

Session 1, Working Group 2: *Women and Gender*

“Safety Audit for Women” Experiences of Dar es Salaam Anna Mtani, Safer Cities Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

1.0 BACKGROUND

Definition: What is a safety Audit for women?
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It is a participatory tool used to examine specific locations within a community to assess how safe it feels for women

- ◆ It is a pro-active way for community members, women, builders and policy makers to improve safety.
- ◆ It is a tool for change not only in terms of physical design but in the way women’s concerns on safety is dealt with e.g. fear for sexual assault, harassment and rape, free mobility, etc.
- ◆ It enables women to work together by using their many years of experience, local knowledge and expertise in urban survival to address a common problem – their safety.

If the most vulnerable group is used as a criterion to examine safety standards in a particular area say women, elderly, disabled etc, then other groups will also benefit from the results.

The basis: A selected area is examined to evaluate the potential danger for women on the basis of sensibility of women on safety e.g. parking a car close to entrance or exit, walking, jogging, during the day, choosing an escort for evening activity such as going to the hospital, shop or visit a friend.

- ◆ The goal is to make the community/city safe 24 hrs a day for women and other vulnerable groups.
- ◆ Women should not have to modify/limit their behaviours in order to be safe.

2.0 IMPACT OF URBAN PLANNING ON SAFETY ISSUES:

In general terms, urban development planning especially at the level of urban design and layout are very critical factors for both safety (individual safety) and for disaster-response. Unfortunately, the considerations of security very seldom seem to be taken into account with urban design and layout.

- ◆ Urban Planning and design creates urban space which offers greater or lesser opportunities for urban violence or crime to take place eg location of public facilities.
- ◆ Urban Planning and Design should discourage/minimise chances of crime
- ◆ Male planners and designers may not recognise what makes a place seem favourable for crime because men do not have the same intimidation in public places like women.
- ◆ Women’s use of the environment is different from men’s in that:
 - more women lack transport facility such as cars or bicycles, so they walk
 - women have more responsibility to other members of the community such as children, elderly, looking at the sick etc thus spend most of their time attending them, they need to walk in safe places
 - most women are taking up low income jobs with un-usual working hours e.g. cleaners (offices and urban spaces), bars, night-shift jobs like nurses, etc
- ◆ It is only when urban environment is planned to be safer for women (live without fear) that they can participate fully in urban life we can say our cities are safe for everyone.

2.1 Conducting the Safety Audit

2.1.1 How to start:

- Introduce the safety audit to the community or concerned group through the local leadership or whole group e.g. mayor, city council, local MP, other women groups, media, possible funders, etc
- Select a questionnaire or conduct a discussion that will sensitise and establish that safety is an issue for women in the community.

Dar es Salaam has already conducted two safety audits in Manzese and Kurasini. A third area in Mchikichini is under preparation whereby the initial process has started. In this case Manzese will be referred.

Manzese experience: First briefing was done to the ward executive officer, followed by a similar briefing to the Ward Development Committee who agreed to call a meeting for the women in the area for briefing giving them an opportunity to explain their safety perception and agree to participate.

(a) Site selection:

- Depending on the response of the questionnaire or discussion, women select the site
- Map the selected area

Manzese experience: It was agreed in the Ward Development Committee meeting that the safety audit should be conducted in the area that had a strong sungusungu group (Midizini and Mnazi Mmoja). The reason was to establish additional safety needs for women other than the general needs addressed by the Sungusungu (security) group

1. Select a focus group:

A category of women who share a certain environment and perception is selected; call a meeting with the women to set the parameters and locations within the area. These will describe what is most unsafe, enhance awareness on safety issues, and give voice to women's concerns that may not have had a venue for discussion e.g. in view of disabled people, hearing problems, blind, poor, shift workers, women with young children, elderly, blind, language etc.

Manzese experience: The women meeting recommended the names of focus women to participate in the safety audit basing on their duration of staying in the area (the longer they have stayed the better). They set minimum duration not less than 5 years preferably living in a family house (not tenants), leadership experience and community recognition/popularity. Leadership role was an added advantage. This means the focus team is very familiar to the area and to most people. Eight women were selected, four for each area to participate in the audit. The eight women conducted the audit for the two areas.

2. The Audit Team:

The audit can be conducted in-groups in order to serve time. However the groups should be of even numbers i.e. 2,4,6,8, etc. Each group should include a member of the focus team and other local leaders as necessary. Each group is given a copy of the map, questionnaire and checklist to familiarise and conduct the audit on the agreed date and time. Anticipate the weather.

Manzese experience: the whole team of eight women, the Ward executive secretary, Mtaa chairperson and safer cities team participated in the first audit all as one group. It was agreed to conduct the audit in the afternoon after the women had finished with their house-core (duties) but early enough before evening duties catch-up with them.

5. Organising the Audit:

To do an audit it needs a pre-planning.

- (i) Set up a schedule to outline the audit
- (ii) Involve all necessary sectors for support and other assistance.
- (iii) Edit the questionnaires to be sure each member understand in the same way
- (iv) Conduct the audit as agreed – be sure to be in time.
- (v) Orient the co-ordinators on what they should document
- (vi) Document data – on the map or write
- (vii) After the audit, spare some time to discuss the findings and give recommendations.
- (viii) It's good to have some refreshments during or after the audit discussions.
- (ix) Prepare a report and submit to the authorities for implementation.

Manzese experience: The team met at the office of the Mtaa chairperson to organise for the safety audit tour. The group walked as one group from one area to another on different days. After each walk the group set as a team to discuss the findings and made recommendations to address the problems. Findings were:

1. Most streets have been blocked by buildings
2. Unfinished buildings which are used by as hideouts for potential criminals
3. Narrow and dark streets prohibiting vehicular circulation, rescue services such as ambulance and fire
4. Poor visibility due to housing congestion
5. Poor sanitation resulting to floods and spread of communicable diseases
6. Dirt environment due to uncollected wastes
7. Most women are engaged in risky economic activities e.g. selling of local brew in unlighted pubs and risky areas
8. High unemployment among youths
9. Domestic violence is rampant due to drug abuse and alcoholism
10. Sungusungu initiative has helped to reduce crime in the area.

Safer Cities prepared the report, which was later circulated to the audit team for their comments before it was submitted to the Municipality. The report was later presented to the municipality which recommended for a repeated safety audit for purpose of institutionalisation in municipal departments. The repeated safety audit was done to include the municipal staff such as the Engineering, Urban & Environmental Planning and Economic planning departments. The final recommendations were presented to the municipality authority for further action.

Safety audit as a tool for crime prevention it is also an entry points for environmental enhancement and economic improvement. The recommendations that were raised by the women in Manzese or any other location may touch environmental, socio-economical and cultural improvement as key aspect for crime prevention benefiting not only the women but also the whole community. Not all recommendations need financial resources to implement, the quick wins may start immediately such as the house to house campaigns to lighten up the out buildings surroundings (a bulb for each door)

Manzese experience: From the Safety Audit, Manzese women observed several aspects that need to be addressed in order to improve their safety perception/feelings. These include

- To light-up the area especially around buildings and streets.
- Open up and widen the streets
- Improve cleanliness (waste collection) in the area
- Improve drainage channels to prevent flooding
- Demolish un-finished buildings
- Initiate job creation activities for income generation e.g. Municipality to sub-contract women and youth groups in waste management
- Land use regularisation – mixed activities, etc
- Enforce licensing regulations to control illegal business such as video show kiosks, loud music from Bars and local brew pubs
- Need for alternative/descent income generation strategy for the women currently involved in selling local brew during the night risking their safety.

6. Conclusions:

The need to involve women in planning at neighbourhood level become essential in order to address women's concerns, which are concern's for everybody. Implementation of safety audits may become another entry point towards improvement of the living and physical environment in cities in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction. By involving women they learn the impact of crime in their lives and be motivated to report. Therefore a new approach – customer designed to local problem is essential. The Safer Cities approach tailored to partnerships at community level concerning their perceptions of safety, especially the most vulnerable (the poor, women, aged, youth) is most appropriate.