





## **Increasing the good will decrease the bad**

Neighbourhood help working group (2012-2014) set up by the Council for Crime Prevention

The given task was to clarify the significance of neighbourhood help in citizens' view of safety



## Off to fieldwork

Work was carried out by reaching out to the people and over the past two years we met dozens of civil groups, who through their actions build a safe community in their own neighbourhoods.



## **Significance of dialogue**

On grass-root level

Development from bottom up



## **Accessibility**

Essential questions in inclusion and participation



## **Media cooperation and influencing**

Communicating about the work whilst working.

Opportunities for participation and influencing were offered.

The articles, interviews, blog posts, surveys, use of otakantaa.fi –service, the celebration of European neighbours' day and the campaign on May 23rd 2014.



## **Nordic cooperation project**

Due to the efforts of the working group, a Nordic cooperation looking into the neighbourly help and residents' possibilities in influencing the safety and comfort of their living environment was initiated. The project has been nominated funding by the Nordic council of ministers. The results will be reported by the Nordic council of ministers in their series TemaNord in the autumn of 2014.



## Inspiring examples

The group did not see initiation of new pilot projects necessary. Instead, the background material of the report depicts numerous existing projects and forms of activity that can function as examples and inspiration of neighbourhood help.



## Guidelines

What is the shared core message of our working group?

The guidelines and the broad background material was handed to the Council for Crime Prevention on April 30th 2014.

The guidelines present essential observations of the neighbourhood help, local democracy and participation. In addition, examples are given to the ways residents themselves can influence the safety and comfort of their own living environment.



## **Tools for inclusion are also tools for crime prevention**

The use of new democratic tools on both local and national levels promotes safety and comfort.

Using them in our work was part of the process.



## The conclusion was...

- Regardless of people's socio-economical or ethnic background, the common message seems to be the same. The feeling of safety increases when one knows their neighbours and has no need to fear them.



- Help is available when needed, and inclusion and opportunities for influencing can be practiced in one's closest environment. It does not seem to be more complicated than that.



- The feeling of safety is created through interaction and trust- not barbed wires or surveillance cameras.



- By reinforcing communal structures the people are enabled to create solutions to problems in their residential areas.



- Citizens should be given a concrete possibility to influence the development of their residential area through for example participatory budgeting.



## Neighbourhood help

Can mean concrete help among individuals. It can occur as everyday consideration of others or as more organized volunteer work.



**”Today I will give help, tomorrow I ask for and receive help myself ”**

Offers for help and requests for help encounter in different ways. In addition to the natural flow of information and traditional neighbourly help there is an organized transmission of volunteer work.



## **Volunteer work and helping of others are not age bound**

Everyone has something they can do well and together we are able to do anything. It is a waste not to utilize human resources.



## **Participating in collective activity is an opportunity not an obligation**

The easier the participation on different levels is made, the greater the chance for everyone to find their way of participating.

Besides concrete results, collective activity has a positive influence on perceived safety and comfort too.



### **1. PROPOSAL:**

The possibilities for unemployed to participate in civic activity and volunteer work must be improved. This should be done in a way that does not compromise his or her livelihood.



## **”It takes a village to prevent one crime”**

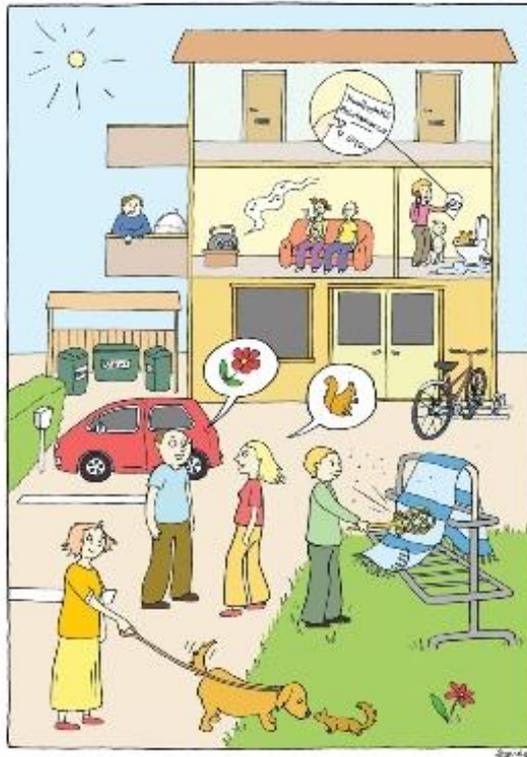
Responsibility for the unsafe or unkempt living environment is often left to the officials. The possibilities for individuals or community to act on the issue either proactively or restoratively are often overlooked.



Instead , people fear for the possible consequences of an intervention. To intervene in a grievance is however important neighbourly help and an indication of community responsibility. A community that functions well will prevent crimes.

## **2. PROPOSAL :**

Information and know-how on civil rights to intervene in grievances shall actively be offered to people of all ages.



## **Neighbour conciliation can be used as a work method in disputes between neighbours**

### **3. PROPOSAL :**

Impartial neighbour conciliation should be promoted by the officials, companies that possess apartments and individual housing companies. Conciliation is important in the prevention of conflict situations.



## **Premises are needed for residents cooperation**

Working together has more advantage than individuals doing the same on their own. Cooperation requires planning and easily attainable meeting places.



**Premises for organizations and communities as well as increase in the degree of utilization of public premises**

**4. PROPOSAL :**

Ownership of public premises should be thought of in a new way that enables communal spirit and tenant activity: "Municipal premises are premises of the municipal citizen".



## Promoting the sense of community at times requires "communal caretakers"

Real estate management and maintenance might be in order, but no one is liable for the social cooperation and communality.

**5. PROPOSAL** : An agent who promotes communality should be nominated in connection with public premises. The nomination would be the social equivalent of a janitor/care taker.



## **Support structure is a requirement for successful volunteer work**

From the point of view of crime prevention, volunteer work has a significant societal task. This demands structure and resources. Volunteer work is affordable but not free.



## **Organization creates stability and trustworthiness for volunteer work**

Excessive highlighting of the risks and responsibility issues related to volunteer work might lead to a rise of the threshold for operation. The challenge is to find an agent to coordinate volunteer work, especially in the sparsely populated areas.



## **Strengthen the network cooperation- agents ought to build networks!**

Residential areas have multiple agents: residents, municipality, officials, congregation, housing cooperatives, organizations, and local companies. Often they operate oblivious of each other. In order to enhance the effectivity of the operation, the actors should seek ways for identifying the work of different agents as part of a larger body of operators. Also, it is essential to invest in open communication.



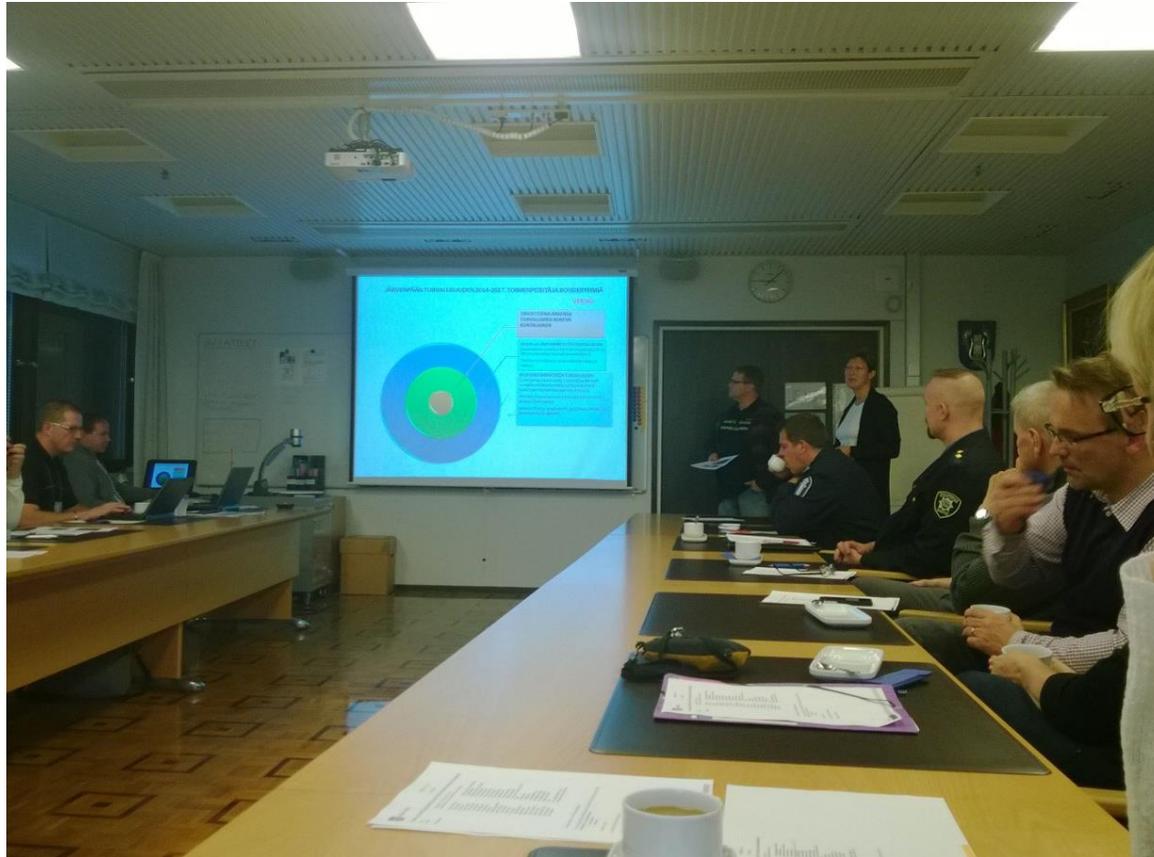
## Legislation must be altered

Momentary legislation does not recognize the idea of the modern civic activity. Legislation and its interpretation should encourage and enable civic activity instead of setting restrictions for it.



## **The real chances for residents to have an influence are essential in the development of inclusion**

**6. PROPOSAL :**§ 27 in the current municipal law enables a hearing of citizens as well as their inclusion. Municipalities should use this possibility more and the interpretation of the law should be enforced to bind municipalities. Gathered information on the local possibilities of influencing should be easily attainable.



## **Identifying the interface between authoritative work and civic action**

The distinction between the public officials and civic action must be maintained clear when promoting civil activity in crime prevention.



## **Safety services even in sparsely populated areas must be organized by the officials**

No sort of self-defence or seizure right based civic activity to protect people or property should be developed to operate beside the police .



## **National programme for crime prevention to serve citizenship and civil society**

### **7. PROPOSAL:**

Council for Crime Prevention's National programme for crime prevention Safetybee (1999) will be updated to serve today's citizenship and civil society. The program ought to identify the ways and possibilities that citizens have in crime prevention and in the promotion of perceived safety. Respectively, the actors of the civic society will be added to the composition of the council for crime prevention.



## **One step ahead in advancing safety in Finland**

The Neighbourhood help working group suggests that the council for crime prevention should together with the civic society advance, follow and report on the fulfillment and impact of the given measures.



**Neighbours' Day on 23rd of May 2014 at 14.00 POP UP  
ILO**

Release event and After Work together with local operators and citizens!

In the event Finnish Refugee Council presents  
*The Neighbourhood act of the Year 2014 award*

**Welcome along!**

**Thank you!**

A great big thank you to all of You,  
mentioning no one, forgetting no one.



**Source: Neighbourhood help in Finland  
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## The composition of the Neighbourhood help working group 2014:

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- specialist **Titi Gävert** of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
- Chief of customership **Taina Hakamäki** of SATO
- Chief of regional work **Päivi Männistö** City of Helsinki/of the Municipal union
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- Negotiating official **Juha Toropainen** yMinistry of the Environment (in memoriam May 2014)
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In addition:

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- **Karolina Henriksson**, planning officer in Ministry of Justice, project worker in the Nordic project for Neighbourhood help.