



SAFETY AND PEACE PROMOTION RESEARCH UNIT

Co-directed by

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Report: Honouring our Peace and Safety Promotion Assets

(Participatory community asset development as a means toward safety and peace promotion & International Volunteers Day)

The MRC's Peace and Safety Promotion Research Unit (SAPPRU/CVI) which is co-directed by UNISA's Institute for Social and Health Sciences (ISHS) ran a two day community workshop from 02 to 03 December 2010 in Strand where approximately 42 community members from three different areas gathered together to exchange their everyday problems and challenges. This programme was titled Honouring our Safety and Peace Promotion Assets and consisted of two components: 1) a workshop titled, *Participatory community asset development as a means toward safety and peace promotion* and, 2) a celebration of International Volunteer's Day which is held on 5 December annually. This workshop was held in the Broadlands Park Phambili Centre which is also known as the Bethesda Evangelical Church. Community leaders and Volunteer's from Broadlands Park, Nomzamo and Errijaville were given the opportunity to share their experiences and thoughts about what builds and what divides their communities, and how they could solve a variety of community issues. This programme is part of a number of projects that SAPPRU/CVI conduct in the Broadlands Park and Nomzamo communities which are characterised by a high crime rate, drug abuse, unemployment and poverty. The aim of these initiatives is to eliminate crime, violence and injury through safety and peace promotion and skills and assets development.

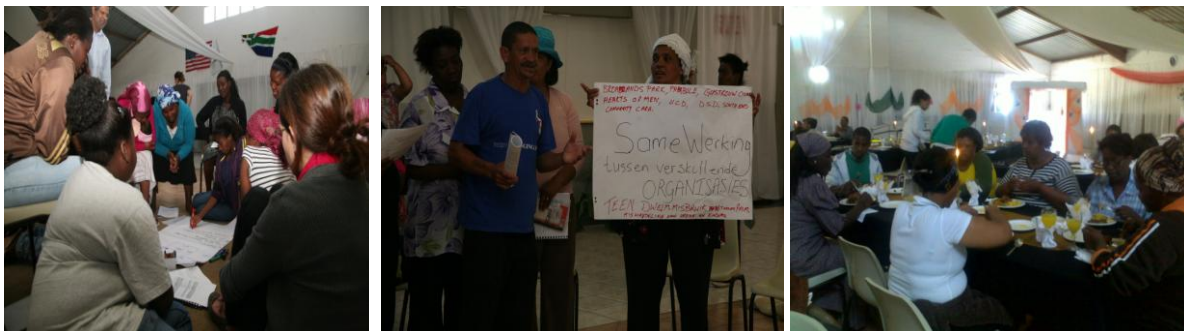
Many South African communities focus on what is not working and on what they do not have when trying to resolve problems. This usually leads to frustration and yields few results. *Honouring our assets* aimed to assist community members in both realising and maximising their assets in order to develop their communities further. The programme also celebrated the community Volunteer's and their contribution to society. Additionally, participants were provided with the opportunity to conduct cross-community discussions. This allowed the participants to consider how they could support one another with resources that may be available in one community but unavailable in another. The workshop culminated in the development of 3-dimensional maps of their assets and the creation of interventions and action plans as a means to circumvent their needs and enhance their assets. The participants found this workshop to be very useful.

The MRC's Corporate Communications Division was there to record the first day and interviewed a 31 year old participant from Nomzamo who said: "This is good because we as ambassadors, we will be able to go back in our communities and share the knowledge we have been empowered with

here in this programme”. This participant has been part of the initiative since 2001 and reported to have gained rich knowledge and helpful tips on how to intervene and solve problems in her community. A participant from Broadlands Park reflected that: “I don’t feel like I am wasting my time coming here every time ... I take the knowledge I learn here every time straight to my home first before giving it back to the community because I feel that charity begins at home”. She said that these programmes have had a great impact on her life especially in assisting her to motivate her children to stop using illegal substances. Another participant stated that: “Through these interventions we have managed to keep our community in a close knit circle as a family, yes it’s a challenge at times but together we learn to conquer every obstacle, some of the progresses that we have managed to make was creating a soup kitchen to those who really need food and I am grateful for that”.

All the participants were awarded attendance certificates at the end of the two day course. In addition to these, committed Volunteer’s who have been working with MRC-UNISA SAPPRU/CVI were acknowledged and appreciated for their committed and ongoing service to the community. This programme is part of the long established objectives of the MRC-UNISA SAPPRU/CVI and aims at targeting both the youth and the matured community members from all backgrounds, race and genders. In light of the positive feedback from the community, we are happy to note that our initiatives are much appreciated.

We would like to thank our Volunteer’s at Nomzamo and Broadlands Park for their ongoing assistance in organising these events, the Phambili Centre/Bethesda Evangelical Church for always availing their facilities for our use and, Shahida Dudley from the Claremont Volunteer Centre for her guest speech on International Volunteer’s Day.



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15 December 2010