> … the characteristics of communities that affect their ability to identify, mobilize, and address social … problems.[13]

Community capacity is the ability of communities to recognize needs and to respond to them by mobilizing human, economic, social and public resources. The purpose of community capacity building is:

> … to foster conditions that strengthen the characteristics of communities that enable them to plan, develop, implement and maintain effective community programs.[14]

One frequently cited approach to community capacity considers community assets and deficits.[15] With regard to assets, a community's capacity for social development will depend upon existing hard assets, such as infrastructure, and soft assets including people, groups and organizations. Community capacity building takes the focus off deficits as the absence of needed assets and focuses it on techniques for mobilizing such assets (e.g., leadership, organizational strength, and social and political will).

It is important to bear in mind that building capacity is NOT the same as achieving community development. Community capacity building sets the stage for sustainable activity but requires the mobilization of a community's assets. In short, community capacity has to be realized through its application to a particular issue or issues.

A focus on community capacity building leads easily to a project-oriented approach to problem solving. But, as the early economic approaches to development demonstrated, such an approach ignores the complexity of the human ecosystem. In a more holistic understanding, assets are recognized as necessary but NOT sufficient for development. The challenge facing many communities is translating community assets (community capacity) into sustainable responses to community needs without adopting a fragmented, project-by-project orientation. However, projects do play a role in community capacity building as the following quote illustrates:

> [Community capacity building] CCB is a process of change management which allows residents to direct change instead of being overwhelmed by it. It enables the development and implementation of agreed community projects, encourages the development of new skills and helps obtain further resources to achieve community goals. It involves building and strengthening the relationships between individuals, associations,

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[13] Dennis L. Poole, "Building Community Capacity to Promote Social and Public Health: Challenges for Universities," *Health and Social Welfare*. 22, 3 (1997): 163 — 170: 163.

[14] Ibid.

[15] See for example: J. McKnight, and J. Kretzmann, *Mapping Community Capacity* (Evanston Illinois: Center for Urban and Policy Research, North Western University, 1990).
J. Kretzmann, and J McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*, (Evanston Illinois: Center for Urban and Policy Research, North Western University, 1995).

institutions and businesses. The community's assets are identified and mobilized to achieve a common vision. The community then identifies projects and actions required to implement that vision and its capacity to manage and implement change grows.[16]

As the above quote illustrates, projects are only one component within the broader purpose of community capacity building that is the development of communities. Thus, integrating community capacity building into the wider context of community development has the potential of avoiding a narrow project orientation.

How can social development be sustained when the issue is crime prevention? As noted, earlier, crime prevention through social development is based on an assumption that social development is of intrinsic value. It assumes that more developed communities (more assets, both hard and soft) and communities with more capacity (a greater ability to mobilize their assets to respond to local needs) are healthier and safer places to live. Lessons learned over the past half century of sustainability research are consistent with a social development approach to crime prevention. However, such an approach must include a philosophical understanding of sustainability and a consideration of the following three key questions:

1. Is the approach project focused (non-sustainable) or a philosophy about how to act (sustainable)?
2. Is the approach *top-down* and vertically integrated (non-sustainable) or is the approach *bottom-up* and horizontally integrated (sustainable) with vertical linkages?
3. Is the approach to treat communities as pre-determined and singular entities (non-sustainable) or does it view communities as diverse and potentially divided?

COMMUNITY CASE STUDIES: LESSONS LEARNED

Overview

Six case studies of communities with sustained crime prevention activities were undertaken. As noted earlier, the criteria and process used for site selection involved identifying communities as ones that had crime prevention activity that was community-based and that had *persisted* over time. This was an important starting point. It was based on the *appearance* of sustainable activity. It remained to be seen, however, if the six case study sites reflected other characteristics that had been linked with sustainable activity in the research literature. As detailed earlier, while persistence over time is an important dimension of sustainability, the literature had emphasized the processes involved in building a web of interconnections within communities. It is these processes that are seen

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[16] www.nre.vic.gov.au/web/root/domino/cm_da/nre - "Frequently Asked Questions."
   See also: Herbert J. Rubin, "Being A Conscience and a Carpenter: Interpretations of the Community-Based Development Model." *Journal of Community Practice* 4, 2 (1997): 57 - 90. and
   J. A. Voyle, and D. Simmons, "Community development through partnership: promoting health in an urban indigenous community in New Zealand," *Social Science and Medicine* 49 (1999): 1035 - 1050.

as fundamental if activities are to be sustainable. They include a focus on how people in communities behave towards one another — how they "do business." They also consider how communities translate individual or private concerns into public, community-wide issues.

Definitions of "Community"

While the definitions of community varied in the six communities, they had the common feature that, whatever the formal boundaries of the community were, the area resonated for the people involved. For some, the area was where they lived while for others it involved an historic tie to a region. For some, the area was a portion of the region that they worked in for a social or community service agency while others had businesses in the area. Participants had varied roles and responsibilities but shared a common commitment to the positive benefits of addressing crime issues.

A Commitment to Addressing Issues of Local Concern

The start-up of activity in all six case studies related to an issue of local concern that, in the views of the community, was not being adequately met through existing measures. The types of issues that were frequently mentioned related to personal and community safety and security issues and included matters such as violence and abuse, substance abuse, drinking and driving, bullying and general concerns about public disorder. In all of the communities, children, youth and families were a rallying point around which people came together, to find ways to make their communities better places to live. This commitment tended to evolve over time, and in some cases was accelerated and strengthened by a particular event that occurred in the community that propelled people into action.

In all six cases, community members were committed to addressing their own problems. This commitment allowed them to bridge the disparate interests and values of community members and to get them to work together toward a common goal. However, working together posed challenges for both individuals and organizations. It forced them to examine how each operated within the community and it required many of them to modify how they "do business."

Another dimension to local concerns and issues was found in all six case studies: the issues that the community initially mobilized to address continued to evolve over time. Thus, while groups and individuals may have first come together over a particular issue or concern, their activities persisted even after the original issue had been addressed. In sustainable community activities, the iterative process of needs identification and developing a commitment to continue working together was generalized in the community. In many ways, this is the key to sustainability. During the case studies, this process was explored to examine how it contributes to sustainable community activity.

Evidence of Sustainability

Persistence Over Time

According to the literature, persistence over time is a necessary but not a sufficient indicator of sustainable activity. However, it is an easily measured dimension and consistent with a common-sense view of the concept. In all six communities crime prevention activities had persisted for at least three years. The longest existing group was Community F where crime prevention activities had been operating for 10 years. The group in Community B had been in operation for eight years. Activities in the other four communities had been in operation from three to seven years.

Bottom-up Decision Making Dealing with Community-based Issues

As noted earlier, in all six communities, the activities began around local issues and emerged outside of any project funding. The six communities began their activities through the identification of an issue of concern or by responding to a particular problem. They began to explore project funding only after they had begun to articulate what they needed to do. In Community A, collective activity was sparked by concerns about youth in the community. Originally, this involved four community service agencies — the schools, the police, social services and a community advocate. In Community B, action grew out of an RCMP advisory committee to assist the RCMP in working in the area. In Community C, a movement to address justice issues within the community led to the establishment of a Justice Committee. In Community D, a community-wide meeting identified the needs of youth and families as a priority. This meeting also emphasized that these concerns were shared across many different sectors, groups and individuals in the city. In Community E, an assets survey designed to make the community healthier revealed that young people felt unwelcome in their own community and were experiencing a number of problems and stresses. In Community F, concern focused on how to assist children and prevent child abuse and victimization and improve the quality of life in a particular neighbourhood. Thus, initial activities focused on responding to problems and on what was identified as a need within each community. Organizations and activities developed around these local issues.

Continued Ability to Respond to a Broader Range of Community Issues

While all the communities began with a specific issue, what eventually emerged was a wider set of community concerns. Thus, in Community A, the need to respond to young people has grown into making the community a better place to live for all residents of the neighbourhood. Service providers and community members are working together to create a safer and healthier environment including more and better services for community members. In Community B, the RCMP advisory group has been transformed into a group concerned with community-wide issues related to seasonal work, family violence, bullying and addictions. Community C began by setting up a Justice Committee to address young offender cases. However, they are now working on keeping youth in school, building liaisons between the school and parents who suffered under the residential school system, increasing recreational opportunities for youth, addressing health needs — especially addictions, and providing safe houses to give youth immediate safety in times of crisis.

Community D began with a general call to identify common community concerns. This has developed into a community-wide process for identifying needs and mobilizing local resources to meet them. They are currently expanding their model to other communities in the region. While Community E began with an assets scan, they used the information on youth alienation to build ties to the schools, seniors, youth, churches, social service agencies and the business community. In Community F, the original concern with abuse of children quickly expanded to identify a number of community issues including community pride and recreation.

A Holistic Approach

In all six communities, the approach to problems was holistic and built upon bringing people from different sectors together. So, for example, a high call rate to police in Community A led to a response that included housing, recreation, police, social services, schools and community members. Rather than simply seeing the calls as a police issue that called for increased patrols or a police presence, the problem was linked to recreation for youth, the limited sense of community experienced by residents, the lack of trust between youth and families, and the role of the professionals serving the community. Community B began to recognize the need for a holistic response and moved away from a focus on advising the police to consider problems as involving the schools, recreation, community and social services, in addition to the police. Community C was responding to crime concerns by building alliances with the schools, the health unit, local community members, recreation and the Band Council. They responded by patrolling the community, by offering refuge houses for youth fleeing dangerous or stressful family situations, working with the arena staff to provide recreational opportunities, and helping the schools build positive relationships with parents to assist children and youth in staying in school. In Community D, the steering committee was established after an initial community meeting engaged service providers from social services, health, prisoners' advocates and housing and volunteers including various groups, organizations and individuals in the community. In Community E, the isolation of youth was responded to through the health services, church groups, recreation, the schools, the business community and seniors. Youth were a key part of the decision-making process in this community and led many of the activities. In community F, initial concerns around the abuse of children led to a community-wide effort improve to community and public perceptions of the neighbourhood as well as practical action to enhance the social and recreational opportunities available for young people living in the community.

In all six communities the holistic response meant that the focus *changed* from a particular project or activity to an ongoing concern about the health and welfare of the community and its members. This contributed to sustainability as the groups were conducting ongoing scans to ascertain whether new needs were emerging. The exception was Community E where the move to a general concern for community well-being was tenuous. In this situation, a generalized concern became focused on a single project (the establishment of the Boys & Girls Club), which was successfully completed. Once they were successful, many people thought the issue of youth alienation had been resolved and saw no further need for community-wide activity. The debate within the community over the need for such activity is ongoing.

Building Community Capacity

Earlier in this report, community capacity was defined as the characteristics of communities that allow them to identify problems, to mobilize community resources and to respond effectively to identified needs. The purpose of community capacity building is to promote the conditions that strengthen the characteristics of communities that allow them to identify needs and mobilize to meet them. The six communities examined in this study started with differing levels of community capacity. While both hard and soft community assets are important, attention in this analysis was directed at the processes by which the communities built capacity.

Leadership

"If it hadn't been for [name] this initiative would never have 'gotten off the ground'."

In all six communities the following claim was made — that what made this initiative different from other community initiatives was the leadership of one special person. She/he was described as having "made it happen." Leadership is a complex concept to assess — the qualities of a good leader depend on the community and the issue of concern. In this study, all the leaders knew the community and local concerns. They were personally connected with other groups, organizations and individuals in the community and were committed to putting in their time and energy (often on a volunteer basis) to build the necessary alliances and interest in an initiative. The leadership was consistent and prepared to be involved for the long haul.

In the communities we studied, leaders showed trust in others and encouraged the development of connections among partners. As a result, the community trusted them and partnerships emerged. Leaders motivated others to get involved. In Community A, the leader was well acquainted with the community members and with the professionals who worked in the community. She provided a key link between professionals and the residents, which not only brought people to meetings but also led to building better understandings among them. In Community B, leadership was described as being of two types — individual and community-wide. The coordinator in this community was seen as a real champion on the issues and had a tremendous influence on community activity. At the same time, a considerable amount of community-wide leadership supported the activities of the coordinator. This leadership was exercised through formal institutions such as schools, the health centre, cultural groups and the police. Specific individuals in each of these sectors exercised their judgment and supported the activities of the collective. In Community C, leadership helped to keep the volunteers working in the face of opposition by some community members to their investing so much time and money on youth in conflict with the law. In Community D, the leader provided his professional time on a volunteer basis and so did his staff. This willingness to ante up to get the job done encouraged other organizations and volunteers to give their time to the effort. They were all aware that they were not being asked to do any more than the lead agency and individual was doing. In Community E, the leader provided key links to business and other groups in the community. She used her connections to diverse groups within the community to bring people with similar concerns about youth together. She was also

instrumental in getting funding for activities. In Community F, leadership was shared among the original group of concerned parents, some of who are still actively engaged as leaders many years later.

Working Together

In all six case study communities, efforts to address emerging issues required that those who were originally involved in identifying concerns begin to work with other groups and organizations and to include a variety of community members as well. In all six communities, efforts were made to identify the groups, organizations and individuals who had a concern with, or an interest in, the issue they were trying to address. Typically this involved some form of community meeting. Such meetings were designed to both raise awareness of the issues and to identify those groups, individuals and organizations that could or should be involved. Groups and organizations were also asked for assistance. Local businesses provided food for barbeques, prizes for street dances, and other support.

Working together was required because problems were seen as not being "owned" by any particular group or individual. Rather problems represented shared concerns that all those involved had a role in addressing. Thus, in Community A, the high rate of calls to the police were not simply a police problem but were also a problem for social services who had to deal with the youth, for the schools who had to deal with youth and with some of the costs of vandalism, and for community members who were fearful of being victimized and who had little pride in their community. A similar process emerged in each of the other communities. Community B extended participation to include education, health and social welfare issues and groups, as they moved from a focus on advising the RCMP to a concern with community well being. They used a family fair to increase awareness and to mobilize a broader base of support. Community C built both formal and informal, low-key connections throughout the community to garner support and participation. Community D began by calling together groups and organizations concerned with youth issues. They challenged these groups to work with them to respond more effectively to needs in their community. In Community E the process began with an assets scan and yield the startling information that youth felt alienated and unwelcome in their community. Working with youth and youth serving agencies (the schools, police, local churches, and businesses) they began to consider how to redress assets deficits and to make youth feel more welcome. Participation expanded to include older persons and social services. Finally, in Community F, local parents were concerned about child abuse and abused children acting out in the community. While this is the issue that brought them together, once they began to talk they identified a range of issues that contributed to their concerns. They identified the absence of community involvement and sought to bring residents together at a street dance. To run the dance, they went to local businesses for prizes and found support there. The housing authority offered space and information on a tenants' association that broadened the concerns to include recreation for children and youth in the area and led to the housing authority building an outdoor play area.

The idea of community partnership and working together is a simple and appealing one for community development. Effective working relationships, however, are not easy to establish and sustain. They develop and emerge over time. The commitment to a shared

issue is a starting point for establishing working relationships. There were also organizational barriers, such as privacy issues that limited the ability (and the willingness) of professionals to exchange information. Even when sharing information was clearly beneficial to the individuals and the professionals involved, it took time to develop information-sharing protocols. This can be a particular challenge when community volunteers are core participants. Other players may perceive their involvement as an increased risk that information may not be treated confidentially. Some groups attempted to consciously manage this process by establishing guidelines for working together. In most communities, however, relationships emerged gradually over time and depended on the development of respect and trust among and between individuals.

Horizontal Linkages

In all six communities, the groups, organizations and individuals who worked together were all concerned about the particular issues and most of the organizations involved had already dealt individually with the identified problem. However, working together on the same problem was beneficial. It provided those involved with support and allowed them to combine their knowledge, skills and expertise. This helped generate creative ideas and solutions to ongoing challenges. These shared concerns and working together led to the development of horizontal linkages within the six communities that provided the context for community action. This included linkages between organizations and with members of the community. The result was an increase in trust. For example, in Community F residents developed a sense of trust with representatives of the housing authority as well as many of the service providers working in the neighbourhood — health services, education and the police.

In Community A, the horizontal linkages had reached a point that the specific individuals involved were not essential to the process being sustained. So, when professionals were replaced (they moved to other districts or retired) the new person who took over was introduced to the community initiative, welcomed in and asked to participate. This was critical as it meant the group survived beyond the terms of specific individuals. In Community B, the linkages were also core to the organization and had the effect of extending leadership beyond a single leader into the broader community as groups and individuals were involved in taking the lead on activities and bringing new concerns and issues forward. In Community C, horizontal linkages emerged slowly. From a committee designed to organize criminal justice forums, the group expanded their connections to include the schools, health, and other community members. These linkages emerged as working with youth in conflict with the law provided insights into the wider needs of youth. They also began to address the needs of younger children. They developed a parenting skills program to reduce the risk that younger children would experience negative life events. In Community D, the process began with the development of horizontal linkages. The general meeting brought together community members and agencies to find better ways of meeting needs through collaboration. In Community E, horizontal linkages were seen from the outset as integral to building a healthier community. When the focus on youth emerged, the group quickly expanded its linkages to include local youth, the schools and youth serving agencies. Finally, in Community F, horizontal linkages emerged as residents began to try to meet needs. They found that by connecting to local groups and

businesses they were able to achieve successes that they never thought possible. For all six communities, these horizontal linkages were central to responding to shared concerns and problems.

Vertical Linkages

Vertical linkages were present in all the communities though the nature of these linkages varied. One common vertical linkage was to the federal government. All these groups had accessed federal government project funding. While the funding allowed them to establish particular projects, the different groups did not rely on this funding to continue their activities. Though some communities would have liked to have ongoing funding from the federal government to assist them in maintaining a coordinator, not all the communities wanted ongoing funding. In one of the communities, funding was declined because of the need to focus on local needs rather than to focus on issues identified at the federal level. All the communities relied on federal government sources for information on crime prevention and other activities they undertook.

There were other vertical linkages. Community A had developed linkages with the police who were instrumental in funding a position and in moving the program to other neighourhoods. Initial funding for the coordinator's position was provided by a local philanthropic society. In Community B, linkages were made to both the provincial and federal agencies for support for specific projects. In Community C, the Justice Committee relied on the Band Council for office space and accessed the Grand Council for information, support in grant writing, and skills training. In Community D, the vertical connections with the provincial government involved provision of training resources including funds to purchase certified youth and family programs and training materials. In Community E, the municipal government had an important role in supporting the community initiative providing office space and working to assist them in furthering their plans for the Boys and Girls Club. In Community F, the provincial housing authority was pivotal in providing information, assistance in the formation of a tenants' association, funds to travel to conferences, and a meeting space. The provincial government is now providing some funds to pay for a program coordinator.

Maintaining Connections and Linkages

Establishing a committee of concerned community members, groups and organizations was critical to ensuring that various community players worked together. However, maintaining and expanding linkages was equally important. In all the communities, their success in doing so was attributed, in large part, to having a dedicated coordinator. The coordinators in the six case studies were responsible for calling meetings and for communicating with group members. Their work on behalf of the community meant that already overtaxed volunteers and professionals concerned with the community issue did not have yet another strain on their limited time and energy. This included both part-time and full-time coordinators. A coordinator was an essential element in the sustainability of the different enterprises.

Leadership was a second key component to maintaining connections and linkages in these sites. In all six communities, the coordinator also provided leadership. These leaders, as

noted earlier, were committed, dedicated and hard working. They were also able to inspire others to participate and were instrumental in securing funding for projects and programs.

Commitment to the issue was a third core component. All the participants had a commitment to the issue or the community that they were involved with. This commitment grew out of a sense of concern but was nurtured by their having input into defining the issues and the solutions. In some communities, the most committed participants were volunteers who had previously benefited from the programs and were now working to help others. The involvement of professionals in Community A led to a commitment for both professionals and community members. Group activities also provided committed workers with support and assistance that kept them going and reduced stress and strain.

Realized Outcomes — Nothing Succeeds Like Success

A final feature that contributed to sustained activity was early success. Each of the communities balanced a broad issue focus with projects that allowed them to make an immediate impact on their communities. All six communities reported that early achievements and demonstrated successes encouraged ongoing activity. These successes made the activities seem worthwhile because they were in stark contrast to other initiatives that had taken place in the communities where there was lots of talk but very little to show for it. For example, in Community C, visits to youth in custody were helpful in assisting these young people to successfully return to their community. As well, new by-laws and a security patrol were introduced to reduce property crime in the community. More importantly, the introduction of the Justice Committee returned responsibility for crime in the community to the community. This has supported the return to traditional, collective responsibility for community problems.

Immediate and visible success helps to generate interest from partners and encourages them to get involved and to stay involved. In Community D, early success contributed to the visibility of the community's efforts. This was made a priority since demonstrating that they can make a difference lent credibility to their initiative. They were able to quickly address gaps in support services. The programs that are identified by community members as necessary have proven to be very popular in the community. In Community F, one early demonstration of community action was a street dance. This brought people out of their houses and helped them to get to know their neighbours. About 300 people participated in the event and it marked an important occasion for the community. The success of this event boosted the spirits and confidence of those involved and raised the interest of others in the community. Another early success in this community was the building of a playground. This provided a needed recreational opportunity for children and youth who had no recreational facilities within walking distance available to them. Equally important was that the playground provided visible evidence that through community action, the residents could do something to meet their own needs and enhance the quality of life for everyone living in the community.

Considering the Role of Resources

Much of the focus within sustainability efforts has been on resources — particularly financial resources. Investments in communities, especially funding, that result in achievements that are time limited are a great concern to policy makers locally, nationally and internationally. The disappearance of programs once funding ends is made even more worrisome because often the skills and training that are part of the process of running a program are also lost or eroded. Individuals who have expanded their skills and knowledge during the course of participating in a project may move on to new employment and may be lost to the community. In thinking about ways to invest in communities that will result in long-term benefits, the role of resources — financial, physical, knowledge and personnel — is critical to consider.

Financial Resources

Financial resources are a major issue for those studying sustainable activity. The literature on sustainable development grew out of a concern about the failure of activity to persist once external resources — primarily financial resources — were no longer provided. While financial resources were important to the six case study communities, none appear to be totally dependent on external funds for their persistence. External funding usually went to specific, usually short-term, projects that the community was trying to establish. While all had received project funding through the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC), they had also secured funding from a variety of other programs (e.g., employment programs, information technology programs) as well as from local sources. They did fund raising locally among community members and also sought assistance from local groups, agencies and businesses. Indeed, many relied on donated and volunteer resources as much as possible to keep financial requirements low. At the same time, frustration and concern was expressed about the time and energy spent pursuing even the small amounts of funding that is periodically needed in order to carry out various activities (such as funding for supplies).

One concern with respect to funding was the coordinator. Funding for a coordinator was one of the most difficult challenges experienced by the communities. All six communities indicated that without a coordinator, the activities of the community would not have persisted. However, in most cases, securing funding for a coordinator position proved quite difficult. In Community A, funding for a coordinator was precarious. At the time of the site visit, funding for the existing coordinator had not been secured beyond the end of the month. While participants were optimistic and working to obtain funding for this position, it was acknowledged that sustainability was a concern if the coordinator position was lost. Community A had also begun the process of implementing their model in a second community. In this community, the police funded the coordinator's position. This led to some tension as the coordinator was now an employee of the police department and policing priorities were highlighted. In Community B, the coordination position had made the difference. While the RCMP had begun advisory groups in a variety of centres throughout the province, only Community B had a coordinator. Importantly, this was the only community in which an advisory committee developed a sustained, community-wide effort addressed at community well-being and crime prevention. The coordinator's position

in Community B was paid from project funding when this was available including NCPC funding. The coordinator's own organization had provided "bridging funding" when project funds were not available. In Community C, the coordinator was combining a paid position as coordinator of the Justice Committee with her activities in crime prevention. In Community D, the lead agency allowed the Director to spend some of his paid time on coordination and he donated many hours of volunteer time per week. In addition, the staff in this agency had been approached to volunteer their time to the initiative. While this put some strain on staff members, it made the community initiative independent since it was not accountable to any group or organization beyond its own collective in determining priorities and activities. In Community E, the group had just lost their coordinator as the municipality stopped funding the position. They were waiting to see if a new fund-raising venture (a discount clothing store) would generate sufficient resources to fund the position. In Community F, the provincial government had only recently agreed to fund a coordinator's position (in the past, the coordination function was filled largely on a volunteer basis, although some periodic project funding to coordinate summer youth activities had been obtained). Funding for a coordinator represents a central issue for sustainability. The lack of a coordinator may have serious consequences for those communities trying to sustain collective action.

Physical Resources

All six communities had acquired physical resources provided by participating agencies or local area groups. This included office space — provided by a local mall in Community A, by the RCMP in Community B, by the Band Council in Community C, by the lead agency in Community D, by the city in Community E, and by the housing authority in Community F. Typically, the office space came with other physical resources — telephones, photocopying, fax machines and computers. This was not always the case. In Community A, such equipment had to be found, with much of it being donated by the police and other groups. Community F had acquired space informally and made gradual improvements over time (including the creation of a recreation space). They had also accessed other information technology programs to obtain computers for some of their programming. The crucial aspect of having a physical space was that it gave the group visibility, a sense of place and belonging, and provided community members with easy access to what was being offered. Visibility provided communities with a confirmation that someone was willing and able to respond to local concerns. It also allowed community members who wanted to participate with a point of contact.

Knowledge-based Resources

A common feature of the activities undertaken in the case study communities was the role of information or knowledge-based resources. Groups required a variety of information on programs and activities that had been used elsewhere and might be used locally. Groups sought guidance on establishing and running programs. Information or knowledge-based resources were important for all six communities. The specific information varied. Family violence programs were used in Community B, with a values-based program being core to their current efforts. Information on bullying programs was used in Community B, Community C and Community D. In Community E, the assets assessment was a useful tool for starting the community mobilization process. They also used materials for

developing leadership skills to assist in training their youth. Community F found information on tenant's rights and associations invaluable since it helped them secure a way to problem-solve issues facing the community and to establish a legitimate presence in the neighbourhood.

Volunteers/Personnel

In all of the communities, it is people who make a difference. The core strength of these sustainable efforts was the people involved. All six communities balanced volunteers with other participants. In most communities, this included professionals — police, social service staff, educators, health care professionals, counsellors and faith leaders. In addition, these communities relied on a corps of volunteers who provided support for specific activities and a local perspective on issues and concerns. This latter role strengthened the group because addressing these concerns raised the profile of the group within the community.

Lessons Learned

The key lessons learned from this study are:

1. **Local Meaning:** Sustainable community activity begins with local groups and organizations identifying needs, problems and solutions that are meaningful for them.

2. **Local Connection:** To be sustainable, responses to local issues must connect individuals and groups who share a concern about a specific problem. This contributes **to** translating individual/private concerns into community-wide (public) issues.

3. **Local Ownership:** A sustainable approach must be based on shared community ownership of problems so that no group or individual owns them or is solely responsible for them. Shared responsibility for problems requires shared solutions. Implementing shared solutions, in turn, requires sound leadership and coordination.

4. **Community Vision:** While concern begins with a single issue, sustainable activity requires the recognition that additional needs and issues emerge over time. This understanding means that communities must develop and retain a broad focus of concern — a vision of where they are going — while simultaneously working step by step on projects and specific issues.

5. **Non-hierarchical, Integrated and Diversity-sensitive Approach:** Community activity is more likely to be sustainable when it is premised on a non-hierarchical (bottom-up), integrated and diversity-sensitive approach. This contributes to the ability of groups to be flexible and to continue to respond to demands in the local context over time.

6. **Community Capacity-building:** Building community capacity to identify problems and to mobilize to respond is the basis for sustainable initiatives.

7. **Coordinated Process and Communication:** Building community capacity is a necessary but not a sufficient component of a sustainable community development process. Key to sustainability is the development of a process for action. Different communities will develop their own unique processes. All processes require coordination. All processes require communication. In this study, it was the presence and actions of coordinators who developed and maintained links with community partners, as well as vertical linkages to the municipal, provincial/territorial and federal governments that contributed to sustainability.

8. **Horizontal Linkages:** Horizontal linkages are critical to sustainability. These linkages are effective when they are based on trust, mutual respect and a shared interest in and commitment to the well being of the community. Such relationships benefit participants both in their capacity as individuals who care about communities and as professionals working in communities.

9. **Vertical Linkages:** Vertical linkages provide communities with resources (financial, knowledge) that are critical to both beginning initiatives and to sustaining them. They also provide a link to wider norms and values (e.g., social justice, human rights).

10. **Opportunities for Early Success:** Capacity and commitment are furthered by early successes so that even communities that begin with limited capacity can build momentum towards sustainable responses.

11. **Project Funding:** Project funding helps to create opportunities for immediate successes, which in turn builds momentum for further action. Project funding can also help build community capacity in specific areas. Project funding alone, however, will not sustain activity; it must be viewed as one component in a larger community vision or initiative.

12. **Resources:** Resources are important for sustainable activity. Some financial resources are essential for basic infrastructure and for processes (especially to provide for a coordinator). "In-kind" contributions, especially volunteer labour, as well as donations from the local community are also critical to sustaining activities and also help to build community ownership. Information about what works and how to access sources of funding is another critical resource that communities need to effectively meet their needs.

Implications

In this study, we did not directly undertake to study the issue of the role of governments in sustaining crime prevention as our focus was on determining the community level factors that contribute to sustainability. However, it is evident that governments or other funders face a challenge in finding ways to develop and balance coherent broad based policies that nurture, respect and support local community capacity to set local priorities and encourage local initiative to addressing local needs. A key question is how to best strengthen community capacity and connect community-specific needs with governmental responses that are broad enough to meet the needs of the diverse communities they serve, and specific enough to have a meaningful impact on crime.

For most of the communities we studied, the role of the governments versus the role of community in sustaining activity is a fine balance. In all the communities studied, broader-level government funding makes a key contribution to infrastructure (whether it be the social housing units, contributions to core agency funding, services, etc.). In addition, government project funding (from a variety of levels and program sources) has enabled communities to do things that they otherwise might not have been able to do, or at least been able to do with the same breadth and scope. In addition to project funding, governments also played an important role in providing supporting information on approaches that had been found useful elsewhere.

The need for multi-dimensional responses to local problems provides a set of complex challenges for policy makers at all levels. It suggests that government approaches that engage in dialogue with communities and that proactively integrate concerns across departments might be more effective in preventing crime than "stove-piped" approaches. While this notion is not new, it reinforces the importance of communication and of building practical bridges and partnerships among key players such as justice, health, education and human resources as a promising approach to sustainable initiatives. It underscores the importance of investments in community capacity, in particular in areas such as leadership and human resource development. Furthermore, it reinforces the importance of recognizing the value that the voluntary sector brings to crime prevention and the value of shaping opportunities to build on that strength.

Flexibility and innovation in funding approaches, in order to facilitate sustainability, is critical. We have noted that short-term project funding plays a particular role in helping communities to test out ideas, achieve some early successes and build momentum. However, this approach is not enough to sustain activity over the long term. Other strategies, such as multi-year funding, and diversification of funding sources (public and where appropriate private sources) are also required to ensure that a certain degree of stability and capacity for long-term planning is realized. Greater harmonization in funding processes across various initiatives may also contribute to sustainability by streamlining the ways and level of effort that communities must exercise to access funding.

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