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Coalition on Community Safety, Health and Well-being
Coalition pour la sécurité, la santé et le bien-être des communautés



Community Safety Round Table

Consolidated Key Messages

Crime Prevention through Social Development

The National Crime Prevention Centre of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada describes “crime prevention through social development” as follows:

Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD) is an approach to preventing crime and victimization that recognizes the complex social, economic, and cultural processes that contribute to crime and victimization. CPSD seeks to strengthen the “bridge” between criminal justice policies and programs and the safe, secure, and pro-social development of individuals, families, and communities. It does this by tackling the factors which contribute to crime and victimization that are amenable to change.

These risk factors include:

- inadequate living conditions, such as poor housing and unstable situations;
- family factors, such as family poverty, family size, poor or inadequate parenting, parental criminality, and parental substance abuse;
- individual personality and behavioural factors, including hyperactivity, a lack of problem-solving skills, self-control, critical reasoning, judgment and failure to consider the consequences of behaviour;
- peer association, such as relationships with friends who follow a delinquent/criminal lifestyle;
- school-related factors, such as poor educational achievement and truancy, as well as deficient school environments, and exclusionary policies; and
- lack of employment opportunities and training.

Key Ingredients for Safe, Healthy Communities

The key ingredients of sustainable community safety, health and well-being are:

- 1) Collective social accountability.
- 2) Addressing, in an inclusive manner, marginalization, systemic barriers and the root causes of crime.
- 3) An integrated strategic plan that is characterized by inclusive community engagement, resulting in strategies built by and for the community.
- 4) A coordinated and cohesive public engagement process.
- 5) Sustainable funding and resources including the requisite human resource capacity to deliver on the policies through programs and services.
- 6) A full range of basic social infrastructure services available in communities (e.g., youth activities, preventive health programs, literacy programs, cross-cultural initiatives, seniors support, family services, etc.).

Key Messages on Sustainable Social Development

Messages which might be used to increase awareness by the public and decision-makers on the importance of supporting sustainable social development are:

There is a clear link between social development and prevention of crime and victimization.

Canadians value safety in their communities and recognize that crime can flourish in communities where social and economic conditions present risk factors and where social development measures are unsustainable.

Community safety is best achieved through a balanced approach that comprises police, courts, corrections and crime prevention.

Community safety is best and most efficiently achieved when governments, the private sector, communities and individuals support a four-pronged approach that includes crime prevention, enforcement, justice and corrections.

The federal government has confirmed that crime prevention through social development is the foundation of safe, healthy communities.

The federal government has demonstrated its leadership by confirming that crime prevention through social development is the basis of safe, healthy communities. It now needs to work with other orders of government to put in place a long-term strategy that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of all governments and communities for sustainable crime prevention through sustainable social development.

Investments need to be made in sustainable social development to build community capacity so that social development programs are accessible to everyone, including the most marginalized groups in society.

Crime prevention produces short, medium and long-term benefits. Investment in sustainable social development to-day yields positive results. Without investment in prevention, our communities will become more and more unsafe with increasing strain on social infrastructure and public institutions. The federal government has made a commitment to social development by funding local, multi-year projects which support the growth of safe, healthy communities across Canada.

Community safety requires flexible and sustainable public investment in order to build community capacity. Social programs and services must be locally accessible and issues of marginalization must be addressed convincingly.

There is a need for a strategic framework and resource plan that involves all levels of government and communities in realizing crime prevention through sustainable social development.

Tax-payer dollars provide the funding for programs and services that contribute to social development. Allocation of resources by federal and provincial/territorial governments should reflect the reality that targeted action to ensure safe, healthy communities is best taken at the local level. Individual communities require resources to address their own challenges, priorities and capacities.

Crime prevention through sustainable social development should be a part of every community safety plan.

Every community would benefit from having a community safety plan based on a national planning model. The community safety plan should set out local solutions to local problems and be integrated with all facets of local planning.

Public engagement, reflecting not only diversity of the community but also a shared vision for its safety, health and well-being, is at the core of successful crime prevention.

All stakeholders need to agree on the challenges facing their community and work to overcome the social and institutional factors that create barriers to cooperation and lead to marginalization. Social development organizations, the police and the community, in particular the leaders of marginalized groups, need to unite in sustained strategic partnerships.