

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Name of the organization: Estonian Neighbourhood Watch ENHWA (ENWA)

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| Project purpose (one sentence): | <p>The aim of the program is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• help people protect themselves and their properties,• to reduce fear of crime and• improve their local environment <p>by improved home security, greater vigilance, fostering a community spirit and improving their living environment.</p> |
| Category / Categories | Neighbourhood watch |

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| Project title: | Neighbourhood watch (NW) |
| Country of Origin: | Estonia |
| Project description: | <p>Objectives: The aim of NHW is to prevent crime and vandalism within the neighbourhood involving the community members, local government, police and other interested parties into the action.</p> <p>Activities The first condition of starting with neighbourhood watch in one district is that people should realize that they need and they want to participate in this movement. If the initiative comes from police or the ENHWA, then probably they start with NHW but the activity might be not so effective. So if there is initiative inside one area then it is important that they will receive adequate information about NHW. Usually the people organize a meeting and the representative of the ENHWA (with police if possible) comes to introduce the possibilities of NHW. Then people can decide – is this what they need and do they want to participate in NHW.</p> <p>If they want to start with NHW, the first step will be gathering the data of participants of NHW – name, address, e-mail, telephone number(s), car number and colour. Each participant confirms with his/her signature that they agree with using this data in the NHW activities. So after the meeting there is enough time for everybody to sign in to the NHW sector if they have the interest. Of course, later it is also possible to sign in or sign out. Later this data will be updated at least once a year but usually after every new member joins or when somebody leaves the NHW sector.</p> <p>The members of NHW sector choose a leader who will represent them in the co-operation agreement, in NHW meetings and will be a contact person for other institutions. One obligation of NHW sector</p> |

leader is also to update the data of NHW members.

Neighbourhood watch co-operation agreement

After the data of the NHW members is gathered, the next step will be signing the contract. It is co-operation contract between four (in Tallinn five) parties - NHW sector, the police, the local government and the ENHWA (in Tallinn also the Municipality police). The contract is a joint agreement that we all make an effort to create more safety in this area and we work in close co-operation. The contract is signed by the highest positions of the parties – NHW sector leader (elected by the members of the NHW sector), the mayor, the head of the police in current district and the managing director of the ENHWA. The process of contract signing has very important meaning to people who start with NHW. They will see that their activity is noticed and recognized at the highest level of authorities and of course it is a good opportunity to discuss the possible solutions to the problems which the NHW sector might have.

What happens after the agreement?

After the contract signing the members of NHW sector will receive a folder, where we put different kind of advice-leaflets and information booklets about safety, of course there is a paper with contact data of their neighbours (the paper with important numbers) and some information about our co-operation partners in the field of safety business.

The neighbourhood watch sector receives placards from the ENHWA, those are signs for strangers that people living in this area are observant and who react if they see something suspicious.

The actions of neighbourhood watch members

The main principle of NHW is that if you see something suspicious, you do react. How does one know how to react? How do one knows when one should do something – call to neighbour, police or to local government. Usually new members of NHW have those questions. To answer those questions and give basic information about safety, the ENHWA organizes training. This meeting, where all the members of this NHW sector are invited, is usually held shortly after the agreement signing. The ENHWA, the police and local government are sending their representatives to the meeting to share information and answer the questions. If the neighbours weren't familiar with each other earlier, this meeting gives a good opportunity to get to know each other.

The paper with important numbers.

As mentioned in paragraph two the members of NHW sector give the contact data to the NHW sector leader. The ENHWA makes a paper with the data of neighbours, police, local government contacts and the ENHWA contacts. For certain all the emergency numbers are included as well. So this paper helps the neighbours to react if there is some kind of problem. For example if one neighbour sees a stranger in his neighbour's garden, he can make a call to neighbour and share the information. If it appears that there should be nobody in the garden, they will call the police and possible theft will be prevented. Or another example from the apartment building where suddenly one women notices that there is water dripping from the ceiling. She goes to the upstairs neighbours apartment but there is

nobody at home. Luckily she has the neighbours' contacts in her NHW materials, so she can make a call and prevent big damages. Those examples are from everyday life and could happen with anybody. Usually we tend not to notice those things (first example) or we can do nothing and just wait for neighbour (second example). In neighbourhood watch it is important that you NOTICE and then you REACT. How to learn to notice – we think that it comes with time and experiences but also with following the example of other people. How to react - this basic information will be shared in the first training of NHW sector and whenever the need for new knowledge appears.

Being a neighbourhood watch member should be integrated in person's everyday life. Actually there are not many extra duties or obligations for NHW member. The NHW sector leader is a contact person for other co-operation agreement parties and if there are some meetings or roundtables, this person is invited to represent the NHW sector. Once a year the ENHWA organizes a general meeting where all the NHW sector leaders are invited. This is a meeting to develop the ENHWA and to discuss the future activities.

Evaluation

Neighbourhood watch has been practiced in Estonia already ten years. The members usually feel and notice the results of their activity but what is the overall impact? Is NHW an effective model in reducing fear of crime and preventing crimes? To get answers to those questions the ENHWA ordered surveys from the University of Tartu. The first survey was conducted in 2004, second in 2006 and third 2008. In 2007 and 2009 the Ministry of Justice conducted the audit of ENHWA activities including the period of 2003-2009. Next survey with the University of Tartu is planned to take place at the end of 2010.

Firstly about the survey which was conducted by the University of Tartu. In this paper there is a description of the latest survey which was conducted in 2008. The aim was to find out how the members of NHW sector evaluate the effectiveness of NHW, how they rate the co-operation with police, local government and also the ENHWA. Also we wanted to know what would be the suggestions for future activities.

The target group was selected from the biggest areas where NHW is implemented – Tallinn city, Harju and Viljandi county. The sample was 383 respondents (members of different NHW sectors) and they were interviewed through telephone. The questionnaire included 36 questions which were divided into different blocks.

The first block gave an overview how the respondents evaluate the NHW in the field of crime prevention. 85% of respondents said that their home has become safer after starting with NHW. 72% believe that the possible help is now closer than before becoming a member of NHW. 18% of respondents know that in their sector there has been prevented a crime, 10% know a case where the action of NHW has helped to catch a criminal. The author sees this as a very good result considering how rarely we actually witness a crime. Also this

is a data which is not available anywhere else, police is recording only the committed crimes, not the prevented ones.

The second block of the interview was about the relations between neighbours. 13% of respondents said the relations have become better after starting with NHW. The rest reported the relations remained the same.

The third block described the actions of the NHW sector. 48% of respondents have helped to improve the safety inside the NHW sector (new locks, safety doors, gates, patrolling etc).

We also asked about the motivation to participate in NHW activities. The main motivation is the need but also already achieved results. So if it is peaceful and there are no problems, people don't think about NHW, it is integrated in their everyday life. Author thinks that it is also a good result because NHW shouldn't be guarding and watching but acting when the intervention is needed.

The survey gave information also about the relations between NHW sector with police and local government. 20% of respondents think that the co-operation with police has improved. But most of the respondents consider the co-operation with police to be at the same level as before the NHW participation. Co-operation cannot be one sided and there is enough room for development for police forces and also NHW members.

Co-operation with local government is occasional and many respondents actually do not know anything about it. This is also a field where improvements are necessary.

The last block of the survey was about the training need. Almost every respondent indicated need for some kind of training – 83% of respondents need a training how to act in emergency situation, 75% need training about law enforcement legislation, 71% need information how to make their home safer (technical possibilities) and 41% need more information how to improve NHW activities in their district. So this is the actual working field for the ENHWA because one of our aims is to offer different trainings to our members. But there is one problem that makes it difficult to satisfy the training-need. In the research there was also a question about the time resources to take part in those trainings and it came out that only half of the respondents have enough time to actually take part in the trainings. So we cannot draw conclusions here that organising training will improve the quality of NHW activity, because many people just do not have time to participate in the training. But this is a subject where the ENHWA has to find some solution with NHW members.

To sum up the survey the results show that NHW helps to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime. The members of NHW know that the necessary help is closer and if there is a need they can co-operate with their neighbours. The ENHWA co-ordinates the works of NHW sector, the main duties are counselling, organising trainings and composing informational materials. The unique co-operation model- local people, local government, the police and organisation

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| | <p>who co-ordinates the structure – has received the support of all parties and is effective in preventing crime and reducing fear of crime.</p> <p>Shortly about the audit of actions which was conducted by the Estonian Ministry of Justice in summer 2009. The Ministry of Justice has supported financially the ENHWA actions (up to year 2008) and the main aim of this audit was to find out if the work which has been done with their support has been effective and had influence on the target group. The auditor studied the reports of the ENHWA work during 2003-2008, made interviews with the managing director and employees of the ENHWA and also conducted a survey among NHW sector leaders. Auditors final report gives the information that neighbourhood watch is an effective method to prevent crime and to increase the safety in one community, neighbourhood watch gives an opportunity for people to do something for the community themselves, not to wait that somebody else will do. The auditor recommended continuing the NHW implementation.</p> <p>The ENHWA has tried to get crime statistic from the police as well but it is very complicated because of the structure of the data base. So it is not possible to relay on police statistic and analyse the effect of NHW. Still, in 2006 one police officer in Lasnamäe, city district of Tallinn, made a comparison between two apartment houses. The houses situated closely to each other and both had 90 apartments. In one house there was NHW, in the second there was not. The house with NHW had no crime against property during the period of January- December 2005; the other house had 7 events. It is not possible to draw deep conclusions of this example but this is here just to support the surveys described above.</p> <p>Replication. NHW activities are replicable and easily applicable for any interested country.</p> |
| Project Start date: | May 2000 |
| Project Status: | Ongoing |
| Is project still running?: | Yes |
| Date of last review: | December 2010 |
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| Documents: | |