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AI Crime Reduction Matters

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Good governance for effective crime prevention

The contemporary approach to the delivery of community crime prevention work is quite a sophisticated activity when viewed from the perspective of modern management practices. Typically, crime prevention programs are built on the idea of collaborative multi-agency action involving a number of different initiatives and participants. They use varying interventions that are implemented simultaneously or at least in a loosely ordered sequence. As a result, crime prevention programs will frequently operate through partnership arrangements directed at achieving shared outcomes. Defining satisfactory management arrangements is frequently complicated by recurring tensions between partners about ultimate control and ownership of outcomes (Homel 2006).

The process for establishing an optimal management arrangement for any shared enterprise is known as *governance* and the achievement of *good governance* is a key goal for delivering effective crime prevention programs. There are a variety of definitions of governance, largely because it describes a process not a product. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific have defined governance as '... the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)' (UNESCAP 2007). Governance is partly about how governments and other social organisations interact, how they relate to citizens, and how decisions are made in a complex world.

Governance is a process whereby societies or organisations make their important decisions; determine who they involve in the process and how they are accountable for the actions arising from the decisions taken. UNESCAP describes the eight major characteristics for a good governance arrangement as being:

- participatory
- consensus oriented
- accountable
- transparent
- responsive
- effective and efficient
- equitable and inclusive
- follows the rule of law.

Establishing and implementing a governance arrangement based on these eight characteristics will ensure all participants can be confident that the views of minorities are taken into account and the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in the decision making process. It will also create management that will be responsive to current and future needs.

In practice, such an arrangement accords very closely with what is needed for achieving effective and sustainable crime prevention outcomes.

References

Homel P 2006. Joining up the pieces: what central agencies need to do to support effective local crime prevention in Knutsson J & Clarke RV (eds.), *Putting theory to work: implementing situational prevention and problem-oriented policing*. Crime Prevention Studies 20. New Jersey: Prentice Hall: 111-139

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) 2007. *What is good governance?* <http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/projectactivities/ongoing/gg/governance.asp>