

Definition in Depth of Partnership

January 2008

Prof. Paul Ekblom

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Purpose

This definition seeks to portray a considered understanding of the concept of partnership. The focus is on what partnership is for – why it adds value to crime prevention and community safety work. The ultimate aim is to help us gain a comprehensive and explicit picture of the key dimensions of partnership – to organise what we know about it, when it is needed and how best to implement and evaluate it. The specific contexts for partnership will of course differ between countries. The aim is to achieve understandings that are either ‘universal’ (they apply irrespective of national, regional or local context) or ‘contingent’ (which apply in certain, known, contexts).

Origin and Background

The definition originated in a paper, ‘[Shared Responsibilities, Pooled Resources: a Partnership Approach to Crime Prevention](#)’ (Ekblom 2004). The paper itself is a fuller version of material in the Final Activity Report Prepared by the Committee of Experts on Partnership in Crime Prevention (PC-PA), adopted by the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) at its 52nd plenary session (June 2003) and approved by Committee of Ministers in September 2003. The ideas were developed collectively by the Committee of Experts (2000-2002) in response to an original outline presented by Paul Ekblom.

Outline of Paper

The paper in which this definition is set out first develops the meaning of the term ‘partnership’, by focusing in progressive detail on the key concepts on which the term is built. It then focuses in a similar

way on crime prevention and related concepts such as crime reduction and community safety. This is followed by a discussion of why crime prevention in particular needs a partnership approach; an analysis of responsibility for delivering crime prevention; and a further exploration of some central dimensions of prevention, relating in particular to the concept of community. Then, in a change of direction, the paper considers problems and costs of partnership, and a design-based approach to overcoming or controlling these costs whilst securing the benefits. This includes a discussion of evaluation.

Reference

Ekblom, P. (2004). *Shared Responsibilities, Pooled Resources: a Partnership Approach to Crime Prevention*, In P. Ekblom and A. Wyvekens A Partnership Approach to Crime Prevention. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=1782

The Definition of Partnership

Partnership is an institutional arrangement that shades into a philosophy. It is a way of enhancing performance in the delivery of a common goal, by the taking of joint responsibility and the pooling of resources by different agents, whether these are public or private, collective or individual. The added value from such a collaborative approach usually stems from an enhanced ability to tackle problems whose solutions span the division of labour, and/or centre on a particular locality. The agents in partnership may bring with them conflicting or competing interests, and different perspectives, ideologies and cultures –

so in democratic and legally-regulated contexts they seek to act together without loss of their separate professional identities, without unacceptable or illegal blurring of powers and interests, and without loss of accountability.

In the [original paper](#) each of the principal terms introduced in this definition were themselves defined in a consistent system.