

COMMUNITY POLICING:
THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

May 2005

By

David H. Bayley
Distinguished Professor
State University of New York at Albany

For the Civilian Police Division,
Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations.

(This document may not be published, copied, quoted or
Used in any way without the permission of the United
Nations)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Implementation Goals
3. Implementation Agenda
4. Discussion of Implementation Activities
5. Checklist of Local Assessments
6. Organizing UN missions for community policing

INTRODUCTION

This manual will present a practical, operational plan to develop community policing in peacekeeping contexts that can be followed by UNCIVPOL missions. The essential elements of community police and the rationale for it have been described in the companion manual Community Police: The Doctrine. Although the strategies of community policing may be applied anywhere, the operational forms that they take will vary according to local conditions, including both cultural traditions and the capabilities of the police. Accordingly, the implementation plan described here takes into account the need to make careful assessments of local conditions. The goal of implementation is to create institutions that are true to the principles of community policing and are sustainable.

This manual specifies the steps to be followed in creating community policing and also the way in which UN missions need to be organized to carry them out. The manual is organized to answer the following questions:

- What are the community policing practices that must be developed?
- What should UNCIVPOL do to create those practices?
- What local conditions must be assessed in adapting community policing to different contexts?
- How should UN missions be organized in order to implement COP?

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS

Community policing is a strategy for enlisting the public as partners in controlling and preventing crime. It does this in four basic ways: (1) By demonstrating that police give priority to responding to the needs of individuals and communities; (2) By consulting with the public in developing local law enforcement and crime prevention agendas; (3) By mobilizing the community to participate in crime prevention activities; and (4) by adopting a proactive problem-solving approach to crime prevention. The objective of the United Nation's implementation plan is to transform these strategies into operational practices that can be sustained after UNCIVPOL withdraws.

Based upon experience in many countries, the following activities are minimally required in order for police to become responsive, consultative, mobilizing, and problem solving. These constitute the institutional agenda for the development of community policing.

A. To become responsive:

- (1) Create a toll-free emergency telephone number.
- (2) Provide convenient, comfortable access for the public to police stations and police posts to encourage requests for assistance.

(3) Assign competent, well-trained staff to telephone and police station reception duties.

(4) Inform members of the public regularly about progress being made about their cases and requests.

B. To foster consultation:

(1) Assign police officers for not less than three years at a time to manageable beats where the public can get to know them by name. Require beat officers to consult with the community about safety needs and to design practical crime-prevention programs.

(2) Create a consultative committee in each beat and police station composed of representative members of the public and open to public participation. These committees should meet not less than once every two months.

(3) Share timely information about crime in local areas with consultative committees and the media.

C. To mobilize communities in their own defense:

(1) Develop the ability of the police to advise individuals and communities about crime-prevention measures that address local problems.

(2) Provide public education in crime-prevention.

(3) Provide inspection tours of police facilities and opportunities to observe police training.

(4) Assign police officers to work with youth and schools to enhance safety and reduce the risk of victimization.

(5) Develop joint programs with public and private social agencies to address the problems of women and children, especially domestic violence and sexual exploitation.

D. To solve problems proactively:

(1) Train all beat officers in problem solving.

(2) Develop the capacity of all police stations to detect crime patterns and "hot spots" for police attention.

(3) Require first-line supervisors to document recurrent problems that have been detected, the solutions devised, the results obtained, and the time taken to solution.

(4) Train supervisors at all levels in the management of community policing, in particular how to encourage and facilitate community-policing activities by subordinate officers.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Developing the practices of community policing in a sustainable way in peacekeeping contexts is a complex business. It requires a coordinated, systematic approach drawing on international knowledge of change management in police agencies. Here are the steps in such an implementation program. They are what UNCIVPOL personnel must do if they are to be successful in developing and implanting the practices of community in a sustainable way. They are presented in the order in which they should be undertaken.

- (1) Persuade key stakeholders to adopt community policing.
- (2) Create an implementation task force within the local police, chaired by the chief officer, to carry out the community-policing program.
- (3) Jointly assess with local police the factors that will shape the practice of community policing locally.
- (4) Develop and publish a plan for making community policing the core strategy of policing to which police leaders and other stakeholders are formally committed.
- (5) Assign responsibility for implementing community policing to a senior commander reporting directly to the chief officer.
- (6) The implementation task force must determine how the management of community policing will be organized within the police and who will be responsible for it.
- (7) Provide training for managers and frontline supervisors in the requirements of community policing.

- (8) Develop pilot projects in community policing.
- (9) Develop criteria for evaluating the performance of community police officers that are consistent with the goals of community policing.
- (10) Educate all personnel in the objectives and methods of community policing.
- (11) Monitor and evaluate the pilot projects.
- (12) Revise the local implementation program in light of these evaluations.
- (13) Devise ways to demonstrate publicly that community policing enhances safety and reduces fear of crime.
- (14) Expand the practice of community policing to all appropriate operational units.

DISCUSSION OF IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

(1) Persuade key stakeholders to adopt community policing.

The key stakeholders are the senior executive officers of the police, especially the chief or commissioner, and the political leaders of government, especially those responsible for police and public safety. Without their public support and commitment, any program of strategic change in the police will fail. It is relatively easy to obtain verbal commitment to the idea of community policing, but much more difficult to obtain commitment to the operational changes required for it.

Time must be taken at the beginning of UNCIVPOL missions to ensure that leaders understand the operational requirements of community policing as well as its costs. In order to do this, UNCIVPOL officers must be able to articulate the difference between traditional policing and community policing. The key to obtaining sustainable commitment is showing how community policing can increase the effectiveness of local police in preventing crime. Most police take seriously the job of making communities safer. Community policing will be accepted in so far as it responds to this professional concern.

(2) Create an implementation task force within the local police, chaired by the chief officer, to carry out the community-policing program.

Ambitious projects of organizational change require direction at high-levels of command, drawing on the expertise of managers and operational officers throughout the police. A common way of achieving this is through the creation of a task force reporting directly to the chief police officer that is responsible for developing a community-policing plan and then monitoring its implementation. The leader of the task force should be a senior police officer, such as a deputy or assistant commissioner.

(3) Jointly assess with local police the factors that will shape the practice of community policing locally.

Police advisors in UN missions, as well as in bilateral assistance programs, have been criticized for recommending practices that do not fit local conditions. They have also been criticized for giving different and even conflicting advice about operational practices drawn from experience in their home countries.

Although the principles of community policing can be applied universally, they need to be adapted to the conditions of each country. This requires assessments to be made of the local conditions that can affect how community

policing is practiced. Advisors should discuss with local police, government officials, and non-governmental experts the ways in which the strategies of community policing can be applied. The purpose of this assessment is to decide which local institutions and police capacities can be used to implement community policing and which need to be changed.

In section 5 of this manual a checklist is provided of the key items to be assessed by an implementation team. It should be understood, however, that every country is to some extent unique and advisors need to be open minded and add or subtract from the list as circumstances require.

(4) Develop and publish a plan for making community policing the core strategy of policing to which police leaders and other stakeholders are formally committed.

On the basis of the assessments of local institutions and capacities, UN advisors and local police managers should formulate practices that can be implemented with reasonable expectation of acceptance by the local police and public. This kind of informed strategizing is the key to success in implementing community policing. Development of the community-policing plan jointly by local police, government representatives, and UNCIVPOL is also a critical means for obtaining the local commitment that is essential for initial acceptance and long-run sustainability.

UN advisors should obtain written agreement to the operational program, including funding at required levels.

(5) The implementation task force must determine how the management of community policing will be organized within the police and who will be responsible for it.

In order to implement community policing, the local police must determine who will perform the activities required by community policing and who will be responsible for them. There are several alternatives, with strengths and weaknesses to each. They are summarized in Chart 1.

Chart 1

ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS OF COMMUNITY POLICING

(1) Community policing becomes the responsibility of all officers regardless of assignment.

(2) Community policing becomes the exclusive responsibility of a new command.

(3) Community policing becomes the responsibility of the uniformed operations command, which may be further organized as follows:

- (a) Assigned to all uniformed operations personnel.
- (b) Assigned to a specialized community-policing unit within uniformed operations.
- (c) Assigned to designated beat officers who do not respond to emergency calls for service.
- (d) Assigned to designated beat officers within beat squads that combine the functions of rapid response and community policing.

The strengths and weaknesses of each of these options are as follows:

(1) Community policing is made the responsibility of all police officers regardless of assignment and specialty.

Strength: assigning community policing to everyone ensures that it penetrates all police activities.

Weakness: it is difficult to change the orientation of all police officers at the same time, especially those in specialties with strong traditions of practice, such as criminal investigation.

(2) Community policing is made the responsibility of a new, specialized command for deployment throughout the jurisdiction.

The new command would report directly to the chief police officer and is independent of uniformed operations, criminal investigation, traffic enforcement, and public-order response.

Strength: creating a specialized community-policing unit at a central location, such as agency or regional headquarters, ensures that personnel are available to focus on the unique activities of community policing.

Weakness: centralizing community policing may deprive its personnel of vital local contact, as well

as generate resentment among officers assigned to those areas.

(3) Responsibility for community policing is given to the uniformed operations command and is required of all its frontline personnel.

Strength: because uniformed officers account for most contacts with the public, it makes sense to have them at the forefront of community policing.

Weakness: uniformed patrol in most places is preoccupied with responding to emergency calls for service. As a result, community-policing activities tend to be neglected in favor of emergency response.

(4) Community policing is made the responsibility of a specialized unit within uniformed operations.

Strength: the activities of community policing are coordinated by the uniformed operational commander, supplementing and supporting the work of patrol and rapid-response officers.

Weakness: as with force-wide community policing specialists, community-policing specialists within the operational command may lack close contact with far-flung neighborhoods and groups. Moreover, local patrol officers may resent the intrusions of these specialists.

(5) Responsibility for community policing is given to uniformed personnel who are assigned to designated beats and only to community policing work.

This has been called a "split force" organization, in which "community" or "neighborhood" police officers are supported by rapid-response teams, thus allowing the community police officers to concentrate on responding, consulting, mobilizing, and problem solving.

Strength: concentrating community policing in uniformed beat officers who do that work exclusively ensures attention to community policing at local levels by frontline officers.

Weakness: because patrolling and emergency response have historically been considered the core of police work, community police officers who do not share these tasks are frequently regarded by other uniformed personnel as not pulling their weight and having a soft job. Coordination between the community police and response units suffers, with the community police officers feeling undervalued and the rapid responders coordinating actions with community officers as they should.

(6) Community policing is assigned to designated officers within a patrol squad responsible for all aspects of policing within a fixed area.

Strength: assigning all uniformed patrol duties, including the activities of community policing, to beat squads ensures that there is coordination among uniformed personnel regardless of their assignment on any day - patrol, response, crime prevention, and community liaison. It unifies the varied activities of effective operational policing in an operational group.

Weakness: it requires the devolution of patrol decision-making to lower levels of command than is customary, in turn requiring the development of first-line supervisors who can handle the new responsibilities. In this option, first-line supervisors must be trained to manage police strategies rather than simply monitor performance.

Although each police agency must make their own decision about what structure work best, the most common practice in urban areas, especially in the initial stages of community-police development, is to assign responsibility to designated beat officers within the uniformed operational command (Option 3 c), supported by an

overlay of rapid responders. In rural areas because such a split-force arrangement is impractical, the tasks of community policing and emergency response are combined in officers who are posted to work and, sometimes, live there (Option 3a).

There is one element of community policing, however, that should not be delegated to specialists but must become the responsibility of all police officers regardless of assignment, namely, the requirement to be responsive to the needs of individuals, thus demonstrating that policing is a service to all.

(6) Assign responsibility for implementing community policing to a senior commander who reports directly to the chief officer.

The chief police officer will have too many responsibilities to devote operational attention to developing community policing. Because the same is likely to be true of any senior commander in charge of an existing portfolio, the best course of action is to create a position whose exclusive responsibility is managing the implementation of community policing. Community policing needs a full-time champion who will attend to all facets of its development and who will defend it against attempts to use its resources, especially its personnel, for other purposes. It is also essential that there be stability in

this appointment, so that leadership may be consistent throughout the development of community policing.

(7) Provide training for managers and frontline supervisors in the requirements of community policing.

Strategic change can never be achieved by directive alone. It requires commanding officers at all levels to support community policing and, if they are in the community policing chain of command, to facilitate the practices that lead to responsiveness, consultation, mobilization, and problem solving. Of particular importance, they must make sure that subordinates have time to devote to the activities of community policing. This is often difficult because police agencies tend to be organized around responding to emergencies. Because such needs take precedence, community police officers are often viewed as an under used reservoir of additional manpower.

(8) Develop pilot projects in community policing.

Because community policing requires changing the customary activities of policing, police agencies should consider creating pilot projects to develop experience with the practices of community policing. In world practice, pilot projects are generally based on geographical commands, such as police stations. Pilot projects allow mistakes to be made and corrected without discrediting the

entire program. It also develops a cadre of practitioners who can be used to expand the program when the time comes. Because police learn best from one another, such "pioneers" can be invaluable in convincing dubious rank-and-file that community policing can make a positive difference.

In order for pilot projects to succeed, there must be continuity in institutional support, stability in personnel assigned to them, especially its senior commander, and an operational environment conducive to learning from experience.

(9) Develop criteria for evaluating the performance of community police officers that are consistent with the goals of community policing.

While the objective of community policing is the same as traditional law enforcement, namely, crime prevention, its methods are different. Therefore, the performance of officers assigned to it must be evaluated and awarded according to the new requirements. The community police task force should, as a matter of priority, develop criteria for the evaluation of the performance of officers to fit the community-police specifications. Officers will not seek assignment to community-policing roles or participate wholeheartedly in it if they think that the new activities will not be appreciated and rewarded.

(10) Educate all personnel in the objectives and methods of community policing.

Police services often begin implementing community policing by giving all personnel basic instruction in it. This is a mistake unless such training is given to officers who have an immediate opportunity to practice what they have learned. Training in community policing is wasted if it is given to people who cannot apply it. Moreover, education in community policing needs to be adapted to the jobs officers will perform - senior command, frontline supervision, and operational practice. The best strategy, therefore, is to plan for the delivery of community police training when officers are assigned to it and their responsibilities have been made clear.

At the same time, the requirement that policing be provided as a service to individuals does require long-term indoctrination of all personnel, civilian as well as sworn. This should become a fixture in the training of recruits as soon as possible. The training should include how to interact with the public, listen respectfully to complaints about police service, refer people in need of help to appropriate offices and agencies, obtain advice about crime prevention, and coordinate activities with community policing specialists.

As community police activities expand beyond the experimental stage, all police need to know what it is and why it is being developed. It is particularly important for all members to understand and appreciate how community policing may assist in reducing and preventing crime, in particular so as to counteract the notion that community policing is "soft policing" in which laws are not enforced. Community policing is as "real" a form of policing as patrolling, investigating, and responding to emergencies.

(11) Monitor and evaluate the pilot projects.

After the pilot projects have had sufficient time to develop community policing and for their programs to have had an effect, they should be evaluated in terms of goals of community policing. In order to do so, they may need to enlist the assistance of outside experts. UNCVIPOP could play a major role in helping to design sound evaluation programs and providing resources for them. Criteria for the success of community policing will be discussed in a companion manual, Community Policing: Evaluation Programs.

(12) Devise ways to demonstrate publicly that community policing enhances safety and reduces fear of crime.

Because community policing will inevitably face doubt and active dissent, attention should be given to showing its value. Police officers as well as the community will be

impatient with a program that does not show perceptible benefits in fairly short order. To be sustained as a core strategy, community policing must produce a perceptible improvement in public safety, fear of crime, and satisfaction with police service in a reasonable time.

At the same time, it should be recognized that demonstrating the crime-control effectiveness of any police strategy, including community policing, is not easy. Crime data is often inadequate and analysis is complex methodologically. Community policing should be held to account, but no more so than any other police strategy designed to reduce crime.

(13) Revise the local implementation program in light of these evaluations.

The primary objective of creating pilot projects is to correct shortcomings in implementation, not to make a final decision about the worth of community-policing programs. Crime control and crime prevention are complex. No single strategy, especially one as demanding as community policing, can be expected to prove its worth immediately. It follows, therefore, that the development of community policing is a long-range proposition and must be given time to revise and fine-tune its practices.

(14) Expand the practice of community policing to all appropriate operational units.

Some police agencies have tried to implement community policing immediately and everywhere. This is a mistake. Community policing requires not only a change in the responsiveness of all police officers, but in the development of particular forms of interaction with communities and approaches to crime-prevention - namely, responsiveness, consultation, mobilization, problem solving. Such reorientation does take place overnight. It is also unrealistic to expect the value of community policing to be understood immediately by every police officer. It is better, therefore, to start small and well than large and badly. Community policing will take hold in police agencies when there are officers within them and the communities around them that have seen its benefit and insist on having it themselves.

LOCAL ASSESSMENTS

A crucial step in implementing community policing is assessing the fit between its core strategies and local conditions both inside and outside the police (Implementation point 4). Although every locality has different traditions and capacities, several are fundamentally important to the practice of community policing anywhere. These factors fall into two primary categories: (1) the nature and capacities of the communities with which the police must work and (2) the ability of police to be responsive, consultative, mobilizing, and problem solving.

Drawing on the experience of the international community in providing assistance for police development, these are the factors that are most important to consider if community policing is to succeed in different contexts.

I. Community factors

(1) What are the grassroots groups with which the police should consult?

There are various possibilities:

- Residents' associations based on geography, such as housing estates and neighborhoods.
- Economic interests, such as banks, shopkeepers, taxi drivers, and apartment owners.

- Public service organizations, such as hospitals, shelters for battered women, and halfway houses for paroled criminals.
- Leaders of ethnic groups, such as tribes in Africa, castes in India, and immigrants everywhere.
- Village elders.
- Religious leaders.

Choosing partners in crime prevention is a sensitive matter. It can confer status on groups and by implication deny it to those not so recognized. It can also be seen as an attempt by government to control grassroots institutions. Although working with communities can be enormously beneficial to police, police must be alert to the impact of their outreach on the communities themselves.

(2) Are there traditional justice/mediation systems that the police should cooperate with in controlling and preventing crime?

Police must be careful that their activities work with rather than against traditional systems of social control and discipline. At the same time, the police need to be alert to the fact that some traditional practices may be against the law and should not be encouraged. The police should be very careful that they do not ally themselves with groups that are fundamentally opposed to human rights and the rule of law.

(3) Do community groups, whatever their character, have the ability to work as partners with the police?

This ability depends on their ability to act and think independently. If cannot, they may not be able to organize effective community crime-prevention programs. In such situations, there is a danger that they will be seen as agents of the

police, weakening their standing further and increasing local alienation from the police.

(4) Are there groups in society that are at special risk from crime and maltreatment? If there are, the police should make special efforts to assess their needs and devise programs of liaison and support.

(5) What is the distribution of respect/disrespect for the police in the population?

Programs of community policing must be adapted to the reputation of the police in different places and among different groups. Community policing is relatively easy to establish, for example, among prosperous middle-class and professional groups. It requires much more effort with communities that are poor, unemployed, lacking in education, and have high concentrations of migrants.

(6) Is there a tradition of encouraging community groups to be active in social and economic development independently of government?

Where there is, partnership is possible and community policing can be established relatively easily. Where there isn't, people will be suspicious of any outreach efforts by the police and the police will have to make extra efforts to demonstrate that they are interested in genuine grassroots input.

As a general proposition, it is better to work with community groups that already exist and are accepted by the population than to create entirely new ones. This, however, depends on the strength, legitimacy, and lawfulness of these indigenous institutions.

II. Police factors

(1) Do police leaders have the skills to manage the changes required for community policing?

Community policing goes against the grain of traditional policing which is oriented to emergency reaction, especially to serious crime and public disorder. Changing this orientation to include proactive crime-prevention requires extraordinary ability as well as commitment on the part of senior officers. The first step in developing community policing in many police agencies will be to provide training in change-management to senior ranks.

(2) Does the management style of the organization facilitate collaborative decision-making or is it the traditional directive, quasi-military kind?

(3) Do the police officers assigned to community-policing tasks have the skills to do what is required, such as treating the public as clients, soliciting community input, and encouraging cooperation?

Community policing requires professionalism in the management of human resources. This is also true of other police strategies, but is frequently ignored. This means that police personnel must be recruited, promoted, and assigned on the basis of merit, not personal connections.

(4) What is the customary orientation of the police toward the public: sympathetic and polite or suspicious and directive?

If the culture of the police supports behavior that is unsympathetic and authoritarian, then efforts to develop community policing must begin with changing attitudes force-wide. Moreover, such behavior counter-productive behavior must be monitored and corrected.

(5) Do the police effectively control misbehavior by officers, in particular corruption and the use of force?

There must be effective internal control of discipline. Police whose behavior is offensive will not be successful in transforming the public into allies against crime no matter what programs they undertake called "community policing."

(6) Does the development of community policing need to take place in one or several police organizations?

In some countries, there may be more than one police force. Policing may be organized, for example, at different levels of government (national, regional, and local), in terms of different territories (rural/urban), or by function (VIP protection, transportation security, political intelligence). In order for the public to work cooperatively with police, it may be necessary to undertake reform in more than one police institution.

These assessments of the nature of the community and of the police need to be made collaboratively with local stakeholders, leaders, and experts. In this way, the enterprise of assessment becomes a powerful mechanism for demonstrating the commitment of the police to the ideals of community policing, particularly consultation with the community.

The development of community policing faces a chicken-and-egg problem. The defects in police performance that make community policing necessary and potentially valuable are precisely the conditions that make its implementation difficult. The only course of action is to proceed with community policing both as a cure for past

problems and as a lever to reform the police in other ways. The strength of reform as community policing is that it links organizational change to improved effectiveness in making communities safe. It places public safety at the center of reform, thus fulfilling the mandate of all police agencies.

ORGANIZING UN MISSIONS FOR COMMUNITY POLICING

In order for UNCIVPOL to develop community policing as a core feature of policing in the countries where police services are being reconstructed, its missions must be organized, staffed, and supported appropriately. Community policing, or any other plan for strategic reform, cannot be done by directive. Success depends on the skill of UNCIVPOL in persuading and facilitating. This requires unusual expertise, foresight, and commitment. Even then, let it be said, achieving sustainable change in police organizations overseas is a difficult business.

Here are six suggestions for organizing UNCIVPOL missions in order to develop community policing successfully.

(1) The mandate for the mission should explicitly state that developing community policing is an objective. The development of community policing would occur after initial stabilization and after addressing deficits in police professionalism.

(2) All UNCIVPOL personnel should be trained in community-police doctrine.

(3) A senior staff officer, reporting directly to the Commissioner, should be given full-time responsibility for implementing community policing.

(4) The officer directing community policing should have sufficient staff so as to be able to coach CIVPOL advisors in change management, train local supervisors of all ranks in community policing, provide educational materials including model policies, and monitor the practice of community policing for consistency.

(5) All CIVPOL staff involved in developing community policing should have received in-country training in adapting the community-policing model to local conditions.

(6) The mission should formulate a written strategy for engaging with local police at all levels of command with respect to the management of community policing.

(7) The mission should coordinate donor support, in particular by assigning responsibility for the supply of different components in the community-police implementation plan to specific donors.

(8) The mission should support visits by police officers from countries with similar social conditions and solid experience with community policing to provide training and advice.