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Partnerships for crime prevention

The formation of partnerships between communities, government agencies and/or business groups is frequently a powerful approach to the prevention of crime. However, the establishment of crime prevention partnerships should not be an automatic response to all crime problems. Furthermore, partnerships need to be carefully planned and managed and their ongoing effectiveness monitored. This is because even appropriate partnership arrangements can be difficult to implement and costly to maintain (Homel 2005). This CRM highlights the mix of governance, leadership and cooperation that is needed to assist partnerships to be productive crime prevention tools.

Research has shown (Gilling 2005) that in planning and implementing effective crime prevention partnerships the following need to be in place:

- a clear mission or purpose for the partnership, together with agreement on intended outcomes
- a solid level of trust between partner agencies
- leadership, including resources from senior managers to enable partnership to function
- clear lines of communication and accountability at all levels, both across and within agencies
- management that is focused on strategic as well as operational or project outcomes
- partnership structures that are relatively small, businesslike and focused on crime prevention
- expertise to ensure access to a good problem oriented knowledge of crime prevention
- continuity in partner representation and participation, including good documentation
- staff with enough time away from agency core business to provide input to the partnership.

Effective partnerships can be hindered by differential power relationships between partner agencies. For example, there can be different reasons for participating in partnerships, with accompanying differences in resources and access to information. In a true partnership, information needs to be shared and used to enable all agencies to work together to develop crime prevention strategies relevant for a specific local community. This power differential between agencies on the ground can be counterproductive and lead to partnership in name only – rather than a useful and creative approach to crime prevention on a local level amongst equal partners.

References

Gilling D 2005. Partnership and crime prevention, in Tilley N (ed). *Handbook of crime prevention and community safety*. Cullompton: Willan: 734–756

Homel P 2005. *Regional organisation for crime prevention delivery*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/other/2005-07-cp.html>