



Know Your Block

Work to Make a Great Place

TOOLKIT



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Acknowledgments



This publication is the result of a collaboration between the South African Planning Institute (SAPI) and South African Cities Network (SACN) in preparation for the Planning Africa 2014 Conference held in Durban on 19–21 October 2014. The toolkit's aim is to deepen community involvement in local spaces by exposing South Africans to planning and empowering them to improve their neighbourhoods. In so doing, it is hoped that citizens and organisations will be encouraged to drive change and take ownership of their neighbourhood by developing their own 'Know your Block' projects.



Design by InkDesign

An aerial photograph showing a dense urban grid with streets and buildings, overlaid on a light grey background.

Since 1994, many suburbs are increasingly mixed, with professionals and business people, workers and unemployed people of all races and ethnic groups living in close proximity to each. This provides a unique opportunity to build social relationships and develop neighbourhoods to be non-racial, non-sexist and harmonious.

In the past, youth played a decisive role in bringing about change, mobilising communities to organise and protest. Community leaders worked towards a unity of purpose that was embroidered together by the philosophy of non-racialism. Unity, non-racialism and other ideologies underpinned the idea of being South African. From these communities, leaders emerged who thought nationally but organised locally. They responded to local issues because they were based in their communities.

To reawaken this spirit of community participation and stimulate communities into taking action, SAPI launched the 'Know Your Block – Work to Make a Great Place' campaign. In partnership with the South African Cities Network (SACN), a set of simple ideas was produced. The intention is

to link current and latent community efforts and the theories and debates within the built environment community, in order to catalyse new approaches that can make Great Places happen.

About This Toolkit

The aim of this toolkit is to help communities become more aware of and appreciate their neighbourhood, and to find creative solutions to the challenges facing them. Each situation is unique and will require its own strategy to suit the local conditions and needs. However, certain principles and steps are relevant to all situations. This toolkit offers a five-stage/10-step practical process for communities to follow in order to create their own great place. Some examples are provided that showcase and celebrate community efforts to improve their neighbourhood.

It is hoped that this toolkit and the 'Know Your Block – Work to Make a Great Place' campaign will stimulate simple actions in neighbourhoods, such as working together to keep a place clean and tidy, greening an area or making a place more safe and secure, as well as encourage greater and meaningful participation by communities in planning matters that affect their neighbourhood. This booklet also encourages people to get involved, act, organise and mobilise to make where they live and work into great places.



Making Great Places

*Congratulations!
Today is your day.
You're off to Great Places!
You're off and away!
(Dr Seuss)*

Building a better country starts with each community. In most communities, the underlying need is for a neighbourhood that is safe, clean and well looked after. It is in the interests of people who live in an area to maintain the investments they have made and to co-operate with each other to realise the collective aspirations.

The 'Know Your Block – Work to Make a Great Place' campaign recognises that everyone can make a difference, and that change can happen block by block. The campaign is aimed at promoting community involvement in creating and maintaining 'great places'.

A great place is a space that is functional, has reliable basic services, is close to public transport, contains community facilities and commercially viable activities, and allows the community to engage with open and public spaces.

A great place can be found wherever people live in close proximity, as this creates a ready-made environment for people to develop a sense of community. A great place can be created in a suburb, a township, a block,

a townhouse complex or a high-rise building. People make up the dynamic atmosphere in an area. A block is therefore not just a physical space, but could also be an interest group.

Making great places capitalises on a local community's assets and potential, with the intention of creating neighbourhoods that satisfy individual and community needs, and that are enjoyable to live and work in.

In practice, making great places can refer to improving the cleanliness of a street through the efforts of local residents or, more ambitiously, greening public spaces, connecting neighbourhoods, supporting community safety, catalysing economic development, promoting environmental sustainability and nurturing an authentic sense of place.

Great places only emerge if communities are involved in the planning process. Neighbourhood or community-based planning is a process whereby community members collectively come up with solutions to common problems or take advantage of opportunities that will benefit the whole. To be effective, neighbourhood planning should be inclusive and equitable, initiated and supported by community members, of benefit to the community and based on best practices.

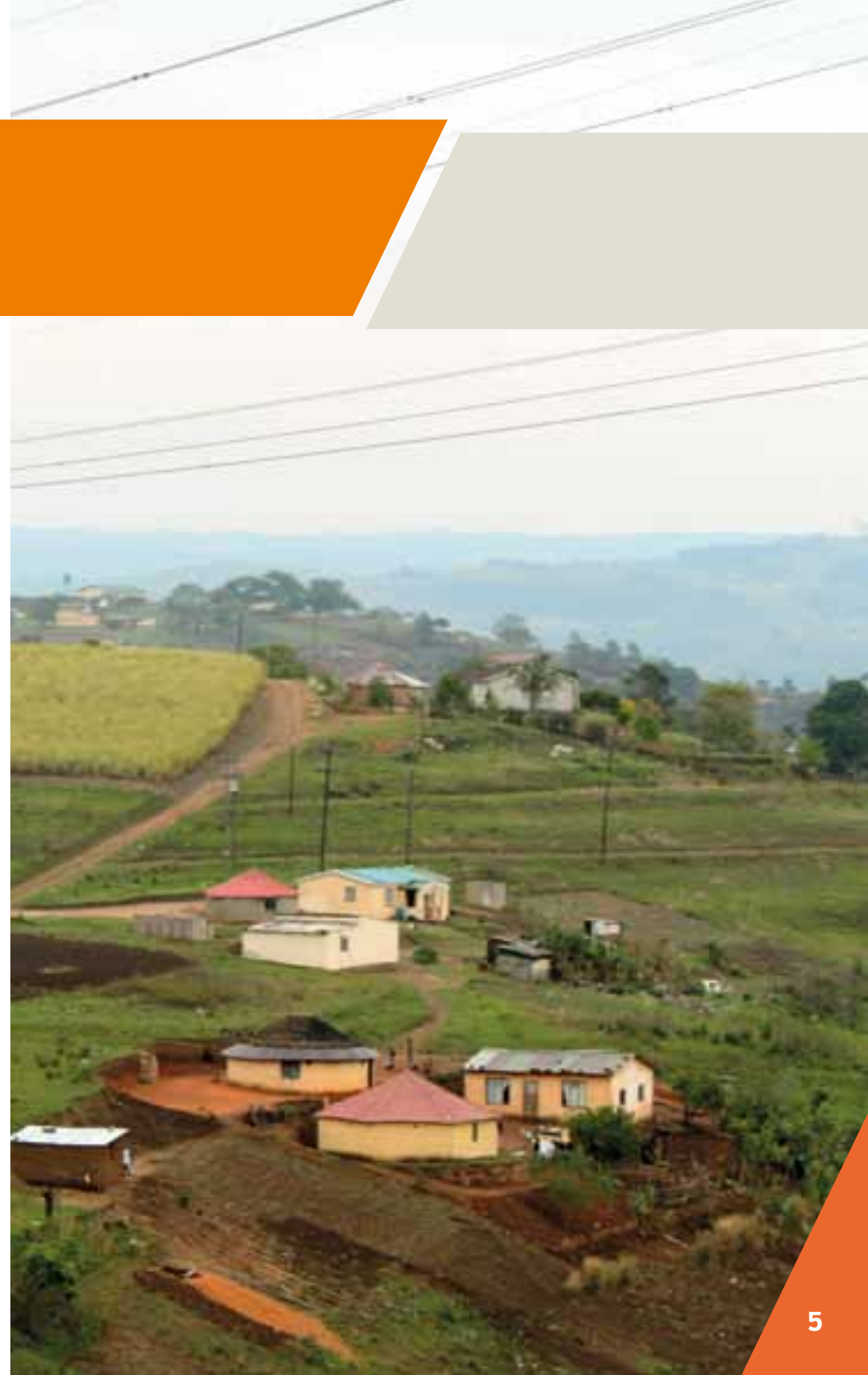
To create a great place, all role-players need to work together, from planners to economists, politicians and decision makers, government officials, state enterprises, the private sector and tertiary institutions.



Planners in municipalities play a special role, as they design plans for areas and process applications from developers who invest in places. When communities engage in making great places, planners have an opportunity to evaluate, assess and review the original designs and plans through the prism of how citizens interact with their place of residence or world of work and leisure. Planners can play a facilitating role, leading the process for creating, identifying and recognising great places.

Making great places in rural areas

Although making great places is predominantly urban based, rural areas can also be developed to be great places. Rural areas have low population densities and economic activities that are more directly linked to land and available natural resources. The prominent agricultural or forestry activities create different social and economic relations, yet rural development builds on the more cohesive nature of rural communities, compared to urban communities.



Know Your Block





SET THE DIRECTION

STEP 6:

Articulate a vision
for the future

STEP 7:

Identify the objectives



TAKE ACTION

STEP 8:

Choose one issue to focus on

STEP 9:

Develop a plan of action

STEP 10:

Communicate with
the community

Go to the people
Live among the people
Learn from the people
Plan with the people
Work with the people
Start with what the people know
Build on what the people have
Teach by showing; learn by doing
Not a showcase but a pattern
Not odds and ends but a system
Not piecemeal but an integrated approach
Not to conform but to transform
Not relief but release

– James Yen (1920s)



Know your area



STEP 1: Get to know the people and issues

- Walk your area and speak to the neighbours (observe and listen).
- Ask people what their concerns are.
- Find out the common self-interests.

STEP 2: Create a snapshot of the area

- Identify the physical (houses, streets), spatial (rivers, hills) and social (open spaces, sporting facilities) elements in your area.
- Draw a picture of the area, or use Google map or a map from the municipality.
- Plot the different elements on the map and different uses (e.g. commercial buildings).

Some Tools for Knowing your Area

Door knocking

This is a basic and often overlooked way of gathering information. Requirements include a simple questionnaire, an introductory letter (explaining who you are and why you are knocking on their door) and time! Door-knockers should knock on doors in their own block, as being a neighbour creates an immediate bond with the person who answers the door.

Briefing workshops

These workshops can be used to get people involved and motivated. The workshops usually last about an hour and a half and can be organised around an interest group (e.g. young people, residents within a geographical area) or a topic (e.g. open spaces, community safety).

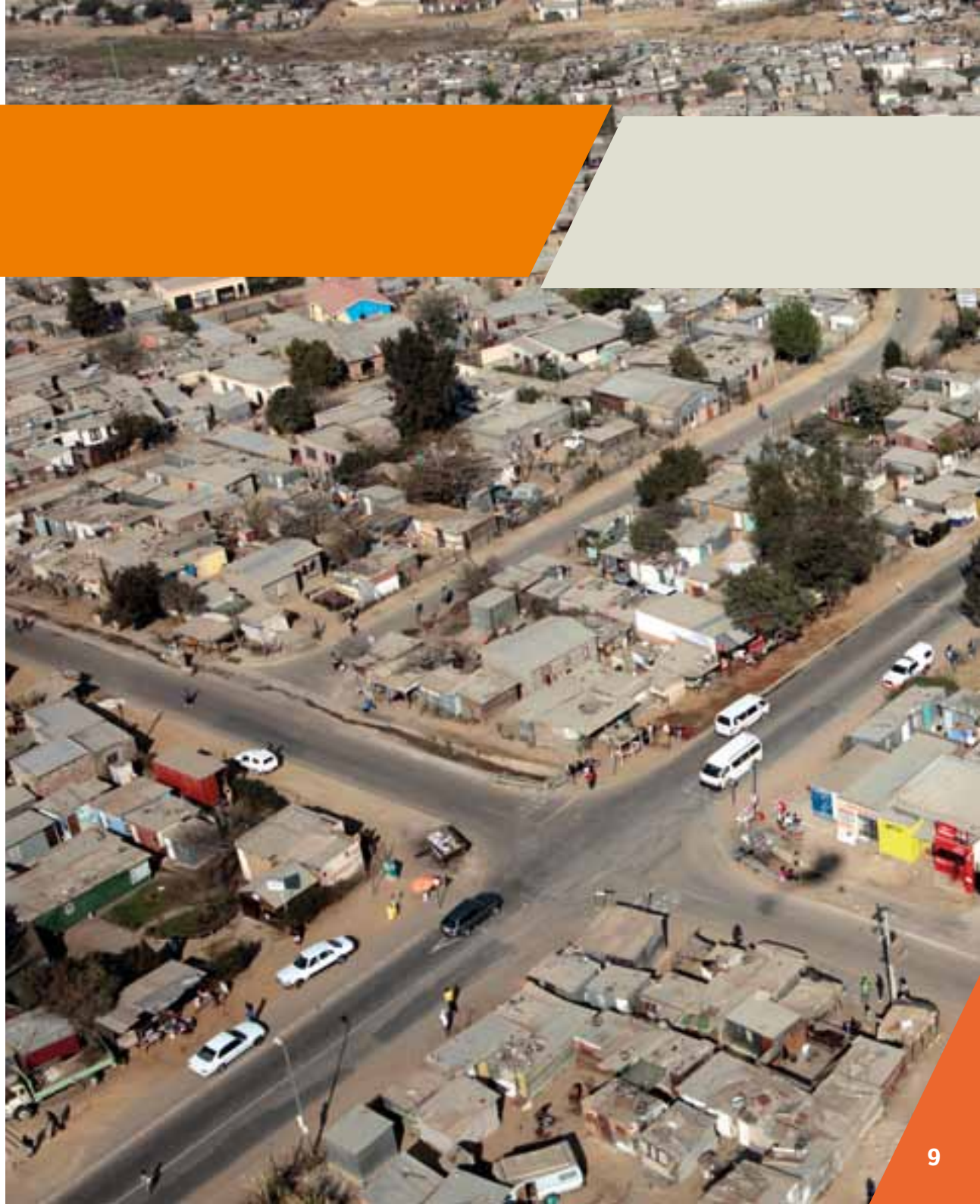
Creating physical maps

Individuals or groups develop physical maps of the area concerned. Maps provide a useful basis for future debate and discussion. Some of the different map types and uses are:

- Activity maps show where people go to do things.
- Land use and resources maps show what uses occur where.
- Mental maps show how people perceive their area and may not be geographically correct but provide useful insight into local perceptions.

Photo surveys

Individuals or teams go around the neighbourhood and take photos according to a theme. Examples of themes include historical places, beautiful/ugly places, places to play, places to socialise and private vs public places. Once processed, the photos can be arranged on boards or paper sheets, grouping relevant photos and then used as the basis for discussion.





Recruit People



STEP 3: Start with a core group

- Attract the right people with complementary skills.
- Consider who else might assist (e.g. NGOs, businesses).
- Reflect the diversity found in the community.

Some Tools for Recruiting People

Recruitment strategy

Start by recognising the strengths and weaknesses of the core group members in order to be able to identify the type of people and skills to target in your recruitment strategy. Then, establish the different reasons people might want to get involved. For example they may:

- have personal experience of the issues you are wanting to address,
- be motivated by their view of the world (e.g. religion, politics) to improve the quality of life in their communities,
- want to pay back society for the help or opportunities that were extended to them,
- possess the experience and skills that can be put to good use in the community, or
- enjoy the social situation and interacting with other community members.

Finding volunteers

With your core group, brainstorm different ways of reaching potential volunteers. Some examples include:

- Asking neighbours and friends to get involved.
- Putting notices in local churches, mosques, schools or clinics.
- Holding information sessions in the local shopping mall, community centre or library.
- Placing a notice in the community newspaper or local radio station.

Guidelines for Community Organisers

- Remember that most people are motivated primarily by self-interest, but human beings can find a common self-interest and connection.
- Start the process of strategy development by imagining that instant just before victory. Then, working backwards, do your best to figure out the steps that will lead to that moment.
- Understand that you have to reinforce unity and compensate for divisions among the people involved.
- Be cheerful in the face of adversity and help others feel that way.
- Be certain that the people you work with truly understand the risks they are taking and the things that could go wrong, before they make the decision to act, individually or together.
- Frame questions in ways that make people think (avoid the arrogance of thinking you know what is right for other people).
- Go with what you know and with whom you know. Even in the Internet age, personal relationships still count, especially when you're asking people to do something.



Profile the Community



STEP 4: Gather information about your area

- How many people (women, men, adults, youth, children, aged) live in the neighbourhood: type of houses, work they do.
- What services are available in the area (e.g. hospital, library, creche) and who provides them.

STEP 5: Analyse your area

- What are the main trends over the past few years that have affected the neighbourhood.
- What are the events or changes at a broader level that have an impact on the neighbourhood.

Community profile

The following are useful questions to start building a community profile:

- What are the main activities and projects in the neighbourhood?
- Which service providers are present in the neighbourhood and how good are their services?
- Which groups receive which services?
- What are the different social groups in the neighbourhood and what are their livelihoods?
- Have the mix of social groups changed over the last few years?
- Which are the most secure and most vulnerable groups?
- How does this vulnerability change during the course of the year?
- What are the characteristics of people with different levels of well-being in the neighbourhood (eg very poor, poor, average, well-off)
- How do different socioeconomic groups fit into the well-being categories? (For example are the elderly mostly poor?)
- What skills and abilities are available in the community ('neighbourhood talent').

Some Tools for Profiling the Community

The maps developed in Step 1 can be used as a basis for compiling a community profile, which means building up a picture of the community, its needs and resources.



Area analysis

This analysis builds on the information from the community profile and looks at the people, opportunities, needs and services in an area. It may require getting more information by talking to people in the community.



SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis look at Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Strengths and weaknesses refer to *internal factors*, while opportunities and threats refer to *external factors* that affect your area. A useful extension of the SWOT analysis is to look at how to address each item, i.e. How to maximise strengths and minimise weaknesses, and how to take advantage of opportunities and reduce threats.





Set the Direction



STEP 6: Articulate a vision for the future

- Hold a visioning workshop.
- Decide on the goals, i.e. the long-range direction to address the issues.

STEP 7: Identify the objectives

- Break the goal down into smaller parts, i.e. objectives.
- Make the objectives 'SMART'.

Some Tools for Setting the Direction

Guided visioning workshop

The aim of this workshop is to come up with realistic hopes and dreams for the future. Participants imagine that they are walking through their neighbourhood in the future (e.g. in 10 years). They then record their visions in writing or pictures (e.g. diagrams, sketches, models, photographic montages).

Some questions to guide the visioning exercise:

- What do you see?
- What do the buildings look like?
- What type of businesses or homes are there?
- Where do people gather?
- What are people eating?
- How are they travelling?
- What is the population mix? Where are the children and old people?
- What is happening on the street?
- Where is the central point of the neighbourhood?
- What do the public open spaces look like?
- What does the neighbourhood look like at night?

Clustering

Clustering (also known as mind mapping) involves writing down ideas (words or phrases or descriptions) that come to mind when thinking about a specific topic. These are then connected around the central topic using shapes, lines and colours. Random associations may eventually become logical patterns or some ideas may reach a dead end. Clustering works well for grouping common ideas generated in a group.

Consolidate

After the various visioning and brainstorming sessions, consolidate the ideas into a vision statement and goals (issues).



Identifying objectives

Objectives specify the outcome of the project and answer the following questions: WHO is going to do WHAT, WHEN and TO WHAT EXTENT? When writing objectives, it is useful to remember to:

- Use only one or maximum two sentences for each objective.
- Prioritise the objectives (rank them)
- Don't confuse objectives (ends) with methods (means). An objective emphasises what will be done and when, whereas a method explains who or how it will be done.
- Make them SMART, i.e.

Specific: what do you want to happen? Use exact language, action verbs and quantifiable numbers.

Measurable: will you know when the objective is achieved? Measure outcomes numerically or descriptively (quantity, quality, cost).

Achievable: is it possible to achieve given the available resources and time?

Relevant: is it relevant to all stakeholders and the real problem? Will it have an effect on the desired goal or strategy?

Time-bound: when will this objective be accomplished?



Take Action



STEP 8: Choose one issue to focus on

- Identify the issues (goals) raised by most people that are easy to solve.
- Prioritise the issues to be worked on.

STEP 9: Develop a plan of action

- Tease out the means (methods) for achieving the objectives of the identified goal(s).
- Once you have solved the first issue, move onto the next one.

STEP 10: Communicate with the community

- Keep the community informed using short and simple messages.
- Be open to suggestions and ideas from the community.

Some Tools for Taking Action

Pair-wise ranking

A rapid and simple way to select the most important issues facing a community. Using the results from Step 7, a preliminary list of issues facing a community is generated. A group of people then vote on the issues, based on which issue most people raised and which is the easiest and quickest to solve.

Action plans

To be effective, it is best to pursue only a few objectives at a time, preferably ones that are likely to succeed in a short period of time. Having generated ideas for achieving the objective, decide which will be carried forward. Then, create an action plan which will include:

- A timeframe
- A prioritised list of tasks to do
- People responsible for each task
- A list of resources required including materials, facilities and funds.
- Communications strategy, to keep the broader community informed. For example, updates on the community notice board/website; regular newsletter; open days; information boards in shopping malls, etc.

Plan–Do–Review

Keeping track of the issues is important. The Plan–Do–review tool is a simple and practical exercise that helps in managing projects and activities.



Benefits of Community Involvement

When people feel they 'belong' to a neighbourhood which is theirs through their own efforts, then it will become a place which is worth struggling to retain and develop. People will safeguard what they have helped to create. (Lord Scarman and Tony Gibson, The Guardian, 11 December 1991)

Some of the benefits of involving local communities are:

1. Better decisions

Local knowledge is the best source of information about an area, and harnessing that knowledge results in better decision making.

2. More resources

Local government's limited resources and capacity can be supplemented by involving local people who have a vested interest in making development work.

3. Active citizenry

Local people working together and shaping their environment creates a sense of community and promotes social cohesion.

4. Greater credibility

Involving the local community in planning is part of people's statutory right to participate in local decision making and may avoid time-wasting conflicts.

5. Sustainable development

People who are part of the process to develop an area feel a sense of ownership and are more likely to maintain and manage the neighbourhood.

Community Ambassadors

Ambassadors are a critical aspect of the Know your Block – Make a Great Place campaign. They may be community leaders (councillors, traditional leaders, school principals, priests and imams, and heads of local organisations) or prominent residents (e.g. leading sport personalities, singers and musicians, artists, poets and writers).

Ambassadors honour, highlight and celebrate the achievements of places, giving a profile to the area and adding value to the community's efforts. They create and promote an enabling environment for communities to realise Great Places. Their role is crucial for encouraging unity among the community, promoting cohesive practices and values that achieve diversity, and giving space to new and emerging leaders.

Ambassador pledge

In the quest to create, develop and maintain Great Places,

- ✓ I will identify and support community initiatives that work towards uniting and uplifting communities.
- ✓ I will strive to make my Great Place known.
- ✓ I will encourage youth and older people who 'know their block' and are working for the common good.
- ✓ I will encourage all to get to know their block and to gather people together to do good.
- ✓ I will mentor and assist potential and budding leaders.
- ✓ I will support SAPI in their quest to identify and promote Great Places.



Ward Committees and Residents' Associations



Communities can organise in a number of ways, from an informal group of people who share a common interest (e.g. literacy) to a formally constituted body such as a ratepayers' association. A neighbourhood forum brings together all residents to improve service provision and take up actions to make the neighbourhood a better place. From the humble beginnings of a small informal neighbourhood forum, it is possible to establish a ratepayers' (or residents'/civic) association. Such associations are formal bodies that can lobby authorities for change, represent people and make a difference to a neighbourhood or community.

Having established the geographic spread of the neighbourhood, a more formal association may help to present the interests of citizens better. A ratepayers' association requires a constitution, some simple rules, a framework for how the association will operate, how it will select leaders or representatives, how often this will happen, when it will meet on a regular basis, how decisions are made, and the objectives that bring all citizens together. A body corporate is a form of a residents' association, whereby (as stated in the Sectional Title Act) all sectional owners on a property are equal partners in the ownership, upkeep and maintenance of the property.

Ratepayers' or residents' associations are recognised by the municipalities and, once registered, are informed of developments within their area. Elected ward councillors are obliged to form representative ward committees to interact with the community. A ward committee consists of the councillor as the chairperson and up to 10 members from the ward who are elected by the community they serve. The primary function of a ward committee is to be a formal communication channel between the community and the municipal council. Ward committees support councillors in working with the community by representing and building relationships with the community.

Additional Resources

<http://www.sapi.org.za>

(Various manuals and handbooks on community organising, neighbourhood organising and transformative community organising).

<http://www.etu.org.za/toolbox>

(useful tools for community organisers).

<http://www.sacplan.org.za>

<http://www.citizenshandbook.org>

(practical assistance for active citizens).

<http://www.communityplanning.net>

(best practice information for community planning).

<http://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org>

(UK website about community planning).

Some Common Issues



ISSUE	Who is responsible for this?	Who to contact
Crime	SAPS and Municipality	Ward Councillor and metro police in metros Local police station
Grime (littering)	Municipality deals with refuse collection	Ward Councillor and refuse department in the municipality
Traffic Lights	Municipality deals with local roads	Ward Councillor and roads department in the municipality
Potholes	Municipality deals with maintenance of roads	Ward Councillor and roads department in the municipality
Sidewalks and pavements	Municipality deals with local roads	Ward Councillor and roads department in the municipality
Open manholes	Municipality deals with local roads	Ward Councillor and roads department in the municipality
Illegal trading	Municipality deals with demarcations and permissions	Ward Councillor and metro police in metros
Street lights not working	Municipality deals with the street lighting	Ward Councillor and electricity department
Open spaces, overgrown grass and trees on the sidewalks	Parks are a municipal responsibility	Ward Councillor and the parks department
Leaking water pipes in streets	Water provision to households is a municipal function	Ward Councillor and the water department

Issues in rural settings may differ, being linked to land usages, cattle and animal management and use of natural resources. In these instances the traditional leaders, councillors and the local municipality can be consulted. Religious leaders can also play a critical role in supporting communities.

Examples of Community Initiatives



It is often through small steps that great places are made. For example, a few households coming together in order to clean up the open space near their homes or to pool resources that enables them to bulk buy. From these small beginnings, larger groups form and bigger actions are organised, for instance, a neighbourhood watch or a co-operative. Ultimately, communities may become partners in planning the development of their neighbourhood, suburb or township. Whatever the scale, as these examples show, sometimes it takes the actions of just a few people to make great places.

Looking After the Environment

Open spaces are an important aspect of any neighbourhood, where all residents can come together regardless of age, race and social status. Healthy public spaces can be the springboard for revitalising and strengthening communities and can help build a sense of civic identity and culture.

A neighbourhood comprising of two streets got together to clean up an open space. After arranging a house meeting to discuss what can be done, the households adjacent to the open space decided to clean up the park on a Saturday afternoon. All the families were involved. Each household brought black refuse bin bags and picked up the litter, in the process teaching the children about the importance of not littering. The effort to clean the open space took up an afternoon, and brought the community together. Upon hearing of the initiative, the Residents' Association approached the City Council for some support. The Council

responded to the efforts of community and instigated regular grass cutting, a proper fence and a bin to be placed in the open space.

In another effort, residents in a gated community spent an afternoon cleaning up a local stream. Parents and children were all involved in getting their hands dirty. This effort to look after the natural environment brought neighbours together and for the first time residents were able to speak about something other than security and the escalating crime in the area.

Improving Safety

Crime is a big concern in many communities. A common response is to increase security measures, but crime concerns can also provide an opportunity to bring the community together.

In a neighbourhood made up of about 19 different blocks of flats, a spate of break-ins led to the formation of a neighbourhood watch. The newly formed neighbourhood watch contacted the SAPS community liaison officer and the CPF in order to register and to receive support. SAPS explained the procedures to be followed, gave some tips on how to liaise with the police and what to do when a suspected crime is being committed. The police also provided each building with a security assessment. Certain problem areas were identified, including the need to improve lighting on the streets. With help of the ward councillor, the community lobbied the municipality to improve the lighting, which was done.



As this example shows, rallying communities to unite around an issue is a start but is not enough. The relevant authorities, such as SAPS and the City Council, have to be lobbied to improve their services.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) encourages the formation of neighbourhood watches, to assist by being the eyes and ears of SAPS in the community. Neighbourhood watches form part of the Community Police Forum (CPF), which is present at all police stations.

Greening an Area

Guerrilla gardening describes the unauthorised cultivation of plants or vegetables on vacant public or private land. Guerrilla gardens promote food security and alleviate poverty..

In one affluent suburb, residents transformed the verges outside their houses into 'guerrilla gardens'. They planted vegetables in these gardens and allowed passers-by to help themselves.

In a small public park, the owner of a garden center planted a food garden, based on permaculture principles, where visitors could harvest the available edible food for free. When the municipality's Parks Department found out about the garden, it expressed some concerns but has since given formal permission

for the planting to continue in a portion of the park. The initiative has since spread, with the support of friends and neighbours, to the adjacent semi-industrial area where planting on road verges has helped not only to beautify the area but also to screen off unsightly factories.

Contributing to the Economy

Many of the actions that contribute to making great places also encourage economic participation. Neighbourhoods can take many practical actions, from engaging with local business and local government to involve the unemployed in work opportunities that upgrade the area to forming a co-operative.

The South African government promotes co-operatives as a way of contributing to economic growth, poverty reduction and employment creation. A co-operative refers to a farm, business, or other organisation which is owned and run jointly by its members, who share the profits or benefits. Co-operatives are seen as an ideal way of empowering the poor, as they are owned by those who use their services, are participatory, responsive to local needs and able to mobilise communities.

A co-operative buying association negotiates discounts for their more than 25 000 household members, based on their consumer spending at retailers. At the end of the year, the total annual profit is distributed among members through cash bonuses, based on the individual's short-term insurance premiums. The association also provides benefits that include hire purchase finance, cash loans and short-term insurance.

A form of co-operative is a stokvel. A basic stokvel has 12 or more members who each contribute a certain amount each month (from R50 to R1000 generally). Each month a different member receives the money. For example, if 12 members each contribute R500 a month, then once a year each member receives a R6000 payout. Some stokvels operate like Savings and Credit Cooperatives, where members 'deposit' money for saving and are able to take out loans at good interest.

Mobilising the Youth

Youth are generally inquisitive to try new things and are the future leaders of South Africa. They are comfortable with social media, able to create a buzz and keep everyone informed of what's happening.

One organisation, founded by six young people under the age of 25 years, has grown to 20 members, all with experience in dialogue facilitation and youth development. The organisation targets youth aged between 16 and 19 years old from various communities. The aim is to develop ethical, innovative and creative leaders who value constructive dialogue. The dialogue and interactive activities relate to issues of social responsibility, leadership and activism, in a comfortable and safe environment. Nearly 800 youth have participated in their flagship programme that engages youth on multiple levels with regards to leadership training and community-based activism.

A young man with a passion for social entrepreneurship founded a non-profit organisation in the township where he grew up, a place grappling with under-development and poverty. He runs the organisation with a group of volunteers and professional trainers. It originally was a performing-art project but, after in-depth research of the community needs, expanded its projects. Today its community initiatives include computer training, pottery and craftwork, as well as school and community outreach programmes. The organisation also helps community members find employment, through circulating job adverts in its internet café and helping with the drawing up of CVs. This social entrepreneur's ultimate dream is to see the majority of youngsters in his township become self-reliant and able to find jobs or start businesses.



Community Based Planning

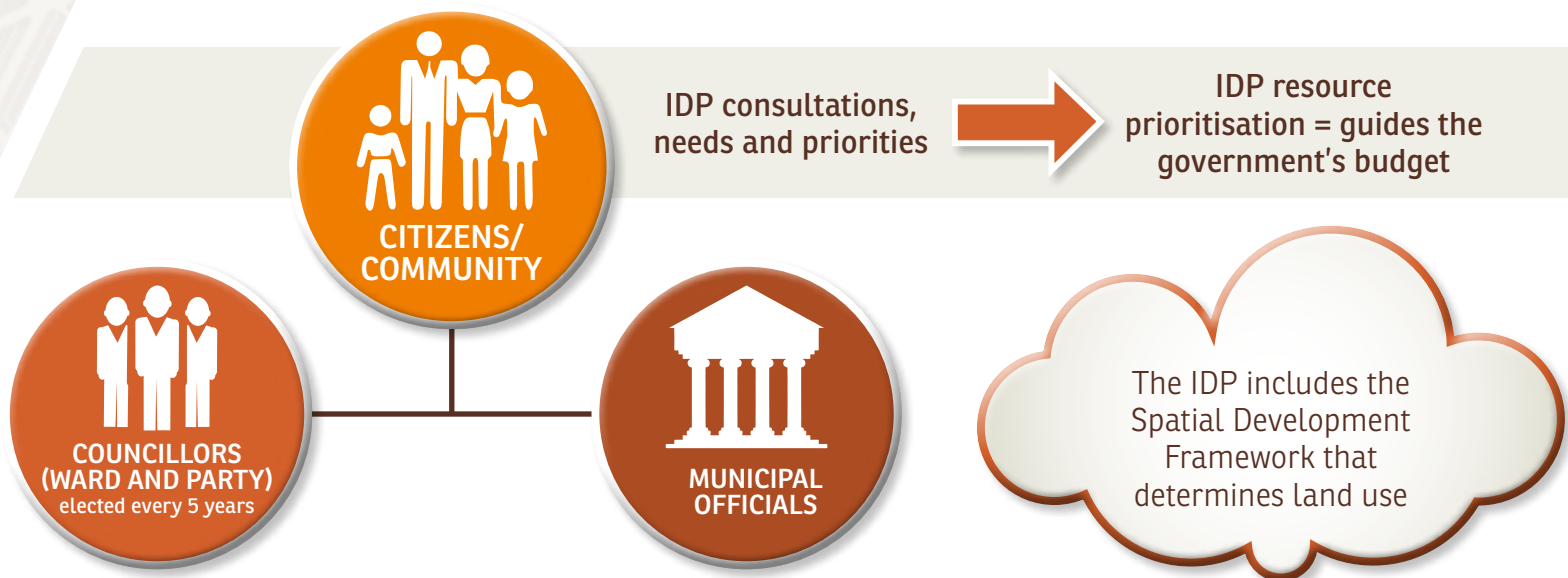


Community participation lies right at the heart of sustainable development. Sustainable communities will take different forms from place to place, but one thing that none of them will be able to do without is a broad and deep level of participation. (Action Towards Local Sustainability, website introduction, 1999, from www.community-planning.net)

Community participation is central to integrated development planning required by the Municipal Systems Act (2000), which stipulates that municipalities must develop five-year integrated development plans (IDPs). Contained in the IDPs should be neighbourhood plans, which can be very simple or go into considerable detail.

The National Development Plan also recognises the importance of active citizenry and that 'sound spatial governance requires strong professionals and mobilised communities'.¹ It recommends that citizens be supported and incentivised to participate in developing neighbourhood visions and plans, that the state assists with resources to enable civil society to participate, and that the 'message needs to be sent out that people's own efforts are important'.²

The IDP sets the tone and context for Great Places



Some Common Principles

The following universal common principles underlie community-based planning:

Communication. Use all available media to communicate with the community, using plain language and visual presentation of information.

Acceptance. Accept that people have different agendas, get involved for different reasons and have varying levels of commitment.

Partnership. Encourage partnerships where possible between various interest groups, neighbourhoods, businesses, policy-makers and other stakeholders.

Inclusion. Include all sections of the community, even people who are not supporters, and create an environment that encourages different perspectives and the participation of all people.

Transparency. Be honest about and document progress/set-backs, as well as who is involved and leading the processes.

Agreement. Agree to clearly understood rules and boundaries that apply to all participants.

Learning. Avoid re-investing the wheel, learn from others who have relevant experience or knowledge, and instil a culture that encourages innovation and learning.



The Planning Profession



In great cities, spaces as well as places are designed and built: walking, witnessing, being in public, are as much part of the design and purpose as is being inside to eat, sleep, make shoes or love or music. The word citizen has to do with cities, and the ideal city is organized around citizenship – around participation in public life. (Rebecca Solnit, Wanderlust: A History of Walking).

Planning is concerned with the design, functioning and management of urban environments, from a small rural settlement, to townships and large cities. It covers many different aspects, for example, sustainable development, spatial planning, land use management, housing, urban regeneration, environmental management, local economic development, tourism planning and urban environmental design.

Most of the work done by planners concerns the idea of 'place'. Planners shape the physical layout of cities, through zoning areas for different types of development (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial) and density. They anticipate how a city will function as it develops, by planning how buildings link to the infrastructure (streets, utilities and transportation corridors), fit into the local economy or affect the natural environment. They also work to preserve and improve the spatial and visual character of place.

Planners work in different settings, such as for property developers, with architects, in provincial or municipal planning departments or as private consultants. Their work can involve a variety of subjects, including land use

planning, urban design, transport and infrastructure planning, use of information technology, heritage and conservation, commercial and industrial development, or policy making and implementation.

Planners can help manage the sustainable growth of towns and cities by developing long- and short-term plans aimed at optimising land use, creating communities and revitalising physical facilities. Given South Africa's growing population and fast urbanisation, the demand for planners can only increase. The following further education institutions offer planning courses: Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), Durban University of Technology (DUT), North-West University (NWU), University of Cape Town (UCT), University of Free State (UFS), University of Johannesburg (UJ), University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), University of Pretoria (UP), University of Stellenbosch (US), University of Venda (Univen), University of the Witwatersrand (Wits).

The majority of urban and regional planners are employed by local governments where their job includes conferring with the different actors, such as land developers, civic leaders, elected officials, as well as other municipal departments.

For more information on the planning profession, visit www.sapi.org.za



SOUTH AFRICAN CITY FUTURES

"Visualising the Futures of our Neighbourhoods"

is a project about doing things differently. This project is to encourage South African cities and their constituent neighbourhoods to start thinking differently about their future. The intention is to implement an innovative project that is part research, part radical co-creation which combines the use of futures thinking, multi-stakeholder dialogue, and multiple forms of visualisation to reflect upon the future of urban neighbourhoods to 2030.

A City Futures is an initiative of urban partners:
South African Cities Network SACN
African Centre for Cities (ACC)
CSIR
The Architects' Collective
Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA)
Mandela Bay Development Agency (NMBDA).

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